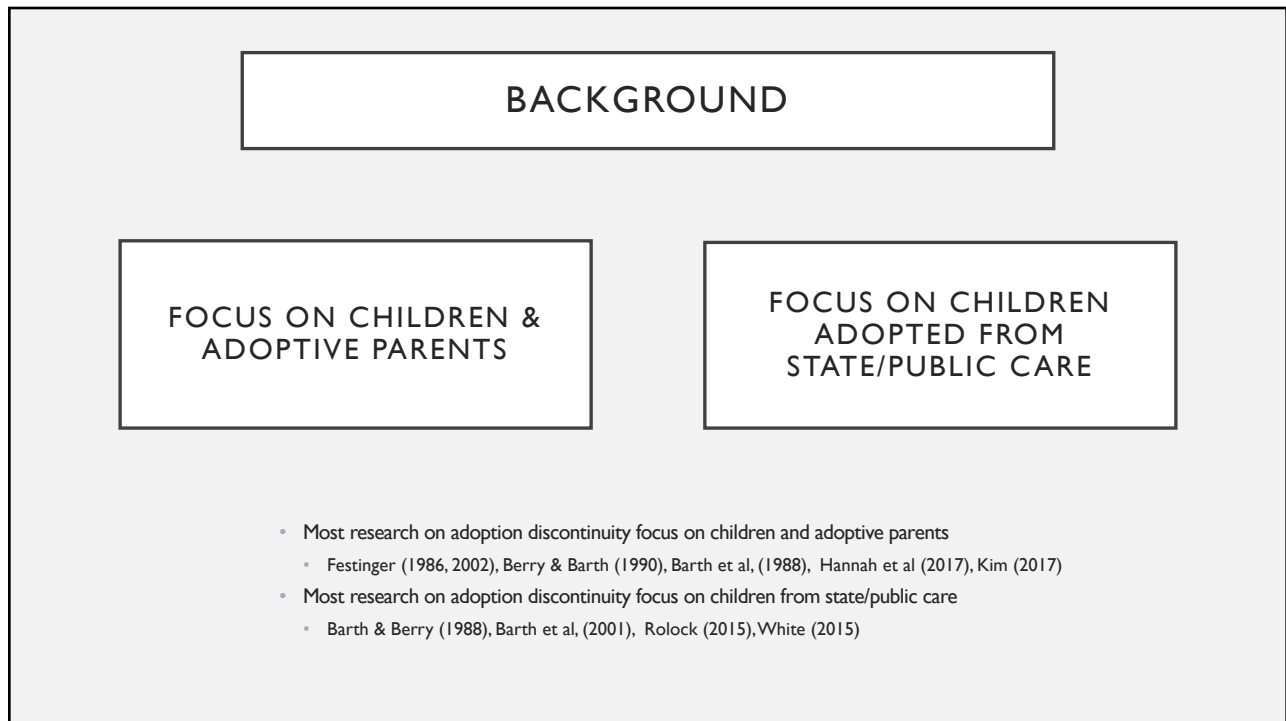
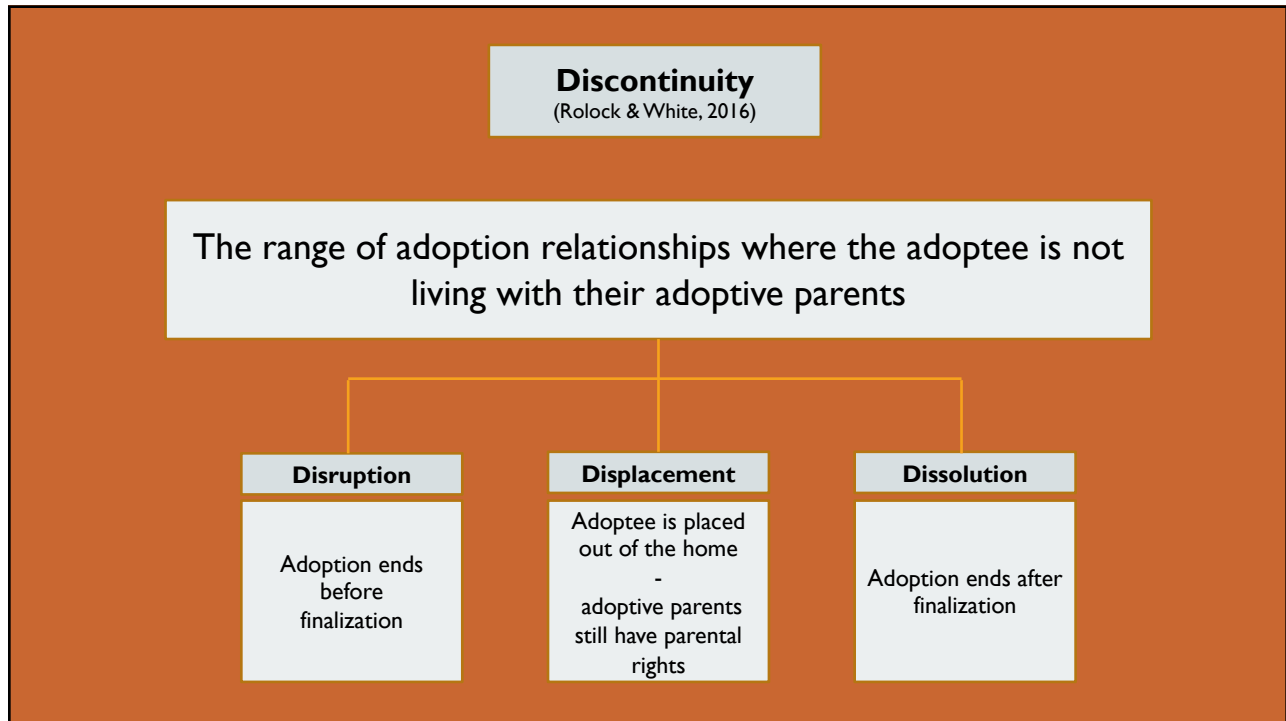


INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION DISPLACEMENT: WHAT DO WE KNOW AND WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

JaeRan Kim
University of Washington Tacoma
August 9, 2018
NACAC Conference

BACKGROUND





TYPES OF DISPLACEMENT CATEGORIES

Foster home
 Group home
 Hospital in-patient psychiatric
 Residential treatment facility
 Camp
 Juvenile detention
 Homeless shelter
 Runaway
 Another adoptive family (formal re-adoption)
 Informal placement with relative
 Informal placement with non-relative

THE STUDIES

Adoptive parents

- 2015
- 19 interviews/16 families
- 16 mothers, 3 fathers
- Age range: 39-64 (mean 54.2)
- Year they adopted: 1992 – 2012
- Mostly white, female, married and highly educated
 - West Coast (2)
 - Midwest (13)
 - Middle Atlantic (4)

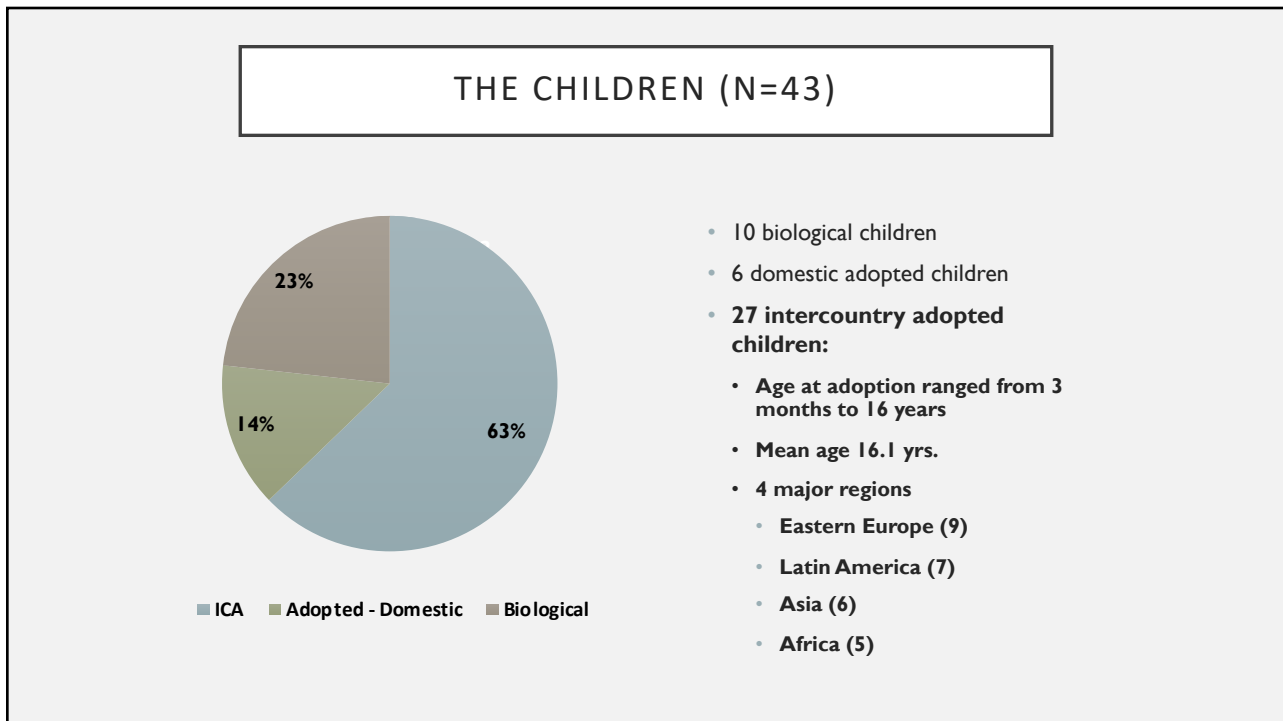
