Lund University

Department of Sociology

BIDS

Growing up as Hybrid Plants

A Multiple-Case Study on How Adoptive Parents Cope with the Chinese Origins of Their Adopted Children from China

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Abstract:

Transnational adoption is a type of adoption where the couple (or an individual) voluntarily become the permanent and legal parents of an adoptee from a different nation. Sweden has been actively participating the transnational adoption since the early 1970s, and from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, China had been one of the major donor countries for Sweden. The children and the parents have different origins, which challenge the way parents raise the children up. Transnational adoptees are likely to have identity crisis if they could not properly perceive their origins. The aim of the thesis is to discuss how the adoptive parents in Sweden cope with issues on their adopted children's Chinese origins while incorporating the children into the kinship of the parents. In doing so, I collected data from semi-structured interviews with adoptive parents, and used the interview results to build three cases. Motivated by the characteristics of the cases, I developed a theoretical framework which contains concepts from Kinning theory and Symbolic Interactionism Theory as well as ideas from Pierre Bourdieu. There are three subquestions which explore how the parents help their children make sense of the Asian phenotypical features, and of the fact that the children were born by unknown bodies. The study also examines how the parents help the children construct the time the children spent in orphanages or equivalent institutions in China. The research findings show that the adoptive parents are open to talk about birth parents to their children despite having little information on them. In comparison, the adoptees' pre-adoption experience is what the adoptive parents make more use of. The parents help the children build meaningful social relations with people from the orphanages or the equivalent institutions to make the children's pre-adoption memory alive. Furthermore, parents themselves also have ties with people from the institutions. In terms of the phenotypical features, the adoptees do not see it as a issue until they go to school where the features tend to be activated through social interactions. In preventing the children being disturbed by the features, the adoptive parents intentionally put their children to play with those with similar backgrounds since the first period after the children came to Sweden. The adoptive parents also construct the image of China for the children with the hope that their adoptees can acknowledge the Chinese ethnicity as they grow up.

Key words:

Acknowledgment:

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1.Introduction

Sweden started its transnational adoption (adopting children from other countries) since the late 1960s. Although Sweden does not have a big absolute number of adoptions, the country is a large international adopter in terms of the adoption ratios (number of transnational adoptions per 1000 live births) in every given year since the early 1970s (Yngvesson, 2012). According to Swedish Family Law and Parental Support Authority (MFoF, 2018), during 1982 to 1992, China sent 21 children to Sweden through transnational adoption. Given the fact that Sweden received 1293 adoptees each year during the period, the number of adoptees from China accounted for almost nothing.

However, since 1992 when China signed the Hague Adoption Convention[1], the number of adoptees from China has surged. M.Dowling and G.Brown (2008) indicated that since 1995, China had become the biggest child-export country for transnational adoption. By the end of the 1990s, there had been 598 adoptees sent from China to Sweden. Between 2002 to 2010, the annual intake of adoptees from China made up over 25% of the total of transnational adoptee intake in Sweden every year (notably 45% in 2004 and 43% in 2005).

Most of the growing number of the adoptees from China were abandoned by their birth parents. From 1979 until 2015 , China had a One-Child policy, which allowed only one child for each couple. Otherwise the household will be punished. Some Chinese families who already had one child would abandon unplanned infants (Kay, 2003). To add to this issue, people have a son preference. Some people, especially in some rural areas, would also abandon the first child if it was a female in gambling that their next child would be a boy. As a result, M.Dowling and G.Brown (2008) indicated that 90% of the abandoned infants in China were female. The abandoned infants are sent to nearby orphanages after being spotted and become available for adoption.

Transnational adoption is beneficial in the sense that it offers parenthood to couples who are involuntarily childless. Investigation shows that most women experience joy because they adopt a child (Foli, 2009, in Martin 2016). On the other hand, transnational adoption also offers parentless children a home. However, some adoptees may face an identity crisis when growing up. Some of them have a narrative of "not fitting in", expressed as "having a missing or partial self, not knowing the true self, being unaware of who one really is" (Lawler 2014, p.57).

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[1] An international convention that deals with multiple issues including international adoption, child laundering and child trafficking.

To highlight this identity crisis, the UN Convention on the Rights of Children emphasises "family relations" rather than inherited genes as a part of identity. The Article 8 of the convention states that:

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognised by law without lawful interference.

2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parities shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity. (Lawler 2014, p.58)

In addition, Family Law and Parental Support Authority in Sweden (2016) also stated that "A child under the age of twelve years old who is adopted by a Swedish citizen becomes a Swedish citizen by adoption, if the child is adopted by virtue of a foreign adoption decision".

1.1 Purpose and Aims:

Previous studies done by Norwegian scholar, Signe Howell, have show that for most adoptive parents, they see adoption a procreative alternative. The couples expect the adoptees to be as intimate as the children of natural birth. The scholar, creates a term, kinning, illustrating the process by which adoptive parents help their adoptees build long-term relationship with a group of people in the receiving country. The group of people are usually expressed in idioms of the person's family and relations, for example, grandparents, uncles and cousins, etc. (Howell 2003)

On the other hand, the transnational adopted children have their origins that are different from those of their adoptive parents. The children were produced by other unknown bodies (in the cases of close adoption where information on the children's biological parents is concealed). Not only other bodies, but also bodies who are different from majority Scandinavians and who thus "give birth to children who do not look like their adoptive parents." Moreover, the children were born in a remote and alien land with different cultures and traditions. They had a period of life in which adoptive parents did not participate. The adoptees' perceptions on their biological parents, on their phenotypical features, and on orphanages or foster families become three tasks their adoptive parents need to cope with during the Kinning process (Howell 2003).

Howell (2003) also complements Kinning theory with the idea that depending on the stages of the child-parents relationship and particular contexts, adoptive parents will sometimes foreground the

children's origins while "backgrounding the social aspect" (e.g. acknowledging or even emphasising the fact that the children were born in another country), or vice versa (e.g. teaching children local languages of the receiving countries to enable them to communicate with majority others in the countries).

Borrowing ideas from this theory, the purpose and aims of my research are:

1. To find out *in* what contexts does the children's origins show in the foreground, rather than their new kinship, and to discuss how the parents cope with the three issues on the origins that are mentioned above.

2. To discuss how the children react to the efforts their parents make to cope with the children's origins, and to discuss how the children's self is constructed through the parents' effort and the children's reactions.

1.2 Research Questions:

Guided by the purpose and aims, the major research question is:

How do adoptive parents incorporate the Chinese origins of their adoptive children from China into the process of raising them as Swedish?

To elaborate the term of "biological nature" in the question, there are three sub-questions:

1)How do the parents help their children make sense of the fact that the children were born by unknown bodies?

2). How do the parents help their children construct the memory of the time the children spend in orphanages or equivalent institutions in China?

3). How do the parents help their children make sense of the children's Asian phenotypical features?

1.3 Delimitations:

Transnational adoption is generally regarded as part of globalisation — "the movement of children from the poor South to the rich North and the movement of value from the North to the South." (Howell 2003). The transnational adoption practice from China to Sweden is a miniature of

such imbalanced relations. Sweden is viewed as a model of a social democratic welfare state that protects children's rights. During the 1960s and 1970s, the country developed public childcare system and introduced parental leave, granting new-born infants parental company for 480 days if either of the parents is employed (Earles 2011).

In comparison, since the late 1970s, China prioritised its economic construction in complement with population control policy while giving less significance on social and institutional development. The population policy increased the number of orphans, a large proportion of whom ended up in understaffed orphanages with limited subsidy (Johnson 2004). Since the early 1990s, China regarded transnational adoption a way to handle the unwanted children (Howell, 2003). M.Dowling and G.Brown (2008) also pointed that some Chinese officials made profits from the transnational adoption. They see the adoptees as "child gifts" in the global market, corrupting and travelling abroad for leisure in name of business.

This thesis attempts to cover some of those issues. However, it cannot claim to be an exhaustive study of the entire scope of transnational adoption from China to Sweden. Considering comments from Hubbinette (2011) saying that "Swedish adoption research has traditionally, like in all Western countries, been dominated by the disciplines of psychology, medicine and social work.", my thesis attempts to study the adoption practice from a sociological perspective.

My original idea is to exam the identities of the transnational adoptees from China under the impact of Swedish society. However, statistics from Swedish Family Law and Parental Support Authority (MFoF, 2018) show that most children adopted from China are under the age of eighteen, meaning that they are more likely to be influenced by families and schools, rather than the society. Consequently, I modified my research question as well as purpose and aims to exam the parent-child relations, with emphasis on the adoptees' Chinese origins.

1.4 Disposition:

Followed by the introduction section, the thesis begins with background information, which contains two parts. The first part introduces the Swedish adoption history and law, highlighting the fact that Sweden actively participates in the transnational adoption. The second part emphasises some rules of transnational adoption made by China, as a donor country, which may affect the upbringing of the exported children.

Furthermore, in the following previous research section, I introduce the history of kinship studies applying to adoption since the 1960s, followed by illustrating the concept of Kinning and its' application in the contexts of Norway and Spain. The section closes with a brief summary of kinship studies on adoption in Sweden, where the identity of some adult adoptees were examined.

The next section comes methodology. The study is designed as a multiple-case study with in-depth analysis of three cases. I collected first-hand data from semi-structured interviews with adoptive parents, and the material is analysed through open, axial and selective coding which give birth to three themes promising to answer the research questions. Motivated by characters of each case and of different themes, I build my own theoretical framework, which is illustrated in the following section. I pick a concept from the Kinning theory and several ones from Symbolic Interactionism. Furthermore, ideas from Pierre Bourdieu also shapes the framework used here.

As for the empirical analysis section, it contains two parts. The first part (6.1) provides background information of the adoptive parents from my interviewees, as well as the parents' decision making process on adoption and reasons why they chose China as a donor country. The rest of the analysis (6.2, 6.3, 6.4) brings forward presentations of three cases, which are interview results from three adoptive families. Each case starts with its background information, followed by distinguishable features with in-depth analysis.

In the last section, conclusion and discussion, there is a short summary of the main results from the empirical analysis. Then the section provides discussion of three themes through comparing the cases. Furthermore, the thesis closes with references and appendix which contains interview guide.

