NO PLACE LIKE HOME: CONCEPTUALIZING KOREAN ADOPTEE EVOLVING SPACES AS PLACES SYMBOLIZING ETHNIC IDENTITY

By
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NO PLACE LIKE HOME: CONCEPTUALIZING KOREAN
ADOPTEE EVOLVING SPACES AS PLACES
SYMBOLIZING ETHNIC IDENTITY

ABSTRACT

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This research explores the process by which Korean adoptees describe their formative years’ place experiences (their adopting country), experience place (their birth country Korea), and the extent to which they begin to reconstruct place (their home residence) upon return to their adoptive country. In conceptualizing place as an organization of evolving spaces, as these spaces become emotional places to adoptees, these places symbolize an ethnic identity emergence, and contribute to psychological wellbeing.

“By 2010 more than one million adoptees will have been involved in international adoption” (Selman, 2007, p. 55). Within these numbers are approximately 200,000 Korean adoptees. Adoptees’ first return visits to Korea often provide them with new cultural and ethnic place experiences that contribute to their reclaiming an identification with their past—a past not realized due to adoption. In a previous study, Napier (2009) discovered that there
was a relationship between Korean adoptees’ place experiences during first return visits to Korea and ethnic identity development. In validating and extending these findings, this study positions adoptees’ place and identity experiences within a conceptual framework in which *Ethnic identity development* represents a process from *in-between place*, transitioning to *finding place*, and finally to *constructing place*.

Of the 451 survey participants from 11 countries, 152 participants returned to Korea. Among adult Korean adoptees that completed their first return trip to Korea, correlation analysis indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between place attachment (place identity and dependence, $p < 0.01$) and ethnic identity (pride, heritage, $p < 0.01$). In addition, the majority of participants identified authentic Korean traditional locations and characteristics as among their most memorable place experiences. Upon return to their current residences, adoptees’ emerging ethnic identity was manifest in their living environments following their first return visit, with the introduction of traditional Korean objects into their personal living spaces. By populating their domestic spaces with memorable objects and using personal narratives to document their experiences it is argued that Korean adoptees have begun rebuilding an ethnic identity.
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DEDICATION

Through an evolution of more than fifty years, our Korean adoptee experiences represent a collection of puzzle pieces; we search to find connection and meaning to complete our puzzle of life. Two central questions we ask are ‘Who am I’ and ‘Where do I come from?’

This dissertation is dedicated to displaced adoptees all over the world, and most of all to my son, Mattison.

may we all find the missing pieces to our puzzle of life and find fulfillment in all that we do.
1. INTRODUCTION

International adoption origins, as a global phenomenon, may generally be traced back to the years following the Second World War (Selman, 2007). Over the past 60 years, globally-displaced movements of adoptees number from “800,000 to 850,000, with a current addition of over 40,000 a year and the likelihood that by 2010 more than one million adoptees will have been involved in international adoption” (p. 55). Following the Second World War, and included within the more than one million adoptees involved in international adoption are approximately 200,000 Korean adoptees. International adoption in Korea began as a result of the devastation caused by the war between North and South Korea; a war which began in 1950 and ended in 1953 with a signed armistice. Losses to Korean families were extensive with two million lives lost or wounded and over ten million families displaced. Thousands of Korean War orphans searched for food and were barely able to survive, especially in Korea’s harsh winters (Kim 2006).

Following the 1953 armistice, over 800 orphanages were formed throughout South Korea for over 80,000 war orphans (Kim, 2006). From 1953 to 2001, approximately 200,000 Korean children (predominately under one year old) were sent to families to be raised in Western societies. Statistics from the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare report over 100,000 were sent to the United States; 50,000 to Europe; 5,000 to Canada; Australia and New Zealand; and the remaining 50,000 to other countries including Korea (Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare as cited in Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute 1999).
The placement of most Korean children into Caucasian environments with minimal exposure to Korean culture emphasized a complete severance from their birth culture, such that adoptees resided without familial ties, social bonds and cultural connections to Korea (Hübinette, 2007). Korean adoption research, and Korean adoptee self-reflection literature emphasize the difficulties adoptees experience navigating their struggle to define their Korean ethnic identity—a significant defining characteristic of who they are. Without a sense of ethnic identity, adoptees tend to exist within a state of ethnic instability, which can contribute to severe psychological and social dysfunction (Hübinette, 2007; Park Nelson, 2007).

Since the 2007 First International Research Symposium on Korean Adoption Studies, in which community-based and adoptee-centered foci contributed to significant differences in both research questions and outcomes regarding Korean adoption, the field of Korean adoption studies has grown by leaps and bounds (Park Nelson, 2010). Adoption research, once limited to empirical studies aimed at adoption practice and procedures from the perspective of adoption practitioners and adopting parents and families, is now a field of study relevant across many academic disciplines. “Issues of adoptee identity relative to birth country and adoptive family placement continue to receive much interest” (Park Nelson, 2010, p. v). In these studies, adoptees tell their stories via literary and artistic works, interviews, and surveys. These frames of study have widened to include new voices, perspectives, and areas of inquiry; at the same time, research has deepened to go beyond basic, preliminary, and baseline data (Park Nelson, 2010). In light of adoptees’ struggles in forming healthy, stable identities, this research explores Korean adoptees’ descriptions of their formative years place experiences (their adopting country), place experiences during
their return trip (their birth country Korea), and the degree to which they extend their place experiences upon their return to their home residence. In conceptualizing place as an organization of evolving spaces, as these spaces become emotional places to adoptees through an introduction of Korean artifacts, they produce new ways of constructing ethnic identity, and therefore contribute to psychological wellbeing.

The following self reflection brings to light one adoptee’s struggle with ethnic identity and how the first return trip to Korea influences ethnic identity emergence…
Self Reflection: Emergence of ethnic identity

Her Korean name is Kim, So-hi. She never hears this name again. She arrives in the United States at three months old, and weighs less than five pounds. She arrives very sick. She has an older sister, who’s also adopted from Korea, Caucasian parents, and four younger Caucasian brothers. She doesn’t know she is different from her parents until she attends grade school and children tell her so. Children chase her around the school grounds with pretend guns, yelling “Shoot the Jap!” She hates being different; she lies about her birthplace. She is terrified to have to admit that she is not from the U.S. She is the only Asian in her class of 200 students.

Figure 1. Korean adoptee

(Personal photograph by author. JPEG file.)
She exists in an entirely Caucasian environment. She grows up with no exposure to Asian culture, and certainly no exposure to anything Korean. She looks in the mirror and does not see an Asian girl; she sees a petite girl, with straight, jet black hair, eyes that are too small, and a nose with no bridge. She likes who she sees, except when she is singled out negatively as someone who does not belong in the United States. She is forced to accept that she is not on the outside what she feels she is on the inside. She is happy to live in an entirely Caucasian environment. Why would she want to be associated with anything Korean? She has no desire to explore her Asianness, and no desire to explore who she is or where she comes from. She has no ties to connect her to her Korean origin. Being Korean has only caused her anguish and shame.

Figure 2. Citizenship

(Personal photograph by author. JPEG file.)

She is an adult now. She is numb to the insensitive inquiries she has lived with her entire life. “What are you? Where are you from? Why don’t you speak Korean? You’re lucky your adoptive parents took you in, they must be special people. Is she your real sister? You don’t have a history.” Her sister begs her to attend an adoptee conference. She doesn’t want to hear negative
stories of being adopted. But she listens… she empathizes… she is a part of the stories of alienation, not belonging, ashamed of being Asian…

One year later, she makes her first return trip to Korea. She is reluctant, she is interested, she is excited… she’s traveled to Japan and Europe… she is not prepared for the feelings she will experience in Korea.

She gets off the plane; she notices immediately that she does not stand out. Everyone has black hair, the same eyes, and the same nose. People like her are everywhere. She eats Korean food. It is spicy and she loves it!
She goes to a palace; she listens to the story in English. She sees the beauty of the brightly painted palace and the neutral tones and patterned designs of the woodwork within the living quarters. She loves the contrast between adornment and simplicity. She hears of wars, tragedy and destruction. She is in tears; she feels an immense sense of protection for Korea, her Korea, her people.

Figure 4. Palace

(Personal photograph by author. JPEG file.)
She goes to a kimchee farm. When she arrives, it is monsoon rain; the water is sheeting over the wooden walkways and steps like waterfalls. Except for the sounds of the rain, it is very quiet. There is no one else around. It is incredibly beautiful and tranquil. The rain stops… It is silent… A haze rises from the cool, damp earth… Everything is washed clean. She can smell the earth, she can see the raindrops on the foliage, she can taste the hot, spicy, pungent essence of kimchee, she can hear the silence, and she can touch the history of her past… She is like the kimchee jars representing over 5,000 years of Korean history; she is a part of this history.

Figure 5. Kimchee Farm

(Personal photograph by author. JPEG file.)
She attends a traditional performance. She sees beautiful, multi-colored hanboks. She watches the dances: the fan dance, the dance of five drums, the court dances, and the harvest dances. She is in awe of the beauty of the dance and the music. The music is eerily haunting and sharp to her ears. She has never heard music like this before. The sounds touch her heart and soul.

Figure 6. Korean dance

(Personal photograph by author. JPEG file.)

She is overwhelmed by her feelings. She is finally proud beyond words of who she is. She is Korean! She whispers to herself, “I am part of this history. This is where I come from.”
She returns home... She passes by the traditional quilted wall hangings in her entryway. The subtle neutrals and the geometric design remind her of the palace living spaces. She touches the rustic miniature kimchee jars. They remind her of the kimchee farm. She learns to cook Korean dishes. She sees the brightly colored boy and girl hanboks hanging in her bedroom. They remind her of the vibrant colors of the palaces and the music and movement of the traditional dances.

Figure 7. Korean objects in the home

(Personal photograph by author. JPEG file.)

She is comforted by Korean objects in her home. They represent her connection to her unknown past and history, and symbolize her belonging to a country, people, ethnicity, and culture. She loves the place of her birth, Korea; her relationship with Korea satisfies a missing connection to who she is. She finds her “home” and returns to re-represent the emotional connection to Korea within her “home.” As soon as she comes “home”, she wants to go to Korea again... her other “home.” She feels she has finally come full circle, from her past to her present, to incorporating her past within her present, for her future...

From my personal experiences, I contemplated whether a single event in adoptees’ lives influences emergence of a positive ethnic identity. Thus began my
journey to research Korean adoptee first return trips to Korea and the relationship to ethnic identity. This example and similar writings related to return visits to Korea (Hong, 2007) help answer the question of whether Korean adoptees displaced from Korea at a young age with minimal Korean cultural exposure experience a significant emotional attachment during the first return trips to Korea and return to represent the experience in their homes. These experiences represent place attachment which is an emotional connection formed by an individual to a physical location (Altman & Low, 1992). Realizing the existence of these experiences, leads to such questions as which places and characteristics are most memorable, and which objects are incorporated into domestic living spaces as reminders of the trip? Do these place experiences and subsequent incorporation of Korean cultural objects symbolize an emergence of ethnic identity? Specifically, do these objects represent feelings of ethnic belonging and pride (Bergquist, 2000), and a new found sense of history, heritage, roots, and a way that defines who they are and where they come from? If so, then what we learn from adoptee experiences and actions can be used to recommend design strategies of domestic spaces for displaced populations that contribute to ethnic identity and thus psychological wellbeing.

Statement of the research

Problem.

Within displaced populations and immigrants to other countries, the unique situation for Korean adoptees tends to involve the “complete severance of familial ties, cultural routes,
and social connections to all kinds of Koreanness and Asianness whatsoever” (Hübinette, 2007, p.153). Korean interracial, intercountry adoptees are socialized into the culture of their adoptive families at a very young age. In addition, Korean adoptees were predominantly placed into Caucasian families in Western societies outside of their birth country (Park Nelson, 2009). As such, adoptees placed at a very young age, often have no memory of their birth country. As they mature with minimal exposure to Korean culture, some adoptees struggle in the development of an ethnic identity (Meier, 1998). Without exposure to Korean culture to formulate an ethnic identity, adoptees reside in an in-between world (Hübinette, 2007). For example, adoptees report residing in a place they do not belong and feel that they live as outsiders in these environments (Hong, 2007). Korean adoptees report living in a world where they do not truly fit in; they are outsiders constantly reminded that they are different from their adopted families and communities (Park Nelson, 2007). Additionally, adoptees report being alienated within their place of adoption and alienated from their place of birth. They often live with no ties to Korean culture, geographic origin, family heritage and Asian physiognomy association (Hübinette, 2007; Park Nelson, 2009).

Korean adoptees placed in Western, predominantly Caucasian homes often lack a Korean ethnic identity and therefore may exhibit an ethnic instability which may lead to severe psychological and social dysfunction (Hübinette, 2007). Hübinette argues that adoptees’ ethnic instability may explain the high preponderance of suicide rates, mental illness and social problems among international adoptees. This existence can be painful and difficult. “Ethnocultural research has also empirically demonstrated that higher levels of racial and ethnic identity are positively correlated with psychological wellbeing” (Cross, 1971
and Helms, 1994 as cited in Bergquist, 2000, p. 11). The problem is that without a sense of Korean ethnic identity that defines their Asian physiognomy, Korean adoptees tend to exist in a world where they are torn between who they are on the outside and who they are on the inside. From this dualistic existence, adoptees can feel as though they do not belong, and as a result, experience damaging feelings toward self that can negatively impact their psychological wellbeing (Park Nelson, Kim, & Peterson, 2007).

**Purpose.**

As previously stated, the purpose of this research is to explore the process by which Korean adoptees describe their formative years experiences (their adopting country), experience place (their birth country Korea), and assign symbolic meaning to objects brought back from the trip to construct place to symbolize an ethnic identity (their home residence). This research conceptualizes place as an organization of evolving personal spaces which become places to adoptees and produce new ways of constructing ethnic identity.

Previous research into place attachment posits that experiences with places function as processes in forming one’s identity (Knez, 2005; Lewicka, 2008; Scannell & Gifford, 2009; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). In addition, the display of cultural and ethnic objects in domestic spaces also contributes to ethnic identity (Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009; Kilickirin, 2003). Finally, a positive ethnic identity contributes to psychological wellbeing (Bergquist, 2000). A merging of Korean adult adoptees’ place attachment and the connection with ethnicity and identity construction as represented in domestic living spaces provides an opportunity to gain an understanding of culturally-sensitive spatial strategies employed to enhance ethnic identity and contribute to personal psychological wellbeing.
Earlier, Napier (2009) identified positive relationships between adoptees’ first return visits to Korea and place attachment and ethnic identity reconstruction. For example, adoptees reported an emotional attachment to Korea—an emotional attachment not present before the return trip. Adoptees also reported a newly heightened sense of belonging to Korean culture and a desire to return to their birth country. Of the 451 adoptees who participated in the survey, 341 had not previously attended Korean schools or lessons, 289 had not associated with other Korean families, 242 were not familiarized to Korean culture (food, music or dress), and 270 had no exposure to Korean ethnic items in the home. As a result, many did not associate themselves with possessing a Korean heritage and viewed themselves as just a person. Demonstrating a complete reversal of no ethnic identity association before the first return trip to Korea, adoptees reported a newfound sense of ethnic identity as a result of the first return trip. These findings warrant further research into Korean adult adoptee place attachment and ethnic identity emergence.

The current study extends the preliminary findings by using adoptees’ personal narratives of memorable experiences of their most significant moments and identification of the objects they brought back to incorporate into their domestic livings spaces that reflect these experiences. This study is concerned with participants’ experiences during their first visit back to Korea. Their experiences are examined for 1) the relationship between their responses to place attachment and ethnic identity reconstruction, by 2) quantifying noted memorable first return visit locations, characteristics, and memorable objects, and 3) quantifying major themes within qualitative descriptions of domestic living places as symbolic of ethnic identity development. In accomplishing the intentions of the study,
concerning place and identity experiences among adult Korean adoptees preceding, during, and subsequent to their first return trip to Korea, this study contributes a clearer understanding of adoptees’ holistic place identity experiences.

**Hypotheses.**

As we go about our daily lives we assign symbolic meaning to memorable experiences that form a collection of memorable experiences then used to discover and define self. Ethnic identity is a part of our self definition. Specifically, a positive ethnic identity contributes to aspects of psychological wellbeing. The hypotheses are that Korean adoptees’ evolve from their formative adoptive identities to more stable ethnic identities; their experiences with places play significant roles in their ethnic identity development. In addition, adoptees’ experiences during their first return visit to Korea as adults represent memorable place experiences, and symbolize connections to a renewed ethnic identity. Finally, adoptees’ incorporation of meaningful Korean cultural objects into their living spaces in constructing places reflects and symbolizes their emerging ethnic identity.

Objectives of this research include:

1) Develop a place identity conceptual framework for Korean adoptees;
2) Develop a framework for reporting and analyzing descriptive narratives in reference to place experiences;
3) Determine if a significant correlation between place attachment and ethnic identity among Korean adoptees upon their first return trip to Korea;
4) Categorize, quantify, and describe themes of Korean adult adoptee place experiences in reference to a first return trip to Korea;
5) Categorize, quantify, and describe themes regarding incorporation of objects/actions within domestic living spaces symbolizing ethnic identity among Korean adult adoptees

6) Develop a contextualist approach to understanding a complex holistic phenomenon regarding the psychological, temporal, and environmental aspects of the phenomenon

7) Explain how this study contributes to the need for conceptual, theoretical, transferability, and future research, in reference to place and identity concepts within interior design; and

8) Position place and identity concepts within interdisciplinary design research.

**Significance.**

Throughout history and continuing into present times, studies regarding cultural groups that have experienced lost pasts confirm how the experience can be detrimental to identity and can contribute to lack of mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. In light of the detrimental effects on identity for populations without a sense of past and history, there has been a call for policies and programs to assist displaced people in reclaiming lost pasts and to redefine individual cultural identities (Hadjyanni & Helle, 2009). While these studies emphasize the detrimental effects to identity, an extension of these studies suggests how displaced populations upon return to their birth country begin to reconstruct their ethnic identity via the design of their domestic living spaces.

Research into Korean adult adoptees’ first return trips to Korea to experience lost pasts, found that a connection to one’s past contributes to ethnic identity and a sense of
belonging (Napier, 2009). In addition, this developing sense of belonging as an element of identity is related to one’s psychological wellbeing (Bergquist, 2000). Understanding ethnic identity and psychological wellbeing relationships calls into play the possibility that culturally sensitive, interior home design strategies can be seen as validating a sense of belonging among marginalized groups (Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009). In addition, research regarding Korean adoptees’ life experiences represents an opportunity to understand through social, cultural, psychological, geographical, and interior and architectural design inquiry, adoptees’ place and identity experiences.

An understanding of displaced Korean adoptees’ first return visit place experiences and subsequent incorporation of meaningful objects into their domestic living spaces is developed here with the help of conceptual frameworks for place attachment and ethnic identity construction. Validation of the frameworks is gained from Korean adult adoptee survey responses. In turn, contained in their responses are indications of a more practical understanding of the importance of culturally sensitive designed spaces for displaced populations’ ethnic identity reconstructions.

Finally, by understanding how memorable place experiences translate into places which contribute to a meaningful existence, we may be able to expand these experiences into meaningful inquiry and interior design strategies for additional displaced populations. The significance of this work represents an opportunity to understand and develop design strategies aimed at enhancing ethnic identity and thus psychological wellbeing.

**Definitions of terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions accompany the terms.
Birth country – refers to Korean adoptees’ country of birth.

Birth family – refers to Korean adoptees’ biological family members.

Displaced adoptee – refers to Korean adoptees relocated through adoption from their country of birth to another country for adoption.

Displaced population – refers to populations exiled or forced out of their homelands.

Design – fundamental means of inquiry to give shape to ideas (Rowe, 1987).

Ethnic identity – psychological construct that includes attitudes of belonging and pride toward to one’s ethnic group (Bergquist, 2000).

Intercountry adoptee – refers to Korean adoptees placed for adoption outside country of birth.

Interdisciplinary approach – allows discovery and incorporation of research from multiple disciplines (i.e. psychology, geography, sociology, anthropology, etc.).

Interdisciplinary design – architecture, interior design, landscape architecture.

Interracial adoptee – refers to Korean adoptees placed for adoption with a family of differing race.

Korea – refers to Republic of South Korea.

Korean – refers to someone whose country of origin is South Korea.

Korean Adoptee – refers to adoptees of Korean ethnic origin most often placed in Euro - Caucasian western society environments.

Place attachment – refers to the emotional connection by an individual to a physical location (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996).
Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation explores Korean adoptees’ return to their birth country and their initiation of an emotional attachment to Korea. By examining adoptees’ formative years experiences, return trip to Korea, and return to host country residences, in terms of place experiences, I am able to illuminate Korean adoptees’ place and ethnic identity development. The current chapter introduces Korean adoptee ethnic identity experiences, a statement of the research, and the structure of the dissertation. Each subsequent chapter lays the foundation for an interdisciplinary approach to design research in which further understanding of place experiences better equip designers to understand how design of places enhance adoptees’ lives.

Chapter Two builds upon the idea that personal spaces are a reflection of one’s self (Cooper Marcus, 1997) and how these spaces via incorporation of objects, may also come to symbolize one’s ethnic identity (Kilickirin, 2003). Currently, there is discussion as to how architectural and interior design research might take on a more philosophical approach to knowledge and understanding. Regardless of views as to whether design resides within all disciplines (Buchanan, 1992; Melles, 2009), or whether it should exist as a discipline on its own (Cross, 1982; Love, 200), each agrees that an interdisciplinary approach best contributes knowledge from design research. This research into Korean adoptees’ place attachment and ethnic identity development follows an interdisciplinary approach by positioning itself within psychological contextualist world view taxonomies. In doing so, the argument can be made that Korean adoptees’ experiences during their return trip to Korea constitute a holistic phenomenon that encompasses a renewed sense of identity with their birth country.
In order to better understand how to use Korean adoptees’ personal experiences as a window into their developing identity, chapter three reviews a tri-partite organizing framework of place attachment that emphasizes person, place, and process as major components of place experiences. This chapter builds on an interdisciplinary approach to design research and lays a foundation that enables the analysis of place and place attachment narratives by adult Korean adoptees making their first return trip to Korea.

With an understanding of place and place attachment experiences, Chapter Four points out identity principles in which Korean adoptees struggle to emerge from threatened identities of their formative years. Experiences before, during, and subsequent to the first return trip can be conceptualized within three place and identity frameworks related to feelings of belonging.

Chapter Five elucidates how domestic places can reinforce identity through the incorporation of meaningful objects and how these objects symbolize place experiences in reconstituting one’s identity. Place science provides designers with an advantage to design places which confirm healthy identities, enhance lives, and contributes to psychological wellbeing (Augustin, 2009).

Chapter Six situates the methods employed for this research within a contextualist world view. To objectify place as space is to lose sight of people as culturally sensitive, and dependant, human beings. Therefore in order to understand the context(s) in which Korean adoptees’ find themselves calls for a mixed - method approach. In considering a place identity foundation for adoptee research, a figure diagramming the foundation describes each
phenomenon as holistic, complex events in which psychological, temporal, and environmental aspects make up these events.

Chapter Seven situates the findings in chronological order via a person place ethnic identity conceptual framework to portray holistic views of Korean adoptee experiences from formative years to adulthood, previously defined and diagrammed in Chapter Six. Quantitative findings are discussed first in tables and figures, followed by supporting qualitative findings, which are first categorized within tables and then followed by additional descriptive tables representing participant write-in responses.

Chapter Eight concludes the dissertation with a summary of the findings and an interpretation for adult adoptees’ place experiences and ethnic identity development. In addition, the implications of the study include conceptual, theoretical and practical contribution for design recommendations, transferability of research design and methodology, and future research. The researcher’s final thoughts close the dissertation.
2. INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO DESIGN RESEARCH

In an effort to position Korean adoptee place and ethnic identity research within a theoretical and philosophical view, specifically from a design perspective, I begin with approaches to design logic and how researchers in design fields undertake unique challenges. In light of these unique challenges, “Interdisciplinarity is often suggested to be a distinctive characteristic of design research (Melles, 2009).

