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## Transracial adoption

### Expatriate parents living in China with their adopted Chinese children

● DeAnna Heimsoth and Julie Anne Laser

Intercountry adoption (ICA) became popular over 50 years ago with the adoption of children from wartorn countries (particularly in Europe) after the second world war. Nowadays more than 20,000 children are adopted into American families from abroad every year (American Radio Works, 2005). From 1993 to 2002, 137,272 children were adopted into the USA, with 60 percent of ICA children immigrating from Russia and China (Meese, 2005). The US State Department (2005) reported that 7906 immigrant visas were granted to Chinese orphans entering the USA in 2005. ICA appears to be an increasingly acceptable and popular method of building a family and raising children in the USA (O'Brian, 1994; Rojewski et al., 2000).

It is estimated that 100,000 American, European and Asian foreigners live in Shanghai, China (Concordia International School, Shanghai, 2004). Despite it being such a large expatriate community, many foreigners have become well-integrated into Chinese culture. Through some of this acculturation, some of these expatriates have chosen to adopt Chinese children. This research investigates the rationale of adoptive parents who reside in the country of origin of their adopted children, specifically the values and cultural practices of expatriate parents living in China who have adopted Chinese children.

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**Key words** ● adoption ● children ● China ● parenting ● transracial

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The first author traveled to Shanghai to conduct a series of interviews with expatriate families. Many themes emerged from the participants' opinions on the transracial and cultural aspects of their adoptions. These responses answered the central question at the heart of this research: how does living in China affect how adoptive parents address adoptees' ethnicity and cultural heritage?

### *Transracial/intercountry adoption*

In general, research on the outcomes of transracial/intercountry adoption has been inconclusive (Haugaard, 2000; Hollingsworth, 1997). The term 'transracial adoption' (TRA) refers to parents of one ethnicity adopting children of a different race/ethnicity, culture or minority group (Vonk, 2001), while ICA refers to adoption across international boundaries. A number of studies have shown that ICA produces largely positive outcomes with successful adjustments (Deacon, 1997; Feigelman and Silverman, 1983; Kim, 1995; Noy-Sharav, 2005; O'Brian, 1994; Rojewski et al., 2000; Silverman, 1993; Tizard, 1991; Vonk, 2001). Some research suggests that ICA children are as likely to form as secure attachments with their parents as children in the general population (Juffer and Rosenboom, 1997; Marcovitch et al., 1997; Noy-Sharav, 2005). However, many of these studies were limited in scope, did not cover large samples, and in some cases where positive outcomes were reflected, questions regarding ethnic identity formation were often not posed (Haugaard, 2000; Noy-Sharav, 2005). Some researchers are concerned that ICA/TRA children adjust at the expense of their ethnic identity (Kim, 1995; Tizard, 1991). For instance, Hollingsworth's (1997) research found a negative relationship between TRA and ethnic identity development.

Parents' responses to the needs of their transracially adopted children may be pivotal in determining the adoptees' long-term adjustment and racial and cultural identity development (Rojewski and Rojewski, 2001). Huh and Reid (2000) found that participation in cultural activities and open communication with parents were crucial to the child's ethnic identity development. Rojewski (2005: 133) states that 'when a child from China is adopted by US parents, the adoptive family must address questions about if, when, how, and how much to acknowledge the birth cultural heritage of their child'.

Questions remain about the degree to which parents should acknowledge cultural difference (Rojewski, 2005). Kirk's classic continuum offers a framework with two opposing strategies related to addressing difference: rejection of differences and acknowledgment of differences (Kirk, 1984, 1985; Noy-Sharav, 2005; Rojewski,

2005). Dalen and Saetersdal (1987) added a third element to Kirk's continuum: stressing the differences (Rojewski, 2005). This third element addresses the concern that parents may promote a child's birth culture and/or racial differences too aggressively, creating resistance and anxiety in the adoptee. Parents, therefore, must balance the tension between honoring their adopted child's heritage and being sensitive to his/her need for connection and belonging (Noy-Sharav, 2005).

