

The importance of cultural ties

Sociology



Cross-culture adoption, a trend that has become more popular in recent years, points to the child's need to maintain close cultural ties with their birth country. In a recent study of Asian American adoptions it was found that while growing up, the children often considered themselves white. As they reached adulthood, that trend had reversed, and most considered themselves Asian American (Dong). As adults, they would seek out ways to connect to their country of birth through language, art, and ethnic organizations. Many of the adoptees in the survey reported lifelong feelings of alienation and isolation. Nancy Ng, a member on the board of the Palo Alto group Families Adopting in Response (FAIR) asserts the importance of " the need to honor the birth country and raise them with knowledge of their birth culture" (Dong),

Developing cultural awareness and close ties to your ethnic heritage is more than just the curiosity to discover who you are. Lacking the knowledge of one's background can lead to more serious issues and manifest in an identity crisis. Boylston contends, " the sense of loss and isolation since they are no longer living in their birth country, can intensify the stress that an individual faces as they move through the psychosocial stages--trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, personal identity, intimacy, generativity, integrity". For the development of a healthy self-identity, it is vital that we understand not only who we are, but also who we have been and where we came from.

This connection to our country of origin extends across generations as children have an intuitive interest in their parent's cultural heritage. The importance extends to our ancestors and as we discover our family lineage we develop an increased sense of self and greater self-esteem. For some, it may be a religious drive that creates the need for connection. Hong writes of <https://assignbuster.com/the-importance-of-cultural-ties/>

the need for exiled Malaysians to return home when she recounts their desire, " to fulfill (sic) their filial duty to visit the graves of their ancestors, parents, and family". Many people, after generations of living in America, still consider themselves a hyphenated American with a desire to visit the homeland of their ancestors.

Our country of origin is a vital component in the definition we form of ourselves and creates a healthy sense of individual identity. The inability to maintain those ties in our lifetime and across generations can leave us in an isolated sea of confusion. As a society, we need to embrace our cultural differences and encourage the exploration of our past, maintain close ties to our birth country, and preserve our unique and varied ethnic differences.