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## **Bicultural Socialization Practices in the Netherlands, Norway, and the United States of America with Children Adopted from India**

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# Race and Bicultural Socialization Practices in the Netherlands, Norway, and the United States with Children Adopted from India\*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- Purpose:** Study of country-specific race and bicultural socialization (BCS) practices among white transracial, intercountry-adoptive (T-ICA) parents and their Indian children ( $N = 622$ ) living in the Netherlands ( $n = 409$ ), Norway ( $n = 146$ ), and The United States (US) ( $n = 67$ ).
- Gaps:** Ethno-racial demography was found to influence BCS practices of T-ICA parents with Chinese daughters (Thomas & Tessler, 2007). Gaps existed as to whether results generalized to other U.S. T-ICA family populations and how American BCS practices compared cross-nationally to White, Dutch and Norwegian families with children from India.
- Why 3 countries?** Contrast with single-country interpretations; examine “country-of-residence” as contextual factor in BCS practices (i.e., Degrees of minority [US > Netherlands > Norway] and Indian populations [US > Norway > Netherlands])
- Across these three countries:**
  - RQ1.** How did these T-ICA families differ in their BCS practices?
  - RQ2.** How did parental reports of children’s negative experiences with others about adoption, birth country, skin color, racial/positive discrimination, and parental worry differ in T-ICA families?

## 2. METHODS

- Research Design/Sample:** Cross-sectional survey design; mailed surveys; Indian adoptees 4-16 years
- Measures:** Cultural identity/discrimination survey items previously tested (Juffer & Tieman, 2009; Tessler, Gamache, & Liu, 1999); psychometric properties for face validity only.
  - Importance of Bicultural Socialization Experiences (IBSE-P); Adoptees’ Participation in Bicultural Socialization (APBS); parents # adult Indian friends; adoptees’ negative experiences with others about adoption, birth country, skin color; racial/positive discrimination; parental worry; with whom adoptees had negative experiences
- Procedure:** Human Subjects Approval; pilot; mailed surveys /follow-up 30-day
- Statistical Analysis:** Factor analyses (oblimin rotation) for IBSE-P/APBS scale formation; (bivariate analysis of categorical data Pearson’s  $\chi^2$  analyses/Bonferroni correction) (Table 1); interval level data (t-tests of independent samples; 1-way ANOVA/Tukey post hoc) (Table 2-3).

## 3. RESULTS

**Table 1.**  
**Family Descriptive Statistics Comparing Countries’ Samples**

| Family Characteristics  | Netherlands<br>( $n = 409$ ) | Norway<br>( $n = 146$ ) | US<br>( $n = 67$ ) |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Gender of Child: (% Female)                                       | 77.5% ( $n = 317$ )          | 74% ( $n = 108$ )       | 70.1% ( $n = 47$ ) |
| Child’s mean placement age (years) (SD) <sup>1</sup>              | 1.2 (1.10)                   | 1.6 (0.93)              | 2.6 (2.60)         |
| Child’s mean age (in years) at time of study (SD)                 | 10.4 (3.90)                  | 9.66 (3.78)             | 10.9 (4.00)        |
| Mother’s mean age (in years) at adoption (SD) <sup>2</sup>        | 35.10 (0.20)                 | 34.60 (4.10)            | 36.5 (3.70)        |
| Father’s mean age (in years) at adoption (SD)                     | 37.20 (5.20)                 | 37.80 (4.60)            | 37.80 (4.60)       |
| Mother’s mean age (in years) at time of study (SD) <sup>3,4</sup> | 44.50 (4.90)                 | 43.50 (5.70)            | 47.60 (6.80)       |
| Father’s mean age (in years) at time of study (SD)                | 46.50 (4.80)                 | 46.70 (5.00)            | 47.60 (6.70)       |
| Mother completed survey   | 87.8%                        | 74.8%                   | 82.1%              |
| Father completed survey <sup>5</sup>                              | 12.2%                        | 25.2%                   | 17.9%              |
| Two-parent families   | 96%                          | 91%                     | 83%                |

