



The Intersectionality of race, adoption and parenting: How White adoptive parents of Asian born children talk about race within the family

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Background

In 1972, The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) stated transracial adoption was akin to cultural genocide. The NABSW was concerned that under the tutelage of White parents, Black children would not learn the skills needed to survive in a racist society hence they were opposed to transracial adoption.

- Today large numbers of children are adopted from Asia.
- Racism is still an issue for people of color and not all White people are aware of the extent that racism exists in our society.
- This research is about how White adoptive parents of Asian born children talk about race related issues within the context of the family.

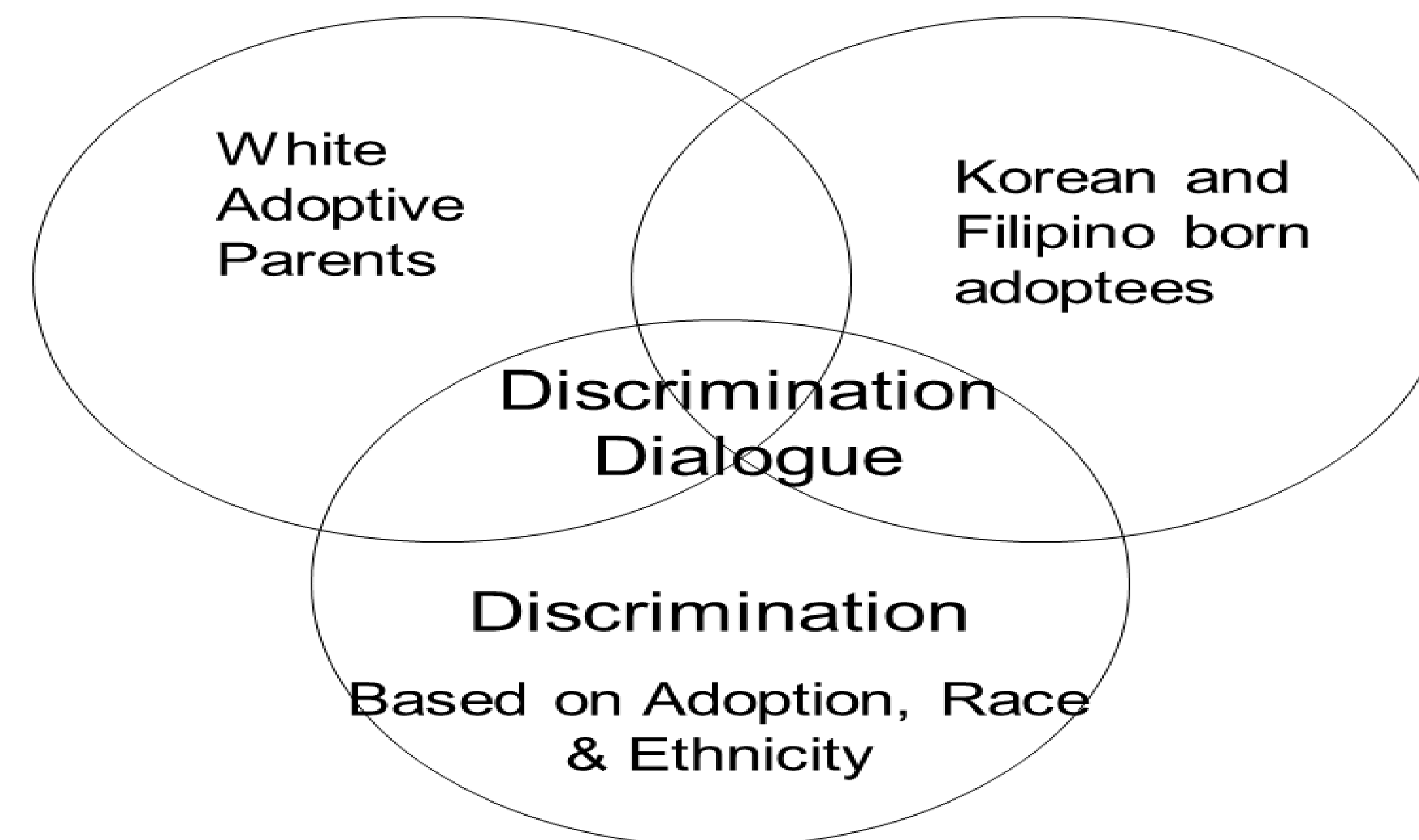
Research Questions

1. Do White adoptive parents of Asian born children talk about issues of race and racism?
2. Do parents feel confident and comfortable in their ability to address race related issues with their children?
3. If parents are not talking to their children about race related issues, why is that?