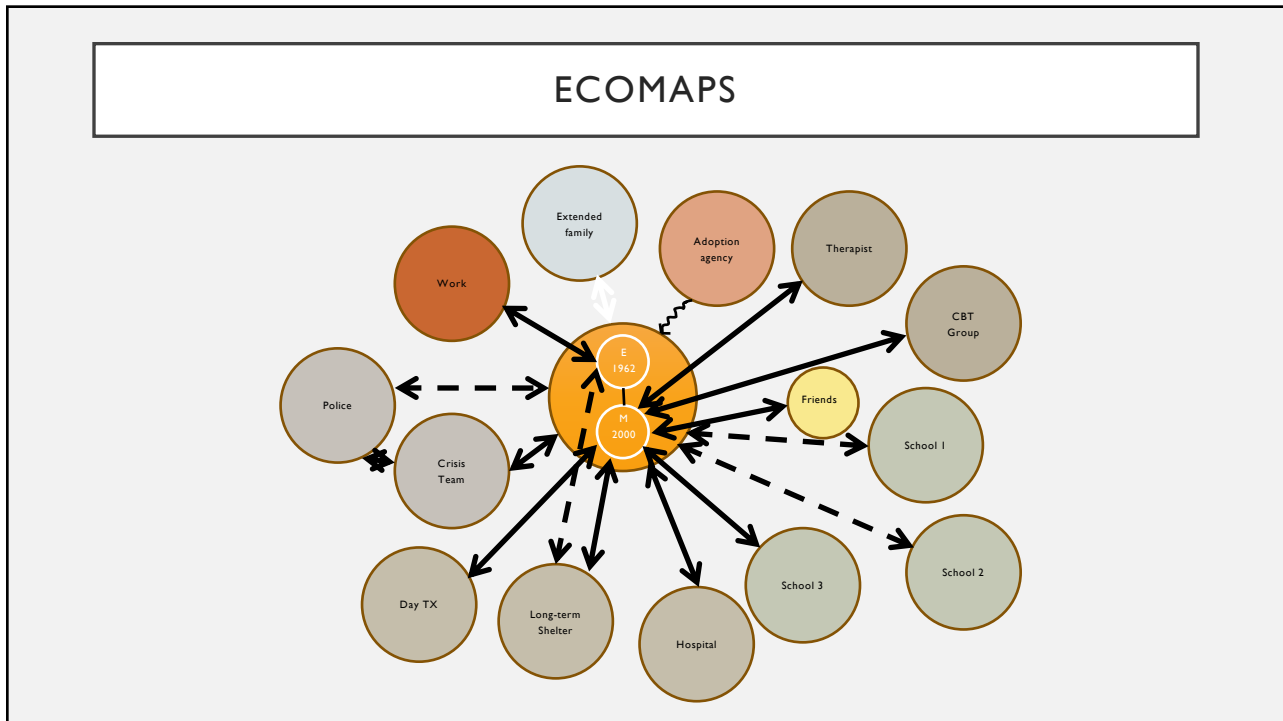
Intercountry adoptees

- 2018
- 20 interviews
- 18 female, 2 male
- Identify as LGBTQIA = 5
- Age range: 28-57 years
- Age at adoption: 4 mon-8 yrs
 - infants (<1 yr) [6]
 - 1-2 years [6]
 - 3-4 years [4]
 - 5+ years [4]

ADOPTIVE PARENTS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS – ADOPTIVE PARENTS

How do adoptive parents choose out-of-home placements for an intercountry adopted child with mental health, intellectual or developmental disabilities?			
What was the parent's understanding of mental health, intellectual or developmental disabilities prior to adopting their child?	How does the parent construct <i>disability</i> ?	What was the parent's experience with accessing and utilizing services?	How has this experience impacted their life?