Designers and design researchers identify spatial and place related problems, observe others, develop concepts, and act on their concepts to make places for living that enrich and improve the world (Zeisel, 2006). At the heart of design research is the design of places; design researchers study people in their surroundings to determine how places influence them (Augustin, 2009). Design studies representing person-environment relationships are often positioned within an environmental psychology contextualist world view in which the topic of study is a holistic event, embedded in its surrounding context, which evolves over time (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). Accordingly, design research, and for this study, Korean adoptee place and identity research specifically, is positioned within an environmental psychology contextual world view.

Relating design logic across multiple disciplines

Design research requires an interdisciplinary (Melles, 2009), or cross-disciplinary (Love, 2002) approach for the generation of new knowledge. Difficulties in positioning design research arise because there is considerable debate among researchers as to whether design is a discipline unto itself (Cross, 1982; Love, 2002), or whether it is a component
within all disciplines (Buchanan, 1992; Melles, 2009). Love (2002) argues that “designing and designs are a coherent cross-disciplinary body of knowledge that does not overlap with other disciplines” (p. 359). In addition, Cross (1982) claims that how one gains design knowledge and develops processes to evaluate design problem solutions are separate from the sciences and the humanities. Regarding design as a separate discipline unto itself, Melles (2009) in evaluating design research education found that, “Interdisciplinarity is often suggested to be a distinct characteristic of design research” (p. 266). As a result, efforts to comprehend Korean adoptees’ place experience and developing ethnic identity calls for an interdisciplinary approach that includes aspects of psychology and environmental psychology, environment and behavior, geography, and design.

Design research may be considered within four broad areas, “design of symbolic and visual communications, design of material objects, design of activities and organized services, and the design of complex systems or environments for living, working, planning, and learning” (Buchanan, 1992, p.9). These areas for design research are interconnected, and no priority is given to each area. Research aimed at understanding the role of Korean adoptee place and identity in the makeup of their personal home environments reside within design of complex systems or environments for living and call for a distinctively interdisciplinary approach.

Characterizing the design problem

Interdisciplinary approaches to design research include a synthesis of methods in how to characterize and evaluate problem solving solutions (Cross, 1982). The root of the design research problem is the description or the definition of the design problem. What is more
definitive of a design problem is the lack of an ideal definition of the problem. For these reasons, adoptees’ sense of living somewhere between their birth culture and adopted culture can be argued to be a wicked problem. Wicked problems contain “no definite formulation, no stopping rule, solutions neither true or false but good or bad, no immediate or ultimate test of solutions, and so on” (Blanco, 1985, p.93). Understanding this problem and finding answers calls for different or uniquely combined approaches to Korean adoptees’ acquisition of a stable, and fulfilling identity.

This study posits that the ideal approach to the discovery of new knowledge regarding place and identity research starts by evaluating and describing the problem. Specifically for this study, the problem is Korean adoptees’ reports of difficulties in navigating an existence between their Korean ethnic culture and the culture of their adopting country in which they feel that they do not belong and as a result struggle in developing healthy ethnic identities. In addition to evaluating and describing Korean adoptees’ struggle in developing healthy ethnic identities, the next task is finding the most appropriate philosophical approach (Altman & Rogoff, 1989) to direct Korean adoptee place and identity research. That framework can be found within environmental psychology world view taxonomies.

**Defining an environmental psychology contextualist world view for Korean adoptee places and ethnic identity research**

In considering place and identity research regarding Korean adoptees, a world view approach provides a foundation for the pursuit of knowledge. Understanding adoptees’ transition from limited cultural ties to a more stable sense of their cultural selves helps guide the research process. These processes that facilitate understanding adoptee’s place and sense
of self experiences are found in environmental psychology (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). Environmental psychology evolves from interdisciplinary “world views of person-environment relationships and their associated conceptual and philosophical assumptions” (p. 7). Design research evolves from similar interdisciplinary ethos regarding psychology and social sciences in discovery of new knowledge, specifically how design of buildings and places in which people live influence how they feel and act (Zeisel, 2006). According to Banham (1975):

Architecture must move with the times because it helps to create the times. It is more than a commentary on the human condition – along with war and peace and love and death and pestilence and birth, abundance, disaster and the air we breathe, it is the human condition. (p. 3)

By considering architecture and landscapes and interiors all as part of the human condition then the design of spaces becomes a sort of language which speaks to us and strives to evoke a sense of place among humanity (Unwin, 2009). These places come to represent the human condition. As such, the communicated person-environmental relationships of displaced Korean adoptees’ human condition in relation to place experiences and ethnic identity allow us to follow the development of a more stable sense of self.

World view taxonomies in reference to psychology in general, and specifically, regarding environmental psychology, provide a foundation for the pursuit of knowledge as the study of changing relations among psychological and environmental aspects of holistic unities. “The root metaphor of contextualism is the historical event, which is intrinsically embedded in its surrounding context and which unfolds in time” (Altman & Rogoff, p. 10).
From a contextualist world view, the world exists as *inseparable* complex, holistic events in which spatial, temporal, sociological, psychological, and physical processes all contribute to the phenomenon or the event. By collecting Korean adoptees’ thoughts on their lives before, during, and after their first return visit back to their birth country, I am able to describe these experiences in relation to Korean locales, ethnic identity reconstruction, and how these experiences influence changes over time regarding adoptee home environment living spaces. I become an aspect of the event by providing subjective descriptions of adoptees’ first return trip events in which I make use of approaches to best understand adoptee place identity relations (Altman & Rogoff, 1989).

From a contextualist world view in discovery of new knowledge, by extending insight into Korean adoptees’ identity development allows their life experiences to be seen as holistic person-environment events evolving over time. By exploring these experiences design researchers may more fully understand evolving place experiences and meaning.

In order to position adoptee place and identity research within a contextualist world view, Table 1. helps elucidate the four assumptions directing this research (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). First assumption is that the Unit of Analysis is a holistic phenomenon which is embedded in the surrounding context. Korean adoptees growing up in a Caucasian world and all the personal differences they experience are connected and inseparable and contribute to their sense of not belonging and not feeling like they fit in (Meier, 1998). The unit of psychological analysis in this study is events involving persons, their psychological processes, and their surrounding environments. “Furthermore, the aspects of an event are mutually
defining and lend meaning to one another” (p. 24). In essence, person and context coexist and jointly define one another and contribute to the meaning of a holistic event.

The second assumption is that Time and Change are inherent features in the event. To understand the phenomenon from a contextualist view requires description of changing features and temporal processes from the perspective that change goes on continuously. All the world is made up of events, and the world is always changing (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). The study of transformations, or a constant state of becoming, is necessary to understand how adoptees’ experiences with places relate to their ethnic identity. While Time and Change are assumed as variable in relation to adoptees and their first return visits to Korea, these experiences may suggest a similar ethnic identity emergence among each adoptee. Both the development of broad-ranging principals regarding adoptee first return visits and ethnic identity development, and the particulars that make each trip and experience unique are of interest within a contextualist world view.

The third assumption, regarding Causation, relies on Aristotle’s fourth conception, *formal cause*, which de-emphasizes the concept of efficient causation, or antecedent-consequent relationships between variables (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). *Formal cause*, which may be described as “a pattern, a shape, outline, or recognizable organization of the flow of events” (Rychlak, 1997 as cited in Altman & Rogoff, 1989, p. 26), discerns the nature of the whole. This approach allows for the possibility that the aspects of the event are not predictable or repeatable, but does not exclude the aspects of the event, if indeed they are show a relationship that is predictable and repeatable. Both the development of broad-ranging principles and unique, non-recurring novel events become a possibility. “Understanding
Idiosyncratic events are valuable because it allows for examination of an event from several perspectives and facilitates an appreciation of the variety of factors that contribute to the fabric of a phenomenon” (p. 27). From a single event, new ideas, principles, approaches and theory may emerge, as well as confirmation of principles and theory developed in previous research. Related to Korean adoptees, this third assumption is concerned with describing adoptees’ experiences regarding their first return trip to recognize patterns in developing healthy, stable ethnic identities.

The fourth assumption deals with the role of the observers and the nature of their observations which are partly defined by their qualities as an observer. The observer is made an aspect of the event. Observers are inseparable from the phenomena, and their role, perspective, and location must be understood as an aspect of the event (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). In this case, separate observers may provide differing but accurate accounts of the events. The observer is merely fixed within the location, and restricts the findings to a particular configuration of observer, participant, and setting.

Table 1. summarizes assumptions regarding Unit of Analysis, Time and Change, Causation, Observers, and Focus of the research and findings in regard to psychology research.
## CONTEXTUALIST WORLD VIEW APPROACH TO RESEARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Time and Change</th>
<th>Causation</th>
<th>Observers</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complex and holistic phenomenon whose parts interpenetrate and are connected in an inseparable fashion. Focus on event from different angles, full understanding requires recognition of the interpenetration of the different viewpoints. Must study event as a whole.</td>
<td>Temporal processes are inherent features of events; they describe changing features, and temporal process. Change goes on continuously. Categorical feature of all events, the entire world is continually changing.</td>
<td>Emphasizes formal causes, i.e. description and understanding of phenomena, but may not describe all events according to the same principles. Description of event instructive, to describe nature in the general sense.</td>
<td>Observers are aspects of phenomena; observers in different physical and psychological &quot;locations&quot; yield different information about phenomena. Observers are inseparable from phenomena, and their role, perspective, and &quot;location&quot; understood as an aspect of event. Seeks to understand the perspectives of the participants in the event.</td>
<td>Focus on event, i.e. confluence of people, space, and time; describe and understand patterning and form of events; openness to seeking general principles, but primary interest in accounting for event; pragmatic application of principles and laws as appropriate to situation; openness to emergent explanatory principles; prediction acceptable but not necessary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Design research concerning place within the contextualist world view

(Altman & Rogoff, 1989, p. 10-11)
In addition to the four assumptions, the focus of the contextualist approach, is toward discovering, describing, defining, or understanding a holistic event as the confluence of psychological processes and environmental contexts. As such the selected event to be researched becomes the fundamental unit of analysis. The persons, the processes they are a part of, and the contexts in which they are carrying out their lives mutually define one another and serve as aspects of the whole (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). The aim of employing a contextualist world view is to approach understanding to “account for, describe, and understand the pattern of relationships among people, places, and psychological processes” (p. 32).

In summary a contextualist world view for place and identity research directs the study of adult Korean adoptees. In this way The Unit of Analysis is Korean adoptees’ holistic experiences of place and identity before, during, and subsequent to their first return trip to Korea, and as integral to the research the observer is an aspect of the event, providing perspectives of adoptees concerning physical locations and Time and Change processes for ethnic identity development. Causation is seen as a description of these holistic events to understand the event and the general sense of place and identity experiences among Korean adoptees.

**Positioning person-environment research within a contextualist world view**

Contextualist approaches direct discovery of new knowledge within environmental psychology research in that the approaches seek to understand relationships between people and places and psychological processes which make up a holistic event (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). As a holistic event “Behavior is inextricably linked with the physical and social
environment in a continuous flow” (Barker, 1968, as cited in Altman & Rogoff, 1989, p. 29). Baker argues that behavior, places, and temporal dynamics are mutual, and that behaviors gain meaning by virtue of the actors and their actions. Each exists together as a single collective entity. In his research, he is not concerned with prediction and forecasting as cause-effect relationships, but attempts to describe and understand behavior settings as complex patterns of psychological functioning. In developing theoretical and empirical work within environmental psychology, regarding behavior and environments, Baker’s work opened the doors for this research to validate or refute how Korean adoptees’ experiences with place are inseparable from the physical environment.

The overlapping of people, places, and processes is further validated by Rapoport (1977) who defines environment as a complex and systematic organization of space, time, meaning, and communication, in which these four aspects of environments occur simultaneously in a variety of arrangements. Within cross-cultural studies, homes are conceptualized as inseparable unities of people, places, and psychological and social processes that exhibit different qualities of change (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). In researching homes of Pueblo cultures, via rituals, these homes are embedded with an array of cultural and religious beliefs which link the person and home with the past, present, and future, and renew ties between members of the community and their ancestral values (Saile, 1977, 1985, as cited in Altman & Rogoff, 1989). Research regarding subjective and experiential aspects of person-environment relations, emphasis is toward meanings, feelings of attachment, and how these experiences relate people to places (Korosec-Serfaty, 1985; Seamon, 1982; Tuan, 1977). “People are their place and the place is its people, and however readily these may be separated
in conceptual terms, in experience they are not easily differentiated” (Relph, 1976, p. 34). These overlapping aspects of people, place, and process help define a contextualist approach aimed at understanding Korean adoptee place identity experiences. The aims of the approach are to delineate definitions of environments (Rapoport, 1977), discover ethnic identity meanings associated with homes in how homes represent links to past, present and future (Saile, 1977, 1985, as cited in Altman & Rogoff, 1989), and describe how person-environment relationships between people and places emphasize meanings and feelings of attachment (Korosec-Serfaty, 1985; Seamon, 1982; Tuan, 1977). The expectation is that with an ability to understand Korean adoptees’ lives more holistically design researchers may more fully understand evolving place experiences and meaning and thus apply this knowledge to design places which promote ethnic identity and contribute to psychological wellbeing.

In conclusion, design research benefits from a contextualist approach and as such must be interdisciplinary (Melles, 2009). Design research concerning person-environment relationships is contextual in that research is framed to emphasize description and understanding of the pattern of relationships among people, places, and psychological processes (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). From a design perspective, by positioning this research, specifically, Korean adult adoptees’ first return trips to Korea within a contextualist world view, this approach emphasizes person-environment relationships. In understanding and describing how adoptees’ experiences with places come to represent emergence of ethnic identity, research evolves from contextualizing the experience as a complex holistic event in which persons, process, and contexts mutually
define one another and serve as aspects of the whole in describing and understanding these experiences.
3. PLACE AND PLACE ATTACHMENT

Place is space that has been given meaning through personal, group, or cultural processes (Altman & Low, 1992; Cresswell, 2004). We surround ourselves with places somewhat like a garment which becomes both a disguise and a representation of who we are. These places define our image to others and become a mental place for us to dream of and remember (Poulet 1977).

In positioning research within a contextualist world view to uncover knowledge and understanding for interdisciplinary design research regarding Korean adoptee place experiences, Chapter Three begins with a historical review of place and place attachment concepts. Those concepts are then related to this research regarding the role of place attachment in Korean adoptees’ lives. Place attachment is then further elaborated upon through the use of Scannell and Gifford’s (2009) three-dimensional, place-person-process organizing framework. While the role of place attachment in adoptees’ lives is enhanced through Scannell and Gifford’s person-place-process framework, gaining access to that framework is enabled through adoptees’ own narratives of their life experiences. Chapter three concludes by introducing Conron’s (1974) means of analyzing narratives describing landscapes.

Origins of place in human geography

The origins of place as a focus of inquiry within human geography may be traced as far back as First Century AD. Early geographers aimed to interrelate a people’s general character to their environments. While seemingly a simple concept, understanding place is
complicated by its multiplicity of common uses in everyday life (Cresswell, 2004). For this reason place becomes complex; place has varied meanings dependent on the context in which it is used. For example, place can be a way of understanding, suggesting ownership, privacy, belonging; or, represent a city, region, or country. Place may suggest a position of social hierarchy and represent a socio-geographical basis. It is sometimes interchangeable with landscape and space. So much a part of who we are, place “is itself part of the way we see, research and write” (p. 15). Place is how we make our world meaningful and how we experience our world. The form it takes on can be as small as a favorite rocking chair by a fireplace, or the everyday places in which we live our lives (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977). Each of our personal references to place forms the basis for how we live and experience the world and provide evidence of our personal and cultural place attachment character.

Cresswell (2004) observes three levels to address place. A descriptive approach to place utilizes common sense to study the uniqueness and particulars of an entity. The emphasis is toward the distinctiveness and particularity of places. For example, from an ideographic perspective the concern might be to research and write about, The Geography of North England. A social constructionist approach to place is interested in the particularity of the place, but only in view of underlying social processes. This approach would be concerned with the social construction of place involving the unique attributes of a place such as the Docklands of London or Baltimore Harbor under conditions of capitalism, patriarchy, or other structural conditions. A phenomenological approach to place “seeks to define the essence of human existence as one that is necessarily and importantly ‘in-place’. This approach is less concerned with ‘places’ and more interested in ‘Place’ ” (p. 51). Place is a way of being and
is not necessarily associated with a specific location. Place becomes a way in which we experience the world. For example, place is central in creating centers of meaning to feel at home in the world.

These three broad areas are not discrete, and may overlap one another. Each approach represents levels of depth, but they do not represent levels of importance, and from multiple inquiries into place we see the importance and necessity to understand the full complexity of place in human life (Cresswell 2004).

Building on Cresswell’s definitions and approaches to place, this research predominately intends to target the uniqueness and particularity of place, and how the experience of place seeks to define the essence of human existence. From an understanding of experiences of places, in how and why places are meaningful, we gain insight into how place experiences define human existence and contribute to psychological wellbeing.

**Concept of place attachment**

In whatever form, descriptive, social, or phenomenological, place is basically contextual, whereas place attachment refers to an emotional connection or bond formed by an individual to a physical location (Altman & Low, 1992; Giuliani & Feldman, 1993). Attachment to a place can also evoke a range of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors as well as feelings. From these attachments, people become attached to places, as places satisfy people’s emotional needs (Kaiser & Fuhrer, 1997). Korean adoptee self reflective literary works of their first return visits to Korea often express emotional connections to their birth country (Hong, 2007). They express a heightened sense of pride and connection to a people and a country, which until this first visit, were completely foreign and unknown. Korea
adoptees report feeling at home, being where they belong, finding out what it means to be Korean, finally feeling like a person with a history and a part of a culture, connecting with Korea’s past, and a sense of pride in being Korean; the experience of visiting Korea holds special meaning to each adoptee (Hong, 2007; Park Nelson & Kim, 2007; Bishop & Rankin, 1997). These experiences display the beginning of many adoptees’ attachment with a place, a culture, and a history.

Historical approaches to place attachment were initially explored by phenomenological scholars such as Bachelard (1964) and more recently by Tuan (1974), Relph (1976), and Seamon (1993) in which their focus was toward the unique and emotional experiences and bonds of people with place (Altman & Low, 1992). While place attachment was not viewed as a valid topic of inquiry within positivist philosophies of research, it was not until a more “eclectic and broader acceptance of alternative scholarly approaches” (p. 2) was accepted that phenomenological analysis became increasingly important in environment and behavior studies. In addition, early place attachment research focused on migration and change rather than attachment to new locales. Altman and Low argue that place was not a valid topic among social scientists other than geographers, and even among geographers, the studies of communities, towns, or villages claimed a very minor analysis of people-place bonding.

It was not until the late 1970s that social psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists began to address personal, family, and group use of space in conjunction with environmental meaning (Altman & Low, 1992). In addition to sociologists’ research studies,
anthropologists began to study places such as homes, childhood environments, sacred places, and elderly environments. At the same time, researchers began to look into social issues of:

...homelessness, relocation, mobility, changing family structures, crime, and community development. In doing so, human emotions about places became salient, including personal and family upheaval, stress, alienation, loss of rootedness to places, and a variety of affective disruptions. (p. 2)

These writings about place attachment, bring together scholars from several disciplines, including anthropology, architecture, family and consumer studies, folklore, gerontology, landscape architecture, marketing, psychology, sociology, social ecology, and urban planning, to address aspects, research, and conceptual approaches to design (Altman & Low 1992). From these studies, place attachment research evolves from interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary methodology. Each study, across multiple disciplines, and via multiple research approaches, emphasizes place experiences and meaning among diverse populations to explain, describe, measure, and report what places were meaningful, and how and why these places held personal meaning to individuals. Within multiple contexts of intellectual and social settings, the concept of place attachment became a legitimate topic of discussion among researchers and practitioners and as such gives validity to the study of Korean adoptees’ place experiences as a compelling research topic within place attachment theory.

The disciplinary range of those who value and employ place attachment theory includes environmental psychology (Knez, 2005; Manzo, 2005; Smaldone & Harris, 2006; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell) behavior and environment (Altman & Low, Eds., 1992), geography (Meier, 1998), forestry (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005; Williams & Vaske, 2003), and
design (Augustin, 2009; Downing, 2003; Cooper Marcus & Francis, Eds., 1998). Within these studies, a variety of related topics emerged that informed research regarding Korean adoptees’ first return visits to Korea and subsequent place experiences.

**Place attachment and environmental psychology.**

Climate or the long term weather in a particular location in relationship to experiences with place plays a significant role among Korean adoptees in that the climate of Korea is very different than the climate of adoptees’ countries of residence (Hong, 2007). Knez (2005) examined relations between place, climate, and place attachment and place identity to explore the significance of climate in the participant’s conceptions of place. Similarities and differences regarding climates experienced in places, tends to influence how one comes to be attached to current and future places. Climate was found to be an important perceived component of a place. In some cases, places with perceived climates evolved attachment and became the deciding factor for personal residences.

Negative experiences with places influence place attachment in similar ways as positive experiences. Manzo (2005) explored multiple dimensions of place meaning with an emphasis illuminating negative experiences to place. “Some participants described negative experiences in either past or current residences, and therefore made a conscious decision to disconnect from that place” (p. 80). In some cases, these “negative experiences in childhood residences created difficulties for them in finding self-affirming places in their adult lives (p. 90). These experiences may relate to feelings of safety, threat, belonging, disconnection, instability, and unhappiness. Korean adoptees write of negative place experiences in their home during their formative years (Park Nelson, 2009). These negative experiences may
provide a starting point for adoptees to move away from similar places in their adult lives. By reviewing negative place experiences these places become places to move toward something more comfortable.

Korean adoptees often write of experiences with place in Korea, and how these experiences with places represent an evolution of self (Hong, 2007). Smaldone, Harris, and Sanyal (2006) claim that place as a process evolves over life stages, and from feelings evoked from place, attachment confirms one’s commitment to place. These life processes as related to Korean adoptees’ first return trips to Korea elicit how feelings and attributes of places confirm a commitment to Korea to begin an association with their Korean past.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) explored place and identity processes for residents living in the London Docklands where it was hypothesized that attached residents would discuss their relationship with the local environment in a way which validated identity principles. In these same ways, this study approaches place and identity processes to understand how and why adoptees discuss, via descriptive narrative, their attachment to Korea during and subsequent to their first return trip.

**Place attachment and geography.**

Meier (1998) from a geographic lens defines place within sociology and developmental psychology in which he attempted to find the relevance of place among Korean adoptees. From his study, a web of related themes emerged which revealed the interplay between ethnicity, identity, gender, and place. He emphasized the value in further research regarding Korean adoptees’ experiences with place, specifically their birth country Korea, and how the experience influences ethnic identity.
Place attachment and forestry.

Kyle, Graefe, and Manning (2005) and Williams and Vaske (2003) employ a psychometric approach to measure place attachment among park visitors for public land management in the United States. Their intent was to discover the extent of emotions and feelings people have for places. These same psychometric measures direct inquiry into Korean adoptees’ emotions and feelings to places.

Place attachment and design.

Well designed spaces, become places to individuals and enhance their lives (Augustin, 2009). These well designed places promote place attachment. Korean adoptees write of places which promote emotional feelings of belonging (Hong, 2007) and in doing so validate how design of places fulfills more than a functional need of a roof over one’s head; these places may also shape beliefs and attitudes (Augustin, 2009). What places, and how and why these places come to represent place attachment to Korean adoptees during their first return trip to Korea, provides designers insight into how to design places to promote place attachment. The importance of place attachment research is that we are always in place and place matters (Augustin, 2009).

