Parenthood in different family forms

**Issues:** key-issues about parenthood; enrichment program; parenthood in adoptive and foster families.

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Theoretical framework

- Parenthood is interwoven within the family relational network: the couple's relationship, the relationship with the partner’s parents and the social context affect parenting
- Specificity of maternal and paternal parenthood
- Shared parental responsibility
- Social dimension of parenthood
Promoting and Enriching the Parental Bond: a group intervention

Preventive intervention program developed for groups of couples and parents.

Theoretical background: relational-symbolic paradigm by Scabini and Cigoli (2000).

**Aims:**
- Stimulating couples and parents to reflect on their couple and family identity;
- Improving couple and parental skills;
- Preventing negative outcomes of family crises;
- Enriching and developing the family social dimension;
- Promoting couples and parents’ network and the connection between the family and the community.

-Evaluation: quantitative and qualitative instruments
Relational network within adoptive families

- The hypothesis underlying our research is that the adoptees’ psychosocial well-being is related to acknowledgment of the *dual connection*.
- The focus is on family relationships, generally considered the most important protective factor in the adjustment process to adoption.

- 1998 - Families with internationally adopted adolescents (Rosnati, Greco, Bramanti)
- 2003 - Adoptive Families with school aged children (Rosnati)
- 2009 - Adult adoptees coping with the transition to parenthood (Greco, Rosnati)
- 2009-2011 Ethnic identify, psychosocial adjustment and family relationship in families with adopted adolescents/young adults (Rosnati, L. Ferrari)

- Two year Post-Graduate Master program in Socio-clinical Interventions with adoptive and foster families (second Edition).
Adoptive and non adoptive families with school aged children

- **Participants**: 234 adoptive couples and 210 non adoptive couples with children 6-11 years

- **Emotional and behavioral problems**
  Adopted children, as perceived by their parents, were more likely to show behavioral problems, and in particular externalizing problems, but the effect sizes were small and the vast majority of them scored within the normal range. This result is consistent with most previous (see Juffer & van IJzendoorn, 2005 for a review).

- **Family Relationships**: adoptive parents showed better well-being, higher marital relationship quality and more social support than non-adoptive ones.
Adult adoptees coping with the transition to parenthood

- Aim: to analyze whether and the extent to which giving birth to their own child might lead the adult adoptee to re-interpret their personal history.
- 34 non clinical married or cohabiting couples within which one partner is an adoptee
- Semi-structured interview and graphic symbolic instrument (The Double Moon Test)
PARTICIPANTS

N° 151 triads (mother, father and at least one internationally-adopted adolescents or young adults).

**Adoptees:**

**Age:** 15-25 years old (M=19.13, SD=3.23)

**Age of adoption:** 0-14 years old (M=4.63, SD=3.78)

**Adoptees Birth Country:**

CENTRAL AND LATIN AMERICA 88.3%
AFRICA 7.2%
INDIA 2.7%
EASTERN EUROPE 1.8%
Some results.

- Adoptees are overall well-adjustment.
- The perception of belonging to the adoptive family and the integration between two cultural backgrounds are important protective factors for the adoptees' psychosocial adjustment and well-being of.
- The adoptees who feel “caught between” two cultures are more likely to show behavioral problems.

In progress:
- Cross-cultural comparison: US adolescents and parents (prof. R. Lee, Univ. of Minnesota)

Future steps:
- Longitudinal research (second wave)
- Comparison with a clinical sample
- Comparison with immigrant adolescents.
Foster families

- Foster care as a complex event: intergenerational and social perspective.
- Foster care as a complex scene with different actors: children, foster families, families of origin, social workers, formal and informal social networks.
- Focus on the different members’ boundaries perception.
- The possibility for the foster child to have access to the family of origin as well as to the family history is a protective factor for his/her psychological well-being.
- A recent research on a particular form of foster care: the Infant Foster Care. The results of this research show that both social workers and foster parents represent the baby as a child but not as a son or daughter of someone else (the main question is: Is there something before the foster care intervention?)
Main Publications

**Family Enrichment program:**

**Adoptive families**
- Rosnati R., Ranieri S., Barni D., (submitted) Family relationships and psychosocial well-being in Italian adoptive and non-adoptive families

**Foster families:**

**Comparison:**
RESULTS

1. Do ethnic identity, BII and filiation influence SDQ?

R² = .26**
## INSTRUMENTS

### ETHNIC IDENTITY
- **Ethnic identity scale**, items derived from MEIM (Phinney, 1992)
  - 10 items, 4-point Likert scale (Cronbach’s Alpha = .93) (i.e. I have a strong sense of belonging with my ethnic group)

### BICULTURAL IDENTITY INTEGRATION
- **Bicultural Identity Integration Scale** (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005)
  - 8 items, 5-point Likert scale (Cronbach’s Alpha = .81) (i.e. I feel like someone moving between two cultures)

### NATIONAL IDENTITY
- Item used for ethnic identity apply to Italian national origins
  - 10 items, 4-point Likert scale (Cronbach’s Alpha = .92) (i.e. I have a strong sense of belonging with Italian group)

### BEHAVIOR’S PROBLEM
- **Strengths and difficulties questionnaire** (Goodman, 1997), (Italian version Marzocchi, et al., 2002)
  - 24 items, 3-point Likert scale (Cronbach’s Alpha = .68) (i.e. I worry a lot)

### CULTURAL SOCIALIZ.
- **Cultural Socialization Scale** (Hughes et al., 2001, 2007)
  - 5 items, 3-point Likert scale (Cronbach’s Alpha = .74 for fathers and .70 for mothers) (i.e. I have encouraged my child to read book about their ethnic group)