Proponents of transracial/intercountry (TRA/ICA) adoption affirm that parents need to acquire cross-cultural competency in order to successfully parent their transracially adopted children (Andujo, 1988; McRoy, 1994; Rushton and Minnis, 1997; Vonk, 2001). This includes foreseeing how environmental factors such as multicultural schools and environments may positively affect the adoptee's racial identity development (Huh and Reid, 2000; Noy-Sharav, 2005; Silverman, 1993). The belief is that improved focus on environmental issues will positively affect the outcomes for transracially adopted children, but this connection has not yet been established empirically (Vonc, 2001).

### *Expatriate intercountry adoption*

Little research has investigated transracial/intercountry adoption among families living abroad, or adopting children from the country in which they are living. Two studies investigate this topic: Noy-Sharav's (2005) research with Jewish parents who migrated to Israel and adopted children from outside Israel, and O'Brian's (1994) case study of three western families living in Hong Kong who adopted Chinese children. O'Brian's research relates more closely to this study, but it neglects to address whether living in the adopted child's culture affected the ethnic/racial identity development of the adoptee. This research begins to fill an important gap in the knowledge of ethnic/racial identity development among transracial/intercountry adoptees living with their adopted families in their country of origin.

## **Methodology**

An exploratory qualitative method of data collection was developed by the researchers to describe participants' experiences of ethnic/racial identity development as yet untouched in the adoption literature. To begin these interviews, several families were identified by a contact person living in the expatriate community in Shanghai, China. These families in turn contacted other adoptive families and through word of mouth, utilizing the snowball sampling technique, the number of

families willing to participate grew to 10. The adoptive parent(s) were the primary source of data and consequently the unit of study.

### *Participants*

As a group, these families have 8–18 years of experience living outside their country of origin (excluding one family for whom the information is not available). The participants have spent 3–8 years in China, with an average of 6.4 years. Of the 17 parents, eight were teachers, four worked for corporations, three chose to be stay-at-home parents and one was a professor. The snowball sampling technique skewed the sample in terms of the number of teachers and the overall degree of affluence. Regarding the level of education, three of the 17 individuals have bachelor's degrees, 13 have master's degrees (MA, MBA) and one has a PhD. All of the families reported having either stable or affluent incomes. Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the participants' demographic information.

The families in the study ranged from 12 years as an adoptive family unit to one family whose adoption had been recently completed. Six of the 10 families had biological children as well as adoptive children. Of the 12 adopted children, nine were female and three were male. These children entered their adoptive homes permanently from 7 months of age to 14 months of age. Table 2 provides information about the adoption length and biological children, as well as the gender and the adoptees' age at the time of adoption.

### *Methods of data collection*

The first wave of this study was conducted in Shanghai, China through individual and group interviews. The second wave included two follow-up email questionnaires to fill data gaps and further refine questions.

Hour-long structured interviews were conducted with eight out of 10 families. The families who had agreed to participate signed both informed consent and consent to be audiotaped. A series of questions were posed:

1. reasons for adopting;
2. the adoption story;
3. the emotional process;
4. the multicultural nature of the adoption; and
5. what advice the adoptive parent(s) might have for other people considering adopting a Chinese child.

**Table 1** Participant demographic totals

Adoptive unit	Marital status	Country of origin	Race / Ethnicity	No. of Years Abroad	No. of Years in China	Profession	Level of education	Income
1	Married	USA	Caucasian	18	18 (3 dif. locations)	Writer, teacher	BA, Grad. degree	Stable
2	Married	USA	Caucasian	8 (Germany: 1)	7	Teacher, executive	MA, MBA	Very stable
3	Single	USA	Asian American	8	8	Teacher	MA	Stable
4	Married	Australia	Caucasian	11 (Taiwan: 1)	10	Lawyer, mother	MA/MA, BA	Very stable
5	Single	USA	Bicultural: Caucasian and Native American	15 (Philippines, Israel, Australia Mexico)	5	Teacher	MA	Stable
6	Married	USA	Caucasian	14 (12 in Hong Kong)	2	Teacher, teacher	MA, MA	Very stable
7	Married	USA, China	Caucasian, Chinese	16 (Hong Kong)		Teacher, teacher	(2) Grad. degrees	Stable
8	Single, divorced	USA	Caucasian	17 (France, Hong Kong)	3	Professor	PhD	Very stable
9	Married	USA, Vietnam	Caucasian, Asian American	~10 (Mali, Malaysia, Australia)	~2	Mother, finance manager	BA, MBA	Very stable
10	Married	Belgium	Caucasian	Unknown	3	Mother, mktg/sales	MA/MBA, MBA	Very stable