In positioning adoptee research within a contextualist worldview, place attachment is readily seen as more than the study of a spatial location defined by latitude and longitude, city, state, region and country. However, spatial location and locational characteristics are notable. They allow adoptees’ memorable experiences to be situated in the world and in doing so contribute to definition of self, specifically those experiences adoptees’ have with their birth country.
Assessing place attachment

That place is space that has been given meaning is generally agreed upon. However, there is less agreement about how to define and measure place attachment (Lewicka, 2008). In reviewing the research conducted by Knez (2005), Kyle, Graefe, and Manning (2005), Williams and Vaske (2003), and Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), it becomes clear that place attachment is a person-place bond or relationship made up of four processes: place related distinctiveness, place-referent continuity, place related self-esteem and place-related self-efficacy (Knez, 2005; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). These four aspects of place attachment evolved from Breakwell’s (1983) model of identity. In each case, place identity which is an emotional attachment, and place dependence which is a functional attachment were included within place research as valid dimensions used to measure place attachment.

Williams and Vaske (2003) assert that, “a valid measure of place attachment should differentiate not only among people with different levels of attachment for a given place, but should also be able to differentiate levels of attachment that a single individual holds for various places” (p.832). From validity and generalizability of place attachment across measurement items of places, and dimensions, they maintain that place attachment can be assessed as two different, but related concepts: place identity and place dependence. Korean adoptee assessment of places and emotional attachment derives from these two dimensions of place attachment. Survey questions elicit participants’ responses to place identity and dependence.
**Place identity.**

*Place identity* is considered the degree to which a person identifies, connects, or develops associations toward a particular place. As an emotional attachment, one’s personal attachment with a place refers to the symbolic importance of that place as a repository and reflection of emotions and relationships that give meaning and purpose to their life. “Place identity has been described as a component of self identity that enhances self esteem, and increases feelings of belonging to one’s community” (Williams and Vaske, 2003, p.831). For example, if individuals experience a meaningful life event at a certain location, they may come to see that location as a representation of who they are. For example, questions to assess place identity might include: I feel this place is a part of me, or: This place is very special to me, or: Visiting this place says a lot about who I am.

**Place dependence.**

The second concept, *place dependence* refers to a functional attachment, an ongoing emotional relationship with a particular setting (Twigger - Ross & Uzzell, 1996). This functional attachment becomes embodied in the area’s physical characteristics. Some individuals may not have on-going access to these meaningful locations (e.g. house when growing up, vacation destinations, etc), while others can frequently visit places associated with significant memories. Because of these meaningful experiences, place dependence tends to represent the profound emotional value that individuals hold toward certain locations. Questions to assess place dependence might include: No other place can compare to this place, or: I get more satisfaction out of visiting this place than any other (Williams & Vaske, 2003).
In that place identity and place dependence are found to be valid measurements of place attachment, this research uses place identity and place dependence as valid measurements of place attachment (Napier, 2009). In so doing, the expectation is to contribute understanding in how Korean adoptees experience place attachment via identity and dependence. In contributing to previous research regarding place, concepts of place attachment, and assessment of place attachment, additional studies confirm place attachment experiences via psychological processes of affect, cognition and behavior. From these concepts, these experiences, or holistic events signify the unit of study for this research (Table 1.).

**Tripartite framework for place attachment: Person, place and process**

In addition to assessing place attachment as dimensions of identity and dependence, Scannell and Gifford (2009) provide an organizing framework to gather, categorize, and report place attachment experiences. They propose a tripartite organizing framework in which person, place, and psychological process represent three multi-dimensional concepts (Figure 8.). The first concept is who is the person and how is the person attached? What are the individual and collective meanings of the attachment? The second is the psychological process: How are affect, cognition, and behavior developed in the attachment? The third concept encompasses the place or the object of the attachment including the characteristics and the nature of the place. These three dimensions of place attachment provide the rationale to understand adoptees’ connections between places.
Scannell and Gifford (2009) approach place attachment with the admission that the difficulty in researching place is in defining a single model and because place attachment is studied from many perspectives, a plentitude of definitions arise. It becomes difficult to develop a theoretical basis for a concept of place attachment. To address this difficulty, they propose a tripartite model. They reviewed multiple definitions of person-place bonding and organized definitions via commonalities across separate theories regarding place attachment. By doing so, they developed a coherent understanding of place attachment. Their focus on person, place, and process helps illuminate aspects of Korean adoptees’ first return visits to Korea. In the model Person includes both individual and group levels where the two may overlap. Places for individuals emphasize personal memories which tend to contribute to a
stable sense of self (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). At the group level, attachments represent symbolic meanings that are shared among groups (Altman & Low, 1992) and therefore these attachments might represent a shared culture (Gans, 1967) or a shared religion (Scannell & Gifford, 2009). For Korean adoptees the distinctions between personal and group level attachments become representations of symbolic associations to Korea.

Scannell and Gifford’s (2009) second dimension of place attachments considers the process by which individuals and groups relate to Place and what meaningful psychological interactions occur. They observe that attachment to places evoke emotional responses which can become effects of the attachment, sometimes positive and sometimes negative. In addition to these effects, psychological processes include cognitive responses in which memories, beliefs, meaning, and knowledge become central to place settings and represent personal meaning. “Through memory, people create place meaning and connect it to the self” (p. 3). Within this framework, I can anticipate that Korean adoptees’ may draw similarities between self and place; salient features of place that make it unique can become a part of adoptees’ self-concept and come to represent who they are.

The third aspect of the model is the psychological Process or behavior, which represents actions. They conclude that these actions may represent the length of stay at a place, desire to remain close to a place, relocation to similar places, or the actions subsequent to a place attachment experience, such as reconstruction of place. By describing and interpreting psychological process among Korean adoptees’ during and subsequent to their first return trip, we may be able to further understand how adoptees’ psychological processes to place influence their actions in developing their home places.
“Perhaps the most important dimension of place attachment is the place itself. What is it about the place to which we connect?” (Scannell & Gifford, 2009, p.4) Scannell and Gifford’s third multi-dimensional construct of place puts forward two place dimensions: social aspects and physical characteristics. They comment that people become attached to places that facilitate social relationships and group identity, which may also involve an attachment to the social group that the place represents. In this respect, place comes to both be and represent “an arena for social interactions, or as a symbol for one’s social group” (p. 5). They further state that the specificity of the physical characteristics of the place are also important. In some cases, physical place attachments tend to emphasize an identity to a physical location which becomes part of one’s self-concept.

From a place attachment tripartite organizing framework, three multi-dimensions of person, psychological process, and place involve the intricacy of person-place attachments. “Some are stronger or more salient than others, several are twisted together and seem inseparable, and few are apparent to outside observers” (p. 5). In review of Scannell & Gifford’s (2009) tripartite organizing framework for place attachment, this research intends to both validate and extend dimensions of place attachment. Within the Person dimension, individual and cultural/group categories include immigrant populations demonstrating how place bonds are often more intense among vulnerable populations. By expanding research regarding immigrant populations to include research among Korean adoptees’ place experiences, the intention is to provide understanding in how adoptees, as a vulnerable population, come to experience Korean places while emerging their ethnic identities.
Within the Place dimension, physical, ethnic and cultural aspects of the environment are not mentioned or posited as valid dimensions. Finally, within the Process dimension, regarding behavior, reconstruction of place due to natural disasters or social or environmental reconstruction efforts is limited to towns and entire communities. While Scannell and Gifford (2009) approach reconstructing place, research is missing with regard to personal space reconstruction of place subsequent to memorable place attachment experiences. In their call for more research to develop a place attachment measurement instrument to explore additional factors of place attachment through description and understanding of adoptee place attachment experiences of person, place, and process, this research intends to contribute an understanding of the importance of place attachment, incorporate concepts for ethnic identity, and provide additional descriptors in measuring place attachment. Adoptees’ responses to place attachment may be categorized within a tripartite organizing framework for place attachment, but in so doing, the “humanity” or the individuality of adoptees’ has yet to be brought into place. Personal narratives of adoptees’ regarding their place experiences to Korea elicit individual descriptions of experiences of place. These personal narratives further illuminate the context and meaning of adoptees’ first return visits to Korea with the expectation to provide understanding in describing place attachment experiences.

**Analyzing narratives on place**

While questions that identify objective dimensions of person, place, and process do provide categories to analyze and compare place experiences among Korean adoptees, these questions and responses portray adoptees as an object, rather than a subject. The subjective dimensions of place attachment are missing. The missing dimension can be brought to the
forefront of inquiry through analysis of adoptees’ narrative responses to open ended questions. Place-making literature and landscape narratives guide inquiry in analyzing Korean adoptee descriptive narratives regarding first return trips to Korea.

In considering place narratives, central to geographic inquiry is place making (Tuan, 1991). While created landforms and human creation of place are studied by geographers, limited research verifies the role of speech, in particular narrative, in the creation of place. The human experience as narrative-descriptive contains interpretive and explanatory stratagems; narratives are almost always ambiguous and complex to analyze. “Words have the general power to bring to light experiences that lie in the shadow or have receded into it, and the specific power to call places into being” (p. 686). Tuan (1991) considers speech to be integral to the understanding people’s sense of place, and he acknowledges the analysis of descriptive narratives as an approach to understanding place. He does not, however, progress far enough to propose a framework of analysis. Where a framework for narrative analysis is found is in the “Introduction” to Conron’s (1974) American Landscape.

Conron (1974) provides a four part analysis of landscape narratives in which visual logic evolves into cognitive logic enhancing how one views the world. In reviewing historical literary narratives on landscape, Conron develops a progression of how man’s perceptions and relationships with landscapes have evolved throughout the centuries and into present times. He validates a historical progression of narratives using the ways literary works describe landscapes. Visual logic begins with metaphor, simile and symbol to express unknown or inexpressible things in known or familiar terms. The connection between observer and
observed is one of separation: here and there or the connection of an observer perceiving the landscape.

The second category, *literary setting* is seen as an inventory list of what one sees. The challenge is one of giving order and coherence to visible facts and mental impressions. Conron provides examples of people’s sense of being in a place that progress from an inventoried list of what is seen to a person’s time-flow movement in place as space and movement. A person’s participation in a place progresses from a fixed point of view to physical movement toward and through the space. Cognitive logic develops from visual logic in that “the significant detail of a landscape is arranged in terms of a *metaphoric frame image*” (p.5). The description gives significant details of the whole.

Finally, as a method of analysis of descriptive narratives, from *metaphor, literary setting, metaphoric frame image*, the narrator describes *dominant impression* of significant details in how the experience affects the perceiver. Analyses of contemporary narratives now display multiple impressions of environmental features that mold and influence the experience. What Conron’s work brings to an understanding of Korean adoptees’ sensed connection with a new found identity is the ability to make use of their personal narratives. While Conron’s four part analysis framework does not exactly mirror Korean adoptees’ developmental progress, it does provide for a means to assess one’s degree of connection with a personal and cultural setting. These quantitative measures of adoptee place making experiences provides a process to categorize literary and cognitive logic in how Korean adoptees describe person, place, and processes (Scannell & Gifford, 2009) as a holistic
phenomenon of psychological, temporal, and environmental aspects of the first return visit (Altman & Rogoff, 1989).

In summary, Chapter Three outlined an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how place and place attachment concepts can be used to analyze Korean adoptees’ first return visits as life changing experiences. Scannell and Gifford’s (2009) three-dimensional, person-process-place organizing framework in conjunction with Conron’s (1974) means of analyzing narratives provides a method to first position Korean adoptees’ narratives and second to gain an insight into their personal state as development from cultural disconnection to connection. Once again, this chapter laid the foundation, from a tripartite framework for place attachment and four part analysis framework for narrative descriptives regarding place among Korean adoptees made possible through an interdisciplinary approach to place and place attachment research.
4. IDENTITY AND PLACE

At the heart of place attachment is the actor who through personal interaction with a place comes to, for better or for worse, identify with the place, which in turn becomes an identification or reflection of self (Breakwell, 1986; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell). In this respect, identity is a dimension of person and process within place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2009). In that this process occurs over time it should not be researched as a concept but rather as processes and mechanisms (Ege, 2008), or as an ongoing enactment of interactive behaviors (Hadjiyanni, 2002). In each case, the concurrent development of place and personal identity is an anchor for self-identifications.

Places provide a means by which to identify oneself and places become an extension of our self-identification process (Downing, 2003). Given that families in westernized societies represent the majority of Korean adoptive environments (Selman, 2007), adoptees often struggle with developing a coherent sense of Korean ethnic identity (Park Nelson, 2007). Korean adoptees that were raised in settings that did not represent or value Korean culture are likely to experience feelings of confusion in formulating their identity (Hübinette, 2007). Without a positive sense of ethnic identity, adoptees tend to be at-risk for developing low self-esteem, diminished feelings of self-worth, and feelings of social isolation (Bishop & Rankin, 1997; Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 1999; Park Nelson, 2007). Relentless reminders of difference and contrast with their adoptive family and peer group can lead to psychological stress, increasing an adoptee’s risk for mental illness, social dysfunction, and suicide (Hübinette, 2007).
Chapter Four begins with identity principles, specifically, self-redefinition in which individuals attempt to emerge from threatened identities (Weinreich, 1983). A connection is made between Korean adoptees and their struggles to emerge from similar threatened identities. A review of processes to emerge from threatened identities reveals research validating conceptual foundations for person place identity. Conceptual foundations resulting from this study position Korean adoptee first return trip place experience within person-place-identity conceptual frameworks, specifically to position findings in discovering ethnic identity development.

**Defining healthy and threatened identities**

Personal Construct Theory (PCT) acknowledges individual variation in people’s definitions of themselves and others with strong emphasis on emotional experiences as transitions for interpreting the world; PCT emphasizes individual change (Weinreich, 1983). Individuals formulate constructs about the regularities of their lives to make them understandable as a means of interpreting and reinterpreting themselves and their situations. One’s identity is the totality of how one defines oneself, and in doing so develops a continuity of past, present, and future in order to form a coherent self. However, one’s identity is in conflict when the individual resides without resolution and continuity, and these individuals exhibit threatened identities. To evolve from threatened identities, individuals must demonstrate considerable changes in self-concept (Weinreich, 1983).

In his research of social identity and the half-Asian child, Hitch (1983) discusses considerations for when a person’s identity comes under threat. He proposes an example such as when a person is socially assigned to a group, but does not wish to be a member.
Consequently, the members of that group reject him and do not allow him membership even if he wishes to join. Then the group to which he feels he belongs also denies him membership. He is rejected by both groups and belongs nowhere. Hitch argues that individuals experiencing these social conditions may demonstrate a threatened identity.

Hitch (1983), continues with possible solutions to solve social identity problems for the half-Asian child. First of all, to lessen social identity conflicts, the individual may alter public opinions of the opposing community. This solution may be accomplished over a long period of time. Secondly, the individual may conceal his origins or by self-delusion, convince himself that he is a part of the opposing community and live within a fantasy world. The third and final solution according to Hitch, is to create group support to raise status where social bonds need not be hidden but can be open and worthy of respect. He concludes, “More understanding of the nature and significance of primary social identity can be gained by finding out how such people come to make their personal existence meaningful” (126). Korean adoptees report similar solutions to cope with threatened identities (Bergquist, 2000; Kim, 2008; Meier, 1998).

Ege (2008) and Hadjiyanni (2002) observe that refugee populations exhibit similar struggles in constructing an identity to those noted in Hitch’s studies. (1983). They reference the 1974 event in which “almost a third, or around 200,000 people, of the Greek Cypriot population of Cyprus became refugees in their own country when the Turkish army invaded the island” (Ege, 2008, p. 1). By becoming refugees in their own countries, Cypriots exhibited similar struggles in maintaining their identity. Similar to PCT theory in which individuals exhibit individual change and continuity of past, present, and future in
demonstrating one’s identity, Ege (2008) and Hadjiyanni (2002) confirm that self-definition is a process of what one becomes via ongoing processes of identity and they do not view identity as a solution. They argue that these processes involve a struggle between past, present, and future identities, and these struggles, demand refugees to remember their past. Ege goes on to say that refugee identity is not an end all identity, but rather a place to move from. In like manner, Korean adoptee research suggests similar struggles in development of ethnic identity (Hübinette, 2007). Korean adoptee place experiences represent an opportunity to evolve from threatened identities to stable identities, and contribute research demonstrating how people come to make their personal existence meaningful.

**Displacement, loss of identity, and memory of lost places in restoring ethnic identity**

Displacements and forced assimilation contributed to vast populations without cultural or ethnic connections to their past (Hadjyanni & Helle, 2009). Studies of forced displacements explain how the experience contributes to a loss of identity, which in turn may be detrimental to mental, emotional, physical and psychological wellbeing (Bergquist, 2000; Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009; Hübinette, 2007). Without stability, permanence, and familiarity, the negative effects of losing one’s past can carry forward through generations (Hadjyanni, 2002). Devoid of cultural or ethnic identity, individuals operate within a framework of multiple identities, some self-imposed and some not (Hübinette, 2007).

Displaced populations forced to relocate rely on collective memory of places of a lost culture to reclaim their past and reconstruct their ethnic and cultural identities (Lewicka, 2008). In addition, refugee populations rely on memory to link them to a place that may have been taken over by outside political forces (Ege, 2008). Hadjiyanni (2002) recognizes that
refugee identity is not a title but rather a struggle embedded in a sense of duty to remember the past. Ege and Hadjiyanni both consider refugee identity to be an ongoing process to evolve, and move beyond challenges to claim an identity separate from refugee identity.

Building on experiences of displaced populations as they remember lost places, what separates Korean adoptees’ experiences from previous studies regarding refugee memory of lost places (Ege, 2008; Hadjiyanni, 2009) is that most Korean adoptees do not remember their birth country, Korea (Park Nelson, Kim, & Peterson, 2007). Because of the young age of displaced Korean adoptees (most often under one year of age), they are unable to remember their ethnic or cultural past (Hübinette, 2007). Adoptees first return trips to Korea represent an opportunity to mend the link to a cultural and ethnic past, and thus begin a process similar to other refugees (Hadjiyanni, 2002) to evolve, and move beyond their displacement, to claim an identity separate from an adoptee only identity. Studies within psychology (Lewicka, 2008), design (Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009), and cultural studies (Hübinette, 2007) advocate for policies and programs to assist displaced populations in reclaiming lost pasts, and in reconstructing ethnic and cultural identities (Kim, 2008; Park Nelson, & Kim, & Peterson, 2007; Park Nelson, 2009).

**Korean adoptees’ search for ethnic identity**

Ethnic identity is “generally viewed as a multidimensional construct that includes feelings of ethnic belonging and pride, a secure sense of group membership, and positive attitudes toward one’s ethnic group” (Erikson, 1959 as cited in Bergquist, 2000, p.4). Current research regarding intercountry interracial adoption often draws attention to adoptees’ difficulties in formulating healthy ethnic or racial identities. In the past, adoption research
regarding racial identity has been minimally addressed; in fact, researchers acknowledged its existence, but were not sure how to speak to its relationship to adoption (Bergquist, 2000). In reality, Korean intercountry interracial adoptees, however well they are able to assimilate into their country of adoption, will always be racially and culturally different from their adoptive families and for these reasons, adoptees exhibit difficulties in forming stable, healthy ethnic identities (Bergquist, 2000; Huh, 2000; Meier, 1998).

What makes the state of Korean adoptee-ness so unique is the complete severance of familial ties, cultural routes and social connections to all kinds of Koreanness and Asianness whatsoever. Adoptees live and socialize in a White world but when they look in the mirror, their physical characteristics remind them they do not belong. (Hübìnnette, 2007, p.153)

Subsequently, Hübìnnette argues, “These daily reminders further emphasize the adoptees’ “ethnic instability… and makes the inhabitance of this hybrid in-between space painful and not very easy to live in” (p.148).

Adoptees’ identities become threatened when any thought, feeling, action, or experience challenges the individual’s identity (Breakwell, 1983). For example, adoptees maneuver through life as part of a middle class, Western Caucasian society. When adoptees are singled out with negative Asian stereotypical labels, they become confused and lose positive images of themselves, and as a result of these experiences exhibit diminished self-esteem (Park Nelson, 2007). “Anything which attacks self-esteem is consequently a serious threat to identity” (Breakwell, 1983, p. 14). In accepting Korean adoptees identity instabilities, one adoptee sums up her identity: “…I think it has to do with identifying myself
in terms of negations… you’re not white, you’re not Korean and that’s how it always is” (Park Nelson, 2007, p. 206).

In understanding Korean adoptees’ difficulties in developing ethnic identities, previous research suggests that Korean adoptees’ childhood thoughts of Korea were mostly curious, and the way they coped with loss and displacement was to deny (consciously and unconsciously) any links to Korea (Wilkinson, 1985 as cited in Meier, 1998). It is not until adulthood or once adoptees move away from home that thoughts of who they were and where they came from sparked new interest and curiosity about Korea (Meier, 1998). “But as their identity struggles unfolded and took shape, many adoptees did—on their own timeframe—find themselves signing up for Korean language classes or going to Korea” (p. 86). In these ways, adoptees search for their ethnic identity.

**Conceptual foundations for place and identity**

The developmental process Korean adoptees experience via formative years, and initiate in their return trips to Korea find relevance in many of the terms identifying person place experiences such as *in place, out of place, betweenness of place, in between space, and inside outside*, each are conceptual foundations for place and identity (Cresswell, 1996; Entrikin, 1991; Hong, 2007; Hübinette, 2007; Park Nelson, Kim & Peterson, 2007; Relph, 1976). By positioning Korean adoptees’ place identity experiences within these conceptual foundations, we more fully understand adoptee struggles in formulating healthy, stable ethnic identities.
**Betweenness of place.**

Entrikin (1991) supposes that within contemporary geography, a holistic quality of place embodies how we view the world, rather than a feature of the world in which a continuum of place discovery begins with a decentered objective view and moves toward a centered subjective view. He argues that place should be understood somewhere between the objective and subject views. From the decentered objective view of the theoretical scientist, place represents location and generalized relationships which de-emphasize the significance of human action. He continues that to trivialize an interest in the specificity of place undermines the significance of an individual’s attachment to place. Conversely, from a centered view of the subject, place has meaning only to the individual or the group. He argues that the centered view requires some universalizing in understanding place. Therefore, the study of place belongs between the decentered and centered continuum of place and calls for forms of analysis that involve a narrative-like synthesis.

In this approach between centered and decentered continua of place, human geographers develop a point of view that is less detached than the scientist and more detached than the travel writer. Entrikin concludes that:

The significance of place in modern life is associated with the fact that as actors we are always situated in place and period and that the contexts of our actions contribute to our sense of identity and thus to our sense of centeredness. In this way, the study of place is of fundamental importance to our understanding of modern life. (p. 4)
Entrikin refers to the *betweenness* of place, in that ‘between’ represents inquiry between decentered objective and centered subjective approaches. Building on Entrikin’s concepts, this research follows a similar continuum between objective and subjective approaches to report place experiences among Korea adoptees and finds clarity in their personal narratives.

**In-between space.**


**Inside outside place.**

Similarly, Korean adoptees’ references to *in-between* may be appropriately compared to the dualistic *inside, outside* component of Relph’s (1976) identity of place. Relph illustrates that to be *outside* is to be as an outsider looking in. To be *inside*, is to reflectively belong and identify with the place; the more profoundly *inside* the stronger your identification with place. *Inside* and *outside* represent a dualism that is always ready to be reversed. Our view of *inside* is defined by our intentions. Building on Relph’s *inside outside* conceptual framework, Korean adoptees may reside in a similar dualistic framework. For example,
adoptees report residing in a place they do not belong and feeling as outsiders in an environment in which they reside (Hong, 2007).

Efforts to locate Korean adoptees within conceptual place identity frameworks, and to further understand adoptee place experiences as developing ethnic identity motivates researchers such as, Cresswell (1996) to pursue geographic inquiry into concepts of place that may inhabit in place, out of place themes. In place defines an ideological normative world and out of place questions that normative world in which transgressive acts disrupt the normative world. He states:

There are two processes at work: the discursive attempt to create and maintain normative geographies (where everything is in place) through and by the media and, second, the effect of place on the interpreted meanings of transgressive actions. (p. 9)

In place/out of place.

Similar to Relph’s (1976) inside, outside in which Korean adoptees’ often report being outside, Cresswell (1996) could identify adoptees as out of place. For example, Cresswell provides a story of three Black men whose car broke down in a White area of town. They did not fit into their White surroundings, so they were chased; one man was killed and another man was blinded. The emphasis was that the Black men should not have been in a White area.

