Exploring the Relations Between Contextual Diversity and Microaggressions

In the Lives of Transracially-Adopted Children from China

An honors thesis for the Department of Child Study & Human Development

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Abstract

A large proportion of transracially-adopted (TRA) children experience challenges related to their racial identity alongside their adoptive status (Baden, 2015). Microaggressions can be particularly challenging for young children because these subtle messages may influence a child's understanding of race and adoption at an age when they are unable to fully understand social categorization and biases due to their cognitive developmental levels. Certain factors may also affect a TRA child's awareness of these microaggressions, such as racial diversity and exposure to other adoptees. The present study examined the relations between contextual diversity and a TRA child's awareness of adoption and racial microaggressions in the school, classroom, community, and adoption contexts with consideration of developmental differences. In a sample of 42 children from ages 5-9, this study found that TRA children were most sensitive to racial microaggressions although they primarily reported adoption microaggressions. Furthermore, findings highlighted a positive correlation between age and awareness of racial microaggressions, suggesting TRA children develop a greater awareness of racial microaggressions as they grow older. Although no significant relations were found directly between contextual diversity and awareness, community diversity appeared to moderate the link between TRA children's awareness of racial microaggressions and developmental differences. Communities of medium diversity significantly moderated the relation between awareness of racial microaggressions and age, while similar relations were not found in communities of low diversity and high diversity. These findings suggest that a diversity threshold may exist for development of TRA children's awareness of microaggressions. Future research should further examine the specific interactions between diversity and cognitive development to better understand how TRA children understand racial and adoption biases.

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Introduction

Since the 1980s, the majority of transracial (interracial) adoptions in the United States

have been international – typically White, Anglo, middle-class families adopting infants from

Asian countries (Lee & Quintana, 2005). In the most recent years, China has consistently been

the top country of origin for adoptees in the U.S. (Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2015). Transracial

adoptions have been controversial over the years because of fear that transracially adopted

(TRA) children will experience inadequate cultural socialization, the process by which children

learn about their heritage and history while promoting cultural, racial, and ethnic pride (Lee &

Quintana, 2005). In the 1970s, there were concerns that adopted Black children received

inadequate socialization in White families as the prevalence of White families adopting Black

children grew (National Association of Black Social Workers, 1972). Moreover, the literature

suggests that a large proportion of TRA children will experience challenges related to their

ethnic and racial identity (Andujo, 1988; DeBerry, Scarr & Weinberg, 1996; Lee & Quintana,

2005). In particular, TRA children are at risk for increased negative racial experiences than

same-race adopted children because of physical differences between family members that may

trigger more opportunities for questions about the child's adoptive status (Andujo, 1988).

Therefore, it is critical to study environmental factors that may contribute to a TRA child's

understanding of race and adoption. Furthermore, this literature is dated and there is little

research on experiences of internationally adopted TRA children, especially from China.

To support positive development in transracially-adopted children, it is critical to

understand various risk and protective factors in the environment that affect a child's awareness

and internalization of cultural messages. These types of risk factors are particularly damaging for

TRA children, who already experience a greater difficulty grasping ethnic and racial identity. In

addition, these factors are prevalent in numerous contexts children's lives – family, school, and

community in particular, where they are exposed to a variety of interactions with different people

who may influence the development their self-perceptions and awareness of biases related to

their racial and adoption identities. The present study intends to examine the role of contextual

diversity in how TRA children from China view racial and adoption biases while growing up

within an American family and community. The following review of literature will define

microaggressions and their implications in today's society, as well as explore the development of

biases and how contextual influences may shape the way children understand these messages.

Microaggressions

One potential risk factor for TRA children may be exposure to racism and specifically

exposure to microaggressions, a term first coined by Pierce in 1970 as "subtle, stunning, often

automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs" (Pierce, Carew, Gonzalez, & Willis,

1978, p. 66). Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, & Bucceri (2007) furthered this definition as "brief and

commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or

unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults towards

people of color" (p. 271). Issues such as racism have evolved through the years to become more

covert as people become more aware of overt, "old-fashioned" racial hatred (Sue et al., 2007).

Microaggressions are an example of covert biases present in today's society. Oftentimes,

perpetrators are unaware of the weight these messages may carry and that they engage in such

negative communications when they interact with minorities – regardless of whether these

microaggressions are intentional or unintentional, these biases may devalue or oppress the

targeted group (Sue et al., 2007).

Racial microaggressions are a common type of microaggression directed towards particular racial groups based on stereotypes. In particular, Asian Americans may often struggle with these subtle forms of biases due to the "model minority" myth, which invalidates their experiences of discrimination. In a focus group of Asian Americans, Sue et al. (2009) highlighted common Asian American microaggression themes such as *alien in own land* ("Why is your English so good?"), *ascription of intelligence* ("Asians are good at math,"), *exoticization of Asian women* ("You little China doll,"), and *invalidation of interethnic differences* ("All Asians look the same"). In essence, Sue et al. (2009) bring to light how microaggressions towards Asian Americans typically reject them from mainstream American society, fail to make interethnic distinctions, and perpetuate stereotypes of coming from an "exotic" country. Furthermore, microaggressions that some people may view positively (e.g., "Asians are good at math") may disregard individual differences and the racism Asian Americans experience.

Other microaggressions exist alongside racial microaggressions; these stigmas also occur regarding gender, sexuality, and religion. In addition, microaggressions are pervasive in a variety of contexts – health care settings (Bleich, 2015; Sue et al., 2007) and classrooms (Sue et al., 2007) in particular. The primary microaggressions of focus in the present study are adoption and racial microaggressions. Baden (2015) proposes that many adoption-related stigmas stem from fairytales, films, and comments from families and friends that convey biology-related judgments or criticisms about adoption, foster care, or birth and adoptive parents. For example, children who are adopted may be asked "Why don't you live with your 'real' mom?", suggesting shameful or inadequate birth parents while also denying the legitimacy of adoptive parents. If children are transracially adopted, they may also receive more questions or comments regarding their adoptive status that may devalue their racial or ethnic backgrounds. A common adoption

microaggression theme is "grateful adoptees", where children might receive comments from others such as "You are lucky to be here in America." This comment may devalue their country of origin and overlook the loss associated with adoption.

Current research suggests that biased comments like these create a climate of invalidation and insult, and have long-term consequences for minorities' mental health, perpetuating stereotype threat, creating physical health problems, and lowering work productivity and problem-solving abilities (Sue et al., 2009). This issue is especially concerning in young children because these subtle messages may influence a child's understanding of their race at an age when they are unable to fully understand social categorization and biases due to their cognitive developmental levels (Kang & Inzlicht, 2012).

Development of Biases

To better understand microaggressions and their detrimental effects to minorities, it is critical to incorporate a developmental perspective in order to consider acquisition and formation of biases in childhood. A wealth of literature examines how more overt biases such as stereotypes and prejudice affect adolescents and identity, but these biases take root in childhood and become more severe as a child's cognitive abilities for social categorization and abstract thinking advance (Aboud, 2003; Kang & Inzlicht, 2012; Raabe & Beelman, 2011; McKown & Strambler, 2009). Furthermore, since the concept of microaggressions is relatively new, much less research looks at how more subtle biases are understood by young children. Although children are less likely to recognize these subtle messages than adolescents due to their developing understanding of the world, microaggressions rooted in childhood may contribute poor long-term outcomes, such as child's later understanding of ethnic and racial identity, as well as mental and social well-being (Sue et al., 2007).

Middle childhood, which ranges from ages 6 to 12, is a critical period to study the development of biases because children are exposed to school and classrooms as new contexts for growth. Although bias studies often focus on adolescents, children have been known to experience microaggressions before this age (Vaschenko, D'Aleo, & Pinderhughes, 2011). A meta-analysis of age differences in the development of prejudice in children has suggested that children experience peak prejudice at age 7 (Raabe & Beelman, 2011).