**Table 2** Adoption information

Adoptive family	Adoption status	Year of adoption	No. of birth children	No. of adopted children	Adoptee gender	Age when adopted
1	Complete	1995	2	1	Girl	10 months
2	Complete	2004	2	1	Boy	8 months
3	Complete	2005	0	1	Girl	10 months
4	Complete	2002/4	0	2	(2) Girls	11 & 10.5 months
5	Complete	2003/5	0	2	(2) Girls	7 & 10 months
6	Complete	2006	1	1	Boy	14 months
7	Complete	2003	1	1	Boy	11 months
8	Complete	2005	0	1	Girl	12 months
9	Complete	2006	1	1	Girl	8 months
10	Complete	2004	2	1	Girl	12 months

Once the individual interviews were completed, all the participants were invited to attend a group session, during which six of the 10 families discussed TCA and the experience of being a western family in China with an adopted Chinese child. This session was recorded with permission on video.

Several follow-up emails were sent to the participants in order to fill remaining data gaps. Participants were asked to:

1. rate their Mandarin language-speaking ability;
2. indicate how many years they have lived outside their home country and where;
3. indicate how many years they had lived in China; and
4. state whether or not the adoptee has a Mandarin-speaking caregiver.

This email also asked: 'How does living in China affect your opinions about your adopted child(ren)'s ethnicity and how you address your child's cultural heritage?' Nine of the 10 families participated in the follow-up emails. Table 3 indicates each family's participation in the data collection process.

## Results

After the data collection stage, the recordings were transcribed. Data were then reviewed for organically occurring themes. The themes that emerged came primarily from the participants' responses to the fourth

**Table 3** Sample participation

<b>Adoptive family</b>	<b>Individual interview</b>	<b>Group session</b>	<b>Email</b>
1	X		X
2	X	X	X
3		X	X
4	X	X	X
5	X	X	X
6	X	X	X
7			X
8	X	X	X
9	X		X
10	X		

question of the interview, which asked the families for their opinions on the cultural aspects of the adoption, as well as the group discussion on this topic and the subsequent emails. The research question, 'How does living in China affect how adoptive parents address adoptees' ethnicity and cultural heritage?', was answered through this process.

To begin with, the experience of living in Asia influenced the majority (8 out of 10) of these families to adopt Chinese children in particular. These families expressed that their decision to adopt a Chinese child was motivated in one way or another by their love for China and its culture. One couple stated: 'We love China . . . It was China that brought us together.' Thus, when the couple decided to adopt, it was China that brought children into their family. Two of the eight families were additionally inspired to adopt Chinese children because of their experiences in Asian orphanages. For another adoptive mother, the one-child policy motivated her towards adopting a Chinese child, and moving to China enabled her to fulfill that dream. Two of the 10 families did not have a particular interest in the ethnicity of the child. One family said: 'We just wanted another child for our family. And whether that child was black, Asian or white, didn't matter. We just wanted the right child for us.' Another adoptive mother said: 'We love the part of having . . . a culturally diverse family,' and adding their Chinese daughter to the family helped create that for them.