Building on Cresswell’s conceptual framework for place and identity, Korean adoptees’, due to adoption, social, cultural, geographic, and ethnic circumstances may feel that they reside in an out of place environment. In some cases, Asian children may come to
feel that they are not associated with White family members and White communities (Park Nelson, 2007). Cresswell argues, “Places have associated characteristics that influence our characterizations of the people in them or from them” (Cresswell, 1996, p. 154).

Korean children aged 7-8 years demonstrate the beginning of ethnic identification in that they begin to learn that their ethnicity and facial structure is constant. They’re from Korea, and this is the reason they look different from their parents (Hugh & Reid, 2000). Building on previous research regarding person identity conceptual frameworks for place, this study posits that at this age, many adoptees begin to experience an in-between space (Hübinette, 2007), an outside place (Relph, 1976), or a sense of being out of place (Cresswell, 1976) experience and begin considering ways to strengthen their place attachment and identity.

**Constructing place.**

Menin (2003) in *Constructing Place: Mind and Matter*, gathers diverse views and perspectives regarding constructing place and considers the nature of how we conceive, construct, perceive, and interpret place. *Constructing place* is a central role of the mind in concert with physical expression of mind and matter in which the two overlap between “experience, understanding and making place” (p. 7). Mind relates to self and place and matter involves physical actuality. When we create places, we are also creating selves. Hence, Menin’s concern is to bring to light place-making processes, specifically to understand how these experiences enrich lives in both conceiving places and in living in these places. In an essay describing research among a migrant population relating ethnic identity and domestic space culture (Kilickirin, 2003), the participants of the study incorporate objects from their
heritage as representation and symbolization of their ethnic and cultural identity. Missing from her collection of place making is research regarding adoptee populations and how they evolve from being displaced from their ethnic and cultural heritage, identify with their Korean ethnicity, and *construct place*. Korean adoptees cannot rely on remembrance of a past culture, and without exposure to Korean culture during their formative years; it is not until they reach adulthood that they may decide to return to Korea to experience their culture.

It is often during college, or as adoptees come into adulthood, that they decide to travel to Korea (Kim, 2008; Meier, 1998). During the trip adoptees often experience an emotional attachment to place, or place attachment. In their written narratives it becomes apparent that during this trip many adoptees experience place through an identity with people and an identity of self (Hong, 2007). Relph (1976) argues that for some, the profound attachment to place is as meaningful and necessary as a close relationship with other people. Adoptees report their Korean experience to be more meaningful than their reconnection and relationship with their birth family (Kim, 2008). In personal accounts, many adoptees note that their first visit back to Korea left them feeling at home, being where they belong, finding out what it means to be Korean, finally feeling like a person with a history and a part of a culture, a connection with Korea’s past, and a sense of pride in being Korean (Bishop & Rankin, 1997; Kim, 2008; Kim & Peterson, 2007; Napier, 2009; Park Nelson). This multifaceted phenomenon of experience that virtually everyone maintains is:

A deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, and where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both
individual and cultural identity and security, a point of departure from which
we orient ourselves in the world. (Relph, 1976, p. 43)

Korean adoptees report that when they return to their country of residence, they often
bring back objects as reminders of their place attachment experiences (Hong, 2007; Park
Nelson, 2009). These processes of emerging place attachment epitomize constructing place
because as previously summarized, psychological processes for behavior contribute to
reconstruction of place via memories and meaning, to become an extension of self (Scannell
& Gifford, 2009). Building on Scannell and Gifford’s place attachment framework, adoptees’
experiences with place include memories of their trip, meanings that they attach to the
experiences and from these memories and meanings, actions and behaviors that influence
their environment for becoming an extension of self.

While there may be some general locations and characteristics in adoptees’
descriptions of place as representations for constructing place, this study articulates that it is
the experiential discussion of place and the expressed emotional feelings of places by
adoptees, and subsequently the possession of acquired objects that symbolize place, that are of
interest. Specifically, place experiences and the relationship to the development of ethnic
identity are key foci. This study argues that place is the most unique experience of space,
specifically as a mechanism to understanding place experiences: how adoptees’ experience
place, and from these experiences, how they construct place is of great value.

In summary, Chapter Four considered the processes for identity redefinition among
individuals demonstrating threatened identities. Korean adoptees often struggle to emerge
from threatened identities, identities which are often imposed, and emphasize their not
belonging culturally and racially to their adoptive families. As adoptees approach adulthood, it is often during these times that they make decisions to return to their birth country. The experience of returning to Korea often represents feelings of finally belonging, and feelings of ethnic pride; feelings that were absent up until the first return trip. From these feelings of belonging and ethnic pride, adoptees may return to their residences with a newfound sense of identity.
5. DESIGNING PLACES WHICH ENHANCE LIVES

As we understand Korean adoptees’ struggles to fit in and feel that they belong, we can now look to how first return visits to Korea begin the process to restore adoptees’ ethnic identity. From these experiences, we begin to see how to assist parents of Korean adoptees, and Korean adult adoptees themselves to more readily develop culturally-relevant place-based environments that assist in their building a stable sense of self. By understanding how designs of spaces become places to evolve adoptees’ healthy and stable ethnic identities, we are also creating places to enhance self and promote psychological wellbeing.

“The design of a physical place influences the mental state of the people in that space” (Augustin, 2009, p. 1). In an effort to reduce the ongoing disconnect between researchers and people who create spaces, Augustin brings place psychology to the forefront via general principals within place science. She notes that place science, which is a scientific approach to designing person-centered places, is concerned with understanding social, cultural, environmental, and design constructs for the population for which you are designing. When designers relate place psychology and place science research to design, they are able to design spaces that enhance lives. For Korean adoptees and their adoptive families, this means understanding how design of living spaces enhances ethnic identity.

Chapter Five reviews current research regarding place science to understand strategies for designing places. One such strategy is to use the design of domestic places (homes) to aid in the characterization of identity through the incorporation of meaningful objects. Place science provides designers with insights into the design of places which support identities,
enhance lives, and contribute to psychological wellbeing. Understanding how Korean adoptees experience place and come to represent place experiences within their home environments along with a review of their behaviors after their first return visit to Korea contributes valuable understanding into how the design of personal places contributes to Korean adoptees’ shift from threatened to healthy ethnic identities.

**Considering a place science advantage**

Understanding how to design places from the developmental interplay of form and character or design of spaces gains clarity from reliance on foundations of psychology, biology, architecture, interior design, sociology, and sometimes from physics, chemistry and anthropology. “Scientific research by place scientists has documented patterns in how we interact with our world” (Augustin, 2009, p. 9). Environmental psychology and person-centered design strategies direct structured thinking, to understand how places physically influence state of mind and psychological wellbeing and as such, how the design of places influences ethnic identity.

By applying scientific research to uncover patterns in how humans respond to spaces, place science applies this information in designing places and products. On a practical level, “Places influence people psychologically” (Augustin, 2009, p. 247). We each know this. There are places in which we feel comfortable while in other places we want to get away from these same places as soon as possible. “Places also have meaning to the people who use them beyond their mere functionality” (p. 247). Places we create say something about who we are. Place science accesses a variety of alternatives from multiple disciplines to develop design of personal places that enhance lives (Augustin, 2009).
Building on environmental psychology approaches similar to place science, this study attempts to describe and understand place experiences among Korean adoptees with the expectation to uncover meaning and description for how places contribute to ethnic identity and enhance their lives. Korean adoptees remember their first return visit experiences and these experiences influence their incorporation of objects and characteristics into their personal living spaces (Hong, 2007; Park Nelson, 2009).

**Memory and design of places**

Korean adoptees often report memorable place experiences upon their first return trip to Korea (Hong, 2007; Kim, 2009; Napier, 2009). In collecting, categorizing, quantifying and analyzing responses regarding memorable places, these experiences lead to understanding regarding design strategies for memorable places. Designers must first understand the “essence and content that makes a place memorable” (Downing, 2003, p. 213), in attempting to translate memorable experiences to places which contribute to a meaningful existence (Seaman, 1993), represent an individual’s identity (Weinreich, 1983), and enhance lives (Augustin, 2009).

Downing (2003) remarks that:

We all have memories of places. They identify who we are as individuals. At the same time, they tie us to networks of people, culture and society. Even through time they reach into the past to people whose lives and experiences were as real as ours, and into the future to those whose lives, we can only imagine. Our ability to transcend our own experiences, by using them to imagine other people and places, discover something new and surprising, and
deepen a thought demonstrates the power and potential that remembrance holds for us as we create future places (p.213).

Downing found that very personal and meaningful design strategies evolved from an understanding of people’s place experiences. By referring back to her own memories she recalls moments, events, places, and people which define her joys and disappointments and the conundrums of human existence. While gathering designer’s memories of places, Downing recorded over 100 interviews of student designers and seasoned professionals in an effort to understand how and why these memorable places were important. She found that multiple inputs such as sense and culture influenced designers’ experiences of places. Nine domains of place emerged from this research.

Table 2. summarizes these domains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains of Place</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A secret place</td>
<td>Hiding places that serve as retreats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancestral places</td>
<td>Retrieved places from extended family interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of self</td>
<td>Reflects an emphatic identification of self with place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensate places</td>
<td>Sensual experience, extension of the body to experience place, movement, sight, touch, smell, audio to create a strong identity to place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of comfort</td>
<td>Responses to places which create comfort via emotion or experiential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregarious places</td>
<td>Social construction of experience, closely linked to places of activity or participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of region</td>
<td>Complexly interwoven with places of topography and geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious places</td>
<td>Similar to admired places presented through formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract places</td>
<td>Represents objective characteristics of places in consideration of a form apart from any contents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Identification of memorable places
(Downing, 2003, p. 218-227).
The role of Korean adoptees’ memorable place experiences during the first return may be categorized within three of Downing’s (2003) Domains of Place: Places of Self in which places signify emphatic identification of self with place; Sensate Places which via sensual experience create a strong identity to place; and Places of Region which are specific to experiences in South Korea. In her review of sensate places, she describes sensual experiences as an extension of the body in that:

The body moves, sees, touches, smells, and hears and responds to the pleasure or pain of sensations. Sensate places heighten a particular sensation and create a strong identity based upon it: the smell of raisins in my grandmother’s kitchen, the light streaming through a clearstory window in the cathedral at Toledo, the color and proliferation of tiles in an English church, the mirror reflections in Sir John Soane’s house, the sweep of the roof at Ronchamp, the taste of oozo in a Turkish bar... Sensate places are powerful contents of memory and are more easily transferred to the design of future places than some of the other domains. (p. 222-223)

Place memories represent and shape our identity. Downing (2003) argues that it is via these memories that we have the conceptual capacity to relate symbols to their meaning. “Memories are symbolic summations and elaborations of our unique experiences” (p. 228). This symbolizing of unique personal experiences of lived in places is discursively expressed through language. As found in their narratives, Korean adoptees, remember and symbolize their experiences with Korea using similar means, via written words that express their relationships between places without being in these places.
Similar to Conron (1974), Downing (2003) claims that through language, we access the ability to employ metaphor by relating one thing to another in a different domain. We bring a less familiar aspect of cognition and emotion and relate it to something that is more familiar and understandable. This allows us to see a new subject matter in a new way and in a new setting. Building on Downing’s (2003) and Conron’s (1974) references to places of memory as symbolic in which we often refer to places via metaphor, this study looks at adoptee memories of places to discover how places symbolize meaning with expectations aiming to more fully understand how memory of places becomes symbolic representations of self. How we assess place memories is key to designing successful spaces (Downing, 2003). The more we know about the psychological experience of space and, how we remember these places (Downing, 2003), the more informed we will be to design places that enhance lives (Augustin, 2009).

**Domestic places which contribute to identity**

Displaced populations are often found to remember and recreate places that connect them to their pasts (Lewicka, 2008). Among these places, domestic spaces often represent a cultural means for fluid and dynamic processes of similarity and difference in defining one’s identity (Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009). Adoptees may not remember their birth country, or home of origin. Via their first return visit, memories that adoptees retain of their country, culture, and ethnicity (Meier, 1998; Kim, 2008) help them to recreate their home place in current surroundings.

Kilickiran (2003) argues that, “people who are physically separated from places they know as ‘home’ have a profound desire to re-create a home-place, and that the private world
Home plays a crucial role in refugees’ struggles with displacement. Home mends broken links between culture, pasts and homelands, while uncovering a sense of continuity and stability (Kilickiran, 2003). Equally important, home provides a stage for transitions from displacement and loss, an environment that can be used to aid in recuperation, stability, and acknowledgement of change. Populations that have been exiled or forced out of their homelands and people who for a variety of reasons had to leave their homes, may be those who value creating home the most (Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009).

Korosec-Serfaty (1984) asserts that home is a total experience which is subdivided into separate interior spaces; however, these spaces become experienced as a whole. The attic and cellar contain hidden aspects of one’s self and provide for secrecy. The contents of these rooms can be held in secret or displayed to others; in this way, each of these places represents an aspect of one’s self identity.

Living rooms are often more as public places used to communicate self and social identity to guests; however, they may also provide private places for intimacy and family gatherings (Rechavi, 2009). Although research suggests that public and private zones exist in separate places, both can co-exist in one place within the living room. The underlying assumption here is that living rooms are used to entertain guests and that objects displayed within the living room portray a desired image of the household (Cooper Marcus 1997). These objects on display were considered special and become powerful statements about who they are.
In acknowledging home as domestic space (Moore, 2000) and as space which represents an image and an identity of the inhabitants (Cooper Marcus, 1997; Korosec-Serfaty, 1984; Rechavi, 2009), people utilize domestic places to reflect their identity. Hadjiyanni and Helle (2009) claim that displaced populations reside in places different from their pasts and strive to create similarities in their domestic spaces to connect them to their cultural pasts. As a result, domestic spaces provide ways to be positioned by, and positioned within, the narratives of occupants’ pasts. Those narratives of other times and places may be of a foreign country or culture expressed as language or objects; each are means by which societies remember and teach about the past. Domestic spaces are an extension of cultural and ethnic identity (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

Missing from research on how domestic spaces become a medium used to mend broken links to the past is how Korean adoptees’ home spaces become places of identity.

**Objects symbolize identity**

In Korean adoptee published works of their visits to Korea, a few adoptees mention their possession of acquired objects as tangible links to their past (Hong, 2007). Homes become domestic places which offer an oasis for self and self identity (Moore, 2000). They provide a backdrop for incorporating meaningful things and thus become an opportunity to retrieve an identity by interacting with the material world. The things with which people surround themselves are inseparable from who they are and give order to who they are to become (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Understanding what things individuals cherish, and why, provides designers with invaluable everyday knowledge of human beings (Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009; Kilickirin, 2003). “Things can have meanings that
may transform the very world in which we live. But things by themselves alone cannot help us: only in the way we relate to them is their symbolic energy released” (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 247). We bring things into our lives that have meaning and often symbolize a specific event or memorable experience.

When considering processes for constructing place, the incorporation of objects within domestic spaces often represents place experiences (Augustin, 2009; Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009; Kilickirin, 2003). Cherished objects become meaningful in the transaction between person and object. In addition,

The whole factual world of human affairs depends for its reality and its continued existence, first, upon the presence of others who have seen and will remember, and second, on the transformation of the intangible into the tangibility of things. Without remembrance and without the reification which remembrance needs for its own fulfillment and which makes it, indeed, as the Greeks held, the mother of all arts, the living activities of action, speech, and thought would lose their reality at the end of each process and disappear as though they had never been. (Arendt, 1958, as cited in Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 174)

What we see and what we remember depends on how we transform our emotions from actions, speech, and thought of experiences into objects, tangible things which remind us of our experiences (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981). We selectively decide which places and objects come in and out of our lives. We invest them with emotion, and by doing this, at a much deeper, almost unconscious level of
individualization, we become who we truly are. It is the movable objects in the home that become symbols of self, even more than the structural components of the space (Cooper Marcus, 1997).

Home places link us to our histories and provide us with ways to develop our identities. Kilickirin (2003) conveys that domestic spaces provide an avenue to recover repressed histories and identities; the private realm of domestic spaces plays a significant role in recovery of lost identities. For example, visual materials such as photographs, posters and paintings, figures, postcards, ornamental objects on shelves, lace cloths on coffee tables, hand-woven objects, small rugs and pillow cases, and things specific to their homelands were found to link displaced women to their pasts and present by helping to recover a sense of belonging to the communities they left behind. Kurdish women’s homes represented a dual identity, as experienced by Kurdish families who grew up in Turkey and who were now residents of London. They have incorporated things from all of their cultures to represent multiple identities. Empirical research theorizes that in mending broken links to their cultures, their pasts and their homelands, domestic spaces and the objects incorporated in them play a crucial role in these women’s struggle with displacement (Kilickirin, 2003).

Kilickirin’s (2003) conclusions are reinforced in Rechavi’s (2009) research into the role of living rooms in which objects in the living room hold deep and personal meanings to remind occupants of people they’ve loved and of meaningful experiences in their lives. For example, in observing actual living rooms, photographs of loved ones and a variety of knick-knacks which represented gifts, important events, and places visited, art displayed on the
walls, books, decorative items, and collections, were all objects representing meaningful experiences.

Hadjiyanni and Helle (2009) researched Ojibwe identity in Minnesota homes and, reported the Ojibwe incorporating objects characterizing culture and identity into their homes after forceful re-location into reservations. They argue that the situation for the Ojibwe runs parallel with other native groups around the world, “whose story cannot be told without speaking of cultural imperialism, brutality, dislocation, and extermination attempts that many have labeled genocidal” (p. 464). In describing their findings, Hadjiyanni and Helle report that Ojibwe reclaim their past by “displaying native objects, making crafts, observing spiritual customs, sharing traditional foods, and keeping close connections to family and community members” (p. 467-468).

Each of these acts reflect how domestic spaces allow the Ojibwe to reclaim their past, adjust to their present, and prepare for their future, a future that they fear will not remember past traditions. In reclaiming connections to their past, multiple native objects were on display, such as sage hanging by the door, eagle feathers, ceremonial drums, framed prints, dreamcatchers, dolls and birch bark baskets, curtains, lamps, and wallpaper designs of native motifs. One man replies in regard to these items in his home, “The objects reveal the personal connections” (Hadjiyanni & Helle, p. 469).

Hadjiyanni and Helle (2009) conclude that research regarding design, culture, and identity specific to displacement is limited, and further studies should investigate how other displaced populations construct identity in their homes.
Places and objects symbolizing ethnic identity: Converging research toward design knowledge

Place experiences contribute to identity. In considering and then building upon concepts regarding place and identity, these concepts lead to discovery of new knowledge regarding design research. Set in a contextualist approach, the study of a complex, holistic event transpires from place concepts which make experiencing our world meaningful (Cresswell, 2004; Relph, 1976). Understood as place attachment, this emerging meaningful world signifies an emotional connection formed by an individual to a physical location (Altman & Low, 1992; Scannell & Gifford, 2009). These constructs for place and identity directed inquiry into Korean adoptees’ first return visits to their birth country to discover how places they experienced influenced their construction of place and an emergence of ethnic identity.

Equally important with place concepts are identity concepts in that their manifestation contributed to psychological wellbeing. Identity is how one characterizes oneself in the past, present, and future to form a coherent self (Weinreich, 1983). Norberg-Schulz (1985) refers to this as orientation and ethnic identity is a multidimensional construct that includes feelings of belonging and pride, a secure sense of group membership, positive attitudes toward one’s ethnic group, and a connection to others of the same ethnicity (Breakwell, 1983; Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009). From memorable cultural and ethnic experiences, we remember particular places (Downing, 2003) and use them to connect our self identity with a larger cultural or ethnic identity thereby giving meaning to our existence (Menin, 2003). In an effort to perpetuate the places we identify with and find meaningful, we often incorporate
representative objects into domestic living spaces which are visual symbols of our identity to ourselves and to others (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Rechavi, 2009).

Norberg-Schulz (1985) notes that architecture creates places in which to dwell, where we come to belong and establish a meaningful relationship with a given environment. These places offer rich possibilities for identification. The concept of dwelling implies that when we belong to a place, its history, and its customs, we establish a meaningful relationship with a physical and cultural environment. “When we identify with a place, we dedicate ourselves to a way of being in the world” (p. 9). When we dwell, we experience what it is to know a place and to belong to a place. To an extent, the act of dwelling creates, or at least modifies, architecture for “objects of human identification because they embody existential meanings, making the world stand forth as it is” (p. 19). The more we know about a person or cohort’s place attachment experiences, the more likely it is, according to Norberg-Schulz, that our designs can support that person or group’s sense of dwelling; concurrent sense of identity, meaning, and orientation.

Building on place, place attachment, and identity, and how constructing domestic spaces via incorporation of objects creates connections to lost pasts, this study hypothesizes that from memorable place experiences, Korean adult adoptees move from an in-between place to a more comfortable stable place. Upon return from their first visit to their birth country they organize their home places by often incorporating objects that represent meaningful places and symbolize a previously lost ethnic identity. Knowing that this progression of place experiences comes to signify a discovery of self within a greater culture allows the use of traditional and nontraditional methods to analyze the structure and the
pattern of the events. Applied to Korean adoptees’ struggle to evolve from threatened identities, this research adds validity to place attachment and ethnic identity concepts in general, and Korean adoptees’ discovery of place to begin constructing a new place to evolve their ethnic identity and therefore exhibit psychological wellbeing in particular.
6. METHODS

Directed from a contextualist approach (Table 1.), by researching place attachment and ethnic identity as a holistic event grounded in international interracial adoption context, this study illuminates the complexity of Korean adoptees’ place experiences before, during, and subsequent to their first return trip to Korea. These events come to represent an emergence of ethnic identity. By means of understanding how person, place, and process define each event, and how processes evolve over time regarding attachment and identity, the study describes the importance these experiences represent in adoptees’ sense of self and psychological wellbeing. Given the measured indications of the extent of the relationships between place attachment and ethnic identity (Napier, 2009), previous findings begin to highlight how the influence of a regained culture in adoptees’ lives influences ethnic identity development.

Chapter Six restates the hypothesis of the study in which a contextualist approach directed the methods used in this study. As an outgrowth of evaluating these events as holistic phenomenon, the design of the study looked at Korean adoptees’ formative years, adoptees’ first return trips to Korea, and adoptees’ return and subsequent incorporation of memorable objects as symbolization of ethnic identity; each life stage is viewed as holistic phenomenon. The survey instrument employed to collect adoptees’ responses used open-ended questions to elicit written narratives that added detail regarding place and identity experiences. As adoptees’ ethnic identity context became clear, so too did their contextual world: place identity, place dependence, and ethnic identity. In reviewing and confirming dimensions of contextual place attachment: place, person, and process (Scannell & Gifford,
2009), this study contributes a theoretical place identity framework to examine adoptees’ reported place experiences, before, during, and subsequent to their first return trip to Korea.

In reviewing the hypothesis of the study, Korean adoptees’ evolve from their formative adoptive identities to more stable ethnic identities; their experiences with places play significant roles in their ethnic identity development. In addition, adoptees’ experiences during their first return visit to Korea as adults represent memorable place experiences, and symbolize connections to a renewed ethnic identity. Finally, adoptees’ incorporation of meaningful Korean cultural objects into their living spaces in constructing places reflects and symbolizes their emerging ethnic identity. These hypotheses directed the design, data collection, and categorization of the findings for interpretation to further understanding regarding Korean adoptee place and identity experiences.

Proposing a Korean adoptee conceptual foundation for place and identity

The nature of adoption, particularly interracial intercountry adoption, is often characterized by emotional and psychological problems and adoptees’ experiencing not belonging and residing “in-between space” (Hübinette, 2007). For adoptees, their lives are typically made up of a progression of upsetting events that contribute to adult adoptees feeling confused, alienated, and not ever truly fitting in (Park Nelson, 2007). Adult Korean adoptees fortunate enough to return to their birth country write about how they discover a sense of belonging and feel like they’re home (Hong, 2007), and for the first time in their lives feel involved with their culture, and finally feel like they fit in (Meier, 1998).

