FAMILY AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION
OF CHILDREN ADOPTED INTERNATIONALLY:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Françoise-Romaine Ouellette and Hélène Belleau
with the collaboration of Caroline Patenaude

INRS-Urbanisation, Culture et Société
Institut national de la recherche scientifique
Université du Québec

FAMILY AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION
OF CHILDREN ADOPTED INTERNATIONALLY:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Françoise-Romaine Ouellette and Hélène Belleau
with the collaboration of Caroline Patenaude

Montréal 2001

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Family and Social Integration of Children
Adopted Internationally: A Review of the Literature
(Françoise-Romaine OUELLETTE and Hélène BELLEAU)

INTRODUCTION

This literature review was carried out following a call for proposals by the Conseil québecois de la recherche sociale[1] (CQRS). It presents a brief survey of the main theoretical studies that approach adoption from the standpoint of "difference," followed by a general synthesis of the existing body of knowledge concerning the well-being of children who have been adopted from abroad, and their integration into their families and into society at large. Its aim is to highlight the main knowledge acquired through social science research that could be useful for gaining a better understanding of intercountry adoption, in terms of three key dimensions of the adoptive identity: (1) the child's development; (2) his or her filiation and family integration; (3) his or her broader social integration.

Current Scale of Intercountry Adoption

Since the 1980s, intercountry adoption has been a growing phenomenon in several Western European and North American societies. In Quebec, it has really gained momentum since 1990, the year a legal and administrative reform took effect that removed the main obstacles which had, until then, impeded applications for adoption. This reform, for example, allowed for psychosocial evaluations to be referred to professionals working in private practice, which has shortened the waiting period, and it clarified the role of accredited agencies acting as intermediaries in dealing with foreign authorities, which has had the effect of increasing their numbers, allowing for the processing of many more applications. Moreover, a door was opened for private contacts to be made in countries authorizing such steps to be taken. Like Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Sweden since the 1970s and 1980s (Gravel and Roberge, 1984; Trillat, 1993), Quebec now has one of the highest intercountry adoption rates in proportion to its overall population, that is to say, close to 900 children per year, for a population of less than 7 million. By way of comparison, just under 3,000 intercountry adoptions were

carried out annually in France in the early 1990s—the numbers have been slightly higher since 1995—while the annual number concluded by Americans reached approximately 10,000. (Mattéi, 1995).[2]

Currently, most adoptions involve infertile couples, but some adoptive parents are couples who already have biological children or who adopt following voluntary sterilization. Still others are single parents (usually women—Ouellette and Frigault, 1996). Most are relatively well-off, as the costs of intercountry adoption are very high. Most of the children being sought for adoption are Asian, but adoptions also involve Native American children, children of mixed race and black children, coming from more than sixty different foreign countries. Quite often, they are already three years of age or older (25 percent of children adopted internationally by Quebeckers between 1990 and 1994, Ouellette and Frigault, 1996). In society as a whole, intercountry adoption is valued both as a strategy for creating or enlarging a family and as a means of protecting children in difficult circumstances. It is often seen as a preferable solution to placing children in foster families or in institutions in the country of origin, because of the measure of stability that it offers, although this point of view is somewhat controversial.

Legal and administrative practices surrounding these adoptions are currently in a phase of adjustment, in connection with *the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption* which was concluded in May 1993 under the aegis of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, with the participation of 66 countries. This convention came into effect on May 1, 1995, was ratified by Canada in December 1996, and took effect on April 1, 1997 in the provinces that had already conformed to the provisions set out (British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan). Quebec, having innovated as early as 1982 with the creation of an official coordinating body, the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale, and having generally acted along the lines proposed by the Hague

---

[2] France and the United States are the two countries currently carrying out the highest number of intercountry adoptions in absolute numbers.

Convention to date, will also officially ratify it as soon as the necessary adjustments have been made.

The Social Pertinence of Research on Intercountry Adoption

In most cases, it appears that the development of internationally adopted children and their adjustment to their new environments turn out well (Bagley and Young, 1981; Barth and Berry, 1988; Linowitz and Boothby, 1988; Bartholet, 1993a, 1993b; Silverman, 1993; Wilkinson 1995), such that intercountry adoption could not be defined as a social problem. This generally positive finding, however, needs to be further qualified through closer investigation. On the one hand, there needs to be recognition of the fact that adoption constitutes, for both the child and for his or her parents, an experience which differs from that of other children and families, in legal, social and psychological terms. On the other hand, it must also be recognized that intercountry adoption usually involves children with physical characteristics which are different from those of their adoptive parents. They are black, Asian or of mixed race and their integration into a white family, in a country with a mostly white population, brings into play the question of ethnic and racial differences. Furthermore, these children have lived their first months or years in a very different socio-cultural environment than that of their adoptive country. Before being adopted, many have already made major gains in terms of culture and language acquisition in their communities of origin. Moreover, while the majority of intercountry adoption experiences turn out well, others unfold painfully, and sometimes end in failure. It is important, therefore, to better understand how these situations might be prevented, or, at least, how best to provide adequate support when they arise.

Many different actors are concerned with gaining a better understanding of the various facets of intercountry adoption. Adoptive parents wonder what strategies should be favoured, within their families and in society in general, to best accommodate these children with respect for their differences. The adjustment and well-being of these children is also an area of great concern for specialists in the field of child protection and

for health-care workers, especially in the case where children are adopted at an older age, where there are deficiencies or problems in development, where a child's physical or mental health is impaired, or where two or more children are adopted at the same time. The increase in intercountry adoption is beginning to have implications for a growing number of public policy-makers, heads of community organizations, and workers in the education, justice and immigration sectors. The need for tools to assist in understanding this reality and in developing suitable approaches to it, is being keenly felt. This is all the more true due to the fact that knowledge in this area remains relatively limited, sketchy and poorly disseminated. It should be added that the evolving body of knowledge about the intercountry adoption experience will likely shed some light, not only on the evolution of adoption itself, but also on that of the family institution taken in a broader sense. It is in response to these types of concerns that this literature review was carried out.

Methodology

The literature on intercountry adoption addresses many different subjects from many different angles, ranging from the analysis of various national legislations, for example, to the selection processes for prospective adoptive parents, or from a discussion on the socio-political issues involved, to the psychological evaluation of the children concerned. Within the scope of the present literature review, the bibliographic search was restricted to the human and social sciences, as well as to documents published since 1985 dealing directly with the question of the adjustment and integration of adopted children into their adoptive environments.

As a first step, the main computerized bibliographic reference databases were consulted in order to draw up the most exhaustive list possible of papers published between 1985 and 1997. These were: *Current Contents Search*, *Dissertation Abstracts Ondisc*, *Francis*, *Sociofile*, *Social Sciences Index*, *Social Work Abstracts Plus* and *Psychit (Psychological Abstracts).* We also consulted university thesis and dissertation indexes, as well as a certain number of non-computerized reference databases. These were: *Point*

de repère, *Index des périodiques canadiens*, *Humanities Index* and *Anthropological Abstract*. Very recent and not yet indexed issues of main academic journals that were likely to contain research papers on the subject were skimmed through one by one. From this first list of almost 600 titles, which were recorded using Pro-Cite software, we made a selection of research papers, books and other documents that focused more specifically on the adjustment and integration of intercountry-adopted children into their adoptive families and communities. Only titles in French and English were retained. However, as important contributions to the research on intercountry adoption have been made in the Netherlands and Scandinavia, we made sure to track down research papers, written in English, that reviewed this work as well.

To this bibliography, we added some research papers with limited circulation, some association publications and other pertinent but unpublished documents not appearing in bibliographic databases. These titles were often found through contacts with other researchers and people involved in the area of adoption, in Quebec, Canada, and France. During the course of analyzing and writing up material, new titles were again discovered, and these were taken into consideration each time they were pertinent.

Lastly, as it quickly became apparent that it would be important to consider work dealing with intercountry adoption in the light of theoretical analyses of adoption in general and on interracial adoption, a few other titles were retained that we considered to have significant reference value on these subjects.

Contrary to our original plan, we did not consider publications aimed at popularizing the subject for the general public. The interest of these publications lies in the factual information they provide, the social attitudes they convey, the points of view they express. However, they proved to be too numerous. An analysis of this body of work would constitute a large-scale research project in its own right.

Once this bibliographic search had been completed, a reference database was put together containing more than 200 titles which were directly pertinent to our subject.

Among these references, 125 were then studied in detail using a grid comprised of the following headings: issue discussed; objectives; analytical framework; methodology; main results; conclusions, key words; main works cited, particular comments. Three types of information emerged: (a) the empirical knowledge generated; (b) the theoretical approaches favoured and avenues of reflection identified; (c) the research methodologies used and their application limits. The present document presents an analytical synthesis of the works surveyed, accompanied by an annotated bibliography and a table summarizing the main empirical research and clinical analysis identified.

The annotated bibliography of titles surveyed (Annex I) includes, in most cases, a brief commentary indicating the content of the research paper or book and, in some cases, a brief summary of the method used and the results. This bibliography includes all titles cited in the following text, including those that focus on adoption in general and not specifically on intercountry adoption.

The summary table of empirical or clinical research published since 1985 (Annex II) was drawn up by selecting a single reference for each research, either the most complete paper or, in some cases, the most recent. It specifies the receiving countries of the adopted children concerned and the main countries of origin, the composition of the study group or sample (the number of adopted and non-adopted children, the number of parents and families), the age of the adopteees at the time of adoption and at the time the study was done and, lastly, the type of approach used (objectives, method, etc.).

The text of the literature review as such consists of an analytical synthesis outlining our understanding of the present body of knowledge on the integration of internationally adopted children. It is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 deals with adoption in general, from a more theoretical than descriptive point of view, looking at adoption in terms of "difference." Its aim is to give perspective to the different approaches to the question presented in the chapters that follow, which deal solely with research studies published since 1985 on the adjustment and integration of internationally adopted children. Chapter 2 gives an overall view of this literature, pointing out its main

strengths and its limits. The other chapters successively approach the issue from three different angles. Chapter 3 deals with adopted children from the standpoint of their particular situation: their characteristics, development and adjustment at school. Chapter 4 talks about the child's integration into his or her adoptive family and the practices which come into play in this process. Chapter 5 deals with the question of the child's origins and his or her ethnic or "racial" identity. The conclusion highlights the directions most research is currently taking and indicates avenues to be explored.

CHAPTER 1

Adoption and the Issue of "Difference"

To date, the main body of academic research that has advanced theoretical knowledge on the adjustment of adopted children has dealt mostly with adoption in general or adoptions carried out within a single country, which, depending on the author, are called domestic, local, national or internal adoptions. These studies do not, therefore, focus on cases where the child is of a different ethnic or cultural background from that of his or her adoptive parents, with the exception of a group of studies on transracial adoptions which we will address later. Nevertheless, these studies see "difference" as the central issue in all adoptions, one that must be considered if we are to understand the individual, family and social dimensions of adoption. We will outline the main themes of these theoretical contributions, with the belief that empirical knowledge on intercountry adoption can only fully gain meaning and significance when put into perspective within a more global study of adoption.

The issue of "difference" in adoption has been examined mainly from the following angles: the personal experience of loss and mourning, kinship, origins and, lastly, ethno-cultural identity. These complementary angles bring into focus the inescapable fact that the adoptive relationship is always evaluated in terms of how closely it approximates the cultural ideal of a family, composed of a heterosexual couple and the children born to them. In fact, adoption in itself does not challenge this family norm. Rather, it is its echo, its mirror-image (Modell, 1994). Until recently, starting with the first modern laws on adoption that were introduced around the 1920s, the adoptive family was seen as having to maintain a resemblance to or to define its identity in terms of the biological family. Moreover, the legal form of adoption which has been favoured in the West has been that of full adoption, which assigns the child a new family and a new birth certificate, as if no previous parent-child relationship had ever existed, and which grants adoptive parents exclusive parental status.[3] It is important to highlight this principle of

---

[3] In Quebec, Canada, the United States, and several other Western countries, adoption is necessarily full adoption. Some countries, such as France and Belgium, also have a limited (or simple) adoption by which

exclusivity which governs our adoption practices, because it explains many of the particular characteristics of adoption as experienced by the people concerned (Ouellette, 1996c, 1998).

1.1   The Experience of Loss and Mourning

Given its cultural and legal framework, adoption implies loss for all members of the triangle involved: birth parents, adoptive parents and the adopted child. This theme of loss is elaborated upon most particularly in the psychological literature, which is interested in the emotional state of people, their self-esteem, and their sense of belonging. It is also very important for experts in social work, who strive to identify the major factors contributing to successful adoptions in order to infer from them the criteria that should be applied in selecting prospective adoptive parents. It is important as well, in a general way, for authors interested in the subjective points of view of the family actors involved.

The loss caused by adoption is most often defined as the loss of blood ties that normally connect a child to his or her parents and which have social and symbolic significance. This loss, however, is also the loss caused by the disruption of the first attachment relationship and the base of security that this bond normally provides for a child's development.

1.1.1 The Social and Symbolic Loss of Blood Ties Between Parents and Child

A woman who gives her child up for adoption does so at the cost of loosing forever her emotional, legal and symbolic ties with this child, as well as her parental status. Not to be overlooked are also the many losses associated with the guilt caused by this act of relinquishment, which stands in stark contrast to our ideal of maternal feelings that are naturally spontaneous and unfailing. Adopters fulfill their desire to have a child

---

the previous parent-child relationship continues to exist. It is a recourse particularly in the case of children who are adopted at an older age or where adoptees are adults.

and succeed in carrying out their plans for having a family, but they too must come to terms with the experience of loss. In fact, the cultural images of femininity, masculinity and family which are projected in our society closely associate adult maturity with fertility and procreation. Infertility and the need to turn to adoption to start a family can therefore constitute a wound to one's self love, cause feelings of guilt and failure and become a source of social stigma (Kirk, 1984; Miall, 1987). Furthermore, even for fertile adoptive parents who already have children and who voluntarily choose adoption rather than procreation, the absence of blood ties with their adopted child entails a dimension of loss as well, linked to feeling less legitimate as parents, for example, or to being unable to find answers to questions that arise concerning the child's origins (Kirk, 1985). While their difficulties may be similar to those experienced by all families, it is not unusual to see them interpreted as being specific to adoption, with the effect of making their parental status more fragile (Rault, 1996). Most authors agree that adoptive parents must come to terms with their own grief over the loss of biological kinship as a necessary condition for being able to properly accommodate an adopted child. This idea, moreover, is at the heart of the psychosocial evaluation of adoption applicants.

Despite these considerations, the social discourse on adoption often puts less emphasis on the various losses suffered by birth parents and adoptive parents than on their involvement in a gift-giving relationship with the child: the gift of the mother who agrees to be separated from her child so that he or she may be better cared for by others, and the gift of love and of a family offered by the adopters. The adopted child, then, is often defined as the receiver of altruistic gifts made for his or her benefit (Ouellette, 1995, 1996b). On an emotional level, however, and in terms of identity, this child must also come to terms with various losses: the loss of his or her biological parents and of his or her origins, the loss of a feeling of stability and genealogical continuity, and the loss of status that comes with being "different," with not having been wanted, with having been given up.

All of these losses are said to be a source of potential stress and emotional vulnerability, even for children who are adopted at a very young age, for whom they can

show up in subtle ways as the children grow up and begin to understand the implications of their adopted status. These losses can translate into potential behavioural problems and can increase the child's vulnerability to other pathogenic experiences (Brodzinsky, 1987). They can underlie, throughout the adopted child's life, a fear that they will be repeated, the fear of losing loved ones or of being deserted by them (Bowlby, 1980). They can be that much more intense when an adopted child feels that his or her individuality is not recognized by the adoptive parents, as if he or she had simply come to repair deficiencies in their lives (Schechter and Bertocci, 1990). They are very closely related to the need that some adopted children feel to track down their origins.

1.1.2 Disruption of the First Attachment Relationship

While children under the age of six have traditionally been perceived as being able to adapt without difficulty to a new family environment, as being able to "change in nature easily" (translation) (Collard, 1988), it is now acknowledged that, on the contrary, all of a child's first life experiences have a lasting and impressionable impact. Thus, several studies on adoption refer to the attachment theory whereby the quality of a baby's relationship with his or her mother (or any other person who takes care of the baby and interacts with him or her) influences this child's emotional development, self-esteem and the quality of other relationships that he or she will later enter into (Bowlby, 1980). In effect, the feelings of emotional security acquired through the relationship with the mother during early childhood support the capacity to create new ties that are satisfying later on.

Infants that are adopted in the days or weeks following birth can develop the same attachment relationship with their new parents as biological children. However, children that are neglected, mistreated or placed in institutional care during the first two years of life are at risk of suffering long-term effects from the insecurity and lack of affection inherent in this situation. The older the child, and the more often he or she has been uprooted, the greater the chances that the process of forming attachments to the new family will be difficult (Golombok, 1994). This child will therefore be more likely to

have adjustment problems related, for example, to a prolonged lack of care and stimulation, to repeated separations, or to negligence or mistreatment (Brodzinsky, 1993). Some cases where adoption ends in failure are caused by these kinds of problems (Barth and Berry, 1988).

Children who have been separated from a mother figure between the ages of six months and four years apparently suffer the most severe shock (Quinton and Rutter, 1976; Steinhauer, 1996). These preschool-aged children are conscious of the separation without being able to understand or verbalize it. Their grieving period is sometimes long and can be complicated by a change in language environment. For children who are separated at an older age from an attachment figure, the experience is traumatizing. They experience major and obvious emotional distress. The outward signs of the grief caused by this separation, however, vary considerably from one child to another.

American psychoanalyst Marshall Schechter (1997) suggests that the psychological mechanisms of attachment develop from an initially physiological process rooted in the central nervous system. The bonding process may therefore be affected by genetic factors, by intra-uterine life or by experiences encountered in the first days and weeks after birth. An infant can distinguish certain visual, vocal, and olfactory features of its mother as early as the first weeks of life, while parents depend on biological affinities with their infant to recognize, on an unconscious or preconscious level, its reactions, tensions and needs. As a consequence, Schechter suggests facilitating attachment to the adoptive family by using all possible means to find out as much as possible about the child's background, including such factors as health, heredity, and family, and also to reproduce in the infant's new environment some of the elements, such as food, music or movement, that marked its intra-uterine life and the first days following its birth.

1.1.3 The Psychological Reactions of the Adopted Child[4]

Allowing for exceptions, most adopted children progress normally through the various stages of identity formation, from earliest childhood to adulthood (Hoopes, 1990). Nevertheless, at certain points along the way, the adoption can become an important dimension of their inner life and it is the feeling of loss that affects them the most. This loss appears to be more problematic than the loss felt subsequent to divorce or the death of a parent, but it is acknowledged to a much lesser degree by those around him or her (Brodzinsky *et al.*, 1992).

The child's explicit reactions to the loss suffered depends on his or her cognitive development (Brodzinsky, 1990). Hence, preschool-aged children view their adoption as positive when it is revealed to them in a warm and affectionate environment. They do not, however, understand what it means to be adopted until the age of six or seven. At this time, they become more analytical, introspective and logical. They can now differentiate between birth and adoption and can acknowledge the fact that they were given up and assess what the absence of biological ties with the rest of their family implies. It is more around the age of eight, then, that a child may begin to show ambivalent reactions to the adoption. An increase in aggressive and oppositional behaviour, depression or problems with communication or self-image can, at this age, be a manifestation of an adaptive grieving process. In adolescence, the development of higher cognitive functions leads to another re-evaluation of this loss, as part of the process of identity formation. At this age, the child becomes aware of the loss of genealogical ties in addition to the loss of his or her biological parents.

Therefore, it is important to take into account the age of adopted children when analyzing their adjustment strategies. Younger children focus on the problem they perceive by actively seeking information, a listening ear or support. As they grow up,

---

[4] We frequently refer, here and elsewhere in this chapter, to the collective work entitled *The Psychology of Adoption* (Brodzinsky *et al.* 1990), which, as it brings together some of the most respected American experts in the field, constitutes a major synthesis of the central themes of adoption in psychology. There is

they look instead to come to terms with their emotional distress through emotional and cognitive responses aimed at putting their situation in a less threatening light, or by resorting to strategies of denial or avoidance. Most of these children appear to adjust well to their particular situation. They may re-experience episodes of grief at different times throughout their lives, particularly during crises or major transitions, such as marriage, birth, or the death of a parent.

The most important interrelated personal variables that influence adjustment are: self-esteem, the sense of personal competence and control, the degree to which the child feels secure, and the degree of involvement in the family. When there are weaknesses with regard to these variables, children make a more negative assessment of their situation and develop strategies which are less satisfying, such as withdrawal, depression, projecting the blame on their biological and adoptive parents and externalizing conflicts through anger, aggressive behaviour, theft or lies. A small number of these children are eventually led to seek psychiatric assistance, in particular those exhibiting disruptive behaviour or who express intense rage.

Children who consult in clinics are more likely to have behavioural problems, low self-esteem and learning difficulties (Brodzinsky, 1990). In the United States, adopted children make up 2 percent of the population of children (Zill, 1985, cited by Brodzinsky *et al*., 1992), but they represent between 4 percent and 5 percent of children in outpatient mental health clinics and between 10 percent and 15 percent of children in residential care facilities (Kadushin, 1980). Empirical research done on the basis of non-clinical samples indicate that there are no differences between adopted and non-adopted children when it comes to personality or behaviour, but that adopted children appear to have more emotional or academic problems (Brodzinsky *et al*., 1984; Hoopes, 1990). Some authors wonder, however, about the biological dimensions of the problems for which adopted children consult. Perhaps their biological parents were themselves antisocial or depressive, for example. Prenatal factors can affect their development, but these are

no equivalent synthesis from the point of view of any other discipline with regard to full adoption as it applies in North America.

rarely taken into account, especially since excesses in eugenics on the part of partisans of heredity theories have greatly discredited attempts at applying biological explanations to human behaviours. Examples of these factors are maternal stress and malnutrition during pregnancy, the absence of adequate medical care or the exposure of the foetus to alcohol, drugs or other pathogenic substances. Some characteristics of clinical populations of adopted children could thus be related to biological factors rather than to psychological conflicts brought about by the adoption as is asserted by most attempts at explanation (Cadoret, 1990).

1.2   *Recognizing the Difference Between Biological and Adoptive Kinship*

In order to gain an understanding of the dynamics of the personal path of adjustment following adoption, it is important to take into account the cultural context and social representations that differenciate biological and adoptive kinship and create conflicting social messages for adopted children and their parents. This current of thought was most specifically initiated by the Canadian sociologist, David Kirk (1984, 1985), who has had considerable influence on the evolution of research in this area. In his book, entitled *Shared Fate*, which first appeared in 1964, Kirk emphasizes that adoptive parents are faced with potentially conflicting demands (Kirk, 1984). They must create for this child a solid basis for integration, an unconditional family anchor, but, at the same time, they must reveal to the child that they are not his or her birth parents, that he or she was born to another couple. The strategies they use to deal with this dilemma are rooted in an acknowledgement/rejection dynamic concerning the difference between adoptive kinship and biological kinship.

In relation to others, parents that adopt a *rejection-of-difference* approach try as much as possible to resemble a biological family, for example, in the appearance, number and spacing of children. In relation to the adopted child, they minimize or ignore his or her origins and the circumstances of the adoption, developing instead the theme of the "chosen" child. As for themselves, they maintain a myth concerning how the adoptive relationship came about, involving, for example, the will of God, or fate. According to

Kirk, however, an *open acknowledgement-of-difference* between biological and adoptive kinship is an essential condition for healthy communication in the family and for developing ties that are both stable and dynamic between the parents and the child or children. Adoptive parents are thus placed in a better position to understand their children, to hear their questions about the circumstances of their birth and relinquishment and to react with empathy for the suffering caused by the loss of their birth parents. Thus, they allow these children to gain the sense of confidence and security necessary for their development.

In practice, adoptive parents often appear to have an ambivalent attitude, conveying both acknowledgement and rejection of difference simultaneously. In fact, being open about adoption introduces the idea of a double kinship affiliation. This can create insecurity for the parents who then fall back on reasserting their exclusive status.

As emotional bonding constitutes the main criterion for defining parenthood and family, these parents conceive of their experience as being above all a process of normalizing their emotional ties with their child, based on the model of intense attachment that is supposed to characterize biological families (Hoffmann-Riem, 1986; Ouellette and Méthot, 1996). Once they have attained this feeling, which can happen almost instantly in the case of a small baby, but which can take years in the case of an older child, the difference between adoption and birth no longer seems pertinent because everything is unfolding "as if" the child had been born to them. The relief of having become a "real" family can then lead to a tendency to deny the other differences between biological and adoptive kinship (Hoffman-Riem, 1986).

Many adoptive parents express their feelings of normality by resorting to metaphors that compare adoption to birth, or awaiting the child to pregnancy. Just as often, on the other hand, adoptive parents find themselves questioning the biological dimensions of motherhood. They might emphasize instead the symmetry of the feminine and masculine roles in the adoption process, speaking, for example, of "both parents giving birth together" (translation) (Ouellette, 1994), and focus on the equality of all

parents, whether they be biological or adoptive. Several adoptive parents also strive to disassociate motherhood from biology so as to dismiss the idea of a mother-child relationship prior to adoption. They agree to talk with the child about the fact that he or she was born to "another woman" but firmly resist speaking about her as a "mother" (Hoffman-Riem, 1989). The idea that this person is simply a genetrix and that the child is related to her in no other way than on a purely biological level challenges our cultural conceptions of motherhood and kinship (Ouellette, 1996).

The dynamic of acknowledgement/rejection of difference has been explored by several experts in the psychology of adoption. It has been shown that the experiences following adoption can be just as important a determining factor in the child's adjustment, if not a more important one, than his or her personal characteristics, past experiences or possible pathologies. Thus, the parents' acceptance of and satisfaction in their adoptive parenthood, as well as a warm and accepting attitude toward their child, have been identified as generally predictive of a positive adjustment (Kadushin, 1980; Hoopes, 1982). Indeed, the well-being of the child is influenced by the parents' reaction to his or her curiosity, to the need to be informed and to be supported in the development of a positive self-image (Brodzinsky *et al.,* 1987, 1988). Nevertheless, the idea of a continuum of attitudes and communication behaviours between the poles of acknowledgement and rejection of difference has been criticized. Brodzinsky (1990) suggests instead a curvilinear model in which both extremes *(*insistence-on-difference or denial-of-difference) are equally associated with poor adjustment on the part of children. He also highlights that rejection-of-difference can, temporarily, have a positive effect on the building of family unity when the children are still young. Kaye (1990) suggests that, in the present-day context where adoption is talked about more openly, the quality of intra-family communication is probably no longer based to the same extent on acknowledgement or rejection of difference. Hence, the fact of denial could simply be due to the absence of negative experiences. Rather than a dynamic of opposition between acknowledgement and rejection of difference, he perceives in the discourse of adoptive parents and their adolescent children higher and lower levels of distinguishing, with a moderate recognition of difference corresponding to better adjustment. He emphasizes

the lack of social and professional support given the adoptive family once the child has been placed. This does not contribute positively to the recognition of the adoptive family's unique situation or to communication on the subject (see also Kirk and McDaniel, 1984).

The lack of institutional support for adoptive parents has certainly contributed to reinforcing rejection-of-difference strategies. In fact, our society does not offer adoptive parents any models, standards or social sanctions, be they positive or negative, adapted to their particular situation, and to which they can refer while carrying out their parental role (Kirk, 1985). This role is defined in no other way than with reference to the role of all other parents, and this constitutes an implicit pressure to minimize or play down the significance of the distinct nature of the adoptive situation.

Over recent decades, the predominant importance placed on the emotional life of families has contributed to the fact that less emphasis is placed on the difference between biological and adoptive kinship, importance being placed instead on all parent-child ties based on an authentic and reflexive parental project. Thus, adoptive and biological kinships are not considered to be different because the feelings are the same, no matter how the family was formed. In this way, the feelings of loss are not taken into consideration. Moreover, adoption is seen more and more as an elective family model which is currently valued, and no longer as a departure from the norm (Ouellette, 1996c). Hence, according to Miall (1996), the Canadian population considers that family functioning and the parents' involvement in raising their children are the determining factors in the development of strong ties, whether the family is biological or adoptive. This author suggests, therefore, that it is no longer appropriate to conceive of the absence of biological ties as being a determining factor in the experience of adoptive families. This recent evolution in family values has allowed for a profound transformation of the practices of adoption, favouring a diversification of the categories of adoptable children and changing our reading of the issues at play.

1.3. *Origins*

Traditionally, adoption was kept as secret as possible and adoptive parents often did not inform their children about it. The children learned about their adoption accidentally or through a third party, sometimes only after they had already become adults. During the 1970s, warnings from experts against the harmful effects of keeping secrets about family relationships and, especially, pressure exerted by groups representing adopted children and biological parents who had consented to giving up their children for adoption brought about a growing recognition of the right of each person to know about his or her parents and identity of origin. Hence, rules regarding the confidentiality of adoption files were softened to a certain degree (Schechter and Bertocci, 1990). Moreover, adoptees now have free access to their own files in England, Scotland, Finland, Israel and Sweden. However, information allowing for the identification of birth parents and the specific circumstances surrounding the birth and relinquishment are still most often kept confidential, as is the case, for example, in Canada, the United States, France and Australia. In Quebec, once an adoptee reaches the age of fourteen, he or she can gain access to non-identifying information concerning his or her background, but the identity of birth parents remains dependent on their consent, in the case where it is possible to track them down. A growing number of "open" adoptions are being permitted, in which biological and adoptive parents can enter into direct contact and sometimes take on a "moral" commitment to maintain contact by exchanging letters every year, photographs or even visits (Goubau and Beaudoin, 1996).

It is within this new context of relative openness that intercountry adoption has grown and it, in turn, has had the effect of reinforcing this openness. In effect, the foreign birth of the internationally adopted child is more often obvious, and this eliminates any attempt at hiding the truth. Furthermore, adoptive parents can sometimes meet the birth parents and, in some cases, maintain contact with them. All the same, information regarding the family and the child's past usually remains incomplete. Hence, a high proportion (about 30 percent, Ouellette and Frigault, 1996) of children adopted by Quebeckers since 1990 have been young girls born in the People's Republic of China,

about whose background little is known. Moreover, the birth family ties are always erased by our legal adoption process, even in the case of older children who have known their parents, grandparents, sisters and brothers, uncles, etc., and of children who are adopted in countries where legislation does not provide for the severing of ties preceding adoption.

The current interest in open adoption indicates that some adopters can envision the coexistence for their child of two family references, those of birth and those of adoption, each having different legal, symbolic and social implications. Also, the phenomenon of reconstructed families following divorce has fostered recognition of multiple family ties. However, full adoption, as favoured in Western countries, supports instead the opposite idea that exclusivity of the parent-child relationship is necessary, and the social discourse that accompanies it tends to play down the significance of the loss experienced by the adopted child, who gains a new filiation and a new family at the cost of a definitive severing of ties with his or her birth family (Delaisi and Verdier, 1994; Daubigny, 1995; Ouellette, 1996c, 1998). Is the elimination of birth ties inevitable, and does it really protect the interest of the child? This question is all the more pertinent given that other legal forms of adoption or stable care arrangements for children exist or could be explored, such as limited adoption, which creates a new filiation without severing the previous one or requiring that the initial family name be left behind. Moreover, in several societies, contrary to what is generally thought, families commonly take in abandoned children, or children whose parents are sick or have died, without ever trying to imitate a birth relationship with the child or exclude the birth family from the process of the child's identity formation or when determining his or her genealogical ties or network of belonging (Lallemand, 1993)[5] In Quebec, permanent family placements that were carried out before there was any legislation governing such practices did not always negate the birth ties, and this did not prevent the children from being fully assimilated into the families that took them in.

---

[5] Lallemand (1993) reviewed the various forms of transferring children from one family to another that are practised around the world, in an anthropological perspective that highlights the links that can be established between these practices and matrimonial exchange, the exchange of goods, and the passing on of family identity and lineage.

Ouellette (1995, 1996c) emphasizes the paradoxical situation that is created for the child who is assigned exclusively adoptive kinship in a society where blood ties are seen as indissoluble bonds of love and solidarity. She points out that the main social actors involved in adoption have two main strategies for dealing with this paradox. The first consists in articulating a view of the parent-child relationship that puts it outside of the domain of kinship, speaking of it in terms of individual rights and defining the child as a minor in need of protection rather than as a son or daughter in a kinship line. One the most eloquent examples of this is the legal and administrative approach taken up by social services, which defines the adoption of older children, who have two parents, as a way of protecting their rights and their better interest. The other strategy identified is that of the social discourse which speaks of biological ties as preceding adoptive ones or as being external to them, treating biological ties as just one part of the particular history of the child, and "not a component of the child's current identity" (translation) (Ouellette, 1996c: 73). Hence, for example, converted into a question of origins, the original filiation takes the form of documents, photographs and other souvenirs kept by the parents to be shown to the child. Birth ties are recognized in these records of adoption but are de-activated, objectivized. They become a set of leads upon which to build a personal history.

1.4. "Racial," Ethnic, or Cultural Difference

In some social discourse, the fact that the adoptive family has finally been accepted as being equal to others has tended to disqualify the idea that the difference between biological and adoptive kinship should be recognized. It may be noted, however, that this difference is transferred to the child himself or herself, as favoured by the predominance of adoptions where a different ethnic or cultural background, different skin colour or other differences in appearance between the adopted child and his or her adoptive environment come into play. This is the case in the great majority of current intercountry adoptions, with the exception of those involving children from Eastern Europe. Analysis of these adoptions has been heavily influenced by the lively debates that began in the 1960s, especially in England (Gaber and Albridge, 1994) and in the

United States (Tizard, 1991), concerning the domestic adoption of black,[6] Hispanic or Asian children by white parents, but also in Canada (Sachdev, 1984) concerning Amerindian and Inuit children.

Opponents of interracial adoption are of the opinion that it is neither in the interests of the children, who, they feel, are liable to experience identity problems throughout their development and be ill-prepared by their white parents to deal with racism and discrimination, nor in the interests of their birth community which is thus dispossessed of part of its young generation. In support of this position, the *National Association of Black Social Workers* (NABSW) has succeeded to a large extent in reducing the number of interracial adoptions in the United States during the last thirty years. Since 1994, however, the *Multiethnic Placement Act* has required that American social service agencies quickly find adoptive parents for any abandoned child, condemning any delay caused by the search for candidates of the same "race." In fact, research that has been done on the adjustment of transracially adopted children indicate that they do not experience any particular emotional or social problems. They are comfortable with their racial identity, feel that they are an integral part of their adoptive families and plan to maintain strong ties with their parents and siblings (Simon, Altstein and Melli, 1994). Most are confronted, at some time or other, with hostile or discriminatory behaviour (this is especially true for black children, and to a lesser degree for Asian or Latin American children), but in the majority of cases, they do not consider this to be a source of difficulties (Silverman, 1993). The problems identified among these children are mostly related to their pre-placement experiences, such as being uprooted frequently and the attachment problems this creates, or to the fact that they were adopted at an older age (Feigelman and Silverman, 1990; Golombok, 1994). Failures are no more common in intercountry adoption than in other types of adoption, and, furthermore, they do not appear to be related to the "race" or sex of the adoptee, the number of children adopted by the same family or the characteristics of the adoptive parents, be they religion, race, marital status or the duration of the marriage, schooling or income (Barth and Berry,

---

[6] In the discourse surrounding the racialization of identity, the category of people said to be "black" is very extensive and includes people of mixed race, no matter what shade of skin they may have.

1988). Lengthy temporary placement in institutional care or in a foster family constitutes a much greater risk for the child than transracial adoption. On the other hand, Bagley (1991) makes a very negative assessment of the adoption of native children in Canada.

In transracial adoption, "difference" is thought of as referring to physical appearance and ethno-cultural background, seen as the child's individual distinctive characteristics. The acknowledgement/rejection dynamic regarding differences, then, concerns these distinguishing features rather than the family dynamic associated with a shared feeling of loss and the grieving process that needs to be facilitated. In terms of intervention, it is less the capacity for empathetic communication on the part of the parents which is solicited than their sensitivity to the issues of equality and ethno-cultural diversity. Most children who have been transracially adopted appear to have a very positive racial identity, but the strength of this identity depends largely on the involvement of the adoptive parents (Silverman, 1993). Some researchers mention that adoptive parents and the children they adopted in the 1960s and 1970s make no reference whatsoever to ethno-racial differences, which seems to indicate that they have a tendency to conceal it rather than to recognize it and make room for it in the family dynamic and in the child's socialization (in Canada, Westhues and Cohen 1995; in the United States, Simon and Altstein 1977; in Britain, Bagley and Young 1981). Others stress that some advocates of transracial adoption push their argumentation to the point of "colour blindness" (Cohen, 1994). Thus, Bartholet (1993a, 1993b) calls for the quick adoption of homeless children, radically opposing that preference be given to adoptive parents of the same "race" as the child. She thus excludes the nuances that others lend to the discussion by recognizing that identity formation based on "race" must not be favoured, but that it can create an added difficulty in the adjustment process of a black child adopted into a white family.

Just as for the difference between biological and adoptive kinship, too great an insistence on or denial of racial or ethno-cultural difference can become a major roadblock for those who have to take on an adoptive identity. Too great an insistence can lead to rejection, or conversely, exaltation of mixed-race families, whereas denial can

lead to colour-blindness. This situation is all the more problematic for transracial adoptees because it is the subject of sometimes virulent political and ideological debate. The challenge is to acknowledge a social difference rooted in biology without assigning more importance to it than to the adoptive ties, but without excessively minimizing its significance either.

Conclusion

Intercountry adoptees are no exception when it comes to the issues affecting adopted children. They also must come to terms with the experience of loss and mourning that the permanent severing of ties with their parents of origin inevitably implies, to which is added the loss of their cultural background, a loss which is necessarily more pronounced for children who are no longer infants. Based on the communication dynamic that gets established within their adoptive families, they also learn to come to an understanding of who they are, of their past and what they have experienced. Those whose parents are less open about their own infertility and their status as adoptive parents, as well as about the existence of the child's biological mother, are probably less likely to feel comfortable with the questions that haunt them concerning their origins. They often end up feeling the difference of their physical appearance or their ethno-cultural background more than the difference of the family situation they share with their parents. Thus, they are referred back to their individuality or, conversely, to their belonging to a very broad ethno-cultural community.

These psychological, psychosociological and anthropological considerations on the issue of difference in adoption are not always explicitly taken into account in research on intercountry adoption, which is, in fact, mostly descriptive. Nevertheless, they are in the background of most of the questions brought up by the researchers and should guide any reading and interpretation of their results. This is why we decided that a detour through the literature on adoption in general was necessary before embarking upon the presentation of recent studies focusing specifically on the integration of intercountry-adopted children.

CHAPTER 2

Research on the Integration of Intercountry-Adopted Children:

An Overview of the Literature Reviewed

This chapter provides an overview of the body of work that we have examined on the integration of intercountry-adopted children. It includes several categories of documents of varying interest. Our main source of data is, of course, publications which report research results, since they are specifically oriented towards the production of new knowledge and their results or main conclusions can be briefly recorded. A distinction will be made between, on the one hand, literature reviews and collective works, and, on the other, empirical or clinical studies.

Apart from actual research publications, the other categories of documents consulted, although less directly or obviously relevant for us, are nevertheless significant:

_ analyses of a particular aspect of intercountry adoption (e.g., ethnic identity or late adoption);

_ statistical or sociological profiles of populations of intercountry-adopted children and their adoptive parents;

_ assessments of the situation regarding intercountry adoption in some countries;

_ examinations of intervention with foreign adoptees or their parents;

_ descriptions of actual experiences by authors who have been personally and/or professionally involved in intercountry adoption.

The examination of these studies was, in some cases, a determining factor in enabling us to grasp the numerous dimensions of this subject, understand their linkages and develop a critical view of the entire body of work consulted. Some studies contain an in-depth analysis of intercountry adoption based on theoretical considerations which relate it to other important issues such as attachment, psychological structuring, filiation and identity. Other studies are more factual and less directly relevant, focusing less on the child's integration and more on the adoption procedures, the legal and administrative

challenges or the adopters' point of view. They nevertheless help to enrich our understanding of the context.

The pages that follow do not present all these categories of documents in detail. Rather, they target research publications only, which are not only the most numerous, but also the most important for the purposes of this review. After a brief survey of the literature reviews and collective works, we will describe in more detail the main characteristics of empirical or clinical studies. We will end this chapter by highlighting, as several other authors have done, a number of political and ideological standpoints that may colour the works reviewed.

2.1   *Literature Reviews and Collective Works*

A number of reviews of empirical research on intercountry adoption in certain countries that were produced in the early 1990s provide indirect access to the body of knowledge accumulated since the 1970s. They focus on European countries where, long before Quebec, other Canadian provinces and France, there has been a great influx of children of foreign origin: Hoksbergen (1991, 1997) on the Netherlands, McRoy (1991) on the United States, Textor (1991) on West Germany, Tizard (1991) on Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark, and Triseliotis (1991) on Britain as well as Norway, Canada and the United States. Westhues and Cohen's (1995) research report on intercountry adoption in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia (Canada) also includes a relatively detailed review of the relevant literature on each of the main subthemes related to the integration of children. Lastly, the works by Silverman and Feigelman (1990) and Silverman (1993) on transracial adoptions (including intercountry adoptions) should also be mentioned.

These reviews primarily present the results of quantitative research based on questionnaires and interview data on adopted children's self-esteem and development, family integration, school performance, risk factors of behavioural problems, and ethnic and racial identity.

Another type of overview of some aspects of intercountry adoption is provided in the collective work edited by Rita J. Simon and Howard Altstein (1991a), *Intercountry Adoption. A Multinational Perspective*. In this book, experts from seven countries (the United States, Canada, Norway, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Israel) deal with a range of themes, including adjustment of adopted children, history of adoption, and the debates and conflicting points of view about it. Altstein and Simon (1991) predicted in their conclusion that the number of intercountry adoptions would decrease because of nationalistic feelings in "sending" countries and improved economic conditions in those countries. However, this prediction does not appear to hold true. On the contrary, in some countries the number of adoptions of children from abroad has increased considerably, in particular Canada and France, which have recently produced several studies. Moreover, although the influx of children from certain countries has decreased, other countries have become important sources for intercountry adoption.

