An Exploration of Cultural Influence on Domestic Practices in the Context of Sustainable Living

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Abstract: Individuals from different ethnic groups behave differently in everyday living contexts, and culture can be an explanatory factor. Cultural influence can be explored in terms of indicators such as ethnicity, language, religion, food, and cultural festivals and practices. These not only depict the reinforcement of both the visible and the invisible parts of culture, but also why there are variabilities in domestic practices such as the food consumed by individuals from different ethnic groups and the way religious practices impact on everyday activities. This paper calls for a better understanding of cultural influence on individuals’ behaviours. It establishes the groundwork for a CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) Index as a means of exploring the influence of cultural contexts, both CALD and Australian-born, on everyday living and resource consumption in Australia’s multicultural society.

Keywords: Culture, Society, Acculturation, Consumption, Migrants

INTRODUCTION

As individuals go about their everyday living, there are clear differences in their behaviours and in their resource consumption at home, which has an impact on the environment, measurable as an ecological footprint which represents the amount of land and water area that is required on a continuous basis to produce all the goods consumed, and to assimilate all the wastes generated by individuals (Wackernagel & Rees 1996, p. 61). Numerous studies have examined the determinants of resource consumption, including some in relation to the ecological footprint (Brandon & Lewis 1999; Jorgensen, Graymore & O’Toole 2009; Newton & Meyer 2012; Noorman, Biesiot & Uiterkamp 1998; Pachauri & Spreng 2002; Troy & Randolph 2006; Wiedmann et al. 2011). Socio-economic and demographic variables are frequently found to be the main determinants of consumption such as energy and water by households and individuals (Jorgensen, Graymore & O’Toole 2009; Newton & Meyer 2012; Noorman, Biesiot & Uiterkamp 1998; Troy & Randolph 2006). However, comparatively little research has focused on culture as a determinant, especially cultural influence on consumption patterns related to sustainable living and resource consumption. This raises the question of the extent of cultural influence on different ethnic groups’ behaviour, especially migrants.

This paper, as part of a larger work (Ting 2012, forthcoming), examines published research with a view to understanding how individuals from different ethnic groups behave across a spectrum of everyday activities, such as language use and food consumption. Activities are examined under the indicators of cultural context, such as ethnicity, language, religion, food, and cultural festivals and practices. These indicators demonstrate the interconnectedness between individuals and their culture. In doing so, this paper establishes the groundwork for a better understanding of cultural influence that will provide an insight into migrants’ consumption
patterns and thereby their ecological footprint. It includes the definition of the interconnectedness between individuals and their culture using a CALD Index, which has not been explored in previous studies. The Index will be used to examine the influence of cultural contexts, both CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) and Australian-born, on everyday living and resource consumption in Australia’s multicultural society. Statistical analysis of data taken from a household survey of China-born migrants as a CALD group and Australian-born residents in Melbourne, Australia was discussed.

**Cultural Influence on Individual Behaviours**

The key question is to what extent the culture of an ethnic group can be advanced as a factor capable of explaining individual differences in behaviour. Culture can be defined as ‘the socially acquired life-style of a group of people including patterned repetitive ways of thinking, feeling and acting’ (Harris 1979, cited in Fletcher & Light 2007, p. 424). This implicit influence of culture on individual behaviours is obvious in ‘most areas of our life, such as the way we should dress and what we should eat’, and in ‘almost everything we do, see, feel, and believe’ (Cullen & Parboteeah 2008, pp. 46–7). This implies that individuals’ behaviour reflects that of their ethnic group, with individuals accepting each other’s behaviours without realising the reasons behind it or the need to explain it. For instance, Japanese do not have to explain that by slurping their noodles or eating them noisily they are, through action and sound, showing appreciation of the food. However, this behaviour is not common among, or even acceptable to, Westerners who consider it to be rude.

Cultural influence does not only include the shared beliefs, norms and values of the ethnic group acquired while growing up and at home (Cullen & Parboteeah 2008, p. 49; Gupta 2009, p. 149) but can pervade the society that individuals interact with. Unlike the need to understand and portray civic behaviours so as to live responsibly within a society, individuals display cultural behaviours, such as language use and food consumption, without having to understand the reasons behind them. This is because ‘all societies are ordered by meaningful logics of which the people are more or less unaware’ (Harris 1979, p. 53), and the pervasiveness influence of culture on individual behaviours is obvious in ‘most areas of our life, often without any reflection or justification’ (Geertz 1973, cited in Triandis 1989 p. 511). For instance, in Asian culture it is common for junior staff of a company to address the manager by their surname, that is, Mr Lin or Miss Lin. In western society, they may be addressed by their given name, that is, John or Mary. These instances illustrate the differences in verbal communication between cultures. The former culture emphasises hierarchical status based on age, education and seniority where titles are preferred and expected, while the latter has a flatter structure (Cullen & Parboteeah 2008, p. 644; Gupta 2009, p. 151). These examples not only depict the visible differences in mannerisms of eating and communication but also require an underlying awareness of understanding and communication style among different ethnic groups.