1 See Chapter 4, subsection Conceptual foundations for place and identity, for a detailed review of conceptual place and identity literature.
Place attachment represents three multi-dimensional concepts that help provide an understanding of Korean adoptees’ experiences with place and identity before, during, and subsequent to their first return trip to Korea. The concepts of person, place, and process, as a tripartite model of place attachment (Figure 8.) (Scannell & Gifford, 2009) positions how adoptees describe themselves regarding their ethnic identity, what is memorable regarding places they’ve experienced during their return trip to Korea, how memories from the trip have affected their ethnic identity, and how they’ve populated their living spaces with artifacts representing the trip. Person, place, and process dimensions provides a holistic view into the experiences of Korean adoptees. These stages of place attachment overlap and each one represents place experiences as an emergence ethnic identity. Figure 9. proposes person place process concepts via a chronological progression of ethnic identity emergence and development.
Figure 9. Conceptual foundation for Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity development

In developing a conceptual identity and place foundation, Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity emergence spans multiple overlapping life stages in which adoptees are always situated in place. Critical to this realization is that prior to their first return visit to Korea many of the overlapping places contain or provide little reference to their birth culture. International interracial adoption implies a new beginning for adoptees and puts into motion
unique circumstances separate from lives not affected by adoption (Hübinette, 2007). Korean adoptees begin new lives with new families, in new countries, and new living environments; these new dimensions of place come together and represent holistic place experiences. Adoptees’ place experiences can be noted as *in-between space* (Hübinette, 2007), *outside place* (Relph, 1976), or *out of place* (Cresswell, 1976). Given adoptees’ own descriptions, this study notes adoptee beginning place experiences as representing *in-between place*. Adoptees identified as situated *in-between* place report being alienated from: their culture, geographic origin, family heritage, and Asian physiognomy association. Adoptees’ often reside in this *in-between place* until young adulthood (Huh & Reid, 2000; Kim, 2008; Park Nelson, 2009).

As adoptees continue to struggle with identity issues through their formative years and into adulthood, it is not until they have an opportunity to return to Korea that some are able to come to some resolution regarding their identity struggles (Kim, 2008; Meier, 1998). Korean adoptees’ own accounts reinforce the idea that first visits to Korea represents an opportunity for being *inside place* (Relph, 1976) or *in place* (Cresswell, 1976), and for this study, *finding place*. Adoptees report that their return visits to Korea often represents finding their place in the world, their identity, their culture, and their ethnic identity (Kim, 2008; Meier, 1998; Napier, 2010b). Perhaps adoptees’ intensely personal and profoundly significant encounter with place, *finding place* their first return trip to Korea, is as much influenced by their *in-between place* experiences during their formative years and by *finding place*, adoptees finally feel accepted, that they belong, and that they are not outsiders (Hübinette, 2007, Park Nelson, 2007). Possibly, their association to *outside* (Relph, 1976) or *out of place* (Cresswell, 1996)
or in-between place (Park Nelson, 2007) heightens the experience to finding place. Building on each of these conceptual representations of person place identities, this study claims that Korean adoptees finally exhibit finding place as a result of their first return trip to Korea. In proposing this second state of ethnic identity development, I plan to position adoptee survey responses to moments experienced during the trip to bring to light how person, place, and process dimensions elucidates adoptees’ ethnic identity development.

From finding place, adoptees are able to begin constructing place (Hadjiyanni & Helle, 2009) when they return to their place of residence. Tuan (1980 as cited in Menin, 2003) states, “It is a current and popular belief that people do not know who they truly are unless they can trace their roots” (p. 101). While Korean adoptees may not be able to trace their family heritage, they may connect with their place of birth (Kim, 2008). Building on previous Korean adoptee personal accounts (Hong, 2007), and research regarding identity and place (Meier, 1998), from this often life-changing experience of visiting their birth country for the first time, adoptees are able to begin constructing place. This study posits that as adoptees return from Korea, they incorporate objects collected from their first return visit signifying their memorable experience.

In proposing a place and identity foundation, I positioned Korean adoptees’ place and ethnic identity experiences along the continuum to bring to light how dimensions of place, person, or process elucidates adoptees’ ethnic identity development. By situating adoptee place identity experiences along a conceptual framework, adoptees experiences come to represent emergence from minimal ethnic identity as a result of growing up separate from their birth country environment, to experiencing their first return trip to Korea in which
adoptees write of experiences of belonging and pride, and finally to symbolizing their ethnic identity within their home living environments via objects brought back from Korea to exhibit to themselves and to others their ethnic identity development. In addition, by positioning adoptee experiences along this continuum, I was guided by the question, will additional categories within these dimensions emerge?

From a conceptual framework for place and identity among Korean adoptees, I employed a mixed – method design. In this way, I am able to access multiple means to collect, categorize, and report findings. Drawing on quantitative methods to gather large quantities of data as well as qualitative methods to collect and report write in subjective responses from participants, these methods illuminate adoptee place and identity experiences. By researching Korean adoptee places as identification for self via person, place, and process, the conceptual place and identity model is a lens through which to view psychological wellbeing variables in relation to place attachment and ethnic identity development.

**Korean adoptee place and identity: Mixed - method research design**

Research within a contextualist world view takes into account that in the discovery of new knowledge, psychological phenomenon are considered as occurring “within, being defined by, and linked with temporal and contextualist aspects of the setting” (Altman & Rogoff, p. 34). In this respect, Korean adoptee research regarding place and identity occurs in contextual place settings with an emphasis to discover and understand how ethnic identity development contributes to psychological wellbeing. In describing these settings for Korean adoptees, I asked, via the survey, multiple detailed questions regarding the experience of the event. For example, in regard to adoptee formative years, I asked how adoptees remembered
their exposure to Korean culture, their feelings concerning their ethnic identity, and additional questions regarding the context of their adoption. Referring to respondents’ return trip to Korea, I asked questions regarding the locations and characteristics that were most memorable, and why these experiences were meaningful. Relative to their return from the trip, I asked adoptees if their living environments changed and how as a result of their trip, what objects were incorporated in their living spaces in remembering their trip, and what these objects signify. By asking questions regarding the three settings, this research concentrated on each holistic event in terms of the psychological, temporal, and environmental aspects of the first return trip. From these questions and the participants’ responses, I began to identify how place attachment involves ethnic identity and how ethnic identity then contributes to psychological wellbeing.

**Operationalizing an aspect of psychological wellbeing.**

Higher levels of racial and ethnic identity are positively correlated with psychological wellbeing (Bergquist, 2000). I argue that one aspect of psychological wellbeing may then be operationalized as a function of place attachment and ethnic identity. In addition, higher levels of place attachment are directly related to higher levels of ethnic identity which together contribute to higher levels of psychological wellbeing. Operationalizing an aspect of psychological wellbeing is seen as the following equation:

$$Ps = f(\text{PA})(\text{EI})$$

$Ps$ = Aspect of Psychological wellbeing

$\text{PA}$ = place attachment, measured by levels of place identity and place dependence

$\text{EI}$ = ethnic identity, measured by levels of pride, belonging, and distinctiveness

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To discover whether this equation for psychological wellbeing is supported, I reviewed adoptee published literature regarding identity and place experiences for place and identity relationships, and then asked questions via the survey instrument to discover correlations between place attachment and ethnic identity during the first return trip to Korea. I also asked open-ended questions regarding how these place experiences contributed to heightened ethnic identity via the trip and if and how objects incorporated into the home residence signify ethnic identity.

**Korean adoptee place and identity research design.**

Figure 10. demonstrates how I examined the hypothesis via review of Korean adoption research and Korean adoptee literary works, and survey responses via quantitative measurable variables and qualitative descriptive narratives. Korean adoptees’ experiences represent dimensions of person, place, and process during their formative years, during the first return trip to Korea, and subsequent to their return trip. Adoptees’ place and ethnic identity experiences evolve over time. As the researcher, I am an aspect of the event in defining the research method, value judgments for research, and how the research is interpreted and reported. The findings describe adoptees’ psychological, temporal, and environmental aspects of their experiences with place and identity. In conceptualizing adoptee place and identity experiences, adoptees move through three complex holistic events as an emergence of ethnic identity. These three complex holistic events allow for data collection and review for understanding in how Korean adoptees experience places as contributing to evolve their ethnic identity. The two variables under review are place attachment and ethnic identity as contributing factors for psychological wellbeing.
Mixed - Method Research Design

Collect measurable Person, Place, and Process data regarding adoptee place and identity experiences.

Collect descriptive psychological, temporal, and physical aspects of the event.

Report quantifiable responses for most memorable places and characteristics.

Report quantifiable responses for most memorable artifacts collected from the trip.

Report quantifiable responses for how living spaces changed resulting from the trip.

Report descriptive narratives regarding the first visit experience in relationship to ethnic identity before, during, and subsequent to the first return trip.

Data Collection:
- Adoptee literary works
- Korean adoption research
- Most memorable characteristics and locations of first return visit to Korea
- Descriptive narrative of place experience

Data Collection:
- Adoptee literary works
- Korean adoption research
- Ethnic identity before, during, and subsequent to first return trip
- Descriptive narrative of ethnic identity progression, before, during, and subsequent to first visit

Data Outcomes:
- Correlations between place attachment and ethnic identity
- Place attachment to Korea
- Heightened levels of ethnic identity
- Descriptive narrative regarding how incorporation of memorable objects from the trip signify ethnic identity

Figure 10. Korean adoptee place and identity research design
A holistic view of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research.

In view of the challenges in researching how Korean adoptees experience place and identity as complex, holistic phenomenon, my mixed-method research design merges quantitative and qualitative data, by contributing comprehensive understanding, and by maximizing the advantages and lessening the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches carried out separately. In this way, my research methods are designed to test the hypothesis and answer the research questions. By summarizing large quantities of data via descriptive statistics, the survey responses from 451 participants become quantifiable in terms of recurring themes across multiple categories. For example, adoptee demographics, formative years’ experiences, most memorable locations and characteristics, and place attachment and ethnic identity concepts, are each quantified with regard to frequency of yes/no responses, Likert scale, recurring words, phrases, or particular references. The expectation is that trends in place and identity experiences during formative years, most memorable Korea trip experiences, and behaviors regarding place attachment and ethnic identity will emerge. In addition, by correlating place attachment and ethnic identity response frequencies, these methods quantify positive and significant relationships between place identity, place dependence, and ethnic identity.

In positing a holistic view of the situation or the event, I employed qualitative approaches via write-in responses to survey questions to gather and report findings to validate quantitative descriptive statistics of survey participant responses. Responses to open ended questions contributed descriptive narratives of an event, and so doing, provided a fuller understanding of the experiences of the event. Via qualitative approaches, I employed means
to study adoptee experiences in their natural settings to make sense of and interpret the first visit phenomenon in how Korean adoptees associate meaning to their first return visit (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Taken together, the quantification of frequency of use of qualitative comments or descriptors as noted in particular moments in the adoptee’s unfolding context, contributes to making sense of, and analysis of the data via an interpretive holistic account. The study is concerned with meanings participants deem valid to describe the experience (Creswell, 2009), and from these descriptions, adoptees’ experiences provide a richer detailed understanding of the emotional and psychological effects of the event. Given this approach, the researcher can then more fully describe adoptees’ subjective experiences. An outcome of this approach is an informed understanding of place attachment in how the attachment contributes to ethnic identity and thus psychological wellbeing among Korean adult adoptees.

**Assessing trustworthiness within a mixed-method design.**

Korean adoptee place and ethnic identity research within a contextualist approach to inquiry required multiple approaches to make sense of the meanings people bring to the event (Altman & Rogoff, 1989). In assessing trustworthiness of the data and analysis, these methods were evaluated for, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Groat & Wang, 2002).

**Credibility.**

In assessing credibility, I am employing multiple data sources and multiple data collection techniques to cross check data and my interpretations between adoptee responses regarding Korea first return visits and ethnic identity; in this way, I’m going to the heart of
credibility (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Groat & Wang, 2002). In addition, in describing Korean adoptee place and identity experiences, the results and conclusions must be seen as credible to Korean adoptees (Trochim, 2005). In this case, the preliminary study\textsuperscript{2} was selected via competitive process among other Korean adoptee researchers, peer reviewed, published, and presented at the Second International Symposium on Korean Adoption Studies in 2010 in Seoul, Korea (Napier, 2010a). The survey instrument, adoptee literary works, and research studies involving displaced populations, place attachment, and ethnic identity, these three data sets are multiple means to assess credibility.

\textit{Transferability.}

In collecting adoptee survey responses, rich descriptions of the contexts and experiences of Korean adoptees leads to the conclusions of this study and can be applied to another, if the contexts of the two are adequately addressed as similar. In this way, the conclusions are transferable (Groat & Wang, 2002; Trochim, 2005). In addition, from the conclusions, assessment of recurring themes regarding place attachment and ethnic identity may be transferable if applied to similar settings or circumstances among other adoptee populations.

\textit{Dependability.}

The methods chapter of the study establishes an audit trail by documenting how the context of the research evolved (Trochim, 2005) concerning the research methods, methods analysis, and survey development and deployment. Documentation provides dependability as fundamental consistency within the data and accounts for trackability of expected instability.

of data (Groat & Wang, 2002). In addition, by describing limitations of the study we see why the study is not generalizable across all Korean adoptee populations.

Confirmability.

This study is confirmable in that others can confirm or corroborate adoptee survey responses and findings of the study (Trochim, 2005) via triangulation of multiple methods, sources, and investigators. Adoptee research, adoptee self-reflection literature, and survey responses, triangulate the findings to test the hypothesis of this study and answer the research questions. In addressing reflexivity, I am interactively linked with the participants. My values and my perspective, regarding Korean adoptees, inevitably influences the inquiry. The findings are value mediated from my point of view (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Stable healthy ethnic identities as influencing psychological wellbeing is value mediated as subjective and my interest is to explain how things are. Adoptees reside within three evolving life stages. These conceptual stages provide a foundation to position adoptee survey responses regarding place and identity experiences.

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, the design, methods, and analysis of the study were evaluated via each of these categories to assess trustworthiness.

Participant recruitment

As the principal investigator of the study I am active in Korean adoptee organizations and also involved in Korean adoption research. As a result, I have access to adoption communities and assistance from Korean adoption agencies from numerous Korean adoption receiving countries. My initial contact was with local United States’ agencies and in support of the research, additional agencies agreed to participate.
Participants for this study were recruited by use of convenience (non-probability sampling) which is not random, and is not representative of the entire population (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991). Specifically, adults adopted from Korea as infants or young children, were recruited from on-line, Korean adoptee associations and organizations, adoption services, adoptee assistance groups from numerous locations around the world, as well as snow-ball sampling through 12 selected Internet list-serves. I contacted each organization via e-mail with a brief description of the study. I requested approval to recruit participants. Upon receiving an organization’s approval, potential participants received the Internet link to the survey in an email from their respective organizations.

Survey instrument

The electronic survey questionnaire was comprised of 34 - items designed to assess participants’ formative years pertaining to exposure to Korean culture and ethnic identity and the influence of the first return visit to living space such that participants who reported having traveled to Korea, would complete all 34 items, whereas participants that did not travel to Korea only completed the first 12 items. Prior to administration, the survey was reviewed for wording and clarity. Based on the reviewers’ feedback, minor changes were made. An electronic version of the finalized survey was then posted online using Survey Monkey (i.e. Internet - based software to collect data).

The survey questionnaire was divided into ten sections which consisted of 34 questions. Questions 1-13 and 16-22 were reviewed and analyzed via descriptive statistics in a previous study (Napier, 2009; Napier, 2010; Napier 2010b). Efforts were made to identify most memorable locations visited and those location’s most memorable characteristics.
Preliminary interpretation validates a reciprocal relationship between place attachment experiences and adult adoptees’ ethnic identity reconstruction (Napier, 2009).

This study begins with question 14 to provide understanding of survey participants and qualitative responses for questions 15 and then continues with questions 23 through 29. In addition, this study includes questions 27, 28 and 29. Finally, the study concludes with questions 30 through 34 regarding influence of the trip toward domestic living space (Table 3).

The survey in its entirety includes: sections one through five, informed consent and a demographic questionnaire, participants’ ethnic identity and exposure to Korean culture during their formative years. Section five asked participants whether or not they have ever returned to Korea. This variable assesses whether the participant has had a place experience in Korea. Participants that responded: “yes, I have traveled to Korea” were presented with nine statements concerning their expectations and experiences with their first trip to Korea (e.g. I expected to find what was missing in my life when I went to Korea). This variable assesses participant’s intent to return to Korea. Based on a five-point scale, participants were asked to rate how much they agreed with each statement, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

While the following questions were compiled for the previous study, review of these responses provides context for participants’ qualitative descriptive narratives regarding memorable place experiences. Participants were first requested to designate all places visited from a dropdown list of 27 natural features and environments and urban and cultural environments (e.g. “Lake, Sea, Mountains, Public Garden, Palace, etc). These locations were
compiled from adoptee literary writings describing experiences with, ethnic, cultural, and natural environments (Hong, 2007). In order to determine locations with a memorable place experience, participants were instructed to identify and rank the five most memorable places and to associate a location’s memorable characteristics; participants were presented with a second dropdown list of 18 descriptions that they felt reflected these five locations (i.e. architecture, food, landscape, patterns, etc). Descriptions were based on a diverse mix of locations discussed in adoptee - authored literary works about their experiences when visiting Korea (Bishop & Rankin, 1997; Hong, 2007) as well as predominant design characteristics of Korean architecture and interior design (Iwatate, Kim, & Lee, 2006; Kim, B.R., 2005).

In order to determine place attachment and ethnic identity among participants, the next section presented 15 items intended to assess participants’ place attachment (place identity and place dependence), and ethnic identity as a result of the trip. For the first 10 items, participants were asked to rate their agreement based on the same five-point scale, with statements intended to represent the degree to which they were attached to a specified place (place identity) during their visit, as well as the emotional connection associated with the place (place dependence). The last five statements asked participants to rate the degree to which they felt their trip to Korea affected aspects of their ethnic identity.

To understand and describe changes to adoptees’ personal living environments, the final section assessed the influence of the trip to present living conditions; specifically what were the most meaningful objects brought home, what do these objects symbolize, and how has the participant’s living environment changed following the trip? Participants were also given the opportunity to write in additional information throughout the survey. The survey is
not intended to represent a cumulative score for place dependence, place identity and ethnic identity. The entire 34-item survey was estimated to take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

**Quantitative method: Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis**

The study includes 18 questions via mixed – method approach. Quantitative and qualitative questions, responses, methods, analysis and variables to be measured (Table 3.) are summarized to with the aim to establish soundness and trustworthiness in the instrument and the findings. The variety of data, methods and analysis validate a mixed-method triangulation design which confirms quality of research (Creswell, 2009; Groat & Wang, 2002). Quantitative data collection of questionnaire responses are tabulated by frequency and then correlated between responses for place attachment and ethnic identity to understand the relationship to Korean adoptees. Correlation analysis for place identity (section 7), dependence (section 8) and ethnic identity (section 9) follows from previous frequency and descriptive statistics. At the same time, additional quantitative analyses via descriptive statistics are intended to confirm previous findings.

**Qualitative method: Content analysis**

Open-ended qualitative responses are first quantified via content analysis. “Content analysis is briefly defined as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics. It includes the careful examination of human interactions” (Neuendorf, 2002, p.1). From initial quantitative content analysis, further qualitative analysis evolves in which qualitative content analysis measures are employed through careful categorization, coding,
and interpretation (Krippendorf, 1980). Qualitative content analysis allows for interpretive narrative of the findings by the researcher (Groat & Wang, 2002).

Table 3. details Mixed - Method Approach. A summary of the Survey Instrument regarding Section, Number, Question, Response, Method of data collection, Analysis, and Variable to be measured for this study follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sect.</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Questions regarding your Korean ethnic exposure.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Further understanding in adoptee experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Is there anything else you would like me to know about your family, education, profession or personal interests?</td>
<td>Open ended</td>
<td>Qual</td>
<td>Interpretive Narrative</td>
<td>Further understanding in adoptee experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Place Location (Top 3 most memorable places visited)</td>
<td>Write-in</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Similarities in locations chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Please describe why the location ranked number 1 was the most memorable location of your visit to Korea</td>
<td>Open ended</td>
<td>Qual</td>
<td>Interpretive Narrative</td>
<td>Trends and understanding in locations chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Place Characteristics (Top 5 most memorable characteristics)</td>
<td>Write-in</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Similarities in characteristics chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Please describe why the characteristic ranked number 1 was the most memorable location of your visit to Korea</td>
<td>Open ended</td>
<td>Qual</td>
<td>Interpretive Narrative</td>
<td>Trends and understanding in characteristics chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Place Identity (5 Questions)</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Correlation Findings</td>
<td>Discover significant relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Place Dependence (5 Questions)</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Correlation Findings</td>
<td>Discover significant relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ethnic Identity (5 Questions)</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Correlation Findings</td>
<td>Discover significant relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>My trip influences design choices in my home</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Significance of trip to living space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>By possessing Korean cultural items, they symbolize the missing pieces of my history</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Significance of cultural items to ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>I am comforted by Korean items in my living environment</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Significance of cultural items to ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Korean items in my living environment are only for decoration and do not hold personal meaning to me</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Significance of cultural items to ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I want to learn more about Korean architecture and Korean design</td>
<td>Likert</td>
<td>Quant</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Significance of cultural items to ethnic identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Please describe your most meaningful souvenirs or items that you brought home for yourself and why</td>
<td>Open ended</td>
<td>Qual</td>
<td>Interpretive Narrative</td>
<td>Trends in objects and meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>What does possessing Korean items symbolize or represent for you</td>
<td>Open ended</td>
<td>Qual</td>
<td>Interpretive Narrative</td>
<td>Significance of cultural items to ethnic identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Please describe if or how your living environment has changed after visiting Korea</td>
<td>Open ended</td>
<td>Qual</td>
<td>Interpretive Narrative</td>
<td>Influence of trip to living space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about yourself regarding your first visit back to Korea or your Korean ethnic identity</td>
<td>Open ended</td>
<td>Qual</td>
<td>Interpretive Narrative</td>
<td>Further understanding in adoptee experiences regarding ethnic identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretive narrative for categorizing place experiences**

As previously discussed in Chapter Three, adoptees’ responses to place attachment may be categorized within a tripartite organizing framework for place attachment, but in so doing, the “humanity” or the individuality of adoptees’ has yet to be brought into place.

Adoptees personal narratives regarding their Korean place experiences elicit individual
descriptions of experiences of place. These personal narratives further illuminate adoptees’ first return visits to Korea with the expectation to provide understanding in describing place attachment experiences. Adoptees’ responses to place attachment may be categorized within a tripartite organizing framework for place attachment, but in so doing, the “humanity” or the individuality of adoptees’ has yet to be brought into place. Personal narratives of adoptees regarding their place experiences to Korea elicit individual descriptions of experiences of place. These personal narratives further illuminate the context and meaning of adoptees’ first return visits to Korea with the expectation to provide understanding in describing place attachment experiences.

Analyzing narratives on place, Conron (1974) provides a four part analysis of landscapes in which expressed visual logic can be seen as evolving cognitive logic in how one views the world. Within a contextualist approach, these literary descriptives from adoptee survey responses characterize the first return visit via temporal, psychological, and environmental aspects (Table 1.). From an understanding of the first return visit, further description of the confluence of people, space, and time contribute positioning of experiences within a conceptual person identity framework (Figure 9.).

Conron’s landscape analysis when applied to visual and cognitive logic evident in Korean adoptee narratives of their first return visits provides a categorizing tool for content analysis. This approach to interpretive narrative allows the researcher to categorize, code, summarize, describe, and explain recurrent themes within the data.

For example, beginning with metaphor, responses might include a reference to something unknown in known terms; literary setting might include a list of the place along
with positioning a participant within the setting; *metaphoric frame image* might include descriptions related to metaphors but in a much more holistic descriptive narrative. Finally as an example of *dominant impression*, narratives might include how the experience with place has made an impression on an adoptee’s life via actions which effect their living environment.