This thesis will largely draw on a Piagetian perspective of cognitive development in examining microaggressions. In particular, this perspective allows us to better understand the cognitive developments in middle childhood that contribute to a child's perception of microaggressions. At this age, Piaget (1963) suggests children transition from the pre-operational phase to concrete operational phase. The *pre-operational phase*, which ranges from ages 2 to 7, is defined by primitive reasoning, where children do not yet understand concrete logic and cannot mentally manipulate information. They are egocentric, that is, they have difficulty seeing things from other people's perspectives. For example, a child adopted from China who is under the age of seven may think that all Chinese American children are adopted. The *concrete operational phase* occurs between ages 7 and 11 (Piaget, 1963). In this stage, a major feat in cognitive development is inductive reasoning, or drawing inferences from observations and making generalizations based off of these inferences, and elimination of egocentricism through the development of a more advanced logic. However, children at this age may still struggle with deductive reasoning. As a result, it is natural for children in middle childhood to experience difficulties in understanding other perspectives and biases that may hurt other peers or in understanding other perspectives about race and adoption. Since children in middle childhood are in between these two stages of cognitive development and are experiencing peak prejudice at

age 7, middle childhood is an important developmental period to examine how children begin to understand and become aware of microaggressions and other biases.

Current literature on social-cognitive development that focuses on children's social perspective taking suggests that children in middle childhood learn to infer others' mental stages, intentions, beliefs, and psychological characteristics at this age (McKown & Strambler, 2009; Spencer, 1982; Brown & Bigler, 2005). McKown & Strambler (2009) propose that stereotype consciousness must involve awareness of both others' stereotypes and mental states; children become better able to do this in the concrete operational phase. In their study of children from ages 5-11, McKown & Strambler (2009) found that in older ages, a greater proportion of children were able to infer others' racial stereotypes about their own race as well as other races. Awareness of stereotypes depends on the knowledge of these biases, which is associated with developing a perspective-taking ability and interpreting others' behaviors as expressions of discrimination and negative attitudes.

Children become more aware of these biases as they develop a deeper understanding of race and categorization in cognitive development. Making racial categorizations requires racial awareness, which takes place after learning about existing stereotypes and attitudes. For example, Brown & Bigler (2005) proposed a developmental model of children's perspectives on discrimination, explaining how children must show advanced cognition in understanding race and gender, others' cognitions, classification skills, moral reasoning, and social comparisons. The researchers highlight that children have the basic cognitive skills necessary to perceive discrimination by age 5 and increase skills over the course of childhood, but are only able to perceive discrimination if it is extremely obvious. Perceiving more subtle forms of discrimination requires greater cognitive functioning – understanding others' cognitions and

perceptions of discrimination only begin to mimic those of adults by age 10 (Brown & Bigler, 2005).

Brodzinsky, Singer, & Braff (1984) found developmental changes in children's cognitive understanding of adoption depending on the children's acquisition of social knowledge. Brodzinsky et al. (1984) drew upon Piaget's theory in their study to understand children's knowledge of adoption, but also noted that understanding adoption, birth, family roles and relationships, and interpersonal motives contribute to a child's understanding of adoption. Similar to the results of Brown & Bigler (2005) and their model of children's perspectives on racial discrimination, Brodzinsky et al. (1984) found that there is a strong social component involved in children's developing understandings of adoption. In both adopted and non-adopted children, at 6 years of age, they are able to differentiate between birth and adoption, but they show no clear awareness of motivations behind adoption (Brodzinsky et al., 1984). Thus, children may be particularly vulnerable to adoption biases at this age because they have difficulty understanding concepts such as the permanence of adoption. As children grow older and reach 8-11 years of age, they become better equipped to understand these concepts (Brodzinsky et al., 1984). General knowledge and social-emotional challenges of adoption change as TRA children grow older and may contribute to the development of a TRA child's awareness of microaggressions.

However, there are often discrepancies in the development of understanding biases; some children are more aware and some are less aware of the biases they experience. Therefore, it is also important to consider factors outside of cognitive development that may influence awareness of microaggressions, such as contextual factors. Examining exposure to discrimination in the various contexts within which children operate is crucial to consider with

the developmental advancements in TRA children's cognitive abilities to understand how these messages are understood.

Contextual Factors and Adoption

According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), different levels of systems, or contexts, exist in the environment that influence an individual's development. This theoretical model recognizes that development results from unique person-context interactions within ecological systems of children (Luthar and Cichietti, 2000). The most direct contexts, microsystems, are environments such as school, family, and peers. More distal systems include the mesosystem (e.g., interaction between two systems such as the parents working with teachers), exosystem (e.g., extended family, neighborhoods), macrosystem (e.g., history, culture, social conditions), and the chronosystem (e.g., major life transitions, such as moving to a new community), which involve larger environmental influences such as interactions between systems (e.g., family and school), culture, historical factors, and policies. This model is critical in understanding how children are shaped by their environment, as it highlights the complexity of interactions between an individual child and the context in which the child grows. In particular to adoption, Brodzinsky et al. (1984) highlight how children who are exposed to different aspects of the adoption experience develop an increasingly differentiated, abstract, and hierarchically integrated understanding of adoption.

In the case of TRA children, it is important to examine potential risk and protective influences present in these environmental spheres that may aid or harm a TRA child's development. Vashchenko et al. (2011) suggested that risk factors in adoption include lack of shared racial and cultural backgrounds in transracial adoptive families, discrimination and racism towards minorities, the Asian model minority myth, and being bullied because of one's adoption

status. In particular, TRA adoptees are growing up in a different country from their culture of origin, which may be a barrier to opportunities to learn about their race. Additionally, adoptive parents often do not share the same racial heritage as TRA children.

Context is particularly important to consider in developing an understanding of racial identity and discrimination, as Clark (1955) highlights how children cannot learn about their racial group without being involved in a larger pattern of emotions, conflicts, and desires which are a part of their growing knowledge of what society thinks about their race (as cited in Park, 2010). Therefore, it is important to examine the implications of diverse contexts, notably, the prevalence of other racial minorities and adopted children. TRA children can be exposed to these kinds of settings in the school, classroom, and community, where they may interact with other children similar to them in their racial or adoption status. By exposing children to these diverse contexts, children are presented with more opportunities for bicultural socialization, and as a result may gain knowledge of cultural values, ability to communicate, and a sense of being grounded in the culture – these factors can contribute to how a child understands biases and how these biases affect their later development (Thomas & Tessler, 2007).

Contextual Diversity

Community diversity. Research in the field has offered conflicting arguments for community diversity as a protective factor for ethnic identity or a risk factor for increased exposure to microaggressions and biases. Diversity is defined as a multi-group concept that may include peers of various minority groups, not just of the same race (Adams et al., 2005). A common conception in the literature is that multiculturalism in the community includes social inclusiveness, or the underlying assumption that other minority groups present in the community may help reduce the risk of social marginality (Oates, 2004). Although cultural exposure may

enhance TRA children's understanding of their racial identity and racial perspective-taking ability (Lee & Quintana, 2005), some literature suggests that diversity does not necessarily lower prevalence of experienced biases and prejudice (Adams et al., 2005; Sue et al., 2009; Vashchenko et al., 2011). For example, Adams et al. (2005) highlighted how school diversity does not support the assumption that the presence of diversity encourages children adopted from China to associate socially desirable traits with being Chinese. They found that adopted children may show a greater White preference due to socioeconomic reasons – adopted children may identify more with White children because of their shared privileged economic status in contrast with other low-income minority students present at the school, since the majority of adoptive families come from middle- to upper-class families.

School and classroom diversity. In particular, school is a critical context to examine as children begin schooling during middle childhood and spend less time in the home. There is very little research considering school diversity and microaggressions for school age children; however, according to a study of college students by Sue et al. (2009), diverse classrooms increase opportunities for racial microaggressions. As a result, these settings may increase exposure to negative experiences related to individuals' race that may contribute to their understanding of racial self-identity. On the other hand, Aboud (2003) highlighted how preschool children from more diverse schools are less likely to hold consistent attitudes between ingroup-favoritism and outgroup biases. Thus, school contexts can have a significant impact on a child's exposure to racial and adoption microaggressions.

Sue and colleagues have suggested that diversity may trigger more thoughts about how individuals feel and look different from the majority (Sue et al., 2009). As classrooms become more diverse, TRA children may be exposed to a greater number of bias incidents because of

their physical differences from their adoptive parents, which may create more opportunities for questions about their adoption status. These physical differences may make children more aware of other differences, such as being a minority or adopted. A greater number of interracial interactions may increase opportunities for racial microaggressions and difficult dialogues on race (Sue et al., 2009). In addition, children in middle childhood have limited social categorization abilities, as previously discussed. The increase in bias incidents in previous literature may be a result of the children's current stage of development. Simplistic views of race and categorization may lead children to be more blunt and less sensitive to race issues in both awareness of experiences and committing the biases themselves (Park, 2010).

