Adoption Microaggressions

Examples From Interviews

- **Benefit/Normalization**
  - Having worked in mental health in the United States and as a clinician, I see somewhat afraid to adopt in the United States.

- **Reduction in Adoption Wish Situation**
  - But then I talk about the fact that even though that she was adopted, I don't think for a minute she was a mistake. She was always destined to be my daughter.

- **Challenges in Adoption**
  - I've been asked how much she costs.

- **Cultural Limitations/Inability of Heritage**
  - You know I forget she's Chinese. I forget I don't think of her as Chinese. Uh, I think when people are asking about my daughter and I'll say, well I adopted her from China, but it's funny. Every now and then, I'll look at her and I think, oh, she's Chinese! You know? It doesn't, I don't think of her as Chinese ever.

- **Adoption is A Win-Win Situation**
  - And there are so many kids who don't have families to love them—why not all?

- **Intimidating Adoptees And Birth Parents**
  - Why do you keep pointing at me and saying things to you? You know because also they say she's "the one instead of you."


Racial Microaggressions

Examples From Interviews

- **Alien in Own Land**
  - She's adopted. She's from China? You're her real mother?

- **Acceptance of Intelligence**
  - If anything [she] thinks of the positive stereotype of Asian girls, she's sort of quiet, she's, well, quiet.

- **Color Blindness**
  - It's just like, who cares what color your skin is?

- **Crimes Against Asian American Women**
  - A person of color is followed around the store.

- **Denial of Racism**
  - And um, it's funny I think it probably has more to do with gender than with race because I do see black men, um not as many, but I see the black men getting advanced faster and in larger numbers than white women.

- **Myth of Meritocracy**
  - I believe the most qualified person should get the job.

- **Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles**
  - Little girls don't get educated in China.

- **Second-Class Citizen**
  - Person of color is mistaken for a service worker.

- **Environmental Microaggressions**
  - That's really challenging cause, I mean, I just don't think of her as Chinese, I mean it just, it just so minimizes the experience.

- **Denial Of Racism Reality**
  - Interviewer: So- right now you don't think of her as Chinese?

- **Essicatization Of Asian-American Women**
  - There's a funny line between biasing, "Your daughter is beautiful!" you try to sort that out.

- **Invidiation Of Interracial Differences**
  - And you don't want to sort [if] people tell you about someone they know who was Chinese—It's like a... 

- **Invisibility**
  - I said, "Well, [her]—not she—was born in China."

Introduction and Method

- **Transracial adoptions are 40% of all U.S adoptions, and typically involve White parents adoption children of color (Transracial and international adoptions, TRAAs) TRAAs and their families encounter frequent microaggressions that invalidate their family.
- **Microaggressions are insults, behaviors, and slights that communicate derogatory and hostile attitudes and beliefs, whether or not intentional (Sue et al., 2007).**
- **Our study developed the microaggressions model Hughes et al., 2006, and an adoption microaggressions model (Baden, 2010), this poster examined racial and adoption microaggressions in the lives of TRAAs and their families.**
- **This poster also examined parent’s Preparation for Bias (PfB) behaviors (Hughes et al., 2007), designed to help children cope with these experiences of stigma.**

Sample: Community sample of 46 families; current sample for poster: 19
- **Family Types**
  - Bi-Moms: 47%
  - Two-Moms: 16%
  - Single Mom: 37%
- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - 45% White, 5% Asian
- **Ages of residence**
  - Urban: 43%
  - Suburban: 42%
  - Rural: 15%

Preparation for Bias Behaviors: Reactive

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<tr>
<td>Parent Fails to Respond</td>
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<td>Parent Committed Actual AMA/RMA</td>
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<td>Child Committed Actual AMA/RMA</td>
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Preparation for Parent Behavior: Actively

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Preparation for Bias Behaviors: Proactive

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Discussion

- **Microaggressions: families experienced 336 microaggressions in 212 incidents**
- **More actual AMAs than RMAs – Is race more taboo than adoption?**

Adoption Microaggressions

- **Do others perceive Asians as not real citizens?**
- **Parents are interacting with messages from adoptive parents.**
- **Adoptees’ AMAs were most common actual AMAs, making adoptive parents top victims of actual microaggressions**
- **Adoption Microaggressions**
  - Biological and Pair/Desired Parents were most common actual AMAs, making adoptive parents more likely to experience actual microaggressions than adoptive parents

Adoption Microaggressions

- **Biological and Pair/Desired Parents were most common actual AMAs, making adoptive parents more likely to experience actual microaggressions than adoptive parents**
- **Phantom Birth-Parents and Adoption Is Win-Win were top parent committed AMAs**
- **These were adoptive perceptions towards birth parents, and make 8% unique**
- **Adoptees’ AMAs were cultural Limbo and Phantom Birth-Parent**
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Preparation for Bias Behaviors

- **Reactive behaviors: Parents give Simple Responses.**
- **Any parents experiencing the pull to be polite? How much does context matter?**
- **Contextualized Messages – Do parents see their child as "honorary white person" and see no need for PfB**
- **Proactive behaviors: Educate Others, Educate Child, Actions to Empower Child.**
- **Other behaviors will not be “polite" in these communities.”**

Limitations

- **Exempt data set used with cross-sectional design and retrospective accounts.**
- **Sample limited in size and region.**
- **Limited to families with young children who were adopted from China.**

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