2. Background

2.1 Swedish Adoption History and Law

Sweden started transnational adoption since the early 1970s. Though not outstanding in the sheer number of the adoption, Sweden has one of the world's highest adoption ratios in any given year. In 1978, there were 1,600 adoptions, with a 17.4 adoption ratio. The ratio dropped in the following years (10.8 in 1998, 11.7 in 2004, and 7.4 in 2008) with the decrease in adoption number. In 2006, transnational adoptive children between age 0 to 14 are mostly from China. Until 2012, the country has adopted approximately 50,000 children, mostly from Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern

Europe (Yngvesson, 2012). The resemblance of most adoptees is thus different from the majority others in Sweden (Andersson, 2012).

Family Law and Parental Support Authority (2016) granted the adoptees the legal status of Swedish citizen upon adoption.

"A child under the age of twelve years who is adopted by a Swedish citizen becomes a Swedish citizen by adoption, if the child is adopted by virtue of a foreign adoption decision…….which is valid under the Act (1997:191) consequent on Sweden's accession to The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption."

So legally, the adoptees have social rights, including free health care and free school, as children who were born in Sweden.

2.2 Chinese Adoption Practice and Law

The adoption program is run by the China Center for Adoption Affairs (CCAA), an organisation entrusted by the Chinese government. The organisation divided children who were available for adoption as non–special needs or special needs status, and couples who choose China as a donor country need to decide if they are open to children with identified special needs (China Center for Adoption Affairs, 2014). Many children with non-special needs were abandoned by birth parents due to the One-Child Policy. Thus, they are more likely to experience better prenatal care, compared to those who are abandoned due to family poverty or drug abuse. And for those who are in special needs program, the medical needs are well recorded (Ishizawa & Kubo 2013, in Martina and Rosenhauerb, 2016). They are part of the reasons that why Swedish parents chose China as a donor country.

Before the early 2000s, non-special needs program took place more than the special-needs. However, as waiting time of non-special programs become longer, more adoptive-to-be parents were open to those with special needs. In 2006, the special needs adoptions outnumber the non–special needs ones (Tan, Marfo, & Dedrick, 2007, in Martina and Rosenhauerb, 2016). Some adoptees have resemblances due to the same or similar "special-needs" they have, which might make it easier for a connection to be felt.

Adoptive couples were required by the Chinese government to travel to China and to stay in the country for approximately two weeks in order to pick up the children and completing the adoption

process. The personal experiences in China may affect parents ability to cope with the geo-cultural origins of the children (Andrew, 2007). In addition, since abandonment is illegal in China, there is little information on the children's birth parents (Andrew, 2007), which may lead to hiatus of the adoptee's self-narrative.

3. Previous Research

Adoption in Kinship Studies

Natural kinship is based on biological ties, meaning that those born in a family naturally belong to the family. The children receive care and love from the family, and become the heir to the family property. Early researchers on adoption studies borrowed the natural kinship model. For example, Goody (1969) came up with three main types of the functions of adoption: "To provide homes for orphans, bastards, foundlings and the children of impaired families. To provide childless couples with social progeny. To provide an individual or couple with an heir to their property."

It was not until the 1970s that anthropologists researching adoption started challenging the traditional kinship and coming up with their own theories. Marshall (1977, in Howell 1999) thinks that kinship consists not only in part of shared biogenetic substance, but also in "shared land and similar resources". He called the latter "nurturant relationships". Based on the study in Chuuk State, he thinks that the nurturant relationships overlay the traditional kinship. Weismentel (1995, in Howell 2009, p.155) also supports that it is possible for a child to become a full member of a nonbiological family through feeding and sharing time together.

Both these scholars believed that there is no persistent dichotomy between natural kinship and nurturant relationships where adoption resides. Marshall (1977, in Howell 2009, p.155) argues that the nurturant relationship is an integral part of "the nature of kinship". Clientship and certain kinds of friendship acted out with adoption as one major relationship. While Weismentel (1995) illustrates that some form of a biological model for kinship as reference made adoption meaningful. "The physical act of intercourse, pregnancy, and birth can establish a strong bond between two adults… other adults, by taking a child into their family and nurturing its physical need through the same substances as those eaten by the rest of the social group, can make of that child a son or daughter who is physically as well as jurally their own." (Howell 2009, p.155)

Signe Howell (2003) then created a new concept, Kinning. The concept denotes a process where adoptive parents, as important agencies, incorporate their adoptees into the adoptive parents' family

tree (including grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc.), and build the adoptees' consistent sense of belongings to multiple relations that is centred by the core family composed by parents and children.

Howell (2003 & 2006) then applied the Kinning Theory to studying transnational adoption in **Spain and Norway**. She found that various sociocultural and law differences in the two countries did not affect similar attitudes adoptive parents have towards their adoptees. On one hand, the parents help adoptees to be socially connected to the receiving countries and transcend the constraints of the adoptees' genotypic features that are different from the majority in the country. The parents teach their children language and dress them in clothes with characteristics of the receiving countries. Some adoptive parents also search for similarities and resemblance between themselves and the children to make the relations naturalised. On the other hand, the parents also emphasised the adoptees' biological origin in certain contexts. They take their adopted children to socialise with other adoptive families.

Lind (2012) applies the Kinning theory in transnational adoptees' identity studies in Sweden. She argues that in the Swedish context, the adoptees "foreign origin" also refers to three major meanings, as Kinning theory indicates (in the purpose and aim): the adoptees' phenotypical features, the fact that the adoptees are born by unknown mothers on non-Swedish territory, and their past before being adopted in the donor countries. Yngvesson (2015) introduces a report from social workers who contacted adoptive and foster parents of 100 children. The report shows that in most cases, the parental caring and the permanent relations within the parents' kin group makes the transnational adoptees feel themselves as "Swedes".

However, the report also shows that the self-perception of those who wish to be acknowledged as Swedes is challenged by their phenotypical features as the primary reminder of their foreign origins. Because the main-stream discourse in the Swedish society empties the concept of race of any cultural or historical difference, and the appearance is a fundamental factor in the Swedish national imagination, typically with white skin, blonde hair colour and blue eyes (Mattsson 2005, in Andersson 2012).

To deal with the visible non-whiteness, the Swedish Intercountry Adoption Authority (MIA) suggested the transnational adoptees to have a pride in their foreign origin. However, Lind (2012) criticises the suggestion by arguing that it is difficult for the adoptees to identify themselves to their

original country since they do not have the cultural cultivation of their origins while growing up in Sweden. In addition, the positive acknowledgement of their origins could not change the fact that the adoptees failed to meet the criteria for being authentically Swedish. The studies show that the task for the Swedish adoptive parents, is not only to make the adoptees become "as if the biogenetic child of the adoptive parents", but also, to cultivate the adoptees proper self-perceptions that make them comfortable when socialising in the "racially divided society" (Caldwell, 2006, in Lind 2012).

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design: Multiple Case Study

The thesis is designed as a multiple case study since "the case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question." (Stake 1995, in Bryman 2012, p.66). The case study is the most appropriate way for describing and understanding different conditions of each adoptive family through in-depth analysis. The study contains three cases, each representing a Swedish adoptive family with one or two adoptee(s) from China. In addition, there are several common issues that adoptive parents in two or three cases need to cope with. If similar results are found in more than one case, the researcher can "develop greater confidence in the findings of the cases" (de Vaus 2001, p.231).

4.2 Data collection: Snowball Sampling and Semi-Structured Interviews

This study is a qualitative research employing first-hand data from interviews as the empirical foundation. I did five interviews and the interview results build on five cases. All the informants are adoptive parents. I find the first informant through one of my acquaintances. Then I got contact information of the second interviewee through internet searching since she is the contact person of an adoptive family group. She then helped me post advertise on Facebook group, through which, I find the other three informants based on snowball sampling. The basic information of all the five cases are listed in the table 1-1. With the respect to the privacy of the families, names that I used in the thesis are all assumed names. Each interview is semi-structured, guided by several questions that are centred around three themes drawn from Kinning theory (see Purpose and Aims). According to informants' answers to my prepared questions, I also follow up questions to probe details that might be central to the analysis or to clarify points that the informants make. In addition,

Case number	Interviewee's Name (age)	Relation to the Adoptees	The name of the Adopted Children	Time to pick up (the age of the parent at that time)	Age of the child when picked up	Age of the child now	Special-Need child or not	Siblings	Return trip or not
1	Mary (39)	Mother	Eric (Male)	2007 (31)	3 years	13	Yes (Cleft lip and Cleft palate)	A younger sister aged 9 adopted from Taiwan	Half yes (been to Taiwan to pick up the younger sister)
3	Maggie(46)	Mother	Linda (Female	2007 (35)	10 months	12	Yes (Symptom not shown)	No	Yes
2	Jane (45)	Mother	John (Male)	2014 (41)	3 years and 4 months	6	Yes (minor heart problems)	An older brother aged 9 adopted from China	No
4	Alice(43)	Mother	Male	2014 (39)	1 year	6	Yes (symptom not shown)	No	No
5	Bob (48)	Father	Female	2009 (40)	10 months	9	No	No	No

to make the interviewees feel comfortable to talk, the interviews were conducted at their home as they wished, and each lasts two to three hours.

(Table 1-1)

4.3 Data Analysis: Coding and Thematic Analysis

I pick three cases (Case 1,2,3) for in-depth analysis based on the features of the cases shown on table 1-1. Because children in Case 1 and Case 2 are relatively old and thus their identities are more easy to be detected, compared to those in the other cases. Furthermore, I also pick Case 3 because it is comparable to Case 1 in the sense that children in both cases were adopted at around the age of three and were categorised as special-needs children. Their mental stages and the problems the adoptive parents encounter are likely to be similar.

The data analysis is based on grounded theory approach including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Bryman 2012, p.569). For Case 1, I firstly use open coding "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorising" data from the interview and in the end, around twenty labels are used. I then link codes "to contexts, to consequences, to patterns of interaction, and to causes" (Bryman 2012, p.569) — what are called "axial coding", to come up with coherent plots available for analysis. Lastly, I developed six themes that can systematically integrate other categories through selective coding. The six themes are: biological parents, orphanage time, language, appearance, return trip, and social activities, which are then used as labels to code and analyse the other two transcripts, through which, Case 2 and Case 3 were built.