We have not found any other academic work that thoroughly assesses research on intercountry adoption from the perspective of children's integration. Furthermore, in general, collective works (including special issues of journals) mainly deal with adoption in general or domestic adoption, reserving only limited space to articles on intercountry adoption and concentrating more on the issues related to adoption procedures and processes rather than the theme of children's integration. This issue is also among those least dealt with in the literature intended for non-experts.

2.2   *Empirical and Clinical Studies*

The studies based on empirical research data and clinical observations are diversified, both in terms of methodological approaches and research goals. They form a body of work which largely covers our main themes of investigation: personal development, family integration, the issue of origins, as well as social integration and ethnic and cultural identity. A general survey of these studies is given in the summary table of Annex II, which sums up each of the studies based on its principal

bibliographical reference (some studies resulted in the publication of several papers or different reports).

In order to identify significant trends or subgroups among these studies, we first categorized them according to receiving country (this was generally the country of the authors and the adopted children involved). This criterion allowed us to rapidly evaluate the geographical scope covered by the academic publications that are currently accessible in English and French. Several methodological criteria were then used to highlight the diversity of approaches and also many of the gaps in knowledge.

2.2.1   *Empirical or Clinical Studies by Receiving Country*

The distribution of the empirical studies and clinical observations reviewed that deal with the integration of intercountry-adopted children by receiving country, is as follows (references in italics relate to observations of clinical cases):

Germany	Külh 1985, Weyer 1985;
Britain	Bagley and Young 1981, Bagley 1993a, Greenfield 1995;
Australia	Harper 1986, *Harper 1994*;
Belgium	Paulis 1989, Wattier and Frydman 1985, Nabinger 1994, *Decerf 1995*;
Canada	
- provinces other than Quebec	Harder 1987, Marcovitch et al. 1995, Westhues and Cohen 1995, Marcovitch et al. 1997, Ames et al. 1997;
- Quebec	Routhier 1986, Lussier 1992, Despeignes 1993, Morrier 1995, Belleau 1996, Ouellette and Méthot 1996, Ouellette et Méthot 2000;
Denmark	Melchoior 1986, Rorbech 1991;
United States	Wilkinson 1986, Andujo 1988, Koh 1988, Lydens 1989, Smith and Brown 1989, *Hartman and Laird 1990*, Simon and Altstein 1991b, Horn 1992, Johnson et al. 1992, Cole 1993, Benson et al. 1994, Trolley et al. 1995;

France	*Ozoux-Teffaine 1987*, Terre des Hommes-France 1992, *Maury 1991*, *Balland* et al. *1995*, *Choulot and Brodier 1993*, Nabinger 1994, Greenfield 1995, *Neuberger 1995*, Terre des Hommes-France 1995, Rude-Antoine n.d.;
Finland	Kvist et al. 1989;
Israel	Levy-Shiff et al. 1997;
Italy	Nabinger 1994;
Luxembourg	Nabinger 1994;
Norway	Dalen and Saetersdal 1987, Saetersdal and Dalen 1991, Andresen 1992;
Netherlands	Hoksbergen et al. 1987, De Vries 1988, Hoksbergen et al. 1988, Verhulst et al. 1990a, Verhulst et al. 1990c, Geerars et al. 1991, Geerars et al. 1995, Juffer and Rosenboom 1997;
Switzerland	Spring-Duvoisin 1986, Lücker-Babel 1991, *Beal 1993*.

It should be noted that only two of these authors investigated more than one receiving country, that is, Nabinger 's (1994) study which follows the integration of adopted Brazilian children in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Italy, and Greenfield's (1995) comparative study of the services available for adoptive parents in Britain and France.

Research on intercountry adoptions carried out in Quebec, France, Belgium and Switzerland are in French. English-language studies, which are by far the most numerous, deal with intercountry adoptions in North America (the United States and Canadian provinces other than Quebec), Australia, Israel, Britain, Germany as well as in Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands. The latter European countries have been pioneers in research on intercountry adoption because this phenomenon appeared there earlier and was more widespread. In their first large-scale study on intercountry adoption in Quebec, Gravel and Roberge (1984) noted that they were unable to consult the studies by Dutch and Scandinavian researchers because of lack of time and lack of knowledge of the language involved. Some of these studies have since been published in English. Others are cited or summarized in secondary sources which provide sufficient

information for them to be referred to (in particular, Geerars et al. 1991 and Geerars et al. 1995, cited by Hoksbergen 1997).

While France and the United States are countries which adopt several thousands of children every year, it is surprising that there have been very few publications in these countries in the last ten years. Those in France that are cited are clinical studies (very few cases) or research reports that are not widely disseminated, at least in other countries (Rude-Antoine n.d., Terre des Hommes 1992, 1995, Nabinger 1994). The only exception is the paper by Greenfield (1995), a British author, in which he compares the practices of intercountry adoption in France and Britain.

The body of Canadian studies is substantial by comparison, but the Quebec studies are unpublished, except those by Ouellette and Méthot (1996, 2000) and Despeignes (1993). Moreover, of the studies done outside Quebec, Harder's (1987) is also unpublished. Of the four other studies, three -- those by Marcovitch et al. (1995 and 1997) and Ames et al. (1997) -- deal with children adopted from Romania. The study by Westhues and Cohen (1995) is a notable exception in terms of scale, that is, the number of families studied and the fact that it examines three provinces.

To sum up, while there is no need to comment country by country, the above description shows that the volume of academic research on the integration of intercountry-adopted children is still relatively small at the end of the 1990's, even though the phenomenon of intercountry adoption has existed for approximately thirty years and has grown considerably over the last decade.

2.2.2   Methodological Approaches

Methodologically, research on international adoption as well as on domestic adoption has become more diverse. The majority are psychological studies which mainly deal with the children's psychological development. They are part of a well-established tradition that concentrates on the quantitative analysis of data collected through

questionnaires and standardized instruments. On the other hand, studies that explore more specifically the themes of family integration or ethnic and cultural identity are increasing. They are most often sociological, anthropological and psychoanalytical studies and are distinctly qualitative.

Quantitative Approaches

In quantitative studies, predefined parameters of investigation, which are already well-established in the prevailing schools of theoretical and empirical research on the child, identity and the family, are applied to the context of intercountry adoption. Their aim is to find out to what extent intercountry adoption can be considered as a particular context of personal development, family life and social integration, and to what extent the population of adopted children differs from children in general or non-adopted children. They indicate the situation of the majority and the relative importance of variations from the mean so that an overall diagnosis can be made, for example, that the great majority of intercountry-adopted children develop normally in their new environment. As this body of work develops further, it should also be possible to distinguish between the different situations of intercountry adoption based on the variables that are specific to this field of research, that is, the child's country of origin, age at adoption, the receiving country, his or her original ethnic and cultural group, and physical appearance.

Qualitative Approaches

Qualitative studies are less concerned with identifying precisely the characteristics of adopted children and their parents or the relative influence of predetermined variables on their well-being, development and adjustment, and more concerned with analyzing the processes, experiences and real life situations in order to gain a renewed understanding from them. They are of interest because they reveal the complexity of concrete cases of intercountry adoption while explaining the different levels of reality that are linked to it and the different viewpoints of the numerous actors involved, i.e., the parents, the adopted children and their siblings, the extended family, the community, teachers, and social and health workers. As each of these studies is based

only on a small number of cases, the scope of their conclusions is limited. However, they are essential to the identification of the key factors in the adoptive experience which should ultimately be taken into consideration in choosing the variables to be used in large-scale surveys and quantitative studies.

These qualitative studies are divided into two main subgroups. The first includes sociological, anthropological or psychological works based on in-depth interviews, life stories, observation data, or material produced by the subjects interviewed (stories told by the children, Horn 1992, or family photos, Belleau 1996). Their aim is to explore the numerous dimensions of the processes at work in adoption and to discover the informants' subjective opinions of their experience. The second subgroup is much smaller in size, all the more so because our review was restricted to the humanities and social sciences databanks. It includes studies published by health or mental health clinicians who describe a very small number of concrete cases in order to illustrate an analysis of a more general scope, to help understand the subjective experience of adoptees and their families. These studies are based on therapeutic interventions with adopted children and families who have problems. They mostly draw on psychoanalysis and contribute more particularly to broadening our understanding of the psychological implications of adoption, providing approaches to solving the conflicts and anxieties that underlie the behavioural problems or emotional states of adoptees.

Among the qualitative studies, those by Lücker-Babel (1991) and Rude-Antoine (n.d.) should be mentioned because they document and analyze intercountry adoption cases from a legal and also sociological (in the case of Rude-Antoine) perspective.

Quantitative And Qualitative Approaches By Country

When the methodological approaches of studies are considered by country, a few significant distinctions emerge. Compared to American and Canadian studies in particular, France stands out because several of the works reviewed are clinical and are based on a small number of case-studies (Ozoux-Teffaine 1987, Maury 1991, Choulot

and Brodier 1993, Balland et al. 1995, Neuberger 1995). Quebec is also different because it only produces qualitative studies based on interviews (Routhier 1986, Lussier 1992, Despeignes 1993, Morrier 1995, Belleau 1996, Ouellette and Méthot 1996, Ouellette et Méthot 2000). Elsewhere in Canada, semi-structured interviews have sometimes been used, but quantitative approaches predominate on the whole. Among them, the study by Ames et al. (1997) on the development of children adopted from Romanian orphanages has given rise to several other studies (e.g., Chisholm et al. 1995 and Fisher et al. 1997). The study by Westhues and Cohen (1995) should also be underlined; conducted with 126 families in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec, it is based on semi-structured interviews and analyzed quantitatively. Lastly, a great variety of approaches are used in the United States, ranging from clinical studies (Hartman and Laird 1990) to large-scale quantitative studies (Lydens 1989, Simon and Altstein 1991, Benson et al. 1994, etc.) and also more qualitative approaches (Wilkinson 1986, Horn 1992).

The Use Of Questionnaires And Standardized Research Instruments

Research protocols based on individual interviews structured around questionnaires, tests and standardized instruments are used principally by researchers working in the field of social work and psychology. Since we mainly had access to articles published in academic journals rather than to extensive versions of the reports, we were unable to systematically consult these research instruments.

The questionnaires are designed on the basis of the needs of each research project. Standardized tests and measures are also numerous and varied. For example, some of the instruments used to evaluate self-esteem, attitudes, behaviours or the intelligence of the adoptees are as follows: Hodges et al.'s Child Assessment Schedules (1982); the Rosenberg Self-Concept Scale (1965); Kuhn and McPartland's Ten Statements Test (1954); the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Scale for Adults; the Tennessee Self Concept Scale; the Youth Self Report; the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children Revised; the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale; and the 18-items Rating Scale for School Adjustment. The Twenty Statements Test is used to assess ethnic and racial identity. Other

standardized measures are suggested to parents either to assess the development of their child or to define the child's relationship with them and, more generally, the family atmosphere: the Child Behavior Checklist by Achenbach and Edelbrock (1983); the Graham and Rutter Questionnaire (1968); Family Adaptation and Cohesion Scales; the Kirk's Index; and Kirk's Attitudes Toward Adoption (1988); etc. Surveys are also carried out with teachers of adopted children (in particular Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Koh 1988, Verhulst et al. 1990c, Levy-Shiff et al. 1997) and information is gathered through methodological tools such as Achenbach and Ederbrock's Teacher Report Form (1986) and Behavior at School Assessment List. Researchers (Juffer and Rosemboom 1997, Marcovitch et al. 1997) also observe mother-child interactions under the Strange Situation Paradigm (Ainsworth et al. 1978) in order to assess the quality of attachment (secure or insecure – avoidant, dependent or controlling).

Due to the great variety of instruments used and of the children's ages at adoption and at the time of study, it is very difficult to establish comparisons between the results of the different research studies.

Studies Based On Large Samples

To conduct studies based on large samples of at least one hundred individuals or families, many researchers prefer to use mail questionnaires instead of interviews. This is the method used by Lydens (1989), Smith and Brown (1989) and Benson et al. (1994) in the United States; Külh (1985) in Germany; Bagley (1993a) in Britain; and Marcovitch et al. (1995) in Canada. This method is used in large-scale Dutch studies, an epidemiological study of 2,148 parents of adoptees and 933 parents of non-adoptees (Verhulst et al. 1990a) and a survey of 670 institutions to analyze 349 cases of intercountry-adopted children who were placed in residential care (Hoksbergen et al. 1988). A mail questionnaire was also used by Benson et al. (1994) to survey 715 American families as part of their comparative study of the mental health of adoptees and non-adoptees. Smith and Brown (1989) contacted 166 families of children adopted from

India to identify their health problems. Trolley et al. (1995) also used a mail questionnaire but on a small sample of 34 American families.

Some researchers who conducted large-scale studies used face-to-face interviews, for example, in the Canadian study by Westhues and Cohen (1995) that examined both a large number of cases and a diversity of subthemes and was conducted with parents of 126 families, their adopted adolescents and their siblings. Hoksbergen et al. (1987), De Vries (1988) and Andresen (1992) also conducted interviews. Similarly, the Danish study by Rorbech (1990) of 455 adoptees was based on interviews on the family, social and ethnic identity of Asian children. In France, the Terre des Hommes organization conducted two mail surveys – one in 1992 with 451 families and another in 1995 with 276 adoptees. But these two surveys also included open-ended interviews with a sample of parents (43) and adoptees (39).

Longitudinal Studies

In recent years, a number of longitudinal studies on transracial adoption have indirectly helped to further our knowledge on the future of intercountry-adopted children (Groze 1996). We reviewed only four studies on intercountry adoption, which were completed since 1985 but the data for which were collected over a fairly long period of time, that is, Bagley and Young's study (1981, 1993a) in Britain; the Norwegian study by Saetersdal and Dalen (1991); the Canadian study by Ames et al. (1997); and the American study by Lydens (1989). However, the research protocols differ greatly. For example, Bagley and Young (1981) and Bagley (1993a, 1993b) used a questionnaire to assess the self-esteem, adjustment and identity of girl adoptees from Hong Kong when they were between 12 and 18 years old in 1980. A follow-up study was carried out by them in 1989, through an interview with the young women when they were between 22 and 28 years old. For their part, Ames et al. (1997) made a first evaluation of the development of Romanian children when they had been in their adoptive families for eleven months (median length) and a second evaluation when the majority (70 percent) were 4 ½ years old. Using a mail questionnaire, Lydens (1989) studied the identity

development of adoptees aged between 12 and 17 years in 1974, and contacted them again in 1984 when they were aged between 22 and 27 years. Saetersdal and Dalen (1991) studied the initial period of adjustment to the family by Vietnamese children who were aged 2 to 5 at the time of their adoption, their school adjustment and their identity problems in adolescence using a survey of 182 parents and in-depth interviews with 98 youths aged 17 to 22 years.

The Choice of Informants

The common goal of all these research studies is to gain a better understanding of or to assess the integration of foreign adoptees into the adoptive environment. They are all based on data collected directly from the adoptive families, except those of Lücker-Babel (1991) and Rude-Antoine (n.d.), which study archive files (the latter also conducted approximately sixty interviews), and that of Hoksbergen et al. (1988) which was conducted with the people in charge of the residential care institutions where the young adoptees were placed.

Over half of the research studies reviewed were carried out through direct contact with both adopted children and their parents. The researchers interviewed them personally or, in rare cases, contacted them through a mail questionnaire. In some cases, the researchers also met or interviewed the adoptees' siblings (Weyer 1985, Simon and Altstein 1991, Benson et al. 1994, Westhues and Cohen 1995). Clinical studies also involved direct contacts with the whole family (Hartman and Laird 1990, Decerf 1995). In other studies, the children's teachers were contacted (Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Koh 1988, Andresen 1992, Levy-Shiff et al. 1997). The goals pursued in all these research studies that combine data collected from children and adults were to assess certain aspects of the child's development and integration.

In ten studies, parents provided the only source of data. This can be justified by the young age of the children and the demands of the method used (for example, a written questionnaire or a retrospective account of the adoption) or by the orientation of the

research questions. Thus, for example, Paulis (1989), Trolley et al. (1995), Belleau (1996), Ouellette and Méthot (1996), as well as Rude-Antoine (n.d. in the qualitative part of her study, specifically aimed at understanding the ideas and practices of parents as a structuring framework for the children's development of family and ethnic identity.

Another ten studies use adoptees as their sole source of data. In most cases, they are adolescents (Dalen and Saetersdal 1987, Geerars et al. 1991, Morrier 1995) or adults (Rorbech 1990, Lussier 1992, Bagley 1993a, Terre des Hommes 1995). Horn (1992) interviewed children aged 4 to 16, using a method that was adapted to their age (the child told a story). Johnson et al. (1992) studied the development of children aged 6 weeks to 73 months. In addition, there are clinical studies presented by authors who are psychologists, psychiatrists or psychoanalysts who had direct contacts with the adoptees they discussed (Harper 1986, Wilkinson 1986, Beal 1993, Choulot and Brodier 1993, Balland et al. 1995, Neuberger 1995).

Composition of Groups of Subjects or Samples

The composition of the groups of adopted children examined in the studies is, in general, not controlled for at the outset. In many cases, their characteristics were not pre-determined but defined afterwards in the description of the profile of those who had actually been contacted. In other cases, the only criterion used to select subjects was the fact that they were among the children adopted through the same association (Simon and Altstein 1991, Terre des Hommes 1992, 1995). Moreover, in this field of research, associations of adoptive parents are the principal channels through which researchers recruit subjects. Sometimes, the selection is made according to country of origin (e.g., Smith and Brown 1989, Ames et al. 1997), the adoptee's age group at the time of adoption (for example, Wilkinson 1986) or at the time of survey (for example, Morrier 1995). Studies which report clinical observations select cases that can be used to illustrate an analysis based on the expertise of an author who is a psychologist, psychoanalyst, physician or social worker.

Without being systematically planned, three leading variables often emerge from the identification of the dominant characteristics of the groups of subjects formed. They are the children's country of origin, their age at adoption and their age at the time of the study.

Children's Country Of Origin

Since the first intercountry-adopted children mainly came from Korea, then Vietnam and elsewhere in Asia, and since this predominance still exists, the studies conducted in North America, like those conducted in Europe and Australia, mainly focused on Asian children (Korea, China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, etc.). Children from Latin America, the West Indies or Oceania are sometimes included (Colombia, Bolivia, Mexico, Haiti, etc.).

Having said this, the children's countries of origin vary somewhat according to the receiving country involved because the adoption networks differ from one receiving country to the next.

Thus, in the United States, studies conducted in the 1970s mainly focused on young adoptees who arrived from Korea (Wilkinson 1995), whereas studies carried out in the 1980s dealt with a more varied population, including children adopted from Vietnam and Colombia. American studies also examine a number of children adopted domestically but who belong to a different ethnic group than that of their adoptive parents (Hartman and Laird, Simon and Altstein 1991a, Horn 1992, Benson et al. 1994). Moreover, Linowitz and Boothby (1988) and McRoy (1991) explain that in the United States and Britain, intercountry adoption is a less important research issue than so-called "transracial" domestic adoptions.

Studies conducted in Quebec are distinct from the others because their samples include children adopted from Haiti or the West Indies and the more recent studies include children from the People's Republic of China. In fact, Quebeckers have been

adopting in Haiti since the 1970s. During the 1990-1994 period, Haiti ranked second, behind the People's Republic of China, in terms of the number of children that it sent to Quebec (Ouellette and Frigault 1996).

The most diverse origins are currently found in studies conducted in France. Children come not only from Asia and Latin America but also from Europe (Poland, Romania,…), Africa (Cameroon, Rwanda…) and Oceania (Australia, Tahiti…). The children in the 60 families included in the study by Rude-Antoine (n.d.) come from 25 different countries.

In general, the country of origin of the children examined is not an important variable in the research design and analysis and receives little attention. However, this is changing due to the interest on the part of a number of researchers in adoptions in Romania after the fall of Ceaucescu in 1989. Studies of adoptions of Romanian children to Canada (Marcovitch et al. 1995, Ames et al. 1997, Marcovitch et al. 1997) and the United States (Johnson et al. 1992) raise the issue of the health and development of children who had lived in orphanages, suffered serious nutritional and emotional deprivation and lacked stimulation.

Children's Age At Adoption

The age at adoption of the children included in these studies varies considerably and is often not controlled for at the outset. In some cases, attempts were made to contact as many subjects as possible in an overall population of adoptees, and as a result, the range of age at adoption for these subjects is very wide (for example, Verhulst et al. 1990b, Simon and Altstein 1991, Terre des Hommes 1992). In other cases, the country of origin of the targeted group helped restrict the age range. Thus, the fact that American researchers focus much more on children from Korea, a country which offers mainly young babies, is certainly related to the fact that the majority of American studies (Hartman and Laird 1990, Simon and Altstein 1991, Cole 1992, Benson et al. 1994, etc.) deal with samples of children who are adopted at a very young age. In any case, the

predominance of very young children in intercountry adoption inevitably means that surveys which aim to include a large number of subjects mainly concern cases of early adoption.

Age at adoption is increasingly being considered in a more systematic way because, as will be seen in the chapters that follow, this variable has a very strong influence on the adjustment of the child and the family. Although many researchers did not control for this variable in recruiting their informants, they took its influence into account in their data analysis (Germany: Külh 1985, Weyer 1985; Belgium: Wattier and Frydman 1985; Canada: Lussier 1992, Westhues and Cohen 1995; United States: Lydens 1989, Simon and Altstein 1991; France: *Terre des Hommes* 1992 and 1995). Moreover, in some of the studies reviewed, age at adoption is one of the main selection criteria. For example, some researchers recruited only cases in which the child was adopted at under two or three years old (in Quebec: Despeignes 1993, Morrier 1995 and Belleau 1996) or designed a research protocol that made the distinction at the outset between early adoption (0 to 2 years old) and late adoption (age three or over – Ouellette et Méthot 2000). A number of studies also focused specifically on late adoption (Australia: Harper 1994; Canada: Ouellette and Méthot 1996; United States: Koh 1988, Wilkinson 1986, Hartman and Laird 1990; France: Ozoux-Teffaine 1987, Maury 1991).

Age Of Adoptees At The Time Of The Study

With regard to age of adoptees at the time of the study, the first finding that emerges is the variability of the study populations and the fact that this variable is often not controlled for. Several authors studied groups of children in a wide age range, for example, children aged 4 to 14 (Kühl 1985), 12 or older (Westhues and Cohen 1995), and 12 to 19 (Dalen and Saetersdal 1987). Rude-Antoine (n.d.) did not provide any indication of age of children in the 60 families with whom semi-structured interviews were conducted.

Only a few researchers selected restricted age groups in order to highlight specific characteristics. In these cases, the focus was mainly on adolescents (Verhulst et al. 1990c), for example, children aged 12 to 17 (Andujo 1988), 15 to 17 (Geerars et al. 1995), and 13 to 18 (Kühl 1985). A growing number of recent and mainly European studies deal with grown-up adoptees (Saetersdal 1988, Lydens 1989, Rorbech 1990, Satersdal and Dalen 1991, Lussier 1992, Bagley 1993a, Terre des Hommes 1992 and 1995).

It appears that the studies dealing with a number of well-defined issues tend to select groups of children whose age is more precisely targeted. This is the case of De Vries' (1988) study on language development in children aged 5, 6 and 7, Andresen's (1992) study on school adjustment of children aged 12 to13, Morrier's (1995) study on the identity strategies of adolescents aged 14 to18, Juffer and Rosembloom's (1997) study on child-mother attachment of children aged 6 to 18 months, and Marcovitch et al.'s (1990) study on the influence of institutionalization, developmental delay and quality of child-mother attachment on the behaviour of a group of Ontario children aged 3 to 5 adopted from Romania.

Comparisons And Control Groups

The majority of researchers collect and analyze data on adoptees or adoptive families without using comparison groups or control groups. This is particularly true of studies whose aim is purely descriptive or exploratory and those that use discourse analysis. These studies tend to document the situation of adoptees rather than identifying the characteristics which would or would not make adoptees a distinct social category. Comparisons are sometimes made with families who also or only have biological children, or between cases of early adoption and cases of late adoption. However, the analysis does not involve an item by item comparison of fixed variables.

On the other hand, studies whose aims are to assess children's development, attachment to the mother, school performance or self-esteem in relation to the ethnic

origin of the child and his or her parents may, for example, not involve an experimental design but a natural experiment (Serbin 1997). This means that a group of adopted children whose composition cannot be strictly controlled for is compared with the general population of children in the receiving country or the country of origin or with another group of children, for example, adoptive siblings (Weyer 1985, Simon and Altstein 1991a, Benson et al. 1994, Westhues and Cohen 1995), children adopted at a different age, children adopted domestically (Kühl 1985, Levy-Shiff et al 1997), children from another country or of another ethnic origin (Andujo 1988), and non-adopted children of the same age (Hoksbergen et al. 1987, De Vries 1988, Verhulst et al. 1990a, Andresen 1992). Hoksbergen et al. (1988) and Geerars et al. (1991) compare adoptees who were placed in residential care due to personal or family problems with adoptees who had never been placed. Ames (1997) compares children adopted in Romania who had been through the orphanage system with children who came straight from a hospital or a family, and with a group of non-adoptees born in Canada. Smith and Brown (1989) compare the results of their mail survey on the health of American children adopted from India according to World Health Organisation standards.

2.3 *The Positions on Intercountry Adoption Taken by Authors in Academic Research*

The limitations of current knowledge on intercountry adoption are often mentioned in the literature reviewed. It is pointed out that it is impossible to make a systematic comparison of studies given that the composition of the samples is highly diversified, the methods and measurements used differ greatly, most of the studies do not have a control group, and respondents are mostly self-selected. However, this does not appear to prevent some authors from taking a firm position either for or against intercountry adoption, thus revealing that the practices are primarily guided by political or ideological choices.

Moreover, in this field, not only are several authors involved in intercountry adoption at the professional level but also at the personal level because they have adopted a child from a foreign country. They sometimes assume a political position on

intercountry adoption through their discussion on the psychological and social needs of adoptees. Some are more explicit about this, for example, E. Bartholet (1993a, 19993b), an attorney and adoptive mother who attempts to demonstrate that the beneficial effects of intercountry and transracial adoption on children far outweigh its negative aspects. Others remain in a rather hazy area between an academic discourse and a more political and ideological discourse (Linowitz and Boothby 1988). Consequently, in this literature review, we have endeavoured to properly distinguish the research results from the various interpretations made of them by the authors.

Some consider that intercountry adoption should remain a last resort, especially for older children who will never be adopted by families in their own countries (Kühl 1985, Bach 1988, Linowitz and Boothby 1988, Textor 1991, Tizard 1991, Balland et al. 1995, Terre des Hommes 1995). Textor (1991) recommends that humanitarian aid be provided to countries where these children come from since he considers that intercountry adoption is a form of exploitation of poor countries by rich countries. Tizard (1991) maintains that, whenever possible, priority should be given to placement in the country of origin to avoid children being subjected to racial discrimination. Maury (1991), for her part, considers that intercountry adoption should be avoided as far as possible when the children's countries of origin can take care of them, judging that adoption is an individual, not a collective solution.

According to Linowitz and Boothby (1988), the generally optimistic vision presented by the quantitative studies that are based on large samples and, conversely, the sometimes alarmist conclusions of clinical studies, should be questioned. Although the latter report particularly critical cases, Wolters (1980, cited by Linowitz and Boothby 1988) hypothesizes that the parents interviewed in large-scale studies are probably reluctant to talk about the problems they have :

> There can be a kind of *duty to be joyful and happy* about the adoption of their child prevalent in the parents of adopted children which makes this more negative side of adoption unacceptable. You must be happy; it is a wonderful thing to adopt a child from a

far-away foreign country (Wolters 1980, cited by Linowitz and Boothby 1988: 185).

According to Textor (1991), most studies on the subject are not representative because adopters participate in the study on a voluntary basis and those who have had a negative experience refuse to answer the questions. Similarly, Terre des Hommes (1995) believes that the minority of young adoptees who have serious problems may represent the silent majority who refused to answer their questions.

Lastly, as mentioned by Triseliotis (1991), too many researchers use tests in their studies and neglect to question pre-defined concepts such as ethnic, cultural and racial identity. The result is that ethnic identity is reduced to objective facts and this may be responsible for the gap noted between the level of affirmation of this identity and self-esteem. According to this author, perceptions should be taken into consideration. Horn (1992) found that most American studies examine the phenomenon of adoption through quantitative studies and pointed out that research should focus not so much on the "problems" of adoptees but rather on the understanding of the experience of adoption as a reality that is shared by both parents and their children.

These limitations are not specific to this field of research and do not in any way invalidate the knowledge produced. However, they are a major obstacle to an assessment that can be generalized of the success or failure of intercountry adoption and the quality of integration of children. They oblige us to abandon the idea of drawing definitive conclusions that can firmly justify, on the basis of research, a practice that primarily responds to individual and institutional concerns informed by a set of moral and social values in constant change.

Conclusion

This overview of the body of texts reviewed brings to light the fact that research on the integration of intercountry-adopted children is still growing both in terms of the number of publications produced in the Western countries involved and in terms of the

accumulation of generated knowledge. The most important limitations are methodological, that is, the characteristics of the cases examined (age at adoption, age at the time of study, country of origin,…) can vary greatly within the same study group, the results of the various research studies cannot be easily compared and few studies use a control group. However, a highly productive diversity of disciplines and approaches begins to emerge from the most recent studies. In order to take advantage of these, we should draw on works written in English and French as well as on European studies and North American studies. In fact, this diversity can be seen in the entire body of texts and not in each of the countries where research is conducted on the subject. The chapters that follow form part of such an endeavour to establish links between all these contributions.

CHAPTER 3

The Unique Situation of Each Child

The integration of intercountry-adopted children raises questions above all on their physical and psychological well-being. What condition are they in when they are entrusted to their new family? Do they evolve in the same way as other children? The main results of research which has attempted to answer these questions relate to the children's health and adjustment upon arrival and the factors that are likely to explain them, as well as to their subsequent development, self-esteem and school performance.

In another context, a chapter which is devoted to the development of children would automatically adopt a biographical approach—starting with the birth of the child—based on the model of medical anamnesis, the collection of life stories in sociology or the stages of identity formation in psychology. However, for objective reasons of paucity of information and because adoption inherently causes a break with the past as if there were a new birth, the history of the adoptee often seems to begin with his or her adoption. This has a strong effect on academic research. To our knowledge, there is currently almost no empirical research which considers intercountry adoption as a stage in a child's life rather than as an initial threshold. The period of the child's life prior to the adoption is recalled merely through allusions to "previous family and medical history." A noteworthy exception is Nabinger's (1994) study which follows the entire course of life of Brazilian children adopted in Western European countries.

It should first be pointed out that all the research contributions on intercountry adoption allow us to maintain that the great majority of children adopted internationally develop in the same way as other children. Thus, we might be tempted to minimize research results which highlight the particular circumstances or difficulties of adoptees. However, these results allow us to get away from the uniform image conveyed by the findings that these adoptees rank among above-average children so that we might gain a better understanding of the specific aspects of their experience. In this sense, these

studies help us grasp the complexity of the subject and move beyond the simplistic questions of whether or not intercountry adoptions have been a "success" or a "failure."

3.1   *Initial Physical and Mental Health Condition*

Although the medical bibliographical databanks were not examined, several works reviewed dealt with the health of adopted children at the time of their arrival in the receiving country (in particular, Dalen and Saetersdal 1987, Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Smith et al. 1989, Nabinger 1991, Saetersdal and Dalen 1991, Johnson et al. 1992, Marcovitch et al. 1995). Most of the children appear to arrive in satisfactory health, but the incidence of medical problems may vary, depending on the country of origin or age at adoption of the children studied.

The main physical health problems noted are malnutrition, skin disease (impetigo, scabies and other infections), anemia, respiratory and digestive tract infections, and sometimes more serious problems such as hepatitis B and AIDS (Hoksbergen 1991, SAI 1995, Westhues and Cohen 1995, Ames 1997). In many cases, the circumstances of the mother's pregnancy and the care provided after birth may have negatively affected the child's health. Thus, in a sample of 200 infants adopted in India by Americans, Smith et al. (1989) found that at least 37.5 percent had been born prematurely and were of a size and weight below the standards of the World Health Organisation.

A number of researchers found that approximately 50 percent of the children had developmental delays and physical disabilities at the time of adoption. Thus, according to their parents, over half of the 98 children adopted from India and Vietnam interviewed for the Norwegian study by Saetersdal and Dalen (1991) had problems with sleeping and eating. One third of these children, in particular those adopted between one and three years of age, had serious adjustment problems. However, as regards physical health, three-quarters could be considered to be in good health upon arrival; those who were in poor health were mainly orphans from the Vietnam war.

Hoksbergen et al. (1987) arrived at the same conclusions but the percentages were lower. Thus, 59 percent of a group of 116 children from Thailand showed no particular adjustment problems when arriving in the Netherlands. The others mainly had problems with sleeping and eating, but displayed aggressiveness, excessive mood swings or, on the contrary, were extremely passive. Over half of the children who arrived in poor health experienced these problems, as opposed to one third of those who arrived in good health. The Canadian study by Westhues and Cohen (1995) found that approximately 8 percent of children adopted from abroad had permanent medical conditions such as neurological and orthopaedic problems, delays in cognitive development or hearing impairment, 50 percent had had temporary problems, and 42 percent were considered by their parents to be healthy. In a group of 65 American preschool-aged children adopted from Romania, 55 were found by the International Adoption Health Clinic to have medical, developmental or behavioural problems (Johnson et al. 1992). There were many cases of hepatitis, intestinal parasites and other infectious diseases, and 12 children had neural developmental problems. Similarly, Marcovitch et al.'s exploratory study (1995) of 105 Canadian families who had adopted a Romanian child between January 1990 and April 1991 revealed a high rate of initial problems: developmental delays, food and health problems, and stereotyped behaviours, and some sleeping problems, tantrums and attachment problems. However, these problems improved considerably during the first few years.

3.2. *Impact of Age at Adoption and Previous Experiences*

Many authors suggest that adjustment problems must be correlated with the child's age at adoption. However, no linear correlation seems to have been established between developmental problems and age at adoption (Verhulst et al. 1990b).

It is generally held that the most problematic age period for the adoption of a child is between the ages of six months and five years. For example, in Hoksbergen et al.'s (1987) Dutch study mentioned previously, 24 percent of children adopted when they were under six months of age had one or more problems, as opposed to 77 percent of

children adopted at two years of age and older. The French study by Terre des Hommes (1992) which mainly examined adopted Asian children, maintains that children adopted between three and four years of age are particularly vulnerable and have more problems adjusting to and integrating into the adoptive family. In comparison, those who are five years of age and older at the time of adoption gradually but steadily integrate into the family. According to the authors, children adopted at three or four years of age are old enough to have memories of their past but not mature enough to understand what is happening to them. They experience adoption as a disruption rather than a transition to a better life. Maury (1991) also noted that, with regard to the three to six year olds, this period is the most difficult for adopted children to differentiate between birth parents and adoptive parents and thus to position themselves in relation to their biological parents. According to Choulot and Brodier (1993), adoptions of five or six year-old children are highly risky because these children cannot easily forget their childhood. Consequently, this type of adoption requires considerable thought on the part of parents (Choulot and Brodier 1993, Balland et al. 1995).

It is generally agreed that an adoption which occurs when the child is three years of age or older is characterized as a late adoption. Several authors consider that this type of adoption is laden with risks (Wattier and Frydman, 1985; Hoksbergen et al., 1987, 1988 and 1991; Maughan and Pickles, 1990; Beal, 1993; Choulot and Brodier, 1993; Harper 1994; Balland et al., 1995). This is because, among others things, the child adopted at an older age might have lived through negative experiences such as numerous placements, neglect or abuse. Moreover, Verhulst et al. (1992) and Ames (1997) noted that there are strong correlations between the age of children at adoption and the extent of abuse to which they might have been subjected. The results of the study conducted by Verhulst et al. (1992) on 2,148 adoptees and their parents show that half of those who had been through more than four care placements (orphanages, foster families, etc.) before being adopted had considerable adjustment problems. In addition, 24 percent of children who had been seriously neglected in the past and 31 percent of those who had been abused showed behavioural problems. Nevertheless, these authors conclude that negative

experiences during early childhood cannot entirely account for the behavioural problems of children who are adopted late.

Lussier (1992) asserts that while the experience of late adoption is generally positive for children who have mainly lived in an orphanage before being adopted, the adoption of those who have lived with their birth families appears to be much more complicated. This assertion, however, still needs to be backed up by further research, given that the living conditions in some orphanages can cause deficiencies from which it can be difficult to recover if the child has had to stay there for an extended period of time.

A systematic approach to the impact of pre-adoption experiences has begun to be developed with regard to groups of children adopted in Romania, by exploiting the possibilities for comparison between children who lived in an orphanage and other children. Among the children studied by Johnson et al. (1992), of the 10 who were physically healthy and developmentally normal, two had not been placed in an orphanage and eight had been placed in one for only a very short time. For the others, the length of stay in an orphanage is negatively linked to the child's linear growth. Moreover, 85 percent of those adopted at six months of age or older had problems associated with emotional deprivation, in particular, growth failure, delays in motor skills and language development, and behaviours such as avoiding eye contact and tantrums.

Other researchers attempted to establish links between the pre-adoptive experience of placement in an orphanage and the quality of attachment between the child and his or her adoptive mother. Chisholm et al (1995), collaborating in Ames et al.'s team (1997), collected their data by approaching the parents. They found no differences between children who had previously been in an orphanage and those who had lived in a family. Similarly, Marcovitch et al. (1997) who conducted a medical and psychosocial follow-up study of 56 Romanian children in Ontario did not find any difference in this regard. However, they observed the behaviours of children using the Strange Situation

Paradigm[7] and found that there was a high rate of indiscriminately friendly behaviour, which suggests that some of the children appeared to be falsely secure in their attachment. Moreover, they stress that insecure attachment only becomes a cause for behavioural problems when it is combined with other factors that may be linked to the child's pre-adoptive experience.

Since adoption implies the loss of original social ties and a break with personal history, and since intercountry adoption is practised in conditions that do not facilitate communication of information, knowledge of the child's background is generally very limited. Yet, the circumstances of the biological mother's pregnancy (stress, medical assistance, malnutrition, etc.) as well as the child's living conditions following birth (malnutrition, discontinuity of care, deprivation and abuse, etc.) are all factors that can affect his or her development (Brodzinsky 1990, Verhulst et al. 1992).

3.3   *Long-term Adjustment and Development*

With regard to the long-term adjustment of children adopted from abroad, some researchers find few differences between the control groups of non-adopted children or domestically adopted children. Thus, Andresen's results (1992) demonstrate that, compared to a group of 135 non-adoptees, the majority of a group of 151 Korean adoptees aged 12 or 13 years were well adjusted to their family and school environments. Moreover, there was absolutely no link between their age at adoption and the quality of their adjustment. Levy-Shiff et al. (1997) compared a group of 50 Israeli children adopted internationally to a group of 50 children adopted domestically and found no differences between the two groups in terms of emotional, social and school adjustment, nor in terms of levels of anxiety, depression, hyperactive behaviours or self-esteem.

---

[7] An observation and coding process of the child's behaviour with his or her mother for a brief period where the child is in turn with the mother, then left by the mother for a few minutes, first alone, then with another person. The child's often subtle behaviours reveal the quality of the mother-child attachment and the resulting attitude to a change in environment and to strangers.

However, other authors demonstrate that initial adjustment problems may, in certain cases, persist (Harper, 1986; Verhulst, 1992). Westhues and Cohen (1995), along with Loenen and Hoksbergen (1986) and Simon and Altstein (1981), assess that approximately 10 percent of children adopted from abroad will continue to have problems with relationships to such an extent that they will need professional help, and 10 percent will succeed in overcoming these difficulties, whereas the adoption experience will be satisfactory for approximately 80 percent of these adoptees. However, Hoksbergen et al.'s (1987) study found that for 40 percent of the families who encountered problems during the children's initial adjustment, these problems persisted for many years. Furthermore, half of the parents whose child had behavioural problems reported that it was difficult for them to resolve the disturbances this caused within the family.

A recent study of children adopted from Romanian orphanages also reveals results that indicate long-term problems (Ames et al. 1997). Among children who had been placed for at least eight months in one of these institutions, 72 percent of parents held that their children still had considerable behavioural and emotional problems three years after being placed. They had more problems than those adopted as very young babies from a family or hospital and more problems than the Canadian control group of non-adoptees. They were nevertheless making progress. Thus, the authors consider that it is important to put more emphasis on supporting and following up adoptive parents, who did not appear to be prepared for the unusual demands of children with serious adjustment problems (see also Hoksbergen et al. 1987).

The main behavioural problems identified among some children adopted internationally—as well as some children adopted domestically—are: attention seeking behaviour, lack of feelings of guilt, stealing, lying, depression, being secretive or suspicious, poor peer relations and learning problems at school (Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Verhulst et al. 1990a, 1990b, Wilkinson 1995). According to Wilkinson (1995), these problems must be correlated with the great loss of social references experienced by these

children, such as the change in language, food, and the visual, sound and smell environment, especially at bed time.

Verhulst et al. (1990a) assessed that, compared to the general population, more intercountry-adopted children have psychiatric problems (antisocial behaviours, fragile network of relations and emotional problems) in pre-adolescence and adolescence. The difference noted between the adopted children and biological children in their sample was related to the boys' particularly high scores in terms of the Delinquent Syndrome and on the Hyperactive Scale as well as to a slightly larger proportion of girl adoptees obtaining high scores on the Schizoid Scale. In fact, adopted boys aged 12 to 15 years obtained scores that were almost four times higher than those of their non-adopted peers and girls in terms of the incidence of deviant behaviours such as stealing, vandalism, cheating, lying, and hanging around with children who get into trouble. They were more often placed in institutional care. Geerars et al. (1991) also indicate that girls mainly have symptoms of depression and schizoid tendencies while boys have more aggressive and delinquent behaviours. Using a Dutch translation of the Youth Self Report, they also show that the children have fewer problems than the parents report. They obtain high scores on peer relations and acquisition of autonomy from parents, but they are more insecure about gender expectations and acceptance of their physical appearance.