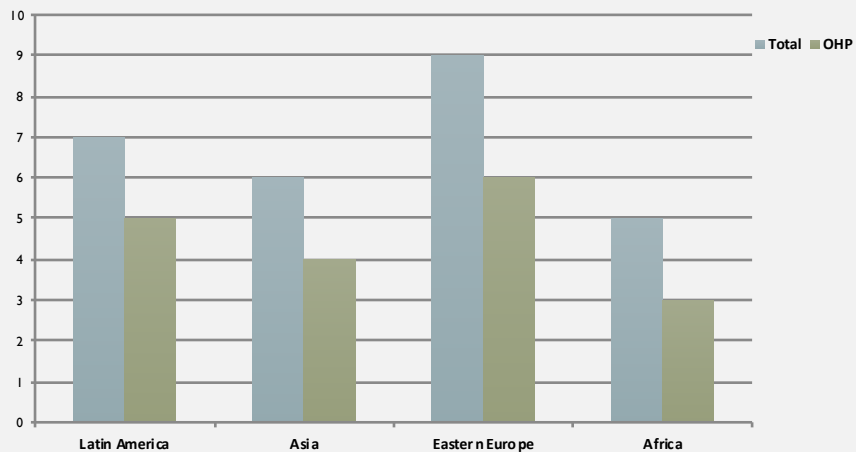


DISABILITIES

Developmental	Mental Health	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder /Alcohol Related Neurological Disorder (7) Learning Disability (6) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (5) Intellectual/Cognitive Disability (4) Autism Spectrum Disorder (2) Chromosome Disorder (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (9) • Anxiety (6) • Reactive Attachment Disorder (5) • Bipolar Disorder (4) • Depression (4) • Oppositional Defiance Disorder (3) • Mood Disorder (2) • Schizophrenia (2) • Attachment Disorder – not RAD (1) • Conduct Disorder (1) • Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse (2)

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTED CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT

18 ICA had one or more out of home placement



GENERAL THEMES - PARENTS

Stars in Their Eyes

Intersection of Can't and Won't

You Can't Run Into a Burning Building Without Getting Burned Yourself

STARS IN THEIR EYES

Intercountry adoption as "not special needs"

Intercountry adoption as "not open"

Not being able to think about the potential for disability

Pre-adoption process confirmed optimism, not reality

I just went into it blindfolded. Thinking I was going to become instant soccer mom, to a wonderful boy that my family would love; he'd travel with me, and as a single mom, we'd be perfect. It didn't happen that way.

Becky

INTERSECTION OF CAN'T AND WON'T

Difficulty finding adoption-competent providers

Unsure if behaviors were adoption, disability, or traditional developmental (i.e. adolescence)

I think there's always when you adopt there's the boilerplate kind of warning that is meant for everyone... You know, "may have adoption issues." You know and sometimes you think "oh, adoption issues" and when they're older they'll wonder, "who's my mom, really?" and stuff like that, not anything life threatening. At least, in our ideas.

Patrick

YOU CAN'T RUN INTO A BURNING BUILDING WITHOUT GETTING BURNED YOURSELF

Stress on relationships

Guilt and loss

Respite and relief

Redefinition of family

No one who wants a family envisions that the children aren't able to live with them; at the same time, we couldn't be a family if it weren't for those placements.

Mary

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTEES

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

NARRATIVE

What is said, what is left out
How story is told

PHENOMENOLOGY

The meanings that people
make of their experiences

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Tell me the story of how you came to be adopted

2. Tell me the story of how you came to be displaced from your adoptive family

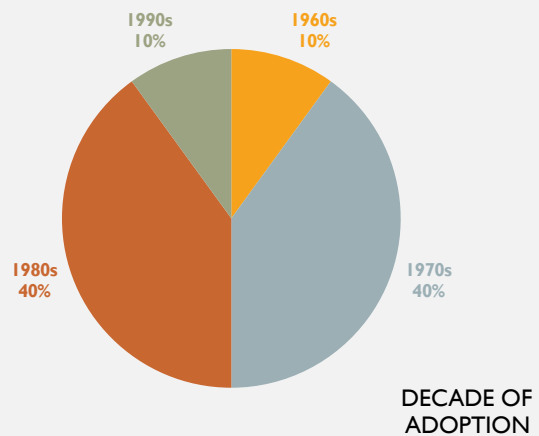
3. How have your displacement experiences affected your life?