After the coding, I go back to the Kinning Theory （shown in Purpose and Aims) and find three themes (biological parents, orphanage time, and appearance) central to answering the research question. The themes happened to be identical to the three of my thematic categories from selective coding. To visualise the results, Case 1 and Case 3 are presented by the three themes. The themes are also used to organise the Discussion part. In comparison, Case 2 is written up by discussing only the themes of the orphanage time and the appearance.

4.4 Limitations:

There are three major limitations of my study. Firstly, case study is criticised for limiting external validity since researchers are usually concerned to illustrate the uniqueness of each case (Bryman 2012, p.59). So, conclusions drawn from my study is applicable only to the adoptive families in the study. However, I find case study the most appropriate for describing and understanding the features of each family. Moreover, the conceptual framework developed in the study can be applied to other contexts.

Secondly, the cases are built on the narratives of my informants, meaning that what interviewees said are the major sources of my analysis. Bryman (2012) claims that semiotics always provides arbitrariness. It could be possible that what my interviewees said was not what they meant. I was thus pay attention to the context of the words or sentences that I chose for analysis. I also looked for relevant wordings through the interview transcript to support what I interpret from chose passages. In addition, bearing the uncertainty of the data on mind, I also use speculation in the analysis when needed.

Thirdly, the position of me, a researcher, might also affect the research results. I am a Chinese studying in Sweden, so I have been acquainted with certain social knowledge of both countries, which may affect the way I constructed and asked questions. I thus have self-criticism since formulating the interview guides and constantly talked about thoughts and findings from the research to my supervisor and close friends, open to their criticism. On the other hand, the social knowledge also makes me easy to understand information from the interview and the intersubjectivity I showed in the field work potentially promoted the expression of the informants.

5.   Theoretical/conceptual framework

I choose concepts including "transubstantiation" from Kinning theory, "the 'I' and the 'Me'", "'significant symbols' and 'imitation'", the "fusion of the 'I' and the 'Me'", and "dissociation" from Symbolic Interactionism, as well as "habitus" and "social and cultural capital" from Pierre Bourdieu to build my own theoretical framework. These concepts are motivated by the characteristics of different themes in the three cases.

The concept of "transubstantiation" and the four sets of concepts from "symbolic interactionism" are beneficial for the analysis of Case 1 and Case 3.

In both Case 1 and Case 3, the concept of "transubstantiation" serves as a lens to see tensions and ambiguities between the child's previous kinship and the adoptive kinship. In addition, in Case 3, the concept is helpful to see the implied effects of the image construction of the adoptees' biological mothers on the child-parent relationship between the children and the adoptive mothers.

In comparison, another concept from symbolic interactionism, "significant symbols" is generative to analyse the interaction process between the parents and their children. The concept is used in the sections where the adoptive parents teach the adoptees the meanings of the words that are related to "adoption", and also where the parents teach the children Swedish and make them familiar with the new environment.

Along with "significant symbols", the concept of "imitation" is effective to analyse how the parents change the image of the word "China" in the minds of both the adoptee and his classmates, as shown in the [Appearance] section in Case 1. In comparison, on the topic of the child's socialisation in case 3, I also use "the fusion of the 'I' and the 'Me'" to explain the mother's intention to make her child play with another adoptive family and the effect of living in a town with other Asian inhabitants on the child.

Furthermore, another concept, "dissociation" is also useful to analyse social activities. In Case 1, it is used to explain the effect of socialising with the child's close friends. Besides, the concept is also efficient to see how the self-narrative on the biological parents may affect the adult adoptees' identity, which is indicated in the conclusion section. On the topic of the identity, I also borrow the concept of "the 'I' and the 'Me'" to speculate how the self of the child in Case 1 is constructed through interactions with his classmates.

Moreover, other two concepts from Bourdieu are useful to analyse Case 2. The concept of "habitus" is applied in analysing the child's social activities with those who have mixed backgrounds. While the "social and cultural capital" is generative to analyse what the adoptee gains from her China return trip.

5.1 Transubstantiation

To illustrate how adoptive parents compensate for the "absence of shared flesh, blood and history" with adoptees, Howell (2003) differentiated between "transformation" and "transubstantiation". The former means change of both forms and content. In comparison, "transubstantiation" refers to the effects that the transnational adoptees' substance, that is, the biological body remains, while their social essence including being and self changed. Howell suggested that most activities adoptive parents do for their children are around "transubstantiation" (Howell 2003, p.470).

Transubstantiation is an effect existing over time when adoptees grow up in receiving countries. On the adoptees' arrival in a new land, they have "rebirth". The adoptees were given new names, citizenships and birth certificates by adoptive parents and the bureaucracy of the landing country. The children are also granted new homes, together with new social and cultural expectations. The adoptive parents also "symbolically plant the kids in the soil of one's ancestors" (in receiving countries) through daily-life practice in forms of food, dress, languages etc. Through the practice, the parents distance the adoptees from their origins and create links between the adoptees and the new land. At the same time, they also build personal relatedness between themselves and the children. Such personal relatedness is essential for the adoptees to form their identity and personhood as they grow up. (Howell 2003).

5.2 Symbolic Interactionism

George Herbert Mead (1995) constructs the Symbolic Interactionism Theory to argue that the essence of self is cognitive and formed through social interactions. A person observes and processes what others say and the gestures they make. The person also reflects the attitudes of the others

toward the person behind what the others say or behind their gestures. Based on the attitudes, the person then comes up with how to react on the words and the gestures in the social interactions.

5.2.1 the "I" and the "me"

Mead (1995) explains how social interactions give rise to a person's self by introducing the concept of "I" and "Me". He divides "self" into two phases in social interaction process — the "I" and the "me". The "me" is the "perspective-observer" of the self that looks at one's action, and the social environment, as well as the relation between the action and the environment. Specifically, the "me" is generated by taking the role of the other (role-taking), in which, one can perceive the world that includes oneself, from the perspective of the others. The ability of reflection the "Me" has is important in the role-taking process.

Based on the observation and the role-taking that the "Me" functions, the "Me" is also able to guide the subjective "I" as the other part of the self that is responsible for taking real actions in the social sphere. After the "I" finish an action, the action will be part of the environment that one is situated in, and thus come to be observed by the "Me". The process is not a series of steps, but rather, the "I" is acting at the same time the "Me" is observing, perceiving and guiding. The simultaneous process both makes changes on and maintains the person in the situation by considering the person's relationship to the environment and to others (Burke and Stets, 2009).

5.2.2 "Significant Symbols" and "Imitation"

Symbols are the primarily, or even the solely focus of Symbolic Interactionism for Mead because the symbols constitute the basis of thoughts and meanings. A person could give signs to others in social interactions to trigger a certain response. When both the sign sender and the receivers know the meaning behind the sign and have a shared understanding of what the response would be, the sign becomes a conventional sign or symbol, sometimes referred to as "significant symbols".

Significant symbols take forms of languages and/or gestures. The meaning of the language that is used in symbolic interactions is shared by both users and the objects with whom the user talks. Similarly, the gesture also has meaning to the person who performs it and to the one(s) the gesture is directed to in the interactions (Burke and Stets, 2009).

Mead argues that to understand how shared meanings is reached between/among communicators, it is important to understand the role of "imitation". If one has already learned how to react to a

stimulus (symbol), the person both knows the meaning behind the stimulus (symbol) and records the reaction in the person's behaviour repertoire. When the person observes that others react to the situational symbol in the same way in a social interaction, the individual knows that the meaning of the symbol is understood between himself or herself and the others. Then it is possible that the person recalls the reaction from his or her behaviour repertoire and imitates others' reaction to the symbol in the social interactions (Burke and Stets, 2009).

5.2.3 The fusion of the "I" and the "Me"

Mead also argues that in one situation, one's "Me" need not observe others and the "I" does not function under the instruction of the "Me", that is, the situation where the person has had a sense of belongings to a group before socialising with some of the group members. The sense of belongings to the group triggers an attitude on the person, and based on the attitude, the person acquires corresponding responses through the social process.

In the future similar social situations where a wider range of group members are involved, the person spontaneously relates the unfamiliar group members to the group members that the person has been familiar with from previous social experiences. Consequently, the unfamiliar group members become familiar objects to the person and make the person call out the programmed response that has been saved in the person's mind. So, the "Me" of the individual does not need to observe the social situation as the "Me" usually does. In comparison, the "I" is still the response taker, who is instructed by the commonly shared attitude and the response that the person has acquired from the previous socialisation. In this case, Mead argues that the "Me" fused to the "I" (Mead 1995, p.274).

5.2.4 Dissociations

Mead (1995) also claims that a set of social processes that one is involved in, determines which self the person is going to have. In one's complete self, there are various elementary selves that are identical with various aspects in the structure of the social process that one is involved in as a whole. And if the complete self is not able to answer to one aspect of the structure of the whole social process, the elementary self that is formed in that social process could be detached from the complete self.

The phenomenon of dissociation takes place if a complete self breaks up into component selves "of which it is composed". The possible reason of the breaking up could be that one does not experience a complete aspect of the social process that is supposed to form a unified "elementary self", or one is detached from the social group that is engaged in the process.

5.3 Habitus

Pierre Bourdieu's emphasis on "habitus" allows us to think through how a self is socially produced. He defines "habitus" as an "embodied history" that is internalised as a second nature. The history is partly affected by one's social environment, e.g. the status of the individual's family, the education the individual receives, etc. Through socialising with others in history, one forms types of taste (e.g. style of dressing) and modes of behaviours (e.g. ways of speaking, and ways of standing) — known as habitus. Once formed, the habitus, in turn, also restrains specific social relations that one will make and creates new parts of the individual's history (Alana et.al. 2015, Lawler 2014).

Moreover, Bourdieu also classifies habitus as "primary" and "secondary". The "primary habitus" is created in ones' early childhood. On the basis of the primary habitus, one develops the 'secondary' habitus through performing different agents of "secondary socialisation" — school, peer groups, the media and so on. The habitus is the active presence of the whole past and is produced by the past "as a second nature and so forgotten". (Bourdieu 1990; 56, Alanen, Brooker and Mayall, 2015).