Note: <sup>1</sup>US older at adoption than Dutch/Norway; <sup>2</sup>US mothers older at adoption than Dutch ( $t(484) = 3.30, p < .001$  or Norwegian mothers; <sup>3</sup>US mothers older at study than Dutch,  $t(484) = 4.74, p < .001$  and Norwegian mothers,  $t(230) = 4.95, p < .001$ ; <sup>4</sup>Dutch older than Norwegian mothers at study,  $t(564) = 2.16, p < .05$ . <sup>5</sup>Country differences for fathers’ completion of survey,  $\chi^2 = 13.7(2); p < .001$ ; Bonferroni post hoc indicated Norwegian fathers ( $m = 1.25, SD = 0.44$ ) completed surveys more than Dutch fathers ( $m = 1.22; SD = .33$ ). No significant differences for gender of adoptees, fathers’ age at adoption/time of the study, or family structure.

**Table 2**  
*Analysis of Variance of Scores on the IBSE-P, the APBS, Parents’ Number of Adult, Indian Friends, Adoptees’ Experiences of Negative Reactions from Others (About Adoption, Country of Origin, and Skin Color), Parental Report of Adoptees’ Experiences with Racial Discrimination, and Parental Worry (About Others’ Negative Reactions and Positive Discrimination) by Country.*

| Variable  | Country     |        |      | df    | F    | p        | $e^2$ |
|---|-------------|--------|------|-------|------|----------|-------|
|   | Netherlands | Norway | USA  |       |      |          |       |
| <b>IBSE-P</b>   |             |        |      |       |      |          |       |
| M   | 20.4        | 23.1   | 25   | 2,566 | 26.0 | <.001*** | 0.08  |
| SD  | 5.4         | 5.3    | 7.1  |       |      |          |       |
| <b>APBS</b>   |             |        |      |       |      |          |       |
| M   | 3.3         | 4.1    | 4.3  | 2,600 | 12.8 | <.001*** | 0.04  |
| SD  | 1.9         | 1.9    | 2.1  |       |      |          |       |
| <b>Parents number of adult, Indian friends</b>              |             |        |      |       |      |          |       |
| M   | 1.24        | 1.44   | 2.31 | 2,611 | 57.7 | <.001*** | 0.16  |
| SD  | 0.60        | 0.87   | 1.13 |       |      |          |       |
| <b>Negative reactions from others- adoption</b>             |             |        |      |       |      |          |       |
| M   | 1.6         | 1.6    | 1.8  | 2,611 | 3.14 | <.05*    | 0.01  |
| SD  | 0.7         | 0.8    | 0.9  |       |      |          |       |
| <b>Negative reactions from others- country of origin</b>    |             |        |      |       |      |          |       |
| M   | 1.5         | 1.5    | 1.8  | 2,610 | 4.8  | <.01**   | 0.02  |
| SD  | 0.8         | 0.7    | 0.9  |       |      |          |       |
| <b>Negative reactions from others - skin color</b>          |             |        |      |       |      |          |       |
| M   | 1.6         | 2.0    | 2.2  | 2,610 | 2.3  | NS       | 0.01  |
| SD  | 0.9         | 0.9    | 1.0  |       |      |          |       |
| <b>Adoptees’ experiences-racial discrimination</b>          |             |        |      |       |      |          |       |
| M   | 1.6         | 1.4    | 1.7  | 2,603 | 4.5  | <.01**   | 1.00  |
| SD  | 0.8         | 0.7    | 0.8  |       |      |          |       |
| <b>Parental worry- negative reactions from others</b>       |             |        |      |       |      |          |       |
| M   | 2.0         | 2.6    | 2.8  | 2,536 | 28.5 | <.001*** | 0.02  |
| SD  | 0.9         | 1.1    | 1.0  |       |      |          |       |
| <b>Parental worry- experiences of racial discrimination</b> |             |        |      |       |      |          |       |
| M   | 2.2         | 2.6    | 2.7  | 2,486 | 9.7  | <.001*** | 0.04  |
| SD  | 0.9         | 1.1    | 1.0  |       |      |          |       |

Note: \*Significance <.05; \*\*Significance <.01; \*\*\*Significance <.001; IBSE-P: Importance of BCS; APBS: Adoptees’ Participation in BCS