Adoption diversity. There is a lack of literature on the effects of TRA children who are exposed to other children of the same adoptive background, since most of the discussion in literature focuses on race. However, it is critical to also examine TRA children's adoption related experiences because they are not only minorities by racial status but also minorities by adoption status. It is possible that adoption socialization may contribute to TRA children's awareness of microaggressions. Therefore, this thesis intends to explore whether diverse adoptive contexts may be associated with TRA children's awareness of adoption and racial microaggressions.

Furthermore, very little research exists on the study of diverse contextual influences on children's experiences of microaggressions, especially since the literature on microaggressions is relatively new. The study of children's awareness of microaggressions may be limited because microaggressions consist of subtle interactions that are difficult to interpret by both the victims and the perpetrators. The research that does exist largely focuses on older children, such as adolescents, and on more overt forms of discrimination. However, a developmental and contextual perspective offers value in understanding the roots of biases and how children

develop an awareness of these biases, particularly as long-term consequences of microaggressions are damaging to self-esteem and identity development (Sue et al., 2009). This research must also be further developed in relevance to TRA children, who experience microaggressions not only as a result of being a minority by racial status but also by adoption status. Given these gaps in research, I intend to examine how contextual diversity is related to the awareness TRA children from China have of microaggressions. More specifically, I hope to understand the relations between school, classroom, community, and adoption diversity and the awareness TRA children have of racial and adoption microaggressions. Studying contextual factors like diversity may allow us to better understand potential promotive and protective factors for age-appropriate interventions and inclusive educational curriculums for TRA children.

The Present Study

This study conducted a secondary data analysis of the Adoption and Development Project at Tufts University, which examines the experiences of TRA children from China (Vashchenko, D'Aleo, & Pinderhughes, 2011). The present study seeks to examine the specific relations between contextual diversity and a TRA child's understanding of microaggressions. My research questions aim to understand the relationships between contextual diversity, developmental level, and TRA children's awareness of microaggressions:

1. What is the prevalence of adoption and racial microaggressions in TRA children's lives?

    a. Are TRA children of Chinese descent more aware of adoption microaggressions or racial microaggressions?

    b. Do children experience more microaggression messages in more diverse contexts?

2. Is there a developmental difference among children in their awareness of microaggressions?

3. To what extent does contextual diversity relate to the awareness TRA children have of adoption and racial microaggressions?

4. Does contextual diversity moderate developmental differences in children's awareness of microaggressions?

Methods

Participants

The original sample from the Adoption and Development Project included 46 families that were recruited through adoption organizations serving families in the Northeast United States. Both children and parents were interviewed in the study. Participating children were transracially adopted from China and ranged from ages 5 to 9 at the time of the interview. For purposes of this thesis, 42 children of the original 46 families were included for analysis. If families had more than one TRA child, one child per family was selected based on the child closest to the age range of 6 to 9. Given the focus on cognitive development in this study, children with severe special needs were excluded. In addition, children with Asian parents were excluded from the study since the focus was on transracial adoptions.

Parents in the original sample ranged from ages 41 to 62, with an average age of 50. Almost all of the parents were highly educated, the majority obtaining bachelor's degrees or higher. The majority of the families were headed by heterosexual couples ($n = 31$), but also included families headed by gay parents ($n = 6$), and single parent families ($n = 15$).

Data Collection

The data collection for the Adoption and Development Project took place from 2005-2009 and consisted of semi-structured interviews with each participating parent and child separately. Parents signed consent for both parent and child interviews, and children gave verbal assent for the interview. The parent interviews lasted 1.5 to 2 hours, while the child interviews typically lasted around 30 minutes. All interviews were transcribed for coding.

The child interviews consisted of 59 open-ended questions about ethnicity, adoption, and family (see Appendix I). In addition, these questions asked about their experiences and feelings

about identifying to a particular ethnic background (Chinese, American, or Chinese-American) and being adopted. A codebook was created for assessing adoption microaggressions and racial microaggressions that the children experienced or committed, and these codes were interpreted as quantified themes to be used as variables and measures for data analysis (see Appendix II).

Parents were asked questions regarding perceptions of their child's ethnic identity, cultural socialization activities, and discussions about adoption with their child. For this thesis, parent interviews were only used to assess parent perceptions of racial diversity in the child's school, classroom, community, and adoption contexts.

Constructs & Measures

Context predictors of diversity. In this study, contextual diversity was defined as consistent exposure to children or adults who are of racial minority or adopted. Consistent exposure was defined as activities the child participated in that were reported to occur at least 2-3 times a year. Diversity was assessed terms of both racial diversity and adoption diversity to examine both the prevalence of racial and adoption microaggressions. The specific contexts under study for racial diversity were the school, classroom, and community. Information on diversity was derived from the US Census 2000, Massachusetts Department of Education and other relevant state education departments, and the parent interviews, which included questions regarding their child's school, classroom, and community racial diversity and adoption diversity.

Community racial diversity. Community diversity was measured using an index score of diversity from 0-1.0 based on participants' zip code and data from the US Census (2000). Calculations of racial community diversity using this data and the Blau index of heterogeneity were made by Vashchenko et al. (2011) to calculate an index for community racial diversity and were obtained for this study. Community racial diversity was calculated according to the

presence of seven categories of race: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, and two or more races.

School racial diversity. This information was provided by the Massachusetts Department of Education's online demographic information for the school year the interview was conducted. Demographic information by school included percentages of each racial group (African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, White, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and multi-race). This measure was calculated by summing the percentages of non-White students attending the school. If the participating family did not live in Massachusetts, school information was obtained from their respective state's Department of Education. If school data from the year the interview was conducted were not available, data available from the year closest to the date of the interview was used. Of the 42 participating TRA children, 11 children were enrolled into private schools. Since information for private schools was not available online, parent interviews were used to estimate the percentage of non-White students in the school (see coding procedure in Classroom Racial Diversity). If not enough information could be obtained from the parent interviews and data available online, children were excluded from the school diversity measure.

Classroom racial diversity. Parent interview questions for assessing the classroom racial diversity were: (1) How racially diverse is your child's classroom? (2) How racially diverse is the school? (3) Are there any children of your child's ethnic background at school? (4) Are there any other adopted children at school? (5) How racially diverse is the community you are in?

These parent reports were scored on a 0-5 scale, 0 being "not diverse at all" and 5 being "extremely diverse" by calculating the percentage of non-White students in school. Percentages were estimated using the parent's description of class size and number of children of different

races. This study worked with different types of parent report; a codebook was created to assess racial classroom diversity for parents who used language rather than percentage estimates to describe the diversity of the classroom (see Appendix III). This codebook was based on 22 parent interviews for parents who used both descriptive language for diversity and estimated percentages in their description of diversity. For example, if a parent used a term such as "very" diverse, it would be coded as greater than 50% and given a score of 5, as the majority of parents in the sample of 22 considered greater than 50% to be "very" diverse. Thus, if no percentage was indicated in the parent interviews, diversity was coded using the codebook. If only racial categories were named, average classroom size was found on the state's Department of Education to estimate the average classroom size. If the parents only mentioned school diversity, parent perception of school diversity would be used for classroom reported diversity.

Adoption diversity. In the parent interviews, parents were asked about their child's exposure to other adopted children in the school and activities the child engages in with other adoptees: (1) Are there any other adopted children at school? (2) What types of supports have you used to help you teach/talk with your child about adoption? (3) What experiences have you provided for her/him to learn about/explore being adopted? Adoption diversity, or adoption exposure, was ranked on a 6-point scale from 0-5, 0 being "no exposure" and 5 being "extremely exposed" (see Appendix IV). The scale awarded 1 point per setting in which children were exposed to other adopted children: community level activities for children who were adopted (e.g., travel group reunions and playgroups); school; knowing other adopted children (e.g., parent mentioned family friends with adopted children). Because families differed in how long (e.g., months, years) they provided activities, temporal factors of activities with adoption exposure, such as stopping a consistent activity at a given time, were included in the assessment of

diversity. These activities were given a half point instead of a full point. The same point system applied to frequency of exposure to a certain setting. For example, if a parent did not mention the frequency in which the playgroup met, this setting was only awarded a half point. While some activities did not occur regularly throughout the year, a full point was given for traveling to China or participating in a Chinese culture camp because it was considered more intensive exposure over a short period of time. Furthermore, children with adopted siblings were awarded 1.5 points for intensive exposure.

Age. Child-reported age was used in this study as a predictor to assess age differences in awareness of microaggressions.

Outcomes.