5.4 Social and Cultural Capital

Bourdieu also extends the usage of the term, capital, to social and cultural scopes. He defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resource"(Alana et.al. 2015, p.6-7). The resources are in form of a durable network which contains "mutual acquaintance and recognition" among group members. Each member in the network are entitled to credit from collectively-owned capital that is backed up by other members. (Bourdieu 2000: 19, in Alana et.al. 2015).

When it turns to cultural capital, Bourdieu explained it by exemplifying its three forms. One state is embodied, including "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body"; and the second one is objectified, shown as cultural goods. Institutional recognition is the third form, including academic qualifications and official certificates (Bourdieu 1986: 243, in Alana et.al. 2015).

6. Empirical Analysis:

6.1 Background Information of All the Cases:

All of my informants tried to conceive first when they wanted a child. When this method failed, they then tried medical treatment such as IVF (in vitro fertilization) and hormone treatment, except for one case (Case 1). If the medical treatments failed, adoption came as the last alternative to becoming parents. The decision making process on adoption took one to seven years. Adoptive-parents-to-be read books and articles on adoption, and/or talked to other adoptive family friends. Mental instability, including frustration and anxiety, came with their desire for parenthood during this period, which accords to what Howell indicates in the pre-pregnancy period in Kinning theory.

Once decisions were made within the household, couples sent applications to their local governments in Sweden. Local governments then assigned licensed social workers to examine each couple's conditions to see if they were suitable for adoption. Once the local government approved their application, the parents got to choose a donor country. If they chose China, it was also the time for the parents to decide if they were open for children with special-needs.

There are several reasons why my interviewees decided on China, listed in the order from the most-mentioned to the least.

1.The couples happened to meet all the requirements on adoption that China has, regarding times to visit the donor country, age limits and body mass index of the parents, etc.;

2. Some couples believed that the adoption procedure in China was secured and went quickly, compared to many other donor countries;

3. The couples were influenced by friends who had succeeded adopting children from China or from other Asian countries, namely, South Korea;

4. Some couples believed that China was economically stable and that it was an exciting country with rich history to travel to.

After being approved by both China and Sweden, parents went to China and spent two weeks in the country — the first week in Beijing for sightseeing to get known the country and then four or five days in capital cities of the provinces where they picked up their children in provincial offices. The China trip is one of the things that the parents talk about to their children as the children grow up.

"I think that it is very important to send the parents there and see China, or whatever country it is, so you bring it home, and see we were there, we were there to pick you up." (Maggie, 2018.3.17)

Due to the different geo-cultural origin their children have, the adoptive parents need to cope with issues apart from normal parenting, namely, issues on the adoptees' foster family or orphanage time, biological parents and abandonment, languages, appearance, and social activities, etc. For some of the issues, parents have different strategies while for the other, there are similarities(the differences and similarities will be presented in the discussion chapter after the analysis). In addition, since the cases are interviewee result from adoptive parents, they are named after the assumed names of the informants.

6.2 Case 1: Mary's Family

The couple did not try medical treatment for a long time after they had failed to conceive. Adoption seemed a natural choice for them. It is partly because the adoptive father had a step-father and they had a very good relation. His successful personal experience in "kinning" made him believe that it is not necessary to be biologically related to his children to have good relations with them.

In addition, the couple were also open to older children (around 3 yrs old) and children with special-needs from the beginning. They have adopted two children, the older one is from China and the younger one is from Taiwan. The analysis will only focus on the older brother, Eric.

The case analysis contains three parts. In the first part — biological parents, I borrow concept of "conventional symbols" to analyse how Mary taught Eric meanings of the words that were related to "biological parents and abandonment" to make up for the hiatus in Eric's self-narrative.

In the second part, I mentioned three ways that Mary coped with issues on Eric's orphanage time. Firstly, Mary helped him to continue friendships with the other two boys from the same orphanage by building social capital with the other two adoptive couples. Secondly, Mary explained Eric the meaning behind "transnational adoption", where the concept of "significant symbols" is used for the analysis. Thirdly, she also helped Eric construct his worldview through "significant symbols".

The last part is about Eric's appearance. I use the concepts of "imitation" and "significant symbols" to analyse how the parents change the image of the word "China" shown in the interactions between Eric and his classmates.

[Biological Parents]

Eric asked about his biological parents for the first time at his age four when Mary's brother and sister in law were going to have a baby. He asked about how he was when in Mary's belly, and Mary explained that he never was. She then showed him photos from the China trip, including one of his photos taken on the Great Wall[2]. She told him for many times, about how she and her husband travelled to China to get him. Mary also told him that everyone was born from a mother and that he was born from the tummy of his Chinese mother. She also told him that for some reason, his Chinese parents could not keep him, so he was taken care of by the orphanage until staff there found him a new family. Mary said that Eric could understand what she said, and he was only wondering what his Chinese parents looked like.

The photos are variations of symbols that usually take forms of language and gestures. By looking at photos taken in China, especially the one where Eric was in, he knew that he had connections with China. Through telling him stories on the China trip, Mary enriched the meanings of the photos. Consequently, the photos become significant symbols whose meaning are shared between Mary and Eric. Eric thus got known the fact that he was not conceived by Mary, but rather, he was born in China by an unknown woman. The knowing becomes the foundation of the emotional attachment to the biological parents for Eric later on. (Yngvesson and Mahoney 2000, in Lawler 2014, p.54-55)

As he grows older, why the biological parents had not kept him became important. Mary answered truthfully that she and her husband didn't know why. But they told him some possible external factors behind the abandonment, avoiding saying that it was because of the child himself. For example, they told Eric that the health care in China wasn't free like that in Sweden and that maybe the Chinese parents couldn't afford to pay for the surgeries for his cleft lip and cleft palate[3]. However, Eric seemed not satisfied with the explanation. He once asked the adoptive mother to call the police to ask for information about his biological parents. It shows that Eric had a certain degree of emotional attachment to the birth parents and that there had been a hiatus in Eric's self-narrative about his biological parents. It seems common for those who are adopted under systems of closed adoption where the children's birth records are sealed to express their desire to know their biological parentage (Lawler, 2014). Mary tried to comfort Eric by telling him that the birth parents probably wanted to keep him, but they couldn't.

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[2] One of the scenic spots and historical sites in China.

[3] An opening in the upper lip that extends into the nose.

As Eric becomes older and is able to understand more, the conversations about his biological parents and the abandonment evolved and the couple discussed more details with him. They told Eric about the One-Child Policy, and that he might have siblings in China or that his Chinese family might have given up more than one child. Mary also told him that it was illegal to abandon children in China, which might be the major reason why his biological family did not attach any personal information.

The interaction between Eric and Mary was through conventional symbols in forms of language. The meanings behind the terms — "the health care in China", "the One-Child Policy" and "illegal abandonment" — were elaborated and shared by Mary to Eric. By doing so, she wanted Eric to make up for the hiatus on the birth parents by incorporating the terms in his self-narrative.

Since the self-narrative on the Chinese parents requires "a wider network, stretching back through time" as resources (Lawler 2014, p.24), Mary had to ask a friend in China to help her. Mary filmed her family life in Sweden where Eric was on screen and she also wrote a descriptive paragraph about Eric. The friend helped her send the clips to a local Chinese TV channel and also helped her post the text on a local newspaper.

The access to the TV channel and the newspaper is the capital owned by Mary's friend. Due to the durable relations between Mary and the friend, the access become collectively owned which Mary is "entitled to credit" from (Alana et.al. 2015). However, Mary did not get any respond from the published "Parent Lost".

According to Mary, Eric, thirteen years old now, is still sad that he has not known anything about his biological parents. In comparison, the other child in the family who was adopted from Taiwan has shown little interest in her biological parents. Different from China, Taiwan has an "open adoption" system, so Mary knew information about the biological parents of Eric's younger sister since the beginning of her adoption. "I think part of the reasons (that she was not interested) was that she knew that when she asked, we would have the answer." However, Mary did not know if the differences between siblings made the older brother more eager to know his biological parents.

In addition, Mary was sympathetic for Eric. She told Eric that it was ok to miss his birth parents and to want to know who they were. She also had Eric take a DNA test to look for his biological cousins or siblings, but she has not found anything yet.

"He had a full life before he came to us, and we don't believe that his feeling to his birth parents will make him love us any less." said Mary (2018.3.24). By telling Eric that it was ok to miss his

biological parents, Mary wanted to make them natural topics for Eric to think about. By sending him to do the DNA test, Mary may gave him hopes of finding the parents.

Through the telling and giving the hopes, Mary enabled Eric to be attached to the social group of the Chinese parents (though in a very weak way). The attachment could potentially prevent one of Eric's component selves from being separated from his unitary self. The component self is related to the social process between the time Eric was born and that he was abandoned, and the Chinese parents constituted an important and perhaps the only social group that engaged in the process (Mead, 1995).

[Orphanage Time]

Since Mary and her husband have not known anything about Eric's birth parents, what Eric experienced in the orphanage become the only part that they could construct for him. "We worked really hard on it." said Mary's husband (2018.3.24). They mentioned three ways.

Firstly, they helped Eric continue friendships with two boys from the same orphanage. There were two other Swedish couples who picked up their children from Eric's orphanage at the same period as Mary did. Marry met them on an adoption class before she went to China. When Mary went to China to pick Eric up, she helped the other two families bring gifts to the children they were going to pick up. After Mary brought Eric back to Sweden, she also skyped with the families for several times, telling them how the China trip was. Several months later, when the other two families picked their children up and went back, Mary also welcomed them in the airport.

By doing these, Mary tried to build a "social capital" among the group of three families. The acquaintance and recognition from the social capital entitled Mary to credit from the collectively-owned capital, that is, chances to let Eric socialise with the other two children. After they all came to Sweden, Mary took Eric to meet other two families several times per week for one year during the parents' parental leave[4]. The children spent a lot of time playing together when they were little. Consequently, the three children remain to be friends throughout their childhood.

