

Ethnic Identity of Foster Children with a Minority Background Growing Up in a Family with a Majority Background

Friday, 5th October @ 16:45: Growing Up in Foster Care (Venue: Auditório)

Mrs. Clementine Degener (University of Groningen), Dr. Diana Van Bergen (University of Groningen), Prof. Greetje Timmerman (University of Groningen), Prof. Hans Grietens (University of Groningen)

In western countries there has been an increase of children with an ethnic minority background in foster care. Because foster parents often have a (family) ethnic majority background, transethnic placements have become more common. There is reason to assume that foster children with an ethnic minority background struggle with their ethnic identities (Wainwright & Ridley, 2012), which is evident in literature on transracially adopted children (Samuels, 2009).

There are many societal discussions considering consequences for the ethnic identity of these foster children, but literature seemed scarce on this topic. In order to investigate what is already known, we conducted a systematic literature review. The main questions of this review were: 1) What does the existing literature say about the ethnic, racial and cultural identities of transethnic placed foster children and adopted children from care and 2) What ethnic, racial and cultural socialization by foster and adoptive parents can be recognized?

We followed the checklist and flow-diagram of the PRISMA statement (Moher, 2009). We used a wide variety of keywords considering foster care, adoption from care and ethnic, racial and cultural identity and ethnic, racial and cultural socialization and we inserted these in ninety different combinations in multiple databases. More than 81000 hits appeared and after a process of identification, screening and examination, 8 articles were selected for inclusion.

The articles could be divided in studies on ethnic identity and ethnic socialization. Most articles originated from the United States. The majority of the articles on ethnic identity of foster children or adopted children from care showed ethnic identity struggles or losses. In contrary, other studies showed no evidence for a problematic ethnic identity of foster children. Ethnic socialization was in several articles mentioned to be important for foster children or adopted children from care in order to be able to explore their ethnic identity. Two articles presented outcomes on ethnic socialization of foster parents. For foster parents, ethnic socialization seems to be a process of giving and taking between different cultural backgrounds. In conclusion, the review showed that there is little literature on this topic. There is no clear consensus yet whether living in a family with a different ethnocultural background leads to ethnic identity struggles or losses.

References

- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tezloff, J., Altman, D. G., (2010). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *International journal of surgery*, 8, 336-341. doi: 10.1016/j.ijsu.2010.02.007
- Samuels, G. M., & LaRossa, R. (2009). Being raised by white people, navigating racial difference among adopted multiracial adults. *Journal of marriage and family*, 71,80-94.
- Wainwright, J., & Ridley, J. (2012). Matching, ethnicity and identity, reflections on the practice and realities of ethnic matching in adoption. *Adoption & fostering*, 36,50-61.