Number of microaggressions experienced. The first measure was a count of the total number of microaggression messages present in the child interviews. Some coded bias incidents had more than one microaggression; for this thesis, each microaggression message was counted instead of number of bias incidents. The count included both child-noted microaggressions and coder-noted microaggressions, in which children are not aware. Both adoption and racial microaggressions were examined at as an aggregate and as well as separately.

Awareness of microaggressions. Each child's degree of awareness was determined by whether the microaggression was noted by the coder or the child (see Appendix II). A coder-noted microaggression implied that a child had internalized or committed a microaggression without noticing. A child-noted microaggression indicated that a child was aware and had recognized the discomfort associated with a microaggression and invalidation of her experience. Both adoption microaggressions and racial microaggressions were studied together and separately.

A continuous variable for the degree of awareness was created to reflect the level of awareness per child: the percentage of total number of microaggressions messages per child that were child-noted microaggressions indicated degree of awareness. Again, some bias incidents had had multiple microaggressions; in these instances each microaggression theme was counted as one microaggression message.

Data Processing and Analysis

An existing microaggression and preparation for bias coding manual for child interviews from the Adoption and Development Project listed different racial and adoption microaggression themes (see Appendix II). For example, incidents were assigned a microaggression code of 1206a if the child described a "biology is best" microaggression. If a child mentioned a situation where she was asked, "Why don't you look like your mother?" when talking about what other people have said to the child about adoption, this incident would receive a 1206a. Some bias incidents received multiple microaggression messages. Non-verbal behaviors indicating discomfort that were expressed by children during the interview were also coded as microaggressions (code 1206q) to capture internalized microaggressions that the children may not have been able to express verbally. Other codes included who noted the microaggression (e.g. child noted or coder noted), type of microaggression experience (e.g. actual or anticipated), and who experienced or would experience the microaggression (e.g. experienced by parent, child, or internalized by child). Microaggressions were coded irrespective of developmental levels to study potential age differences in awareness. These codes were assigned by graduate and undergraduate students in pairs of two and disagreements about codes were discussed to resolution.

For the purposes of this thesis, codes and other relevant data were entered into Excel and then entered in SPSS for statistical analysis.

What is the prevalence of adoption and racial microaggressions in TRA children's lives? For the first research question, descriptive statistics were used to assess the prevalence of microaggressions. A range of the number of microaggressions was calculated, as well as the mean and standard deviation of microaggression messages per child for total microaggressions, adoption microaggressions, and racial microaggressions.

Separate correlation analyses also examined the relations between prevalence of microaggressions and contextual diversity for community, school, classroom, and adoption contexts. Analyses were run for both prevalence of racial and adoption microaggressions. To determine whether children were more aware of adoption microaggressions or racial microaggressions, a paired sample t-test was employed to determine which type of awareness was more significant.

Is there a developmental difference among children in their awareness of microaggressions? A correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a significant relation between age and awareness of microaggressions. Since this study largely draws upon a Piagetian perspective of cognitive development, an independent sample t-test was used to determine whether there is a developmental difference between children ages 7 and under (pre-operational phase) and children over the age of 7 (concrete-operational phase).

To what extent does contextual diversity relate to the awareness TRA children have of adoption and racial microaggressions? Correlation analyses were conducted using the percentage awareness children had of microaggressions and degree of diversity in each of the four contexts (school, classroom, community, and adoption). More specifically, these analyses

examined the relation between awareness of total microaggressions, racial microaggressions, and adoption microaggressions for each of the four contexts of diversity.

Does contextual diversity moderate developmental differences in children's awareness of microaggressions? To determine whether contextual diversity moderated developmental differences in children's awareness of microaggressions, a regression analysis was used for each context (school, classroom, community, and adoption). Regression analyses were run separately for each context, as the total sample size was too small to examine the statistical significance all together.

Ethical Considerations

This study was confirmed exempt from IRB review at Tufts University on October 16, 2015.

Results

Prevalence of Adoption and Racial Microaggressions in TRA Children's Lives

Table 1 presents descriptive data for the prevalence of microaggressions in TRA children's lives. In the total sample ($N = 42$), TRA children on average experienced 6.10 microaggression messages per interview ($SD = 4.50$). Children tended to experience more adoption microaggressions ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 2.17$) than racial microaggressions ($M = 1.61$, $SD = 3.95$). Despite the greater prevalence of adoption microaggressions, results showed that children were more aware of racial microaggressions ($M = 23.6\%$, $SD = 40.9\%$) than adoption microaggressions ($M = 10.0\%$, $SD = 20.5\%$). With further analysis, a paired sample t-test demonstrated that these children were significantly more aware of racial microaggressions than adoption microaggressions, $t(42) = 2.307$, $p < 0.05$.

Prevalence of microaggressions in diverse contexts. Diversity was studied in the context of the community, school, classroom, and adoption. Community diversity was measured using US Census data and the Blau index of heterogeneity to calculate the index of community racial diversity, which had a mean of 0.269 ($SD = 0.171$). Values for community diversity ranged from 0.032-0.625. School diversity was measured as a percentage of non-White students attending the school at the time of the interview based on data from the respective state's Department of Education, and had a mean of 0.326 ($SD = 0.255$) and a range of 0.01-0.938. Classroom diversity and adoption exposure were measured 6-point scale from 0-5 based on parent report with classroom diversity having a mean of 2.690 ($SD = 1.732$) and adoption diversity having a mean of 2.845 ($SD = 1.187$).

In a correlation analysis of contextual diversity and different types of microaggression messages (total messages, adoption microaggressions, and racial microaggressions shown in

Table 2), no significant relations were found, suggesting that microaggressions were happening

irrespective of the context.

Developmental Differences in Awareness of Microaggressions

While no correlation was found between age and awareness of adoption

microaggressions ($r = 0.183$, $p = 0.247$), results showed a significant correlation between age

and awareness of racial microaggressions ($r = 0.352$, $p < 0.05$). These results indicate that as

children grow older, they become more aware of racial microaggressions. A child's total

awareness of both adoption and racial microaggressions was not significantly correlated with age

($r = 0.280$, $p = 0.072$). Descriptive data suggested that generally, older children had a greater

awareness of microaggressions than younger children – children ages 7 and under had a mean

awareness of 19.8% ($SD = 0.384$, $\sigma^2 = 0.148$), while children older than age 7 had a mean

awareness of 30.4% ($SD = 0.439$, $\sigma^2 = 0.193$).

Despite data suggesting that there was an age difference in awareness of racial

microaggressions, there was no significant difference between children in the pre-operational

stage (7 and under, $n = 27$) and operational stage of cognitive development (older than 7, $n = 15$)

in the independent samples t-test for awareness of racial microaggressions, $t(40) = -0.822$, $p =$

0.267; adoption microaggressions, $t(40) = -0.056$, $p = 0.723$; or total awareness of

microaggressions, $t(40) = -0.404$, $p = 0.750$. These findings suggest that there were no significant

stage related differences when applying the Piagetian age cut off of age 7.

Further analyses of age and its relation to awareness of racial microaggressions were

conducted to better understand developmental differences. Separate correlation analyses were

conducted for two groups: children in the pre-operational stage (7 and under), and children in the

concrete operational stage (older than age 7). Among older children, the correlation between

awareness of racial microaggressions and age was $r = 0.575$, $p < 0.05$, whereas children ages 7 and under still experienced a significant correlation between age and awareness of racial microaggression but at a lower correlation, $r = 0.380$, $p < 0.05$.

Contextual Diversity and Awareness of Microaggressions

The data revealed no significant correlations between the diversity of different community, school, classroom, and adoption contexts and awareness TRA children had of adoption and racial microaggressions. However, a pattern was evident: almost all correlations were negative (other than awareness of adoption microaggressions and awareness of total microaggressions in adoption contexts), suggesting more diverse contexts may lead to lower awareness of microaggressions (see Table 3).

Contextual Diversity as a Moderator for Developmental Differences in Awareness of Microaggressions

Since significant correlations were found between developmental differences and racial microaggressions, a regression analysis of diversity as a moderator of developmental differences and awareness for racial microaggressions was conducted. Of the diversity variables for community, school, classroom, and adoption, only community diversity appeared to moderate developmental differences in age, $b = -38.5$, $t = 1.984$, $p < 0.05$.