Why did Mary take such efforts to help Eric build the friendship? Because she acknowledged the importance of Eric's orphanage time. After she picked him up from the orphanage, Eric cried for the first three nights. She suggested that it was because he was not used to being surrounded by "white people". She also knew that the three boys were friends when they were in the orphanage with things in common. Staff in the orphanage gave her a picture of the three when Mary picked Eric up. Two, including Eric, have Cleft lip and Cleft Palate, and the other have Albinism. Mary thought that

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[4] Parental leave in Sweden: A insurance that allows parents paid time off to care for their children with job security. The rule applied to adoptive parents also.

such familiarity and similarity are valuable bases for their friendship, and for keeping the memory on China fresh to Eric.

How the friendship may affect Eric's identity-building could be examined through ideas from Mead's conceptualisation of "dissociation". There are two elementary selves for Eric — one acquired in China and the other acquired in Sweden. Since the environments in China (the orphanage) and in Sweden (Mary's family) are different, the two elementary selves are different, and the differences may cause Eric to experience what Mead called "dissociation". To prevent one of the elementary selves from being detached from the complete self composing of the elementary selves, Mary knew that Eric needed a "glue", that is, a social group that is engaged in both social processes when Eric was in China and in Sweden.

On one hand, playing with the boys enabled Eric to be attached to the "Chinese orphanage social group", and the time they spent together in Sweden enabled Eric to relate himself to the social process that he had experienced in the orphanage in China before. Mary told me that she once asked Eric if he ever talked about adoption when he hung out with the boys. Eric replied "no" and explained that they did not really need to, because the other boys knew that they used to share time in China. In addition, one of the two boys is the only one Eric still allows to call Eric by Eric's Chinese name.

On the other hand, the social process with the other two boys in Sweden also helped Eric build another elementary self that is related to his new role as a child in a Swedish family. Apart from the intensive socialisation during the parents' parental leave, the three families also go for summer vacations together occasionally. Since Eric's family moved to Skåne a few years ago, the other two families have come to visit Eric's family a few times each year. Eric also takes trains to Gothenburg, where he used to live, to meet the boys twice a year.

This appears to suggest that the friendship provides Eric a "sameness among members of a group or category". As adoptive children, all the three boys are all likely to think about their biological parents, and the Asian appearance, ect. Mary hopes that the friendship could also help Eric cope with these issues on adoption if he encountered any in the future (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000).

Secondly, Mary also traced down adoptive life of the other children from the same orphanage through internet. Soon after the two boys come to Sweden, little Eric started asking Mary when everyone from the orphanage is coming. Mary thought it was "horrible". She told Eric that it was pure luck that he and the other two boys ended up in the same city. She also explained that it was

impossible for her to pick children from China anytime she wanted partly because each adoption should be examined and approved by both the Swedish and Chinese governments.

This was a time when Mary taught Eric what the "transnational adoption in Sweden" meant, and as long as Eric learned the meaning, the word of "adoption" become a conventional symbol that can be used in the symbolic interactions between Mary and Eric. By learning the meanings, Eric is also able to include the word as part of his self-narrative.

Furthermore, Mary also paid attention to children who were still left in the orphanage. She knew that they got adopted one by one, and she contacted all of the adoptive mothers (except for one) through internet. They built a Facebook group and followed each other's family life. She sometimes mentions some of the adoptive families to Eric. She feels that Eric does not want to hear much details about them, but he likes to know that his mother knows about them and that she keeps in touch with them. I speculated that the friendship with the two boys from the orphanage may has been enough for Eric to make up for the hiatus on the orphanage experience in his self-narrative. And Eric also knows that the parent-child relation between him and Mary entitles him to credit from Mary's capital, that is, information on the other children from the orphanage, when he feels needed.

At the same time when Eric asked the question, Mary also felt heart-broken to know that some children were still living in the orphanage. "Children who were not adopted were those also with special needs and disabilities. In a perfect world, no child should grow up in an orphanage." said Mary (2018.3.24). Her sympathy for the children was partly due to what she found on Eric during the first period since she adopted him. He had not experienced many things a three-year-old should experience. He did not know what parents were; he never went shopping in a grocery store before; He was not used to play on the playground because he had not been allowed to in the orphanage. The lack of the experience leads to a third way that Mary coped with Eric's orphanage time — to complete Eric's worldview for a normal three-year-old.

Mary and her husband took Eric out to experience different things while taking pictures. At night, the couple would let Eric look through the pictures and repeated things on the pictures for him. For example, they showed pictures of a playground while saying "we went to a playground and played there". Or they pointed on themselves, saying "this is mammy and daddy and we are at home, you don't hug man you saw on the bus, but you hug mammy and daddy." The gestures made Eric know that the pictures, or the bodies of the couple are the manifestations of the words, "playground" and "parents", respectively. By reading the manifestations and the gestures through the interactions, Eric

understood the meaning of the words. The words then become conventional symbols for him next time he interacted with the couple.

The worldview construction does not help Eric build on the self-narrative about his orphanage as the first two methods do. Rather, it compensated for what Eric should have learnt in the orphanage. The concept of "transubstantiation" suggested that by helping Eric build basic cognitions, Mary makes his new kinship foregrounds Eric's Chinese origins. Because the conventional symbols that Mary's couple taught were all in Swedish while Eric was forgetting Chinese he learnt in the orphanage. Also, the child-parent relation is likely to be enhanced through the process.

In addition, I find it necessary to rethink what Howell (2003) indicates by "origins" (See purpose and Aims). In the context of my study, the "origins" refers to the "Chinese origins". For those who were adopted in the late childhood, the Chinese origins does not only mean the Chinese ethnicity (genes), but also a "primary habitus" that the child acquires in the orphanage or equivalent institutions before being adopted. How much efforts the adoptive parents need to work on the primary habitus depends on how much gap the adoptees have, compared to their Swedish peers who were born and raised up in a Swedish family. What Mary's couple did for Eric in the third method also accords to the saying that "Kinning is a process fraught with tensions and ambiguities" (Howell 2006, p.64).

[Appearance] and [Identity]

Eric has been faced with issues on the phenotypical features since he started school at age 9. His Asian-looking face made it apparent for his classmates that Eric was from China. So some people in school assumed that Eric was the expert of the country. They asked him questions about China, which made Eric tired of. Eric also heard that people in school said negative things on China, like, "China has dictatorship and people there do not care about the environment." He thus does not want to be related to the country. Eric once asked his mother to remove his pictures on the Great Wall. His mother speculated that he did not want his friends to see and to ask about the pictures.

I speculate that Eric's attitude on the picture is due to his awareness of the phenotypical features and his observation of the school environment. When asked about China in school, Eric realised that his phenotypical features resembled Chinese, not Swedish. He also observed that he was situated in a class composed of people whose biological parents were Swedish, and that people in his class had limited knowledge on China. Most importantly, Eric's relevance to China that was apparently shown through his phenotypical features made him different from the majority others.

Eric's parents, tried to intervene the interactions between Eric and his classmates by working on the images of China in both Eric and his classmates' mind. On one hand, they talked more about China with Eric. For example, they told Eric that it was a group of people in China who decided on how to run the country, and thus China in the news did not always represent majority Chinese. They also told him that "Chinese are leading on solars and genes now." By doing this, they wanted Eric to be acquainted with China and to regard China as a "cool country" (said Mary's husband), which may make Eric be proud of where he is from when he is asked in social interactions.

On the other hand, the parents also went to Eric's school and showed his classmates a comedy, Kungfu Panda, whose story is situated in Henan province, where Eric is from. "Everyone is so impressed that Eric is from the same province as Kungfu after watching the movie." said Mary (2008.3.24). It is likely that the classmates learnt that China was a cool country with rich cultural heritage.

Based on the reactions of the classmates to the movie, it is speculated that Eric's classmates would alter their attitude to the country, China, and respond to the word, China, in a neutral or positive way when they hear or mention it in a social interactions. For example, they might say, "Oh, China is a country that creates Kungfu, and this is super cool!" Eric then observes the reaction and thus knows that the meaning of the symbol — China is a cool country in various ways — is understood among him and the classmates. The observation makes Eric recall the similar behaviour pattern that he had saved. For example, Eric might have a confident statement as response, saying that "yes, I am from the cool country", which is also an imitation of his classmates' respond. In this way, Eric's neutral or positive perception on China turned to be part of his self through the social interactions.

6.2 Case 2: Maggie's Family

Both of the parents were Danish and they had been living in Copenhagen before they moved to Sweden in 1999. They speak Danish at home while Swedish is the main language when they socialise with others. Their adoptive child, Linda, is 12 years old now, and she can speak fluent Danish and Swedish. In addition, the parents sent Linda to an international school two years ago where half of the courses are given by English and students there have mixed background. Linda now can also speak certain degree of English.

The analysis contains two parts. The first part is to illustrate the return trip for China through which the parents construct the child's memory on the foster family. Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital are generative for the analysis. The other part of the analysis is about Linda's social activities with those who have mixed backgrounds as she does, where Bourdieu's conceptualisation

of habitus is applied. Both parts indicate that the parents have helped the child build links with China. The second part also shows that the child has incorporated China as a part of her identity.

[Foster Family] and [Return Trip]

Maggie's daughter, Linda, used to live in a Chinese foster family until she was adopted at the age of ten months. Maggie knew that Linda had been treated well at her foster family before Maggie went to China to pick her up. And in 2014 when Linda was eight years old, Maggie and her husband took the child back to China to visit the foster family. The China return trip enhanced the social capital between Maggie's family and the foster family. They build up relationships based on the mutual acquaintance and recognition that the child is raised up by the two families. Maggie also activated Linda's memory of the previous life in China by visiting the foster family. Moreover, the foster mother and father might feel excited to see the female infant they used to take care of had grown up and been loved by a foreign couple.

"When we met and visited the foster family in 2014, I really knew I was right (about the family's kindness)…because there were 14 people waiting for us when we came…they had flowers and food baskets… Everybody wanted to hug Linda." (Maggie, 2018.3.17)

Maggie showed me a picture where there were a group of people sitting around a table, including Linda's foster mother and father, and some relatives and friends of the foster family. Maggie's family, including Linda's grandmother mother, were sitting among them. Maggie also showed me a picture where the foster father was carrying youth Linda, smiling happily.