Cultural influence on individuals’ behaviours thus has two expressions: the visible part of cultural practices that can be observed through behaviour, and the invisible part of inherent values and belief systems (Bhawuk & Sakuda 2009, p. 8). The former refers to the ‘front stage’ of culture, and the latter to the ‘back stage’ (Cullen & Parboteeah 2008, p. 47). Culture is thus likened to an iceberg (Gupta 2009, p. 149): the top that is above water refers to the visible part of culture, while the majority of the iceberg that is under water refers to the invisible part. This embeddedness of an individual’s front and back stages of culture is reflected in their everyday behaviour. For instance, in Malaysian and Singaporean cultures it would only be polite and gracious that, when entertaining guests in one’s home, the host or hostess ensures that there are leftovers after a meal as a sign that the guests have been well looked after or well fed. This
leftover food is not considered a waste, as it may be seen in other cultures. Such visible contrasts can also be found between Norwegians and Japanese in term of home lighting: Norwegians use small table lamps, reading lamps and spot-lamps to create a mood in their homes, while Japanese prefer fluorescent light to ensure visibility (Wilhite et al. 1996). Many individual activities in everyday life are socially constructed within culture. Culture shapes behaviour (Bhawuk, Landis & Munusamy 2009) for ‘culture ... consists of standards for deciding what is ... what can be ... what one feels about it ... what to do about it, and ... how to go about doing it’ (Goodenough 1966).

**Indicators of Cultural Context**

As culture has a constant influence on individuals’ behaviours, to investigate the extent of this influence is to examine the different indicators of cultural context in everyday living. The approach (Figure 1) is based on ethnic culture, as such culture ‘shapes a particular way of life’ (Hill, Fortenberry & Stein 1990, p. 1071) and is thus the prime variable used to explain individual behaviour.

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**Indicators of Cultural Context**

- Ethnicity
- Language
- Religion
- Food
- Cultural festivals and practices

**Figure 1: Influence of Indicators of Cultural Context on an Individual**

Phinney (1990, p. 503) found four widely used components of ethnic identity: self-identification as a group member, sense of belonging to the group, attitudes about one’s group membership and ethnic involvement. These were classified into ‘what people say they are’ (ethnic identification), ‘what they actually do’ (ethnic involvement) and ‘how they feel’ (ethnic pride). Numerous studies of ethnic identity dealt with aspects that were ‘both common across [ethnic] groups and unique to ethnic identity for any group’ (Phinney 1990, p. 507). Common aspects such as ‘self-identification, a sense of belonging and pride in one’s group’ allow for comparisons across groups. Specific cultural practices, that is, ‘what individuals do’, distinguish one from another, which is essential for understanding. As the aim of the broader research is to find out whether culture is reflected in sustainable living and resource consumption among different ethnic groups in everyday activities, the indicators of cultural context are based on the classifications ‘what individuals say they are’ and ‘what individuals do’. The ‘how individuals feel’ classification will be explored in the broader research. These indicators of cultural context are drawn from literature on ethnic cultural identity or ethnicity (Driedger 1975; Hui et al. 1997; Laroche, Kim & Tomiuk 1999; Makabe 1979; Phinney 1990; Woon 1985) and acculturation (Berry, Trimble & Olmedo 1986; Dohrenwend & Smith 1962; Olmedo 1979; Padilla 1980; Yinger 1981). The indicators are ethnicity, language, religion, food and cultural festivals and practices, as shown in Figure 1, which are examined individually below.

**Ethnicity**

Ethnicity is a complex term which can be defined as meaning a collective cultural identity and is thus ‘used for shared values and beliefs, and the self-definition of a group, us’ (Spencer 2006, pp. 53, 45). Different methods have been used to identify ethnicity, including self-identification
and country of birth of an individual and/or their parents. In the case of self-identification, individuals select the option that best represents their ethnicity from a list. This subjective method means that individual identification is somewhat dependent on feeling and is also a constrained choice within the given list. Using a force-choice category approach can also pose problems to those who were born into inter-ethnic cultural marriages (Stephan & Stephan 2000). Self-identification by individuals may also differ from actual descent and also how others assess them, for instance, Yinger (1981, p. 253) reported that some American Blacks realised they were more American after having visited Africa. Self-identification as a subjective and social construct can constitute an evolving concept of individual ethnicity (Stephan & Stephan 2000).