Two approaches were initially taken to determine the specific effects of this moderation. First, the children were split into a high diversity group ($n = 16$) and a low diversity group ($n = 25$) with mean community diversity as the cutting point ($M = 0.2725$). A correlation analysis between age and awareness of racial microaggressions was run for each diversity group. The high diversity group had a stronger correlation ($r = 0.406$, p $= 0.119$) than the low diversity group ($r = 0.342$, $p = 0.094$). This result suggested that in more diverse communities, children

developed an awareness of racial microaggressions at a faster rate than children in less diverse

communities. However, the second approach using a median split analysis illustrated a different

pattern. The low diversity group ($n = 21$, $r = 0.363$, $p = 0.105$) had a slightly stronger correlation

than the high diversity group ($n = 20$, $r = 0.321$, $p = 0.167$). This result suggested that in more

diverse communities, the rate of developing awareness of racial microaggressions is actually

lower in children.

Thus, a trichotomy analysis was conducted to determine a clearer pattern of this

moderation. Children were split equally into three groups according to low, medium, and high

community diversity. Figure 1 presents the three correlations. The three-way split of participants

by community diversity revealed that children from communities of medium diversity (0.20-

0.35) had a significant and moderate correlation between age and awareness ($r = 0.569$, $p =$

0.034). The lower diversity and higher diversity groups both had insignificant, weak correlations

(lower diversity: $r = 0.213$, $p = 0.466$; high diversity: $r = 0.087$, $p = 0.777$).

Discussion

The present study sought to understand the relations between contextual diversity and TRA children's awareness of adoption and racial microaggressions, with regard to developmental differences. Overall, findings suggest that a cognitive developmental understanding of race and adoption may be more related to awareness of racial microaggressions than is the diversity of the contexts in which the child lives. However, results have also shown that community diversity may moderate the link between a child's awareness of racial microaggressions and age differences, highlighting that cognitive level and diversity may both contribute to a child's awareness of microaggressions.

Racial and Adoption Microaggressions in the Lives of TRA Children

Findings highlight that on average, children experienced more adoption microaggressions than racial microaggressions, but children were significantly more aware of racial microaggressions. It is possible that TRA children may have a greater awareness of race because of its immediate physical differences, especially if the child is transracially adopted and does not look like the rest of his or her family. Furthermore, they may experience more adoption microaggressions because physical differences between TRA children and their families may trigger more opportunities for others to ask about the child's adoptive status (Wegar, 2000). Previous literature has highlighted how children are at an increased risk for negative racial experiences because of these overt differences (Andujo, 1988). It is likely that children are more aware of racial microaggressions because racial differences are physical, whereas adoption microaggressions are based on more abstract concepts between a birth family and adoptive family. In addition, it is possible that children are more aware of racial microaggressions because cultural socialization activities that the parent provides (e.g., Chinese culture camp, Chinese

language classes, reading books about China) may be more centered on race rather than adoption. Although cultural socialization was not within the scope of the present study, future directions for research should examine cultural socialization activities and their relations to awareness TRA children have of adoption and racial biases.

An alternative explanation for this finding may be that TRA children at this age were more cognitively prepared to recognize racial microaggressions than adoption microaggressions. The phenomenon of adoption can be more complex to understand than race – adoption involves understanding the concepts of a birth family and adoptive family, as well as grasping the different perspectives of the adopted child's family members. Brodzinsky et al. (1984) previously highlighted children's difficulty of understanding certain concepts of adoption, such as the permanence of adoption and motivation behind adoption. Furthermore, they noted that children may repeat concepts of adoption without fully understanding the implications of their words until around 8-11 years of age. Thus, adoption microaggressions require more cognitive and emotional development to recognize or respond to these biases. In addition, both adopted and non-adopted children show similar levels of adoption knowledge (Brodzinsky et al., 1984). Thus, children may commit more adoption microaggressions because they do not understand the implications of their words.

Developmental Differences in Awareness of Microaggressions

Awareness of racial microaggressions appeared to be significantly correlated with age differences, while no such correlation existed in the data with adoption microaggressions. Although correlation analyses showed that older children recognized more racial microaggression messages than did younger children, there was no significant difference between children in the pre-operational stage (ages 7 and under) and in the concrete operational

stage (older than age 7). However, separate analyses among these older and younger children revealed that awareness of racial microaggressions in older children had a higher correlation with age that did age and awareness in younger children. It is possible that the t-test did not yield significant differences because there is more diversity among the older children than in the sample among younger children. This finding also highlights how understanding of racial microaggressions may develop differently from the strict stages Piaget's theory suggests. Other theories of cognitive development, such as social information processing theory, suggest that development is continuous and develops gradually over time (Dodge & Crick, 1990). It is also possible that because of the small sample size for the present study, individual differences between children heighten differences within Piaget's cognitive stages, obscuring the distinct differences between the stages for awareness of microaggressions.

These findings suggest that children gain a greater understanding of racial microaggressions over time. Since these developmental differences were only found in racial microaggressions, it is possible that racial microaggressions may be an easier concept to understand than adoption microaggressions, thus making children more aware of them at an earlier age.

Contextual Diversity

The relation between contextual diversity and prevalence of microaggressions. Although results did not show significant correlations between contextual diversity and prevalence of microaggressions, correlations tended to be negative, suggesting that increasingly diverse contexts such as the community, school, classroom, and adoption are linked to a lower prevalence of microaggression messages a child may experience. It is possible that in more

diverse contexts, differences are more normalized. Therefore, children may be less likely to experience microaggressions because diverse communities may be more inclusive (Oates, 2004).

The relation between contextual diversity and awareness of microaggressions.
Overall, there were no significant correlations between diversity of various contexts and awareness TRA children had of adoption and racial microaggressions. However, while the results were insignificant, almost all correlations were negative. Negative correlations may indicate that more diverse contexts were linked to lower awareness of microaggressions. As previously mentioned in the discussion of diversity and prevalence of microaggressions, a diverse context may create an inclusive climate for children that allows them to be more aware of differences and biases, such as microaggressions. In diverse contexts, children may be more likely to be exposed to other children who are different from them and may be more attuned to recognizing and understanding these differences in race and family structures, such as adoption. However, further studies are required to determine the correlations between contextual diversity and awareness, as the results of this thesis are inconclusive.

Furthermore, previous literature has suggested that the presence of school diversity does not necessarily encourage TRA children to associate more positive identity labels with being Chinese (Adams et al., 2005). This study suggests that exposure to racial diversity may not be linked to TRA children feeling more positively about their racial identity, suggesting that other factors may be relevant to awareness of microaggressions, such as cultural socialization. Future research should expand on the role of cultural socialization in examining the development of TRA children's awareness of microaggressions.

Since no significant correlations were found between any of the four contexts (community, school, classroom, and adoption) and TRA children's awareness of adoption and

racial microaggressions, it is possible that other factors, such as ethnic identity, may contribute to a child's awareness of biases more so than contextual diversity. Ethnic identity is an important protective factor that has been shown to act as a moderator against discrimination for TRA Korean American adolescents (Lee, Lee, Hu, & Kim, 2014), and cultural exposure has previously aided the development of Korean perspective-taking for TRA Korean children (Lee & Quintana, 2005). In addition, Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umana-Taylor (2012) highlighted how an understanding of racial and ethnic identity, ethnic-racial socialization, and cultural orientation can act as strong protective or promotive factors. Therefore, socialization, defined by Thomas & Tessler (2007) as the process by which people learn the attitudes, values, and behavior of their culture, may be an important protective factor that occurs in various contexts for TRA children. Components of bicultural socialization relevant to TRA children included knowledge of cultural values, ability to communicate, and having a sense of being grounded in the culture (Thomas & Tessler, 2007). Thus, it is possible that these components of socialization may have contributed to how aware TRA children were of microaggressions in this study.

However, many other factors may contribute to TRA children's awareness of microaggressions; further research is required to study these specific factors. Following Bronfenbrenner's Model (1979), it is possible that interactions between diverse contexts and other variables such as family structure, individual personalities, and school environments may contribute to a child's awareness of microaggressions. Therefore, while contextual diversity was not found to be directly linked to awareness of microaggressions in this study, it is possible that diversity moderated the relations between age and awareness.

Contextual Diversity as a Moderator for Developmental Differences in Children's

Awareness of Microaggressions

Although no trends were found in correlations between community racial diversity and

awareness of microaggressions, community racial diversity was found to significantly moderate

relations between age and awareness of racial microaggressions. Community racial diversity was

the most reliable data source since the information was obtained from the US Census; thus, it is

possible that these data yielded significant results because they were most sensitive to capturing

variation in contextual diversity.