The social capital also provides Maggie's family Chinese cultural capital, which is instrumental for Maggie to remind Linda the fact that Linda is from China. One cultural capital is in form of cultural goods — photo albums. While living in the foster family, the foster parents took Linda as well as the adoptive parents to places where Linda had been taken photos of. Maggie also took pictures of youth Linda every place where Linda was used to be taken photos of when she was a infant. Maggie then compiled two sets of photos ("infant Linda" and youth "Linda") into two photo albums and brought the albums to Sweden as souvenirs. In addition, the foster mother also gave Linda a silver bracelet inscribed "smart and lovely" in Chinese as a gift.

Maggie supports the cultivation of the cultural capital and promotes the cultural capital to be a link between Linda and China. She also got a tattoo of a Chinese word "Tianshi" (meaning "angel") on

her ankle, meaning that she got an angel (Linda) from China. In addition, she put a terracotta[5] as a decoration at home, which Linda can see everyday. Nevertheless, when I asked the origins of the decoration, Maggie knew that it is from a province, Xi'an, but she did not know any more historical contexts of the province which gave birth to terracotta.

Obviously, Maggie had made efforts to remind Linda that she is from China. However, in a native Chinese eyes, what the photo albums, the bracelet, the tattoo and the terracotta represent of Chinese culture is relatively shallow. I speculate that the child acquires not that much history and language of the country from the cultural capital.

Maggie added that Linda had the chance to learn Chinese at school and Maggie "very much" liked her to learn. However, the school requested the parents to help the child practice Chinese at home, while Maggie could not. Maggie also tried to learn Chinese on a distance course, but she found the language hard to learn. Maggie said that Chinese was not like any European language which she could sometimes pronounce by reading the text. Also, she could not guess meanings of Chinese words since they were quite different from Swedish and Danish. Now both Linda and her adoptive parents can not say more than "hello" in Chinese. It shows that it is difficult for the adoptive parents to learn Chinese, let alone to teach their adoptive children. There seems no motivation for the parents to overcome the difficulties, either.

In addition, Linda also experienced the Chinese cultural capital in form of cultural customs, though she did not find the experience pleasing. She told me that the first time she met the foster family on the return trip, everybody wanted to hug her. Linda felt uncomfortable because she had been used to the cultural practice in Sweden, which is different to that in China. "In Sweden, if it is not my child, I don't touch. But in China, people always want to touch children and to take pictures with children." explained Maggie (2018.3.17).

Maggie foresaw the cultural difference, and she coped with it by feeling for the foster mother and educating Linda before the trip. "We talked about it at home before going for the return trip, and we told Linda to let her (the foster mother) do it (to hug Linda) because it was very big for her that you (Linda) were finally back. " said Maggie (2018.3.17).

Now the two families still maintain good relations, and the "social capital" continues providing "cultural capital" to the child, which reminded Linda the fact that she was from China although she was raised up in Sweden. The foster parents send presents to Sweden now and then. Every time

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[5] Terracotta: a type of fired clay, typically of a brownish-red colour and unglazed, used as an ornamental building material and in modelling. The modelling is from ancient China.

Linda sees a parcel from China, she knows that it is from foster mom and foster dad. The two families also video call each other through a Chinese social media, Wechat, despite the language barrier. Linda uses google translate to get known what the foster family says and she has not had plan to learn Chinese. This also shows that what Linda gained from the socialisation with the foster family do not confront the significant sociocultural differences between China and Sweden since Linda does not sacrifice her life in Sweden to learn Chinese (Howell, 2006).

[Social activities] and [Identity]

The parents intentionally helped Linda build friendship with children who have similar backgrounds as Linda at her early childhood. Since Linda was two years old, Maggie met other adoptive parents whose children were also adopted from China. The parents put their children together and let them play. Consequently, the children got to know each other while playing. Now three of them become Linda's close friends. "The reason that (why) I feel connected to them is because……I have known them for so many years. We have been friends for so long." said Linda (2018.3.17).

Maggie added that when the children were in the early childhood, they did not see themselves different from any other children from the appearance. As they grow up, "suddenly", it becomes clear that they are from the same country and they have the same history.

Then in Linda's late childhood, it seems easy for her to build friendship either with those who are born with Chinese genes or those who have adoption backgrounds. Linda has a neighbour friend whose mother is Chinese. At school, Linda has also built close friendship with one boy adopted from Poland, and the other adopted from Africa.

In Linda's early childhood, through playing with children who were also adopted from China, she knows how to interact with peers whose backgrounds are composed of both adoption and Chinese genes. The "know-how" become Linda's "preliminary habitus". Then as she grew older, she met people at school or from neighbourhood and she needs to perform her roles as a classmate or as a neighbour through interacting with them. The roles are what Bourdieu called, "various agents of secondary socialisation". From the "preliminary habitus", Linda knows how to interact with peers who are either adopted or born with Chinese gene. The new social skills then become Linda's secondary habitus (Alanen, Brooker and Mayall, 2015).

Moreover, Maggie also added that by encouraging Linda to make friends with peers adopted from China, she wanted Linda to be "comfortable in her Chinese body". The "Chinese body", as a metaphor of Linda's Chinese origins, has two layers of meanings — one is the "Chinese genes", and

the other is "adoption", as suggested from the backgrounds of Linda's friends. Bourdieu suggested that by acquiring the habitus, Linda has been "comfortable in her Chinese body" since the habitus, as a second nature, is "so forgotten" (Alanen, Brooker and Mayall, 2015).

Linda now chats with one of the three best adoptive friends about what happening in their life through internet several times a week. For example, the friend told Linda about his practice on flips. The topics indicates that Linda takes the friend as part of her daily life. In addition, when Maggie asked Linda her wishes for presents, Linda said that she wanted to see the friend since they had not seen each other for a long time. The wishes shows that Linda values the friend a lot.

In addition, Linda involves the "Chinese cultural elements" in socialisation. For example, she watched Chinese TV series with her neighbour friends. Maggie also mentioned that on a recent family trip, Linda made a friend with a boy who was adopted from China. Because Linda "found it easy to talk" about her Chinese name with the boy, which she had not had chance to talk to many others. "Talking about the Chinese name" indicates that Linda recognised China as her origin, and the fact that the talking turned the boy a friend to Linda suggested that she valued the origin as part of her self. Now, when asked about identity, Linda said that one-third of her identity is Chinese, the same portion as Swedish and Danish which constitute the other two-thirds.

6.4 Case 3: Jane's family

The family has two adopted boys from China. They picked up the first boy, Larsson, at his age of two years old, now he is nine years old. And the second boy, John, was picked up aged three years and 4 months old, and now he is at the age of seven. John had lived in a Dutch foster family in China before he was adopted.

The case contains three parts. The first part is about how Jane helped Larsson and John construct the memory of their biological parents. The concept of "transubstantiation" is used to analyse the effects of such construction. The second and the third part focus on the younger brother, John. The second part illustrates how Jane help John to meet new social and cultural expectations given by daycare centre and pre-school in Sweden. In the third part, I discussed two situations where John's Asian phenotypical features are activated in social interactions, including one with another adoptive family and the other with Asian inhabitants in the town where Jane's family is living.

[Biological Parents]

Jane mentioned that both Ludvig and John started asking about their biological parents at their age of six. But different from Isak in case 1, the adoptees themselves in this case also take initiatives to

construct what their biological mothers would be like. Both Larsson and John imagine their Chinese mothers through borrowing materials from what they want but cannot find on the adoptive mother, Jane, and they think that their Chinese mothers are "fantastic".

For John, since he experienced the first three years and four months at the foster family in China, he recognised the fact that he was from China since he was adopted, and that an unknown Chinese woman gave birth to him. John imagined that his biological mother could offer him a lot of candies. During the interview, John finished the whole bowl of the chocolate served on the table, and he always asked for permission from Jane before taking every piece. My speculation is that Jane does not always give him as much candies as he wants. In addition, John also imagined that his Chinese mother could speak better English than Jane and she could also teach him English. "I will correct him when he speaks English. He does not like that, and he will continue by saying, 'No, no, no, that is how my Chinese mother speak English.'" retelled by Jane (2018.3.3).

Jane is supportive to John's imagination — She always listen to what John says about the biological mother. She also tries to make the biological parents a natural topic to talk about. She tells John things written on his official papers from China, and she also tells John possible reasons why his biological mothers could not keep him, saying that maybe the mother had already had one child, and that she could not have two.

In comparison, the older brother, Larsson, imagined his Chinese mother since he recognised that he was not conceived by Jane and that he did not resemble to Jane. Once Larsson asked how he laid in the belly when he was a baby, Jane told him that he did not stay in her belly, but in his Chinese mother's. When Larsson asked what his Chinese mother was like, Jane helped him construct the Chinese mother temperament through imagination. "I think she is cute because you are, maybe you are lucky — you are like your Chinese mother." (Jane, 2018.3.3)

Additional to John, Larsson not only imagines the biological mother to make up for what he wants but cannot get from Jane, but he also borrows materials from popular culture that he watches. He once watched a movie, Kungfu Panda, whose story was situated in China. He then related himself to the Panda since the Panda was also adopted. The Panda's father was the world best noodle maker shown in the movie. Larsson loves noodles, but Jane does not offer them noodles that often because Jane was used to potatoes as main food and she does not want to change the habit only for the boys. Consequently, Larsson imagined that his biological mother was the best noodle maker in the world. The examples show that both memories on China (for John) and the phenotypical features that resemble to Chinese (for Larsson) could lead the boys to be connected to biological parents. In this

sense, the boys' remaining biological bodies make part of their social essence belong to China, to an unknown woman. Nevertheless, the connections are fragile in the sense that they were built only through the boys' imagination. The boys would not have chances to meet or talk to their biological mothers and they are likely to be disappointed as they grow up and know little facts about their biological mothers. More importantly, the material of the imagination is from their life in Sweden, including what they experienced with the adoptive mother and what they saw from a Swedish TV channel. Consequently, the boy's perception on Chinese mother is superficial and not valid. In addition, without the help from Jane who explained the meanings behind the words related to the biological mother (the "One-child policy" for John and the mother's temperament for Larsson), it would be hard for the boys to construct the image of their biological mothers. Obviously, the construction of the connection between the boys and their Chinese mothers, in turn, confirmed the fact that Sweden is the foundation of the boys' life, and that the relationship between the boys and their adoptive mother, Jane, constitutes majority of the boys' social essence (Howell, 2003).

