



# **Ethnic-Racial Socialization in International Transracial Adoptive Families: The Many Facets and Complexities**

Ellen Pinderhughes

Eliot-Pearson Dept. of Child Development




Workshop, Rudd Adoption Conference, April, 2010






# Workshop Outline

- Parenting challenges in ITRA adoptions
  - Ethnic-Racial Socialization Concepts
  - Discussion
- 



# Critical Parenting Goal

- Socialize children to be successful adults in society
    - Relationships with others, engaging the world, self-discipline, work ethic, as a cultural being...
  - Typically, parents' goals are linked to:
    - Their cultural group membership
    - Their own socialization experiences
- 



# International Transracial Adoptions

- Parents' goals linked not only
  - Own socialization experiences
  - Own cultural background
- But also
  - Adoptee's cultural background
  - Adoptee's preplacement experiences





# Challenges in International Transracial Adoptions

- Domestic transracial adoption

  - Child is of a different race

  - Child is of different domestic cultural group

- International adoption

  - Child speaks different language

  - Child is of different culture

  - Child is immigrant (parents are not)

  - Child may have health/developmental complications

- International transracial adoption

  - Above differences

  - Child is of different race





# Complexities of International Transracial Adoptions

Childrearing (normative biological families)

plus

Normative adoption issues

plus


Cross-cultural adoption issues

Adoptive parents must consider these additional challenges





# Ethnic-Racial Socialization (E-RS)

- Literature bases
    - Non-adoptive families: E-RS
    - Domestic transracial adoptive families E-RS
    - International transracial adoptive families E-RS
    - Adoptive families and communication
- 