An interesting finding in the regression analyses revealed that as children grow older, the

rate of development of awareness is highest in communities of medium diversity. This finding

suggests that there may be a diversity threshold in developing awareness. It is possible that for

children in communities of medium diversity, there was just enough stimulation and diversity in

daily interactions that may have helped them develop a better awareness of racial

microaggressions. For children in the group of highest community diversity, awareness was the

lowest of the three diversity groups. Furthermore, 10 of these 13 children in the high community

diversity group were not aware of racial microaggressions at all. Perhaps in the most diverse

communities, children may not be as aware of racial and adoption biases because they are faced

with so many differences that they have become normalized and more difficult to notice.

Alternative explanations are feasible for understanding why children in communities of

high diversity had the lowest awareness of racial microaggressions. Diverse communities may

not necessarily include more Chinese or Asian people; thus, children interviewed from highlight

diverse communities may still have felt uncomfortable as a racial minority and may not have

been willing to discuss racial experiences. It is also possible that the data may not reflect actual

diversity trends because the study found that in more diverse communities, children experienced fewer microaggressions. Children reporting fewer microaggressions had a weaker assessment of awareness of microaggressions, since there were fewer microaggressions to assess.

Limitations

Several limitations were present in this study. Since this study was a secondary data analysis, the operationalization of microaggressions was limited by existing questions that were not directly related to microaggressions. The interview was not originally intended to study microaggressions specifically; thus, it is possible that not all instances of microaggressions in a TRA child's life were captured.

Measures for adoption diversity and settings in which the child was exposed to other adopted children were limited because no specific questions targeting an assessment of diversity in regards to adoption were asked in the original interview. Measures of diversity were challenging and possibly confounding due to parent-reported data for classroom diversity and school diversity when no information was available from the state's Board of Education. For TRA children who attended private schools, the study used parent-report as a measure for school diversity, which also may have been a barrier to accurate data collection. Furthermore, parent-reported codes were not compared for inter-rater reliability.

The sample size was modest, with a total of 42 children. These children were not included in all analyses depending on the information available for each child. Families were limited to the Northeastern United States, and child participants were all girls. Thus, the representativeness of the sample may not be applicable to other TRA families. In the study of developmental differences for this thesis, children were split into concrete operational stage and pre-operational stage to examine stage differences. However, there were many more children in

the pre-operational stage ($n = 27$) than operational stage ($n = 15$), which may have possibly have skewed results. In addition, these children likely varied in expressivity skills due to their young age. There was no variable to capture variance in expressivity, which may have led to inaccurate coding of microaggressions in the interviews when experiences were not clearly described by the child.

Implications for Future Research & Practices

Current findings in the present study suggest that it is important to keep a developmental lens in mind while examining TRA children's awareness of microaggressions. Furthermore, this study highlighted that the presence of diversity across contexts may be associated with the way children of different ages understand microaggressions. Future research should seek to better understand the link between diversity and awareness of microaggressions, as results are still inconclusive. In particular, more research is needed to examine the moderating effects diversity in age and awareness of microaggressions, as this study suggested that communities of medium diversity might have a stronger link to the development of awareness for racial microaggressions than communities of low diversity and communities of high diversity. In addition, it is possible that other factors, such as racial and ethnic identity, are important contributors to an understanding of race and adoption in TRA children and were not within the original scope of the study.

This study looked at racial microaggressions and adoption microaggressions separately; however, there is a likely a strong intersection between TRA children's understanding of race and adoption that may have an impact on how children experience and recognize each type of microaggression. These children may have a relatively limited cognitive understanding of adoption or less awareness of adoption microaggressions because they are provided with more

cultural socialization activities, such as Chinese language classes, rather than adoption socialization activities, such as adoption playgroups. Further research is required to understand the specific differences between adoption socialization and cultural socialization and their relations to TRA children's awareness of adoption and racial microaggressions.

A greater understanding of diversity and developmental differences may allow future researchers, educators, and other professionals create more culturally inclusive and developmentally appropriate curricula that help TRA children better understand their racial and adoption identities. This knowledge is helpful across school, family, and community contexts. An understanding of developmental differences may allow educators and families to be more cognizant of age-appropriate explanations of adoption and racial differences, particularly since children have greater difficulty understanding adoption at younger ages. Specifically, children ages 7 and under have limited knowledge of adoption – thus, they may have difficulty grasping certain concepts, such as the permanence of adoption. Acknowledging these cognitive differences in young children may allow educators to help them understand these biases when present in the classroom. Additionally, offering age-appropriate explanations may allow educators to prevent biases in the classroom through conversations with both adopted and non-adopted children on race and adoption. Parents may also be more aware of microaggressions themselves and therefore better equipped to help children with biases or misunderstandings. Furthermore, communities with an acceptance of diversity in not only race but also family structures may allow TRA children become more aware and comfortable with these concepts of adoption, their racial identity, and adoptive status.

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Tables & Figures

Table 1. Microaggressions experienced by TRA children ($N = 43$)

Outcome	MAs Involved	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Number of messages	Total MAs	6.61	4.50	1-21
	RMAs	1.61	2.17	0-10
	AMAs	5.02	3.95	0-20
Awareness of messages (%)	Total MAs	15.1%	22.1%	0-0.625
	RMAs	23.6%	40.9%	0-1
	AMAs	10.0%	20.5%	0-1

* MA = microaggression; RMA = racial microaggression; AMA = adoption microaggression
* Awareness of messages was a percentage of child-noted microaggression messages out of total microaggressions in the interview.

Table 2. Correlations between contextual diversity and prevalence of microaggressions

Context	# RMAs	# AMAs	Total # MAs
Community	-0.101	-0.153	-0.241
School	-0.090	-0.115	-0.245
Classroom	-0.053	-0.150	-0.201
Adoption	0.023	-0.097	-0.209

Table 3. Correlations between contextual diversity and awareness of microaggressions

Context	# RMAs	# AMAs	Total # MAs
Community	-0.104	-0.120	-0.208
School	-0.083	-0.057	-0.212
Classroom	-0.049	-0.070	-0.141
Adoption	-0.076	0.165	0.050

Figure 1. Community Diversity as a Moderator for Age and Awareness of Racial RMAs
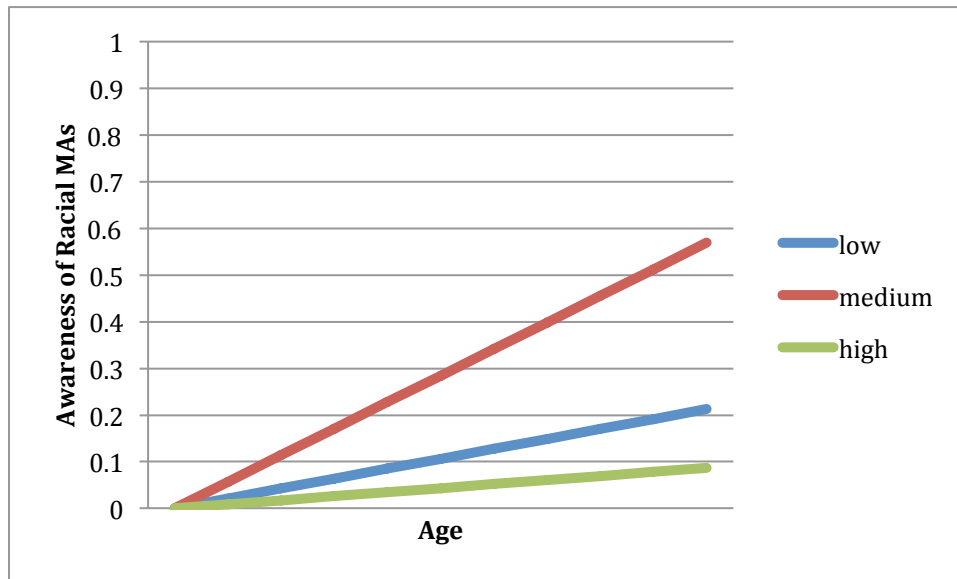
Appendices

Appendix I: Child Family and Adoption Interview Questions

[Interviewer: if the child needs a break during this interview, allow her/him to take a break and play with something else for a while. Look for signs of tiring and offer breaks when indicated.]

We have some dolls here that we are going to play with. There are four dolls here. Take a look at them. *[Interviewer: allow child to hold and examine the dolls].*

Please take the one that you think looks most like you. *[Interviewer: allow child time to consider and make choice.]*

Let's call her/him (child's name)

1. Why did you pick this one?

2. How does she/he look like you? (In what ways does she/he look like you?)

3. Any other ways that she/he looks like you?

Now, I'll choose another doll. Her/His name is Martha/Mark. Let's pretend that Martha/Mark is new to your neighborhood/school. She/He wants to get to know you. *[Interviewer: Using Martha/Mark, decide when to stay in the role and when to step out of the role, choose one of the question formats below.]*

4. What can you tell her/him/me about yourself? Can you tell her/him/me something about yourself? [Interviewer: listen for descriptions of self (age, school, grade, gender, ethnicity; interests, abilities) and descriptions of family (size, membership]. If child does not talk about these things, ask the following questions.]