In other studies, individuals have been identified by their or their parents’ country of birth (Driedger 1975; Driedger & Peters 1977; Laroche, Kim & Tomiuk 1999). This provides an objective way of identifying ethnicity, as subjective responses from participants may distort the findings (Phinney 1990, p. 504). For example, the study by Woon (1985, p. 535) on Sino-Vietnamese, who are Chinese by ancestry but Vietnamese by national origin, concludes that they identify themselves with their birth country Vietnam rather than with their ancestry. Having acquired certain physical, cultural and social traits in their birth country, they are permanently different from members of other ethnic groups.

The identification of individuals’ ethnicity in the broader research is thus based on the ‘choice to identify by natural rather than social criteria’ (Spencer 2006, p. 35), that is, on the country of birth of individuals and their parents.

### Language

Language is not only an important part of culture (Bhawuk, Landis & Munusamy 2009, p. 14), but also embodies and transmits culture (Keesing 1974, p. 77). It constitutes both the visible or verbal part and invisible part of culture in everyday communications. Uncooked and cooked rice are differentiated by two words in Chinese, *mǐ* and *fàn* (YellowBridge 2003), but not in English where the same word ‘rice’ is used for both. Another distinction of terminology in Chinese is the use of different words to address one’s mother’s brother as *jiùjiu* or one’s father’s elder brother as *bóbo* (YellowBridge 2003), whereas in English only the term ‘uncle’ is used. These examples depict the visible and invisible parts of the Chinese language where no explanation is needed as may be required in English. Thus, language can also be seen as the principal carrier of culture (Smolicz et al. 1990, p. 231; Triandis 2001) and the ‘pivot around which the whole social and identification system of the [ethnic] group is organized’ (Smolicz 1981). Other language-centred ethnic groups such as Greeks and Vietnamese also use language as ‘a symbol of ethnic identity and a defining value which acts as a prerequisite for authentic group membership’ (Smolicz et al. 1990, p. 231). It also means that individuals from another culture will communicate and understand the local culture better when they speak the local ethnic language (Cullen & Parboteeah 2008, p. 649).

The link between individuals and their first language which forms part of the broader research is derived from the frequency of the language/s used at home and during social interactions, and those used in everyday activity such as reading, writing and using the internet.

### Religion

While individuals can master more than one language and internalise more than one culture which allows them to switch or adapt from one to another, religion tends to create its own exclusive boundary (Zolberg & Woon 1999). Individuals may use a second language which is not their first language or mother tongue to communicate with others and may use it when working or living in another country. However, they may continue practising their religion whether living in another community or country with a different language. Religion may play
a significant role in defining certain cultural groups but not others (Dashefsky 1972). This is especially true when its ideas and values help to create individual identity and behaviour (Mitchell 2006, p. 1143). Judaism is ‘at the heart of Jewish belief and practice’, with traditions surrounding its history and teaching embodied in festivals and passed on from one generation to another in ‘actions, [and] symbolic food’ (Breuilly, Martin & O’Brien 2002, p. 19). For instance, Jews have a special meal at home on Friday before they celebrate Sabbath or Shabbat on every seventh day of the week with the lighting of candles (Breuilly, Martin & O’Brien 2002, p. 23; Inngpen & Wilkinson 1994, p. 189).

Similarly, religious practices are integrated into everyday life (Jacobson 1997, p. 251; Koenig, Parkerson & Meador 1997; Lee, Miller & Chang 2006), ranging from wellbeing and diet to praying at home and while interacting with others in society (Kala & Sharma 2010, p. 87). For instance, in Catholic homes, a shrine consisting of a statue of the Virgin Mary with one candle on each side is commonly found. Hindus believe in the sacredness of plants such as tulsi, a herb which is planted in the courtyard of Indian houses where it is worshipped every day (Kala & Sharma 2010).

Islam is an example of a religion whose ‘teachings ... demand that all [individuals’] actions should have a religious orientation’ (Jacobson 1997, p. 249). For instance, Muslims pray five times a day, either at home or wherever they are, because this is one of the five tenets or pillars of the religion (Inngpen & Wilkinson 1994, p. 198). Every Friday, men attend afternoon prayer at a mosque. These regular observances have become routinised behaviour. For some women, the wearing of the Islamic veil or hijab, which is a visible part of their religious practice, has become part of their daily attire. Similarly, Jews are prohibited from working on the Sabbath, and in Israel have a Friday and Saturday weekend while Sunday is a working day (Ben-David 2011). The practices of religious faith either alone or communally reflect the centrality of religion in individuals’ everyday living (Jacobson 1997).