Although eight of the 10 families involved in the study specifically chose a Chinese child, six of the 10 felt that addressing their adoptee's cultural heritage was very important. Some interesting and colorful insights came through the responses of the participants: 'Chinese culture is not an extra that we do at Chinese New Year . . . on Saturday morning for language class or on a big trip to Asia.' Another participant stated:

'I see it as critical for her to learn Chinese culture, language and customs.' Another adoptive mother explained that she wanted her adopted daughter to 'know how to be a Chinese person living here, while simultaneously being able to maneuver in western society'. Another participant reported: 'I would love to give her some of the Chinese culture she's born in. And – it's easy here . . . she picks up Chinese just being here.' One of the participating families had completely immersed themselves in Chinese life. The mother stated: 'Because of our family's bilingualism and biculturalism, we are unbelievably more equipped to understand and integrate as a family into the Chinese culture. We addressed it very naturally, in the context of everyday life.' From these responses, it is clear that the families have deeply considered the importance of supporting their adopted child's cultural identity and actively pursue its development.

Two adoptive couples in the study said they did not want to force the issue of cultural heritage. A father of one of these couples said:

We don't feel like we've had to hide him from his heritage, but we don't feel like we have to . . . walk him around the countryside and kind of absorb it by osmosis . . . We're willing to concede that . . . we don't know what the issues will be once he becomes conscious of his own self . . . I think what we are trying to do is – if we just let him be part of our family, fully, without trying to do anything out of the ordinary, we are fully prepared to do what he thinks he would like to do.

The mother in this couple, however, seemed a little more eager to share with her adopted child what she knew about China:

We feel very thankful to have been in China as long as we have, because – there are people that come to China, adopt a child and go right back to the States and (are) really so busy trying to assimilate that child into their family that they don't know much about China and the history of China. And we've worked pretty hard to know about China . . . And I think it is good that we are going to be able to share that with him.

A second adoptive couple, who spoke Mandarin fluently and had lived in China for 10 years, placed their family as priority for themselves and their adopted children. The mother said, 'We don't want anything forced . . . Our aim is . . . to just let them blossom and bloom.' Simultaneously, this family values their daughters' ethnicity, with the adoptive father saying: 'I am very proud of the fact that they are Chinese . . . proud of where they come from and hope that in the future they will be proud as well.' In an email he also said: 'I would like our daughters to grow up . . . interested in Chinese culture and language and hopefully we will be able to create an environment in which this is possible.' In these latter statements this adoptive couple

demonstrates an interest in the development of their children's cultural identity, while they maintained a primary concern with the formation of a family identity.

### *Tangible indicators*

Because supporting the development of a cultural identity is a nuanced and difficult construct to measure, we looked to tangible measures of the families' support of cultural identity to gain further insight. Three tangible indicators emerged from the recurring themes in the data which were selected to measure how the participants addressed their adopted child(ren)'s cultural heritage. They were: first, the family's commitment to learning and maintaining the adoptee's knowledge of Mandarin; second, involvement in bilingual/bicultural (Chinese) child-care; and third, the family's educational choices for the adoptee.

The first tangible indicator assessed how the family addresses and/or maintains the child(ren)'s language of origin. The parents self-evaluated their Mandarin language competency, their biological children's Mandarin language ability and the adoptee's maintenance of Mandarin language. Overall, seven of the 10 families interviewed felt it was very important to maintain their Chinese child(ren)'s language and hoped to facilitate a bilingual environment. One of the adoptive mothers, for example, hoped that all of her children, including her birth children, would benefit from learning Mandarin together. In two of the families, the adoptive parents are more fluent in Mandarin than their Chinese children. One couple has since returned to their home country and said in their interview: 'I think . . . the one thing we'd regret if we move back home is not having a Chinese-speaking environment for them to maintain their Chinese.' For a fifth family, whose Chinese language is Cantonese, the family members are working on becoming fully bilingual. The father in this family said in an email:

(We) live in a Chinese cultural and linguistic context, so for us it's really easy to promote (the adoptee's) mother tongue and mother culture . . . learning Chinese is just part of who we are . . . Another way to say this is that going between cultural worlds is something we do on a daily basis.

Only one of the 10 families seemed ambivalent as to whether or not their adopted child should speak Mandarin. This family wants the adoptee to choose.