4. What would you like people to understand about intercountry adoption?

PARTICIPANTS (N=20)

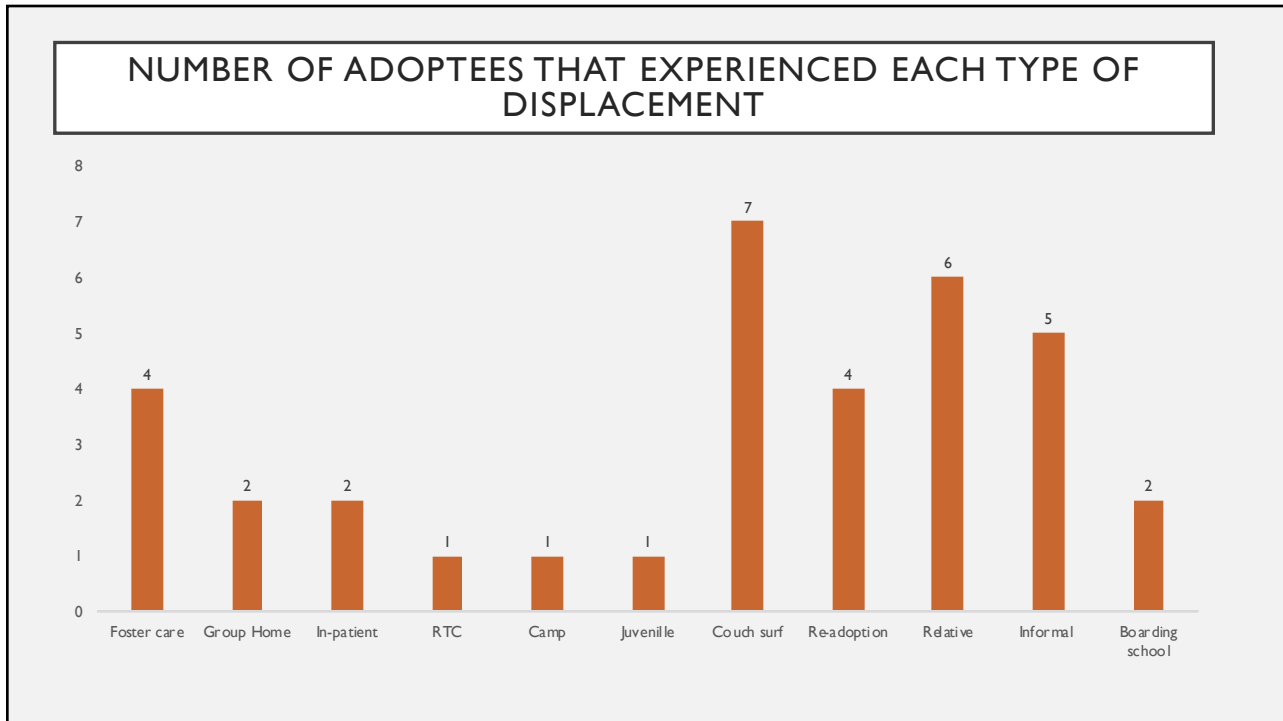
Participant country of origin

- 12 – South Korea
- 4 – Other Asian countries
- 2 – Latin America
- 2 – Other



**TYPES OF
DISPLACEMENT
CATEGORIES**

- Foster home
- Group home
- Hospital in-patient psychiatric
- Residential treatment facility
- Camp
- Juvenile detention
- Homeless shelter
- Runaway/ Couch-surfing**
- Another adoptive family (formal re-adoption)
- Informal placement with relative
- Informal placement with non-relative
- Boarding school**



GENERAL THEMES – ICA'S

Adoption story
 Displacement story
 Impact of displacement on their lives
 What other should know

ADOPTION STORY

I. How participants tell their story

Story of relinquishment in birth country

Story of why adoptive parents adopted them

Story of learning about being adopted

II. Mislead and Misinformed

What they were told in conflict to what they remember or learned later during a search

So actually, I have two stories: the story that I grew up with and then when I met my biological mom, her side of the stories. ...And then when I would try to ask about my adoption, I really wouldn't get an answer or the answer would be, "Well, obviously, your mother didn't want you and your family didn't want you, so that's all you need to know."