Building on Conron’s four techniques of landscape analysis, within *dominant impression*, this study aims to explore how place experiences influence actions for constructing place within domestic living spaces with the expectation to contribute cultural sensitivity as strategies for design.

In summary, Chapter Six described the methods of the study via mixed – method approach: design of the study, the survey instrument, recruitment of the participants, and expected outcomes. Mixed – method approach for this study validates previous research regarding relationships between place attachment and ethnic identity (Napier, 2009). This study intends to contribute additional correlation analysis of these findings. In analyzing qualitative data, a four part analysis tool for adoptee place descriptive narratives (Conron’s 1974) categorizes responses of the event to understand patterns and the form of the event. Finally, building on a contextualist mixed – method approach for place and identity research, this study aims to contribute a transferable research design to uncover new knowledge regarding place and identity for future design research.
7. FINDINGS

The hypothesis under examination is that Korean adoptees’ evolve from their formative adoptive identities to more stable ethnic identities; their experiences with places play significant roles in their ethnic identity development. In addition, adoptees’ experiences during their first return visit to Korea as adults represent memorable place experiences, and symbolize connections to a renewed ethnic identity. Finally, adoptees’ incorporation of meaningful Korean cultural objects into their living spaces in constructing places reflects and symbolizes their emerging ethnic identity. Overall, general themes within the data validate each of these hypotheses. However, additional themes related to place and identities emerged.

From a contextualist world view, and interdisciplinary approach, the research findings represent quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. This study confirms previously collected data in which selected descriptive quantitative findings were previously reported (Napier, 2009). Chapter Seven begins with a reiteration of previously reported quantitative total participants’ demographics and continues with not previously reported first return visit participants demographics and experiences of the event. The format of the findings evolve from mixed – method approaches, and for this study, are presented with quantitative findings first, followed by qualitative findings of write-in responses. By positioning adoptee survey responses within conceptual place and identity framework, these

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3 See Napier (2009), especially chapter four, for a detailed summary of previous findings not reported in this study.
4 The survey in its entirety is found in Appendix B. SURVEY INSTRUMENT.
life stages represent categories of experiences within the framework. *Ethnic identity development: in-between place, finding place, and constructing place.* (Figure 9.) The chapter concludes with findings incorporating all responses of selected adoptees as a representation of place identity experiences. These summaries provide a holistic glimpse into ethnic identity development among adult Korean adoptees.

**Total participant demographics**

A total of 451 participants (female = 82%, male = 18%) took part in the on-line survey from 11 countries: the United States, Greece, South Korea, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Japan, Sweden, Antigua, Germany, Guam and the Netherlands. Ages ranged from 18 to 50 years-old, with the majority of participants between the ages of 20 to 29 (41%) years of age. Most participants reported having been adopted by Euro-Caucasian families (98%), and almost half (47%) had least one sibling adopted from Korea, and 35% from other areas than Korea. High rates of education were found, with 89% of participants having attended some college, 68% earned college degrees, and 20% Master’s, Law, and Doctorate degrees.

**Reporting findings: A conceptual framework for place and identity**

As previously summarized in Chapter Four, this study positions Korean adoptee experiences within a person place identity conceptual framework. *Ethnic identity development: in-between place, finding place, constructing place* (Figure 9). *In-between place* refers to adoptees’ feelings of not belonging while struggling to emerge from threatened identities. *Finding place* refers to adoptees’ first return trip to Korea in which they experience an identity to place and people and as a result begin to emerge from threatened identities.
Constructing place refers to how adoptees upon return from their trip to Korea an in remembering their experience incorporate objects and actions symbolizing an ethnic identity.

In-Between Place ⁵

Adoptees begin new lives, in new countries, with new families, separated from their countries of birth, culture, and ethnicity (Park Nelson, 2007). In these respects, as previously summarized, adoptees report being alienated from their culture, geographic origin, family heritage, and Asian physiognomy association (Kim, 2008). Adoptees reside in-between place, a place not always pleasant, and a place in which adoptees exhibit diminished self-esteem (Breakwell, 1983), ethnic instability (Hübinette, 2007), diminished self worth, and feelings of social isolation (Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 1999). In addition, in view of adoptees’ limited exposure to Korean culture, these feelings of being ashamed of their culture (Bishop & Rankin, 1997; Huh, 2000) contribute to adoptees’ difficulties in forming healthy identities. This section incorporates quantitative findings from the survey in which participants described their formative years in respect to behavior, self, and environmental aspects. In addition, open-ended write-in responses provided further understanding in participant’s perspectives to report these experiences as holistic phenomenon.

Formative years’ ethnic identity.

Of the 451 survey participants, 42% (n = 152) reported having traveled back to Korea (female = 80.3%, male = 19.7%) between the ages of 3 to 50 years old (M = 24.22, SD = 10.19). Fifty-eight percent were adopted at under one year old, 29% were adopted between 1

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⁵ See Napier (2009), chapter two, subsection, The Korean adoptee experience: In search of ethnic identity, for an insightful review of adoptee formative years’ experiences.
and 3 years old, and 13 percent were adopted at over 3 years old. Reflective of total participant demographics, high levels of education were found among participants who visited Korea, with 85% of participants having attended some college, of which 52% earned bachelor’s degrees, and 23% Master’s, 4% Law, and 4% Doctorate degrees. Over half of participants (59%) considered their first trip back to be a “vacation” and almost half (47%) reported that their adoptive parents encouraged their visit.

Overall, the majority of participants reported having had minimal, or approximately 62% reported no exposure to Korean ethnic items in their home during their formative years. As presented in Table 4, 29% of participants reported having attended Korean culture camp. Only 20% of participants reported having participated in Korean language lessons or school, and 45% reported having been familiarized to aspects of Korean culture (i.e. food, music, dress, etc) by their adoptive parents. When asked about peer socialization, 46% of participants reported having associated with other Korean adoptee families and 25% with non-adopted Korean families. Despite these low rates of exposure to Korean culture, 46% reported that during their formative years, they considered themselves to be “Korean” compared to 53% who reported they did not identify as Korean (1% reported they did not remember). When asked specifically about their identity in relation to nationality, 73% reported having identified as an individual from the country of their adoptive families (e.g. American, Swedish, etc) and 57% viewed themselves as Korean and an individual from their adoptive parents’ country (e.g. Korean American); however, 67% indicated that they had considered themselves to be “just a person” while 60% reported they did not view themselves
as part of any ethnic group. Table 4. summarizes descriptive statistics of participants who returned to Korea.

### Table 4. Formative years (N=152)

| Questions regarding your family.  
(Please refer to your formative years between 8-14 years of age.) | Yes     | No      | I don't remember | Count |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are your adoptive parents Caucasian?</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Please refer to your formative years between 8-14 years of age.)</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you or your family associate with other Korean adoptee families?</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you or your family associate with other Korean ethnic families?</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you attend Korean culture camp?</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you grow up with Korean ethnic items in your home?</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your parents familiarize you with Korean culture? (food, music, dress, etc.)</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you participate in any type of Korean lessons or school?</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you view yourself as Korean?</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you view yourself as American or Swedish, etc.?</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you view yourself as Korean-American, Korean-Swedish, etc.?</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you view yourself as ‘just a person’?</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you view yourself as part of any ethnic group?</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to quantitative demographic data collection, participants were given the opportunity to provide descriptive write-in responses (Table 5.). Over 50% of the participants...
described identity experiences. One participant responds, “The weirdest thing was that I had dreams of the future and in those I was white, but not anymore.” Another participant writes of her experience, “I had a hard time growing up, was very shy, and very anxious. Now I have turned it all outwards, into performing! I use to not like my Asian face, but now I love it.” A participant from Finland writes, “It was hard for me to grow up in Finland because I grew up in the minority group of Swedish speaking group in Finland. I was a minority inside the minority because there were very few immigrants in Finland at the time I lived in Finland!” Finally, another participant writes, “Although I did not view myself as belonging to the Korean community, other people viewed me as belonging to the Korean community. Sometimes I did not feel I belonged to any group.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Formative years descriptive responses (N=152)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional information regarding family, education, profession or personal interests</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity experience (Korean or adoptive country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma or abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education or career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First visit experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n=66)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total may not equal 152 due to skipped or other response.

In addition, while not directly related to place experiences and ethnic identity, and not representative of the majority of the participants from descriptive responses, it is worthy to note that six participants reported trauma and abuse during their formative years. They describe exposure to mental illness, suicide, rape, emotional abuse, racism, drug addiction,
alcohol addiction, exposure to adoptive parent’s birth children as convicts, and constant discrimination. Finally, one participant exposed to trauma and abuse writes, “I have a wonderful, blessed life now, wonderful husband (married 31 years), three great children and one beautiful granddaughter.”

Finding Place

As previously stated, adoptees struggle with identity through their formative years until adulthood; it is not until they have an opportunity to return to Korea that some are able to come to some resolution regarding their ethnic identity struggles (Kim, 2008; Meier, 1998). In returning to Korea, adoptees find their place in the world, a holistic experience of psychological processes, within environmental settings, with which to identify with. To understand and describe this phenomenon, finding place conceptualizes these holistic experiences. The following section describes adoptees’ most memorable locations, most memorable characteristics of these locations, and descriptive narratives in how they perceive these experiences. Adoptees’ first return visits to Korea are holistic phenomenon in which the event is viewed as a unity, not by reviewing a single element, and the event is a temporal process in which change goes on continuously (Table 1.).

Most memorable place locations.

Of the 152 participants who made the first return trip to Korea, as evidence of participants’ emotional experiences, a small number indicated that their trip provided them with something they had been missing in life (24%) and most reported they did not consider

---

6 See Napier (2009), chapter two, subsection, The Korean adoptee experience: The first visit home, for additional personal accounts of adoptee first visit experiences from published literature.
their experiences as distressing and upsetting (63%); however, 20% indicated the trip was distressing. Even so, very few indicated that the trip was unemotional or non-memorable (1%). Overall, 64% of participants indicated that they wanted to visit Korea again as soon as possible, 11% did not, and 54% found the experience extremely emotional and poignant (Napier, 2009).

In terms of the types of places visited, from a list of 30 locations, participants reported visiting both natural settings as well as urban and cultural environments. Participants reported frequenting urban areas the most, rating street markets as the most commonly visited (n = 124), followed by metropolitan cities (n = 120), authentic Korean-type locations such as temples (n = 115), folk villages (n = 104), and palaces (n = 96), and adoption agencies (n = 106). Participants also reported that the common locations for them to encounter nature were the mountains (n = 90), national parks (n = 85), the ocean (n = 69), and beaches (n = 60). Most memorable locations were metropolitan cities, orphanages, palace-temple-folk villages, adoption agencies, and public street markets (Figure 11.).
Most memorable place characteristics.

From a list of 18 characteristics, participants were instructed to select and rank, in order of importance, five significant characteristics of their most memorable location (Figure 12.). The most commonly reported characteristics were: food (n = 28), landscape (n = 16) and architecture (n = 15). The second set of memorable characteristics were landscape (n = 22), sounds (n = 22), and architecture (n = 15); and somewhat memorable were smells (n = 17), landscape (n = 13), and patterns (n = 10) and Interior Design and Materials (n = 10).
Figure 12. Most memorable characteristics of most memorable location

Place experience in ethnic identity development.

Table 6. categorizes participant open ended responses to why the most memorable location was memorable within each of the four categories and then summarizes the responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6. Summary of most memorable location descriptions (N=152)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why the most memorable location was memorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor (Simile, Symbol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary setting (list, timeflow, movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphoric frame image (frame of reference)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant impression (effect on the perceiver, mark on the mind)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not analyzed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Total may not equal 152 due to skipped or other response.*
Table 7. reports a representation of responses regarding how adoptees describe their place experiences via Conron’s literary analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7. Descriptive responses for most memorable location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Conron's Visual and Cognitive Logic as Framework for Ethnic Identity Development</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Logic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor (Simile, Symbol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just felt right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it was a tangible link to my past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was very beautiful and it was spring and the trees were in bloom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really like the being by the water and I had never seen the east sea before. The water so warm and swim able. The day that I went was just a relaxing day with beautiful scenery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As an infant, I was taken to City Hall, processed, and then transferred to Holt at Ilsan. We stayed in a hotel that looked directly down on the City Hall building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were thousands of Koreans all wearing red outside on the streets watching the world cup game on a big screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Logic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphoric frame image (frame of reference)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nam Dae Mun was smaller and more quant...lots of older buildings there...felt the culture heavily there...there is a tea house hidden that has live birds flying around. It was a 'sweet' experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My two college student translators took my sister and I on a bike ride through the country. We stopped at a little Folk Village and played traditional games and saw an ancient ice cave. It was because my translators felt like old friends; no Korean family was with us that day so I felt completely relaxed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dominant impression (effect on the perceiver, mark on the mind)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seoul, subway | First time to Korea was Seoul to pick up my daughter...on the subway my friend told me that I truly looked "Korean" and I felt oddly comfortable amongst the surrounding even though I could not speak/understand the language.

A restaurant | While I was there, I went into a restaurant and this lady/employee out of nowhere begins talking to me. At the end of the conversation she hugs me. I found it eerily strange. I had told her I was an adoptee from the Angel orphanage there in Seoul/ Pusan, one of the two. It was a really strange experience, as most of the Korean's were a bit abrupt and not at all like the Japanese. I have been living in Japan for the past 10 years now... I was not used to the different "personality style" of the Koreans. Much more in your face and blunt.

A temple somewhere in Chilisan | After the onslaught of the smog and sounds of metropolitan Seoul which reminded me of my home city of New York, the temple reflected to me the Korea I had always imagined in my mind. There in the mountains, the streams, the tok-tok-tok of the Buddhist prayer drum did I feel like my soul had come home.

adoption agency | My first trip to Korea was with the Holt Motherland Tour. For the majority of the trip, we saw monuments and other points of interest; however, for me, the overwhelming memories are of the other adoptees who I met during the trip. Being at the adoption agency and receiving babies to be escorted to their new parents and homes in the U.S. seemed to bring my journey full circle. However, in my future travels to Korea, I experienced a completely different feeling about the adoption agency.

Adoption Agency, Seoul | The adoption agency was closed at the time, but the lobby area was open. Even though I only got to stand in the building, the experience was life-changing and made the fact that I was adopted all the more real to me. The fact that I was brought into that place 20 years before as a newborn was just amazing. There really were no words.

In summary of Table 6. and Table 7., regarding responses to most memorable location, six percent describe the location via metaphor, simile and symbolism. One participant responds, “It was home.”
Sixty-seven percent of the responses refer to the location via experiences in which the participant described the *literary setting* as a list of characteristics and a sequence of time or movement through space. In some cases, the participant was within the scene described, and at other times, the participant was looking on to the scene as an observer. One participant responds, “There were thousands of Koreans all wearing red outside on the streets watching the world cup game on a big screen.”

Five percent describe the most memorable location via *metaphoric frame image*. One participant replied, “Nam Dae Moon was smaller and more quaint…lots of older buildings there…there is a tea house hidden that has live birds flying around. It was a ‘sweet’ experience.”

In addition, 38% describe the location as having made a *dominant impression* on the participant. One participant replied, “It was the first time I felt connected to my people and felt like I had a real family history. It was the first time I felt like I wasn’t just poofed into existence but was born.” Another participant replied, “It was most memorable because it was as close as I could get to understanding my life before adoption. I didn’t get to see the orphanage where I was, but it was all I was going to get. It sounds corny, but it really was like trying to fill that ‘spot/hole’ in your life that was missing.” Eleven responses were not analyzed.

Table 8. categorizes participant open ended responses to why the most memorable *characteristic* was memorable within each of the four categories and then summarizes the responses.
Table 8. Summary of memorable characteristic descriptions (N=152)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Logic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor (Simile, Symbol)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary setting (list, timeflow, movement)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Logic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphoric frame image (frame of reference)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant impression (effect on the perceiver, mark on the mind)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not analyzed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>118</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Total may not equal 152 due to skipped or other response.*

Table 9. reports a representation of responses regarding how adoptees describe their place experiences via Conron’s literary analysis regarding place experience progression.

Table 9. Descriptive Responses for most memorable characteristic

<p>| Conron's Visual and Cognitive Logic as Framework for Ethnic Identity Development |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>26. Why the most memorable <strong>characteristic</strong> was memorable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Logic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor (Simile, Symbol)</td>
<td>Because they brought memories of well being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMZ</td>
<td>The contrast between city living and countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holt Ilsan Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literary setting (list, timeflow, movement)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple, Haeinsa, Gaya Mtn</td>
<td>Interior presence, area holding the blocks, the fact that they are naturally preserved for 800 + years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nam Dae Moon</td>
<td>I love texture and pattern...I am very visual and loved seeing how Korea used color, patterns and building materials and could compare to what I knew of China and Japan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**First Presbyterian Church in Seoul**

(10,000 members!)

I could not believe how lush the land was and how so many people fit in such a small amount of land. It was also remarkable that there were so many churches with illuminated crosses. Traveling, we observed a sea of red-lit crosses everywhere! While driving, I asked the Pastor if they ever felt afraid of the North. He said, "We are used to the threat and besides - do you see all of these crosses? We know they protect us."

**Gwanusan Mountain, Samgyeri, Masan**

Korea has nice landscape but it usually gets overrun by the cities. Hiking is so simple and relaxing, also getting out and away from the city leads to complex thoughts and ideas about what I want out of this experience. Silence in Korea is rare so it's very special to get to a place where it's all around you.

**A temple somewhere in Chilisan**

It was a landscape I had never seen before - the large towering mountains, the tiled upward arching roofs of the temple, the trees. It was a Korea of another time and space.

**holt family house (Seoul home)**

Simply put is was the feelings, people I was with and the symbolism. There was nothing material about it and nothing you could put on a post card. Seoul was not a picture or a memory... it was a feeling.

**Orphanage**

in the simplicity of caring for children, there is a vast complexity of services, emotions, needs, wants, longings, and individuality
Orphanage

I love the sound of spoken Korean even though I cannot speak it. There was something about hearing spoken Korean in an orphanage that made the trip memorable - but it was a bit of a heartache memory that I could not speak to the staff or orphans there.

Holt Ilsan Center

We have many material goods and are not always happy or content; we learned to appreciate people for who they are and were amazed at the contentment most residents.

Gangnam district (the street with all the businesses)

I had a lot of unique food every day; I can't taste keem (sp) without thinking of my Korean host family. The most memorable noise was the sound of the subway intercom system notifying me of the various stations.

Pusan

Food locations was the best because the food was great. There was always good people watching. The way dining is done in Korea was so different with all the little side dishes to the utensils. It was very apparent that there were major differences in the customs of doing things. I liked experiencing different ways of something that we do on a regular basis.

Ulsanbawi at Seoraksan

Seoraksan park is a national treasure, and the hike to the top of Ulsanbawi is, well, scary. The mountain itself is exotic yet familiar. Oh, the rope bridge you've got to cross to get to the peak is just ridiculous! Only in Korea.

First visit toward ethnic identity reconstruction and place attachment variables.

In addition to descriptive narratives regarding adoptee place experiences as a development of identity, to determine whether an association or relationship exists between place identity, place dependence, and ethnic identity as a result of the first return trip, correlation analyses were conducted to obtain correlation coefficients (Table 10.). Only one relationship (positive) between ethnic identity reconstruction items (i.e. I feel a sense of pride in my ethnic identity history because of my trip to Korea and My trip to Korea positively...
reinforced my Korean distinctiveness) was significant. The relationship, however, with the reverse-worded item (i.e. Before my trip to Korea, I did not view myself as possessing a Korean heritage), was negative, and not statistically significant. This suggests that prior to the trip, how participants identified was not associated with any reinforcement of pride and Korean distinctiveness following their trip. Significant relationships were found between all three place identity variables (i.e. This location in Korea says a lot about who I am, I am strongly attached to this place, and this location says a lot about me) as well as place dependence variables (e.g. I get the most satisfaction from visiting Korea than other place and It makes me feel sad to think of never visiting Korea again, this place means a lot to me). Positive and significant relationships between place identity items, suggests that participant responses on one item will be similar to that of the remaining two items. Similarly, as responses to place dependence variables increase, the responses to the remaining two items will also increase.
Table 10. Correlations between participant ratings of ethnic identity, place identity, and place dependence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Sense of pride in ethnic identity from Korea</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.74**</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Did not possess Korean heritage prior to trip</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Positively reinforces Korean distinctiveness</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Strongly identify with place</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.72**</td>
<td>0.73**</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Strong attachment to place</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.62**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.63**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Location says a lot about me</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.62**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place Dependence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 More satisfaction with Korea than any other location</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.47**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Sad to think about never visiting Korea again</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.28**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Location has a great deal of meaning</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

Additionally ethnic identity items (with the exception of the negative - worded item) were associated with place identity items with the exception of one item (e.g. I feel strongly
attached to this place). These same variables (e.g. pride and Korean distinctiveness) were significantly related to place dependence variables with the exception of one item (e.g. This place means a great deal to me). All six relationships between place identity and place dependence variables were statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level, suggesting that as all place identity scores increase, so will place dependence scores. In terms of the negatively worded ethnic identity item, the only statistically significant relationship was found with one place dependence item (e.g. I get more satisfaction from visiting Korea than any other place).

**Constructing Place**

**Influence of trip to present living environment.**

Subsequent to the first return visit to Korea, as evidence of living environment change, 75% ($n=91$) of participants report possessing Korean cultural items in their home, and 27% ($n=33$) agree that their trip influences design choices in their home. However, 36% ($n=43$) report that Korean cultural items symbolize a connection to their missing history (Figure 13). In terms of the reverse worded question, 63% ($n=76$) report disagreeing that the Korean cultural items in their home are only for decoration and hold no personal meaning. In addition, 41% ($n=49$) of participants report that they are comforted by Korean ethnic items in their living environment. Finally, there is minimal difference in responses to the desire to learn more about Korean design.
Figure 13. Influence of trip to present living environment

Most meaningful objects brought home from Korea.

Survey participants were asked to describe the most meaningful objects or souvenirs brought home from the first return trip to Korea (Table 11.). Twenty-three percent reported small mementos such as jewelry, books and souvenirs. One participant responded, “Souvenirs are ‘things’, I most remember experiences.” Another participant responded, “a daughter.” Another participant responded, “the pictures, they’re worth 1,000 words.” Finally, one participant responded, “A stone from Korea. It’s like being able to touch a piece of my birth country whenever I want.”
Table 11. Objects brought home (N=152)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korean mementos (jewelry, wedding ducks and dolls, flag, books, musical instrument, fan)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean traditional dress (hanbok, dance crowns, shoes)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean traditional furniture (box, cabinet, table, chair, chest, pillow, painting, scroll, light, lantern, silk print)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean traditional pottery and eating utensils (celadon, teapot and cups, chopsticks, bowls, kimchee jar)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs to record memories of the trip.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't remember, not applicable, living in Korea or nothing.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects related to adoption agency visit (video, or documents).</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n=116)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total may not equal 152 due to skipped or other response.

What possessing Korean items symbolize.

As stated earlier, the notion of ethnic identity is commonly viewed as a multidimensional construct that includes feelings of belonging and pride, a secure sense of group membership, positive attitudes toward one’s ethnic group and a connection to others of the same ethnicity (Bergquist, 2000). In addition, ethnic identity implies a connection or link to an individual’s ethnic location of origin or one’s birth country (Napier, 2009). Participants were asked what does possessing Korean items symbolize or represent for you (Table 12.). Eighty-two percent referred to terms which define ethnic identity.
Table 12. Objects brought home meaning (N=152)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic identity (belonging, pride, history, roots, heritage, connection to country and culture, physical history, reminder of being Korean, who I am, missing piece, memories)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t attach meaning, no items, I don't know, means nothing, not applicable.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n=114)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Total may not equal 152 due to skipped or other response.*

In more detail, one participant responded, “It gives tangible proof to a part of me that is not fully formed.” Another participant responded, “My own material history, a tangible piece of my heritage. It is difficult to look Korean growing up, but have nothing else to connect you.” Finally, one participant responded, “Seeing authentic Korean celadon, prints, screens and artifacts in my home bring to me a tactile connection to Korea. It reminds me of where I was when I bought the item, friends and associates who have gifted the item to me and a sense of connection to my beginnings.”