With regard to the young people in Westhues and Cohen's study (1995), age at adoption was not identified as a likely predictor of adjustment at adolescence. However, the Dutch studies reviewed by Hoksbergen (1997) made a link between the prevalence of behavioural problems and age at adoption. Verhulst et al. (1990b) show that the older the child was at placement the more often parents of children aged 12 to 15 years reported delinquent behaviours and communication breakdown for boys, and cruel behaviours and depression for girls. However, their analysis brought to light the fact that the deviant behaviours identified are also closely linked with the youths' age at the time of the study. In fact, based on the data collected on youths aged 10 and 11, these authors were unable to establish a direct link between the incidence of problems experienced by the latter and their age at adoption. This is a particularly interesting finding because it shows the

importance of taking into account not only the children's age at placement but also their age at the time of the study.

Since the behavioural problems of intercountry-adopted children are relatively homogenous and recurrent in their sample, Saetersdal and Dalen (1991) suggest that there is a type of personality that is specific to transnational adoptees, stressing that in spite of their successful adjustment and their intelligence, they are relatively anxious and insecure about their place in Norwegian society and few of them are able to realize their full potential. As adolescents, they maintain a low profile, are afraid of taking risks, and do not have close relationships although they have many friends. However, these authors question whether or not these characteristics should be attributed to adoption itself or to pre-adoptive experiences.

3.4   Self-esteem

Participants in debates on intercountry adoption are usually most interested in the research data on the self-esteem of intercountry-adopted children. Since these data are based on standardized measures, they have an objective character which is lacking in other types of research results. They evoke one of the central values in current societies, that is, the self-realization of each individual. Lastly, they are reassuring about the ability of intercountry adoption to allow children to achieve such a level of development since they demonstrate that, in general, adoptees have high self-esteem. Indeed, except for the Canadian study by Harder (1987), which is based on a sample of eight families, all the studies dealing with this issue that we reviewed reveal that adoptees generally have high self-esteem (in particular Kühl 1985, Lydens 1989, Simon and Altstein 1991, Despeignes 1993, Westhues and Cohen 1995). Based on Kühn's grid entitled Ten Words That Describe Me, some found that only 10 percent of adoptees have relatively low self-esteem (Simon and Alstein 1987, Bagley 1993a, Westhues and Cohen 1995).

The family environment plays a determining role in the development of adoptees' self-esteem (Simon and Altstein 1987; Lydens 1989; Tizard and Phoenix 1989;

Triseliotis 1991; Bagley 1993a; Westhues and Cohen 1995; etc.). Westhues and Cohen (1995) assessed that the self-esteem of youths aged 12 and older who were interviewed is high and, like Simon and Altstein (1987), they found that it is related to the high socio-economic status of their parents. Moreover, differences exist in this regard between adopted children and biological children of the same family. According to Simon and Altstein (1991a), the latter tend to describe themselves directly in more positive terms while their adoptive brothers and sisters obtain high scores on self-esteem especially in response to a negative statement such as "I am not good at anything". Westhues and Cohen (1997) compared adolescents and young adults in their sample and found that adoptees obtain higher scores than a sample of the general population, and that their non-adopted brothers and sisters obtain even higher scores, with the exception of adolescent boys.

While the family environment is the most determining factor in the development of positive self-esteem when children are young, the community becomes more important for them when they reach adolescence and adulthood (Triseliotis 1991). Differences related to gender and ethnic or racial identity begin to come into play. Thus, Bagley's (1993a) study stresses that, as in the general population, more adopted girls have problems related to identity and self-esteem, particularly in adolescence. On the other hand, as they become adults, the young Chinese women in this study who were adopted in Britain when they were babies, scored higher on self-esteem tests than the control group.

Authors who assessed self-esteem in relation to the youths' racial identity concluded that skin colour or ethnic group does not appear to have any impact, regardless of the ethnic or racial composition of the adoptive community (Lydens 1989; Tizard and Phoenix 1989; Verhulst and al. 1990b; Despeignes 1993). Based on their studies of transracial adoption during the 1970s and 1980s involving some 204 families, Simon and Altstein (1992) concluded that the self-esteem of youths adopted by parents of a different "race" than their own is similar to that of their white brothers and sisters. Similarly, Lydens (1989), Despeignes (1993) and Bagley (1993a) maintain that, even

though some adoptees have a weak ethnic identity, it does not in any way affect the development of their self-esteem. In addition, Bagley's (1993a) study reveals that the children's positive scores on self-esteem and identity development are not linked to the importance attached by parents to the adoptees' culture of origin.

3.5   *Intellectual Development and Academic Success*

Research results on adoptees' intellectual and academic performance still vary considerably. Some authors assert that their academic performance is normal, even equal to or better than that of their biological brothers and sisters (Wattier and Frydman 1985, Routhier 1986, Hoksbergen and Bunjes 1986, Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Harder 1987, De Vries 1988, Bagley 1993a, Benson et al. 1994). In their study of Belgium families, Wattier and Frydman (1985) assess that the average IQ of the 28 adoptees interviewed is higher than that of the general population. Moreover, their good academic performance makes the authors wonder whether or not parents may have overinvested in these children, thus subjecting them to very high level of expectations. Rude-Antoine (n.d.) also reports considerable commitment on the part of parents regarding the academic success of their adopted children.

With regard to language learning, several Dutch studies conclude that no alarming problems have been reported in adopted children and that adoptive parents have shown themselves to be particularly attentive to their children's school adjustment problems (Schaerlaekens and Dondeyne 1985, Hoksbergen and Bunjes 1986, De Vries 1988).

Unlike the previous analyses, a number of other studies are less optimistic or reveal radically different results (Verhulst et al. 1990a, Saetersdal and Dalen 1991, Westhues and Cohen 1995, Wilkinson 1995, Ames 1997). Thus, for example, with regard to the way youths perceive their school performance, Westhues and Cohen (1995) conclude that adoptees assess their results in the same way as their brothers and sisters do, but that the latter actually obtain better results. These authors emphasize in a recent article (1997) that, unlike the adoptees, the brothers and sisters have benefited from

middle-class privileges since birth. Verhulst et al. (1990a) found that, in Holland, a higher proportion of adopted children (13.2% versus 4.4% for non-adopted children) are registered in special-education schools. These authors also point out the fact that adopted children from middle-class homes perform better at school than their peers from more privileged homes who are subject to higher standards and thus may live with the chronic feelings of not being able to satisfy these standards.[8] Although their academic results were lower, the adopted children in Verhulst et al.'s (1990a) study performed better in sports and organized activities.

The results of Saetersdal and Dalen's study (1991) show that as adopted children move up in the school system, their learning difficulties become more and more apparent. The authors assess that they are more likely to never realize their full academic potential even though they are perfectly happy in their social environment.

Most authors agree that age at adoption is a determining factor in academic success (Wattier and Frydman 1985, Weyer 1985, Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Verhulst et al. 1990a, Saetersdal and Dalen 1991, Simon and Altstein 1991, Lussier 1992, Terre des Hommes 1995, Ames 1997). Lussier (1992), for example, interviewed 27 young adults aged 17 to 28 years and found that 21 had had academic problems and that 5 of the 6 cases where the adoptee had dropped out of school pertained to children who had been adopted late (they were aged 5 to 13 on arrival). Moreover, 13 of the 27 adoptees (including 7 late adoptions) had used the services of psychologists or social workers. A study of more than 250 French youths adopted internationally concluded that 78 percent had repeated a grade at least once (Terre des Hommes 1995). Half of those who were no longer in school at the time of the study, were adopted at an older age. In another study carried out previously in 1992, Terre des Hommes also concluded that two thirds of the adoptees interviewed had repeated at least one grade compared to 25 percent for the

---

[8] "The present findings agree with those reported by Bohman (1970) who reported for his sample of 118 10- to 11-year-old Swedish adoptees that the children whose adoptive fathers belonged to the highest occupational level performed less well than those with fathers in the intermediate group of a three-step scale of occupational level. Chronic feelings of not being able to satisfy parental standards may be an important stress factor influencing the adopted child's development." (Verhulst *et al.* 1990a: 103).

general population. Lastly, the Canadian study of Ames et al. (1997) compares children adopted from Romanian orphanages with other Romanian children who had lived in families and with a group of biological children. This study concludes that children who had lived in orphanages and who were aged 2 to 5 when they were adopted had a lower IQ than the others, and that half of them had repeated at least one school grade.

According to studies by Hoksbergen et al. (1987) and Wattier and Frydman (1985), age at adoption has a determining impact on the motivation and attitude of adoptees towards school work, irrespective of the neglect and abuse experienced during childhood. In fact, the children in Hoksbergen et al.'s sample (1987) who were adopted when they were under six months old had fewer learning difficulties and concentration problems than those who were adopted when they were over 12 months old. Early intellectual stimulation of the younger children by their adoptive parents accounts for these children's cognitive development, level of adjustment to the school environment, and their capacity to meet academic requirements later on. Weyer (1995) also emphasized that the 100 intercountry-adopted children in the sample had received a more intensive education than average German students. Nevertheless, 28 percent of them, more particularly children adopted at an older age, had repeated at least one school grade. Several had had learning difficulties and also problems with their teachers and peers. Rude-Antoine (n.d.) also indicates that too wide a gap between the adoptee and other students in terms of acquired knowledge, habits and relations with authority can lead to the marginalization of children who were adopted at an older age.

Although adopted children who had already acquired their mother tongue very rapidly learn the language of the receiving country, a few studies show that deficiencies start to emerge sooner or later (Saetersdal and Dalen 1991, Tizard 1991, Westhues and Cohen 1995, Wilkinson 1995). In fact, as it allows for communication, this quickly-gained command of the language facilitates the child's initial adjustment and desire to become part of his or her adoptive filiation (Beal 1993). However, this often comes at the cost of forgetting the mother tongue, which can have a troubling effect on the process of identity formation. The mother tongue is a crucial dimension of the cultural matrix in

which the child began to develop; its loss has serious implications and conceals a highly complex subjective reality (Harper 1994, Wilkinson 1995).

According to a literature review conducted by Tizard (1991), several Scandinavian studies (Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark) have demonstrated that children adopted internationally at age two or older have serious deficiencies in vocabulary and the ability to express themselves. Tizard (1991) also reports the results of Hene's study (1988) which assesses that the proportion of intercountry-adopted children who have this type of deficiency varies from 25 to 43 percent. Wattier and Frydman's Belgian study (1985) arrives at the same conclusions for children placed at over 18 months of age, despite the adoptees' good school performance.

Conclusion

These different research results on the well-being and development of children adopted from abroad indicate that the majority turn out well in the long term, probably much in the same way as other children, even though they often have health problems and some adjustment problems at the beginning. These initial drawbacks should nevertheless not be minimized because they persist in some children. Moreover, proportionately more of these children seem to have certain psychological and behavioural problems. Lastly, they often have the advantage of living in a family environment that encourages success and supports self-esteem, but in which they appear to perceive themselves in less positive terms than their non-adopted brothers and sisters. Compared to other children, they sometimes have to overcome obstacles in order to succeed in school, particularly when they were adopted at an older age.

In seeking to understand the factors that may affect a child's adjustment or development, it seems unquestionable that the child's age at adoption should be considered as a crucial variable. This is because the shock of being adopted does not have the same impact for all ages and also because the longer the period that precedes adoption the greater the chance that it has been marked by negative experiences. The elements of knowledge that make it possible to discuss and assess the importance of age at adoption

are not yet highly developed. In Chapter 4, which focuses on family integration, a separate section will be reserved for the examination of late adoption cases.

Certainly, the child's age at the time of the study is also a very important variable to be considered. A problem that is felt at a given age can in fact be perceived very differently just a few years later. Therefore, we cannot assume that grown-up adoptees would recognize themselves in research results based on their own experiences in adolescence. However, to date, researchers do not appear to have examined this issue in any explicit and systematic way.

Compared to other issues which will be addressed below, the health, psychological well-being and development of children adopted from abroad have not been widely examined in qualitative studies. Many aspects still need to be better defined, in particular medical history and the impact of pre-placement experiences and living conditions as well as the adjustment of children who have developmental delays and emotional and behavioural problems. The child's own subjective experience at different stages of his or her life remains a grey area.

CHAPTER 4

Family Integration

The family—both biological and adoptive—is being defined increasingly as a framework of relationships in which each of its members can flourish and grow emotionally and, especially, one that can meet the needs of the children for whose affective, educational and material well-being it is responsible (Ouellette 1994). In this sense, the quality of family integration of intercountry-adopted children is presently of crucial concern.

In this chapter, we will present contributions from the literature reviewed on the subject of family integration. Three different, but complementary approaches are examined in turn; first, the identification of factors likely to positively or negatively affect children's family integration; the assessment by adoptees and their parents of their interpersonal relationships; and the qualitative examination of the processes of building family ties in adoptive families. In the final section, we focus exclusively on the family integration of children adopted at an older age, which poses a special challenge.

4.1   *Factors Likely to Affect Family Integration*

Several studies have established a direct link between "successful" intercountry adoptions and the adoptive family environment. For example, the study by Saetersdal and Dalen (1991) of approximately one hundred adopted children and their parents in Norway tends to show that the effects and after-effects of malnutrition and neglect experienced by children prior to their adoption are reversible or can be alleviated through a healthy family environment (see also Wattier and Frydman 1985, Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Lussier 1992, Verhulst et al. 1992). In addition, as will be seen further below, the majority of adoptees and their families say that they have a good relationship with each other. However, even in the best conditions, certain adoptions can disrupt the family equilibrium to greater or lesser degrees and for varying time periods. Thus, for example, in a Dutch study by Geerars et al. (1995) of a Thai subgroup of Hoksbergen et al.'s

(1987) sample, 25 percent of parents said that they had experienced serious problems during their adopted child's adolescence. During this time, a child may be withdrawn from his or her family environment. A study of Dutch institutions responsible for placing children in substitute homes (93% response rate, 670 institutions) revealed that 5 to 6 percent of international adoptions carried out until then in the country had at one time or another involved a placement (Hoksbergen et al. 1988). There are five times more placements of intercountry-adopted children than of children born in the Netherlands. The highest rate of family disruption occurs around the age of twelve. Moreover, the older the child when adopted, the more likely that the child will be placed in institutional care (1% of children adopted at under six months old vs. 20% of those adopted at over six and a half years old).

The principal factors identified in the literature as being likely to have an impact on the adjustment of children, their new parents and new family relate to the motivations and preferences of the adoptive parents, the characteristics of their family, the children's age at adoption and the number of children adopted simultaneously as well as the level of preparation of the adoptive parents, their adopted children and their other children.

4.1.1 The Initial Motivations and Preferences of Adoptive Parents

Little attention is paid in the literature to the possible impact of the initial motivations of the adoptive parents on the relative success or failure of children's integration. It appears that adoptions that primarily result from humanitarian concerns are, more often than others, associated with a rejection of the child or integration problems (for example, Spring-Duvoisin 1986, Terre des Hommes 1992). However, humanitarian aid is not a predominant motivation. The most frequent motivation is infertility or sterility (primary or secondary) or, in the case of adoptions by a single person, the absence of a partner with whom to procreate. Some adoptive parents who already have one or more children also adopt a child to avoid another pregnancy (for medical reasons or convenience), to be able to choose a child of a particular gender or to have an older child rather than an infant (Ouellette 1996a, Meunier 1997).

As regards choosing a child, the most important characteristics for adoptive parents appear to be gender, physical appearance or skin colour, country of origin and age (for example, Ouellette 1996c, Rude-Antoine n.d.). Comments on the gender of the child are rare. Ouellette and Frigault (1996) underlined the predominance of girls among children adopted in Quebec. However, it is not known whether this is due primarily to the availability of children from the sending countries that are approached by adoptive parents, for example, the People's Republic of China, or whether the preference for a girl dictates the choice of country. Nor are the ideas that favour choosing girls known. Ouellette (1996c) hypothesizes that in today's society, girls are perceived as being more likely to succeed academically and professionally than are boys and that therefore parents may feel more reassured about the future prospects of girls.

On the subject of children's physical appearance, Rude-Antoine (n.d.) underlines that the preferences stated by adoptive parents are part of the "anticipatory strategies" designed to prevent children who are members of a visible minority from encountering problems in their new environment. Thus, Asian children appear to be perceived as being less vulnerable to discrimination and stigmatization than blacks or, in France, Maghrebians. Those who adopt children who are marked as belonging to a different type often expect to have to support these children in a difficult fight against stereotypes, prejudices and racism.

As regards the age of children, the majority of adoptive parents are looking for children who are as young as possible. In practice, other considerations sometimes push them into adopting children who are older than they originally wished (Ouellette and Méthot 1996). Kühl (1985, cited by Textor, 1991) indicates that the probability of success is greater when there is a small difference between the age requested and the age of children when they are placed in the new family. Moreover, those who have attempted late adoption subsequently say that they had not realistically anticipated the difficulties involved (Ouellette and Méthot 1996, Rude-Antoine, n.d.).

Like gender, the age of children at adoption must be correlated with the choice of country of origin. For example, it is known that adoptions of children from the People's Republic of China by Quebeckers almost inevitably involve very young female babies. In contrast, children adopted from Haiti are often at least three years old (Ouellette and Frigault 1996). Nearly half of the children adopted in France from Colombia in 1994 ranged in age from five to ten years and half of those adopted from Russia ranged in age from three to seven years (Mattéi 1997). The subject of late adoption will be discussed in a later section of this chapter (4.4).

4.1.2   Characteristics of the Adoptive Family

The characteristics of the adoptive family that are mentioned most often in the literature as having a potential effect on adopted children's integration are the quality of the relationships between family members and family composition (i.e., presence of other children, etc.).

According to Bagley (1993a), the family integration of adopted children is closely linked to their adoptive parents' ability to communicate, tolerance, authority and affection. Kühl (1985, cited by Textor 1991), who compared domestically-adopted and internationally-adopted children, relates the success of an adoption to the advanced age of future parents, sufficient time intervals between successive adoptions, the parents' ability to communicate and the absence of conflict in the family group. Children's difficult past, the discovery following placement that children have a disability, the existence of too wide a gap between the children's behaviour and the adoptive parent's expectations of them also have a negative influence. According to Geerars et al. (1991), failures are related in particular to the presence of emotional problems within the family.

In any family, brothers and sisters' feelings of jealousy towards the newly arrived child, who demands a lot of the mother, can create tensions among siblings (De Blois 1995). Moreover, if there are too many children in the adoptive family, the probability of success could be decreased (Hoksbergen 1991, Terre des Hommes 1992). The risks seem

to be higher when the adoptees are integrated into families with children who are both younger and older than them (Kühl 1985). Geerars et al. (1991) compared a group of Dutch adoptees who had to be placed in a substitute family with another group of adoptees who were not placed in care. The parents of the former children were more likely to have biological children, their family was larger and the adoption often resulted in a drop in status for the eldest child or another form of "negative" placement in the family. According to some authors, in the most difficult cases, for example, adoptions of grown children or children with significant disabilities, the absence of other children is probably preferable (Ames 1997). This is especially so since the existing children often suffer considerably from the disruptions to family life caused by the difficult adjustment of their recently adopted brother or sister, and even their parents feel overwhelmed and distressed and have less time to devote to them (Ouellette and Méthot 1996).

Conversely, some studies show that the initial integration of young adopted children is all the more easy when there are other children in the family. In these cases, parents have previous parenting experience and the other children can facilitate the adopted child's adjustment to his or her new environment (Saetersdal and Dalen 1991, Terre des Hommes 1992). Based on an analysis of clinical cases, Tillon (1995) explains that the adoptive family's biological children can encourage more intense discussions between siblings and play an intermediary role between adopted children and the people around them when they are first adopted. Communication between siblings also makes adoptees aware of their position in relation to the others, particularly during adolescence, both with regard to their origins and their place within the family.

However, whether or not the children already present in the family are adopted or are the biological offspring of their parents may also make a difference. Thus, according to the results of research conducted by Hoksbergen et al. (1987), although relationships between siblings and between the parents and adopted children are generally positive, it remains that fewer children who are adopted by families with other adopted children have behaviour problems. Contrary to Tillon's assertion, the presence of several biological children may have a negative effect (Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Bagley 1993a). For

example, a study by Bagley (1993a) revealed that children who are closed to the question of their origins are mainly found in adoptive families with several biological children.

Differences in skin colour or physical features used for the purposes of racial categorization do not appear to have a great impact on family integration. Based on his review of studies carried out prior to 1985, Silverman (1993) maintains that transracial adoptions do not result in a greater occurrence of serious relationship problems within families. Simon and Alstein (1987) also conclude that children adopted by parents of another "racial" origin than their own are as well integrated into the family as their siblings.

4.1.3 The Child's Age at Adoption

Several of the studies reviewed suggest that age at adoption is a predominant factor in the successful integration of adoptees into the family (for example, Kühl 1985, Linowitz and Boothby 1988, Kvist et al. 1989, Lydens 1989, Maughan and Pickles 1990, Verhulst et al. 1990b, Nabinger 1991, Simon and Altstein 1991, Tizard 1991, Terre des Hommes 1992, Silverman 1993, Harper 1994). As was mentioned previously, the adoptions of children aged three years or older are considered to be more risky but, for certain authors, earlier adoptions are just as risky. Thus, for example, a study conducted by Hoksbergen et al. (1987) of 88 adoptive parents indicated that children who were adopted at six months or older were overrepresented among families who reported having problems with the initial establishment of a parent/child bond.

4.1.4 Number of Children Adopted

Some families adopt two or three times. The impact of successive adoptions is barely discussed in the literature. Nor are there studies of cases where a large family is created through adoption. Nabinger (1994) mentions examples of large adoptive families in which each child integrates well. Nevertheless, she underlines the risk of the family system being constructed around generalizations about nationalities of origin ("You never

know what Haitians are really thinking; the Guatemalans, on the other hand…")
(translation) (p. 87) and in which little attention is paid to the individuality of children,
especially if the parents are trying to continuously show that they made the right choice.

Few studies have examined more specifically the adoptions of siblings, that is,
biological brothers and sisters adopted together by the same family. Such adoptions are,
nevertheless, not exceptional (Ouellette and Frigault 1996, Mattéi 1997). Adoptive
parents may accept siblings, not only because they would like to have more than one
child, but also because they are tired of waiting or because one of the siblings meets their
wishes (Crine and Nabinger 1991, Balland et al. 1995).

Adoptions of siblings almost always involve the adoption of one child who is
already older and, at the same time, the introduction into the family of a subgroup that
already has its own culture and dynamics (Crine and Nabinger 1977). The older children
have often experienced situations in which they were obliged at an early age to
demonstrate maturity and assume a parental responsibility for their younger siblings.
They may feel deprived of their adult-parent role and present serious behaviour problems
much more often than their siblings. Parents may need support, particularly when a split
develops whereby one of the children comes to personify the "perfect child" and the other
the"bad child." According to Crine and Nabinger (1991), there is reason to believe that in
these cases, family integration may encounter problems or fail.

4.1.5 Preparation and Support for Adoption

Many authors mention in passing that the level of preparation of adoptive parents
for the problems that may be encountered in adoption is probably an important factor in
the process of integrating children. This is also frequently mentioned by professionals
who work in the field. Nevertheless, the studies reviewed do not systematically explore
the possible link between the quality of preparation for adoption and children's
integration.

Ouellette and Méthot (1996) suggest, in relation to the adoption of older children, that adoptive parents are not influenced very much by the preparatory warnings they receive. They minimize potential future problems and concentrate solely on the positive aspects of carrying out their project. In certain cases, the fact that they already have children or professional experience with children gives them confidence, whereas the problems which they subsequently face often go beyond anything that they could have expected. These authors consider that adoptive parents would, however, be more receptive to post-adoption assistance and support services if they truly felt that there were problems. However, many do not ask for the help that both they and their children need, often fearing that their decision to adopt or their parental abilities will be called into question. It is easier for them to recognize that they have problems when the child's academic success is at issue.

Preparation of the child should be a priority in all adoptions. However, this aspect appears to be neglected in intercountry adoptions, even when older children are involved (Harper 1994, Ouellette 1996a). In some cases, children are escorted to their adoptive country and handed over to their new parents at the airport with no transition period, which may be very painful (Greenfield 1995). It appears that many parents involve existing siblings when the adopted child arrives in the adoption process (SSAE 1990). But these children may subsequently feel even more guilty about their feelings of jealousy because their parents asked for their permission before introducing this new child into their lives and, thus, they are associated with a decision that is not their responsibility (Crine and Nabinger 1991).

4.2   *Family Integration From the Point of View of Children and Their Parents*

According to the quantitative results of studies in which children and their parents are asked to describe their relationship, the family integration of adoptees is usually considered to be satisfactory by the parties concerned. However, major problems are felt in a minority of cases and there are a number of differences between adopted and non-

adopted children in terms of their feelings of belonging and their perceptions of their place within the family.

4.2.1 Adoptees' Point of View on Parent-child Relationships

The large majority of adoptees say that they have a good relationship with their family (Kühl 1985, Hoksbergen et al. 1987; Simon and Altstein 1987, Rorbech 1991, Bagley 1993a, Benson et al. 1994, Despeignes 1994, Westhues and Cohen 1995). This is the case, for example, for 90 percent of the young people who participated in a study conducted by the French organization Terre des Hommes (1995). This is also true of more than three-quarters of the young Canadians adopted from abroad who were studied by Westhues and Cohen (1995). Moreover, these young people said that family members knew them the best and were their main confidants. As many adopted children as their non-adopted siblings felt close to their parents: 64 percent of the 155 adolescents in the study said that they had a close relationship with their mother and 58 percent with their father. In comparison, 55 percent of the biological children (121) of these same families felt close to their mother and 62 percent to their father. Paradoxically, more of the adopted than non-adopted children said that other families seem to be happier than their own, that most children are closer than they are to their parents and that they wanted to leave home as soon as they could. In fact, their level of family integration appears to be lower than that of their non-adopted siblings (Westhues and Cohen 1997). The status of adoptee seems to have little effect on the level of belonging, strictly speaking, but would affect family dynamics in cases where children feel that they are marginal. According to the authors, the age of children when the interviews took place may also have had an effect on the research results because the adoptees interviewed were, on average, younger than their non-adopted siblings.

Other studies have also reported on the differences between internationally-adopted children and non-adopted children and between internationally-adopted and domestically-adopted children. For example, one Dutch study that reported on the personal accounts of 116 children adopted from Thailand showed that these children trust

their parents more than do a control group of biological children (Hoksbergen et al. 1987). In Germany, a comparison between domestically-adopted children and internationally-adopted children, mainly from Asia (Korea or Vietnam) showed that the latter talk about their adoptive families in more positive terms than domestically-adopted children (Kühl 1985). Thus, 80 percent of these adoptees said that they had a good or very good relationship with their adoptive mother and 88 percent with their adoptive father. However, the author notes that the relationships between parents and children are less satisfactory for the two parties in the case of children adopted at an older age. Moreover, the comparative study by Levy-Shiff et al. (1997) conducted in Israel indicates that intercountry-adopted children perceive their parents as more supportive, but also as more controlling than do domestically-adopted children.

A number of studies have taken ethnic or national origin into account in their evaluation of the parent-child bond. Benson et al. (1994) compared the attachment of young adoptees of Asian origin with that of a population of adoptees of various origins. More of the children who were adopted by parents whose origin was different from their own were very attached to their adoptive parents, as compared with children whose adoptive parents were of the same origin. In a study of the formation of family identity in transracial adoptees (Despeignes 1994), the children interviewed expressed feelings of attachment to their parents. However, the majority of these children of Haitian origin, who ranged in age from seven to thirteen years, also showed a strong desire to please and to submit to authority. When asked what they would choose if they could determine the "racial" origin of their parents, nine out of twelve said that it did not matter.

As for adopted children's perception of their relationships with their parents, Horn (1992) adds important nuances, which are undoubtedly linked to his type of approach. His interpretation of stories created and told by ten adoptees ranging in age from four to sixteen years shows that the characters and scenes that they invented reflect an apprehension and lack of trust in parental figures. According to Horn, given that, for children of this age, the distinction between the imaginary world and reality is still not clear, their enormous creativity reflects feelings that they have really experienced.

4.2.2 Adoptive Parents' Point of View on Parent-child Relationships

Few studies examine the point of view of adoptive parents regarding their relationship with their adopted and biological children. Although these studies confirm that the majority of situations are perceived as satisfactory, they also reveal problems.

According to Simon and Altstein (1991), 83 percent of parents in the Stars of David association whom they interviewed thought that their relationships with their biological children were good and positive, while this was true of only 68 percent of the parents with regard to their adopted children. The proportion is higher for second adopted children (74%) than for first adopted children (58%). Westhues and Cohen (1995) concluded that 43 percent of mothers and 53 percent of fathers do not see any difference between their relationships with their adopted children as compared with their biological children. However, although 26 percent of mothers and 22 percent of fathers state that their relationships with their adopted children are more harmonious, 30 percent of mothers and 23 percent of fathers consider that their relationships with their adopted children are conflictual.

Hoksbergen et al. (1987) compared the respective perceptions of adoptive and biological parents with regard to family functioning. Their analytical grid included three dimensions: family cohesion, adjustment and social image. Their results show that more adoptive parents than biological parents consider their family to be very close. More adoptive parents also attach importance to family cohesion and provide their children with more rigid supervision. They tend to be less critical than biological parents about their family functioning and show a more positive image of themselves. They find it more difficult to cope with family problems and attribute more importance to the opinion of others than do biological parents. Finally, adoptive parents who also have biological children demonstrate a more flexible attitude towards family supervision.

The parents of Israeli children adopted from abroad who were interviewed by Levy-Shiff et al. (1997) were found to have a more positive attitude, as compared with

parents of Israeli-born children, towards the challenges of parenting and adoption and used strategies aimed more at solving problems and seeking assistance. On the other hand, these parents, particularly the fathers, were more overprotective, intrusive and controlling in their interactions with their children. These fathers had probably been more involved in the intercountry adoption project than those who had adopted domestically. Their paternal feelings were also stronger. The authors believe that intercountry adoption tends to involve those who already have resources and that, in addition, it creates a positive process of taking back power and control over their life, which compensates for the greater vulnerability of the adoptees.

The relationship problems identified by the adoptive parents themselves are particularly linked to the evolving nature of children's identity and sense of belonging to their family and social environment. These are manifested particularly in times of upheaval. Thus, several authors describe the adolescence of young adoptees as a particularly difficult period for both them and their parents (Terre des Hommes 1992, Verhulst et al. 1992, Westhues and Cohen 1995). Maury (1991), who studied children adopted at an older age, explains that adolescents reclaim their birth identity in order to rebel against their parents and society as a whole, as most young people this age do.

The departure of adopted children once they reach adulthood is yet another key stage for adoptive parents. Hartman and Laird (1990) underline that the latter may once again experience a sense of loss and may fear that their child, without a blood relationship that "guarantees" an emotional bond, will become completely detached from them. However, some studies indicate that more young adoptees state that they will leave home as soon as possible, as compared with their biological siblings (Gill and Jackson 1983, Simon and Altstein 1987, Westhues and Cohen 1995).

4.2.3 Adoptees and Their Siblings

Research on the relationships between siblings provides interesting data concerning adoptees' perception of their place within their families. Several studies show

that these children generally view their relationship with their adopted and non-adopted siblings positively (Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Simon and Altstein 1991, Despeignes 1994, Westhues and Cohen 1995). On the whole, they indicate that they have the same type of relationship with their adopted and non-adopted siblings and report having the same type of relationship with their siblings of the same colour as themselves and with those who are white (Weyer 1985, Simon and Altstein 1987 and 1991).

Other researchers have qualified these initial conclusions. For example, based on their analysis of drawings by children adopted from Asia, Wattier and Frydman (1985) note that the problem of sibling rivalry for parents' attention, particularly that of the mother, is still a likely source of problems, whether or not other siblings are adopted. A German study that compared adopted and biological children in the same families concluded that the latter feel more confident about their place in the family and are less jealous of their adopted siblings (Weyer 1985, cited by Textor 1991). This study also shows that young adoptees accept the presence of biological children more easily than they do the arrival of other adopted children. However, it should be pointed out that in most of the families included in the study, the relationships between the adopted and non-adopted children were similar to the relationships between biological children.

In their 1987 study of family integration based on the Family Integration Scale, Simon and Altstein had similar findings for adoptees and biological children, but in subsequent research, these authors had less positive results. In their survey of 59 Judeo-American families, 85 percent of the parents viewed the relationship between their biological and adopted children as good and positive (Simon and Altstein 1991), but this percentage fell to 70 percent when referring to the relationship between adopted children only. The children themselves were asked questions about three subjects: trust; the feeling of being treated equally by the parents (similar treatment); and the feeling of being supported by their parents (parents stick to me). The adoptees, whether adopted domestically or internationally, felt less integrated within their adoptive family than their siblings who were born into the family (Simon and Altstein 1991).

According to Crine and Nabinger (1991), it may be difficult for families to accept the fact that an adopted child surpasses their biological children, especially in academic performance. In rare cases, this could precipitate rejection of the adoptee, who has upset expectations and become somewhat of a scapegoat for others' feelings of dissatisfaction.

4.3   The Construction of Family Ties and Identity

A number of the studies reviewed focus on the process of integrating adopted children into their new families. These studies provide information particularly on the concrete practices of adoptive families and related social attitudes. They are mainly qualitative and thus refer to small samples. They are of interest here because they can reveal the specificities of the adoptive experience. First of all, they focus on the first contacts and the beginnings of attachment, not only because these largely determine how the family history will turn out, but also because some studies on the subject have examined relatively recent adoptions. They also consider the different ways that children become part of the group and family memory.

4.3.1 First Contacts and Beginnings of Attachment

The history of the relationship between a child and his or her adoptive parents begins, from the latter's point of view, the moment the parents hear about the child for the first time. They often even feel an attachment for the virtual child, still unidentified, who will eventually be proposed to them. This is not very different from what happens when a child is born. However, instead of pregnancy, birth and nursing, the entry into adoptive parenthood is marked by other stages, for example, the waiting period before adoption, the trip in the country of origin and the first meeting.

In the accounts of adoption, photographs are often mentioned as being an important element in the beginnings of an affective relationship and of responsibility between the adoptive parents and the child who is proposed to them. The role that photographs can play in integrating children psychologically, even before they arrive in

the family and their adoptive country, is well known by adoptive parents and workers in this field. When parents, siblings and their family and friends first set eyes on the child, he or she has already become one of them (Meyra 1992, Rude-Antoine n.d.). Later, when other photographs are taken, some of which showing the child with the members of his or her new family, and when they are circulated (sent by mail, given as gifts or exchanged) within the family network, this symbolic integration is continued and consolidated (Belleau, 1996).

Although the first meeting between the child and the adoptive parents may take place at the airport in the receiving country, most often it occurs in the child's country of origin. The adoption trip provides the new parents with a transition period between their previous life and their new family life, while giving them the opportunity to meet their child in his or her own environment. Nabinger (1994), who has worked in Brazil, maintains that it is essential for the adoptive parents to see their child's birth environment but that the time spent in the country of origin is still too short for the parents and children to get used to each other. She suggests that this can be compensated for by better selecting and preparing adoptive parents, by intensifying the collaboration between adoption workers in the country of origin and the receiving country and by providing better post-adoption follow-up. The impact of the adoption trip will be discussed again in Section 4.3.2.

Physical contacts are extremely important in establishing initial attachment bonds between the new parents and their adopted children. Couant (1996) uses the term "maternalization" to describe the active work that adoptive mothers carry out in this regard. She identifies a first phase of development of very close bonds with children when intense physical contact compensates symbolically for the inability of the adoptive mother to nurse. Moreover, it is during this first phase that children try to "replay their birth." Establishing this close relationship is much easier when an infant rather than an older child is adopted, especially in the case of international adoption because older children will have become accustomed to ways of doing things that are very different from those in their new families. For example, in a study that compared certain mothering

practices, Nabinger (1991) revealed that adoptive mothers in northern Europe value the independence of their children while those in Brazil, on the contrary, tend to encourage dependence.

With regard to the conditions that favour the attachment between adopted children and their parents, most authors refer to the notion of mourning, whose importance has already been underlined (Chapter 1). In fact, it is the work of mourning carried out by parents and adoptees respectively that in a way initiates attachment (French 1986, Ozoux-Teffaine 1987, Maury 1992, Balland et al. 1995). Unlike the other authors, Couant (1996) believes that adopted children oblige their parents to mourn, in a radical way, the loss of the imaginary child while inducing a close relationship with them, especially with the adoptive mother, from the time of their initial contact with each other. However the clinical work consulted indicates that, more generally, the place of the biological child who could not be conceived is often where an unconscious psychological investment on the part of the parents lies. Their difficulty in accepting adopted children as they are, children who are different from those whom they dreamed of and who have a past that is all their own, may nevertheless be obscured by the intensity of their efforts to repair the children whom they removed from miserable living conditions (Balland et al. 1995).

As for the mourning that adoptees must sooner or later go through, it is discussed mainly in relation to late adoption in studies that draw on psychoanalysis and refer to children mourning the loss of their biological parents and the process of regression experienced by many children who are adopted at an older age (Wattier and Frydman 1985, French 1986, Ozouz-Teffaine 1987, Maury 1991, Beal 1993, Decerf 1995, Terre des Hommes 1995, Ozoux-Teffaine 1996).

4.3.2 The Integration of Children Into the Family and Their Entry Into Family History

Various material and symbolic practices may contribute to children's integration into the family. In this regard, adoptive families model themselves largely on biological families. Like everyone, they use the available repertoire of cultural practices and

attitudes in our societies that relate to the formation of families and the exercise of the social roles of parents, sons and daughters, grandparents, and so on. We will examine the practices and attitudes that are more specific to the context of intercountry adoption. They involve the following four dimensions: equating adoption with birth, the search (or lack thereof) for similarities between the adopted children and other family members, the naming of children and their symbolic entry into the family memory.

Equating Adoption With Birth

Intercountry adoption necessarily involves a waiting period, which can sometimes be very long, between the birth of children and their official entry into their adoptive family. Moreover, intercountry adoption takes place beyond national, geographic, ethnic and cultural boundaries. Nevertheless, the studies reviewed show that adoptive parents and their family and friends see the adoption as being equivalent to a birth. The accounts of their adoption experiences are often peppered with metaphorical references to procreation. For example, the long period of administrative procedures and of waiting are associated with a pregnancy, or the long trip to go and get the children in his country of origin is presented as a "long labour." This phenomenon, which is common in all types of adoption, including the adoption of children who are older, has been observed by a number of authors (for example, Ouellette 1994, 1995, Decerf 1995, Belleau 1996, Rude-Antoine n.d.). Some adoptive parents talk about a "dual childbirth," referring to the fact that in adoption, the man and the woman are in similar positions (Ouellette 1996a).

In certain contexts, the first contacts with the child can take a ritualized form that is reminiscent of the rituals surrounding birth. Thus, certain accounts of their group adoption trip by adoptive parents from Quebec all include the same sequence in which the child's first bath given in the privacy of their hotel room appears to act as a rite of passage which dismisses the child's previous life to a past which is detached from his or her current social existence (Ouellette 1997). Moreover, several families celebrate this date as the child's birthday. The date on which the adoption is officially finalized is also

very often celebrated as the child's birthday. This was the practice, for example, in 56.6 percent of the American families interviewed by Trolley et al. (1995).

In Belleau's (1996) analysis of family photo albums and parents' accompanying discourse, a distinction emerged between the ideas of families with adopted children only and those who also have biological children. The latter tell the story of the child's arrival in their family by comparing the steps in the process of adoption (proposal of the child, waiting period before the trip, the adoption trip itself, the first meeting) with the stages of procreation (conception, pregnancy, birth). The first physical contact with the child is thus presented as a birth. On the other hand, families with adopted children only tend to refer to a birth when they get off the airplane upon returning to their own country. What is interesting about these distinct images is the different meaning that the adopted child's arrival may have, depending on whether it enlarges a family or gives the adoptive parents the social status of parents for the first time.

The Search For (Or Negation) Of Similarities

Like all other children, adopted children identify with their adoptive parents and need to be recognized as one of them by the members of the extended family group. Their family identity develops through, among other things, the statement of common points that connect them to this group. This often happens through the discovery by the parents and their family and friends, of physical and behavioural similarities between themselves and the adopted children in the family, even when they are physically very different from the child. Similarly, many young adoptees say that they have inherited character traits, ways of doing things and so on from their adoptive parents.

A number of authors interpret the fact that parents and children find such physical and behavioural similarities with each other as the expression of the children's profound desire to belong to the family group. Moreover, the adoptive parents' and adoptees' desire to establish close bonds during the first years "often leads to (undoubtedly through mimicking) a strange physical resemblance" (Couant 1996: 35). The main challenge is to

create links (Maury 1992, Neuberger 1995) that will compensate in an imaginary way for the absence of a blood ties (Couant 1996). This phase of recognition of similarities is followed by the acceptance and recognition of everyone's differences (Despeignes 1994). Some authors associate this desire for integration with the colour blindness of certain parents and children who no longer see their colour difference (Lussier 1992, Maury 1992, Morrier 1995).

Conversely, other interpretations emphasize that the child's integration occurs through the acceptance of a lack of physical similarities. In their study of young adoptees in Canada, Westhues and Cohen (1995) asked parents if their child reminded them of someone in their own family; 55 percent of the mothers and 62 percent of the fathers said no. These authors believe that these responses mean that the adopted children have been accepted as they are and that their own identity has been recognized, which provides a basis for constituting a strong mutual tie. Moreover, according to Costa-Lascoux (1988: 174), the absence of similarities may be valued as proof that investment in adoptive filiation is mainly affective in nature.

The ability to attribute some of the child's physical or psychological problems to an unknown heredity may have a positive, even liberating, effect on the adoptive parents (Couant 1996). Nevertheless, some of them experience problems dealing with this unknown area and recognizing themselves in this "foreign" child (Mégard 1986, Noël and Soulé 1986). Moreover, if the hereditary hypothesis is used too hastily to explain adopted children's behaviour problems, it may interfere with their becoming part of a network of family resemblances by exaggerating differences and referring to characteristics that are perceived negatively (Noël and Soulé 1986, Saetersdal and Dalen 1991, Decerf 1993, Daubigny 1994).