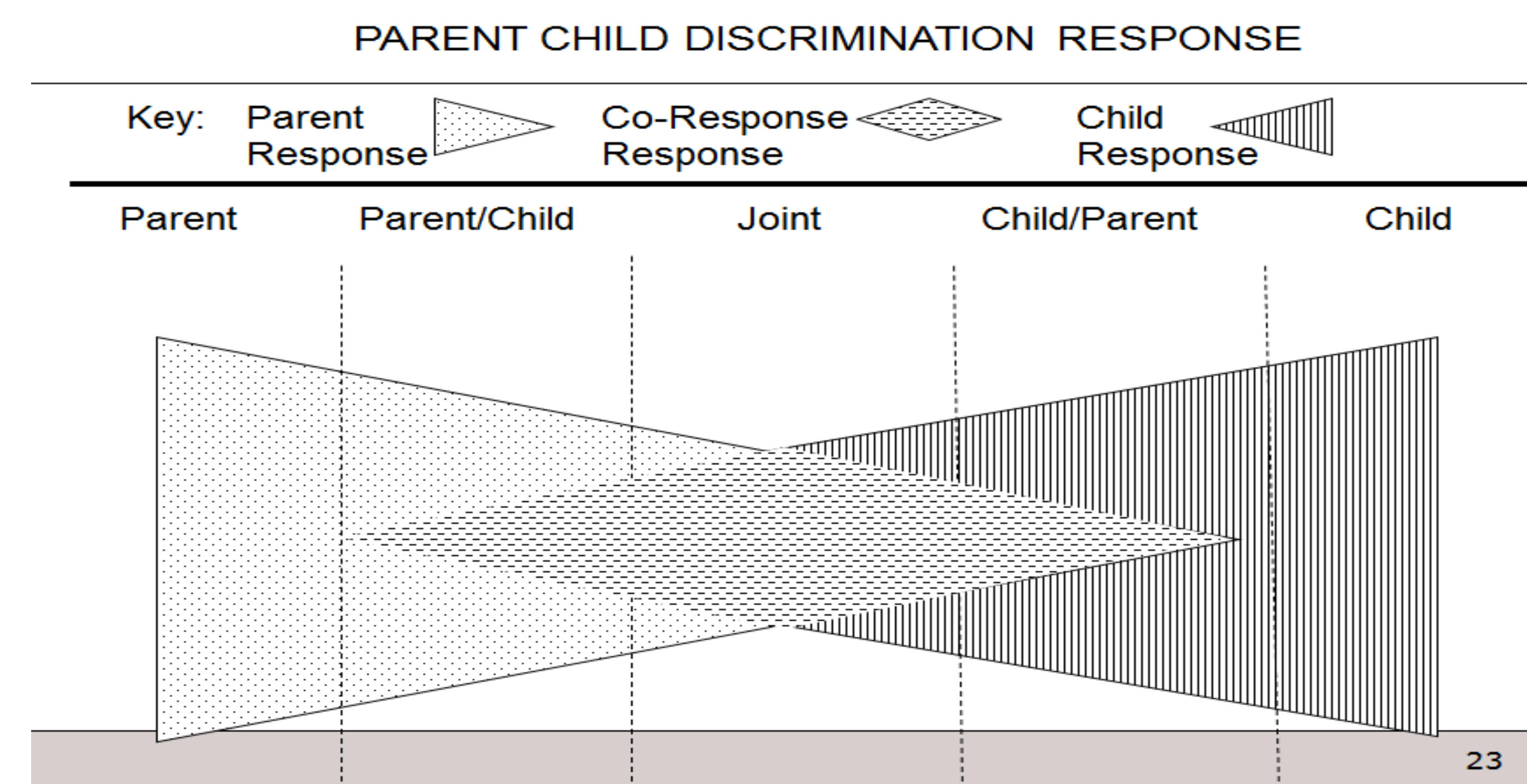
Method

Data for this study were collected using a qualitative interviewing approach which included two interviews with eleven White parents, representing nine families, of Filipino and Korean born adoptees.

Results: Key Players



Results: Discrimination Dialogue Diagram



Results: Key Quotes

Parents

- Extended family – “You can’t ‘joke’ like that”
- Strangers – it could get exhausting
- School – Family Tree exercise

Parent/Child

- “I tried never to be upset with anyone in front of my child.”
- “You have to have a little bit of teflon about it”

Child/Parent

• “The conversation we had that night was so frank. She’s trying to do something about this issue but everything she tries to do just ends up blowing up in her face.”

Via a mother - “Dad told me what to do, he said; smile, say ‘have a nice day’ and walk away!”

Child

- Girls tended to be more assertive than boys in their response; “Stop saying that”
- Boys were less confrontational – “He would act like it was no big deal” or “He always put a good patina on things.”

Results: Summary

The results indicate that before children reached adolescence, they were much more open and willing to share upsetting events with their parents.

Recommendations

- Parents engage in conversations and problem solving about discrimination prior to their child’s teen years.
- Adoption agencies newsletters maintain an ongoing column written by young adult adoptees.
- Post adoption support organizations offer workshops with role playing on how to address discrimination.
- The creation of a qualified corps of volunteers to support transracial adoptive families.

Mentoring Models