5. How old are you?

6. Where do you go to school?

7. What grade will you be in next year?

8. How many people are in your family?

Now, it's your turn. What would you like to know about her/him? *[Interviewer: be prepared to answer the child's questions about Age: 7, Grade: finishing 1ˢᵗ, Where did she/he move here from: Vermont, Who's in her/his family: Mom/Dad, sister and brother, Is she/he adopted: no]*

9. Can you tell Martha/Mark/me about some of the things you like/ your favorite things? [Interviewer: listen for the following themes: Favorite color, favorite food, favorite holiday, favorite book/TV show, favorite thing to do/activity/hobby. If child does not talk about these themes, ask the following questions:

10. What is your favorite holiday? Why?

11. What's your favorite color?

12. What is your favorite food? What is your second favorite food? Why?

13. What's your favorite book? Why?

14. What's your favorite TV show? Why?

15. What's your favorite thing to do? What's your favorite activity? Why?

Because Martha/Mark just moved here, she/he also is interested in learning about where others have lived, where they are from.

16. Can you tell Martha/Mark/me where you are from? Where is your family from?

17. What do you say when people ask you where do you come from? Are there times when you tell people something different, such as that you are from X? When? Why? *[Interviewer: If the child says that he/she is from China, say "that you are from Boston(or where the child lives)", If the child says that he/she from Boston, say "that you are from China"]*. What do you say when they ask where you were born? Are there times when you tell people something different, such as that you were born in X? When? Why? *[Interviewer: If the child says that he/she was born in China, say "that you were born in Boston (or where the child lives)", If the child says that he/she was born in Boston, say "that you were born in China".]*

Children can be different from each other. They look differently, they act differently, they come from different places. Martha/Mark lived somewhere where there were not many differences between people. Now that she/he lives in Boston, she/he is learning more about differences and wants to know about your experiences with different people.

18. What kinds of differences have you noticed between children? Anything else?

19. Of all these differences *[Interviewer: List the differences that child mentioned in question# 18]*, which ones do you notice most often?

20. When did you notice that people look different from each other – that people have different color skin, eyes and hair?

Now, let's talk about your family. Some families are different from other families and some are similar.

21. Is there anything special about your family that might be different from other families?

22. How are you a special part of your family? How are you the same or different from your family?

23. What do you like about your family?

24. What do you not like about your family?

Some children who are adopted talk with their parents about where they were born. And some children don't talk with their parents about this.

25. Do you talk about China with your parents? What do you talk about? What do you know about China? [*Interviewer: If child says they were born somewhere other than China, use that location in the questions.*]

26. Do you like to talk about China? Why or why not?
[Interviewer: Get ready to show the response guide with faces.]

27. When you are talking about China, how do you feel? Pick the face that matches how you feel. *[Interviewer: Point each face and say ""Would you say that "you always like it, you sometimes like it, you do not care, you sometimes don't like it, you never like it?"]*

28. What does being born in China and growing up in America mean to you? What do you call that? [*Interviewer: try to help each child describe or give a name for her/his characteristic* (e.g., Being Chinese? Being Chinese-American?). *Use the self descriptor that child used in question # 27, 28, 29 &30).If child says that she/he is from somewhere other than China, use that country's descriptor (e.g., US – Ameri*can).]

29. How do you feel about being _____?

30. What have other children said to you about being _____? [Interviewer: ask child about what was said, how they felt and what else happened, if anything].

Some children who are adopted talk with their parents about adoption. And some children don't talk with their parents about this.

31. Do you talk about adoption with your parents? What do you talk about? What do you know about adoption?

32. Do you like to talk about adoption? Why or why not?

[Interviewer: Get ready to show the response guide with faces.]

33. When you are talking about adoption, how do you feel? Pick the face that matches how you feel. *[Interviewer: Point each face and say "Would you say that "you always like it, you sometimes like it, you do not care, you sometimes don't like it, you never like it?"]*

34. How do you feel about being adopted?

35. What have other children said to you about being adopted? *[Interviewer: ask child about what was said, how they felt and what else happened, if anything].*

Sometimes people can do things that hurt your feelings and sometimes people can do things that make you feel good.

36. Have other people said or done things that made you feel good about being _____?
[Interviewer: ask child about what happened, how they felt and what else happened, if anything.]

37. Have other people said or done things that made you feel bad about being _____?
[Interviewer: ask child about what happened, how they felt and what else happened, if anything.]

38. Have other people said or done things that made you feel bad about being adopted?
[Interviewer: ask child about what happened, how they felt and what else happened, if anything.]

39. Have others people said or done things that made you feel good about being adopted?
[Interviewer: ask child about what happened, how they felt and what else happened, if anything.]

40. Have you had a chance to do things to learn about being Chinese-American? What kinds of things? *[Interviewer: Get ready to show the response guide with faces.]*

41. Some children who have the Chinese experiences that you do like them a lot, and other children who have the Chinese experiences that you do don't much care for them. How much do you like learning about Chinese culture? [Interviewer: Point each face and say *"Would you say that, "you are really interested, you are a little interested, you do not care, you are a little bored or really bored?"]*

42. Have you had a chance to do things to learn about being adopted? What kinds of things? How did these things make you feel?

43. Some children who have the adoption experiences that you do like them a lot, and other children who have the adoption experiences that you do don't much care for them. How much do you like learning about adoption? [Interviewer: Point each face and say *"Would you say that, "you are really interested, you are a little interested, you do not care, you are a little bored or really bored?"]*

Let's talk about something new with Martha/Mark. Her/His older cousin, Susan, who lives in Kansas told her/him that she was going to become a mom and have a family. Martha/Mark is wondering about being a parent and having a family.

44. Can you tell Martha/Mark/me – what is a family? How many people does it take? Do you have to have any specific people to have a family? Who?

45. Why do we have families? (Why is it important to have a family?) What do families do for us?

46. What does it mean to be a parent? What does a parent do?

47. What does it mean to be a mother? What does a mother do? How is that the same or different from what your mom does?

48. What does it mean to be a father? What does a father do? *[Interviewer: for children with a father ask, "How is what that the same or different from what your father does?" For children without a father ask, "How is that the same or different from what your mother does?"]*

49. Suppose that someone wants to become a parent - what do they have to do? [Interviewer: if child says that the person needs to get married in order to become a parent, ask child, "then what do they have to do?" (Look for a response that suggests either adoption or birth])

50. Is there any other way of becoming a parent besides giving birth or "making" a baby? *[Interviewer: if child has already mentioned adoption, you don't need to ask this question.]*

51. Let's pretend that someone decided to adopt a child. What does adoption mean? Why do you think someone would want to adopt a child?

52. How old are children when they are adopted?

53. If someone gave birth to a child and is raising that child, can they still adopt other children? Why would they want to? *[Interviewer: If child does not understand "raise" try "If someone gave birth to a child and is "taking care" of that child can they still adopt other children?"]*

54. Let's pretend that a child is being adopted. Where do you think the child would come from? Why do you think children are placed for adoption*? [Interviewer: If child does not understand try "Why do you think children come to be adopted?" or "How come children get adopted?"]*

55. Suppose someone adopts a child. Is that child theirs forever? Why? *[Interviewer: Get ready to show the stick figure pictures].*

56. There are children who are adopted and they are children who are not adopted. How are they similar? [Interviewer: If child does not understand "similar" try "how are they like each other?"]

57. There are children who are adopted and they are children who are not adopted. How are they different?

58. This family has an adopted child this family does not have an adopted child. How are they similar? *[Interviewer: If child does not understand "similar" try "how are they like each other?"]*

59. This family has an adopted child this family does not have an adopted child. How are they different?

Well, (_____) thank you for letting Martha/Mark get to know you. Would you like to play with her/him for a few more minutes before we do our next activity?