[Orphanage time]

After John came to Sweden, he was soon sent to a daycare centre. Most children in the centre only spoke Swedish and it was hard for John to communicate with them when he had not acquired Swedish. Before coming to Sweden, John was living in a foster family where foster parents speak Dutch, while volunteers there speak English, and nannies speak Chinese. So, he spoke a mixed language which "nobody could understand". Jane then corrected John's pronunciation by teaching him Swedish everyday. She showed objects she can find through daily interactions to John. She told him names of the object in Swedish, and then let John repeat them. John learned very fast in memorising the names, but now, he sometimes still speaks with poor articulation as if with a thick tongue.

Except for the language, John's behaviour pattern that he acquired in the foster family also affected his socialisation. When John met children there for the first time, he would run to them, and start playing with them in a straightforward way. The children thought that he was a bit strange because they neither knew him, nor were familiar with the ways John played.

Both teaching John Swedish (cultrual expectation) and putting John at a daycare centre to socialise with other Swedish children (social expectation) are efforts that Jane made to incorporate John to her kinship. However, the kinning process is fraught with tensions and ambiguities. On the other hand, Jane also need to acknowledge the existence of John's relations to another land, that is, he had

experienced three years and four months in the foster family in China, which caused John's pronunciation problem and his improper behaviours in the day care centre. To cope with the dilemma, Jane explained to people working in the daycare centre about John's behaviour, saying that usually, parents take their children to baby groups early on, so the children could practice on interacting with strangers. But for John, he spent most of his time in the foster family and socialised with two other boys who knew him well. The three boys played with their own rules, which made John assume that everyone in the world would do so (Howell 2006).

After the explanation, people in the daycare centre started paying attention to John. After one year since John attend the daycare centre, he built a close friendship with a Swedish girl. Jane was grateful about what people in the centre had helped with, and the friendship indicated a progress that Jane made in incorporating John in the kinned trajectory.

At the age of six, John started a pre-school where he knew no one. By then, John had still been learning how to interact with strangers. Sometimes he still socialised with others based on his previous behaviour patterns. He thought that he was the best in the world and that everyone wanted to play with him. He would also talk a lot at the beginning, assuming that everyone knew what he was saying. "But actually, it takes some time for others to understand what he says," which turned John frustrated.

However, the frustration does not prevent John keeping high self-esteem partly because Jane is supportive to the high self-esteem. She seldom yells at him to avoid him feeling bad about himself. Jane draws lessons from many adult adoptees who are sad about not knowing their past. She hopes that by being used to feeling good about himself, John will not care much about the biological parents when he grows up. However, if the high self-esteem could make up for the possible hiatus in John's self-narrative when he grows up worths doubting.

Morgan (1987) argues that "kinship is a sphere where culture and nature meet in different ways in different societies." (in Howell 2006, p.82). Jane speculated that the high self-esteem is what John is born with, and the high self-esteem is contradictory to one of the Swedish cultural and social expectations, that is, not to regard oneself as the best. It is a juggling act for the adoptive mother to "keep both biology and sociality as meaningful" (Howell 2006, p.82). Considered the possible hiatus in John's self-narrative on the biological parents, Jane chose to foreground John's high self-esteem by keeping it, while backgrounding the Swedish social expectation.

In comparison, John's certain behaviour patterns (e.g. acting in a too straightforward way) and the mixed language he spoke are caused by the sociality in the foster family in his early childhood — they are what Bourdieu calls, "primary habitus". The "primary habitus", since formed in China, is counted as part of John's Chinese origins. The part of origins also clashes with social expectations in the new kinship, that is, acting while thinking others and being able to speak language that others can understand. On this point, Jane chose to foreground the sociality in Sweden, while backgrounding the part of John's origins. The idea behind the choice is that both acting while thinking others and speaking languages that others can understand are basics to be a social creature. By correcting John's behaviour and teaching him the language, Jane is doing jobs of normal parenting which does not necessarily only to adoptive parents.

[Appearance] + [Identity]

It seems that the Asian phenotypical features have not been an issue for children at John's age. But Jane has been making effort to prevent John's distinguishable features disturbing him in the future, as the parents in Case 1 and Case 2 have done for their children when the children were at John's age.

Jane's husband has a brother, who also adopted two children from China, which is a big factor that made Jane decide on China as a donor country. "I think it is important for them (children in the two families) to know that…our families look like that — In both families, children are from China." Jane often takes the two boys to meet the other families. Jane ordered Asian food from restaurant, and she also made Chinese food, including dumplings and Peking duck. In addition, they also celebrated Chinese New Year together every year.

When socialising with the cousin's family, the constructed social settings give John an attitude that it is common to have parents with Swedish phenotypical features. The attitude then gives rise to a programmed response, which possibly makes John feel comfortable to socialise with Swedish families where children are also adopted from China as he grows up. In addition, through the socialisation with his cousins, John also learned various ways of interactions with children who were adopted from China. For example, eating Chinese food and celebrating Chinese festivals (Mead 1995, p.274).

According to the Kinning theory, the socialisation with the cousin's family makes John's "social essence" foreground because the socialisation provides John a sense of belongings to the family

group constituted by the two families. On the other hand, the socialisation also prepares John to cope with future social situations when his phenotypical features foreground. When he socialises with children adopted from China in a similar family setting as that with his cousin's family, it is speculated that John will possibly feel comfortable since how he reacts to the children have saved in his mind. In this sense, the constrain of John's phenotypical feature is transcended (Howell 2003).

In addition, Jane also mentioned that there were many Asian people in the town where her family were living. John always meets one or two Asians, mostly from Vietnam, Thailand and China, when he goes to the downtown. "I think…it is good for him to see it, and it become somewhere in the back of his head…" (Jane, 2018.3.3). Jane also said that she asked John about his origins, John answered "Chinese", and Jane is supportive to the answer. She thinks that John tells the truth because "his ethnical belonging is Chinese" (Jane, 2018.3.2). Then, when strangers ask John where he is from, he always replies "China". Then people will ask him where he is living, John then answers the Swedish town's name.

Through frequently meeting Asians in the town, I speculate that John develops a sense of sameness to the group of Asians. The sense of sameness, as a collective phenomena, gives John an perception that it is common for an Asian to live in Sweden. Accordingly, when Jane asked John about his identity, John said that he was proud of being a Chinese — the answer which is encouraged by Jane, becomes a programmed response. In another social contexts, people who asked John about his origins might also be a Swedish, looked similar to Jane. The similarity and the similar question made the whole social setting familiar to John. Thus, the "I" of John is speculated to call out the response without the "Me" observing the situation. Here, the "Me" and the "I" of John join to a single entity (Mead 1995, p.274).

This is an example when the boy's Chinese genes foregrounds his Swedish social essence because people notices John's Asian phenotypical features and asks about them. Jane helps John transcend the constrains of the features by making him feel proud about this ethnicity. Different from what the concept of "transubstantiation" indicated, John's "self and being" do not completely change to Swedish. The sameness to the Asians in the town gives him "a fundamental condition of social being" as an ethnical Chinese (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). However, Given the fact that John also has a sense of belongings to Jane's family group with his cousin's family, I would argue that John's identity is ambiguous through the Kinning process.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The section begins with the major findings of the study, and then followed by similarities and differences among three cases discussed thematically.

In general, parents shown in the three cases are responsible and caring. They acknowledge the children's Chinese origins and actively remind their children of the origins through various ways.

To answer the question of how the parents help their children make sense of the fact that the children were born by unknown bodies (subquestion 1), the adoptive parents are open to the topic of their biological parents although they do not have much information on it. They explained to the children the facts that the children were adopted, and they also explained the children possible reasons on why the biological parents neither keep the children nor attach any personal information about themselves.

When it comes to the subquestion 2 on how do the parents help their children construct the pre-adoption memory in China, they help the children build meaningful social relations with people from the orphanages or the foster families. The parents themselves also have weak ties with some people from the institutions and they keep contact mostly through internet.

In terms of the children's phenotypical features (subquestion 3), the parents in all the three cases foresaw the possible disturbance brought by the features when their children grow up. So the parents let their children play with those with similar backgrounds since their early childhood, hoping that the sense of belonging their children have among the friends will make them not care much about their Asian looking.

[Biological Parents]

Based on Case 1 and Case 3, I find many similarities on how the adoptive families deal with issues on the biological parents. Both cases show that the adoptive parents do not have much information on the children's Chinese parents, and parents in both cases think that it is important to help the children construct their biological parents as part of the children's self-narrative. In addition,

children in both cases are curious about the biological parents and they start asking questions at the early childhood[6] (Eric in case 1 started at age 4, while two boys in case 3 started at age 6).

At the children's early childhood, they ask about biological parents only out of curiosity, with limited personal emotions involved. The parents introduce the biological mothers as "unknown bodies" in China who give birth to the children. The adoptive parents also help the children construct images of the biological mothers in ways that the children can understand, either through using photos and words as conventional symbols (Case 1), or being supportive to children's imagination on their Chinese mothers (Case 3).

As the adoptees grow older, based on the findings from Case 1, the biological parents tend to be an issue to them. The child starts asking questions about the abandonment with personal emotions involved. To cope with the issue, the adoptive parents explain possible external reasons, relating to China as a broad social context and avoiding saying that it was the children's faults. In addition, parents in Case 1 have taken initiatives to look for their children's biological parents or other relatives, while parents in Case 2 also show the willingness to help their children find the Chinese mothers.

Furthermore, the parent in Case 3 also mentions that she has read stories of adult adoptees in Sweden. Some of the adoptees have identity crisis when growing up because they do not know their biological parents.The identity crisis could be explained by Lawler (2014) claiming that when adoptees do not get enough resources on the biological parents, there was possibly a hiatus for them in the self-narrative. The hiatus then might give rise to a sense of "displacement" when the adoptees grow up, that is, "a sense of having been one thing (a member of family A) is displaced by having to become another thing (being a member of family B)".