**Living environment change after visiting Korea.**

The way in which individuals define domestic spaces allow for representation to define oneself. Domestic spaces become an extension of cultural and ethnic identity (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). We bring things into our lives that have meaning and often symbolize a specific event or memorable experience. In examining the hypothesis, from memorable place experiences, Korean adult adoptees remember these experiences, and from these experiences construct places in which they often incorporate
objects as remembrance of experiences with places. Survey participants were asked how their living environment has changed after visiting Korea. Forty-eight percent reported that their environment hasn’t changed, while 44% responded that the design of their environment has changed via décor, furniture and Korean design characteristics (Table 13.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13. Influence of trip to domestic space (N=152)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living environment change after visiting Korea.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hasn't changed, not applicable, not much, living in Korea</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design has changed (different materials, décor, more organized, simplicity, more colors, display Korean items)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Korean customs and culture (sit, sleep, eat on the floor, take shoes off, cooking)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n=116)</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Total may not equal 152 due to skipped or other response.*

In regards to design change, one participant responds, “I wanted to decorate as much as I could with things I brought back. When I went 2 years ago I was quite poor working for the school district at that time. Since then, I have found Korean pieces and always try to buy them.” Another participant responds, “My celadon jar is displayed in the entryway to see every day, some artwork is hung in various rooms, and I’ve got a few pictures of my trip to Korea scattered around the house.” In regards to Korean customs and culture, one participant responds, “I've become a little more simplistic, cleaning out my space to try and get it to be more open.” Another participant responds, “I would love to have under floor heating and
would love to someday make a special tea room decorated w/Korean design.” Finally, one participant responds, “I'm inclined to sleep/eat on the floor more. A la Korean culture.”

**First return visit and ethnic identity.**

To conclude the survey, participants were given one final opportunity to submit additional comments regarding the first trip back to Korea or Korean ethnic identity. Over 40% reported additional comments regarding ethnic identity association as a result of the trip (Table 14.). One participant responds, “As a young child, I thought I was French, Italian (My father is this), English, Irish, Scottish (My mother) AND Korean....but I identified with being a white American ALWAYS. I never had identity crisis or discomfort with looking Korean; EXCEPT for the feeling that I was UGLY. After visiting Korea, being present among a mass of people who looked similar - I felt a compounding & profound sense of NORMAL. I realized I am not ugly, just different, and I am sooooo GLAD to be different among the majority of white faces that I am accustomed to.”
Table 14. First trip and ethnic identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic identity association</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, nothing to add or too young to remember</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic identity development via multiple trips</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip not associated with Korean ethnicity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching or living in Korea</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painful, confusing experience with first return trip or adoption</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthfamily search, meeting or foster family meeting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (appreciate adoptive parents, memorable, enjoyed it)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wished they had been exposed at a young age to language and culture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive parents Korean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n=81)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total may not equal 152 due to other response.

Eleven percent report nothing additional to add, or they were too young to remember specifics of the return trip to Korea. In addition, 10% report an ethnic identity development via multiple return trips to Korea. One participant responds,

My first visit was the tip of the iceberg so to speak. My second trip was more exploratory in scope and self-exploration because it wasn't a tightly scheduled tour. For my third trip, I attended the 2004 gathering in Seoul with 400+ adoptees. All three trips have given me an appreciation for my Korean heritage and have left me wanting to know more.

Seven percent report experiences related to their birth family or foster family search or meetings, or describe painful or confusing experiences as a result of the return trip or their adoption. One participant adds that he/she wished they had been exposed at a young age to
Korean language and culture, and one participant adds that his/her adoptive parents were Korean.

**A holistic view of Korea place experiences and ethnic identity development.**

From adoptees’ survey responses, *Ethnic identity development: in-between place, finding place, constructing place*, these life stages involving first return visits to Korea often bring the majority of adoptees closer to a positive Korean ethnic identity and thus psychological wellbeing. While each life stage is viewed as a complex holistic event, to review life stages across each representative participant, each summary is provided as an overview of the three conceptual place identity frameworks. In summary, one participant responds, her family associated with other Korean adoptee families, but not with other Korean ethnic families, did not learn the Korean language, did not grow up with Korean ethnic items in the home, was not familiarized with Korean culture, did not attend Korean lessons or school, viewed herself as a person from her country of residence, and did not view herself as Korean. The first trip back to Korea was in 2004; she was 48 years old and has made 2 return trips. Her first trip was as a tourist. She did not expect to find what was missing in her life, and wants to visit Korea again. She strongly disagrees with the trip being emotional and poignant, and yet she strongly disagrees that the trip was unemotional and not memorable. Her most memorable locations were the Blue House, museum from North Korea, and an art museum. When asked why the number 1 location was memorable, she responds, “It was a rare privilege to be given a tour to the Blue House and meet the Korean First Lady.” Architecture, landscape, interior design and materials, simplicity and plants and trees were her most memorable characteristics of the most memorable location.
Additionally, in reference to her living environment, when asked what object or souvenir was most memorable, she responds,

My hanbok. I wear it about 4 times a year at Korean Festivals. When I wear it and pull my hair back I look very ethnic until I begin speaking with a Dutch accent! I love the design, bright colors and beauty of the hanbok.

When asked what does possessing Korean items symbolize or represent for you, she responds,

Seeing authentic Korean celadon, prints, screens and artifacts in my home bring to me a tactile connection to Korea. It reminds me of where I was when I bought the item, friends and associates who have gifted the item to me, and a sense of connection to my beginnings.

When asked to describe if or how your living environment has changed after visiting Korea, she responds,

While I had quite a few items in our home from Korea after the visit the additional items brought together some pieces of the puzzle, such as the history of Korea, location of various items, the item’s role in Korea’s history and being able to connect to specific locations and cities in Korea, such as my visit to Kuemsan and the World Ginseng (Insam) Festival in 2006. Now when I see ginseng I remember my visit to Keumsan, the people, food and landscape.

Finally, when asked if there is anything else that you would like to tell me about yourself regarding your first visit back to Korea or your Korean ethnic identity, she responds,
My husband, son (at that time he was 11 years old) and I went together to attend the First Korean Adoptee Gathering in Seoul. After the gathering we went on a 7 day tour of South Korea, from Seoul to Jeju Island, Busan and Kyoungju. We saw many temples, palaces, burial sites, museums, the Ocean, the beaches, and the fish market. We traveled by plane, bus, and train. We were able to shop in large and small locations. Made friends easily with other adoptees on the trip. Our favorite location was Jeju Island and the Sollac Tea Museum.

As another participant describes her experiences, her family associated with other Korean adoptee families, but not with other Korean ethnic families, she did not learn the Korean language, did not grow up with Korean ethnic items in the home. She was not familiarized with Korean culture, did not attend Korean lessons or school, she viewed herself as a person and did not view herself as Korean. Her first trip back to Korea was in 1982; she was 19 years old and she has made 3 return trips. She went back as a tourist. Her trip was encouraged by her parents and it was sponsored by her adoption agency. She did not expect to find something that was missing in her life. She strongly disagrees that the trip was unemotional and not memorable and she agrees that she wants to visit Korea again as soon as possible. The adoption agency and the street markets were her most memorable locations. Smells, architecture, simplicity, building materials and plants and trees were her most memorable characteristics of the most memorable location.

In regard to living environment, when asked what the most memorable object brought home, she responds, “One of my favorites is a ceramic bowl that I purchased at an Il San
shop. I love its simple curved sides and color.” When asked what possessing Korean items symbolize for you, she responds, “It represents a link to my heritage that I missed while growing up in an all-American house.” When asked how your living environment has changed as a result of your trip, she responds, “I decorate my home with art and ceramics from Korea. Even though my home is not a traditional Korean home, it is obvious to a visitor that Korea is a part of me.” When asked if there is anything else you would like to add regarding your first visit back to Korea or your Korean ethnic identity, she responds,

My first visit was the tip of the iceberg so to speak. My second trip was more exploratory in scope and self-exploration because it wasn't a tightly scheduled tour. For my third trip, I attended the 2004 gathering in Seoul with 400+ adoptees. All three trips have given me an appreciation for my Korean heritage and have left me wanting to know more.

Finally, another participant describes his experiences; he didn’t associate with other Korean families, and he did not attend Korean lessons or school. He doesn’t remember if he was exposed to Korean culture or had Korean items in his home. He did not view himself as Korean, but as American, and he did not view himself as a part of an ethnic group. He viewed himself as just a person. When asked if there was anything else he would like me to know about his family, education, profession or personal interests, he responded,

Up until college I was not very interested in Korea (purposefully ignoring it) although I had visited when I was 12. A study abroad experience in Japan ultimately changed that when I met a Korean friend while having time to reflect on myself far from home.
He returned to Korea in 1996 when he was 12 years old. He has been to Korea once. He went as a tourist. He was encouraged by his parents to go on the trip. The trip was sponsored by his adoption agency. He did not expect to find something that was missing. He was neutral to whether the trip was extremely emotional or poignant. He disagrees that the trip was distressing and upsetting. He strongly disagrees that the trip was unemotional and not memorable and strongly agrees that he wants to return as soon as possible. The fish markets in Busan, Jeju beach and temple or palace somewhere were his most memorable locations visited. When asked why his most memorable location was memorable, he responds, “saw many new things including an octopus trying to get away by crawling along the floor.” His most memorable characteristics of the most memorable location were the sea cucumbers and octopus, sounds, plants and trees, weather, and monotones and neutrals.

When asked specific questions regarding living environment, the most meaningful souvenir or item brought home he responds, “world cup 2002 hat I bought on the streets.” When asked what possessing Korean items symbolize for you, he responds, “now? A choice in something that is a part of my heritage. before: not much.” When asked how his living environment has changed after the trip, he responds, “a lot has changed, but not so much from having visited Korea since that was a long time ago.” In addition, he was interested in exchanging emails and continuing the discussion.
Study Limitations

As stated earlier, the findings of this study are preliminary and should be interpreted in the context of several limitations. As a population, adult Korean adoptees are not easily accessible especially in terms of obtaining a random sample. Although I am pleased with the original sample size (N = 451), these participants represent only a fraction of adults who were adopted from Korea when young. Particularly, participants who took part in this study were already affiliated with Korean adoptee organizations, adoption agencies, and/or Internet listserves specifically for Korean adoptees. It is possible that participants already involved with the Korean adoptee community, would be more likely to have access to research opportunities than adoptees with no involvement. Although it appears that there are a good range of responses, the findings cannot be generalized to the population of adult Korean adoptees considering that the sample reflects selective participation. Additionally, when looking closely at the demographics of participants, the education levels are impressive. Almost three quarters of participants reported attaining college degrees (68%) and 20% of participants had graduate or professional levels of education, which could also reflect an increased likelihood for participation if there was professional interest in research.

Additionally, considering that participants were asked to reflect back on their formative years, it is possible that their memory recall became an issue in terms of providing accurate responses. Sample participants were asked to respond to items based on their experiences, feelings, and socialization particularly between the ages of 8 and 14; however, the majority of participants were at least six years older (20 to 29 years). It is very likely that participants were unable to recall the nuances of their experiences or may have skewed
memories based on subsequent subjective experiences. Additionally, 22.5% (n = 34) of participants reported having returned to Korea for the first time as a child. Similar to the previous statement, participants may have struggled in their attempts to remember childhood experiences or were not developmentally ready to understand or identify the meaning or significance of their visit. Several participants reported having made multiple trips to Korea since their original visit. Experiences during subsequent visits to Korea may have clouded recollections or may have been generalized to the memories of their initial visit. And finally, in reference to correlation analysis, the measures used to assess the constructs of ethnic identity, place attachment, and place dependence have not undergone the rigor of testing to determine whether items were completely representative of the observed constructs among this particular sample. Additional psychometric inquiry into these constructs using aspects of this measure is needed.

In summary, Chapter Seven drew attention to place and identity experiences among 451 adult adoptees, of which 152 returned to Korea. While trends in the data appear, each story is unique, and in telling their stories, adoptees confirm that they want their story heard. These stories represent a progression of place and identity experiences. By categorizing place descriptive narratives of adoptee experiences, these experiences contribute to a progression of place experiences as they relate to ethnic identity development.
8. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Overview

This study has shown how adult Korean adoptees evolve from formative years’ identities (in-between place) to more stable ethnic identities, how Korean place experiences (finding place) become memorable experiences and symbolize connections to a renewed ethnic identity, and finally, how incorporation of meaningful objects into adoptees’ living spaces (constructing place) reflects and symbolizes their emerging ethnic identity. Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity emergence evolves along a continuum of three holistic conceptual place identity experiences, in-between place, finding place, and constructing place.

Korean adoptees report limited exposure to Korean culture, Korean language, Korean schools, and Korean ethnic populations during their formative years, and as a result report difficulties in forming healthy, stable Korean ethnic identities. Adoptees write of these experiences as feeling alienated and not belonging to their adoptive culture, or their Korean birth culture. This existence is painful and difficult to navigate.

During young adulthood, adoptees return to Korea for their first return visit. In remembering the trip, adoptees experience memorable places and as a result, acknowledge an attachment to their birth country Korea and an emergence of ethnic identity, a sense of belonging, pride, and history. These first trips represent a significant, life-changing, empowering experience for adoptees. For the first time, adoptees feel a sense of connection to self; they finally feel like they have something real, something tangible to identify with and define their existence; these experiences fill an empty hole in their lives.
In remembering these significant experiences with place and a newfound ethnic identity, adoptees return to their place of residence and incorporate Korean cultural objects into their living spaces, and in addition, sometimes incorporate Korean customs specific to how they eat and sleep. These Korean objects and customs symbolize their ethnic identity, an identity to self, and an identity significant in defining self to others. In these actions, adoptees’ healthy, stable identities, become visual, tangible identities signifying adoptees’ link to their past, their link to their return visit to Korea, and their link to their future, a future which connects them to their past, a past they want to display to others.

Korean adoptees’ experiences with places pay significant roles in their emerging ethnic identity. From their experiences we gain insight into how places become meaningful, and how in remembering these places, how these places symbolize ethnic identity and influence psychological wellbeing.

This research confirms place and place attachment concepts, in which to adoptees’ place is space given meaning, and adoptees’ attach to places that satisfy emotional needs. In addition this research validates identity and ethnic identity concepts as a construct of place attachment, in which identity is how adoptees define themselves and ethnic identity includes feelings of belonging and pride specific to adoptees place experiences their first return trip to Korea. Finally, this research describes how in remembering memorable places, adoptees incorporate representative objects of their first return trip into their domestic spaces as visual symbols of identity to self and to others. In these ways, adoptees construct their place to enhance their lives and thus their psychological wellbeing.
Discussion

As seen in the sample of responses among Korean adoptees, Korean adoptees’ evolve their ethnic identity through a progression of Korea place experiences. Adoptees’ experiences are profoundly influenced by place, places which hinder or assist in how adoptees define healthy, stable identities. To adoptees, these places come to represent more than physical locations, these places hold emotional meaning and attachment or detachment. As infants or children, adoptees leave their familial, cultural, ethnic, and geographic connections to Korea, to reside in Western societies, places where they do not truly fit in, often exhibit no ethnic identity, and as a result, often struggle to form healthy, stable identities. Residing within entirely White environments with no connections to Korean culture, navigating within these pre-defined Western society identities, is difficult and often traumatizing for adoptees. Adoptees’ childhood memories often include difficulties related to discrimination, racism, abandonment, abuse, exclusion from adopted family history, being a minority, and diminished self-esteem. Situated within these circumstances, findings demonstrate that 73% of adoptees identify with their adoptive country residence and do not possess an ethnic identity.

As adoptees approach adulthood, they begin to question their heritage and ethnicity and become interested in their culture and country of birth. Among those who attended college, during that time, adoptees begin to associate with other Koreans. During this stage of life, adoptees often decide to make their first return trip to Korea. Findings demonstrate that of 152 participants that traveled back to Korea, the average age to return to Korea was 24 years (\(M = 24.22\)). These return first visits come to represent their ethnic identity to their birth of their ethnic identity. Positive and significant relationships (P<0.01) were found between
ethnic identity and place identity and place dependence as a result of the first return trip to Korea. These findings confirm an emergence from minimal ethnic identity during adoptees’ formative years to newfound feelings of ethnic pride and belonging and identity and dependence to places in Korea.

After the first return trip to Korea, adoptees remember these experiences, and from these experiences construct places to incorporate objects as remembrance of experiences with places. In addition, in remembering their experiences of their first trip to Korea, adoptees emphasize that owning and displaying these objects symbolizes their connection to their heritage, history, culture and ethnicity, in fact, their ethnic identity. Findings demonstrate that 75% reported possessing Korean cultural items in their homes, and 82% of adoptees reported that possessing Korean items symbolized their ethnic identity. These objects come to represent places visited within places in which they reside. By remembering these places via objects, these objects hold emotional meaning, and are something adoptees can touch, display, and reflect on when they are not in Korea. These objects become tangible links to their pasts and come to represent much more than the actual physical object. These objects symbolize their ethnic identity. Adoptees finally feel a sense of pride and connection to their place of birth and by owning and displaying these objects, adoptees reveal an emergence of their ethnic identity for themselves and for others to see.

Each of these stages in adoptees’ lives represents their ethnic identity development. Adoptees progress from being in-between place during their formative years, to finding-place during their early adult years when they make their first return trip to Korea, and finally constructing-place as they return to their country of residence and incorporate objects,
characteristics, and Korean customs into their homes. These three stages emphasize how places come to represent identity and ethnic identity development.

**Entire Sample**

The entire sample consists of predominantly Euro-Caucasian adopted Korean adults from eleven countries and the majority were between the ages of 20 and 29. Of the entire sample (N = 451), 152 traveled back to Korea. Napier (2009) summarizes formative years’ Korean exposure and identification among the entire sample in her previous study. In terms of this study, the focus is participants who have returned to Korea.

**Participants Who Visited Korea**

Of the participants who visited Korea, 97% report being adopted into Caucasian families, 80% were female, and 20% were male, and 87% were adopted at three years or younger. Having been adopted at this age, they would not have memories of their birth country, language, family, or customs. They would have no memory to associate their outward appearance with their country of birth. For these reasons, adoptees often report difficulties in not fitting into their adoptive Western society environments. Korean adoptees exhibit separate challenges in formulating their ethnic identities compared to immigrants and refugee populations in that they do not have memories of their birth countries and they do not have other ethnic family members with which to associate their outward appearance. For this reason, adoptees often report embarrassment and shame at their Asian physiognomy characteristics.
In-between place.

Adoptees report residing in an *in-between* place where they do not feel that they belong. They are outsiders, not part of the Caucasian group with which they seek entry. In addition, Korean adoptees tendency to report minimal exposure to Korean culture while growing up minimizes opportunities to formulate their ethnic identities. Particularly, from the six indicators of ethnic socialization, the majority of participants reported having limited exposure to Korean culture camps, language lessons/school, ethnic items in the home, or general cultural socialization such as food, music or dress; however, socialization with adoptive families with Korean children appeared to be more common. Additionally, in terms of their ethnic identification during their formative years, participant responses appeared to be more evenly distributed (based on yes/no percentages) when asked if they identified as Korean only, any ethnic group, and identifying as Korean combined with their adoptive nationality (e.g. Korean American). However, the findings were less evenly distributed when asked whether they identified with terms that did not include “Korean” (i.e. just a person and adoptive parents’ nationality). This may suggest that particularly during their formative years, participants identified with terminology that did not include ethnic or racial descriptors (e.g. Asian or Korean).

These findings are not overly surprising given that previous research (Hübinette, 2007) suggests that Korean adoptees often report experiencing racial discomfort while growing up in predominantly White, homogenous communities. This may be particularly applicable to the sample considering that participants also described a limited degree of ethnic exposure as children. Without natural immersion or contact with other individuals of Korean
descent, adoptees are more likely to downplay their ethnic differences, and identify as American instead of Korean American (Huh & Reid, 2001). It is unfortunate that as Korean children, without any Korean association, adoptees do not exhibit pride in their Koreanness and are often made to feel ashamed of their outward appearance.

Finding place.

The significance of place can be associated with the fact that individuals are always situated in place locations and that the context of these experiences contributes to their sense of identity and understanding of life (Entrikin, 1991). The purpose of this study was to begin by presenting the concept of place attachment and ethnic identity among adult Korean adoptees’ concerning their first return trip to Korea. Bivariate correlations suggest a statistically significant relationship between place identity (p < 0.01) and dependence (p < 0.01) as indicators of place attachment (Twigger - Ross & Uzzell, 1996) as well as Korean distinctiveness and pride (p < 0.01) as indicators of ethnic identity (Bergquist, 2000; Breakwell, 1983).

Descriptive findings illustrate the characteristics and locations that were most meaningful for participants. By including geographic context and sensory descriptors, contextual information is provided that speaks to participants’ attachment to Korea. Although street markets, metropolitan cities, and authentic Korean - type locations such as temples, folk villages, and palaces, and adoption agencies were the most frequented, the most memorable were metropolitan cities, orphanages, palace-temple-folk villages, adoption agencies, and public street markets. Participants overwhelmingly chose food as the most memorable characteristic, landscape as the second most memorable, and architecture as the third most
memorable. Interestingly, food, landscape, and architecture can certainly be found near street vendors and in metropolitan areas; however, it is also important to underscore that both characteristics for food and landscape can also be found in various other locations. Nevertheless, the association to Korean food, landscapes and architecture are most likely unique experiences of Korean adoptees, especially due to minimal exposure to Korean culture and ethnicity during their formative years.

It is not surprising that food was described as the most memorable, considering the range of sensory experiences involved with aspects of food. Various memories of locations, emotions, and interactions, may be ignited when adoptees re-experience the aroma of sesame oil, view an assortment of panchans on a table, taste fresh kimchi, and hear the crackling of stone pots. In addition, temples, palaces and museums as well as folk villages were among the most frequented locations and architecture and patterns, design and materials were selected among the most memorable characteristics; it is interesting to note that these locations and characteristics symbolize authentic Korean environments. Perhaps the uniqueness of these environments provides a newfound identity to a place previously known only in fantasy. Although some participants in the sample described having visited Korea on multiple occasions or when they were young, these associations may have been stronger for them after their initial visit, considering the likelihood of having minimal exposure to Korean culture prior to their trips.

In addition to descriptive statistics regarding the first return visit, quantitative content analysis to summarize findings, followed by qualitative content analysis via visual and cognitive logic categorizes findings further in validate concepts of place attachment and
ethnic identity. Participants first described the location and meaning. Secondly, participants described characteristics and meaning for the most memorable location. It is interesting to note that of the 152 participants, over 90% described in their own words some type of memorable association to their most memorable location. These responses varied from one word to one response that was over 600 words. From sample responses, adoptees remember the experience as a life changing event and want to tell their story.

In terms of relating description of the trip to metaphor, adoptees describe the trip as home, connected, a beginning, tangible link, history, and existence. These findings are not surprising after review of previous adoptee literary works describing experiences while traveling to Korea; adoptees often describe their experiences from metaphor or simile for what the first visit means to them. Each story most often represents some sort of ethnic identity development. For some adoptees, this development may take years to finally recognize and come to terms with.

At the same time, from visual to cognitive logic, participants predominantly describe the experience from literary setting and dominant impression. In some cases, participant responses describe a list of characteristics with minimal involvement in the scene such as how the city mixes the old and the new, while others look on to a scene below, as referenced by looking down on the City Hall where they were taken and processed for adoption. Finally, participants describe themselves within the scene at a restaurant being hugged by a stranger. These descriptions represent a progression of place experiences from outside to inside, which is a component of finding place, a place in Korea that is theirs, a place that they are finally able to identify with.
From Conron’s (1974) *metaphoric frame image*, participants were not inclined to detail their memorable location from literary setting as it intersects with landscape as metaphor. The details of the location and characteristics were least described from this viewpoint.