The second tangible indicator is the kind of child-care choices the participants have made, specifically, whether or not the family has employed a Chinese child care provider (*ayi*) to support the development

of the child's language and biculturalism. Five of the seven families with complete adoptions at the time of the interviews currently or have previously employed a Chinese *ayi*. One of these adoptive mothers stated: 'It is very important to me that she gets a very balanced exposure to both cultures. Her *ayi* speaks to her in Chinese, and I do my best to speak to her in English – hopefully she grows up bilingual.' A secondary benefit of having a Chinese *ayi* is that the adoptee is naturally immersed into Chinese culture. One participant who feels it is very important for her daughter to have a Chinese caregiver, said: 'Culturally, she's learning the nanny's style of doing things. Which is very different from mine . . . it's good for her to learn the Chinese way as well.' For some families the *ayi* is like another member of the family. For example, one adoptive mother stated their *ayi* is like a 'Chinese grandmother' to her adopted children. Two of the families sampled employ Philippine caregivers. Only two of the 10 participating families had no outside caregiver. In these families the adoptive mothers are the exclusive at-home caregivers. Of these two, one is a Chinese mother, who speaks Cantonese with all her children. The other sends her daughters to a Chinese pre-school.

The third tangible indicator is the school to which the family plans to send, or is sending, their adopted child. Four of the 10 participating families planned to send or were sending their adopted child to a Chinese pre-school. The family in Hong Kong sends their adopted child to Cantonese pre-school, as do three of the Shanghai families. One adoptive mother said in an email: 'I see it as critical for her to learn Chinese culture, language and customs. My current aim is for her to attend a Chinese-run bilingual school.' Five of the 10 participant families planned to send or were sending their child to a racially integrated, international school, while the plan of the remaining family is unknown. Table 4 provides a data display of the four indicators and demonstrates how each participating family relates to the selected indicators.

The final column in Table 4 sums up the families' opinions on addressing their adopted child's cultural heritage and provides some specifics regarding the family's current situation or intentions for the future.

### *Kirk's continuum applied*

As noted above, Kirk's classic continuum provides a framework for addressing cultural difference, which offers two opposing strategies: rejection of differences and acknowledgment of differences (Kirk, 1984, 1985). With Dalen and Saetersdal's (1987) addition of a

**Table 4** Addressing cultural heritage

Adoptive family	Parent(s) speak Mandarin	Sibs speak	Importance of language for adoptee	Chinese <i>ayi</i>	Choice of school	Addressing cultural heritage
1	Both advanced	Both Advanced	Very	Yes	International school (while in China)	Adolescent adoptee knows what it is to be Chinese. Family returned to parents' home country in August 2005, and hopes to remain in contact with Chinese friends and outreach possibilities involving China and Chinese culture.
2	Both beginning	N/A	Child's choice	No (but Chinese housekeeper)	International school	Wants to let adoptee be part of the family and let him decide what he wants as he becomes conscious of it. 'We will explore our Chinese heritage together whether it's here in China or when we move back to the States.'
3	Intermediate	N/A	Very	Yes	International school	Wants daughters to grow up being proud of Chinese ethnicity, interested in Chinese language and culture, hopes to be able to provide that environment for them. However, their priority is to be a family. (Returned to parents' home country in 2005.)
4	Both advanced	N/A	Very	Yes: PT	Chinese pre-school (while in China)	