According to Decerf (1993), the social attitudes mobilized through the racial and cultural origins of the intercountry-adopted children sometimes produce a specific mode of affective investment in the children that tends to make them "beings of a special nature that must be isolated from contact with subjects that obey ordinary filiation rules" (p. 27).

She notes that some Belgian adoptive parents opt for a ritualized parenting approach and maintain, around the child and his or her origins, the myth, for example, of the abandoned child or the child who has been the victim of racial determinants. Paulis (1989) also identified negative forms of insistence on racial difference within family interactions.

Naming The Child

The family name and given name of adopted children are important labels of identity (Soulé 1984, Balland et al. 1995, Couant 1996, Ouellette 1997). However, few studies on intercountry adoption examine the naming of children.

In full adoption, the child's membership in the family line inevitably occurs through the passing on of the father's surname (or, in Quebec, through the mother's or both parents' surnames). The new surname also reflects that the child belongs to the receiving society. Adoptive parents are more concerned with giving the child this new surname than with legalization of the adoptive relationship. Indeed, the transfer of the name, more than the adoption order is "seen as a true recognition of the child's becoming a member of his or her new adoptive family" (Rude-Antoine, n.d.: 228).

As long as the adoption is not recognized in the receiving country (through recognition of the adoptive order made in the sending country or through a new order), children do not have their adoptive parents' surname. They are therefore registered at school and in the health system, for example, under their original name. Some adoptive parents find this delay in public recognition of their parental status difficult (Rude-Antoine n.d.). On the other hand, authorization of the use of their surname before the adoption is finalized legally would not be any more acceptable. Indeed, children should only lose their birth identity when they have the legal guarantee of being able to keep the identity given to them by their adoptive parents because there have been cases in which children have been orphaned or abandoned a second time before the adoption is finalized (Spring-Duvoisin 1986). Of course, as the examination of cases of failed adoption in

Switzerland shows, it is essential that children be given their own name and first name by the country of origin before an international adoption takes place:

> From the point of view of optimizing the protection of children's rights, it is more important to guarantee a certain continuity of their name (considering, among other things, the risk of being placed a second time) and to recognize their own origin (at least until a partially new origin is given to them) than to create a membership in the family that does not yet exist (translation) (Lücker-Babel 1991: 70).

Giving adopted children a first name has implications at more than one level. The given name is a mark of the child's individuality and uniqueness, but it may also serve as a vehicle for the parents' preferences, family tradition or the establishment of a privileged relationship between the child and a person who has the same name or between the child and his or her godparents who are asked to choose the given name (Ouellette 1997, Rude-Antoine n.d.).

According to the Swedish study by Koh and Gardell (mentioned by Cole 1992), keeping the original given name of adopted children has an important effect on their ethnic identity. Balland et al. (1995) consider that suppressing the given name of children may be harmful psychologically because it cancels out the identity for which it provided recognition. It meets the more or less unconscious wish of the adoptive parents to blot out the painful past of children, but at the risk of preventing the children from mourning the loss of their birth family.

There has been little research on adoptive families' practices of giving a first name. It may be hypothesized that they vary markedly from one receiving country to the next. In her study of American families who adopted Korean children, Cole (1992) found that approximately 43 percent of parents interviewed had kept their child's original name, either in whole or in part. However, the most frequent practice was to make it the child's middle name and to give the child a usual first name that is more American-sounding or one from the family. A large-scale Danish study revealed that the original given name of most children adopted at a young age became their middle name but that one-third lost it

completely in favour of a strictly Danish name. On the other hand, most children adopted at an older age kept their original given name when adopted (Rorbech 1991).

The study conducted by Terre des Hommes (1995) in France revealed that 75 percent of the adopted children concerned received a new given name when adopted and that 18 percent missed their original given name. However, almost half of the 25 percent who kept their original given name would have preferred to change it. As in the study cited above, it was found that the child's original given name was kept more often in the case of those adopted at an older age. Finally, according to this study, young people with a French given name felt that they were perceived more as being French.

Ouellette (1997) also mentions that the majority of the adoptive parents in Quebec who told her their adoption story gave their child a new given name. Most often, these were quite common names in Quebec. In some cases, the parents invented a name or used a more conventional name but changed its spelling to evoke the child's origins. In other cases, the child's original given name was used but changed to make it more easy to pronounce. As in Denmark or France, the original given name is often kept as a second name on the birth certificate, but never used. The author underlines that changing children's given names for the purposes of family or social identification but keeping their original name, at least on paper to evoke their individual history, also corresponds to the most common attitudes towards the children's culture of origin. This culture is effectively recognized and even given importance so as to support the children's self esteem but the children are above all associated with the culture of their adoptive country.

Inclusion Of The Child In The Family Tradition And Extended Family

The integration of children into their new families presumes, among other things, that they are being transmitted values that distinguish that family, that they can feel personally concerned by its history and traditions and that their membership in the extended family is recognized. However, as Tillon (1995) noted, adoptive parents are introducing foreign children into their family, children who are not immediately

associated with the symbolism of kinship ties. They create conditions for the family integration of the children which were until recently unheard of. The question then is whether these conditions generate practices that are new or different from usual family practices. This dimension of the integration of intercountry-adopted children is still relatively unexplored, as if socialization into the family culture necessarily goes without saying.

Simon and Altstein (1991) examined the passing on of identity and religious values in American Jewish families who were members of the Stars of David (SOD). The latter teach their adopted children to respect the culture of the country of origin (through language, books, trips and participation in various rituals), but they also encourage the acquisition of a clear Judeo-American identity. For example, an adoptee from Korea is given a Hebrew first name and has a bar mitzvah as a rite of passage. Of the families interviewed, three out of four held a ceremony to mark their child's conversion to Judaism and two out of three boys were circumcized. The children were enrolled in a Jewish school or, at least, in Hebrew lessons. None of the families treated their biological and adopted children differently as regards plans for a Jewish education and ceremonies associated with rites of passage. However, the Jewish identity was linked to individual behaviours (knowledge of history and culture, pride in being Jewish) rather than to family and community expressions of Jewishness. Similarly, the majority of the adopted children in the study by Levy-Shiff et al. (1997), which was conducted in Israel, were converted to Judaism.

Among the symbolic practices that reinforce the cohesion of the family group, those relating to photographs play an important role in consolidating the position of the adopted child. Belleau (1996) examined this question based on family photo albums and their accompanying accounts of family history and found that there is a specific mode of family integration of adopted children. It consists in including the adopted child, at a symbolic level, in the childhood of the adoptive mother. She showed how, for example, certain mothers photograph their adopted child in settings similar to those in which they themselves were photographed as the main subject when they were children.

What these images and their accompanying story have in common is that they inscribe the elective tie in a time preceding the arrival of the children, that is, in that of the adoptive mothers…Through photography, the children see themselves as being related to the past of their adoptive mother and, by extension, as part of the history of the extended family. All the work of constructing an identity of belonging to the adoptive family can be seen here (Belleau 1996: 234).

The entry of the child into the group depends largely on the interactions with the various members of the extended family, particularly with the grandparents. However, international adoption may sometimes not live up to the latter's expectations. Indeed, although becoming an adoptive parent is voluntary, grand-parents, uncles and aunts enter into the adoptive relationship without having chosen it themselves and, sometimes, without having had the opportunity to think it over ahead of time, even though they are associated with the adoption project.

Although few in number, studies on intergenerational relationships in adoptive families present a rather positive portrait of the relationships that develop between grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and so on. For example, in their study of some 34 adoptive families, Trolley et al. (1995) note that most parents first inform the maternal grandparents when they decide to start adoption procedures. The authors hypothesize that this greater openness on the maternal side has an impact on subsequent intergenerational relationships, a phenomenon that needs to be more widely studied. Moreover, in his study of ten adoptive families, Routhier (1996) mentions that, according to statements made by parents, the members of the extended family accepted the adopted child well despite the fact that, at first, they were sometimes not very much in favour of the project. According to Ouellette et al. (n.p.), while some adoptive parents in Quebec consider that their adoptive children are the grandparents' favourites, this is not confirmed by the grandparents, who emphasize that they make no distinction between their grandchildren.

According to Tillon (1995), because the grandparents play a crucial role in the renewal of points of reference from the past and the continuity of the family unit, it seems to be easier for them to accept adopted grandchildren when they arrive following a long period of infertility. She also maintains that their biological grandchildren may facilitate

the integration of their adopted siblings by denouncing, for example, the injustice committed against them. Moreover, because of the important ties linking them to both their adopted siblings and their grandparents, they are sometimes able to build a bridge between these two when attachment does not develop right away.

Although some studies show that young adoptees think that their grandparents play an important role in their lives (Simon and Altstein 1987), others show, on the contrary, that the latter intervene in only a peripheral way (Terre des Hommes 1995). Morrier (1995) nevertheless maintains that the great majority of adoptees think that they have been as well received by the extended family as they would have been were they biological children.

The integration of adopted children by the extended family is sometimes approached in the negative, that is, in relation to the absence of racist behaviour towards adopted children of a different ethnic origin (Despeignes 1993, Tillon 1995). Such absence of racist incidents helps the children to adjust and reinforces the adopted child's family identity (Despeignes 1993). A study of Simon and Altstein (1987) revealed that 71 percent of young adoptees of another "racial" origin than their parents consider themselves to have a very close relationship with their grandparents, as compared with 53 percent of biological children and 57 percent of adopted white children. This difference between the three groups persists when young people are interviewed about their relationships with their uncles and aunts. Moreover, the authors mention that their responses agree with their parents' statements. They conclude that the racial factor does not play a negative role in the family integration of these children.

4.4   *Family Integration of Children Adopted at an Older Age*

The overall finding to emerge from the current state of knowledge on intercountry adoption of children aged three years or older is that a satisfactory family adjustment usually takes place in the medium or longer term. Thus, for example, the Danish study by Rorbech (1990) of a group of young adults ranging in age from 18 to 25 years, two-thirds

of whom were adopted at an older age (three years or older), shows that the majority maintained a close relationship with their families. Slightly less than half had left their parental home but most of these were in contact with their family on average once per month. However, 20 to 25 percent of the young people in the study had maintained little contact with their parents and siblings.

Various authors conclude that children adopted at an older age frequently have difficult relationships with other family members, whether their parents or siblings (Cordell et al. 1985, Kühl 1985, Hoksbergen et al. 1987, Kvist et al. 1989, Lydens 1989, Simon and Altstein 1991, Lussier 1992). More of these young people feel, for example, that they are not treated by their parents in the same way as their siblings (Simon and Altstein 1991).

The literature on late adoption, more than any other type of adoption, reveals that the integration of a child into the family is a gradual process which should be considered in different stages. It should be expected that the first months or even years after his or her arrival may be painful for the child and the whole family. Subsequently, the balance of relationships achieved will not necessarily reproduce the spontaneously affectionate and relaxed family functioning that the adoptive parents had first dreamed of. The problems experienced in order to quickly establish a relationship of trust and complicity with the child make many parents feel incompetent, guilty and sometimes angry (for example, Linowitz and Boothby 1988, Harper 1994). Adoption may also lead to a family break-up. In the case of a successful adjustment, the child will have experienced an internal process which is complex and personal. Most of the studies reviewed on the subject concern a small number of cases and are conducted from a qualitative or clinical perspective. The authors refuse to generalize their observations, maintaining that each case is unique and must be considered as such (Ozoux-Teffaine 1987).

In a study of approximately twenty Quebec families who adopted grown children, Ouellette and Méthot (1996) found that with two or so exceptions, the families that experienced difficulties for a prolonged period of time after a late adoption succeeded in

finding a state of equilibrium and mutual attachment that did not necessarily correspond to the initial aspirations of the parents, nor even often to the idea that people generally have of a normal family life, but that allowed them to continue to work in the desired direction. According to these authors, adoptive parents are first and foremost mobilized by an ideal of family normality, which is defined primarily in emotional terms. They want above all to experience with their child the same emotions and the same attachment that are attributed (rightly or wrongly) to other families who have biological children or children who were adopted at a very young age. The family entourage also thinks in terms of this model of the "normal" family, with the result that relatively little attention and support is given when adopted children arrive. In fact, members of the extended family model their interactions with adoptive parents and their recently adopted children on what "normally" happens[9] when someone in the group has children the same age. However, considerable attention and help is "normally" given to parents at the birth of a child and in the child's first few months, but this help then decreases substantially, becoming very light and occasional. Moreover, most parents are very reluctant to seek professional help to solve relationship problems with the adopted child because to do so would go against the ideal that they are pursuing, that is, to be like other families.

In a Swiss study of children adopted after the age of six, Beal (1993) discusses the harsh realities faced by children who have been "polytraumatized" (mistreated, abandoned as a result of war, etc.). Not only do they experience deep disillusionment because of unrealistic expectations that they have built up regarding their adoptive mother and more generally about the adoption process (see also Maury 1992, Beal 1993, Balland et al. 1995), but they must also deal with Western culture and adjust to the reduced world of the nuclear family and its particular demands. Their initial adjustment therefore constitutes a very emotional period that requires adoptive parents to be highly available and to often invest heavily in the therapeutic work needed to make sense of the child's anger.

---

[9] Cheri Register's (1991) book entitled *Are those Kids Yours? American Families with Children Adopted from Other Country* illustrates in its own way the theme of the "normality" of adoptive families. Based on her personal experience and interviews with adoptive families, the author attempts to demonstrate that the latter correspond entirely to what is "normal" for American families.

Ozoux-Teffaine (1987) sees late adoption as an exaggeration of what all adoptees experience. She emphasizes that the adoptive parents must mourn the loss of the biological child, but also that the adoptees themselves must mourn the loss of their family of origin in order to then be able to develop a lasting attachment relationship. While Maury (1991) and Decerf (1995) underline that the abandonment experienced by adopted children clearly puts them in the position of rejected object of parental love, Ozoux-Teffaine reveals instead that breaking the link with the children's environment of origin may give them access to a structuring experience. She shows how the establishment of the adoptive tie develops in a movement towards a close relationship, but that it then makes disengagement possible:

> On the one hand, the possibility for children to once again become, virtually, the awaited babies but to then give it up; on the other hand, the ability of their parents to assume the primary maternal preoccupation, but to accept that they will also lose certain narcissistic aspirations when faced with the trials of adoption (translation) (Ozoux-Teffaine 1996: 43).

The study by Maury (1991) of young people who were adopted at an older age (between five and ten years old) shows that they integrate into the family in a two stage process. In the first stage, children become familiar with family members and their environment and evaluate what they can get out of them. During the second, regressive stage, children mourn the loss of their original environment and biological parents. Only then can they "renounce all the potential parents of the world and become attached to their adoptive parents who become their real parents, for themselves and according to the law" (Maury 1991: 17). After several years, these children will become part of the family romance and the unconscious fantasy of the family, when life together makes it possible to develop a common memory and past. For this author, integration into the family can be considered a success when the subject of differences between group members allows for considerable room for similarities in the family fantasy (Maury 1992). According to Decerf (1995), the role of fantasies is crucial because they allow abandoned children to deal with a number of questions that are vital for them. Indeed, through their fantasies, children can reproduce themselves, that is, recreate themselves in a sexed and desired way, for example, through regression. This fantasy-based construction allows for the

emergence of "another mother." Only then can abandoned children reach the position of recognized and named children.

French (1986) shows how the adoptive relationship is established by referring to Bowlby's attachment theory which deals with children's skill at creating new affective bonds and at overcoming the distress related to losses suffered after the age of eighteen months. She describes the problem behaviours of the child that she adopted and explores the stages of mourning the past (denial, anger, depression, acceptance), which lead to attachment to the present. She puts forward recommendations to enable parents to encourage this process.

From the perspective implicitly adopted by the majority of authors mentioned above, late adoption is simply a variant in the creation of a relationship of filiation in the full sense of the term. This is a relationship that, in addition to being socially and legally structuring for the child, also allows for a form of restorative psychological restructuring centered on the internalization of adoptive parental figures. On the other hand, Harper (1994) examined the case of seven foreign children adopted in Australia between the age of four and a half and twelve years old and found that rather than resembling a birth, late adoption is more like a marriage between two individuals who were initially strangers to each other. The marriage may end in a break-up, especially since, contrary to what happens in a union between adults, children's pasts cannot be recovered and communicated. She refers to Bell's (1959) description of late adoption:

> It is a process whereby individuals already equipped with consciousness, memories, patterns of thought and reaction and large stores of life experience link their lives together (Harper 1994: 25).

She adds that one of the elements that can play a role in the failure to integrate older children is their poor understanding of the family's functioning, obligations and roles. They see their parents as suppliers (of food, material goods, entertainment, and so on) and find it difficult to assimilate the notion of a mutual relationship of affection. The author underlines that time plays a large role in the process of family integration and that

it takes children at least the same number of years or months that they had lived outside the adoptive family to create lasting ties with its members. When adoption fails, both the adopted children as well as the adoptive family and its members suffer greatly.

The speed at which older adoptees learn the language of their adoptive country often leads to demands at the cultural level being made too hastily by adoptive parents who are anxious for their children to adhere to Western values. Conflicts may then ensue which, rather than being related to the usual subjects of intergenerational conflict, have to do with cultural divergences which, from the children's perspective, evoke historical inequalities between colonizers and the colonized (Beal 1993, Balland et al. 1995). Thus, as Beal explains in relation to parent-child relationships and, particularly, those between mother and child:

> The notions of culture and generation take each other's place whereas the former should include the latter. Therein lies the debacle, for the protagonists are caught in a game of stereotyped, hyper-differentiating relationships since they refer to different cultures, which prevents them from truly questioning their mutual desire for filiation: they become strangers to each other (translation) (1993: 364).

According to the author, the violence that often emerges from confrontations during adolescence can be resolved through a long and difficult therapeutic process.

According to Cordell et al. (1985), who studied approximately twenty adolescents who were adopted at an older age, integration problems occur when adoptive parents think that children will automatically assume the family heritage and forget their own. Based on this finding, the authors have developed group counselling intended for young people that allows them to share their common experiences and express their attachment to their environment of origin without offending their adoptive parents. Balland et al. (1995) also consider that the risks of failure of late adoption are linked to the cultural break experienced by children who arrive from abroad and recommend that older children be adopted within their country of origin.

Conclusion

The creation of an adoptive family brings into play several levels of reality, particularly the initial motivations and the context in which children are introduced, practices and ideas (those of the parents but also of the siblings, grandparents and other members of the extended family) and, finally, each and everyone's perceptions and feelings. The literature reviewed indicates that the particularities of adopted children or adoptive families can be identified for each of these levels. It should be noted, among other things, that the majority of adopted children consider their family relationships to be very positive but that a number of studies suggest that they do not have exactly the same sense of family belonging as their non-adopted siblings. Moreover, new practices of integrating children into the family group sometimes develop around them, particularly at the symbolic level. These practices are structured around ideas of adoption as being a new birth into social life. Moreover, most of the analyses that we have reviewed suggest that even late adoption consists in experiencing the same stages, in terms of relationships, that parents normally go through with their biological children. However, late adoptions reveal the irreducible difference between adoption and the constitution of a family through procreation, insofar as they unambiguously require that everyone be aware of the losses that parents and children must mourn.

The following chapter focuses on another important aspect of the experience of intercountry adoption, that of children's origins and identity. This dimension has repercussions on both the process of family integration and personal development.

CHAPTER 5

Identity and Social Integration

In the literature reviewed, the identity and social integration of children adopted from abroad are considered mainly through the question of origins and the matter of ethnic identity and colour. The question of origins is, to begin with, significant as regards the development of a personal identity, insofar as all individuals need to position themselves with reference to those who brought them into the world, visualize the human context of their birth and put their present lives into a perspective of continuity with reference to their past. Though adoptees are very clearly and intimately affected by the matter of their origins, their adoptive parents are as well, for it is their responsibility to support their children as they develop. The question of origins cannot, of course, be dissociated from that of ethno-cultural and colour identity. However, colour identity also bears on the adoptees' social integration, that is, to the place that they occupy or that their host society attributes to them as individuals born in another country and, most significantly, endowed with physical features that visibly distinguish them from the majority of their fellow citizens. Another key dimension of social integration is that of adoptees' rights. However, as this aspect is seldom taken up by researchers, it will be covered only briefly at the end of this chapter.

5.1. *The Question of Origins*

The main tension within any familial dynamic is associated with permitting each member to undergo the process of individuation while ensuring that the group cohesiveness remains intact around common referents. In the case of an adopted child, however, particularly one adopted internationally, this tension takes on greater significance since one of the child's main distinctive traits stems from the fact that the origins of his or her existence are elsewhere than within the adoptive family. The child was not only born to a different set of parents, but is also from another country and another culture.

The matter of the adopted child's background and origins will be taken up below by highlighting the literature's principal contributions on the following aspects, in the order indicated: the disclosure and recounting of the adoption, the knowledge of the child's background, the adoptive parents' acknowledgement of the child's familial and cultural origins, and lastly, the interest that the adoptees show in their past and in their biological parents.

5.1.1. *The Disclosure and Recounting of the Adoption*

Though many children who were adopted at a very early age feel as though they always knew that they were adopted, others remember a specific moment when they were either told or learned of it (Terre des Hommes 1995, Westhues and Cohen 1995). Ideally, children's awareness of this fact, whether gradual or not, should bring them to adopt, in turn, their adopters (Terre des Hommes 1995). However, when is the right time to tell a child that he or she is adopted? Most specialists do not encourage parents to try to find such a moment, as this would have the effect of breaking a more or less long period of silence or secret. Instead, they advocate that the parents be completely open with the child on this subject from the outset. For that matter, it appears as though this is the approach most widely endorsed by adoptive parents. In the study conducted by Trolley et al. (1995), 73.5 percent of parents contacted indicated that they told their children about their adoptive status very early into the adoption and all did so before the children reached five years of age.

Neuberger (1995) does not share the majority position and challenges the belief that children must be told as young as realistically possible about the adoption. According to Neuberger, priority should first be given to ensuring that the "mythical graft" between the child and his adoptive parents, and with the extended family, has "taken" well. By mythical graft he means "the imaginary process through which a child is made to become part of the family, a process that positions the child in a filiation, an affiliation" (translation) (p. 118).

Talking to children about their adoption involves, among other things, the adoptive parents' account of how the adoption took place. Hartman and Laird (1990) stress, as do others, that when children are often told the story of their adoption, it helps them integrate their own distinct background into the collective memory of the family group. At the same time, the children learn to link their past with the present and derive a sentiment of continuity thereof, both with respect to their being and identity. However, the less information there is on a child's origins, the slimmer the chance the story has of being told. And the less it is told, the greater are the risks of the child developing a certain anxiety over it.

5.1.2. *Knowledge of the Adopted Child's Background*

Adoptive parents' knowledge of their children's family background, and the extent of this knowledge, depends largely on the intermediaries with whom they deal and the children's country of origin, but also on the placement policies and practices favoured by the institutions in the parents' own country. Another factor is the parents' conscious decision to gather the most information possible themselves or, on the contrary, to give priority to adopting a child whose past is unknown (Ouellette 1996c).

Among the parents interviewed for Greenfield's study (1995) of 46 families in France and 60 in England, most of whom adopted internationally, a large proportion reported having met their children's birth mother during their stay in the children's country of origin (in most cases, a Latin American country): 55 percent of English families and 35 percent of French families. Approximately 86 percent of the English families and 70 percent of the French families had obtained information on their children's birth mother whereas only 43 percent of the former and 26 percent of the latter had obtained information on the birth father. This difference of roughly 20 percent between the respondents of the two receiving countries was also observed with regard to information on the children's pre-adoption medical history. The author attributes these discrepancies to the fact that the legal and institutional policies and practices associated with domestic and intercountry adoptions in England differ from those in France. When

the families of the sample population were interviewed, half of them nevertheless indicated that they were disappointed with how little information they were able to obtain on their children's social and medical backgrounds.

In Germany, where adoptions are conducted either through state-approved agencies or through private contacts, a study of 300 adoptees shows that, in one out of two cases, the adoptive parents knew the identity of the birth mother or the biological parents (Bach 1988, cited by Textor 1991). Before their placement, half of the children were living in children's homes, and 41 percent were living with parents, relatives, or foster families (pp. 111-112).

In Quebec, a large proportion of the children adopted since 1990 come from the People's Republic of China and most of the parents of these children are said to be unknown (Ouellette and Frigault 1996). The adoptive parents frequently commented that the information they received from the orphanage lacks credibility since almost the same information had been given to other adopters. These observations attest to the fact that the policies and conditions for abandoning and receiving children are not designed to allow children to one day retrace a few reference points in their family histories. However, Quebeckers who adopt children in other countries, Haiti or Latin America in particular, are at times able to meet the biological family or, at least, learn of its identity. Sometimes contacts are established and maintained, with the possibility of planning reunions for some time in the future (Ouellette 1996c, Ouellette et Méthot 2000). Though such ties with the biological family are mentioned by other authors, for example, Rude-Antoine (n.d.), they have not been specifically researched.

In the context where information on children's pre-adoption history is scarce, a number of authors stress the importance of the adoption trip that future parents make to their children's country of origin (Ozoux-Teffaine 1987, Hartman and Laird 1990, Meyra 1992, Greenfield 1995). In a study conducted in France by the Service social d'aide aux émigrants (SSAE 1990), the couples interviewed felt that their adoption trip was a means for them to develop a more authentic view of their child's place of origin and to more

adequately communicate to the child the few elements that were known of his or her history. During the trips, adoptive parents made a point to keep all documents substantiating the journey (airline ticket, hotel pamphlets, etc.), but especially to take numerous photographs and videos of the people and places. These souvenirs were to be among the principal tools used when talking to their children about their origins and relating the story of their adoption (Meyra 1992, Belleau 1996, Ouellette 1997). In addition to photographs taken in the country of origin, some parents purchase clothing, toys or other items while there, with the intention of putting together a "box of souvenirs," or a "legacy," from their adopted child's country (Belleau 1996). The matter of the child's background is brought forward through these family archives primarily by reference to the child's country and culture of origin, and only very slightly by reference to his or her biological family or the social environment to which the child belonged.

Only rarely do adoptees have direct knowledge of their pre-adoption history. The age at which they were adopted clearly weighs heavily in determining whether or not they have memories of their country of origin and their lives there. For that matter, fewer than one out of four youth contacted by Westhues and Cohen (1995) recalled the first time they met their adoptive parents, since nearly 75 percent were under four years of age at the time. In the Terre des Hommes (1995) study, slightly more than 50 percent of the adolescents interviewed were two years of age or older when they were adopted; 64 percent had no recollection of their arrival in their new family nor of the events preceding it. The study found that the adoptees who were dissatisfied with their situation at that time had greater recall. As regards the research conducted by Rorbech (1991) in Denmark on 384 young adopted adults (18 to 25 years of age) from various continents, two-thirds of whom were more than three years old when adopted, the author found that only half remembered having spoken another language and that about one-third had memories of people or violent incidents from their lives prior to their adoption.

5.1.3   Recognition of the Child's Background and Origins

Though there is agreement over the enormous importance of the adoptive parents talking to their children about their "origins," there appears to be a lack of consensus as to the reality encompassed by the term. For some, it refers to the child's biological parents and to his or her past, whereas for others, "origins" brings to mind a country, a culture or an ethno-racial group. In the latter case, the matter of the sexuality in the child's origin and family background may remain veiled. Others consider the two dimensions simultaneously and there are shifts in meaning from one to the other.

According to Hartman and Laird (1990), two points in particular should be stressed when telling children about their adoption: how and why the birth mother relinquished her child for adoption, and why the parents wanted to adopt them, as well as how they proceeded. It is also extremely important that the biological father not be excluded from the story. The failure to recognize the child's biological family is, in the authors' opinion, tantamount to denying "phantoms" that can play a significant role in the child's identity development, even if the child has a false image of his or her family. Rorbech (1991) found that adoptees who were able to talk to their adoptive parents about their biological families generally had a more positive image of their biological parents.

When a child is adopted from a distant country, his or her adoptive parents may feel less threatened by the existence of biological relatives and, consequently, are more likely to openly discuss them with the child (Saetersdal and Dalen 1991). However, some parents may be fearful of their adopted child idealizing the biological parents and, as a result, of finding themselves devalued (Mégard 1986). Adoptive parents may feel empathy for the birth mother, combined with guilt feelings for having removed her child from her (kidnapping guilt) (Hartman and Laird 1990). Broaching the subject of their adoptive child's biological origins is thus not so simple for parents of intercountry adoptees. Just as parents of in-country adoptees, they can be inclined, more or less unconsciously, to become part of a dynamic wherein the difference between biological and adoptive relatives is rejected, rather than accepted. There is also a tendency for the

adoptive parents to at times place so much emphasis on the child's past or on his or her adoptive status that the child's personality traits become completely eclipsed (Dalen and Saetersdal 1987).

Furthermore, not all family discussions about the child's specific origins necessarily convey an open recognition of the difference resulting from the absence of biological bonds between the adoptive parents and child. Indeed, the discussions can be very neutral, touching upon only the cultural differences, the country's politics, etc. (Terre des Hommes 1995). It is clearly important to talk to children about the fact that they are adopted and about their country of origin, but this does not mean that the parents discuss the children's biological parents and the motives that pushed them to relinquish them (Rorbech 1991). In the context of his research, Kühl (1985) notes that nearly 80 percent of the adoptive parents interviewed indicated that they talked with their children about their origins; however, 45 percent of the adoptees said that they rarely or never asked their parents about the period preceding their arrival in Germany. The French study carried out by the SSAE (1990) shows, moreover, that the parents almost never talked about emotional bonds that could have united the children to their biological mother or to kin in their country of origin. In addition, the parents rarely inquired into the child's personal history. Some parents preferred to embrace the "stork story," that is, they chose to see themselves as having a child with no past. The sexual act preceding the birth of the child was thereby eclipsed by this fantasy, which itself evidences the parents' distress over this dimension of their adopted child's origins (Maury 1992). Ouellette (1996b and 1996c) also observed that a number of parents see the child who is found after being abandoned as the ideal child for international adoption. She cites the case of an adoptive mother who had misgivings about the information she had been given on her son's biological family and on the motives for his abandonment. The mother instead chose to believe that he was found and recounted only this version of his adoption to him.

According to Ouellette (1996a, 1996b, 1996c) adopters in Quebec focus their efforts on putting together, for their children, a recollection of their origins, with particular emphasis on their country, culture and ethnic group of origin, rather than on the

people who brought them into the world or with whom they lived. In addition, this recollection is primarily anchored in their own memories of the trip and of what they have learnt through reading about the country. In this way, they are inclined to transpose the problematic of the difference that is specific to the legal adoptive relationship outside the scope of the kinship domain. However, the effect of this transposition is to form a bond, like that between siblings, among the adopted children born in the same country.

The study of family photo albums conducted by Belleau (1996) provides a number of examples illustrating this phenomenon. In the albums, the adopters presented "the country that gave birth to the child," and often interpreted the child's specific physical and psychological traits in a way that was consistent with what they know of the culture and customs of the child's country of origin.

Belleau (1996) also draws attention to the fact that the acknowledgement by adoptive parents that their children are of different origin is supported through the formation of adoptive family networks. The author also observes the importance of these networks in photo-exchange circles and, what is more, notes that the family albums may have in them many snapshots in which the members of these networks appear, whereas people who are not relatives are generally excluded from the albums. In her thesis, Belleau refers to the theory of David Kirk (1985) identifying the lack of social models for adoptive families. She suggests that the relations that adoptive parents maintain with other adoptive couples (the child's arrival [Airplane Day], during holidays, on birthdays, etc.) are tangible evidence of the emergence of such a kinship model, one that operates on a mode similar to that of blood relationships and that also stresses the adoptive parent-child relationship.

Finally, the significant efforts of today's adoptive parents to recognize the origins of their adopted children do not rule out the possibility that their actions may also convey the notion of a parent-child relationship that is natural or inescapable. For example, by evoking fate ("we were meant to meet"), the parents suggest a shared bond that is both involuntary and predestined, as are relationships by blood, and that also helps the family

members to become familiar with the child, at times even before he or she arrives (Ouellette 1996c).

5.1.4   Adoptees' Concerns About Their Background and Origins

When adoptees themselves contemplate their origins, their birth mothers are foremost in their thoughts, along with their countries of origin. According to a number of researchers, the importance that they give to this dimension of their personal history appears to vary according to the quality of their family relations or their emotional well-being. Other researchers instead feel that, normally, all adoptees are interested in their origins, whether or not they express this interest openly. In this way, while there is consensus to the effect that adoptive parents must openly discuss this matter with their children at each stage of their lives, there are divergences as to how the attitudes of the adoptees themselves should be interpreted.

Some studies have revealed that roughly 50 percent of youth adopted internationally indicate that they occasionally think about their biological mother or family. In this regard, they would appear to differ from children adopted domestically. The study conducted by Benson et al. (1994), in which two-thirds of the children making up the sample were adopted domestically, revealed that nearly two thirds of the respondents said that they would like to meet their birth mothers. On the other hand, in the studies that examine international adoption only (Rorbech 1991, Despeignes 1993, Terre des Hommes 1995), between 40 and 66 percent of the youth indicated that they did not want any other information or that they never thought about their biological mothers. These findings might reflect how the adoptees view the possibility of such a meeting actually taking place. In another study, Kühl (1985) interviewed biological children, children adopted domestically and others adopted internationally. Of the latter, two-thirds indicated that they would like to visit their country of origin and half would like to meet their biological parents. He found that the adoptees who had best integrated into their adoptive society were especially interested in their countries of origin, whereas those who

were unstable or dissatisfied with their relationships with their adoptive parents were more likely to want to meet their biological parents.

The study that Benson et al. (1994) conducted on 715 American families that had adopted children domestically or internationally examined the answers given by boys and by girls on the subject. Forty-five percent of the girls and 30 percent of the boys hoped to learn more about the situation surrounding their birth; 60 percent of the girls and 45 percent of the boys wanted more information on their birth mothers and, 49 and 42 percent, respectively, on their birth fathers. Finally, 70 percent of the girls and 57 percent of the boys indicated that they would like to be able to meet their birth mothers. In summary, of the children adopted domestically and internationally, the study revealed that, relatively speaking, more girls than boys wanted to know their biological origins.

As noted in the preceding chapters, research findings can be influenced by the age of the adoptees when the particular study was conducted. For instance, adolescence is often a difficult period for adoptees (Weyer 1985, Verhulst et al. 1990b, Simon and Altstein 1991). Adoptees also appear to go through their adolescence at a later age than do children living with their birth parents (Terre des Hommes 1992) and adolescence is the period in their life when they most want to get closer to their origins (Weyer 1985, Verhulst et al. 1990b, 1992, Terre des Hommes 1992). During this period, they contemplate their origins more intensely, question why they were abandoned and relive the negative memories of their lives before being adopted.

With respect to adult adoptees, and according to parents interviewed during the initial study by the French organization Terre des Hommes (1992), the majority of adoptees appeared to have a positive attitude of acceptance and nearly half were apparently indifferent toward the fact of being adopted. When the adoptees themselves were interviewed for a subsequent study, slightly less than half said they wanted more information on their biological families and nearly 40 percent indicated that they never thought about the latter (Terre des Hommes 1995). Among the young women, however, preoccupation with the birth place became more intense when they gave birth to their first

child. In his study, Rorbech (1991) reports that half of the adoptees from 17 to 22 years of age occasionally thought about their birth mothers and biological families, that one-third wanted to seek more information, whereas two-thirds did not feel the need to do so. The desire to look for information on the biological family appeared to be stronger among a small group (around 17%) who were reluctant to discuss their adopted status with their adoptive parents. An open dialogue with the parents could thus promote the sense of belonging to the country of adoption while reducing the need to know more about the birth parents.

The age of children at the time of their adoption also affects the amount of interest they show in their origins. In the study Lydens (1989) conducted in the United States among 101 Korean-born adoptees, the youth who had been adopted at an older age were more interested in their ethnic and adopted identity when they reached adolescence or adulthood than were the children who had been adopted very young. In the above-mentioned study by Rorbech, the desire to search for one's origins was strongest among children adopted at an older age. Were they to have to make the choice, some of them would have preferred to remain in their countries of origin rather than be adopted in Denmark. This may have been but a passing phase in the lives of these 17 to 22-years old, reflecting what the author sees as poor adaptation to the receiving country. Examining the search for origins from a clinical perspective, Maury (1992) links it to late adoption: "Once the children had fully integrated the 'romance of their origins' and know how to reply if asked questions, they no longer want to continually go back to it. Children adopted at a later age are the only ones to maintain a genuine interest in their countries" (translation) (1992: 47).

Similarly, Morrier (1995), who interviewed 21 adolescent adoptees, contends that the little interest shown by them in their origins is probably a healthy reaction, since this dimension of their lives totally alludes them. She links the absence of memories and an affective relationship with the biological family or the country of origin to the young age of these children at the time of placement (under three years of age). Only their physical appearance enables them to identify themselves with their country of origin.

Among the authors who interpret adoptees' desire to know more about their pre-adoption history and about their birth parents as a symptom of having poorly adapted to receiving country, there is a tendency to minimize the significance of origins on identity formation, which others refute. In connection with this, Wilkinson (1986, 1995) identified five stages of identity formation in adopted children: (1) the denial of origins; (2) the inner awakening of the children in the face of their origins; (3) the acknowledgement of their distinct origins; (4) the identification of the latter and more active search for them; and (5) the acceptance and recognition of their dual origins. Synthesized by McRoy (1991), these stages resemble those identified in the course of the research that has been carried out on transracial adoptions (Belle and Evans 1981, Cross 1987).

Despeignes (1994), who also views the matter of origins as necessarily being of importance, points out that the majority of young adoptees would firstly like to have information on their parents' physical appearance and, secondly, on their character traits, so as to be able to establish from whom they, the children, take after genetically. The subjects of her study were 12 youth from 7 to 13 years of age who, as a rule, were little inclined to talk about their past. Seven of the youth said that they never thought about their biological families. Despite this, most of the children stated that they would have preferred to remain with the latter had circumstances permitted. Furthermore, during the interviews, three of them brought up the possibility of reunions, unlike the others who, according to the author, appeared resigned. The adopted youths' lack of interest in their country of origin is seen by the author as the reflection of a love-hate reaction towards the birth mother and, by extension, toward the "motherland" that abandoned them.

Abandonment is doubly painful since, for the majority of adoptees interviewed, there is no explanation for it (Hartman and Laird 1990, Terre des Hommes 1995). The authors of the Terre des Hommes (1995) report reason that certain adoptees' lack of interest in their origins may be outward only and may actually be a defensive reaction with which to protect themselves. They also found that after initially reacting with

relative indifference, the majority of young adoptees become somewhat curious about their countries of origin as they grow older.

5. 2.   *Ethnic Identity and Colour Identity*

From an interactionist perspective, identity is defined as the result of an individual and collective process that may vary over time and according to the circumstances (Morrier 1995, Westhues and Cohen 1995). Since most intercountry adoptees are Asian, American Indian, black, of mixed race or, at least, do not have the same physical appearance as that of the majority in their receiving country, they are inevitably confronted with being identified in society as being different. Usually they do not share this difference with their adoptive parents and non-adopted siblings, who are most often from the majority. For that matter, adoptees can often be mistaken for children of immigrants. Spickard (1989), Waters (1990) and Meintel (1992) demonstrated that individuals actually have considerable flexibility in their choice of ethnic identity. Rather than being limited to one ethnic group, their sense of belonging can be fluid (see also Barth 1969, Gans 1979, Oriol 1988). They do not, however, have an infinite choice of identity referents available to them (Gallissot 1987). Intercountry adoptees basically have two poles to choose from: that of the country or the culture of origin and of the skin colour they inherited from their biological parents, or that of the host community and its culture.

Depending on the given context and author, this dissimilar social identity is termed national, ethnic or cultural (according to the receiving countries or communities and the communities or countries of origin, and to the skin colour or "racial" categorizations of the receiving country). In the pages that follow, the elements that distinguish ethnic identity from colour identity will be elaborated upon. Ethnic identity refers to a country or social group's culture whereas colour identity refers to individuals' physical appearance, skin colour and racial categorization. Some authors refer not to colour identity, but to racial identity.

5.2.1. Ethnic Identity

The development of a child's identity evolves with age, in relation with the broader social environment (Loenen and Hoksbergen 1986, Gill and Jackson 1993). In this connection, Cole (1992) distinguishes between ethnic identity and ethnic identification. The former refers to the sense of belonging to a group; the latter, which occurs later in the child's development, calls on the child's cognitive ability to define himself or herself and others using the descriptive markers of a specific ethnic group. The author maintains that it is only around seven years of age that children truly acquire the ability to perceive themselves in terms of an ethnic group.

Identification With A Receiving Country Or Host Culture, According To The Countries

Some authors feel that the ethnic identities developed by transracially or internationally adopted children are generally less affirmed than those of domestically adopted children (McRoy et al. 1984, Simon and Altstein 1987, Andujo 1988, McRoy 1991, Bagley 1993a, Westhues and Cohen 1995). The feeling of belonging to the host society nonetheless largely prevails in the way young adoptees define their identity (Külh 1985, Saetersdal and Dalen 1991, Despeignes 1993, Morrier 1995, Terre des Hommes 1995). Lussier (1992) considers that this sense of belonging stems from a sense of belonging to the adoptive family, "as though their ethnic group has become a family group" (translation) (p. 129). However, the research gives an account of rather significant differences from one receiving country to the other as regards the proportion of adoptees who felt that they belonged solely to the majority group in their country of adoption.