From *dominant impression*, participants describe meaning of the trip in how it has made an effect on their lives. They describe what has changed. The trip has given them meaning and provided them with something that was missing. Adoptees describe finally being able to make sense of their lives, their identity and their adoption. These descriptions include emotion and feelings, an extension of visual impressions or *dominant impressions* which begins the association from their place experience in Korea, *finding place*, to incorporating meaning and objects of the trip into domestic living spaces, to begin *constructing place*.

**Constructing place.**

Our homes may provide sanctuary, shelter, and comfort and whether we consciously or unconsciously acknowledge the intention, we use our home environment to express something about ourselves (Cooper Marcus, 1997). Our living environment may become an extension of our ethnic and cultural identity. We personalize our space with objects and invest emotion and meaning and make a conscious effort to include these objects in our living spaces. In this way, we surround ourselves with meaningful objects which comfort us and allow others a glimpse of who we are. As we incorporate meaningful objects into our spaces we represent our identity development, we are *constructing place*. 

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From descriptive statistics in reference to living environment changes as a result of the first return visit, it is interesting to note that only 27% agree that their trip influences design choices in their living environment and only 36% agree that Korean items symbolize a connection to their missing history. In response to these findings, it is surprising that 63% disagree that the Korean ethnic and cultural items in their homes are for decoration only. If 63% of participants have Korean items in their homes, what is the value they provide other than just decoration?

The majority of participants reported bringing objects home from Korea as a reminder of the trip. Korean mementos were the most popular objects brought home such as jewelry, wedding ducks and dolls, flags, books, musical instruments and fans. In addition, traditional Korean dress was the second most popular item brought home and third, traditional furniture items and traditional pottery and eating utensils which were incorporated into their living environments. Photographs were also reminders of the trip. It is not surprising that so many of the items brought home were Korean traditional items, considering that the majority of participants were not exposed to Korean culture and the history, and as a result associate these objects with a previous mystical and fantasized view of their birth country and culture.

Overall, 82% of the objects brought home symbolized an ethnic association. It is not surprising that these objects symbolize ethnic identity considering participant survey responses in terms of viewing oneself as Korean, almost 50% did not view themselves as Korean. These objects may represent a Korean ethnic identity not present during their formative years.
As evidence of changes to living space, over 50% report that their living environment has changed, specifically regarding design, customs and culture. It is interesting to note that distinguishing characteristics of Korean architecture and design were incorporated within living spaces, such as simplicity, materials, colors, and display of items. In addition, over 10% incorporated customs such as sitting, sleeping, eating on the floor, taking off of shoes at the door, and incorporated Korean cooking into their living environments. Incorporation of cooking should not be surprising, considering that food was the most memorable characteristic of the most memorable locations visited in Korea.

In conclusion to the survey, additional comments regarding identity, multiple trips to Korea, teaching and living in Korea, and meeting birth family members and foster families, these descriptions of adoptee place experiences provide for an emergence of development of ethnic identity.
Implications for Research

According to Norberg- Shultz (1985), places tend to become objects of human identification because they embody existential meanings related to belonging and relationships. By gaining an understanding of the locations and characteristics most memorable for participants and how participants re-represent place experiences via constructing place in their living spaces, design researchers can identify concepts in relation to architecture and design to better support belonging (Seamon, 1993).

Overall, the findings presented in this paper validate the significance that place attachment to Korea may have for adult Korean adoptees, and subsequently, how and why adoptees re-represent place within their living spaces. Specifically, how each experience contributes to adoptees’ ethnic identity development. From these experiences, design researchers, adoptive parents, academic scholars, and all those in a position to make an impact regarding displaced populations, should further consider the importance of place attachment in how these experiences impact design of home environments as implications for identity. By maintaining a meaningful representation of experiences from Korea in everyday lives, living spaces serve as a new or different type of attachment to Korea and by constructing these places, potentially begins to minimize feelings of displacement while enhancing psychological wellbeing.
Design Recommendations.

From an interdisciplinary design perspective, memorable place experiences often become part of an individual’s identity. When we identify with a place we form an emotional connection to that place. We often incorporate memorable objects of the experience as a reminder of the experience. In recommending design implications, this study validates the inclusion of meaningful objects from meaningful place experiences as representations of emerging ethnic identity. Adoptees’ selection of memorable objects from most memorable locations and characteristics for incorporation into their living spaces is supported by participants who described a change to their living environments. From these findings, recurrent themes support incorporation of Korean ethnic and cultural objects and customs into domestic living spaces as representation of memorable place experiences. In that most of the objects symbolized aspects of Korean ethnic identity (belonging, pride, history, roots, heritage, connection to country and culture, physical history, reminder of being Korean, who I am, missing piece, memories) they can be seen as further validating adoptees ethnic identity emergence and development.
Conceptual contribution.

Ethnic identity as a construct of place attachment has not been included in extensive research review, although identity is posited as a construct of place attachment. Findings from this study claim that ethnic identity is directly related to place attachment and should be considered in studying place attachment concepts.

Finally, this study contributes new knowledge in defining a chronological conceptual framework for place and identity among Korean adoptees. The conceptual framework is grounded in previous research regarding place and identity, and evaluated via adoptee literary works, adoptee research, and adoptee survey responses. As a result, Ethnic Identity Development may be defined as In-between place (adoptees’ formative years in which they exist in dualistic dimensions of place and self), Finding place (adoptees’ first return trip to Korea in which they report finding place and thus self), and Constructing place (adoptees’ return to their residence to incorporate memorable reminders from their trip as symbolization of ethnic identity and self).

In proposing a conceptual chronological place and identity model for Korean adoptee experiences, the intent is that this model might provide a conceptual starting point to position future research regarding place and identity among adoptee and displaced populations.
Theoretical contribution.

The framework for analysis of descriptive narratives on place provides new approaches to categorize and report place experiences. In addition, the previous framework (Conron, 1974) was appropriate for categorizing adoptee narratives on place experiences, specifically in regard to adoptees’ references to place via metaphor, literary setting, metaphoric frame image, and dominant impression. From a four category analysis, it was speculated that as adoptee descriptions became more inclusive of self, the levels of place experience and thus ethnic identity emergence became more evident. However, at this point of the research, further analysis is required. Finally, from the four descriptors for levels of place experience, additional reference was given to ethnic identity as related to dominant impression in what Korean adoptees incorporated into their personal living spaces and how their actions may have changed as a result of their Korea place experiences.

In addition to the tri-partite framework for place attachment, this study contributes additional knowledge in regard to process in respect to affect, cognition, and behavior in how Korean adoptees construct place within their home environments. These processes of constructing place contribute to ethnic identity development and bring a new dimension to Scannell & Gifford’s (2009) framework. Equally important within the tri-partite framework for place attachment, in regard to person, reference was not given to displaced persons from adoption. Specifically, there was no reference to how these experiences contribute to the process of place attachment.

The contextualist world view provides a framework to report, describe and analyze complex holistic phenomenon, specifically Korean adoptees’ place and identity experiences.
related to first return visits to Korea. By positioning adoptee first visit experiences within a contextualist world view, these experiences represent complex holistic events representing spatial, temporal, psychological, and environmental aspects which come to represent the whole.

**Transferability.**

While these findings confirm previous research regarding Korean adoptee ethnic exposure and identification and Euro-Caucasian family association, the findings should not be generalized across all Korean adoptee populations. Even though the findings should not be transferred, the research design in respect to methodology, the data collection instrument, and the framework for descriptive narrative analysis may be of value in discovery of additional displaced populations’ experiences with place and subsequent incorporation of objects into domestic living spaces in contributing to ethnic identity.

In addition, the research constructs for place attachment and ethnic identity within the survey instrument are grounded in psychology and environment and behavioral analysis. While there has not been further psychometric testing and comparison within this study, previous studies regarding place attachment and ethnic identity confirm the use of both constructs within the survey instrument. For this reason, the survey instrument may be transferred for use within other research studies regarding ethnic identity and place attachment.

Transferability of methodology is appropriate for further interdisciplinary, holistic research. Mixed – method approach contributes multiple methods and multiple modes of analysis in which each provide for triangulation of findings.
**Future Research.**

As this research comes together, its findings generate even more questions regarding place experiences and subsequent incorporation of most meaningful objects as contributing to ethnic identity development. Four responses from participants become especially intriguing for future research.

1) *My first trip was the tip of the ice berg, so to speak...* How do multiple place experiences progress persons from unstable to stable ethnic identities? Is there a difference in ethnic identity progression between one trip and say, four? If so, what is the difference, how do adoptees synthesize and re-synthesize each experience to evolve their ethnic identity? How do these experiences represent change within their living environments?

2) *Adoptive parents are Korean...* Only 2% of the 451 participants for this survey were not adopted into Euro-Caucasian environments. Is there a difference in place experiences for adoptees not adopted inter-racially? Is the transition less traumatic, if so, how? What does the first return trip place experience represent, and does the living environment change to represent an ethnic identity development?

3) *I’m living in Korea...* Among study participants, some were living and teaching in Korea, and often responded not applicable for their responses for how their place experience in Korea translated to their domestic living space. How are adoptees incorporating their Western society norms into their lives while living and working in Korea? What are meaningful place experiences within Korea as a resident, and how
are these experiences represented in their living environment as ethnic identity development?

4) I wish I had been exposed at a young age to Korean language and culture... Finally, the inspiration for my research has always been, how can these findings eventually translate to childhood adoptee living spaces? Would ethnic identity begin at an earlier age if children were exposed to ethnic and cultural objects and traditions of their birth countries at an earlier age? My research stops far short of any recommendations for practical design of childhood spaces, nevertheless, perhaps findings from my research regarding place experiences and meaning for incorporation of objects from Korea into living environments at least brings to attention how objects may symbolize and become a representation of adoptees’ ethnic identity.

While not brought to attention from participant responses, in regard to literary narratives on place, I see value for future research in adding to the definitions of place analysis categories. For example, a process included in the categories for addition of imagery, emotion, and sensory triggers would provide for further discovery regarding how these triggers affect place experiences in making them memorable. In addition, I would like to add a more inclusive descriptive definition of dominant impression to how effect evolves the experience regarding place. For example, besides memory as a dominant impression, such as previous experience and life as impression for the experience, why not also include how the experience makes a dominant impression on the perceiver and as a result, what actions the perceiver follows? Additional descriptives to definitions could make the four categories even
more explanatory in how to analyze and how to report findings of participant narratives for experiences of place.

**Final Thoughts**

In conclusion, this study contributes additional understanding regarding conceptual frameworks for place attachment that validate ethnic identity. Korean adult adoptee responses provide examples for understanding the importance of culturally sensitive inclusion of objects within displaced populations’ living spaces. By constructing places to include memorable objects from place experiences, these objects come to symbolize ethnic identity development. Finally, by connecting how memorable place experiences evolve places which contributes to a meaningful existence; these experiences direct inquiry into design strategies for additional displaced populations.

In closing, this research is very dear to my heart. I began my research four years ago after becoming involved with other Korean adoptees (11 years ago) and after I made my first return trip to Korea (10 years ago). In two years I completed my M.S., and this study concludes my D.DES. When I began the research process, I searched for references to first return trips to Korea by adoptees within scholarly research. In a few cases, the first return trip was mentioned as a very significant experience and a worthy topic for future research, but not yet studied. Thus began my journey to discover and report Korean adoptee place experiences in how they might contribute to ethnic identity. By completing my doctorate, this opens the doors to further research regarding Korean adoptees and how places play a significant role in ethnic identity development.
REFERENCES


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Hong, J., ed. (2007). *I didn’t know who I was: A collection of essays and poems by Korean Adoptees*. South Korea: KorCN.


Place, S. *Adopted Koreans face cultural divide.* (2000, July3). Minnesota Daily.


APPENDIX

A. WSU Institutional Review Board Exempt Certification

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bob Scarfo and Deborah Napier,

FROM: Patrick Conner (for) Kris Miller, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3005)

DATE: 12/29/2008

SUBJECT: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 10688-001

Based on the Exemption Determination Application submitted for the study titled Korean Adoptee Place Attachment in Relationship to Ethnic Identity, and assigned IRB # 10688, the WSU Institutional Review Board has determined that the study satisfies the criteria for Exempt Research contained in 45CFR 46.

Exempt certification does not relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to protection of human subjects participating in the study and adherence to ethical standards for research involving human participants.

This certification is valid only for the study protocol as it was submitted to the IRB. Studies certified as Exempt are not subject to annual review. If any changes are made to the study protocol, you must submit the changes to the IRB for determination that the study remains Exempt before implementing the changes. Request for Amendment forms are available online at http://www.irb.wsu.edu/forms.asp.

In accordance with federal regulations, this Certification of Exemption and a copy of the study protocol identified by this certification must be kept by the principal investigator for THREE years following completion of the project.

It is important to note that certification of exemption is NOT approval by the IRB. The study materials should not include the statement that the WSU IRB has reviewed and approved the study for human subject participation. Please remove all statements of IRB Approval and contact information from study materials that will be disseminated to participants.

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections.
MEMORANDUM (Contin.)

If you have questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-3668. Any revised materials can be mailed to the Office of Research Assurances (Campus Zip 3005),

TO: Bob Scarfo and Deborah Napier,

FROM: Patrick Conner (for) Kris Miller, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3005)

DATE: 12/29/2008

SUBJECT: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 10688-001

faxed to (509) 335-6410, or in some cases by electronic mail, to irb@mail.wsu.edu.

Review Type: New Protocol
Review Category: Exempt
Date Received: 12/11/2008
Exemption Category: 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2)
OGRD No.: N/A
Funding Agency: N/A

You have received this notification as you are referenced on a document within the MyResearch.wsu.edu system. You can change how you receive notifications by visiting https://MyResearch.wsu.edu/MyPreferences.aspx

Please Note: This notification will not show other recipients as their notification preferences require separate delivery.
APPENDIX

B. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. INFORMED CONSENT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
   1. This survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is voluntary, and consent is given freely without coercion. All information collected from the online survey is anonymous with no specific identifying information. All results are for the purpose of research.
   If you are comfortable participating in this survey please select the appropriate answer below.

   Yes I would like to participate.
   No I do not choose to participate.

2. REQUEST FOR DEMOGRAPHIC DATA
   2. What is your age? (Defined ranges to choose from, <20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, <50)
   3. What is your gender?
   4. Where do you live?
   5. Please answer the following questions about yourself.
      Did you attend college?
      Did you complete a degree?
      Are your adoptive parents college graduates?
      If you have adult children, are they college graduates?
      What is your highest degree completed?
   6. What is your profession?
   7. What are your hobbies?
   8. Please answer the following questions.
      Do you socialize with other Korean adoptees? Yes No
      Do you socialize with other ethnic Koreans? Yes No
      Do you speak Korean?
   9. Are you a Korean adoptee?

3. CHILDHOOD FORMATIVE YEARS
   10. At what age did you leave Korea to arrive in your adoptive country? (Defined ranges to choose from, <1 year, between 1 and 2 years, > 3 years old)
   11. Where did you grow up?
   12. What is your adoptive father’s profession?
   13. What is your adoptive mother’s profession?
   14. Please answer the following questions regarding your family. Please refer to your formative years between 8-14 years of age to answer the remaining questions.
      Are both of your adoptive parents Caucasian? Yes No
      Do you have siblings? Yes No
      Do you have an adopted sibling? Yes No Not Applicable
      Are any of your siblings natural birth siblings?
      Is at least one adopted sibling from Korea?
      Are all of your siblings adopted?

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Did you or your family associate with other Korean ethnic families?
Did you attend Korean culture camp?
Did you grow up with Korean ethnic items in your home?
Did your parents familiarize you with Korean culture? (food, music, dress, etc.)
Did you participate in any type of Korean lessons or school?
Did you view yourself as Korean?
Did you view yourself as American or Swedish, etc.?
Did you view yourself as Korean-American, Korean-Swedish, etc.?
Did you view yourself as ‘just a person’?
Did you view yourself as part of any ethnic group?
15. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

4. KOREA FIRST VISIT EXPERIENCE
For the following questions, please reflect on your first visit back to your birth country, Korea.
16. Have you traveled back to Korea? Yes No
17. What year was your first visit back to Korea?
18. How old were you when you first visited Korea?
19. How many times have you visited Korea?

20. Please answer the following questions.

I went back to Korea specifically as a tourist for a vacation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My parents decided it would be a good experience for me to visit Korea, it was not my decision.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I went on a tour of Korea that was sponsored by my adoption agency.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I expected to find what was missing in my life when I went back to Korea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My experience was extremely emotional and poignant.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My experience was distressing and upsetting.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
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</table>
My experience was entirely unemotional and not memorable.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</table>

I want to visit Korea again as soon as possible.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</table>

5. **KOREA VISIT PLACE LOCATION**

*From your first visit, please reflect back to your experiences and answer the following questions.*

21. My first trip back to Korea, I visited the following natural environments.

- [ ] Mountains
- [ ] National Park
- [ ] Ocean
- [ ] Island
- [ ] River
- [ ] Lake
- [ ] Stream
- [ ] Waterfall
- [ ] Hot Springs
- [ ] Beach
- [ ] Other (Please specify: ____________)

22. My first trip back to Korea, I visited the following urban and cultural environments.

- [ ] Museum
- [ ] Palace
- [ ] Traditional Folk Village
- [ ] Arts Center
- [ ] Orphanage
- [ ] Private Residence
- [ ] Public Performance
- [ ] Auditorium
- [ ] Public Garden
- [ ] Temple
- [ ] Adoption Agency
- [ ] Art Gallery
- [ ] Public Street Market
- [ ] Theatre
- [ ] Farm
- [ ] Metropolitan City
- [ ] Rural City
- [ ] Sports Facility
- [ ] Other (Please specify: ____________)

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23. From the natural and urban and cultural places visited, please rank the top three most memorable places visited by location, name and city. (ex. Palace, Gyeongbok, Seoul).
_______________________________________________

24. Please describe why the number 1 ranked location was most memorable.

6. KOREA VISIT PLACE CHARACTERISTICS

25. From the Number 1 ranked most memorable location listed in the previous question, please check which characteristics of this location made this location memorable giving “1” to the most memorable characteristic and “5” to the lesser memorable characteristic.

___Vibrant Colors
___Building Materials
___Water
___Silence
___Interior Design and Materials
___Simplicity
___Architecture
___Landscape
___Patterns
___Complexity
___Monotones and Neutrals
___Smells
___Sounds
___Weather
___Nature
___Plants and Trees
___Food
___Other (Please specify: ______________

26. Please summarize why the number 1 ranked characteristic was most memorable.
_______________________________________________

7. KOREA VISIT PLACE IDENTITY

27. Please think back to your number 1 ranked location and select your response to the following questions from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

I feel this location in Korea is a part of me.
Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I identify strongly with this location in Korea.
Strongly Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
I am very attached to this location in Korea.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Visiting this location in Korea says a lot about who I am.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
</table>

This location in Korea means a lot to me.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I do not feel like I am accepted in Korea.  
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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
</table>

I do not belong in Korea.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
</table>

8. **KOREA VISIT PLACE DEPENDENCE**

28. Please think back to your number 1 ranked location and select your response to the following questions from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

No other place can compare to my number 1 ranked most memorable location in Korea.  
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I get more satisfaction out of visiting Korea than any other.  
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
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The things I do in Korea I would enjoy doing just as much at a similar site.  
<table>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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My visit to Korea represents my ongoing relationship with Korea.  
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</table>

It makes me feel sad to think of never visiting Korea again.  
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<th>Disagree</th>
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</table>
9. **KOREA VISIT AND ETHNIC IDENTITY**

29. Please think back to your number 1 ranked location and select your response to the following questions from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

My trip back to Korea positively reinforces my distinctiveness of being Korean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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Before my trip to Korea, I did not view myself as possessing a Korean heritage.

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I feel a sense of self worth with rich Korean history after visiting Korea.

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I feel a sense of pride in my ethnic history because of my trip to Korea.

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After my trip, I do not feel a connection to Korea, even though I am Korean.

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10. **INFLUENCE OF TRIP TO PRESENT LIVING ENVIRONMENT**

30. From your trip, please answer the following questions in regards to items you brought back to your primary residence from your first visit to Korea. Please answer the following questions with strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Korean items in my living environment are only for decoration and do not hold personal meaning to me.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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I am comforted by Korean items in my living environment.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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My trip to Korea influences design choices in my home.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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I want to learn more about Korean architecture and Korean design.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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I have Korean cultural items in my home.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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By possessing Korean cultural items, they symbolize the missing pieces of my history.

<table>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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31. Please describe the most meaningful souvenirs or items that you brought home for yourself and why.

32. What does possessing Korean items symbolize or represent for you?

33. Please describe if or how your living environment has changed after visiting Korea.

34. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about yourself regarding your first visit back to Korea or your Korean ethnic identity?

11. Closing and Thank you

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

If more were known of the experiences, places and artifacts encountered and their meaning to the adoptee during the adoptees' first visit home, from these experiences, design considerations would be valuable in defining adoptee living spaces to begin the healing process for the thousands of displaced intercountry interracial adoptees.

Sincerely,
Deborah Napier
MS ARCHITECTURE/DOCTORATE OF DESIGN STUDENT
APPENDIX

C. Research Interest Resume for Deborah S. Napier

Deborah’s formal exposure to the Korean adoptee community began with her attendance at the First Annual Korean American Adoptive Family Network (KAAN) Conference in the summer of 1999 in Los Angeles, California. As a Korean adoptee herself, Deborah’s adoptee experience was rich and rewarding with a supportive network of family and friends. With hesitation, Deborah attended the conference, and after attendance of sessions with adoptees and adoptive parents, Deborah immediately empathized with adoptees’ heartfelt stories of alienation and sense of confusion for feeling American on the inside and looking Korean/Asian on the outside. Having grown up in an environment with no ethnic identification, Deborah contemplated, is there an event in the adoptees’ life that enables ethnic reconstruction in that adoptees embrace their Korean ethnicity with pride? From that first conference in 1999 to present research interests, Deborah continues to be involved in adoptee and adoptive parent networks, specifically as an advocate for the best interest of the child.

Adoptee Organizations / Affiliations

Adoptees For Children
http://adoptees4children.org/
Member and advocate since Fall 2007

International Korean Adoptee Associations
http://gathering.ikaa.info/en/
Participant since 2004

Asian Adult Adoptees of Washington
http://www.aaawashington.org/a_index.php
Member since 2003

Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network
http://www.kaanet.co/
Participant since 1999
Publications, Presentations and Session Participation

2010 October - IDI Design Research Conference: Designing Health
WSU - Spokane, WA
Publication and Presentation

2010 October – IDI Design Charette
WSU – Spokane, WA
Presentation

2010 August - International Symposium on Korean Adoption Studies
Seoul, Korea
Publication and Presentation

2010 August - IKAA Gathering
Seoul, Korea
Presentation and Age Group facilitator and Final Ceremony Age Group Summary of group discussions

2007 August - International Korean Adoptee Associations IKAA Gathering
The global Korean adoptee community
Seoul, Korea
Participant and Responsible for Online Survey of participant demographics and economic summary

2005 April - Korean Adoptee Mini Gathering
Las Vegas, Nevada
Participant

2004 August - The International Gathering of Korean Adoptees
Seoul, Korea
We adoptees have taken flight all over the world-first as youth and now adults to our birth country. May this coming journey be one to remember as we learn about our heritage, ourselves and each other.
(The Gathering 2004), Participant

2003 September - Korean Adoptee Mini Gathering
Portland, OR, Participant
Research Interest Resume for Deborah S. Napier (Continued)

2002 July - Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network
Fourth Annual Conference
Sharing Strengths to Build Community Partnerships
Bloomington, Minnesota
Publication and Presenter: Creating Ties to Korea

2001 July - Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network
Third Annual Conference
Common Ground: “Exploring Experiences That Unite Us”
Seattle, Washington
Presenter: Adult Adoptee parent session

1999 July - Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network
First Annual Conference
A Tapestry of Voices and Energies Raised in Unity
Los Angeles, California
Participant: Adoptive parent discussions