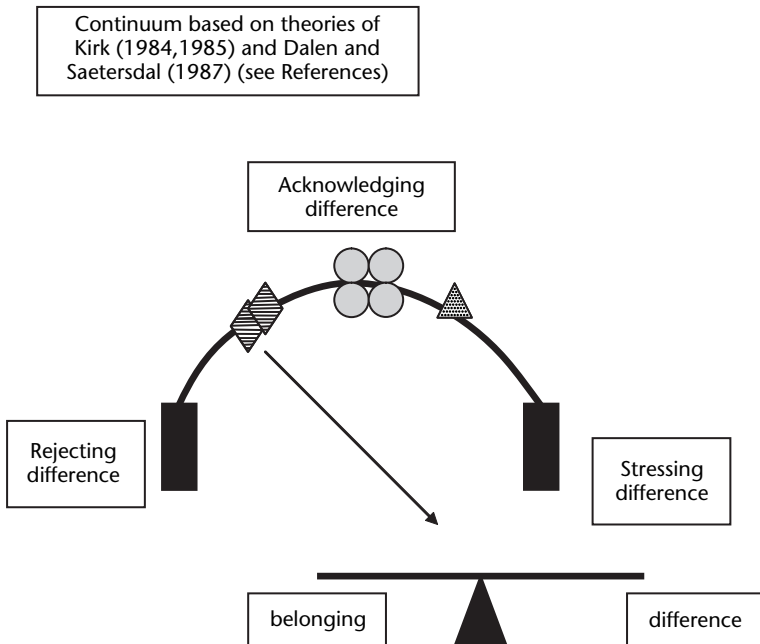
(Continued)

Table 4 (Continued)

Adoptive family	Parent(s) speak Mandarin	Sibs speak	Importance of language for adoptee	Chinese <i>ayi</i>	Choice of school	Addressing cultural heritage
5	Beginning	N/A	Very	Yes	International school	Very enthusiastic about maintaining adoptees' culture: wants to keep heritage up, with Chinese <i>ayi</i> , Chinese schools, contact with other Chinese and families with Chinese children.
6	Beginning	Beginning	Undecided	No	International school	N/A (was still in process of adopting at time of interviews)
7	Cantonese; Intermediate	Bilingual home	Very	No, mother provides socialization	Cantonese-speaking pre-school	Adoptee goes to Cantonese-speaking preschool. Cantonese and English are spoken in the home. Being Chinese is an everyday part of life.
8	Intermediate	N/A	Very	Yes	Chinese pre-school	Adoptive mother may work and live in China until retirement. Goal is that her daughter will be fully bi-cultural and be able to navigate both Western and Chinese Culture with ease.
9	Beginning	Beginning	Undecided	Yes	Undecided	N/A (was still in process of adopting at time of interviews)
10	-	Beginning	Very	No	Chinese pre-school	Values multilingualism and wants all her children to be comfortable with Chinese language and culture.

third element, stressing the differences, one can analyze to what extent the families in this study are addressing their adoptees' cultural heritage on the scale consisting of: rejection of differences to acknowledgment of differences to stressing the differences (Noy-Sharav, 2005; Rojewski, 2005: 135). The following figure illustrates to what extent the seven families with complete adoptions at the time of the interviews were addressing their adoptees' cultural heritage.

Four of the seven families with complete adoptions (represented in Figure 1 by the four spheres) were acknowledging their child's cultural heritage in the context of everyday life in China. One of the seven seemed to be stressing the difference (represented by the triangle), while two families appeared to lean just slightly towards rejecting the differences (represented by the two diamonds). However, these two families, rather than rejecting their child(ren)'s difference, appear to struggle with how to balance recognizing their child(ren)'s cultural heritage with the child(ren)'s need for belonging. For example, one of these adoptive mothers said: 'Living here in China we are constantly reminded that, from a lot of local people's point of view, they just think we're just being nice looking after these Chinese children . . . (We're



**Figure 1** Addressing difference

not really accepted as their parents . . . so, that's especially hard for us, and hard for the girls . . . I think it's just more important for their development . . . to just be part of a family.'

For this adoptive couple, creating a sense of belonging in their family for their adopted children was priority, and the cultural heritage aspect came second. The adoptive father in the second family shared a similar opinion during the group session, in which he explained what an integral part of their family the adoptee had become. Moreover, the father shared, 'He's perhaps racially Chinese, but I just don't see him that way, because he's just my kid.' These sentiments regarding how much or how little to stress the cultural heritage of the child are wrapped into how these families think about the multicultural nature of their adoption and their adopted children's race/ethnicity.