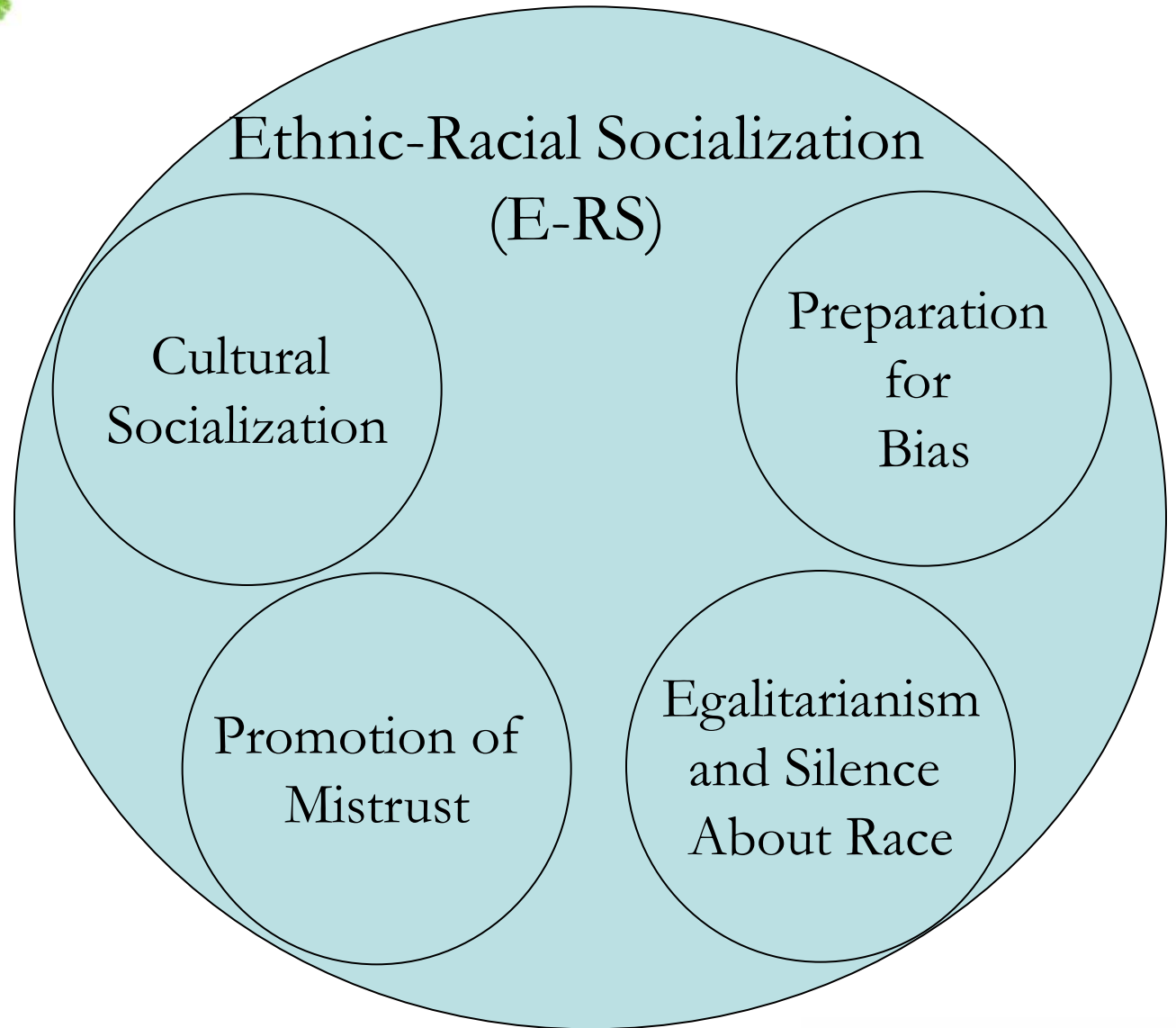


# E-RS Facets

- Type of E-RS
- Contextual issues
- Modality of E-RS
- Parent's Role
- Developmental Considerations
- Child and adolescent engagement







Hughes et. al., 2006





# Types of E-RS

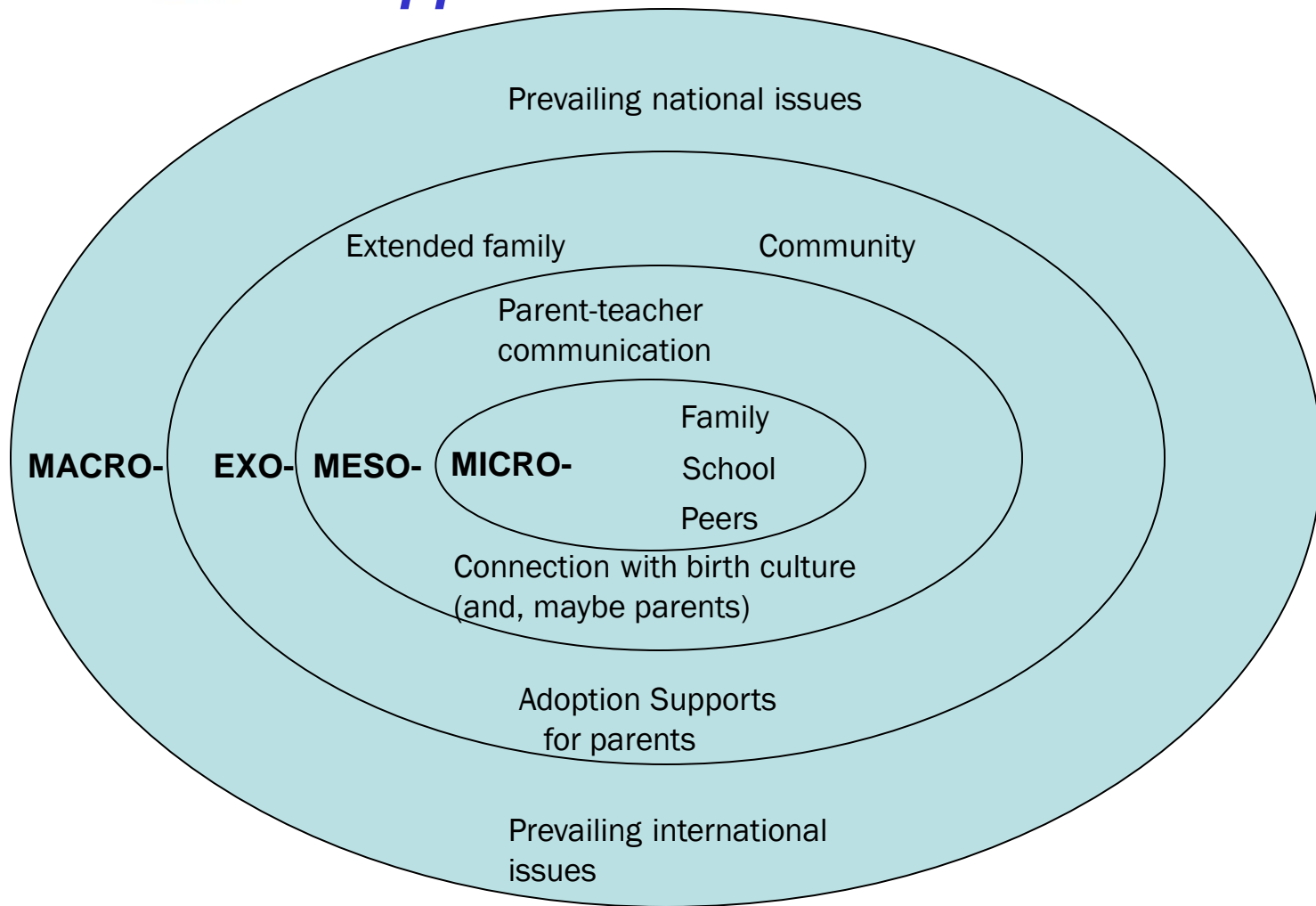
Hughes et. al., 2006

- **Cultural Socialization**
    - Similar concepts: Enculturation (Lee, 2003; Tessler et al., 1999); Cultural pride reinforcement (Stevenson, 1994); Ethnic Socialization (Yoon, 2004)
  - **Preparation for Bias**
    - Similar concepts: Racial inculcation or racialization (Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2006); Racism awareness training (Stevenson, 1994);
  - **Promotion of Mistrust**
    - Similar concepts: mistrust Whites (Thomas & Speight, 1999)
  - **Egalitarian and Silence about Race**
    - Similar concepts: Cultural assimilation (Lee, 2003; Tessler et al., 1999); Mainstream socialization (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Stevenson et al., 2002);
- 