Ethnic preferences and outlooks are therefore shaped and influenced by religions, whether through their religious practices or as a conduit for transmitting culture. Including religion as one of the cultural indicators enriches an understanding of ‘cultural aspects of the social life’ (Katz-Gerro 2002, pp. 221–2). In the broader research, religion of individuals is identified in addition to their regularity in participating in religious services and activities.

Food

Food consumption differs between ethnic groups. This could be due to religious influence, such as fasting and abstinence from restricted foods in many religions (Sarri et al. 2003). For devout Hindus and Buddhists, no meat is consumed at all; Judaism and Islam prohibit consumption of pork; Orthodox Christianity forbids meat on fasting days (Shatenstein & Ghadirian 1998). Seventh-day Adventists are encouraged to limit their meat consumption and to avoid coffee and other drinks with high caffeine content, alcohol and tobacco (Hoff et al. 2008, p. 2573).

Traditional ethnic beliefs also play an important part in individuals’ diet. Food consumption among the Chinese is based on the historical belief in the relationship between diet and health (Kaptuck 1983, cited in Satia et al. 2000, p. 940). It is important to have a balance of yin/yang and hot/cold foods in order to balance the organs and thereby ensure good health and a long life: ‘eating yang foods leads to higher energy levels and yin foods help get rid of internal body heat’, while ‘cold foods cause chills, coughing, phlegm secretion, and allergies and hot foods cause canker sores and mouth blisters but help enrich blood quality’ (Satia et al. 2000).

Traditional ethnic food beliefs are also central to South Koreans (Kim, Moon & Popkin 2007). The low percentage of fat in their diet and their low rate of obesity have been attributed to a traditional low-fat and high-vegetable diet and the manner in which food is prepared or cooked. Their diet consists of kimchi (pickled and fermented Chinese cabbage), fermented soybean foods, cooked or uncooked vegetables, roasted or broiled meat or fish, and soup.
Similarly, the Turks’ very strong sense of hospitality is reflected in their love of food. Most meals include dairy products such as yogurts and yogurt drinks. Pork is not permitted, as required by Islamic traditions. The host family would normally spend hours eating dinner over several courses, with a guest or even a stranger invited to share with them. Dinner finishes with a cup of very strong Turkish coffee or tea, even if it is late in the evening (Abazov 2009). All these illustrate that it ‘is not just to eat; it is to prefer certain foods cooked in certain ways’ (Geertz 1973, p. 53) and affirm that ‘food takes on … cultural meanings’ in everyday living (Hargreaves, Schlundt & Buchowski 2002).

As the type of food consumed is intertwined with certain cultures, preference for and frequency of ethnic food consumed by individuals are identified in the broader research.

**Cultural Festivals and Practices**

Cultural festivals are celebrations of customs and rituals (Ingpen & Wilkinson 1994, p. 13) which have been observed for generations. Reasons for celebrating are to practise cultural traditions and to showcase ethnic culture (McClinchey 2008) and also because of religious beliefs and practices, for example, festivals may mark the birth of a deity or the passing of time, such as the coming of spring (Ingpen & Wilkinson 1994, p. 13).

Greek Orthodox Christians observe three main periods of fasting before certain festivities throughout the year (Sarri et al. 2003) when they must abstain from specific types of food as part of their daily diet. For instance, in the 40 days before Christmas, eating of meat, dairy products and eggs is not permitted, while fish and olive oil are allowed except on Wednesdays and Fridays. During Lent, fish can only be consumed on two days and olive oil on weekends, while meat, dairy products and eggs again are not allowed. The Orthodox Christians’ diet is therefore a periodic vegetarian one that includes fish and seafood.

For the Chinese, traditional festive celebrations occur according to the lunar calendar and as part of their cultural heritage (Dawson 1991, p. 36; Ingpen & Wilkinson 1994, p. 17). Popular festivals such as the Chinese New Year (Qunjie) and All Souls’ Day (QingMing) show the specific cultural meaning and practices of the importance of family togetherness when people gather together for reunion or a meal (Chongqing Publishing House 2000, p. 42; Tong, Ho & Lin 2004, p. 76). The importance of family and ancestors is also reflected among those who practise daily offerings and prayers on the family altar at home which may be symbolised in the form of a li dai zhu xian tablet (Chongqing Publishing House 2000; Tong, Ho & Lin 2004, p. 86; Triandis 1989, p. 512). One distinctive practice is receiving ang pow or red packets which contain money. As these red packets symbolise good luck and success, they are given to those who are leaving home to pursue study or work, as wedding gifts and especially during Chinese New Year (Chongqing Publishing House 2000, p. 42).