### *Race/ethnicity*

Living in China seems to have influenced these families' opinions on racial/ethnic difference. While some of these families have become more inclined to reinforce the child's ethnicity, living in China appears to have made others less aware of their child's ethnic difference. The same six families who felt that addressing their adoptee's cultural heritage was very important also reported they were very conscious of the adopted child's ethnicity. However, four participating families said they either forget their child is Chinese or 'race is not an issue'. Instead of labeling this as colorblindness, these researchers propose that these families appear to be experiencing a deep form of acculturation.

We propose that having lived in Asia for many years, the Asian ethnicity has become the norm in the lives of these expatriates, and Asian children have become their subconscious conceptualization of what children look like. For example, one adoptive mother said: 'When I think about a child these days, the image that just pops into my head is an Asian child . . . because I've been living in Asia for a long time, and most of the kids I see are Asian.' An adoptive father said: 'I have an empathy with Chinese children that I don't have with western children . . . 'cause I see a (Chinese) child . . . and it makes me think of my daughters.' Another participant stated: 'I am more familiar with Asian kids than western kids at this point, so it seems very normal to have a Chinese child.'

## **Discussion**

Living in China appears to have enhanced these families' understanding of Chinese language and culture, and consequently their ability to

pass that understanding on to their adopted children. For example, one adoptive mother said in a follow-up email:

Living in China greatly affects my understanding of where my daughters come from, their heritage, and their early beginnings. I chose adoption in China because of those reasons, and I am glad I did. I think, too, that living in China allows me to more fully understand their Chinese culture, which in turn makes my ability to share about my girls' culture, that much easier.

Another parent, who had been living in Asia for 14 years, said: 'I think that it (living in China) makes us more aware of the child's cultural heritage and the importance of maintaining the connection with it.' In this family's interview they were concerned about children who were adopted into the USA. They said: 'I think . . . some children who are adopted from China who grow up in the US feel like they've lost their culture. And eventually . . . feel like they need to go back to find it. At least this way, this child will spend a few years here, growing up – actually, spend their developing years here, and hopefully feel like they actually lived in some kind of culture.'

For these families, living in China makes exposing their Chinese children to Chinese culture and language a natural part of everyday life through having an ethnically and culturally Chinese caregiver, going to Chinese or integrated schools, and living in a Chinese or integrated community with access to a diverse circle of friends.

## Limitations

This research has several limitations. The first is the nature of the snowball sample, which is small, not easily generalizable and limited in diversity. Second, this research does not address the long-term outcomes of national adoptees with expatriate parents, nor does it compare how this population of adoptive parents may be different or similar to transracial adoptive parents living in their country of origin. However, with these limitations we believe that it contributes to our knowledge of intercountry/transracial adoption.

## Implications for practice

The researchers hope that parents and children experiencing this phenomenon, as well as professionals who facilitate these adoptions and individuals living abroad who are considering adopting children from the country in which they live, will benefit from this study. Most of all, however, the researchers hope that professionals in the

intercountry/transracial adoption field, when assessing adoptive parents' attitudes towards ethnic and cultural difference, will take into account the cultural context, the environment and the families' cross-cultural experience. As the world becomes an integrated global community, social work professionals will need to broaden their perspectives and become increasingly open to new phenomena and intercultural influences on peoples' attitudes and behaviors.

## Conclusion

These adoptive parents did not adopt from China because it was one of many places in the world from which they could adopt, but because they wanted to bring a Chinese child into their family. They adopted a Chinese infant not in spite of their Chinese-ness, but because of it. It seems that their love for Chinese culture made them desirous of having a Chinese family member. By embracing their Chinese child, they were also embracing China. These expatriate families, through their own acculturation to China, have opened their hearts and homes to a culture they love and have done so in the most intimate way of bringing a child into their home. The most profound love is that of bringing people together to create and sustain a family. This study begins to reveal how cultural immersion may affect adoptive families' opinions on cultural and ethnic differences in organizing their family. More studies of this nature on families living in their child's country of origin need to be conducted in order to discover how new global trends of intermixing and multicultural families may be changing the way people think about ethnic and cultural differences.

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