Among the young Canadian adoptees interviewed for the study conducted by Westhues and Cohen (1995), 51 percent of the boys and 40 percent of the girls thought of themselves as Canadians (or Quebeckers), 23 percent of the boys and 38 percent of the girls thought of themselves as belonging to another ethnic group, and 10 percent of the boys and 5 percent of the girls claimed to have a hybrid identity. On the other hand, the study Kühl (1985) conducted on children adopted in Germany shows that 66 percent of

them saw themselves as "mostly German," 28 percent felt they were "a bit more German" than another nationality, compared to 16 percent and 32 percent who felt that they defined themselves respectively "mostly" or "a bit more" with regard to their original national identity. Even greater divergences between the results documented by Westhues and Cohen and those reported in other studies are found, possibly because the questions asked by the researchers may have at times directed the respondents toward a single choice.[10] In England, Bagley (1993a) interviewed young women who were born in China and adopted by British parents. The large majority of these women identified themselves as English upon reaching adulthood. In the research conducted by Rorbech (1991) in Denmark, more than 90 percent of the adoptees (in the sample) thought of themselves as Danish. Moreover, two-thirds of the latter felt no major emotional attachment to their country of origin and the same number said they were happy to be living in Denmark. With respect to a group of 41 Vietnamese-born adoptees from 17 to 23 years of age adopted in Norway, Saetersdal and Dalen (1991) conclude that they tend "to minimize their feelings of differentness and the importance of the ethnic identity," (p. 103), while stressing "their belonging and loyalty to Norway and their Norwegian families" (p. 105).

According to some studies, the priority that adoptees give to identifying with their host cultures is reflected by the social networks they develop. For example, Terre des Hommes (1992) conducted a study of 451 adoptive homes in France and found that more than 80 percent of the adopted children had friends, but that only 14 percent were seeking contact with people from their country of origin. In a second study by the same organization in which the young adult adoptees were interviewed, 80 percent of the adoptees did not feel drawn specifically toward peers of the same ethnic origin as themselves (Terre des Hommes 1995).

A number of factors come into play in the development of an ethnic identity, including the relative significance of ethnic diversity in the host community and the

---

[10] As Tizard (1991) points out, in a number of studies on the ethnic identity of young adoptees, a bias was introduced when the youth were asked to choose between their origins and their receiving countries, without the researchers first exploring the degree to which the children thought of themselves as having a mixed cultural identity.

majority's more or less high degree of tolerance in the face of other ethnic groups. Indeed, for individuals, the way people see them is just as important in the establishment of an identity as is socialization within the family, particularly from an interactionist perspective (Morrier 1995).

Ethnic Identity And Social Adaptation

An adoptee who identifies only slightly with his or her ethnic background is seen by some authors as having adapted to the host society. Others view this as evidence of a certain uneasiness. For example, Rorbech (1991) believes that the importance that young adoptees attach to their ethnic background is inversely proportional to the degree to which they feel accepted by the receiving country:

> The more adjusted and accepted they felt, the less important their own ethnic background was. We may conclude that the vast majority were integrated and accepted in Denmark, both by their families and by their friends and acquaintances (Rorbech 1991: 138).

Despeignes (1993) also observed weak ethnic identities among the foreign-born adoptees that she interviewed in Quebec and attributed this to the absence of identity models for them in their host community and to certain adoptive parents' lukewarm acknowledgement of their adopted children's culture of origin. In research on Korean-born adoptees, Cole (1993) found that the parents having strong ethnic affiliations had children with a weak Korean identity, and vice versa. In other words, the degree of parents' ethnic identification appears to be inversely proportional to that of the children's identification with their group of origin.

The Influence Of Parents In The Development Of An Ethnocultural Identity

When young adoptees reject their origins, Triseliotis (1991) believes that it may be a strategy they use to try to make themselves accepted by the host population. However, this rejection may be inferred from their parents' attitudes. According to the study Westhues and Cohen (1995) conducted in Canada, adoptive parents do not

necessarily perceive their children's ethnic identity in the same way as the children do. Parents may be more inclined than their children to see the latter as Canadians and as belonging to the majority culture, without taking the racial dimension into account. As to whether the adoptees see themselves first and foremost as Canadians, the adoptive parents seem to believe this is the case, more so than do the adoptees themselves. From this it appears that the parents' vision of reality is linked to their own majority status, and that they are unable to transmit this vision to their children. In the analysis of their findings, the authors stress that, in such a context, these youth may lose their ethnic identity.

A number of authors emphasize the crucial role that adoptive parents and their families play in constructing the ethnic and cultural identity of their internationally adopted children. For example, in light of the differences between parents' and adoptees' perceptions of the latters' ethnic identities, Beal (1993) suggests that adoptive parents be encouraged to take interest in their children's birth cultures, "so that the children may be recognized in their dual references" (translation) (p. 366). For their part, Trolley et al. (1995) believe that the parents' acknowledgement of the birth culture of internationally adopted children is as important as their acceptance of the difference due to the adoption. However, they point out that the objective is not to promote an identification with "the culture of birth which can be understood and appreciated without the children becoming marginalized or less American" (p. 468).

Some authors specifically examined the way adoptive parents deal with their child's different culture of origin. In their study, Trolley et al. (1995) interviewed 34 American families and found that 78 percent of the parents felt that it was important for their children to identify with both the American and birth culture, and that the latter played an important role in the children's identity and in their adjustment to their new environments. However, a considerably larger proportion (90%) felt it was beneficial to expose the adopted child to his or her birth culture and 70 percent regularly did so. Around 90 percent used reading material and 46 percent drew on interpersonal relationships, particularly during special socio-cultural events. Moreover, 86 percent of

these parents said that they felt they had some knowledge of the culture of their children's country of origin and 46 percent felt that their children themselves had moderate awareness. Rude-Antoine (n.d.) observed, as have others, the wide range of cultural products that adoptive parents draw on to link their child's culture of origin to family activities: objects, clothing, music and song, food and cooking, in particular. They also encourage their children to acquire knowledge of the language of their birth country and, often, to associate with people from the same country. Adoptive family associations promote and stimulate such efforts and, though this phenomenon has been mentioned by a number of authors, it has not yet been researched.

A study conducted by Simon and Altstein (1987) of 218 young Americans who were transracially or internationally adopted found that two-thirds of the parents attempted to make their children aware of, and initiate them to, their culture of origin. Some endeavour to create bonds, particularly with members of the black community, some send their children to desegregated schools and others attend churches in black neighbourhoods. Another study conducted by Simon and Altstein (1991) among 59 Jewish families who had adopted children or both adopted and biological children shows that three-quarters of the parents reported that they took an interest in the children's culture of origin and took part in family activities relating to the rituals and ceremonies of that culture. According to Westhues and Cohen (1995), nearly three Canadian families out of four read books having to do with their adopted children's origins. Many also take part in cultural activities.

Bagley (1993a) studied the ethnic identity of Chinese girls adopted in England and observed that while the adoptive parents addressed their child's past in various ways, their interest in the child's culture of origin was more intellectual than emotional. In addition, certain parents attributed a great deal of importance to the culture of origin, and other chose to not emphasize it, for fear of making too great a distinction between the child and the rest of the family group.

In France, the adoptive parents interviewed by the SSAE mentioned at the outset that it was important to maintain ties with the children's country of origin. And while they felt that it was impossible to raise their children in their culture of origin, the parents nonetheless endeavoured to either assure them of a dual identity or provide them with a vision of the two cultures (origin and host) so that they may one day choose between the two. However, the majority of parents who had attempted to give their child a dual identity later concluded that it was a mistake to do so (SSAE 1990). In Quebec, Ouellette (1997) noted that the adoptive parents interviewed for her research seemed to favour a flexible use of distinct identity referents—namely the child's origins and Quebec society—making it possible for both to be developed, without one excluding the other. The clearly assimilationist positions advocating, on this level, that the child's identity of origin be eradicated are definitely in the minority.

Paulis (1989) also addressed how adoptive parents approach their child's culture of origin. She analyzed a small number of cases of Belgian adoptive parents who perpetuate stereotypes concerning their children's country of origin and unintentionally attribute their own vision of their children's culture of origin to them, and consequently limiting the extent to which the children can put down roots in the their host culture.

Ethnic Identity According To The Child's Age At The Time Of Adoption

Depending on the age of the children at the time of their adoption, the matter of their ethnic or cultural identity of origin will prove to be more or less significant in the familial dynamic. Morrier (1995) contends that children who are adopted very young do not undergo an acculturation process since they were too young to have learnt the culture of their country of origin. However, other authors consider that, even in the case of the adoption of an infant, cultural differences affect the way the family initially adjusts to the new arrival, who has already become familiar with nurturing and mothering habits other than those of his or her adoptive mother (Nabinger 1991). As a whole, the literature implicitly conveys the idea that the culture of origin is first and foremost a symbolic referent for children adopted very young and is thus not a factor that actually structures

how they think, act and how they perceive their environment. Late adoption, however, is another matter altogether.

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, a child who is adopted at an older age has already internalized many elements of his or her culture of origin. As the child develops and integrates into the adoptive family and society, this culture consequently enters into play and is a key pole of identification for the child. Maury (1991) studied young adoptees of Korean origin who arrived in France when they were between five and ten years of age. She learned that when the adoptees were still children, they liked being in the company of other adoptees of the same origin as they were then able to dissipate their feelings of isolation arising from their particular status. Once they reached adolescence, however, most of the adoptees no longer wanted these contacts, particularly gatherings of adoptive parents with their children. As adults, the adoptees thought of themselves first as French and no longer had any interest in such reunions.

Adoptive parents' acknowledgement of and interest in the culture of origin may be particularly important for children adopted at an older age. Compared to children adopted earlier, these children are more likely to be somewhat confused about their identity or to identify with their group of origin rather than with their adoptive family and the host culture. Since the adoptees try to enhance the image of their culture of origin, as well as safeguard it, they must negotiate a dual belongingness for themselves (Lussier 1992). Koh (1988) made a study of 60 American parents, their Asian children, who were between four and sixteen years of age at the time of placement, and the children's teachers. He feels that the young adoptees experienced major inner conflicts of loyalty, not only with regard to their biological parents and their adoptive parents, but also more generally with respect to the American culture and their culture of origin. The adoptees employed various strategies; some expressed a strong desire to erase the past, while others preserved ties with their country, language and culture of origin, despite the fact that they believed that their adoptive parents expected them to become Americanized. The research reviewed under subsection 4.4—particularly Cordell (1985), Beal (1993) and Balland et al. (1995)—comes to much the same conclusion.

5.2.2.   Colour Identity

In almost all societies, individuals are put into social categories, based on identity markers such as skin colour and other physical features (e.g., slanting eyes, the shape of the nose, or pilosity). This categorization is accompanied by practices that stigmatize and discriminate against individuals who find themselves assigned to minority categories. More often than not, internationally adopted children are integrated into families that are part of the white majority, whereas the adoptees are "colour." What then happens to the adoptees' colour identity or their "racial" identity?

The Sentiments And Perceptions Of The Adoptees And Their Parents

The literature on this subject invariably, and at the very outset, touches on the highly polarized political debates on transracial adoption that have prevailed for a number of years already, particularly in the United States. It also draws on the major studies that demonstrated that, despite everything, young blacks who were adopted by white parents or parents of another ethnic group develop a "black" identity. For example, Bartholet (1993a) cites the findings of a study by Simon and Altstein (1987) in which 66 percent of young blacks adopted by whites indicated that they were proud of their "race," 17 percent said they were indifferent to their skin colour and 11 percent would have rather been white. The study revealed that among the young adults interviewed who had been adopted by parents of another race, 71 percent felt that their living in a white family did not cause them any problems.

Westhues and Cohen (1997) arrived at the same conclusion upon analyzing their data, which showed that the large majority of adolescents and young adults who had been adopted internationally were "comfortable" or "very comfortable" with their racial background, though less so than their non-adopted siblings. A small percentage said that they were "uncomfortable" or "very uncomfortable." In France, 75 percent of the young adoptees interviewed by the French organization Terre des Hommes (1995) thought that others saw them as being French, despite their physical appearance. More qualified findings emerged from the study conducted by Benson et al. (1994) on a very large

sample of American families (715) with children adopted internationally: none of the data collected by the authors indicates that the adoptees, between 12 and 18 years of age at the time of the research, had developed a very positive racial identity. The sentiments expressed by the adoptees covered a broad spectrum, from pride to shame. In addition, racial issues often appear to be more problematic for them than the adoption itself.

In choosing their friends and, later, their spouses, young adoptees appear to prefer Caucasians. This phenomenon, which is observed irrespective of the origins of the adoptees, can largely be explained by the fact that whites predominate in their school and social environments (Simon and Altstein 1984, Terre des Hommes 1992, 1995, Westhues and Cohen 1995). From one study to the next, however, this preference for whites is somewhat differently interpreted. Certain authors see it simply as a sign that the adoptees had become integrated into the white community (Rorbech 1991, Westhues and Cohen 1995). Others believe that youth of the same ethnic origin act like a mirror and thus as a reminder of a dual belongingness in relation to which the young adoptees may find themselves obliged to position themselves if they associate with these youth, whereas the adoptees do not feel different from the majority (Terre des Hommes 1995). In the study conducted by Maury (1991) in France, the Korean-born adoptees interviewed indicated that they felt embarrassed when faced with Asian-origin immigrants who either claim another culture or need to resolve problems adapting. While they think of themselves as French, some consider them to be foreigners.

On the subject of domestic and international adoptions in the United States, Simon and Altstein (1987) found slightly higher proportions of young black adoptees who had friends of the same "race." Of interest is the fact that the adoptees' white siblings were more likely to associate with young blacks than were their peers. The authors view this phenomenon as clear evidence of the influence that the presence of a black child can have on his white non-adopted siblings. Moreover, when asked about their plans for the future, most of the transracial adoptees stated that they would like to live in a mixed or white community, that is, similar to the one where they grew up.

With respect to physical appearances, Morrier (1995) holds that girls may be less at ease, and more preoccupied, than boys with how they look. Only one other study, that of Rorbech (1991) conducted in Denmark, casts light on the connection to racial difference as experienced by boys and by girls respectively. The two authors draw different, though non-contradictory, conclusions to the effect that boys are over-represented among the adoptees (15% of the entire sample) who never discussed their physical appearance with their parents.

Some adoptive parents and their adopted children no longer notice the difference in the colour of their skins (Simon and Altstein 1987, Bagley 1993a). Reference is commonly made to this phenomenon of colourblindness in the literature on transracial and international adoptions. Westhues and Cohen (1995) found that around 10 percent of the adoptees in their sample thought of themselves as white. Among the adoptees' parents, 4 percent saw their children as being white while 33 percent of the mothers and 26 percent of the fathers believed that their children saw themselves in the same way.

Certain authors do not see anything negative, per se, in young intercountry adoptees thinking of themselves as white, despite evidence to the contrary, or not seeing themselves as being any different from others. Indeed, the authors feel that these perceptions may attest to the adoptees having well adapted (Lussier 1992, Morrier 1995). Others, such as the authors of the Terre des Hommes report (1992), consider that when the parents or children themselves do not give any thought to skin colour, they are refusing to acknowledge the difference. On this subject, the complexity of the process for constructing a colour identity must not be minimized, and expressions currently used such as "positive black identity" warrant being openly questioned, as Tizard and Phoenix (1989) have in their critical article on transracial adoption.

The Parents' Influence

In his review of the literature on transracial adoption, Silverman (1993) notes that most studies established a direct link between an adopted child harmoniously developing

a racial identity and the efforts made by the adoptive parents for the child to do so. This subject was addressed by two studies on international adoption which used the same procedure – the doll test– to determine relatively close realities. The findings differed somewhat. In the first study, Cole (1992) concludes that the involvement of parents in cultural associations and international adoption self-help support groups was not in any way linked to the development of their children's ethnic identity. On the other hand, the second study, by Routhier (1986), tends to confirm that parents play a role in the development of their children's "racial" identity. The author interviewed the parents of 10 Quebec families who had adopted children from the West Indies, and also conducted the doll test. According to her findings, the majority of parents promoted their children's integration into Quebec society and at the same time particularly sought to provide their children with information about their birth country. She also determined that the parents' choice to substantially enhance perception of the child's skin colour was reflected directly in the child's choice of dolls during the test. However, the parents sensed that their child's racial identification was inclined to vary and Routhier confirms their perception by demonstrating that racial identity, like ethnic identity, fluctuates throughout the child's development (see also Wilkinson 1986). Using American studies on transracial adoption to support her analysis, Routhier affirms that children begin to develop a racial awareness at three or four years of age and that by around six or seven years of age, all children recognize distinctions made on the basis of skin colour.

Racism And Discrimination, According To The Composition Of The Host Community

A person's identity is formed in relation with others. Close relatives play an important role in the process; however, the broader community also has an influence, which can be a very important variable, particularly when it comes to colour identity. Indeed, the degree to which society is receptive to and accepting of different ethnic groups varies, especially when the individuals are of "visibly distinct races." As such, it is important to guard against transferring research findings from one country to another (Triseliotis 1991).

With respect to discrimination, 57 percent of the adopted French youth interviewed by Terre des Hommes (1995) said that they had not been victims of racism. In contrast, the research conducted by Westhues and Cohen (1995) in Canada found that only 15 percent of the boys and 18 percent of the girls had not been discriminated against. In Quebec, the adopted youth interviewed by Despeignes (1993) also spoke of the tensions in their relations with their peers because of their skin colour. The percentage determined by Simon and Altstein (1987) on the basis of the data they collected in the United States is closer to that of Terre des Hommes: 39 percent. Moreover, in the study Kühl (1985) made in Germany, the 43 young intercountry adoptees indicated that they more often bore the brunt of discrimination by adults than by their own peers. Half of the adopted youths−particularly girls−said that they had been discriminated against because of their physical appearance. However, 30 percent considered their physical appearance to be an advantage in their close relationships, at school and at work; only 15 percent felt it to be a disadvantage.

It is often at school that adopted children are made aware of the fact that they look different from the others and start to be the target of racist behaviour (Routhier 1986, Terre des Hommes 1992, Morrier 1995, Westhues and Cohen 1995, Wilkinson 1995). For example, 27 percent of the adopted youth interviewed by Rorbech (1991) said that they had been teased or discriminated against in their schools. Lussier (1992) maintains that children adopted at an older age appear to be more sensitive to, and hurt by, racist behaviour on the part of their peers.

In the majority of studies, intercountry adoptees were made to feel very welcome by their parents' family circles and neighbours (Routhier 1986). Nevertheless, Dalen and Saetersdal (1987) and Kühl (1985) found that some adoptees, being frequently asked questions by unknown people and treated as refugees, felt anxious about their identity as it was constantly questioned. Certain youth develop strategies with which to come to terms not only with people's curiosity but with discrimination and prejudices (Kühl 1985).

Adopted youth apt to be victims of racism may be better able to adjust in receiving societies made up of a mix of ethnic groups than in less diversified societies (Simon and Altstein 1991). Other research sheds different light on this supposition. Morrier (1995) believes that a multi-ethnic environment can provide adolescent adoptees in Quebec with support in affirming their colour identity and that those who have difficulty accepting their colour may prefer to live in such an environment since they can expect to find greater tolerance there. On the other hand, exposure to racism is no greater in homogeneous Franco-Quebec communities than in multi-ethnic Montréal. Moreover, another study conducted in Quebec (Lussier, 1992) suggests that adoptees living in small population centres feel more accepted. When they leave their environment, however, and are suddenly no longer an exception, they may be more vulnerable than adoptees raised in large cities. These findings also correspond with those of Rorbech (1991) for Denmark.

Strategies Used To Adapt To Racism And Discrimination

In the preceding chapter, mention was made of the fact that adoptive parents, taking into consideration the problems they may expect to encounter, sometimes choose the country of origin or the colour of the child they are to adopt. They strive to develop strategies to help their child combat racial prejudices, particularly at school. For example, parents encourage humour, which helps to dedramatize the situation, and also try to enhance appreciation of the child's attributes so that what others could perceive as being negative instead become sources of pride for the adoptee (Rude-Antoine n.d.). Research on adoptees' colour identity is primarily focused on investigating the strategies used by adoptees themselves, who naturally seem to have more difficulty than their parents in recognizing their differences as being positive.

Drawing on concepts used in ethnic studies and immigration, the previously cited study by Morrier (1995) addresses the long-term adaptation and identity-forming strategies of 21 West Indian and Asian youth adopted in Quebec before three years of age. The majority of the youth employed the "assimilationist" adaptation strategy with

respect to their colour identity, that is, they totally dismissed skin colour in defining themselves, and identified with the culture of the Quebec majority. This was the case for all the Asian youths in the sample, toward whom racial prejudices are generally quite favourable. Some black youths of Haitian origin who defined themselves as "bicultural" implemented another strategy, particularly in the context of Montréal: they claim a dual belongingness by identifying with both the Quebec culture and the Afro-American culture (and not their Haitian origins).

Effectively, when young adoptees are confronted with racism or discrimination, they often must affirm a colour identity. The adaptive strategy they choose to implement is determined by the degree of the rejection by others (Rorbech 1991, Morrier 1995).

Adoptees develop a number of different strategies for coping with the racial prejudices of those around them. The study conducted by Despeignes (1993) enabled her to identify four strategies in particular: winning over others with their kindness in an effort to make themselves accepted, searching for the support of significant persons who implicitly accept them, internalizing a negative self-image linked to skin colour, and, lastly, resorting to violence. Decerf (1995) developed the notion of a negative self image from a psychoanalytic perspective, referring to it in terms of adopted children who undergo a racist rejection of themselves.

Morrier (1995) maintains that the defence strategies used against racist prejudices differ according to the adoptee's gender. Girls employ "gentle" strategies while boys tend to use force. Girls also appear to have more problems dealing with their colour, a closely tied consequence of attaching greater importance to how others see them. In addition, the female adoptees in Morrier's sample expressed their rejection of the social roles of women in their birth culture, since the roles go against the values of equality promoted in Quebec.

5.3. *Adoptees' Rights and Social Status*

The question of origins and that of ethnic and colour identity relate to choices, attitudes, sentiments and perceptions, and bring into play processes contributing to the development of oneself and others within social and familial interactions. Other dimensions of the social integration of adoptees are, in contrast, associated with legal or administrative rules and standards that define rights and status: immigration law, which determines the eligibility time frames for access to citizenship; and family law, which specifies the formal steps in an adoptive process and determines, for example, its legal effects. Nonetheless, the literature reviewed hardly touches on these dimensions.

Two elements are of compelling importance in defining an adoptee's identity: the eligibility time frames for access to citizenship in the receiving country and, depending on the countries, the possibility of claiming dual citizenship, especially since differences of status and rights between the members of the same family can arise from them. Spring-Duvoisin (1986) and Lücker-Babel (1991) take up these issues in the context of adoption failures in Switzerland. The research made by Lücker-Babel underscores the extent to which the status of foreign adoptees is precarious during the initial period of their integration, as long as legal recognition of the adoption has not been conferred in due form, as per the specific requirements of their receiving country.

Even in a context of official equality of rights, access to citizen status can allow inequalities to persist between children adopted domestically and those adopted internationally. Levy-Shiff et al. (1997) report that even if most of the foreign-born children adopted in Israel are converted to Judaism, the conversion is often not recognized by the Rabbinate. Since family law in Israel is under Rabbinate jurisdiction, the adoptees receive an Israeli identity card which has a special prefix or number identifying them as being adopted from abroad, that is, their status in Judaism remains in doubt (p. 112).

Not all international adoptions sever the child's previous family ties. Though the adoptions are most often converted into full adoptions in the receiving country (this is the case in Canada), as preferred by the Hague Convention, in some countries, the adoption does not necessarily terminate the birth filiation ("adoption simple", in France, for example). Under what circumstances might a court favour limited adoption and what would be the legal consequences? The study by Rude-Antoine (n.d.) looks at this question and analyzes the international adoption archives in France. One fact in particular emerges from her work: among the cases of international adoptions, it is those involving the adoption of a relative that are most often settled through limited adoption. This makes it possible for pre-existing family ties to be reaffirmed without having to extinguish the bond between the adopted child and his or her biological parents. Moreover, the study disclosed that the transfer of children born in Muslim countries which do not authorize adoption results in situations involving rights, which would be best clarified while respecting the domestic laws of Muslim states.

In her work, Ouellette (1996c, 1998) stresses that the radical and exclusive nature of full adoption needs to be thoughtfully re-examined in the context of international exchanges of children whose parents often are living and known (particularly in the case of late adoptions), as other legal forms could probably be formulated. She takes this issue and ties it to the situation where the child who is the object of a full adoption is confronted with an identity-based paradox in cultural contexts such as ours, which recognizes the importance of origins in establishing an identity.

Conclusion

Before being able to profess an understanding of the acknowledgement of origins and ethnocultural difference in the context of international adoption, many unknowns and imprecisions must first be clarified. This situation is due, in part, to the fact that the work conducted on these subjects can be compared only slightly, varies in scope, and yields findings that are often interpreted by people who do not yet have definite viewpoints as to how our societies treat those who are different.

As regards the integration of children adopted from abroad, the issues that now most stir our sensibilities are those associated with the development of an ethnic and colour identity, since Western societies are increasingly multiethnic and pluralistic. As noted in Chapter 1, failure to place these issues in relation to the question of origins and the development of a personal identity can lead to the weight of the difference due to the adoption being borne on the shoulders of the intercountry adoptees alone. The issues are also unfailingly connected to the practices, ideas and attitudes of the parents and the family. Consequently, the conclusion of this last chapter completes our review of the literature and the issues involved. At the same time, these issues open up to the matters of immigration and citizenship, which continue to be only rarely taken up in the literature.

CONCLUSION

The results and conclusions of the research reviewed here cannot be generalized. Indeed, the various studies and investigations were carried out in several different countries, using methodological approaches that are difficult to compare. They cover groups of children who may or may not be representative, this being difficult to evaluate considering the diversity of their backgrounds and their varying ages at the time of adoption. In fact, in presenting an overview of the literature surveyed, this limitation was predictable from the beginning.

This does not mean, however, that valid conclusions cannot be drawn from the literature. On the contrary, taken as a whole, this literature review, as intended, gives access to an understanding of intercountry adoption that includes its many nuances, as a complex human and social phenomenon. It is unfortunate, then, that the information that is generally available to interested parties and, especially, that really benefits the main social actors called on to intervene in the field of intercountry adoption or directly with intercountry-adopted children, is far less extensive and diversified than the information that has in fact been gleaned on the subject to date. In fact, some studies are only published in documents with limited circulation, and most are published in specialized research journals read by researchers in academic circles that rarely get into the hands of practitioners, administrators, adoptive parent associations or adoptive parents themselves. A good part of this research is written in English and is not widely read by Francophones, while some of it is written in French and is even less widely read by Anglophones.

If the overall impression that we have of the literature is one of fragmented knowledge on the subject and a lack of familiarity among authors of each other's work, this situation is symptomatic of the fact that developments in this field of research are not yet highly structured around a set of research issues seen as having priority by the group of disciplines concerned. However, such a situation, which would be favourable to a better co-ordination of research work, seems to be emerging. Thus, it is increasingly recognized that adoption should be approached as an evolving process which potentially

unfolds throughout a person's entire life, rather than as a single event which can be judged to have been a success or failure. Intercountry adoption is therefore viewed as setting a child on a life course that is not always very different from that of most children who are raised in their birth communities, but which entails differences and particular variations that are worth recognizing.

In Chapter 1, we emphasized the issue of "difference" in adoption in general, pointing out that it involves a particular experience of loss and mourning, with respect to family ties and identity. In the case of intercountry adoption, "difference" is often attributed exclusively to the fact that the children concerned are mostly Asian, black, Native American or of mixed race. The literature surveyed, however, shows that while the impact of this personal difference is something that internationally adopted children have to come to terms with and should not be minimized, neither should we lose sight of the fact that these children are no exception when it comes to experiencing all the other dimensions of adoption. Therefore, research should be planned not only in relation to ethno-cultural identity, but also to all of these dimensions, in order to gain a better understanding of intercountry adoption.

The following paragraphs briefly outline several useful and pertinent directions that research could pursue in order to shed some light on the factors most likely to have a short or long-term impact on the evolving process of intercountry adoption. These factors pertain, in particular, to the country of origin, the characteristics of the child and of his or her adoptive family and adoptive environment, the conditions for solving problems following adoption, and the question of origins and the rights of adoptees, as well as that of their ethnic identity.

Country of Origin

Given the diversity of the national and ethno-cultural backgrounds of adopted children, it would be useful to compare their experiences in light of this criterion, right on through adolescence and adulthood. Differences could be linked, for example, to the

conditions in which the children were cared for before adoption, to the intermediaries involved, to legal, administrative and informal practices surrounding the surrendering of the children to the adopters and the communication of information concerning their identity and birth family.

More should be known about the health of children upon their arrival in their new families. Research on this subject, which is not systematically surveyed here, is growing, and shows variations from country to country, particularly with regard to the detection of certain diseases. Can this simply be attributed to the weakness of health-care services in the countries of origin or are other factors at play?

Attention should also be given to the fact that, in our societies, social attitudes regarding children adopted from Asian countries are very different from those regarding black or Latin American children. To what extent do these attitudes colour the motivation and expectations of adopters? In what ways do they affect how well the children are accepted and their sense of belonging in the adoptive society? Are there different categories of adoptees, based on which countries of origin they come from?

Characteristics of the Child

Of all the characteristics of intercountry-adopted children, age at the time of adoption is the strongest predictor of difficulties. In fact, adoptions that are described as late adoptions are associated with much more difficult personal and family experiences than adoptions that take place at an earlier age. The bonds of affection and trust that normally develop with adoptive parents are sometimes seriously compromised. Emotional, language and school-related deficiencies are sometimes only partially repaired. Moreover, late adoptions often involve the presence of other risk factors, such as growing up in an institution, lacking proper care and stimulation, being abandoned several times, leading to several successive placements, or being the victim of neglect and abuse. By "late adoption," most authors mean that of a child aged three or older. However, some experts also say that an adoption which takes place when a child is over

six months of age is already more problematic than the adoption of a new-born baby. It would be useful to carry out research that is more specifically focused on the type of problems and difficulties encountered by children adopted between the ages of six months and three years, especially since these adoptions do not appear to be widely perceived as potentially difficult or risky.

Again, with regard to the characteristics of adopted children, it would be useful to see more research on their health and on the differences between boys and girls. Research should be carried out regarding the impact of their health on their development and adjustment and on family dynamics. How do parents come to terms with a disease or a deficiency that they did not foresee or that is more serious than they expected? What services in the way of care and assistance do they rely on for the support they need? What expertise is currently available on intercountry adoption among practitioners within the health and social services network or among professionals in private practice? What knowledge do they have of intercountry adoption overall and what practices do they tend to favour or discourage?

Differences linked to the sex of adopted children should also be studied, in particular those related to the preference of adopters for a boy or a girl and the influence that this can have on their choice of a birth country, on the adjustment of children of each sex and their parents, and, finally, on the extent to which the children, once they become adolescents or adults, become involved in searching out their origins. (The latter would appear to be more often the case for women, according to some researchers.) The differences between girls and boys could also be studied by comparing their strategies for adapting to prejudice or racism, as well as their attitudes regarding success at school, their ethno-cultural identity of origin and their social and romantic relationships.

In some cases, adoption concerns a group of siblings, and this generally means that at least one of the children is older at the time of adoption. Little is known about the implications of these adoptions, even though they are not exceptional and often appear to be problematic, especially for the oldest brother or sister. How are exchanges between

brothers and sisters reconstructed once they find themselves in their new family? Is their individual access to both parents more difficult and do each of them integrate as well as a child who arrives alone? As compared to children who arrive alone, do they retain a more distinct identity from other children in the family?

Research should also be conducted on the relationship that may exist between the characteristics that were initially sought after in a child by the adopters, and the quality of integration into the family of the child that was eventually adopted. Indeed, it is known, based on the study of clinical cases, that certain adjustment problems spring mainly from the difficulty that parents experience in coming to terms with the gap between the characteristics they sought after in a child and the actual characteristics of the child they adopted. It would be interesting to study this question by developing not only the psychological and psychoanalytical, but also the social and cultural dimensions of the aspirations of adopters and of their reactions to the characteristics, such as age, sex or temperament, of the child they have actually adopted. The question could also be asked as to what extent aesthetic affinities for a country can facilitate the first contacts with a child who comes from this country or, conversely, create for this child preconceived expectations that he or she can never live up to.

Characteristics of the Adoptive Family and the Adoptive Environment

Regardless of the characteristics or past of an adopted child, the adoptive family can play an important healing role in his or her adjustment. In fact, according to several studies, most children overcome their difficulties once they have been welcomed into a secure and affectionate environment. However, there are several factors which can influence the degree of adjustment. These are: the structure of the adoptive family (for example, the number of adopted or biological children and their age), the socio-economic environment, the gap between the expectations of the parents and the characteristics (such as age, health or behaviour) of their adopted child, the expectations of the adopted child with regard to his or her new family, and the dynamics of relationships within the family. The involvement of the extended family should not be overlooked either,

including the strategies used to integrate the child into the family, both in terms of regular exchanges and ritualistic or symbolic practices such as family reunions or exchanging photographs and gifts. Lastly, the receptiveness of the adoptive society regarding immigration and ethno-cultural differences adds an additional degree of complexity to the child's adjustment and social integration processes, particularly during adolescence. The parents and siblings will eventually have to take a position in reference to each other with regard to this question of national and ethno-cultural identity.

It is clear that no particular family structure can be considered as necessarily more suitable than another for adopting a foreign-born child. Thus, for example, the presence of other children can sometimes be a facilitating factor, especially given that the adopters are, in this case, experienced parents. However, the adopted child can also be quite reluctant or find it hard to take on the role, say, of the younger, youngest or oldest sibling, that is reserved for him or her within the new family. What the research suggests, rather, is that each case must be considered individually, taking into account the particular characteristics of the child and what the adoptive family is offering as a context for integration. In this regard, the literature surveyed offers no substantial elements of reflection on single parent adoptive families or on adoptive families involving homosexual couples, although, in fact, in the latter case, only one parent legally adopts the child. As these adoptions are on the rise, however, it would be important to better understand the dynamics involved in them. Knowledge available on the reactions of other children in the family also needs to be expanded upon. How do they experience the adoption? Are they prepared for it and what impact does it have on them? Do families that are made up of both biological and adopted children offer a different context for integration than those made up of only biological or only adopted children or of an only child, whether he or she is biological or adopted? Some studies indicate that differences exist between these types of families, especially in terms of the social attitudes surrounding the child, and his or her arrival in the family and integration into the extended family network (Belleau, 1996).

Very few studies deal with intergenerational relationships within the adoptive family network. How do grandparents and other close relatives influence the choices made by adopters, the climate into which a child is welcomed, and, later on, the way problems that may arise are resolved? Is the child given a particular status within the extended family or, on the contrary, is he or she completely assimilated into the wider group of biological children within the family. What, in the longer term, are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these possibilities? Furthermore, it is time to begin addressing the question of the family status of children born to these intercountry adoptees. Some studies could already get underway on the subject, based on the adoptees involved in the first waves of intercountry adoption in Quebec. Some themes that could be explored are the adoptee's choice of spouse, their plans regarding parenthood, their relationship with their own children and with other members of the extended family, the passing on or not of their adopted status or ethno-cultural identity of origin to their children, and the question of inheritance and how it is handed down upon the death of adoptive grandparents.

Solving Problems Pursuant to Adoption

The problem of access to proper support for adoptive parents is sometimes alluded to in the literature, but the possible link between how well a child integrates into a family and what kind of support the family received has not been explored. It would be pertinent to better understand the type and the impact of support received from informal sources, such as family, friends or colleagues, from other adopters, be they individuals or associations, and from formal sources, such as professionals, institutions, government or government-related services. This study should also include a look at how adopters assess their needs and those of their child, what strategies they use in seeking assistance, and what circumstances might lead them to isolate themselves or to deny their own difficulties or those of their child.

During the first months or even years following their adoption, some children have made use of professional services, such as those offered by doctors, psychiatrists,

psychologists, remedial teachers or speech therapists. It would be useful to draw up a list of needs for these post-adoption services and of the professional resources that have informally developed an expertise in this subject. It would also be useful to find out what assessment these professionals, from their particular point of view as clinicians, have made of the phenomenon of intercountry adoption, what problems they have identified and what avenues for solving these problems they have used so far, and with what result.

Adoption is an evolving process that unfolds over the course of an entire life. The need for support can therefore show up long after the situation has apparently stabilized and become normalized. To what extent is this need specific to adoption, or rather, similar to that experienced by any other person or family? A possible difference could, for example, be related to the question of origins as it comes up at different stages in an adoptee's life, such as adolescence, the death of an adoptive parent, or the birth of a child.

The Question of Origins and the Rights of Adoptees

Most of the actors involved in intercountry adoption anticipate a wave of adoptees searching out their origins or even seeking reunion with their birth families, as children who were adopted during the 1990s gradually reach adolescence or adulthood, especially in the case of children who were adopted at an older age. What are the prevailing attitudes at the moment within adoptive families and among adoptees themselves with regard to such reunions? Similarly, what are the attitudes within the accredited organizations and public institutions concerned? Insofar as these attitudes create a context that will influence the terms of upcoming claims and the climate surrounding them, some reflection would be appropriate here.

Some adoptive parents, for whom the biological mother figure constitutes a threat, choose intercountry adoption because they believe that the possibilities for reunion with the birth parents are remote. Others choose intercountry adoption because they want to give a child a chance to survive. How do these parents react when they learn that their child has a family and when they are brought to meet the child's biological mother before

the child is surrendered to them, without being prepared for such a meeting beforehand? Other adopters take on the commitment, right from the start, of maintaining contact with their child's birth family. What exchange networks are established in this case, and what are the terms of the agreements made? How do these relationships evolve over time? What is the impact on the child and his or her adoptive family?

Although, in principle, the mother's consent to the adoption of her child should be formally given before the adopters receive a proposal to adopt her child, this is sometimes not the case at all. As long as the *Hague Convention* has not been formally implemented in all birth countries and adoptive countries, there will still be cases where consent is given only after there has been a direct meeting between the mother and the adopters. What are the motivating factors and the reactions of each party in this case? Which intermediaries are involved and what role do they play? What understanding do the various actors have of the notion of informed consent? How is the child made aware of this situation? What signs of it are left in the file?

Adopted children are usually informed of the fact that they lived in difficult and very undesirable conditions and that adoption was their "lucky chance." How do they react to the fact of being thus defined as being indebted to their birth parents for having entrusted their care to someone else and to their adoptive parents for having taken them in? Does this affect, for example, their behaviours or attitudes within the family, their career choices and plans for the future or their psychological well-being? How do the adoptive parents strive to lighten the load of this debt?

The question of origins immediately brings up the issue of the right of adoptees, aged fourteen and up, to find out about their background, as recorded in their adoption file. It also brings up the issue of the preservation of records concerning them. The literature is almost silent on this subject and some research should be done. What are the current practices of adopters, accredited organizations and authorities in the birth countries and adoptive countries with regard to the request for and the preservation and passing on of information concerning adopted children? Which information do they

consider to be pertinent, which do they try to obtain, which do they tend to dismiss or neglect? What kind of selection do they make? What information do they contribute to "creating" (the classic example in the case of domestic adoption is the letter that the biological mother is asked to write for her child, to be read at a later date)? What status should be assigned to photographic and videotaped records put together by adopters? When what is known about the history of a child is passed down to him or her, what are the main recurrent elements? Has this evolved from one wave of adoption to another, for example, between adoptions that took place in the 1980s and those that took place in the 1990s? It is not clear, moreover, what requests for information are being made by adoptees who have become adolescents or adults or how they assess what is communicated to them.

Several research issues also come up regarding the integration of adoptees in terms of immigration law and the right of citizenship, and as to their status under family law and the legal effects of their adoption. However, the literature surveyed only rarely mentions these aspects of intercountry adoption and does not, with very few exceptions, present any research results related to this. It would be important to study how situations where adoption ends in total failure are resolved, according to whether the disruption happens before or after a definitive adoption order is issued in the adoptive country. The very fact of identifying and documenting such circumstances would in itself be a significant step forward in terms of advancing knowledge that could be useful where intervention is concerned. Such research could take into account the similar experiences of domestically adopted children who are placed in foster families.

Ethno-cultural Identity

This research theme has often been raised, but mostly in terms of defending transracial adoption. Efforts have therefore been focused on demonstrating that having a different ethno-cultural background has very little impact on the social identity of adoptees. It would, however, be useful to continue to develop this theme in a wider perspective in order to shed some light on the various social attitudes that relate to it and

their evolution in the context of the growing pluralism of Western societies and the significant increase in intercountry adoptions. Thus, for example, preventive and adaptive strategies developed by children and their families with respect to discrimination and racism would be better understood if they were correlated with their perspective on these issues, such as how they see the immigrant's situation as compared to that of an adoptee, or their understanding of the causes and impacts of racism.

Nothing precise has yet been learned about the importance of the ethnic make-up of the adoptive environment, but it does appear to have an impact on the way in which adoptees are perceived and identified by themselves and others. Comparisons could be made, for example, between ethnically homogeneous and heterogeneous environments in terms of the framework for social integration that they offer children of different national backgrounds. In this regard, the study of the differences between adopted boys and adopted girls could be extended so as to examine, not only their childhood and adolescence, but also their family, professional and social life in adulthood.

Overall Considerations for Further Research

Irrespective of specific research themes, it is generally important never to lose sight of the fact that adoption is a creative process involving the transition of identity, and, for this reason, particular attention should be given to the experiences of the children themselves. There is a lack of research aimed at finding out about and understanding the point of view of adopted children as regards their experience, their birth and adoptive family ties, their identity and what they plan to pass on to their own children. Adoptees of all ages should be asked about their experiences, including adoptees who have reached adulthood and can now look back and reflect upon their life path, as well as children who were adopted at an older age, who still vividly remember their adoption and are now old enough to talk about it. These subjective points of view should be gathered and analyzed in the framework of qualitative studies, but based on a greater number of cases than the clinical studies currently available. This qualitative research should aim at supporting the

development of theoretical and analytical frameworks to be used specifically in the study of the dynamics that are set in motion by intercountry adoption.

As suggested by several authors, one of the main areas where research is lacking is that of longitudinal studies that would allow for groups of adopted children to be studied right up to adolescence or adulthood, in order to understand how their family relations evolve, as well as the ways they integrate into society at large. Generally speaking, the various research studies would do well to better target the ages of the subjects studied and be careful to interpret the results in terms of this age variable. Lastly, we should also point out the deplorable fact that studies with control groups are still all too rare and that this weakens to a great extent the capacity for interpreting and generalizing research results.

Lastly, it should be emphasized that, as was already mentioned in the introduction to Chapter 2, research on intercountry adoption does not deal with the life path of the children concerned since birth. Our understanding of their social integration is thus limited by the lack of knowledge about the first part of their lives, and this contributes to reinforcing the impact of the disruption brought about by the adoption. Although there are many significant obstacles to overcome in addressing these gaps in knowledge, they are certainly not insurmountable.