Mead's conceptualisation of "dissociation" is generative for grasping this displacement. For those adult adoptees, birth parents constituted an important and perhaps the only social group that engaged in the social or familial process between the time they gave birth to the children to when they abandoned the children. The social process formed one of the adoptees' component selves that are necessary for their unitary self. And the lack of information on birth parents broke up each adoptee's complete self into two separate component selves. The former one self relates to their

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[6] In psychology the term **early childhood** is usually defined as the time period birth until the age of nine to eleven years, therefore covering infancy, kindergarten and the **early** school years up to grades 3,4,5 or 6.

birth parents belonging to China, while the later one that constitutes most of the grown-up adoptess' self belonging to their adoptive families in Sweden. If the adult adoptees assume that a person should belong to only one place, then the two separate selves might lead them to ask, "where shall I really belong to?" (Mead, 1995).

The adoptive parents in both Case 1 and Case 3 do not want their children to experience the "identity crisis" when the children grow up. This could be the major reason why they are keen on looking for their children's biological relatives. However, it is too soon to tell how the children will incorporate their biological parents into their identities from Case 1 and Case 3.

[Orphanage time (or foster family)]

Compared to biological parents, orphanage time (or foster family) is a more useful mechanism for the parents to incorporate their children's biological nature from China since the parents have more information on the time the children spent in China. A common way for the adoptive parents to make their children's memory alive is to help the children build personal connections with people who were involved in the orphanage (or in the foster family). In Case 1, Eric continues friendships with two peers who used to live in the orphanage through daily interactions in Sweden. In comparison, in Case 2, the connections Linda have are with the foster parents who used to take care of her, and going to China for a return trip is a main way to activate and enhance the relationship. It is also speculated that the activated and enhanced relationship between the foster parents and the adoptee makes the adoptee care little about her biological parents (since the adoptive parents mentioned little on her biological parents in the interview) through comparing to the adoptee in Case 1 who does not have such relationship and cares about his biological parents. The speculation could provide a clue for further studies.

Through the personal interactions that the children have with people from the orphanage or from the foster family, both children in Case 1 and Case 2 recognise their Chinese ethnicities, whereas the respect to China might be subtle (to Eric) and superficial (to Linda).

Furthermore, the adoptive parents in all the three cases also build personal connections themselves with staff in the orphanage (or in the foster family). In addition to Case 1, Mary has been keeping contact with an Australian woman who has been running a charity for the orphanage where Mary picked Isak. The Australian lady updates Mary news on the orphanage. For example, Mary knows that there is not much children left in the orphanage now, and the charity is constructing a new

school there. In return, Mary also sent Eric's pictures and Christmas cards to the lady, and she also donates money to the charity. Further, the Australian woman also provides Mary information on other adoptive families who adopted children from the orphanage after Mary, and Mary traces down the families through internet. Quite similar to Mary, the adoptive mother in Case 3 also has Facebook contact with the Dutch parents who took care of John when he was China, and also with other adoptive families who adopted children from the same foster family. Both the parents in the two cases keep the weak ties in case that their children encounter any problems related to adoption, and that the children want to go back to China for a return trip in the future.

On top of it, there are two similarities on Case 1 and Case 3 during the first period since the children came to Sweden. Firstly, since the children were adopted at around age three, both had acquired certain behaviour patterns from the institutions they were staying in. Mary also mentions that Eric was over-friendly to strangers since he had not got much chance to socialise with strangers in the orphanage, which is similar to John on the point that John acted in a too straightforward way to his peers in the daycare centre since he had not been trained to make friends with strangers in the foster family. Secondly, Mary mentions that she repeated names of objects to Eric in Swedish and explained the meanings of the worlds through daily interactions to help the child learn the language and build basic cognition for several months after they picked the child, which was similar to what Jane has been doing for John.

In both cases, the behaviour correction and the language acquiring do not help the children build on the self-narrative on what they experienced before adoption in China. Rather, it compensates for what they should have learnt as three-year-old children. During the process, the children's biological nature is backgrounding, and their social essence partly changed to Swedish through enhanced child-parent relations with their adoptive parents. The examples on the points also exemplifies tensions and ambiguities that are common in the kinning process (Howell 2003&2006).

[Appearance]

There is a pattern on the topic of the appearance among all the three cases. All the cases shows that in the early childhood (before nine years old), the children are not aware of their phenotypical features that are different from the majority others in Sweden. As they grow up, the children tend to be exposed to various social situations where they might receive comments on the appearances. Sometimes the comments, as "conventional symbols" indicated from Symbolic Interactionism, affects the children's self-identity (Mead, 1995).

There are two types of social interactions. One is situated in general social environments which give rise to "a general notion" that a person has of the common expectations that others have on the person. The notion makes the person clarify the relations between the person and the others who play roles "as representative members of a shared social system" (Mead, 1995). The general social environments the adoptees were in affects their basic attitudes to China. In Case 1, Eric goes to a normal Swedish school where most of his classmates neither have mixed backgrounds nor know well about China. The classmates also tend to comment negatively on the country, and they consciously or unconsciously relate Isak to the country. In comparison, Linda in Case 2 goes to an international school where half of the courses were given in English. Many of her classmates also have mixed backgrounds and thus they do not regard Linda special on the point that she is adopted from China. Obviously, the social environment where Linda is surrounded by makes it easier for her to recognise the Chinese ethnicity than Eric.

Parents in both cases are aware of the impact of the general social environment. After hearing the complaints from Eric on the negative comments his classmates have on China, his parents went to school and tried to change the image of the word "China" in his classmates' mind. Besides, it is Linda's mother who transfers Linda from a normal Swedish school to the international school because she recognises the potential benefits for the child. "I like it, it is quite fun to be surrounded by people with different backgrounds." (Maggie, 2018.3.17)

Apart from the general social environment, what kind of people the adoptees build close friendship with also matters since a person's identity tend to be exposed with those the person is close to. Linda has many close friends who also have China as part of their backgrounds, and she feels free to talk about her Chinese names and watch Chinese TV series with the friends etc. In comparison, Eric also builds close friendships with two boys from the same orphanage and one of the boys is the only one Eric allows to call him by Eric's Chinese name. It is speculated that more often the adoptees activate their Chinese features in social interactions and more comfortable they are by doing so, they are more likely to identify themselves to the country. Eric seems reluctant to relate himself to China according to his asking his mother to remove a picture he was photoed in China. In comparison, Linda confirms that one-third of her identity is Chinese, the same portion of Swedish and Danish.

Parents in both cases intentionally build "social capital" with other adoptive families during their children's early childhood. Through the social capital, the parents make their children play with those who have similar backgrounds. The "playing-together" makes it natural for both Eric and Linda to build close friendship with peers who have similar backgrounds as they grow up (Alanen, L., Brooker, L. and Mayall, B. 2015).

Furthermore, it is not evident to see if John in Case 3 has been fully aware of his phenotypical features since he is only seven. The effect of the social interactions on his self-identity is also hard to detect. But it seems that the town he is living in with many Asians inhabitants serves as "general social environment" that makes John feel that it is natural for an Asian to live in Sweden. In addition, Jane also builds close relations with another adoptive family from her family kin. The time the two families spend together made it easy for John to build close relationships with his cousins who were also adopted from China when John grows up.

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Semi-structured Interview Guide:

<u>Basic information about the adoptees:</u>

- How old is the adoptee now (and gender)? When did you adopt him/her? Where did you adopt? At what age was him/her?

- How many kids do you have in your family (are they all adopted)? What is the personalities of the adoptees? Did the personalities change with time?

<u>Before adoption:</u>

- Why China?

- Does the China side have any requirement for you to be eligible to adopt?

- How are the living conditions for the kids before adoption? (Did they like them? How did they feel when they are going to be adopted?)

Is it a big decision for you to make to become an adoptive parents?

- How did you prepare to be an adoptive parent before adoption (e.g. Read articles, having class, etc)?

<u>During adoption:</u>

(Transition Sentences: Ok, let's now move on from the adoption procedure to general Chinese cultural.)

China (personal tie & cultural tie) + Parenthood

- Does China allow you to maintain any personal ties with the biological families/foster families/orphanages?
- Do you have any personal ties with them now? If so, how often and how do you interact with each other?

- How much did you know about the country before adoption (before coming to China and during the adoption trip)?

- Does China wish you to keep the general cultural heritage of the kids? Is it mandatory? How can they track?

- Do you practice any Chinese cultural at home?

    Further probing: daily-life practice (decorations) or celebrating festivals? Do you teach the language to the kids? Or expose them to Chinese popular culture (songs, animations, etc)?

- Do you have any social group or relatives with similar backgrounds to communicate with?

- Have you ever planned to go back to China? Do you want the kids to find their biological parents or just let them see the country?

China (personal tie & cultural tie) + Childhood

- Is the adoptee interested in Chinese culture? (How do they react to general Chinese culture?) Is there any differences between upon their first arrival and now with time?

- Is the adoptee curious about their personal history before adoption? (Do they ask?) Since when do they ask? How do you explain it (China + parenthood)?

    Specifically, how do they understand the fact that they were abandoned in some way? How do you explain to the adoptee (China + parenthood)? What is his/her reaction?

- Does the kid relate the general Chinese culture with their personal ties? How do you feel about it?

Sweden (personal tie & cultural tie) + Parenthood
- What difficulties did you ever meet in helping kids adopt to life here?

- Do you find any difference in ways to raise kids between your family and other majority Swedish families?

- Is the international adoption common in Sweden? What others say about the international adoption? How do you feel about it?

- Have you ever thought about any difference of your kids if they were raised up in China, by their birth parents or foster families or orphanage?

- If your kid choose to go back to China and live there, how will you feel?

Sweden (personal tie & cultural tie) + Childhood

- Has the kid been adjusted to life here in Sweden in general (in terms of the language, the living style, and school life,etc)? Has he/she encountered any difficulties in adopting? (personal tie)

- How do the kid thought about the fact that they look different from the majorities around them? Have they every asked? If so, how did you reply? (personal tie)

- How do they like you as their parents? (personal tie)

- Will they compare life here in Sweden to that in China before adoption? Did they show any preferences?

- Do they think the Swedish identity comes natural them because they were raised up in a Swedish family? (cultural tie, better to ask older kids)