# *Ecological Systems of Adoption\**

## *Applied to E-RS*



Chronosystem -> -> ... Historical changes in challenges, supports, developmental considerations

\*Palacios, 2009





# E-RS Modality and other facets

## Modality

- Language lessons
- Play group
- Culture Camp/School
- Meals, books, celebrations
- Parent-child discussions
- Mentor
- Travel to homeland

## Level of involvement

- Child only
- Family
- Community

## Structure

- Structured/planned
- Unstructured/informal

## Setting

- Home
- Community






# Parent's Role

- Approach to difference

- racial difference; cultural difference; adoption status as difference
- Accept, reject, both accept/reject


(e.g., Bebiroglu & Pinderhughes, 2010; Brodzinsky, 1990; Fong & Wang, 2001; Friedlander et al., 2000; Kirk, 1964; Johnston, Swim, Saltsman, Deater-Deckard, & Petrill, 2007; Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2006; Tan & Nakkula, 2004; Tessler, Gamache, & Liu, 1999)

– **Beliefs/values/attitudes** (e.g., Bebiroglu & Pinderhughes, 2010; Fong & Wang, 2001; Friedlander et al., 2000; Johnston, Swim, Saltsman, Deater-Deckard, & Petrill, 2007; Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2006; Tan & Nakkula, 2004; Tessler, Gamache, & Liu, 1999)

- Salience of race
  - Importance of cultural socialization
  - Importance of mainstream socialization
  - Connection to child's birth culture
- 




# Parent's Role

- **Comfort level with differences and with dealing with them** (Li et al, 2008; Wrobel et al, 2003)
  - **Confidence in how addressing E-RS** (e.g., Li et al, 2008; Tessler, Gamache & Liu, 1999)
  - **Parental approach to activities/discussion**
    - **Proactive or reactive**
      - **Initiate, Propose or Wait/Child Choice** (e.g., Bebiroglu & Pinderhughes, 2010; Tessler, Gamache & Liu, 1999)
  - **Parental Approach to child during discussion**
    - **Role: Teacher/facilitator, comforter, communication broker** (Pinderhughes, Golden, Waddell, 2009; Rosenblum, Freeark, Mackenzie, 2009; Wrobel et al., 2003)
    - **Sensitivity to child**
      - **Intrusiveness, detachment** (Rosenblum, Freeark, Mackenzie, 2009)
- 



# Developmental Considerations

- At what ages do parents engage in each of the E-RS types\*
  - Content to be shared\*
    - \*CS (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006; Johnston et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2006)
    - \*Age differences in Prep for Bias (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006; Johnston et al., 2007)
  - When parents initiate, propose, or allow child to initiate discussions or activities (Hughes et al., 2006; Wrobel et al., 2003)
- 




# Child and Adolescent Engagement

- Activities
  - Participation
    - Frequency, continuity, breadth
    - Interest in activities
    - Understanding knowledge of E-RS\*
- Discussions
  - Purpose: how children use discussions\*
    - Cognitive, emotional purposes





# Links to Child and Adolescent Outcomes

- Cultural Socialization and outcomes
    - Benefits for cultural competence (e.g., Andujo, 1988; Deberry et al., 1996; Friedlander et al., 2000; Lee & Quintana, 2005; Thomas & Tessler, 2007; Yoon, 2001)
    - Benefits for emotional/behavioral adjustment (e.g., Deberry et al., 2007; Johnston et al., 2007; Yoon, 2001)
  - Prep for Bias and emotional/behavioral adjustment
    - Marginal negative effect on externalizing behaviors for older children (Johnston et al., 2007)
  - Communication openness linked to adjustment (Brodzinsky et al., 2006)
- 



# E-RS Facets and Complexities

## E-RS Types

Cult. Socializ.  
Prep for Bias  
Promote Mistrust  
Egalitarianism

**Parent role**  
Approach to difference  
Beliefs/attitudes  
Comfort level  
Confidence level  
Proactive/reactive  
Role in discussions

## Contextual Considerations

Micro: Family/Peer/School  
Meso: PT, Birth Culture  
Exo: Ext family, Community, Adoption Supports  
Macro: Nat'l, Int'l issues  
Chrono: Hist. changed

**Modality, etc.**  
Modality  
Level of involvement  
Structure  
Location

## Dev. Considerations

When, what to share  
When let child lead

## Child Engagement in Activities, Discussions

Frequency  
Purpose  
Interest  
Understanding



# Discussion ideas