ANNEX I

Annotated Bibliography

ACHENBACH, T.M. and C.S. Edelbrock, 1986, *Manual for the Teacher Report Form and Teacher Version of the Child Behavior Profile*, Burlington, VT, Department of Psychiatry, University of Vermont.

ACHENBACH, T.M. and C.S. Edelbrock, 1983, *Manual for the Child Behavior Checklist and Revised Profile*, Burlington, VT, Department of Psychiatry, University of Vermont.

AINSWORTH, M.D.S., M. Blehar, E. Waters, and S. Wall, 1978, *Patterns of Attachment*, Hillsdale, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

ALTSTEIN, Howard and Rita J. Simon, 1991, "Summary and Concluding Remarks," in Rita J. Simon and Howard Altstein, ed. *Intercountry Adoption: A Multinational Perspective,* New York, Praeger: 183-191.

In this synthesis of the collective work that they edited, the authors make a comparative review of empirical studies conducted in the United States, Canada, Norway, Germany, Denmark, Holland and Israel. The issues examined are: the integration, adjustment and development of intercountry-adopted children. Among the findings to emerge from the summary is that the child's age when placed is a critical factor in the success of the adoption. Children adopted at one year or older sometimes have serious adjustment problems, which are aggravated when the children's ethnic origin is different from that of their parents. The composition of the receiving society also appears to be an important factor in children's adjustment; an ethnically heterogeneous society would facilitate the integration of intercountry-adopted children.

AMES, Elinor W. *et al.*, 1997, *The Development of Romanian Orphanage Children Adopted to Canada. Final Report,* Simon Fraser University, British Columbia.

A longitudinal study to assess the development of Romanian children who were adopted by Canadian couples. Based on two series of assessments, this recent study concludes that 72% of children who had lived in orphanages for at least the first eight months of their lives showed significant emotional, social and behavioural problems three years after their arrival.

ANDERSSON, Gunilla, 1991, "To Feel or not to Feel Swedish – is that the Question?," *Adoption and Fostering*, 15 (4): 69-74.

The author examines the integration and development of children adopted from abroad by Swiss parents. Her remarks are essentially based on a number of studies on the subject as well as on her own work experience in a Swiss adoption centre. The issues examined are:

school performance, ethnic identity and the overall quality of life of these grown-up adoptees. The article also includes three letters written to the author by three young adults who were adopted from abroad in which they share their thoughts on these issues.

ANDRESEN, Inger-Lise Kvifte, 1992, "Behavioural and School Adjustment of 12-13 Year Old Internationally Adopted Children in Norway: A Research Note," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 33 (2): 427-439.

The aim of this study is to assess school and family adjustment of children adopted from abroad by Norwegian families. The sample consisted of two groups of children. The first group comprised 151 twelve-to-thirteen-year-old children adopted from abroad (79 girls and 72 boys), mainly from Korea; 30 of them were six months old or less when adopted, 37 were seven months to one and a half years old, 26 were one and a half to three years old, 33 were three to five years old and 25 were over five years old when adopted. The second group was made up of 135 non-adopted children of the same age. Data were collected through two questionnaires: the Norwegian version of the Rutter's scales for parents of adopted children and the Rutter's scales for teachers of the adopted and non-adopted children (Rutter 1967, 1970). The majority of the children were found to be well adjusted to their family and school environment. Moreover, adjustment problems were more common among boys than girls, but no link could be established between age at adoption and quality of adjustment.The results concerning the adopted children's performance at school are less satisfactory than those of non-adopted children, but this difference is not statistically significant.

ANDUJO, Estela, 1988, "Ethnic Identity of Transethnically Adopted Hispanic Adolescents," *Social Work*, 33 (6): 531-535.

A study to compare the adjustment and the development of ethnic identity of Mexican American children adopted by families of their own ethnicity and by white American families. The author focuses more particularly on the influence of environmental and family factors on the development of ethnic identity. Data were obtained through interviews conducted with 30 American families of Mexican origin, 30 white American families and 60 children of Mexican-American origin aged 12 to 17 who had been adopted between the age of two and seven years. Standardized tests were also used: the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, Twenty Statements Test, Mexican-American Value Attitude Scale as well as a 60-item interview schedule on ethnicity and family and peer relations.

BACH, R. B., 1988, "Daten und Soziale Hintergründe der Adoption von Kindern aus des Dritten Welt. Eine Untersuchung der Gemeinsamen Zentralen Adoptionsstelle der vier Norddeutschen Bundesländer in Hamburg," *Zentralblatt für Jugendrecht*, 75: 328-333.

A statistical portrait of intercountry adoption in Germany based on a sample of 300 adoptees from Asia and Latin America. The author discusses the different types of private and public adoption practised and concludes that, under the laws in force in this country, many intercountry adoptions would be considered illegal, particularly due to the age of

the children at placement. Approximately 73% of the children were under one year old when adopted and many of these were only a few months old.

BAGLEY, Christopher, 1993a, "Chinese Adoptees in Britain: A Twenty-year Follow-up of Adjustment and Social Identity," *International Social Work*, 36 (2): 143-157.

A follow-up study of the one conducted by Bagley and Young (1981) with the families who adopted 53 children from Hong Kong in the 1960s. The assessment of the development of 44 of the young women, aged 22 to 28 years at the time of the survey, reveals very positive outcomes both in terms of adjustment, acculturation and absorption into English culture and in terms of self-esteem and identity.

BAGLEY, Christopher, 1993b, "Transracial Adoption in Britain: A Follow-up Study, with Policy Considerations," *Child Welfare*, 72 (3): 285-299.

BAGLEY, Christopher, 1991, "Adoption of Native Children in Canada: A Policy and a Research Report," in Howard Altstein and Rita J. Simon, ed. *Intercountry Adoption. A Multinational Perspective.* New York, Praeger: 55-79.

BAGLEY, C. and L. Young, 1981, "The Long-term Adjustment and Identity of a Sample of Inter-Country Adopted Children," *International Social Work*, 23 (3): 16-22.

The authors of this study, based on a mail survey of 67 British families who had adopted an infant or young girl from Hong Kong, examine the education, social development and problems encountered. The study also analyses the results of individual interviews with 51 parents and 53 girl adoptees to assess the latter's self-esteem (Erikson), adjustment and identity.

BALLAND, I., A. Laurent and J. Boucharlat, 1995, "À propos de l'adoption internationale," *Prisme*, 5 (2-3): 321-327.

The authors describe the specific characteristics of intercountry adoption (simultaneous adoptions, sibling adoptions, late adoptions, etc.). Based on two clinical cases of children adopted from Poland and Guatemala at age 11 and 12, these child psychiatrists examine the children's past (neglect, abuse, heredity), identity issues (naming) as well as loyalty to their birth parents.

BANKS, N., 1992, "Techniques for Direct Identity Work with Black Children," *Adoption and Fostering*, 16 (3): 19-25.

BARTH, Richard P. and Marianne Berry, 1988, *Adoption and Disruption: Rates, Risks and Responses.* Hawthorne, New York, Aldine de Gruyter.

BARTH, F., 1969 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* Boston, Little Brown.

BARTHOLET, Elizabeth, 1993a, *Family Bonds. Adoption and the Politics of Parenting,* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company.

In this book, the author recounts her personal experience of adopting two Peruvian boys from the perspective of a single parent, attorney and human rights activist. She advocates easier access to intercountry adoption and, in the interests of the well-being of children, considers that adoptions should go beyond racial boundaries. Bartholet also examines the issue of assisted reproduction with the aim of revealing the inconsistencies inherent in our conception of adoption. Her argument is supported by a number of quantitative and empirical studies on the development of foreign adoptees as well as legal, historical and anthropological concepts.

BARTHOLET, Elizabeth, 1993b, "International Adoption: Current Status and Future Prospects," *The Future of Children*, 3 (1): 89-103.

The author, who herself adopted children from Latin America, attempts to demonstrate that the benefits of intercountry adoption far outweigh the negative aspects put forward by opponents of this type of adoption. Bartholet examines various barriers (legal, social…) that obstruct the process of intercountry adoption before and after the child's arrival. She provides an overview and critique of the problems attributed to this practice by presenting the findings of a number of empirical studies on the development of foreign adoptees. She also makes recommendations aimed at providing direction for the needed reforms.

BASQUIN, M. and N. Basquin, 1985, "Les enfants adoptés sont-ils toujours carencés?" *Lieux de l'enfance*, 1-2: 139-148.

This article focuses on the different types of deprivations that a child may have experienced prior to adoption and on their impact on the adoptive family. According to the authors, the deprived child may suffer from several disorders, for example, those related to sleep, eating, behaviour, attention, self-image, and so on. The later children are adopted, the more likely they are to show, in one way or another, previous suffering, especially in adolescence. Finally, the authors present the different phases through which parents, confronted with these manifestations of the early deprivation experienced by the child, go through.

BEAL, Claude-Pierrette, 1993, "À propos d'adoption d'enfants du Tiers-Monde poly-traumatisés," in M. Rey-von Allmen, ed. *Psychologie clinique et interrogations culturelles,* Paris, L'Harmattan, pp. 359-366.

Drawing on her practice as a psychologist/psychotherapist in Switzerland, the author examines the adjustment, attachment and integration processes that late adoptees (aged 6 or older) have to go through. The adjustment requires heavy therapeutic investment on the part of parents and children.

BELL, P. and J. Evans, 1981, "Counselling the Black Client," in *Professional Education,* Minneapolis, MN, Hazelton Foundation.

BELLEAU, Hélène, 1996, *Les représentations de l'enfant dans les albums de photographies de famille*, Ph.D. dissertation in sociology, Université de Montréal, Montréal.

Based on a qualitative analysis of the photo albums of sixteen Québec families and the related discourse (open-ended interviews), the author attempts to demonstrate how a child is integrated into the family and the group's memory and, from a sociological perspective, how his or her identity is constructed by the parents. The author compares and brings out distinctions between families with only adopted children (from China and Haiti), those with only biological children and those with both.

BENOIT, Teresa C. et al., 1996, "Romanian Adoption – The Manitoba Experience," *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 150 (12): 1278-1282.

BENSON, P. L., R. Sharma Anu and E. Roehlkepartain, 1994, *Growing up Adopted. A Portrait of Adolescents and their Families,* Minneapolis, MN, Search Institute.

This American study is based on a vast sample of more than 800 adoptees and 1,262 adoptive parents. Its purpose is to compare the mental health of young adoptees aged twelve to eighteen with their non-adopted peers. Based on a mail survey, the authors specifically examine the adoptees' racial and ethnic identity, attachment, self-esteem as well as family and social integration.

BERRY, Marianne, 1992, "Contributors to Adjustment Problems of Adoptees: A Review of the Longitudinal Research," *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 9 (6): 525-540.

The author presents a review of empirical studies on the behaviour and adjustment problems of adopted children. The results reveal that adopted children are indeed at increased risk of behavior problems as well as decreased self-esteem. The author explains that unrealistic parental expectations, particularly regarding academic achievement, lead to difficulties in adjustment in the child.

BOWLBY, J, 1980, *Attachment and Loss, Vol. 3: Loss: Sadness and Depression,* New York, Basic Books.

BRODZINSKY, David M., 1993, "Long-term Outcomes in Adoption," *The Future of Children*, 3 (1): 153-163.

BRODZINSKY, David M., 1990, "A Stress and Coping Model of Adoption Adjustment," in D. M. Brodzinsky and M. D. Schechter, ed. *The Psychology of Adoption,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 3-24.

BRODZINSKY, David M., 1987, "Adjustment to Adoption: A Psychological Perspective," *Clinical Psychology Review*, 7: 25-47.

BRODZINSKY, David M. and L. Huffman, 1988, "Transition to Adoptive Parenthood," *Marriage and Family Review*, 12: 267-286.

BRODZINSKY, David M., C. Radice, L. Huffman and K. Merker, 1987, "Prevalence of Clinically Significant Symptomatology in a Nonclinical Sample of Adopted and Nonadopted Children," *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 16: 350-356.

BRODZINSKY, David M., D.E. Schechter, A.M. Braff and L.M. Singer, 1984, "Psychological and Academic Adjustment in Adopted Children," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 52: 582-590.

BRODZINSKY, David M., D.E. Schechter and R.M. Hening, 1992, *Being Adopted: The Lifelong Search for Self*, New York, Doubleday.

BRODZINSKY, David M. and Marshall D. Schechter, 1990, *The Psychology of Adoption,* New York, Oxford University Press.

This collective work brings together the contributions of several American and European experts on adoption from a variety of disciplines including psychology, psychiatry, social work and sociology. The book provides a description of current theory and research in the area of adoption with a particular emphasis on mental health issues. The book, which covers a wide range of topics, is divided into four sections: theoretical perspectives, empirical research, clinical issues and social policy and casework issues.

CADORET, Rémi J., 1990, "Biologic Perspectives of Adoptee Adjustment," in David M. Brodzinsky and Marshall D. Schechter, ed. *The Psychology of Adoption*, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 25-41.

CALLOUD, Hubert and Monique Calloud, 1995, "Une famille comme les autres (1959-1994)," in Brigitte Camdessus, ed., *L'adoption. Une aventure familiale,* Paris, ESF éditeur, pp. 43-61.

This article tells the story of Hubert and Monique Calloud, the parents of three children adopted from the Middle East during the 1960s. The authors recount their experiences and feelings as they created their adoptive family, from the time that they discovered that they were infertile until the birth of their grandchildren.

CARSTENS, Carol and Maria Julia, 1995, "Legal Policy and Practice Issues for Intercountry Adoptions in the United States," *Adoption and Fostering*, 19 (4): 26-33.

The aim of this article is to examine the scope and nature of intercountry adoption and to review the legal issues associated with intercountry adoption in the United States. The authors first present an historical overview of intercountry adoption in the United States, the evolution of the number and main sending countries of adoptees as well as the profile of the latter (age, handicaps, etc.). They then compare the legal aspects of domestic transracial adoption with those of intercountry adoption and briefly discuss the phenomenon of trafficking of children. The adoption practices of a number of Third

World countries as well as the impact of these adoptions on the development of social child welfare services in the sending countries are presented. The authors also review international efforts aimed at standardizing the laws regulating intercountry adoption. Finally, they review studies on the development of intercountry-adopted children and make recommendations regarding placement policies in the United States. They propose, in particular, the establishment of a database on intercountry adoption in the United States which could be used by policy makers and clinical practitioners to assess trends and needs.

CHISHOLM, Kim, Margaret Carter, Elionor W. Ames and Sara J. Morison, 1995, "Attachment Security and Indiscriminately Friendly Behavior in Children Adopted from Romanian Orphanages," *Development and Psychopathology*, 7: 283-294.

This article reports on assessments of the mother-child attachment relationship on the basis of information gathered from Canadian parents who adopted a Romanian child. This analysis is part of the longitudinal study conducted by Ames and her collaborators (see Ames et al. 1997).

CHOULOT, J. J. and J. M. Brodier, 1993, "Risques d'échecs des adoptions incontrôlées d'enfants étrangers," *Annales de pédiatrie*, 40 (10): 635-638.

The authors report on four cases of failed adoptions of older children from abroad. Risk factors underlined are: advanced age of the parents or adoptee, insufficient commitment on the part of the adopting parents, insufficient consideration by parents of the problems of adoption.

COHEN, Phil, 1993, "Yesterday's Words, Tomorrow's World: From the Racialisation of Adoption to the Politics of Difference," in I. Gaber and J. Albridge, eds. *In the Best Interest of the Child,* London, Free Association Press, pp. 43-75.

COLE, Jill C., 1993, "Perceptions of Ethnic Identity among Korean-Born Adoptees and Their Caucasian-American Parents," *Dissertation Abstracts International, A-The Humanities and Social Sciences*, 54 (1): 317A.

COLE, Jill C., 1992, *Perception of Ethnic Identity among Korean-Born Adoptees and their Caucasian-American Parents*, Ph.D, School of Social Work, Columbia University, New York.

This study examines the role of parents in the development of the ethnic identity of a group of Korean-born adoptees. In particular, it takes into consideration age of child, composition of receiving community, parent interest in Korea and practices within the home. For this study, interviews were conducted with 48 children aged five, six and seven years (open-ended questions, doll and puzzle instruments) and with the parents.

COLLARD, Chantal, 1988, "Enfants de Dieu, enfants du péché: anthropologie des crèches québécoises de 1900 à 1960," *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, 12 (2): 97-123.

This article examines the anthropology of crèches in Quebec and the movement of illegitimate children in the Charlevoix Ouest region between 1900 and 1960. The research is based on documents published by the crèches, studies on them and an ethnological survey of two villages in the county. The author demonstrates the influence of religious nationalism on adoptive practices of the time, and of a marked change in premarital sexuality, which explains the rise in illegitimate births as well as the surplus of children placed. She traces the movement of these illegitimate children, from birth and abandonment to their adoption; the rules, practices and ideology of this movement are each analyzed.

CORDELL A. S.,C. Nathan and V. P. Krymow, 1985, "Group Counseling for Children Adopted at Older Ages," *Child Welfare*, 64 (2): 113-124.

The authors present an experiment in group therapy with children adopted at older ages. The sample consisted of two groups of adoptees. The first was made up of ten adolescents (five girls and five boys) aged 13 to 17; eight of the teens were white, one was black and one Oriental; six of them had been adopted between the age of eleven and fifteen years old, two at the age of six and seven years and one when an infant. The second group was made up of ten preteens (eight girls and two boys) ranging in age from ten to thirteen years; seven were white, one black and two Oriental; five of them were adopted at age eleven, four between age four and ten, and one was adopted while infant. The aim of the therapy was to provide follow-up for the late adoptions and thus to increase the success rate. The authors hypothesize that children placed at an older age have more unresolved problems about their past experiences and are particularly vulnerable during adolescence (Kirk 1966). The therapy was therefore designed to allow the adolescents to freely express their feelings and put their past into perspective. The authors report on the group sessions in which the adolescents participated as well as on the sessions conducted with their parents.

COSTA-LASCOUX, Jacqueline, 1988, "Du fantasme à la réalité," *Autrement*, 96: 172-177.

Based on interviews with candidates for international adoption, the author attempts to reveal the motivations, ideas and attitudes of the latter in relation to the adoption of children from abroad. She examines three levels of the life of the couple, the child and society brought into play by intercountry adoption: the real, the symbolic and the imaginary. The author explains that parents wish to build a family as if the adopted child was their own, but they perceive their involvement in an affective and voluntary filiation as establishing a stronger and more durable bond, which is expressed in an idealization of the adopted child and his or her otherness. The adoption of a child who is physically different from the parents is not a way to hide the couple's infertility but to attest to the generosity of the parents who perceive adoption as a value in itself. Finally, the author examines the attitude of parents towards the reluctance of governments of sending countries to consent to full adoptions and discusses intercountry adoption from a North-South perspective.

CouANT, Mireille, 1996, "L'élaboration de l'appartenance familiale: des mères adoptives parlent," *Dialogue*, 133: 30-41.

The author, who has adopted several children, interviewed five adoptive mothers of children of various origins in order to understand the reality of belonging to a family in adoption. She focuses on the process of attachment and identification, of parents in relation to the children, and vice versa. The author examines a number of topics, including grieving for the biological child, psychological pregnancy experienced by the couple while waiting for an imaginary child, conditions in which family belongingness is achieved, confrontation of reality with the imaginary when the child arrives, the development of attachment and the initial bonding with the adopted child. She also considers the process of making the child a part of the family line, first by giving him or her the family name and then sharing the adoptive parents' family history with the child. The author also examines the issue of the mystery of the child's origins and the uneasiness of the adoptive parents about the possible search for origins, which could be an obstacle to the development of adoptive family membership. Finally, the author examines the perception of adoptive parents who also have biological children regarding the differences in the sense of belonging to a family and the personal identity of these two types of children.

CRINE, A. M. and S. Nabinger, 1991, "Le roman familial des fratries dans l'adoption internationale," *Dialogue*, 114 (4): 35-41.

More than half of the European adoptions of Brazilian children involve siblings. The authors, who work, respectively, at the Porto Alegre children's court and in a Belgian adoption service, attempt to remedy the lack of information on "at risk" cases. They first describe the family and social context of these children prior to their placement in a residential institution, which generally results in the dispersion of siblings. They then underline that through intercountry adoption, siblings can be placed together and describe the motives of adopters. They then discuss sibling relationships after adoption, based on three likely scenarios: natural siblings adopted by a couple who do not have other biological or adopted children, blended adoptive sibling relationships resulting from separate adoptions of children without biological ties and "mixed" sibling relationship in which biological and adopted children coexist.

CRoss, W. E. Jr., 1987, "A Two Factor Theory of Black Identity Implication for the Study of Identity Development in Minority Children," in J.S. Phinney and M. J. Rotheram, ed. *Children's Ethnic Socialization,* Newbury Park, CA Sage, pp. 117-133.

DALEN, M. and B. Saetersdal, 1987, "Transracial Adoption in Norway," *Adoption and Fostering*, 11: 41-46.

The authors of this Norwegian study examine the health, racial and ethnic identity as well as the development and social integration of 41 children adopted from Vietnam. The children were aged two to five at adoption and, at the time, had serious health and behaviour problems (passivity, apathy, developmental delays and malnutrition).

However, they recovered rapidly. Moreover, the results show that when they reach adolescence, the adoptees must deal with discrimination and feel somewhat marginalized by the receiving society.

DAUBIGNY, Corinne, 1995, "L'effacement de l'identité, une pratique culturelle?," in Lucette Khaïat, ed. *Vérité scientifique, vérité psychique et droit de la filiation*. Toulouse, Editions Erès, pp. 183-190.

DAUBIGNY, Corinne, 1994, *Les origines en héritage,* Paris, Syros.

DE BLOIS, Esther, 1995, "Première phase de l'adaptation à l'adoption: impacts physique, psychique et social," in Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale, *Colloque Adoption 1994. Dessine-moi une famille,* Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux, pp. 148-153.

The author describes the stages that adoptive families go through during the first phase of physical, psychological and social adjustment to adoption, more particularly during the first two years following the child's arrival. The paper is based on a review of the literature, collaboration with a number of parents and professionals working in the area of intercountry adoption and her own experience as a social worker in Montreal youth centres.

DECERF, Anne, 1995, "Une autre forme de racisme," *Égalité*, 37: 37-65.

Based on a psychoanalytical perspective, the author hypothesizes that adopted children are likely to develop reactions of racist rejection of themselves. Five cases are presented. The five children interviewed were aged five to eight, and were a few months' old to three years old when they were adopted in France. This article reports on the importance of fantasized accounts of children and parents in the acceptance of difference.

DECERF, Anne, 1993, "Enfant adopté, enfant sacré," *Revue québécoise de psychologie*, 14 (1): 3-29.

The author seeks to understand how collective imagery, in collaboration with individual imagery, helps to surround the adopted child with particular ideas. The author attempts to determine the impact of collective ideas on the attitudes developed by adoptive parents with regard to their adopted child. The author first presents a review of the literature on social representations. She then analyzes six interviews conducted with the adoptive parents of Korean and Indian children who, at the time of the study, were aged 12 to 16 years.

DELAISI, Geneviève and Pierre Verdier, 1994, *Enfant de personne*. Paris, Odile Jacob.

DESJARDINS, Joëlle, 1989, *Adoption internationale, 1980-1989. Bibliographie,* Québec, Assemblée nationale.

DESPEIGNES, Marie-Joëlle, 1994, "Identité psychosociale d'enfants d'origine haïtienne adoptés par des parents québécois," *Intervention*, 97: 20-31.

In this article, Despeignes examines the formation of family identity in children adopted from Haiti. Based on the viewpoints of twelve children ranging in age from seven to thirteen years, she observes that all of them feel attached to their adoptive parents, that they have a good relationship with their siblings as well as with members of the extended family. These young people appeared irritated by the questions about their biological family but would have liked to have had information on the physical appearance and character traits of their birth parents in order to find out who they resemble. Finally, the author develops a general model of family identity formation and underlines the importance of stating common points but also of recognizing the difference of each family member and the importance of the sense of belonging to the broader group.

DESPEIGNES, Marie-Joëlle, 1993, *L'identité psychosociale d'enfants d'origine haïtienne adoptés par des parents canadiens-français.* Master's dissertation in psychology, Montréal, Université de Montréal.

This psychological study examines the identity processes and adjustment mechanisms which foster the family and social integration of intercountry-adopted children. It was based on five 50-minute meetings with twelve children ranging in age from seven to thirteen years and on semi-structured interviews with their parents. The qualitative analysis deals with the development of the "racial" and ethnic identity of children of Haitian origin.

DE VRIES, A. K., 1988, "Taalaanpassing van Koreaanse Adoptiekinderen (Language Adaptation of Korean Adoptees)," in A. K. De Vries and L. A. C. Bunjes, ed. *A Fresh Start... A New Language,* Utrecht, Adoption Center.

This study examines the language development and academic performance of children from Korea, India, Colombia and Bangladesh adopted by Dutch parents. No particular problem was detected among these children who ranged in age from five to eight years, but the authors point out that the parents interviewed seemed to pay particular attention to the children's integration into and adjustment to their school environment (see Hoksbergen 1991).

DUFOUR, Josette, 1991, *Adopte-moi quand même,* France, Fayard. Collection Les enfants du Fleuve.

The author, who heads an association for intercountry adoption from the Third World, recounts the experience of these children, beginning with their situation in their birth country to integration in their adoptive family. She examines a number of situations related to the post-adoption period (jealousy, problems at school, children adopted at an older age, etc.).

FEIGELMAN, William and Arnold R. Silverman, 1984, "The Long-Term Effects of Transracial Adoption," *Social Service Review*, 58 (4): 588-602.

Feigelman and Silverman examine the adjustment problems of Colombian, Korean and Afro-American and white children adopted by white American families. The study was carried out in two phases: in 1975, 737 families were recruited for the first phase of the study and 372 of these families were retraced in 1981 in order to follow up on the children. The assessment of their adjustment was based on their parents' perception. The results show that the variable that had the greatest impact on the children's adjustment was age at placement and that the adjustment of the four groups of children was similar.

FEIGELMAN, William and Arnold R. Silverman, 1983, *Chosen Children. New Patterns of Adoptive Relationships*. New York, Praeger.

FISHER, Lianne, Elinor W. Ames, Kim Chisholm and Lynn Savoie, 1997, "Problems Reported by Parents of Romanian Orphans Adopted to British Columbia," *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 20 (1): 67-82.

The aim of this study is to describe the types, causes and frequency of behaviour problems among Romanian orphans adopted to Canada. The authors attempt to determine whether the institutionalization of children prior to adoption had a particular impact on the types of behaviour problems manifested after placement. Three groups of children were studied: (1) 46 Romanian children who had spent at least eight months in an orphanage; (2) 46 Canadian-born children living with their biological family; and (3) 29 Romanian children who were adopted before the age of four months and therefore had not been placed in institutional care. Interviews were conducted with the parents who also completed several questionnaires, including the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach et al., 1987).

FRENCH, Glenda, 1986, "Intercountry Adoption: Helping a Young Child Deal with Loss," *Child Welfare*, 65 (3): 272-279.

The author, who is a social worker, details her personal experiences during the process of helping her daughter, adopted from Bangladesh, mourn the loss of her biological family and community and adjust to her new cultural environment. The author first describes the problem behaviours of her child when she arrived. She then explores the different stages of grief for her past and development of new attachments to the present (denial, anger, depression and acceptance). She concludes with a number of suggestions for parents aimed at facilitating the process of grieving by the adoptive child.

GABER, I. and J. Albridge, 1994, *In the Best Interest of the Child: Culture Identity and Transracial Adoption,* London, Free Association Books.

GALLISSOT, R., 1987 "Sous l'identité: le procès de l'identification," *L'Homme et la société,* 83: 12-27.

GALAÏNENA, Mirentchu, 1988, *L'adoption, voyage au bout d'un désir,* Paris, La découverte.

In the first part of the book, the author, a social worker, explains the process gone through by French parents who wish to adopt a child from France or from abroad (Brazil, Chile, Romania). The second half of the book is devoted to questions that arise after adoption (children adopted at an older age, first meetings, integration, etc.).

GANS, H., 1979, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2 (1): 1-20.

GEERARS, H.C., H. Hart and R.A.C. Hocksbergen, 1991, *Waar ben ik thuis? Geadopteerde adolescenten over adoptie, hun familie, problemen, uithuisplaatsing en toekomstvisie.* Utrecht, Adoption Center.
    Cited in Hoksbergen, René A.C., 1997.

GEERARS, H.C., R.A.C. Hoksbergen and J. Rooda, 1995, *Geadopteerden op weg naar volwassenheid. De integratie van 68 Thaise jongeren in de Nederlandse samenleving.* Utrecht, Adoption Centre.
    Cited in Hoksbergen, René A.C., 1997.

GILL, O. and B. Jackson, 1983, *Adoption and Race: Black, Asian and Mixed Children in White Families,* New York, St. Martin's Press.

GOLOMBOK, S, 1994, "Attachment," in Ivor Gaber and Jane Aldridge, ed. *In the Best Interest of the Child*, London, Free Association Books, pp. 103-115.

Analysis of the process, from birth onwards, by which children become attached to their mother and its implications for the study of adoption in general and transracial adoption in particular. A review of psychological studies of children shows that the development of a good relationship with the mother and father from the first months of the child's life is an essential factor in the child's emotional development. Children's attachment to their mother in early childhood gives them a sense of emotional security which will later allow them to develop stable relationships with their family and friends as well as high self-esteem. The studies on transracial adoption reported on by the author show that the capacity for black children to become attached to a white family is similar to that of children adopted by families of the same ethnic origin. The author therefore concludes that the delay in waiting to find black adoptive parents is more harmful to the child than transracial adoption itself.

GOUBEAU, Dominique and Suzanne Beaudoin, 1996, "Adoption 'ouverte': quelques enjeux et constats," *Service Social,* 45 (2): 51-71.

GRAHAM, P. and M. Rutter, 1968, "The Reliability and Validity of Psychiatric Assessment of the Child: II. Interview with the Parent," *British Journal of Psychiatry,* 114: 581-592.

GRAVEL, Rénald and P. Roberge, 1984, *Le vécu en adoption internationale au Québec, No.17,* Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère des affaires sociales.

This study provides a portrait of adoptive parents in Quebec and their intercountry-adopted children (from the West Indies, Latin America and Asia). It is based on a quantitative analysis of data collected in interviews (fixed response questions) with parents in 651 households. A variety of subjects are examined, including infertility, the role of private and public agencies, race and ethnicity and the children's academic performance.

GREENFIELD, Joanna M., 1995, "Intercountry Adoption: A Comparison Between France and England," *Adoption and Fostering*, 19 (2): 31-36.

This study compares the services provided to French and British adoptive parents. Forty-six French families and sixty Bristish families were interviewed. Nearly half of the adopted children of these parents were less than one year old when they arrived from Latin America or Sri Lanka. This study sheds light on the stages in the adoption process, more specifically, the procedures followed by parents to find a child to adopt, the first contact with the child and the meeting with the biological parents.

GROVE, Judy, 1994, "Why Do Adoptive Families Need Post-Adoption Services?" *Journal of the Adoption Council of Ontario (Adoption Roundup).*

GROZE, Victor, 1996, "Introduction: Advances in Research and Theory in Adoption," *Children and Youth Services Review*, 18 (1-2): 1-4.

HARDER, E., 1987, *International Adoption: An Exploration of How Adolescents are Faring. M.S.W. Thesis,* Waterloo, Ontario, Wilfrid-Laurier University.

A study of the self-esteem of intercountry-adopted children, based on interviews with eight families (parents and adopted children).

HARPER, Juliet, 1994, "Counselling Issues in Intercountry Adoption Disruption," *Adoption and Fostering*, 18 (2): 20-26.

Harper presents her conclusions based on therapeutic counselling sessions that she conducted with seven adoptees aged 6 to 15. She mainly examines the impact of problems encountered by parents and their children (feelings of loss, poor quality of attachment to the adoptive family, lack of preparation, etc.) on the children's adjustment, integration and development. The children, who were adopted from India, Asia and Latin America, were placed with Australian families at an older age, that is, between four and a half and twelve years.

HARPER, Juliet, 1993, "Lost Memories: the Experience of Older-Aged Intercountry Adopted Children," *Adoption Therapist*, 4: 10-14.

HARPER, Juliet, 1986, "Intercountry Adoption of Older Children in Australia," *Adoption and Fostering*, 2: 27-31.

The author assesses the adjustment of children adopted late from abroad by Australian parents. The sample was made up of 27 families who had adopted a child aged at least four years. The children mainly came from Sri Lanka, India, Korea, Latin America and Thailand and ranged in age from five to sixteen years old at the time of the study, which was based on a questionnaire mailed to the adoptive parents. The questionnaire investigated the type and frequency of adjustment problems that occurred during the period following the child's arrival (transition period*),* the impact of the child's past and culture of origin on the process of family integration as well as the parents' attitude towards their child's culture, identity and future.

HARTMAN, Ann, 1984, *Working With Adoptive Families Beyond Placement*. New York, Child Welfare League of America.

HARTMAN, Ann and Joan Laird, 1990, "Family Treatment After Adoption: Common Themes," in D. M. Brodzinsky and Marshall D. Schechter, ed. *The Psychology of Adoption* New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 221-239.

Based on their therapeutic practice in the United States, the authors present a number of recurrent themes in family adoption accounts, which they illustrate through a number of clinical cases. They focus on interpersonal relations both within and outside the family in order to make professionals aware of the issues that are likely to have a negative effect on family functioning.

HARVEY, Ian, 1986, "Intercountry Adoption of Older Children in Australia," *Adoption and Fostering*, 2: 27-31.

HARVEY, Ian, 1983, "Adoption of Vietnamese Children: An Australian Study," *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 18 (1): 55-69.

HAYES, Peter, 1993, "Transracial Adoption: Politics and Ideology," *Child Welfare*, 72 (3): 301-310.

This article focuses on the debate about transracial adoption in the United States and the impact of the debate on placement practices for black children. The author examines the arguments put forward by opponents of adoption of black American children by white families. The opposition to transracial adoption is generally based on the argument that white parents would be incapable of passing on to their child an ethnic identity and cultural heritage that correspond to the child's racial origin. The author criticizes the ideological and political nature of this debate by examining the interpretation of the results of empirical studies made by opponents. These studies demonstrate that adoptive families who give great importance to the child's ethnic identity and cultural heritage do not have a higher success rate than those that give little or no importance to these aspects.

HENE, B., 1988, *Language Development of Intercountry Adoptees,* Sweden, Spring Report, University of Göteburg.

HODGES, K., D. McKnew, L. Stern and J. Kline, 1982, "The Child Assessment Schedule: Parent-Child Agreement and Validity Measures," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry,* 28: 455-466.

HOFFMAN-RIEM, Christa, 1989, "Disclosing Adoption," *Society,* 26 (4): 26-31.

HOFFMAN-RIEM, Christa, 1986, "Adoptive Parenting and the Norm of Family Emotionality," *Qualitative Sociology*, 9 (2): 162-178.

HOKSBERGEN, René A. C., 1997, "Turmoil for Adoptees During Their Adolescence?" *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 20 (1): 33-46.

This article is based on a review of the main results of studies conducted the Netherlands on the causes and characteristics of behaviour problems developed by intercountry-adopted adolescents. The author focuses particularly on the factors contributing to psychological difficulties in adoptive families, the significance of adolescence as a developmental stage and on how adoptees cope with their situation. This review yields a number of findings related to the behaviour problems developed by intercountry-adopted adolescents and presents the main risk factors: discontinuity in the adoptive family (divorce, death, moves), past traumatic experiences of the adolescent during childhood, fertility problems of parents, unrealistic expectations about the child, advanced age of adopting parents, inability of parents to acknowledge their child's "difference" and social isolation of the adoptive family.

HOKSBERGEN, René A. C., 1991, "Intercountry Adoption. Coming of Age in the Netherlands: Basic Issues, Trends and Developments," in H. Altstein and R. S. Simon, ed. *Intercountry Adoption: A Multinational Perspective,* New York, Praeger, pp. 141-158.

This article is a review of studies on the integration and development of children adopted from abroad by Dutch parents. The author first describes the evolution of laws and policies on intercountry adoption in Holland. He then provides a statistical portrait of the phenomenon between 1970 and 1988 including, for 1984-1988, the age of children at adoption. The literature review is divided according to the approaches used by the authors cited: juridical, medical and psychological/psychiatric.

HOKSBERGEN, René A. C., 1985, "L'éducation des enfants venus de pays étrangers en Hollande," *Enfance*, 1: 77-83.

This article provides a basic overview of the overall situation and history of intercountry adoption in Holland.

HOKSBERGEN, René A. C. and L. A. C. Bunjes, 1986, "Thirty Years of Adoption Practice in The Netherlands," in R. A. C. Hoksbergen, ed. *Adoption in Worldwide Perspective,* Lisse, Swets & Zeitlinger.

HOKSBERGEN, René A. C., F. Jöffer and B. C. Waardenburg, 1987, *Adopted Children at Home and at School,* Lisse, Swets & Zeitlinger.

Hoksbergen, Jöffer and Waardenburg assess the health, development, attachment, and family, social and school integration of 116 children adopted from Thailand by 87 Dutch parents. The average age at adoption was ten months and the adoptees were aged 5 to 15 at the time of the study. Interviews were conducted with their parents and teachers. Various instruments were used: the Family Adaptation and Cohesion Scales measure family cohesion; Kirk's Index assess the attitudes of parents towards difference; the Parents' List measures the correspondence between the child's functioning and the parents' expectations and attitudes; the Behaviors' List evaluates the extent of the child's behaviour problems; the Behavior at School Assessment List describes the child's behaviour at school; and, finally, the Teacher's Questionnaire presents the teacher's assessment of the child's academic performance. The authors conclude that these intercountry-adopted children generally adjusted very well to their social environment despite initial health and behaviour problems.

HOKSBERGEN, René A.C., J. Spaan, and B. C. Waardenburg, 1988, *Bittere Ervaringen (Bitter Experiences),* Lisse, Swetz & Zeitlinger.

HOOPES, Janet L., 1990, "Adoption and Identity Formation," in David M. Brodzinsky and Marshall D. Schechter, ed. *The Psychology of Adoption*, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 144-166.

HOOPES, Janet L., 1982, *Prediction in Child Development: A Longitudinal Study of Adoptive and Nonadoptive Families*. New York, Child Welfare League of America.

HORN, Colin, 1992, *The Experience of Adoption*, Ph.D, Dept. of Education, University of Michigan, Michigan.

This study aims to understand the experience of adoption from the adoptees' point of view. Using a psychological perspective, the author analyzed a collection of 26 stories produced by ten young people during individual interviews (two to three hours long). The adoptees ranged in age between four and sixteen years at the time of the interviews and were adopted mainly from South America and Asia. Six recurrent themes emerged and were analyzed.

JOHNSON, Dana E., Laurie C. Miller, Sandra Iverson, William Thomas, Barbara Franchino, Kathryn Dole, Marybeth T. Kiernan, Michael K. Georgieff and Margaret K. Hostetter, 1992, "The Health of Children Adopted from Romania," *Journal of the American Medical Association,* 268 (24): 3446-3451.

This study aims to determine the medical condition of Romanian children adopted by American families and the effects on their health of institutionalization previous to being adopted. The sample was made up of 65 Romanian children, ranging in age from six weeks to 73 months, who were adopted by American families; 50 of them had lived in an orphanage prior to their adoption. The latter, whose average age was fifteen and a half months at the time of the study, were older than the 15 other children who had not lived in an institution, whose average age was three months,. The study was carried out from three weeks to three months after the child's arrival. A full medical assessment (health status, growth, cognitive and psychomotor development) was carried out between October 1990 and October 1991 at the International Adoption Clinic at the University of Minnesota as well as the New England Medical Center in Boston. Results show that only ten children (15%) were physically healthy and developmentally normal. Two of these had not been placed in an orphanage and the other eight had been placed for only a very short time (four months or less). The other 55 (85%) had serious health, developmental and behaviour problems (hepatitis B, intestinal parasites, and growth delay).

JOHNSON, P.R., J.F. Shireman and K.W. Watson, 1987, "Transracial Adoption and the Development of Black Identity at Age Eight," *Child Welfare*, 66 (1): 45-55.

JUFFER, Femmie and Lizette G. Rosenboom, 1997, "Infant-Mother Attachment of Internationally Adopted Children in the Netherlands," *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 20 (1): 93-107.

This study assesses the mother-child attachment relationship in Dutch families who had adopted children from abroad. Eighty mother-child couples were visited three times; that is, when the child was six, eight and twelve months old. The children, who were from South Korea, Sri Lanka and Colombia, were adopted between the age of seven and sixteen weeks. Interviews were conducted with the families to investigate their motivation, the adoption process and the baby's adjustment. The mothers and children were videotaped in a free-play situation and the infants participated in two tests measuring their competence. The following instruments were also used: the Strange Situation Paradigm and Guidelines for Scoring (Ainsworth et al. 1978) and the Rating Scale 'Sensitivity' (Ainsworth, Bell & Stayton 1974). The results show that the level of mother-child attachment was similar to that found in biological families. Unlike other studies, this research shows that transracial adoption does not inevitably lead to a disturbed relationship between the child and the adoptive mother, especially when the child is adopted at a very early age.

KADUSHIN, A., 1980, *Child Welfare Services* (3rd ed.). New York, Macmillan.

KAYE, Kenneth, 1990, "Acknowledgment or Rejection of Differences?" in David M. Brodzinsky and Marshall D. Schechter, ed. *The Psychology of Adoption*. New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 121-143.

KIRK, David H., 1985, *Adoptive Kinship. A Modern Institution in Need of Reform*. Brentwood Bay, B.C. Ben Simon Publications.

KIRK, David H., 1984, *Shared Fate: A Theory of Adoption and of Adoptive Relationship*. Brentwood Bay, B.C. Ben Simon Publications.

KIRK, David H. and S. McDaniel, 1984, "Adoption Policy in Great Britain and North America," *Journal of Social Policy*: 75-84.

