The Impacts and Effects of Transracial Adoption (TRA) on Indigenous Adoptees

INTRODUCTION

- For a great deal of time, hundreds or years to be more exact, Indigenous children have been taken away from their families and communities.
- The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA) was passed to attempt to remedy the situation.
- Since the passing of the Act children are still being removed at an alarming rate and without knowing what the lasting effects and impacts are we as society and agencies will not be able to help the situation.

HOPEs FOR THE RESEARCH

As the research I have pretty big hopes for what this research will mean to the Indigenous communities.
- Research will continue to be done
- Lead to more recruitment of Indigenous foster homes and adoption families
- Drastic changes in policy; federal, ICWA, state and local, and agencies/organizations
- Support groups and more support in general for our Indigenous adoptees
- Open discussion about what adoptees and birth families went through
- Funding for programming

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In review of available literature, I have found many inconsistencies and gaps in data about the emotional and psychological impacts on Indigenous adoptees later on in their life. Moreover, I have discovered gaps in literature on the following related issues: the research on Indigenous family reunification; the well being of Indigenous transracially adopted (TRA) adults; and the intergenerational impact on the children of Indigenous TRA adoptees.

Most of these effects are linked back to an underdeveloped ethnic identity. “Ethnic identity focuses on the psychological implications of an individual’s personal commitment to his or her cultural heritage...research has shown ethnic identity to influence the behavior and psychological functioning for members of all ethnic minority groups” (Padilla, Vargas, & Chavez, 2010). Although few studies have been done on the effects of underdeveloped ethnic identity on TRA children. There was a study done that found that youth with a solid ethnic identity are associated with “refraining from substance use, higher self-esteem, and lower rates of depression...having Caucasian parents made these youth believe they had to choose between opposing identities” (Padilla, Vargas, & Chavez, 2010).

Our Indigenous population is known to face many disparities in the Child Welfare System, from being a minority to facing cultural deprivation and loss of identity. Indigenous youth are placed into white homes more often than other ethnic counterparts, about 80 percent of children (Hogan & Sau-Fong, 1988). Their inadequate protection for the both child and the parents rights (Landers & Danes, 2016).

FIRST NATIONS REPATRIATION INSTITUTE

The Institute focuses on advocacy, uniting, and education of adoptees/fostered individuals, their families, and the communities (homelands and their current location). They connect individuals with professionals, community leaders, other adoptees/fostered individuals and spiritual leaders.

STUDY DESIGN

THE LASTING IMPACTS AND EFFECTS ON INDIGENOUS ADOPTEES

- Not yet been conducted
- There are 4 phases:
  - Adult Adoptees Interviews
  - Adult Adoptees Focus Groups
  - Children of Adoptees Interviews
  - Children of Adoptees Focus Groups
- Sampling: Snowball Effect (by word of mouth and advertising), beginning w/ Sandy White Hawk’s already established support group of adult adoptees
- Methodology:
  - Semi-Structured Interviews @ least an hour
  - Focus Groups @ least an hour
- Analysis: Grounded Theory, by looking at the results of the interviews and the focus groups the research team and I will pick out the patterns and commonalities. Developing a evidence based theory.

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REFERENCES