**Table 3**  
*Percentages (indicating yes) and Chi-Square Analyses of Adoptees Experiences of Negative Reactions, Racial Discrimination, and Positive Discrimination from Classmates, Neighborhood Peers, and Unknown People*

|   | Netherlands<br>( $n = 405$ )<br>% | Norway<br>( $n = 74$ )<br>% | USA<br>( $n = 50$ )<br>% | Netherlands<br>vs.<br>Norway<br>$\chi^2$ | Netherlands<br>vs.<br>USA<br>$\chi^2$ | USA<br>vs.<br>Norway<br>$\chi^2$ |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Adoptee experienced negative reactions to being adopted from</b> |                                   |                             |                          |  |                                       |                                  |
| 1. classmates?  | 25.4                              | 37.8                        | 58.0                     | 4.85*                                    | 22.9***                               | 4.88*                            |
| 2. neighborhood peers?  | 16.3                              | 23.0                        | 8.50                     | 1.95                                     | 2.35                                  | 4.76*                            |
| 3. unknown people   | 34.0                              | 39.2                        | 34.0                     | 0.72                                     | 0.00                                  | 0.34                             |
| <b>Adoptee experienced racial discrimination from</b>               |                                   |                             |                          |  |                                       |                                  |
| 1. classmates?  | 14.9                              | 47.2                        | 55.9                     | 23.9***                                  | 35.7***                               | 0.47                             |
| 2. neighborhood peers?  | 9.40                              | 19.4                        | 5.90                     | 3.65*                                    | 0.47                                  | 2.87                             |
| 3. unknown people?  | 29.9                              | 33.3                        | 38.2                     | 0.18                                     | 1.03                                  | 0.18                             |
| <b>Adoptee experienced positive discrimination from</b>             |                                   |                             |                          |  |                                       |                                  |
| 1. classmates?  | 10.6                              | 10.1                        | 17.1                     | 0.16                                     | 0.19                                  | 0.19                             |
| 2. neighborhood peers?  | 5.70                              | 3.80                        | 4.90                     | 0.46                                     | 0.45                                  | 0.80                             |
| 3. unknown people?  | 64.0                              | 86.1                        | 78.0                     | 14.8***                                  | 3.26                                  | 1.25                             |

Note: \*Significance <.05; \*\*Significance <.01; \*\*\*Significance <.001

## 4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Norway and US (countries with > Indian populations) had most similar BCS practices (Norway/US > Dutch for parental importance of BCS and children’s BCS experiences)
- US parents had > numbers of adult Indian friends than Norwegian/Dutch samples
- Dutch/US (countries with greater ethno-racial heterogeneity) > overall experiences of racial discrimination than Norwegian Indian adoptees  
\*Yet, the Dutch parent sample worried < than Norwegian/US parents about children’s negative experiences
- With whom children had negative experiences: Classmates about Adoption: US > than Norwegian/Dutch; Norwegian > Dutch; Classmates about Racial discrimination: Norwegian/US > Dutch; Neighborhood Peers about Adoption: Norwegian > US; Neighborhood Peers about Racial Discrimination: Norwegian > Dutch; Unknown People and Positive Discrimination: Norwegian > Dutch
- The Dutch experienced the least negative reactions from others overall, even though they still encountered significant racial discrimination.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

- Norwegian families fell between USA/Dutch samples for BCS
  - Norwegian/US samples most similar (75%) despite ethno-racial contrast; Dutch/US most different (87.5%) except for racial discrimination
- Dutch found it least important to expose children to BCS; children subsequently had < BCS activities. Validated link between parental BCS attitudes predicting activities(i.e., Lee, 2003; Thomas & Tessler, 2007)
- Dutch parents may worry < Norwegian/US parents about negative experiences due to cultural/political contextual factors:
  - Long-standing reputation of Dutch for liberal/tolerant views (Zick, Pettigrew, & Wagner, 2008)
  - Adoptees resemble highly integrated Dutch Caribbean immigrants, the Surinamese (educated; professional)(Michon & Vermeulen, 2013)
  - Shift in Dutch immigration practices/policies. Biculturalism seen as inhibiting integration into larger Dutch culture/economic success
- US > negative adoption experiences with classmates than Norwegians or Dutch—North American phenomenon of Adoptive Family Stigma
- Norwegian parents (vs. US) experienced > negative reactions from neighborhood peers. May relate to US child-rearing practice of socializing in community-at-large versus neighborhoods (Lareau, 2002).