KIRK, H., 1988, *Exploring Adoptive Family Life*, WA, Ben Simon Publications.

KOH, F. M., 1988, *Oriental Children in American Homes: How Do They Adjust?,* Minneapolis, MN East West Press.

Koh examines the impact of adopted children's physical and psychological differences in order to better understand their situation and the development of their identity. Based on interviews with 60 American parents, their Asian adopted children and the children's teachers, the worries about loyalty to birth and adoptive parents experienced by the late adoptees are analyzed.

KÜHL, W., 1985, *When Adopted Children of Foreign Origin Grow Up,* Osnabrück, Terre des Hommes.

This German study assesses the behavioural problems in two groups of 43 children—domestic adoptees and foreign adoptees (mainly from Asia and Latin America)—in order to set up a support program. In particular, the author examines the adoptees' perceptions of their social skills, academic performance and self-esteem. The analysis of the mail questionnaires did not reveal any difference between the adoptees and a control group of 50 non-adopted children.

KUHN, M. and T.S. McPartland, 1954, "An Empirical Investigation of Self Attitudes," *American Sociological Review*, 54: 58-76.

KVIST, B., V. Viemerö and N. Forsten, 1989, "Barn adopterade till Finland fran utomeuropeiska länder," *Nordisk Psykologi*, 41 (2): 97-108.

Based on interviews with the parents of 33 children adopted from Asia, Kvist et al. examine the development, behavioural and emotional problems of children adopted from abroad. They also focus on the self-esteem and interpersonal relations of these children who ranged in age from ten to twelve years at the time of the study. The authors of this Finnish study conclude that, on the whole, the results were very positive.

LALLEMAND, Suzanne, 1993, *La circulation des enfants en société traditionnelle. Prêt, don, échange*. Paris, Editions L'Harmattan.

Children in Western societies belong to their birth parents. In other societies, this claim to exclusivity is deemed excessive because many members of the family group (or of the neighbourhood) can claim custody of the child. This implies different conceptions of the organization of kinship, union and residence. In the West, the adoptee tends to be considered as a pseudo-descendant while he or she could very well be a kind of ally. His

or her presence serves both to consolidate a marriage that took place and to mark the place of the one that could not have taken place. Based on a survey of a large number of societies (African, Oceanian, Asian and so on) in which the child is a great deal more mobile, the author highlights the characteristics of this intense circulation and also describes the various forms that it takes, its main customs and various causes.

LAPLANE, R., 1989, "L'adoption d'enfants étrangers," *Annales de Pédiatrie*, 36 (3): 179-184.

LEVINE, E. and A. Sallee, 1990, "Critical Phases Among Adoptees and their Families. Implications for Therapy," *Child and Adolescent Social Work*, 7: 217-232.

LEVY-SHIFF, Rachel, Naomi Zoran and Shmuel Shulman, 1997, "International and Domestic Adoption. Child, Parents, and Family Adjustment," *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 20 (1): 109-129.

This article examines the psychological, school, social and family adjustment of intercountry-adopted children and their Israeli adoptive families. The sample is made up of a group of 50 children adopted from Latin America and their parents as well as a control group of 50 children adopted domestically and their parents. All these children were adopted when they were under three months old and were aged 7 to 13 years at the time of the study. Data were collected through interviews and also through questionnaires for parents, children and their teachers. The following instruments were used: Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children Revised, 18-item, Rating Scale for School Adjustment (Smilansky and Shephatia 1976), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children (Spielberger 1973), Children's Depression Inventory (Kovacs 1978), Children's Agression Inventory (Feshbach 1966), Conners Symptoms Questionnaire (Conners 1973), Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts 1967), The Cornell Parent Behavior Inventory (Devereux, Bronfenbrenner and Rogers 1969), Coping with Adoption Questionnaire.

LIEUX DE L'ENFANCE, 1985, *Numéro spécial Adoption*, 1-2.

Special issue on adoption that examines the historical evolution of the concept of adoption. Other issues examined are as follows: the intra-psychological dynamics of adoption in both adoptive parents and adopted child; the current adoption situation in France and the problem of adopting children with disabilities; the forms of adoption in countries with a non-Western culture like Tunisia and Togo; the social procedures of adoption, sponsorship, or family placement for children who are political exiles or refugees from South East Asia as well as the related psychological consequences -- the subjects of many articles. Lastly, all the alternatives to adoption that medical science has made available to us, for example artificial insemination and what is generally referred to as "uterus borrowing," (p. 6) are discussed in a sometimes contentious way.

LINOWITZ, Jan and Neil Boothby, 1988, "Cross-Cultural Placements," in M. Everett Ressler, Neil Boothby, and J. Steinbock, ed. *Unaccompanied Children: Care and*

Protection in Wars, Natural Disasters and Refugee Movements, New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 181-207.

This paper reviews pre-1980 studies on the adjustment of intercountry-adopted children and the literature on the resettlement of unaccompanied minors from Vietnam, Cambodia ans Laos. The information set out is drawn from published works, unpublished reports and visits made to resettlement programs in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Britain and the United States. The authors assess the strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages of three types of placement: (1) foster home, (2) group home and (3) institution. Two other less common types of placement are also presented, that is, independent living and adoption. Lastly, the authors address the issue of national policies related to the integration, assimilation and cultural identity of refugee children.

LOENEN, Antoinette and René Hoksbergen, 1986, "Inter-country Adoption: The Netherlands. Attachment Relations and Identity," *Adoption and Fostering*, 10 (2): 22-26.

The authors examine the development of attachment relationships between adoptive parents and intercountry-adopted children as well as the latter's development of racial identity. The issues discussed are: factors likely to affect the building up of parent/child relations as well as the responsiveness of the children and/or parents to problems related to language, culture of origin, emotional block, physical health, behaviour, and gap in the life history of the child. Lastly, the authors address the issues of identity development and the racism experienced by these children and present the results of a few American and European studies on the subject.

LOIS, Melina R., 1996, "Ethnic Identity Includes Ancestry, but is Shaped by Experience," *Adopted Child*, 15 (9).

LOIS, Melina R., 1995, "Institutionalized Children Have Problems, Show Progress After Adoption," *Adopted Child*, 14 (11).

LOUIS, Sylvie, 1991, "Attendre un enfant," *Santé et Société*, 113 (2): 28-48.

LÜCKER-BABEL, Marie-Françoise, 1991, *Adoption internationale et droits de l'enfant. Qu'advient-il des laissés-pour-compte?*, Fribourg, Suisse, Editions Universitaires.

The failure of intercountry adoption is examined mainly from a legal perspective. Distinction is made in the sample analyzed between children whose adoption was pronounced in Switzerland and children whose relationship was disrupted before the adoption order came through. The risk factors identified include, among others, advanced age on arrival, presence of other children in the family, arrival of a sibling, lack of initial enthusiasm on the part of one of the parents. Most of the work deals with Swiss and international law issues.

LUSSIER, Diane, 1992, *Le vécu scolaire d'adolescents issus de l'adoption internationale présentant les caractéristiques d'une minorité visible au Québec*, Master's dissertation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal, Montréal, 156 pages.

This Master's dissertation examines the school experience of intercountry-adopted adolescents (from Asia, the West Indies and Latin America) who have the characteristics of a visible minority. The sample includes 27 respondents aged 17 to 28. Ten of them were adopted at age 5 to 13 and the other 17 were three years old or less at placement. Using the method of life stories, Lussier essentially explores three major issues, that is, (1) the adoptees' problems in the school system, (2) the support measures used to help the latter progress in school, and (3) the influence of racial identity on the school experience, career expectations and peer relations. She concludes that age at arrival is a determining factor in both academic success and relations with peers and the family. In terms of ethnic identity, the author maintains that "in the case of children who arrived younger, there has been a shift from an unconscious biological sense of belonging to a familial sense of belonging.…Their ethnic group is henceforth family-based." (translation, p. 129). Lastly, adopting the terminology of studies on ethnic relations, she considers that there has been a "formal acculturation" in most adoptees in the sense that the latter had modified the very structures of their way of thinking.

LYDENS, Lois Adele, 1989, "A Longitudinal Study of Crosscultural Adoption: Identity Development among Asian Adoptees at Adolescence and Early Adulthood," *Dissertation Abstracts International, A-The Humanities and Social Sciences*, 49 (12): 3882-A.

Based on two analyses of mail surveys conducted in 1974 and 1984, this longitudinal study examines three types of identity development - self, ethnic and adoptive -- among a group of 101 adoptees. The adoptees were aged 12 to 17 during the first survey. Cases of early adoption are compared to cases of late adoption based on the three types of identity.

MARCOVITCH, Sharon., L. Cesaroni, W. Roberts and C. Swanson, 1995, "Romanian Adoption: Parent's Dreams, Nightmares, and Realities," *Child Welfare*, 74 (5): 993-1017.

MARCOVITCH, Sharon, Susan Goldberg, Amanda Gold, Jane Washington, Christine Wasson, Karla Krekewich and Mark Handley-Derry, 1997, "Determinants of Behavioural Problems in Romanian Children Adopted in Ontario," *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 20 (1): 17-31.

This study assesses the influence of three factors on the behaviour of Romanian children adopted in Ontario: (1) pre-adoption experience of institutional care, (2) severity of developmental delay, and (3) quality of child-mother attachment. The sample consists of 56 families and their 56 adopted children aged 3 to 5 at the time of the study. Behavioural problems were assessed through interviews and questionnaires for parents relating to the child's behaviour. Several instruments were also used to assess the child's developmental status including the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock 1983), the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, the Bayley Scales of Infant Development, the Merrill

Palmer Scales, and the Leiter International Performance Scale. The child-mother attachment was observed and assessed in the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al. 1978).

MATTEI, Jean-François, 1997, *Le chemin de l'adoption. Le coeur et la raison*, Paris, Albin Michel.

MATTEI, Jean-François, 1995, *Enfants d'ici, enfants d'ailleurs. L'adoption sans frontière*. Paris: Ministère des Affaires Sociales, de la Santé et de la Ville, Ministère de la Justice, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères.

MAUGHAN, B. and A. Pickles, 1990, "Adopted and Illegitimate Children Growing Up," in L. N. Robins and M. Rutter, ed., *Straight and Devious Pathways from Childhood to Adulthood,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

MAURY, Françoise, 1992, "Adopter un enfant asiatique: fantasmes et réalité," *Accueil*, 6-7 (Nov.): 45-48.

The author describes the typical course of integration of an Asian child adopted by a French family through an examination of the fantasies developed by the parents and children. Parents fantasize a great deal about the child's ethnic and cultural difference. Underlying the motivations of parents are the fantasies of saving a child from the war and of a stork story which implies the hope of receiving a child with no past. Children, on the other hand, also fantasize about their future parents and life in France, especially when they are adopted late. Parents and children must mourn the loss of their fantasies in order to adapt to reality. It is necessary to prepare for adoption so that everyone's expectations can be more realistic and thus to avoid disappointments.

MAURY, Françoise, 1991, "Observations sur l'intégration d'enfants de Corée," *Accueil*, 7 (Nov.): 15-17.

Excerpts from a study conducted as part of a DEA (French post-Master's qualification) in clinical and pathological psychology that examines the outcomes of interracial and international adoption and, more particularly, the integration of Korean children who arrived in France at age 5 to 10. Using a clinical approach, the author focuses on the social and family integration of adolescents, the adjustment process, the recognition of their Korean identity as well as their relationships with the biological and adoptive parents.

MCROY, Ruth G., 1991, "Significance of Ethnic and Racial Identity in Intercountry Adoption Within the United States," *Adoption and Fostering*, 15 (4): 53-61.

Beginning with a historical overview of intercountry adoption in the United States, the author then points out the paucity of studies that focus on intercountry adoption in the United States compared to studies that focus on domestic transracial adoption. An attempt is made to link this phenomenon to the American context. Lastly, American

studies on the development, adjustment, and ethnic and racial identity of the child in intercountry and transracial adoption are reviewed.

McRoy, Ruth G., L. A. Zurcher, M. L. Lauderdale and R. E. Anderson, 1984, "The Identity of Transracial Adoptees," *Social Casework*, 65 (1): 34-39.

This study examines issues and problems associated with transracial adoptions. The sample consists of 30 white adoptive families of children aged 10 and older who had at least one black birth parent. Findings reveal familial and contextual factors that may influence the development of racial self-perceptions among black children whose major reference groups are white. Presented are suggestions for transracial adoptive families and for the child welfare agencies that provide postplacement services to these families.

Megard, Jacqueline, 1986, "Un étranger dans la maison: l'enfant adopté et les craintes des parents," *Dialogue*, 94: 29-36.

Problems known to be specific to adoptive parents allow us to gain a general understanding of parenthood and its fantasies. The fears that these parents have relate to three main issues: telling the child about his or her adoptive status, the fact that the child may search for his or her "real" birth parents, and heredity. All parents nevertheless have to face the difficulty of telling the child about his or her origins. Similarly, it is especially in light of their former adolescent fantasy about "family romance" that adopters imagine that their child will idealize his or her natural parents as much as possible. They therefore believe that their status will be undermined. The child, on the other hand, just like the parents in the old days, wants nothing more than to be able to dream. Lastly, the fear about unknown heredity conceals the fact that parents have a hard time recognizing themselves in this "stranger in the house" -- a son or daughter who is growing up.

Meintel, Deirdre, 1992, "L'identité ethnique chez les jeunes Montréalais d'origine immigrée," *Sociologie et sociétés*, 24 (2): 73-89.

Melchoior, T., 1986, "Adoption in Denmark," in R. Hoksbergen, ed. *Adoption in Worldwide Perspective,* Rockville, MD, National Adoption and Information Clearinghouse.
   This study presents relatively positive data on the integration of intercountry-adopted children in Denmark.

Meunier, Anne, 1997, *Le choix d'adopter*, Paris, Flammarion.

Meyra, Guy, 1992, "Nos enfants, premiers regards," *Accueil. Enfance et familles d'adoption*, 1: 9-12.

Report of a discussion between social workers and parents about the latter's first contacts with their intercountry-adopted child. These exchanges of views relate to the initial meeting with the child, the prior preparation of parents and the child, the impact of this first meeting on the future of the adoptive family and the process of adjustment after the child's arrival. The author makes a number of suggestions for preparing applicants and

parents, and emphasizes the importance of time in reconstructing the child's past and in building up the adoptive relationship.

MIALL, Charlene E., 1987, "The Stigma of Adoptive Parent Status: Perceptions of Community Attitudes Toward Adoption and the Experience of Informal Social Sanctioning," *Family Relations*, 36: 34-39.

MODELL, Judith S., 1996, "The Social Construction of Adoption," *Family Relations*, 45: 309-317.

MODELL, Judith S, 1994, *Kinship With Strangers. Adoption and Interpretations of Kinship in American Culture*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

MORRIER, Ginette, 1995, *Les stratégies identitaires des adolescents de l'adoption internationale appartenant aux groupes racisés*, Master's dissertation in sociology, UQAM, Montréal.

This study examines the long-term adjustment and identity strategies of intercountry-adopted adolescents. The sample consists of 21 children from the West Indies and Asia aged 14 to 18 and adopted before they were 3 years old. The qualitative analysis of the processes of identity construction is based on semi-structured interviews with the adolescents. The interviews focus on the issues of ethnic identity, colour identity, identity of origin and the adoptees' definition of themselves. Also examined is the role of social interactions (family, neighbours, etc.) in the process of integrating these multiple identities.

MYER, R. and R. K. James, 1989, "Counselling Internationally Adopted Children. A Personal Intervention Approach," *Elementary School Guidance and Counselling*, 23: 324-329.

An account of seven workshops conducted in schools aimed at promoting the integration of intercountry-adopted children and at making students aware of racial discrimination-related problems experienced by these adoptees.

NABINGER, Sylvia, 1994, *L'adoption des enfants brésiliens. Une recherche évaluative sur la trajectoire des enfants adoptés par des familles européennes par l'intermédiaire du tribunal de Porto Alegre entre 1980 et 1985*. Ph.D. thesis (law), Vol. 1 (pp. 1-146) and Vol. 2 (pp. 147-324), Université Jean Moulin-Lyon III.

The author who works at the children's court in Porto Alegre (Brazil) seeks to improve the work methods of child welfare professionals in Brazil by using the knowledge derived from her study to assess the family, social and school integration of 90 Brazilian children adopted by 67 European families between 1980 and 1985. The sample consists of 90 children who were abandoned around 2 years old and who, prior to being adopted, were placed in an institution for an average period of 11 ½ months. At the time of the adoption, 23.5% of them were under 1 year old, 48.8% were aged 1 to 4, and 27.8% were

aged 5 to 8; 53.3% of them are boys and 51% are white, the others being Black or of mixed race. Data were collected from 1989 to 1991 through a mail survey of adopters, semi-structured interviews with adopters and adoptees, and observation of family interactions. Nabinger concludes that the majority of children have established deep bonds with their adoptive families and their integration is satisfactory. The cases in which integration failed do not appear to be related to the characteristics of the children and/or adopters but to the way the workers assessed the child's needs and parents' expectations.

NABINGER, Sylvia, 1991, "D'une mère à l'autre: l'impact des différences culturelles dans l'adoption internationale," *Dialogue*, 111: 112-116.

This study compares the mothering patterns in Brazilian and European families and assesses the mutual adjustment of families and their children adopted from Brazil. The children were aged 6 to 10 at the time of the survey and were adopted when they were under 2 by European families. First, interactions between the children and their future adoptive parents were observed, and then structured interviews were conducted with the parents at the time of adoption in Brazil. Four to eight years later, a questionnaire for parents was used to assess the adjustment of the children to their families and the adjustment of the families to their children.

NEUBURGER, Robert, 1995, "Tu es entré dans ta famille par adoption," in Brigitte Camdessus, ed. *L'adoption. Une aventure familiale,* Paris, ESF éditeur, pp. 117-125.

Clinical cases are used by the author who is a psychiatrist/ psychoanalyst to demonstrate that it would be better for the child not to know about his or her origins before a "mythical graft" is created between the child and the family, that is, a family belongingness which situates the child in a filiation. It is therefore harmful to disclose to young children their adoptive status soon after their arrival in the adoptive family. The sample consists of five children aged 12 to 15 who were adopted when they were under 2 years old from Asia, Europe and Latin America.

NGUYEN BA-THIEN, Kim, 1992, "Le devenir des enfants vietnamiens en France," in Séminaire Nathalie-Masse, *L'adoption des enfants étrangers,* Paris, Centre international de l'enfance, pp. 113-116.

Using on her experience as a clinician, the author analyses the problems experienced by South East Asian refugee children and the parents who sponsored them. She reports on a program that provides a 6-months to 3-year follow up of a number of Vietnamese and Cambodian children sponsored by French families and addresses two types of problems. First, problems of social, family and school adjustment of children who are not linked with a foster family by a legally-recognized filiation are examined. In this particular context, the parents must also grieve for the loss of their desire to be parents of these children who cannot be adopted. Second, problems related to maintaining the child's ethnic and racial identity are considered. Lastly, a number of suggestions are made to facilitate the adjustment of the child to the foster family and to provide more support to parents.

NoëL, J. and Michel Soulé, 1986, "Aspects psychologiques de l'adoption des enfants étrangers," in Jacques Foyer and Catherine Labrusse-Riou, ed. *L'adoption d'enfants étrangers,* Paris, Economica, pp. 79-85.

These psychiatrists question whether intercountry adoptions can establish real families or whether they are just more or less successful imitations of a real family. The following aspects are examined: (1) the various dimensions of the family and filiation as well as the genesis of family feelings and ties; (2) the desire of infertile couples to have a child; (3) the different aspects of intercountry and transracial adoption, such as fears and fantasies, the development of ties in the absence of physical resemblance, motivations, social perception of the foreign child, the child's culture of origin, problems specific to intercountry adoption as well as the future of this type of adoption.

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine, 1998, "Les usages contemporains de l'adoption," in Agnès Fine, ed. *Adoptions. Ethnologie des parentés choisies*, Paris, Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme.

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine, 1997, "Repères généalogiques dans l'identité adoptive," in Marie-Claude Pingaud and Tiphaine Barthélémy, ed. *La généalogie entre science et passion,* Paris, Éditions du CTHS, pp. 295-305.

The legal and psychosocial procedure of adoption in Quebec is carried out with the aim of protecting the child who is viewed as an autonomous individual. Thus, continuation of the generations and joining a new paternal and maternal lineage are matters that are relegated to the background. However, adoptive parents must inevitably formulate an answer to the question about their child's origins. The author briefly discusses the naming of the child and the rituals of the first meeting with the child, and highlights the adaptation of the genealogical issue to culture and ethnicity.

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine, 1996a, "Redéfinitions de l'enfant et de la famille: la problématique généalogique en adoption," in Renée B. Dandurand, Roch Hurtubise and Céline Le Bourdais, ed. *Enfances. Perspectives sociales et pluriculturelles,* Ste-Foy, Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture (IQRC), pp. 81-96.

Adoption is viewed as revealing the current redefinitions of the child and filiation in Western societies. The author first outlines the characteristics of the Quebec adoption system, explains the different conceptions of the child, parent and family that are conveyed therein, and points out how these conceptions are removed from the genealogical issue. Lastly, she briefly discusses the controversy in France about the right women have anonymously give up their child at birth ("accouchement sous X") and demands for adoption by gay couples.

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine, 1996b, "Statut et identité de l'enfant dans le discours de l'adoption," *Gradhiva*, 19: 63-76.

Based on an anthropological and interpretative approach, the author examines the child's status in the process of domestic and international adoption and his or her identity

formation. The article is structured around two questions: "Is the adopted child on the receiving end of a gift-giving relationship? and "What is the approach to affiliation of the adopted child in intercountry adoption?" (p. 63) (translation)

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine, 1996c, *L'adoption. Les acteurs et les enjeux autour de l'enfant,* Québec, Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture (IQRC), PUL.

This book brings to light the conceptions, norms and values that structure current adoption practices. The author first examines the cultural conceptions of kinship and the main social customs of adoption, stressing that adoption in Quebec is exclusive and radically alters the adoptee's genealogical identity. She relates the historical development of Quebec's legal and administrative system of adoption to that of the social representations about the child. Lastly, she examines the position of the principal actors involved, that is, adopters, government-appointed professionals, accredited adoption agencies as well as intercountry adoption pressure groups and mutual-aid associations.

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine, 1995, "La part du don dans l'adoption, *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, 19 (1-2): 157-174.

This article puts forward an interpretation of the adoption-as-gift in non-family adoption in Quebec in the 1990s. It analyses the values and social representations which converge to exclude the idea of the child-as-gift from legitimate practices. Adoption thus tends to become a movement of parental status and not of children. The government framework for adoption is based on an individualistic and instrumental vision of kinship ties. The interrelated dimensions of the traditional genealogical link are thus viewed in distinct and dissociated terms.

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine, 1994, "Modernité, filiation et pratiques d'adoption," in F.-R. Ouellette and C. Bariteau, ed. *Entre tradition et universalisme,* Québec, Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture (IQRC), pp. 165-178.

The author examines the practices and positions of the main Quebec adoption organizations as well as the values and norms that they convey. She emphasizes that adoption is currently practised less in reference to kinship structure and more in reference to the individual rights and interests or to special demands, or in relation to the needs of administrations responsible for child protection.

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine and Louis-Robert Frigault, 1996, *Les adoptions internationales au Québec, 1990-1994. Analyse des dossiers de suivi d'adoption du Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale. Research report,* Montréal, Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale, Government of Québec.

A statistical analysis of computerized adoption files administered by the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale (SAI), which draws up a profile of the population of Quebec parents who adopted internationally and of their children who arrived in Quebec between 1990 and 1994.

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine and Caroline Méthot, 1996, "Le désir de normalité familiale dans l'adoption tardive internationale," *Dialogue*, 133: 16-29.

Results of a study on late adoption are reported in this paper. Approximately 20 semi-structured interviews on the children's family integration and identity construction were conducted with Quebec parents who recently adopted children from abroad. Three aspects are explored on the basis of these parents' accounts: their choice, personal predisposition, and the conditions for establishing a parental bond during the initial stages of the child's integration. The sample consists of parents of 27 children aged 6 to 16, adopted at ages 3 to 13 and who came from China, South Korea, Haiti, Mexico, Romania and Russia.

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine and Johanne Séguin, 1994, *Adoption et redéfinition contemporaine de l'enfant, de la famille et de la filiation*, Québec, Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture (IQRC).

Based on an anthropological approach, the authors seek to understand how the establishment of the adoptive bond is conceived and regulated, by analyzing the conceptions, values and normative positions of the main institutional and collective actors involved in adoption. Three types of materials were collected and analyzed: documents relating to the organizations involved as well as those dealing with the issue of adoption (laws, academic and non-academic works), field observation data and semi-structured interviews conducted with the main actors involved (professionals at the Secrétariat de l'adoption internationale and the adoption services of the youth protection branches, representatives of the majority of adopters' associations and accredited intercountry adoption agencies as well as with individuals who are in the process of adopting or who have recently adopted).

OUELLETTE, Françoise-Romaine and Caroline Méthot 2000, *L'adoption tardive internationale. L'intégration familiale de l'enfant du point de vue des parents et des grands-partents.* Montréal, INRS-Culture et Société.

Based on semi-structured interviews with Quebec parents and grandparents, the authors examine the social attitudes and practices relating to the construction, passing on and support of family and ethnic identity. An anthropological and comparative perspective is used to contrast the characteristics of early adoption with those of late adoption.

OZOUX-TEFFAINE, Ombline, 1996, "L'attachement au négatif dans une famille adoptive un lien de filiation adoptif particulier," *Dialogue*, 133: 42-50.

This article examines the development of parent-child attachment in the creation of the adoptive bond. Based on her clinical experience, the author analyses certain types of attachment which develop, not so much in relation to the child's age at adoption but to the circumstances that preceded his or her arrival in the adoptive family. She reports on a psychoanalytical therapy with an adoptive family who has a biological child with a

hereditary kidney disease and an African child adopted at 18 months old who has problems with learning and relationships, especially with his mother. "Negative attachment" is correlated with certain forms of unconscious alliances or pacts in the construction of the adoptive family, within which fraternal intra-psychological and intergenerational relationships become muddled.

OZOUX-TEFFAINE, Ombline, 1993, "Comment se tissent les liens affectifs de l'enfant entre deux vies," *Accueil: Et pourquoi pas un grand*?, Nov.

OZOUX-TEFFAINE, Ombline, 1987, *Adoption tardive. D'une naissance à l'autre,* Paris, Stock Laurence Pernoud.

The author examines late domestic and international adoptions. She focuses on the particular circumstances of the arrival of a child aged three or older in the adoptive family as well as the psychological mechanisms that allow the child to integrate into his or her new filiation. The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 includes the author's detailed observations over ten years of work as an educator and psychologist in the field of child psychiatry. Part 2 presents a number of accounts of French parents who adopted or sponsored a foreign child. The focus was on the real-life situations that provide an understanding of the stages, difficulties and hopes related to late adoption.

PAULIS, Christiane, 1989, "Recherche en cours: un autre aspect des relations interculturelles, l'adoption multiraciale. Analyse de quatre cas particuliers," *Les Cahiers Internationaux de Psychologie Sociale*, 2-3: 175-198.

The author uses a qualitative approach to develop a model of intercultural relations based on an initial and general interpretation of interviews with four families who adopted children from Cameroon, Mauritius, Rwanda and Brazil. The adoptees were aged 3 to 20 years at the time of research and seven months to 6 years at adoption. The analysis brings to light the methods of disseminating ideas about an African adoptee in Belgium.

PRIEUR, Bernard, 1995, "Les ruptures du temps dans les familles adoptives," in Brigitte Camdessus, ed. *L'adoption. Une aventure familiale,* Paris, ESF éditeur, pp. 63-88.

QUINTON, D. and M. Rutter, 1976, "Early Hospital Admissions and Later Disturbances of Behavior: An Attempted Replication of Douglas' Findings," *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 18: 447-459.

RAULT, Françoise, 1996, "Les difficultés de l'adoption," *Dialogue*, 133: 3-15.

The author examines the way actors involved in the adoption process assess the problems encountered. She analyses the respondents' views of their problems and experiences, the courses of action taken and procedures followed by applicants for adoption before and after the child's arrival. The aim is thus to examine the problems of adoption from the parents' and professionals' perspectives and to define the range of situations and obstacles encountered. She concludes that many of the problems reported by the adoptive families are not specific to them but are, on the whole, characteristic of the lives of most

families. However, the evidence gathered shows that many adoptive parents feel fragile because they often try too hard to fit into the norm.

REGISTER, Cheri, 1991, *Are Those Kids Yours? American Families with Children Adopted from Other Country,* New York, The Free Press.

Based on her personal experience (the author is the adoptive mother of two South Korean-born daughters) and interviews with adoptive families, the author demonstrates that these families which are created through intercountry adoption fit perfectly with the "norms" of American families. She explores the great challenges faced by these families and the issue of ethnicity posed by intercountry adoption.

RESSLER, E. M., N. Boothby and D. J. Steinbock, 1988, *Unaccompanied Children: Care and Protection in Wars, Natural Disasters, and Refugee Movements,* New York, Oxford Press.

This is a study about children who are separated from their families during wars, natural disasters, and refugee movements. This issue is viewed from three perspectives: historical, psychological and legal. By reviewing the principal events that provoked movements of unaccompanied children, the authors identify the recurring problems in the protection and placement of these children in order to draw lessons that might improve future intervention. They focus on the factors which can increase or decrease the vulnerability of children who are separated from their families. Lastly, they examine the actions taken in international law. The information used is drawn from: unpublished materials and archives of various national and international relief organizations; interviews with policy makers, program personnel and social workers involved in humanitarian assistance; and visits to ongoing emergency areas and to current resettlement programs for unaccompanied children.

ROBERT, Alberte, 1989, *L'adoption et après,* Paris, Ergo Press.

RORBECH, Mette, 1991, "The Conditions of 18- to 25-Year-Old Foreign-Born Adoptees in Denmark," in Howard Altstein and Rita J. Simon, ed. *Intercountry Adoption. A Multinational Perspective,* New York, Praeger, pp. 127-139.

A study of the family, social and ethnic identity of young adults who were adopted from abroad by Danish parents. The sample consists of 384 subjects ranging in age from 18 to 25 years from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, two-thirds of whom were more than 3 years old when they were adopted. In-depth qualitative interviews were first conducted with ten Asian children, focusing on their identity formation, feelings of a double cultural attachment, and strategies for working within their own roots and cultural origins. Next, interviews were conducted with 384 young adults using a questionnaire with fixed response categories; the questions were about family integration, school environment, social network, leisure time, leaving home, discrimination experienced in adolescence, ethnic identity, and acceptance or rejection of their difference and origin.

Rorbech, Mette, 1990, *Denmark B My Country. The Conditions of 18-25 Year Old Foreign Born Adoptees in Denmark,* Copenhagen, The Danish National Institute of Social Research, booklet n° 30.

   See previous summary.

Rosenberg, M., 1965, *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*, Princeton, New-Jersey, Princeton University Press.

Rosenthal, James A., Victor Groze et Herman Curiel, 1990, "Race, Social Class, and Special Needs Adoption," *Social Work*, 35 (6): 532-539.

Routhier, Ghislaine, 1986, *Étude exploratoire concernant l'influence des attitudes parentales sur l'identité raciale des enfants noirs adoptés par des parents de race blanche au Québec.* Master's dissertation in psychology, Montréal, UQAM.

This study examines the role of parents in the development of the racial identity of their West Indian adopted child. The sample consists of ten Quebec couples and their 13 adopted children aged 4 to 9. Through interviews, the author seeks to understand parents' attitudes towards the child's colour and origins and their perception of the child's integration. In addition, the Dolls Test was administered to children to assess their identity and racial preference.

Rude-Antoine, E., ed., n.d., *Familles et jeunes étrangers adoptés. Lien de filiation et devenir.* Paris, Unité de recherche migrations et société (U.R.M.I.S.). Ministère de la Justice, Groupement d'Intérêt Public, Mission de recherche "Droit et Justice" et Fonds d'Action Sociale (F.A.S.).

This study, which has no publication date but was probably published in 1997, is divided into two major parts. Part I examines the legal procedures of limited and full intercountry adoption and reports on an analysis of 435 cases. Part II includes a qualitative survey based on semi-structured interviews conducted with 60 families of children who were fully adopted. The aim is to isolate the various determining moments in an adoption process and to assess the perceptions of adopters.

Saetersdal, Barbro, 1988, *What Became of the Vietnamese "Baby Lift Children"?*, Paper presented at the International Conference on Adoption in Melbourne, Australia.

Saetersdal, Barbro and Monica Dalen, 1991, "Norway Intercountry Adoptions in a Homogeneous Country," in Howard Altstein and Rita J. Simon, ed. *Intercountry Adoption. A Multinational Perspective,* New York, Praeger, pp. 83-107.

This longitudinal study examines three aspects in the lives of Indian and Vietnamese children adopted by Norwegian parents: the initial period of adjustment to the family, adjustment to school, and the identity problems experienced by these youths in adolescence. A survey of 182 parents and in-depth interviews with 98 adoptees aged 17

to 22 years who were adopted at ages 2 to 5 were conducted. Children's drawings and questionnaires completed by teachers were also used.

SCHAERLAEKENS, A. and N. Dondeyne, 1985, "Taalaanpassing bij buitenlandse adoptiekinderen (Language Adaptation of Intercountry Adopted Children)," *Kind en Adolescent*, 6 (4): 203-218.

SCHECHTER, Marshall D., 1997, "The Importance of the History in the Prenatal Life and the Need to Know," paper given at *Family and Children's Rights in the Year 2000 B New Reproductive Techniques B Adoption,* Organization for the Protection of Children's Rights (Third International Conference on the Child, May 22, 23, 1997, Montreal, Québec, Canada).

SCHECHTER, Marshall D. and Doris Bertocci, 1990, "The Meaning of the Search," in David M. Brodzinsky and Marshall D. Schechter, ed. *The Psychology of Adoption*. New York, Oxford. Oxford University Press, pp. 62-90.

SECRÉTARIAT à l'adoption internationale (SAI), 1995, *Guide médical à l'intention des parents,* Québec, Gouvernement du Québec.

SERBAN-SCHREIBER, Sylvie, 1991, *Les enfants de coeur. Dix-huit histoires d'adoption,* France, Hachette/Carrère.

Portrait of 18 French families who adopted one or more children of French or foreign origin. Some of these families also have biological children, some have been through a divorce and/or a second marriage, and some are single-parent families.

SERBIN, Lisa A., 1997, "Research on International Adoption. Implications for Developmental Theory and Social Policy," *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 20 (1): 83-92.

The author who is a psychologist and has personally adopted a Romanian child presents an overall examination of the evolution of intercountry adoption and its related studies. She demonstrates the implications of studies on the development of intercountry-adopted children for law makers and workers in charge of establishing standards relating to intercountry adoption as well as for adoptive parents who are anxious to meet their child's needs.

SERVICE social d'aide aux émigrants (SSAE), 1990, *L'adoption internationale. Quel soutien aux futurs parents?,* Paris, Service social d'aide aux émigrants.

SILVERMAN, Arnold R., 1993, "Outcomes of Transracial Adoption," *Future of Children*, 3 (1): 104-118.

Review of a dozen empirical studies on transracial and intercountry adoption of Black, Hispanic and Asian children. By interpreting the findings, the author aims to determine whether or not transracial adoption is a practice that is damaging to the child. He focuses

on the measures of adjustment, integration and family cohesion, racial identity and self-esteem. He concludes that transracial adoption is a viable practice because the identity problems reported by the studies reviewed are minor and that the success rates are similar to those reported in studies on adoption in general (approximately 75%).

SILVERMAN, Arnold R. and William Feigelman, 1990, "Adjustment in Interracial Adoptees. An Overview," in David M. Brodzinsky and Marshall D. Schechter, ed. *The Psychology of Adoption,* New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 187-200.

This article is divided into four parts. Part 1 consists of an historical overview of transracial adoption in the United States and Canada. Part 2 examines the laws and practices of adoption agencies which promote or discourage this type of adoption. Part 3 reviews American empirical studies on transracial adoption. The authors present the principal findings on the adoptees' adjustment and racial or ethnic identity. They conclude with their speculations about the future of this type of adoption.

SIMON, Rita J. and Howard Altstein, 1992, *Adoption, Race and Identity: From Infancy through Adolescence,* New York, Praeger.

This book presents the results of a three-phase longitudinal study conducted between 1972 and 1984. In 1972, 204 white families who were members of the Open Door Society and the Council on Adoptable Children and a number of their children were interviewed individually. White, biological and adopted children as well as children from transracial adoption (the great majority of whom were black and the others of American Indian, Mexican, Korean, Vietnamese, Puerto Rican origins) were interviewed. In the second phase of the study, 71 % (188) of the parents were contacted again and interviewed by phone and mail questionnaire. Lastly in 1984, 96 of these families were contacted a third time and interviewed according to the method used in 1972. The authors focused on the children's racial identity, the attitudes of the biological and adopted children about racial issues, family relationships and integration as perceived by the children and parents, and the latter's views of their black child's future identity and the ties that he or she will have with the black community.

SIMON, Rita J. and Howard Altstein, ed. 1991a, *Intercountry Adoption. A Multinational Perspective,* New York, Praeger.

SIMON, Rita J. and Howard Altstein, 1991b, "Intercountry Adoptions. Experiences of Families in the United States," in Howard Altstein and Rita J. Simon, ed. *Intercountry Adoption. A Multinational Perspective,* New York, Praeger, pp. 23-54.

Based on a quantitative analysis, this study assesses the impact of intercountry adoption on the psychosocial adjustment of 37 adoptees, their 23 siblings, and their adoptive parents. The latter were recruited in the Jewish community in Boston and the Stars of David (SOD), an organization of Jewish adoptive families. The survey, based on a closed-ended questionnaire for parents and children, focuses on the quality of adoptees' relationships with their parents, their family integration, school performance, friendship

patterns, social activities, ambitions, reactions of the religious communities to their adopted children, and the children's religious practices. A second phase of this study was conducted with members of Families Adopting Children Everywhere (FACE), an adoptive parent group of Christian families in Washington. The article compares the findings for the two groups of adoptive families (SOD and FACE) and describes four families with adopted children who had major integration problems.

SIMON, Rita J. and Howard Altstein, 1987, *Transracial Adoptees and their Families: A Study of Identity and Commitment,* New York, Praeger.

Presentation of findings of the third phase (1984) of a longitudinal study which began in 1972 on transracial adoption of Black American (80%), Korean, Vietnamese, American Indian, Mexican and Puerto Rican children adopted by white families. Data were collected through individual interviews with 96 families who had a total of 394 children. Among these children, 218 were interviewed, including127 adoptees; 111 cases involved transracial adoption. At the time of study, the mean age of these children was 14.9 years and the mean age of the biological children was 16.8 years. The authors focused mainly on family relationships, racial identity, self-esteem, adoptees' perception of their family integration, and white parents' views of their black child's future identity and the ties that he or she would have with the black community.

SIMON, Rita J. and Howard Altstein, 1981, *Transracial Adoption. A Follow up,* Lexington, Mass., Lexington Books.

SIMON, Rita J. and Howard Altstein, 1977, *Transracial Adoption*. New York, John Wiley and Sons.

SIMON, Rita J., Howard Altstein and M.S. Melli, 1994, *The Case For Transracial Adoption*, The American University Press.

SMITH Garcia, Tara and Julia S. Brown, 1989, "The Health of Children Adopted from India," *Journal of Community Health*, 14 (4): 227-241.

Health problems of Indian children adopted by US parents were investigated via a mailed questionnaire to 166 families who adopted 200 children from 1978 to 1987. Parents' responses revealed that at least 37.5% of the children were premature and almost all the children's weights and heights by age at time of arrival in the US were below World Health Organization norms. Certain problems were frequent such as anemia and malnutrition. Many children were not tested for diseases endemic to India, e.g., hepatitis B, tuberculosis, and salmonellosis. Recommendations are made in the conclusion.

SOBOL, M., S. Delaney and B. Earn, 1994, "Adoptees Portrayal of the Development of Family Structure," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 23 (3): 385-401.

SOULÉ, Michel, 1988, "Penser l'adoption," *Autrement*, 96: 144-148.

This article consists of a question-answer type interview with Michel Soulé, a psychiatrist. Several themes are addressed, including the place of adoption today in relation to assisted reproduction, discourse on the desire to have a child and on the notion of the child's interest, assessment of applicants for adoption, adoption of disabled children and foreign children. As regards intercountry adoption, Soulé explains that parents must mourn the loss of a child with no past and stop idealizing the foreign child. Parents must also come to terms with their infertility inasmuch as they will be constantly reminded of it by the child's lack of physical resemblance to them. Soulé believes that the adoption of disabled children and foreign children will contribute to changing mentalities. Lastly, Soulé deals with the issue of family romance, the adopted child's questioning about his or her origins, and the way parents must deal with this.

SOULÉ, Michel, 1984, "Le fantasme du roman familial et les nouveaux modes de filiation," in Didier Anzieu *et al.*, *Le nouveau roman familial,* Paris, E.S.F.

SPICKARD, P.R., 1989, *Mixed Blood. Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth Century America*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press.

SPRING-DUVOISIN, Denise, 1986, *L'adoption internationale. Que sont-ils devenus ?,* Lausanne, Advimark.

As part of a dissertation for a social work certificate, the author conducted a study of 282 adoptees aged 18 to 25, who arrived in Switzerland before 1970. She examines different aspects of their integration and reveals a generally positive outcome compared to what these children would have experienced in their birth country.

STEINHAUER, D., 1996, *Le moindre mal. La question du placement de l'enfant*. Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.

TERRE DES HOMMES (France), 1995, *Enquête sur l'adoption internationale (II),* Paris, Terre des Hommes.

A follow up of the 1992 study conducted by Terre des Hommes focusing on adoptees who ranged in age from 16 to 39 years at the time of the survey. It is based on a mail questionnaire with fixed response and open-ended questions relating to identity, social and working life, family relations, the birth parents, and ambitions; and also on interviews with 39 adoptees selected to cover different situations: country of origin, age on arrival, gender of adoptees.