Appendix II: Microaggression and Preparation for Bias Coding Manual – Child (abridged)

Includes: Adoption microaggressions (1206); racial microaggressions (1207); who noted the AMA / RMA (1203); type of RMA / AMA experience (1204); who experienced/would experience the RMA / AMA (1205)

Microaggression and Preparation for Bias Codes: Child Coding

1199. **Bias incident** (i.e., adoption or race-related hurtful experience, whether microaggression, microinsult or microinvalidation)
1199z. to be given ONLY when coders can't be clear WHETHER the microaggression is adoption or racial. ONLY applied to child microaggressions

1206. Adoption microaggression

1206a. Biology is best/normative (e.g., Is this your sibling/sister/brother? Why don't you look like your mother? Where are you from? (NOTE – BE SURE TO EXAMINE CONTEXT IN WHICH QUESTION IS ASKED IN ORDER TO DIFFERENTIATE WHETHER STATEMENT SHOULD BE CODED AS 1206a OR 1206p);

1206b. Bad seed adoptees (e.g., "No one wanted you."; "Your real mom didn't want you."; "I was (you were) given up for adoption because I am a girl.")

1206c. Grateful adoptees (e.g., "You are lucky to be here in America."; "I am lucky because I don't live in the orphanage anymore." Your life is much better now; other kids would be thrilled to have what you have.)

1206d. Shameful/inadequate birth parents (viewing birth parents as bad. e.g., How come/why don't you live with your "real" mom? "Why couldn't your real/birth mom keep you?" "The reason I was adopted is that my parents couldn't take care of me.)

1206e. Phantom birth parents (pretending brith parents don't exist. e.g., "Do you think your real/birth mom ever misses you?" "your real parents are the ones you live with now."

1206f. Pseudo/inadequate (adoptive) parents (e.g., Who's/where's your real mom?)Where are your real parents?; (NOTE – Child believes that someone can come and take them away from adoptive parent should be coded.,

1206g. Altruistic rescuers (e.g., "Your parents are so good to you – they adopted you." Adult/peer believes that more families should go adopt children in need.; parents as the rescuers of children in need)

1206h. Cultural philanthropy (e.g., "You get to be an American." "I was told that all I could eat back in China was rice and water." "In China, you'd/I'd be living on the street." Implication of poverty in this statement; idea of what would be happening if child stayed in China; idea of child being better off growing up in U.S/western country; Girls who solicit donations for home orphanage.)

1206i. Adoption is a win-win situation (e.g., the Red Thread Theory—"My mom thinks that I was meant to be theirs." Child says something to indicate that she was waiting for adoptive parents – real parents to come get her)

1206j. Commerce in adoption (Children likely overhear this said between adults. e.g., how much did she cost?; some are more expensive than others; families who can offer material advantages will be better parents. Objectification of adoptees as goods.

1206k. Questioning Chinese heritage (e.g., "Why can't you speak Chinese?"; "my Chinese friend says I am not Chinese enough since I don't speak Chinese." "(I don't understand why) I can't speak Chinese and my Chinese friend who was born here in U.S. can speak

Chinese.") (TO question, You were born in China and grow up here in the US, what do you call that? If child says "I am American, I don't like to be Chinese.")

1206l. Love will conquer all (e.g., "My mom says all we need is to love each other." "It doesn't matter that you're/I'm adopted.")

1206m. Infantilizing adoptees and birth parents (e.g.,"My mom doesn't like to talk about adoption with me." "You're not old enough to know about your real adoption story."

1206n. Miscellaneous (e.g., don't easily fit into the themes above)

1206o. Child participates in parent-led activities or parent-initiated ideas to support the cause of adoption that promote idea of adoption (e.g., adoptees dressed in Chinese traditional dresses to collect donation for orphanages in China)

1206p   Adoption informed question -Where are you from? Did she attach well when she first came home?

1206q   Possible discomfort with being adopted (suggesting internalized microaggression) – child either expresses discomfort with answering questions about adoption/China or shows physical discomfort. Child indicates she doesn't like to talk about China or adoption.

1207.   Racial microaggression

1207a. Alien in own land (e.g., where are you from?; where were you born?; you speak good English)

1207b. Ascription of intelligence (e.g., Chinese students are so smart!; They think I am a good student.)

1207c. Color blindness (e.g., it doesn't matter who you are/ I am; other kids don't think of me different)

1207d. Criminality/assumption of criminal status (e.g., a child will hear message that s/he might be doing something wrong because s/he is Chinese)

1207e. Denial of racism (e.g., I'm not racist, I didn't mean anything by that; I've got a neighbor who's Chinese)

1207f. Myth of meritocracy (e.g., They (referring to folks on the street here in US) are homeless because they didn't work hard; In China, families aren't educated, like they are here. If you want to get ahead, you have to work hard.)

1207g. Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles (e.g., asking a child, "why are you so quiet?"; "Chinese don't like their girls" [NOTE: if this statement is clearly linked to adoption themes, also code for AMAs 1206b and 1206e])

1207h. Second class citizen (e.g.," Chinese aren't as good as American kids"; "Kids don't want to play with me because I'm Chinese"; messages suggesting Chinese are not as good as other children.

1207i. Environmental microaggressions (e.g., shows with mostly White characters; idols are mostly White or Black)

1207j. Denial of racial reality (Asians are the new whites; Asians are the model minority; I didn't know Asians experience racism)

1207k. Exoticization/Objectification of Asian American females (e.g., cute little China doll!; Someone tells me they wanna have pretty hair and skin like me.

1207l. Invalidation of interethnic and intraethnic differences (e.g., Are you sisters? (stranger inquiring the relationship between siblings); from other "Do you know origami", or child "I do origami to learn about China"; "Do you know kung fu?")

1207n. Miscellaneous (e.g., don't easily fit into the themes above. E.g., Chinese kids don't make good athletes.)

1207o. Race-informed (e.g., comments that are triggered by physical differences, but do not address them in the actual comment)

1207p. Physical appearance microaggression (attention to/mention of physical features. E.g., some kid did the slanty eye to me; flat face; Asian hair)

1207q. Possible discomfort about being Chinese or Chinese-American.

1203. Who noted RMA or AMA

1203a. Parent

1203b. Coder

1203c. Child

Appendix III: Codebook for Parent-Reported Classroom Racial Diversity

<u>**Racial Diversity – by percentage**</u> – **developed using descriptive language (below)**
0 = 10% or under = Not diverse at all
1 = 10-19% = Not very diverse
2 = 20-29% = A little diverse
3 = 30-39% = Somewhat diverse
4 = 40-49% = Diverse
5 = 50% or greater = Very diverse

<u>**Percentage & Language in Interviews**</u> (matching parent stated percentages and pairing with the language they used to describe diversity) – only use if no numbers / percentages. Based on 22 parent perceptions.

1. "There isn't any", "no diversity", "all American, white", 2 students with biracial parents, daughters, the Snows in 043
2. "Isn't diverse" (Around 1%) in 81
3. "There isn't any" (less than 1%) in 044
4. "Not racially diverse at all" (TY in classroom) in 070
5. "Not really" (~12%) in 58
6. "Basically not" named 4/22, says "about a quarter" (~20%) in 057
7. "Not that diverse", "about a quarter" (~25%) in 069
8. "Not bad, not as diverse as I would like" (25%) in 063
9. "Pretty diverse" (~25%) in 059
10. "Some, a few" (25-33%) in 002
11. "Not very... Maybe 33%" (33%) in 052
12. "Quite racially diverse" (33% Asian) in 042
13. "Fairly" (40%) in 004
14. "Diverse" (40%) in 007
15. Diverse (40%) in 008
16. "Somewhat diverse" (9 or 10/20) in 003
17. "Very" racially diverse – no prominent group (> 50%) in 74
18. "Very diverse" (> 50% - "predominantly black", "2 white kids") in 078
19. "Very" diverse (50%) in 001
20. "Very diverse" (~66%) in 051
21. "Very diverse (~62%) in 062
22. Extremely diverse (80%) in 006

Appendix IV: Adoption Diversity Codebook

Scale
0 = Not diverse at all
1 = Not very diverse
2 = A little diverse
3 = Somewhat diverse
4 = Diverse
5 = Very diverse

Coding Rules
1 point allotted for each adoption setting reported to have regular exposure (e.g. school, regular play group, family friends who are adopted). Regular exposure is defined as activities the child participated in that were reported to occur at least 2-3 times a year.

Only ½ point allotted per adoption setting instead of a full point if:
1. There was no mention of frequency of exposure to the adoption setting
2. Children stopped participating in adoption activity

1 point will be awarded for adoption intensive activities that were not considered regular exposure (e.g. traveling to China, participating in a Chinese culture camp with adopted children).

Children with adopted siblings will be awarded 1.5 points.