Faith

<div data-bbox="256 285 722 401" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>DISPLACEMENT STORY</p> </div> <div data-bbox="264 447 688 478" style="font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>WHAT LED TO DISPLACEMENT</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoptive parent divorce Adoptive parent abandonment Adoptee behavior Abuse in the home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompted running away Child protection intervention 	<div data-bbox="837 306 1430 842" style="border: 2px solid #a08040; border-radius: 20px; padding: 15px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>I was with them probably around up till the age of four...I know that I had a lot of behavioral issues; I know that, I remember that.</p> <p>[The second adoptive father] said that I never bonded with the [first adoptive family]. When they called the foster care agency the [first adoptive family] had said that I had just spent the last three days crying non-stop and they desperately needed a break and is there anybody that could take me?</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1167 890 1263 930" style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;"> <p>Patty</p> </div>
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<div data-bbox="250 1222 717 1337" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT ON LIFE</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling unloved/unwanted Stability Attachments/Relationships Surviving – Being Resilient Identity 	<div data-bbox="862 1222 1411 1724" style="border: 2px solid #a08040; border-radius: 20px; padding: 15px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>I think it caused me to not feel settled in my life. Even if I live someplace, I don't call it my home because I don't know where my home is. It's the house I live at. It's where I'm staying – because I always feel like that could go away in an instant.</p> <p>...I have to really be paying attention to what's going on in my surroundings... because it could all just change in an instant very quickly and I have to protect myself in the best way I possibly can.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="987 1766 1125 1803" style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;"> <p>Jennifer</p> </div>
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WHAT I WANT OTHERS TO KNOW

More preparation for adoptive parents about an adoptee's trauma

People don't believe adoptive parents can be abusive

The system does not protect children

Children are not blank slates

The master narrative about adoption is oppressive

I think they need to truly understand that the system is not set up for the children. The system, it seems to be set up for families who want children. Everything is set from an adult's point of view.

...Adoption isn't about guaranteeing a family a child. Adoption should be about guaranteeing the child a family.

Mary

The concept of a forever family is like a manufactured Hallmark idea. What defines family? Is it paper? Is it experiences? What's a forever family? Who came up with that concept?

...It's just the idea that sounds like they're rescuing someone. Or that someone has an empty space in their lives that they're hoping to fill with adoption. I find that term very problematic. It's very condescending.

Laura

DISCUSSION – LESSONS FROM THE STUDIES

- Both adoptees and adoptive parents want:
 - adoption social workers to be honest about adoption trauma and loss
 - adoption competent post-adoption services, particularly therapeutic services
 - trauma and ambiguous loss
 - racial, cultural losses
- Both adoptees and adoptive parents are hurt by the dominant narrative of adoption
- Both adoptees and adoptive parents felt intercountry adoption was too much of an “industry” and less about child welfare and the best interests of the child

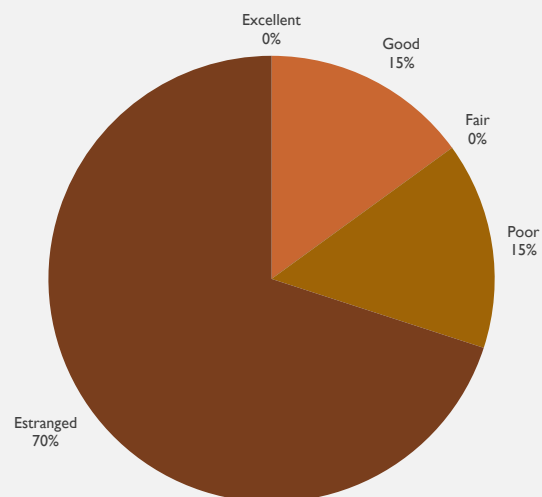
ADOPTIVE PARENT TAKEAWAYS

- Problematic systems – encouraging to adopt and then shutting doors post-finalization
- Need for more resources – International Adoption Clinics were very useful
- County and state agencies need to be more interconnected and less siloed
- Having child in placement doesn’t mean parent doesn’t want to parent

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTEE TAKEAWAYS

- Adoptees question robustness of home studies
 - Mental health
 - Expectations of adoptive parents – particularly adoptive mothers
 - Discipline, particularly related to religious beliefs
 - Elephant in the room - abuse
- Adoptees question robustness of child welfare workers
 - Child welfare workers pushed dominant master narratives (Be grateful, you were lucky, don't be a brat) and did not believe adoptee
- Greater need for adoption AND culturally competent providers

CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH ADOPTIVE PARENTS



DISCUSSION:

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE FOR WAYS
TO SUPPORT ICA FAMILIES?



JAERAN KIM
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA
KIMJR@UW.EDU