TERRE DES HOMMES (France), 1992. *Enquête sur l'adoption internationale. Bilan dix ans après,* France, Terre des Hommes.

A 1968-1978 study of international adoptions in France by Terre des Hommes. Part 1 presents the results of the quantitative analysis of 451 adoptive families' responses to a mail questionnaire. It provides a description of their current situation, that of their adopted children and the problems encountered. Part 2 includes a qualitative analysis of 43 unstructured interviews with parents of South East Asian adoptees whose mean age

was 19 years, most of whom were adopted at age 5 or younger. The interview relates to the problems encountered by the families, their concerns, motivations, and the experiences of their foreign child or children.

TEXTOR, Martin R., 1991, "International Adoption in West Germany. A Private Affair," in Howard Altstein and Rita J. Simon, ed. *Intercountry Adoption. A Multinational Perspective,* New York, Praeger, pp. 109-126.

This article assesses studies on intercountry adoption in West Germany. The author first provides a historical overview of intercountry adoption in Germany, from the Third Reich to the present times. He then reviews a number of studies and presents the main findings about the child's integration, family and social relationships, school performance, self-concept and identity, and the overall adoption success rate. The article ends with a discussion of criticism of intercountry adoption and presents the alternatives suggested by opponents to this type of adoption.

TILLON, Caroline, 1995, "L'aventure des familles 'arc-en-ciel'," in Brigitte Camdessus, ed. *L'adoption. Une aventure familiale,* Paris, ESF éditeur, pp. 91-115.

Based on the analysis of clinical interviews, the author who is a psychoanalyst and psychotherapist examines the integration of intercountry-adopted children into the nuclear and extended family. She focuses on the recognition of difference and its implications for various family members.

TIZARD, Barbara, 1991, "Intercountry Adoption. A Review of the Evidence," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 32 (5): 743-756.

Studies of the outcome of intercountry adoption in various European countries (Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark) are reviewed. The author presents the main research findings on children's adjustment, their school performance, and racial and ethnic identity. It is concluded that the success rate of these adoptions is similar to that of incountry adoptions and identity problems that may appear do not lead to major psychological problems.

TIZARD, Barbara and Ann Phoenix, 1989, "Black Identity and Transracial Adoption," *New Community*, 15 (3): 427-437.

The authors attempt to invalidate the hypothesis that black children adopted by white families are confused about their identity and have low self-esteem as a result of them having a negative view of their racial identity. A review of the literature from Great Britain and the United States shows that much of the opposition to transracial adoption depends on invalidated assumptions about the identity of black and mixed race children living with their own families. The use of three psychological arguments is criticized because their ambiguity leads to a simplistic interpretation of black children's identity development. Several studies show that adoptees and non-adoptees often develop an ambivalent attitude to their racial identity but that this may not necessarily be associated

with the level of self-esteem. The authors conclude that transracially-adopted children are likely to have a different identity from that of children growing up in a black family, but there are not yet well-grounded reasons for believing that the practice is damaging to them.

TRILLAT, B., 1993, "Une migration singulière: l'adoption internationale," in Actes du séminaire Nathalie-Masse, *L'adoption des enfants étrangers,* Paris, Centre international de l'Enfance, pp. 15-25.

The author reviews the history of intercountry adoption and the movements of children from the 18th century to the present time. The issue of intercountry-adopted children is examined in light of the involuntary migration process and North-South relations. The issue of legislation which differs from birth country to birth country, more particularly in the Middle East and black Africa, is also raised. Lastly, the changes in the countries of origin and receiving countries as well as the relations between them are presented.

TRISELIOTIS, John, 1991, "Inter-country Adoption. A Brief Overview of the Research Evidence," *Adoption and Fostering*, 15 (4): 46-52.

The author assesses British studies on intercountry adoption and attempts to identify the influence of racial identity on adoptees' self-esteem. Given the dearth of British studies on this subject, a number of Norwegian, Canadian and American studies were also reviewed. The studies reviewed are divided into two categories: first, those focusing on how children are functioning within the adoptive family and at school, and second, on issues concerned with racial and ethnic identity. Triseliotis concludes that the success rate of transracial adoptions is comparable to that of own-country adoptions. The children involved are often being brought up with little or no racial and ethnic awareness and identification. It is not yet certain, though, whether this negatively affects the children's development.

TROLLEY, B. C., 1995, "Grief Issues and Positive Aspects Associated with International Adoption," *Omega Journal of Death and Dying*, 30 (4): 257-268.

TROLLEY, Barbara, Julia Wallin and James Hansen, 1995, "International Adoption. Issues of Acknowledgement of Adoption and Birth Culture," *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal,* 12 (6): 465-479.

This article examines parents' attitude towards the adoption and birth culture of their intercountry-adopted child, based on a mail and telephone survey conducted on 34 families who had adopted children internationally. The questionnaire used was based on Kirk's (1988) "Attitudes Toward Adoption" pertaining to the parents' experience of adoption and their openness to the disclosure of the child's origins. The Culture Form (Trolley, 1993) focusing on the parents' acknowledgement and perceptions of the importance of the adopted child's birth culture was also used.According to the authors of this article, families who adopt children internationally are faced with not only the acknowledgement of the adoption but the recognition of the birth culture. Thirty-four

families were surveyed to assess issues regarding the relevance, frequency, and means of acknowledgement of the adoption and birth culture.

VAN GULDEN, H. and L. M. Bartels-Rabb, 1993, *Real Parents, Real Children: Parenting the Adopted Child,* New York, Cross Road Publishing Company.

VAN TUYLL, Lucile, 1994, "Intercountry Adoption in Netherlands," *Adoption and Fostering*, 18 (2):14-19.

VERHULST, F. C., M. Althaus and H. Verluis-den Bieman, 1992, "Damaging Backgrounds: Later Adjustment of International Adoptees," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 31: 518-524.

This quantitative study examines the influence of early adverse experiences on later adjustment of international adoptees. The sample consists of 2,148 children aged 10 to 15 years, whose age ranged from a few days to 10 years when they were adopted from abroad by parents in the Netherlands. A 138-item questionnaire for parents, the Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), was mailed. This questionnaire was used to obtain standardized parents' reports of adoptees' behavioural/emotional problems. The findings show that neglect, abuse, and the number of changes of caretaking environment increase the risk for later maladjustment. They also show that the majority of adopted children, even those with backgrounds known to be damaging, seemed to function quite well according to their parents' reports.

VERHULST, F. C., M. Althaus and H. Verluis-den Bieman, 1990a, "Problem Behavior in International Adoptees: I. An Epidemiological Study," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,* 29 (1): 94-103.

This epidemiological study addresses the issue of whether adopted children are at higher risk of developing adjustment problems than non-adopted children. Data on 2,148 10- to 15- years old adoptees from Korea, Lebanon, Colombia and Bangladesh, whose age ranged from a few days to 10 years when they were adopted by Dutch parents, are compared with data on 933 non-adoptees of the same age. These data were obtained through a mail questionnaire on the child's competencies and behavioural/emotional problems, and were standardized using the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and the ANCOVA.

VERHULST, Frank C., M. Althaus and Herma J. M. Versluis-den Bieman, 1990b, "Problem Behavior in International Adoptees: II. Age at Placement," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 29 (1): 104-111.

This quantitative study assesses the impact of age at placement on the risk of developing behavioural problems in international adoptees. The sample consists of 2,148 children aged 10 to 15 years, whose age ranged from a few days to 10 years when they were adopted from abroad by parents in the Netherlands. A 138-item questionnaire for parents, the Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), was mailed. Findings show that the older the

child at placement the greater the probability that the child will develop behavioral/emotional problems and/or will perform less well in school.

VERHULST, F. C., H. Versluis den-Bieman, J. van der Ende, G. F. M. G. Berden and Woudstra Sanders, 1990c, "Problem Behavior in International Adoptees: III. Diagnosis of Child Psychiatric Disorders," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 29 (3): 420-428.

This study is a clinical extension of the previous study on behavioural problems in international adoptees. Clinical interviews were conducted with 132 14-year-old adoptees and their parents. Teachers of 116 children also filled out a questionnaire (Teacher Report Form by Achenbach and Ederbrock, 1986). The clinical evaluation was then compared with the findings of the epidemiological study. The instruments used to interview the children were: the Child Assessment Schedules (Hodges et al*., 1982) and the Youth Self Report. An adapted version of Graham and Rutter's questionnaire (1968) as well as the clinical evaluation of the CBCL and the DSM-III-R Diagnosis of the American Psychiatric Association were used to interview the parents.

WATERS, M., 1990 *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press.

WATTIER, Philippe and Marcel Frydman, 1985, "L'adoption internationale. Étude clinique d'un groupe d'enfants d'origine asiatique," *Enfance*, 1: 59-76.

This study assesses the medium and long-term effects of transcultural adoption. The authors first briefly review the specific characteristics of this type of adoption and then present a 1983 study of a sample of 28 South East Asian children who were adopted four to twelve years earlier by French-speaking Belgium families in Hainaut province. Intellectual development and academic success were chosen as dependent variables and the subjects' emotional lives were also explored. On the whole, the findings recorded are extremely positive since the adoptees' performances on intelligence tests are on the average better than those of same-aged Belgium children. The earlier the adoption the better the intellectual development. Similarly, in terms of schooling, the majority of subjects progress in a satisfactory manner despite some verbal weaknesses. Lastly, tests show that adoptees' emotional lives are just as rich as those of children raised by their legitimate parents in a privileged socio-cultural environment.

WESTHUES, Anne and Joyce S. Cohen, 1997, "A Comparison of the Adjustment of Adolescent and Young Adult Intercountry Adoptees and their Siblings," *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 20 (1): 47-65.

This study aims to determine whether there are significant differences in adjustment between children adopted from abroad by Canadian parents and their siblings. More specifically, the authors compare the differences in adjustment by age and by gender in the areas of family integration, self-esteem, school achievement, peer relations, and racial and ethnic identity. The sample consists of a first group of 86 adolescent intercountry adoptees (12 - 17 years of age) and 33 of their adolescent siblings as well as a second

group of young adult adoptees (18 - 25 years of age) and 65 of their young adult siblings. The children's adjustment was assessed through interviews conducted with the children and their parents and a series of instruments: the Family Integration Statements (Gill and Jackson 1983), the Self-Concept Scale (Rosenberg 1965) and the Index of Peer Relations (Hudson 1982).

WESTHUES, Anne and Joyce S. Cohen, 1994, *Intercountry Adoption in Canada. Final Report*, National Welfare Grants Division, Human Resources Development Canada.

This study examines the impact of intercountry adoption on adoptive families. Structured interviews (a mix of fixed-response and open-ended questions) were conducted with the parents, adoptees and their siblings. The sample consists of 123 mothers, 133 fathers, 155 adoptees aged 12 or older from South Korea, Bangladesh and Vietnam, and 121 of their siblings. Rosenberg Self-Concept Scale (1965) and Kuhn and McPartland "Ten Words to Describe Myself" (1954) were used to assess self-esteem. The issues addressed were as follows: family and racial identity; family, school and social integration; acceptance and rejection of difference; and self-esteem.

WEYER, M., 1985, *Adoption gelungen? Erfahrungsberichte über die Integration fremdländischer Kinder,* Stuttgart, Quell.

WILKINSON, Hei Sook Park, 1995, "Psycholegal Process and Issues in International Adoption," *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 23 (2): 173-183.

This article examines various psychological and legal aspects of international adoption. The author begins with an historical overview of this type of adoption in the United States, presents a brief literature review and focuses on some of the aspects that characterize the psychological development of intercountry-adopted children: separation from the birthplace and culture of origin, shock on arrival and adjustment to differences in language and type of food, fantasies about birth parents, and the five phases of identity development. Lastly, the legal aspects of international adoption in the United States are briefly examined.

WILKINSON, Hei Sook Park, 1986, *Birth is More than Once. The Inner World of Adopted Korean Children,* Sunrise Ventures.

A phenomenological approach is used by the author to gain an understanding of the inner world of Korean children adopted by American families. The sample consists of eight children with a mean age of 5.9 years who were adopted at an older age. Play therapy is used with a particular focus on the intercultural dimension of the children's experiences. The following issues are examined: the children's stages of family integration, their adjustment problems, problems related to physical appearance, sense of separation, and the need for a sense of belonging.

WILKINSON, Hei Sook Park, 1981, *Birth Is More Than Once. The Inner World of Adopted Korean Children*, Ph.D, Ann Arbor University, Ann Arbor, MI.

Summary Table of Empirical and Clinical Studies Published since 1985

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
AMES, et al. (1997)	Canada	Romania	46 adoptees from orphanages 46 Canadian-born non-adoptees 29 adoptees from Romanian families or hospitals Parents	First contact: 16 months or older Second contact: 4 ½ years old, except 30% aged 5 ½ to 9 years.	Over 8 months: 46 Under 4 months: 29	Longitudinal study to assess the development of Romanian children who were adopted by Canadian couples: - first assessment of children 11 months after their arrival in the adoptive family, based on interviews conducted with parents. - second assessment based on intelligence and school readiness tests; emotional behaviour test for the children; interviews with the parents.
ANDRESEN, Inger-Lise Kvifte (1992)	Norway	Korea	151adoptees 135 non-adoptees Parents Teachers	12 and 13 years old	0 - 6 months: 30 7 months - 1 ½ years old: 37 1 ½ - 3 : 26 3 – 5 : 33 5 + : 25	Study to assess the school and family adjustment of children adopted abroad by Norwegian families. Data were collected through two questionnaires: the Norwegian version of the Rutter's scales for parents of adopted children and the Rutter's scales for teachers of the adopted and non-adopted children (Rutter 1967, 1970). The majority of the children were found to be well adjusted to their family and school environment. Moreover, adjustment problems were more common among boys than girls, but no link could be established between age at adoption and quality of adjustment.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
ANDUJO, Estela (1988)	United States	Mexico	30 white American families and 30 Mexican-American families: 60 adoptees	12 – 17 years old	2 – 7 years old	Study to compare the adjustment and the development of ethnic identity of Mexican-American children adopted by families of their own ethnicity and by white American families. The author focuses more particularly on the influence of environmental and family factors on the development of ethnic identity. Data were obtained through interviews conducted with parents and adoptees. Standardized tests were also used: Tennessee Self Concept Scale, The Twenty Statements Test, The Mexican-American Value Attitude Scale, the 60-item interview schedule on ethnicity and family and social relations.
BAGLEY and YOUNG (1981)	Britain	Hong Kong	67 families answered by questionnaire 53 girl adoptees interviewed 51 of their parents	12 – 18 years old	A few months - 9 years	Mail questionnaires on education, social development and problems encountered. Individual interviews with 51 parents and 53 girl adoptees to assess the latter's self-esteem (Erikson), adjustment and identity.
BAGLEY (1993) (1989 follow up of the 1981 study)	Britain	Hong Kong	44 girl adoptees	22 - 28 years old	A few months - 9 years	Follow-up of the study mentioned above. The assessment of the development of grown-up adoptees reveals very positive outcomes both in terms of adjustment, acculturation and absorption into English culture and in terms of self-esteem and identity. The interviews focused on their life in general, the process of their adoption, their academic, professional and family achievements. Standardized measures used: Middlesex Hospital Questionnaire; Coopersmith self-esteem scale for adults; Shostrom's measure of personal orientation and self- actualisation; Cattell's measure of self-sentiment.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
BALLAND et al. (1995)	France	Guatemala Poland	2 adoptees	15 years old	11 and 12 years old	The authors describe the specific characteristics of intercountry adoption (simultaneous adoptions, sibling adoptions, late adoptions, etc.). Based on two clinical cases of older adoptees, these child psychiatrists examine the children's past (neglect, abuse, heredity), identity issues (naming) as well as loyalty to their birth parents.
BEAL (1993)	Switzerland	Third World countries	Not specified in the article	Not specified in the article	6 years or older	Drawing on her practice as a psychologist/psychotherapist, the author examines the processes of adjustment, attachment and integration that late adoptees have to go through. The adjustment requires heavy therapeutic investment on the part of parents and children.
BELLEAU (1996)	Canada Quebec	China Haïti	16 families: 4 parents with only biological children; 13 parents with only adopted children; 13 parents who have biological and adopted children	4 – 12 years old	under 2: 21/25 2 years and older: 4/25	Based on a qualitative analysis of family photo albums and the related discourse (open-ended interviews), the author demontrates how a child is integrated into the family and the group's memory and how his or her identity is constructed. From a sociological perspective, she shows how the parents sometimes deliberately construct an identity for the child.
BENSON, SHARMA and ROEHLKE-PARTAIN (1994)	United States	Asia (Korea) Hispano-Amerindians	715 families: 881 adoptees, a third of whom are transracial; 78 biological children; 1262 parents	12 – 18 years old	All under 15 months old	A comparative study of the mental health of adoptees with that of non-adoptees. Based on a large-scale mail survey, the authors specifically examined the adoptees' racial and ethnic identity, attachment, self-esteem as well as family and social integration.
COLE (1993)	United States	Korea	48 adoptees Parents	5 – 7 years old	Under 1 year : 33 /48 1 – 3: 11/48 3 and older: 4/48	This study examines the role of parents in the development of the adoptees' ethnic identity, taking into consideration age of child, composition of receiving community, parent interest in Korea and practices within the home. For this social work project, interviews were conducted with children (open-ended questions, doll and puzzle instruments) and with parents (semi-structured interviews).

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
CHOULOT and BRODIER (1993)	France	Chili Haïti Other non-specified countries	4 cases of failed adoption		7 – 12 years old	Clinical observation of four serious cases of failed adoptions of children from abroad. Risk factors included advanced age of the adoptive parents or adoptee, insufficient commitment on the part of the adoptive parents, insufficient consideration of adoption problems.
DALEN and SAETERS-DAL (1987)	Norway	Vietnam	41 adoptees	12 – 19 years old	2 – 5 years old	The authors of this study examined the adoptees' health, racial and ethnic identity, as well as their development and social integration.
DECERF (1995)	Belgium	Brazil Haïti Mauritius Thailand	20 adoptive families	7 years old: 7 .... : 8 .... : 5 .... : 5 ....:	under 1 year old 2 ½ years old 3 years old 1 year old under 1 year old	Based on a psychoanalytical perspective, the author retraced the adoptee's course of events, especially emotional ones. She hypothesized that adopted children are likely to develop reactions of racist rejection of themselves. Five concrete cases were used to examine this issue.
DESPEI-GNES (1993)	Quebec	Haïti	12 adoptees and their parents	7 – 13 years old	under 3 year old	This psychological study examines the identity processes and adjustment mechanisms which foster the family and social integration of intercountry-adopted children. It was based on semi-structured interviews with parents and five 50-minute meetings with each child. The qualitative analysis deals with the development of the "racial" and ethnic identity of intercountry-adopted children.
De VRIES (1988)	The Netherlands	Korea India Colombia Bangladesh	144 adoptees and a group of non-adoptees Their parents	Around 5, 6 and 7 years old	Not specified in Hoksbergen's article (1991)	This study examines the language development and school performance of intercountry-adopted children. No particular problem was detected among the latter but the authors pointed out that the parents interviewed seemed to pay particular attention to the children's integration into and adjustment to their school environment (see Hoksbergen 1991).

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
GEERARS, HART and HOKS-BERGEN (1991)	The Netherlands	Latin America and Asia	Sub-group of 40 adoptees in residential care from Hoksbergen et al.'s (1988) sample Control group of 40 adoptees who had not been in care.	15 – 20 years old	All ages	Comparative study of emotional and behavioural problems of the two groups of adoptees, based on age at arrival, age at time of survey, country of origin and gender. A Dutch translation of the Youth Self Report was used.
GEERARS, HOKS-BERGEN and ROODA (1995)	The Netherlands	Thailand	Sub-group of 65 adoptees (42 girls, 26 boys) from Hoksbergen et al.'s sample (1987) 68 parents	15 – 17 years old	Average age: 4 months	This study examines the specific challenges of identity development in adolescence and hypothesizes that, compared to children born in the Netherlands, intercountry-adopted adolescents have more problems in achieving these developmental tasks. Interviews were conducted with adolescents and their parents, and they completed the Child Behavior Checklist, Youth Self Report, General Health Questionnaire, and a standardized questionnaire on personality.
GREEN-FIELD (1995)	Britain France	Latin America Sri Lanka	46 French families 60 British families for a total of 151 adoptees	17% of French children and 39% of British children were under 1 year old	Around 50% under 1 year old	This study compares the services provided to French and British adoptive parents in order to gain a better understanding of the stages in the adoption process, that is, parents initiating the procedures to find a child to adopt, the first contact with the child and the meeting with the biological parents.
HARDER (1987)	Canada	Not specified by Morrier (1995)	8 families: the parents and 10 adoptees	Not specified by Morrier (1995)	Not specified by Morrier (1995)	This study's author used the Hudson Scale to demonstrate that self-esteem is lower among intercountry-adopted children. Their relations with peers, school adjustment and "racial" identity were taken into account in assessing self-esteem.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
HARPER (1986)	Australia	Sri Lanka India Korea Latin America Thailand	Parents in 27 families	5 – 16 years old	Older than 4	The author assessed the adjustment of children adopted late from abroad by Australian parents. A questionnaire was mailed to adoptive parents to investigate the type and frequency of adjustment problems that occurred during the period following the child's arrival (transition period), the impact of the child's past and culture of origin on the process of family integration as well as the parents' attitude towards their child's culture, identity and future.
HARPER (1994)	Australia	India Asia Latin America	7 adoptees	6 – 15 years old	4 ½ - 12 years old	Juliet Harper presents clinical cases drawn on her therapeutic counselling sessions. She mainly examines the impact of problems encountered by parents and their children (feelings of loss, poor quality of attachment to the adoptive family, lack of preparation, etc.) on the latter's adjustment, integration and development.
HARTMAN and LAIRD (1990)	United States	South Asia Domestic adoption	6 adoptees	15.............. : 15.............. : 15.............. : 6 .... : 8 .... : Not specified.... :	5 days old 7 years old 7 years old 4 years old 8 years old 3 years old	A number of recurrent issues in adoption stories were presented by these therapists, based on a few clinical cases. Interpersonal relations within and outside the family were examined in order to raise practicians' awareness of the issues that are likely to harm family functioning.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
HOKS-BERGEN et al. (1987)	The Netherlands	Thailand	116 adoptees 87 parents Adoptees' teachers. A control group made up of non-adoptees for school evaluation.	5 – 15 years old	Average: 10 months Over 2 years old: 11%	Assessment of the health, development, attachment, and family, social and school integration of children adopted from Thailand. Interviews were conducted with their parents and teachers. Various measuring instruments were used: Family Adaptation and Cohesion Scales; Kirk's Index; Parents' List; Behaviors' List; Behavior at School Assessment List; Teacher's Questionnaire. Over half of the children who arrived in poor health had had adjustment problems as opposed to only one third of those who arrived in good health.
HOKS-BERGEN, SPAAN and WAARDEN-BURG (1988)	The Netherlands	Unspecified	349 adoptees placed in residential care recruited from 670 institutions compared to other groups of children adopted abroad	Mainly adolescents	All ages	National research project of the Adoption Centre in Utrecht studying the frequency and causes of placements in residential care of intercountry-adopted children, placement being considered as an objective measure of specific problems. The placement rate for children adopted abroad is five times higher than that for children born in Holland. The questionnaire-based study found a link between the emergence of problems and the child's age, his or her age at adoption and country of origin.
HORN (1992)	United States	United States Colombia Korea Vietnam	10 adoptees	4 – 16 years old	Under 1 year: 9/10 4 years old: 1	The aim was to understand the experience of adoption based on the adoptees' point of view. Using a psychological perspective, the author analyzed a collection of 26 stories produced by these young people during individual interviews (two to three hours). Six recurrent themes emerged and were analyzed.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
JOHNSON, DANA E. et al. (1992)	United States	Romania	65 adoptees of whom 50 were adopted from orphanages	6 weeks to 73 months	Not specified	The aim of this study was to examine the impact of institutionalization on young Romanians prior to being adopted by American families, and to determine their health. A full assessment (health status, growth, cognitive and psychomotor development...) was carried out between October 1990 and October 1991 at the International Adoption Clinic at the University of Minnesota as well as the New England Medical Center in Boston. Results showed that only ten children (15%) were healthy and developing normally. Two of these had not been placed in an orphanage and the other eight had been placed for only a very short time (up to four months). The other 55 (85%) had serious health, developmental and behavioural problems.
JUFFER and ROSEN-BOOM (1997)	The Netherlands	Sri Lanka South Korea Colombia	80 couples of adoptive mother-adopted child	6 - 18 months	Average age: 7 - 16 weeks	This study assesses the mother-child attachment in families in the Netherlands who had adopted abroad. Eighty mother-child couples were visited three times; that is, when the child was six, eight and twelve months old. Interviews were conducted with the families to investigate their motivation, the adoption process and the baby's adjustment. The mothers and children were filmed during a play situation and the children were also tested for skill. The following measuring instruments were also used: the Strange Situation Paradigm and Guidelines for Scoring (Ainsworth et al. 1978) and the Rating Scale 'Sensitivity' (Ainsworth, Bell & Stayton 1974).

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
KOH (1988)	United States	Asia	60 parents, their adopted children and the latter's teachers	Not specified in McRoy's article (1991)	4 –16 years old	Koh examined the impact of adopted children's physical and psychological differences in order to better understand their situation and the development of their identity. Based on interviews with parents, children and their teachers, the worries about loyalty to the birth parents and adoptive parents experienced by children who were adopted late were analyzed.
KÜHL (1985)	West Germany	Korea Vietnam Latin America West Germany	43 foreign adoptees 43 domestic adoptees 50 non-adopted children 163 parents of foreign adoptees 42 parents of domestic adoptees	13 - 18 years old	Under 2: 22% 2 – 5 years old: 40% 6 – 10 years old: 38%	This German study assessed the behavioural problems in two groups of children—domestic adoptees and foreign adoptees—in order to set up a support program. In particular, the author examined the adoptees' perceptions of their social skills, school performance and self-esteem. The analysis of the mail questionnaires did not reveal any difference between the adoptees and a control group of 50 non-adopted children.
KVIST, VIEMERÖ and FORSTEN (1989)	Finland	Asia	Parents of 33 adoptees	10 - 12 years old	Not specified in Tizard's article (1991)	Based on interviews with parents, Kvist et al. examined the development, behavioural and emotional problems of inercountry-adopted children. The latter's self-esteem and interpersonal relations were also studied. Results were found to be very positive on the whole.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
LEVY-SHIFF et al. (1997)	Israël	Latin America	50 foreign adoptees and their parents 50 domestic adoptees and their parents Teachers	7 - 13 years old	Under 3 months	Adjustment of adoptees and their adoptive families was studied by the authors. Psychological adjustment, school, social and family adjustment of adoptees as well as parents' adjustment to their child adopted from abroad were also assessed. Data were collected through interviews (with children and their parents) and questionnaires (parents, children and teachers). Several instruments were used including the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children Revised, the 18-item Rating Scale for School Adjustment (Smilansky & Shephatia 1976), the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts 1967), etc.
LÜCKER-BABEL, Marie-Françoise (1991)	Switzerland	Mainly Asia and Latin America	57 children taken to Switzerland for adoption	0-5 years: 26 6-9 years: 16 10 and older: 10 Age unknown: 5	Not specified	Study of the failure of intercountry adoption mainly from a legal perpspective. Distinction was made in the sample analyzed between children whose adoption was pronounced in Switzerland and children whose relationship was disrupted before the adoption order came through. Risk factors included advanced age on arrival, presence of other children in the family, arrival of a sibling, lack of initial enthusiasm on the part of one of the parents. Most of the work dealt with Swiss and international law issues.
LUSSIER (1992)	Quebec	Vietnam Korea Haïti Latin America Bangladesh	27 adoptees	17 – 28 years old	Under 3 years: 15/27 5 – 13 years old: 10 / 27	Lussier examines the school experience and ethnic identity of young adults who had been adopted from abroad as children (early and late adoptions). Using a qualitative approach based on life stories and semi-structured interviews, the author made the link between the problems encountered by the latter and their characteristics as members of visible minorities.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
LYDENS (1989)	United States	Korea	101 adoptees and their parents	1974: 12-17 years 1984: 22-27 years	Under 1 6 years and older	Based on an analysis of mail questionnaires, this longitudinal study examined three aspects of identity development among adoptees in adolescence and early adulthood, that is, self-esteem, ethnic and adoptive identity. Cases of early adoption were compared to cases of late adoption using the three aspects.
MARCO-VITCH et al. (1997)	Canada	Romania	56 Ontario families 56 adoptees Sub-group drawn from a sample of 105 families of Marcovitch et al. (1995)	3 - 5 years old	Under 4 years old	This study assessed the influence of three factors on the occurrence of behaviour problems in a group of Romanian children adopted in Ontario: (1) pre-adoption experience of institutional care, (2) severity of developmental delay and (3) quality of child-mother attachment. Behavioural problems were assessed based on interviews and questionnaires for parents relating to the child's behaviour. Several instruments were also used to evaluate the child's developmental status and the quality of the child-mother relationship, including the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock 1983), the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, and the Bayley Scales of Infant Development.
MARCO-VITCH, CESARONI, ROBERTS and SWANSON (1995)	Canada	Romania	105 families (parents)	Not specified in Marcovitch, Goldberg et al. (1997)	Not specified	Exploratory study distributed by SPARK (Support for Parents Adopting Romanian Kids) to 105 Canadian families who adopted Romanian children between January 1990 and April 1991. The study examined the health, development and behaviour problems identified by the parents.

191

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
MAURY (1991)	France	Korea	Not specified	Adolescents	5 - 10 years old	Excerpts from a study conducted as part of a DEA (French post-master's qualification) in clinical and pathological psychology that examined the outcomes of interracial and international adoption and, more particularly, the integration of Korean children in France. Using a clinical approach, the author focused on the social and family integration of adolescents, the adjustment process, the recognition of their Korean identity as well as their relationships with the biological and adoptive parents.
MORRIER (1995)	Quebec	West Indies Asia	21 adoptees	14 - 18 years old	Under 3 years old	Study of the long-term adjustment and identity strategies of adolescents adopted from abroad. The qualitative analysis, which was centred on the processes of identity formation, was based on semi-structured interviews conducted with the adolescents. It dealt with ethnic identity, racial identity, birth identity and the way adoptees define themselves. The role of social interactions (families, neighbours, etc.) in the process of integrating these multiple identities was examined.
NABINGER (1994)	Italy France Belgium Luxem- bourg	Brazil	67 families and their 90 adopted children	Not specified	Under 1 year: 23.3% 1 - 4 years old: 48.8% 5 - 8 years old: 27.8%	This mainly clinical and praxiological study assessed the family, social and school integration of 90 Brazilian children adopted by 67 European families between 1980 and 1985. 53.3% of these children were boys and 51% white, the others being black and of mixed race. Data were collected between 1989 and 1991 through a mail survey of adopters, semi-structured interviews with the adopters and adoptees, and observation of family interactions.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
NABINGER (1991)	Europe	Brazil	Not specified	6 - 10 years	0 – 2 years	Study to compare the mothering patterns in Brazilian and European families and to assess the adjustment of adopted Brazilian children and their European families. Interactions between the child and his or her future adoptive parents were observed and structured interviews were conducted with the parents at the time of adoption in Brazil. Four to eight years later, a questionnaire for parents was used to assess the adjustment of the child and his or her family.
NEUBER- GER (1995)	France	Asia Europe Latin America	2 adopted brothers One adoptee 2 adoptees	12 and 14 years old 15 years old	2 years old Baby	Clinical cases were used by the psychiatrist/ psychoanalyst author to demonstrate that it would be better for the child not to know about his or her adoptee status before a "mythical graft" which situates him or her in the adoptive filiation is created.
OUELLETTE, METHOT, MEINTEL and Collaborators (n.p.)	Quebec	China Haïti Mexico Eastern Europe	38 families: parents of 71 adoptees; 22 grandparents	1 ½ - 16 years old	Under 3 years: 44 3 – 13 years old: 27	Based on semi-structured interviews with Quebec parents and grandparents, this study mainly deals with the ideas and practices related to the construction, passing on and support of family and ethnic identity. The characteristics of early and late adoption are raised from an anthropological and comparative perspective.
OUELLETTE and METHOT (1996)	Quebec	China Haïti Mexico Romania	21 families: Parents of 27 adoptees	6 - 16 years old	3 – 13 years old: 27	Late adoption is the main focus of this anthropological study that represents a subset of the previous study.
PAULIS (1989)	Belgium	Cameroon Mauritius Rwanda Brazil	4 families: 4 couples of parents and the Brazilian child adopted by one of them	6 years old......... : 3 ½ years old......: 20 years old.......: 8 years old..........:	7 months old 2 years old 4 years old 6 years old	A model was developed by the author to interpret intercultural relations in the experience of intercountry adoption. The qualitative analysis of four cases relates to the modes of disseminating ideas about an African adoptee in Belgium.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
RORBECH (1991)	Denmark	Asia	384 adoptees	18 – 25 years old	3 years or older: 2/3	A study of the family, social and ethnic identity of Asian children adopted by Danish parents. In-depth interviews were conducted with ten adopted children, followed by a survey of 455 adoptees, based on interviews and fixed response questions. The following themes were addressed: identity formation, feelings of a double cultural attachment, social and family integration. Findings show that the majority of adoptees felt Danish and felt no major emotional attachment to their birth countries. However, one-third asserted that they felt different from the rest of the population and one-quarter had a hard time coming to terms with this situation.
ROUTHIER (1986)	Quebec	West Indies	10 families: parents and their 13 adopted children	4 – 9 years old	Not specified	Study of the role of parents in the development of the racial identity of their adopted West Indian child. Through interviews with parents, the author sought to understand their perception of the child's integration and their attitude to the child's colour and origins. The dolls test was also administered to the children to assess their identity and racial preference.
RUDE-ANTOINE, E. (ed.) (n.d.)	France	25 countries in Latin America, Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and the West Indies	60 adoptive families 104 adoptees	Not specified	Over 3 years old: 28 children Under 3: 64 children Not specified: 12 children	This study is divided into two major parts: Part I examines the legal procedures of adoption and Part II includes a qualitative survey based on semi-structured interviews with the adoptive families. The aim is to isolate the various determining moments in an adoption process and to evaluate the perceptions of adopters. The sub-sections deal with, among other things, the biological and social link, the administrative stage of the process, the search for a child, the arrival of a child, the secrecy about his or her origins, the child's integration into the new family and maintaining links with the birth culture.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
SAETERS-DAL and DALEN (1991)	Norway	Vietnam India	182 parents and 98 adoptees	17 - 22 years old	Vietnam: 2 – 5 years old	This longitudinal study examines three aspects in the lives of children adopted by Norwegian parents: the initial period of adjustment to the family, adjustment to school, and the identity problems experienced by these youths in adolescence. A survey of 182 parents and in-depth interviews with 98 adoptees aged 17 to 22 were conducted. Children's drawings and question-naires completed by teachers were also used.
SIMON and ALTSTEIN (1991a)	United States	Korea Latin America Asia United States	59 families: sub-sample of 37 of the 94 adoptees and 23 of the 34 biological children	Biological children: 6 - 23 years old (average of 11.4 years old) Adoptees: 6 – 21 years old (average of 9.8 years old)	First adoption: Under 1 year old: 46 1 and 2 years old: 4 2 – 4 years old: 4 4 – 8 years old: 4; over 8 years old : 1 2nd and 3rd adoption: not specified	Based on a quantitative analysis, this study assesses the impact of intercountry adoption on the psychosocial adjustment of adoptees, their siblings, and their adoptive parents who belong to the Jewish community in Boston and the Stars of David (SOD), an organization of Jewish adoptive families. The survey, based on fixed-response questionnaires for parents and children, focuses on the quality of adoptees' relationships with their parents, their family integration, school performance, friendship patterns, social activities, ambitions, reactions of the religious communities to the adopted children, and the children's religious practices.
SIMON and ALTSTEIN (1991b)	United States	Korea Latin America	21 families: 31 adoptees 5 non-adoptees	Not specified	Under 1 year old: 21 1 – 10 years old: 10	Second phase of the previous study conducted with members of Families Adopting Children Everywhere (FACE), an adoptive parent group of Christian families in Washington. The survey, based on fixed-response questionnaires for parents and children, focuses on the same aspects: family relationships, identity and religious practices, family integration, etc. The study ends with a comparison of the findings for the two groups of adoptive families (SOD and FACE) and a description of four families with adopted children who had major integration problems.

195

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
TERRE DES HOMMES (1992)	France	South East Asia	451 families with 713 adopted children	Average age: 19	1 year-old and younger: 30% 2 years old: 17% 3 years old: 10% 4 years old: 11% 5 and older: 32% Average age: 3.5 years old	Survey of international adoptions conducted from 1968 to 1978 by Terre des Hommes. Part 1 of this study presents the results of the quantitative analysis of 451 questionnaires mailed to the adoptive families. It provides a description of the current situation of the adoptive families, the adopted children and the problems encountered. Part 2 includes a qualitative analysis of 43 unstructured interviews with adoptive parents focusing on the problems encountered by the families, their concerns, motivations, and the experiences of their child or children of foreign origin.
TERRE DES HOMMES (1995)	France	Korea Vietnam	276 adoptees	16 - 39 years old (the majority aged 19 - 25 years)	1 year-old and younger: 34% 2 years old: 15% 3 years old: 11% 4 years old: 11% 5 years old and over: 29%	Follow up of previous survey but this time focusing on grown-up adoptees. It is based on the responses to a mail questionnaire that includes open-ended and fixed-response questions relating to identity, social and working life, family relationships, the birth parents, ambitions and adoption; and also on interviews with 39 adoptees selected to cover different situations: country of origin, age on arrival, gender of adoptees.
TROLLEY et al. (1995)	United States	Asia Latin America "Caucasians"	Parents of 34 families who had adopted a total of 47 children	8 months - 15 years old (average age: 6)	A few months – 10 years old (average age: 4)	The authors examined parents' attitude towards adoption and their intercountry-adopted child's birth culture. The study was based on a mail and telephone survey. Kirk's Attitudes Toward Adoption (1988) was used in the questionnaire relating to the parents' experience of adoption and their openness to the disclosure of the child's origins. The Culture Form (Trolley, 1993) focusing on the parents' acknowledgement and perceptions of the importance of the child's birth culture was also used.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
VERHULST, ALTHAUS and VERSLUIS-den BIEMAN (1990a)	The Netherlands	Korea Colombia India Indonesia Bangladesh Lebanon Australia Europe Other	Parents of 2,148 adoptees and 933 non-adoptees.	10-15 years old	A few months – 10 years old (0-6 months 24%)	This epidemiological study suggests that, compared to non-adoptees, adoptees are at higher risk of developing adjustment problems in pre-adolescence and adolescence. Data on 2,148 international adoptees were compared with data on 933 non-adoptees of the same age. These data were obtained through a mail questionnaire on the child's competencies and behavioural/emotional problems, and were standardized using an adapted Dutch version of the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and the ANCOVA.
VERHULST, ALTHAUS and VERSLUIS-den BIEMAN (1990c) (10 months later)	The Netherlands	Korea Colombia India Indonesia Bangladesh Lebanon Australia Europe Other	142 adoptees and their parents	14 years old	A few months - 10 years old	A clinical extension of the previous study that assesses the behavioural problems in international adoptees. Clinical interviews were conducted with 142 adoptees and their parents. A questionnaire was also completed by teachers of the 116 children (Teacher Report Form by Achenbach and Ederbrock, 1986). The clinical evaluation was then compared with the results from the epidemiological study. The instruments used to interview the children were: the Child Assessment Schedules (Hodges et al., 1982) and the Youth Self Report. An adapted version of Graham and Rutter's questionnaire (1968) as well as other the clinical evaluation of the CBCL and the DSM-III-R Diagnostic of the American Psychiatric Association were also used to interview the parents.

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
WATTIER and FRYDMAN (1985)	Belgium	South Korea Philippines Cambodia	20 couples of parents 28 adoptees	4 ½ - 14 years old	Under 1 year-old:10 1 to 3 years old: 9 3 to 6 years old: 9	This clinical study assesses the medium- and long- term effects of international adoption on adoptees. The authors examined their intellectual development, academic success and emotional life. The Wechsler Scales and Raven's Progressive Matrices were used to assess the level of intellectual development. A series of projective tests (drawings of the family, L. and S. Bellak's CAT and Murray's TAT, etc.) were administered to assess emotional life.
WESTHUES and COHEN (1995)	Canada	South Korea Bangladesh Vietnam	126 families: 123 mothers, 133 fathers, 155 adoptees 121 brothers and sisters	12 and older 80% of parents were aged over 45 years	1 year-old and less: 39.2% 2 years old: 14.4% 3 - 13 years old: 46%	This study to assess the impact of the international adoption process is based on structured interviews (open-ended and fixed-response questions) with parents, adoptees and their siblings. The following instruments to measure self-esteem were also used: Rosenberg Self Concept Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Kuhn and McPartland (1954) "Ten Words to Describe Myself." The issues examined were: ethnic and racial identity; family, school and social integration; acceptance/rejection of difference; self-esteem. The data were used to compare the adjustment of adoptees with that of their siblings (Westhues and Cohen 1997).

Authors (date)	Receiving countries	Principal Countries Of origin	Sample/ Informants	Adoptees' age at time of study	Age at adoption	Type of approach
WEYER (1985)	Germany	Not specified	50 families: 100 adoptees, 86 biological children	Adolescents	Early and late adoptions	Study of the family and social integration of Asian and Latin American children adopted by German parents. Interviews were conducted with 50 couples of adoptive parents and their children (biological and adopted). Various themes were addressed, including the child's problems of integrating into his or her adoptive family, relations between children adopted from the same family and relations between adopted and non-adopted children, behavioural problems, ethnic identity, adoptees' perceptions of their origins and their biological parents, school performance, ambitions, etc.
WILKINSON (1986)	United States	Korea	8 adoptees	Average: 5.9 years old	Late adoptions	A phenomenological approach was used by the author to gain an understanding of the inner world of Korean children adopted by American families. Play therapy was used with a particular focus on the intercultural dimension of the child's experiences. The following issues were examined: the stages of family integration experienced by the child, adjustment problems, problems related to physical appearance, sense of separation, need for a sense of belonging, etc.