In Turkey, where diversity is one of the characteristics of modern culture, most people still observe Islamic traditions and symbols. Religious festivals such as Seker Bayrami, which ends the fasting month of Ramazan, and folk festivals such as Nevruz, a spring festival, are celebrated. These festivals and family occasions—such as the birth of a first child, the building of a new home or a wedding—are celebrated with family and community, accompanied by music, dance and plenty of food and drink. The importance of family and community togetherness is also evident in leisure and entertainment activities. These usually occur on weekends where the extended families indulge themselves ‘with never-ending feasts and gossip about family and community members’ (Abazov 2009, p. 171). Though this traditional practice has diminished over time, Turks still strongly believe that ‘being with their family and community is an important part of their culture and of their Turkishness’ (Abazov 2009, p. 171). Cultural festivals are thus ‘generally motivated by a desire to express, affirm and preserve a particular cultural heritage’ (Dawson 1991, p. 37).
Frequency of participation in cultural festivals and practices, which forms part of the broader research, is used to identify individuals’ importance of celebrating cultural festivals and retention of culture.

**CALD Index**

This paper has analysed how cultural influence on individuals’ behaviours in everyday living can be examined using different indicators of cultural context. This raises the question of what is the interconnectedness between ‘what individuals do’ in their everyday activities and their ethnic identity, and the impact on everyday activities that relate to sustainable living and resource consumption. It is proposed that individuals’ ethnic connectedness or closeness to their ethnic identity can be determined by the CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) Index which is a composite of:

- ethnicity,
- language use,
- food consumption,
- participation in festivals and celebrations,
- local community interactions, and
- religion.

The five components on ‘what individuals do’ are all contributing indicators to CALD. The CALD Index, as a multi-factor index, could be expected to be a more powerful indicator of consumption behaviours than each individual component due to the complexity or multidimensional nature (Rosenthal & Hrynevich 1985, p. 737) of ethnic identity and cultural influence where two or more components may be interrelated (Driedger 1975; Rosenthal & Hrynevich 1985) and subsequently impact on everyday activities. Some individuals may find that language, traditional ethnic food and religious celebrations are integral to their culture, while others find that their culture and family life are interwoven (Rosenthal & Hrynevich 1985, p. 738). For instance, Muslims’ abstention from pork is one illustration of religious influence on food consumption. Among China-born, Mandarin is the lingua franca when interacting with each other. The interrelationships between components are varied and are dependent on the ethnic group (Driedger 1975; Rosenthal & Hrynevich 1985). Driedger’s (1975) studies on attitudinal and behavioural rankings using composite mean scores found that Jewish students tended to score high on endogamy, that is, marriage within a specific ethnic or religious group (Collins 2005) and choice of in-group friends, while French students identified strongly with their language (French) and their religion (Catholic). A study by Rosenthal and Hrynevich (1985) found that factors such as language, religion, social activities, maintenance of cultural traditions, family life and physical characteristics were important to both Greek- and Italian-Australians.

The computation of the CALD Index is based on a summation of all the components identified above. A 4-point scale is used for each variable to ensure consistency in scoring and to avoid an intermediate response of ‘undecided’ or ‘no difference’ (Matell & Jacoby 1972). In addition, research has shown that some ethnic groups such as Japanese and Chinese were more likely than Americans to choose the midpoint of items that involve expression of positive feelings (Lee et al. 2002, p. 303). A score of ‘1’ on any indicator typified Australian ethnicity and culture, and ‘4’ represented strong Chinese ethnicity and culture. The indicators, scoring system and explanations are presented in Tables 1 to 6 (in the Appendix), grouped under the headings of ‘language’, ‘food’, ‘festivals and celebrations’, ‘religion’, ‘local community interactions’ and ‘ethnicity’. The computation of the CALD Index is represented as follows:

\[
\text{CALD Index} = \sum \text{language} + \text{food} + \text{festivals} + \text{religion} + \text{interaction} + \text{ethnicity}
\]
A high score on the CALD Index reflects a stronger interconnectedness between the China-born Australian resident and their ethnic identity than there is to their host culture, while a low score reflects a stronger connection with the host society.

Results

Following is an illustration of analysis of data taken from a household survey of China-born migrants and Australian-born residents in Box Hill, a middle-ring suburb of Melbourne.

Comparison of every participant’s CALD Index and ecological footprint (a measure of aggregate household consumption) is analysed using a scatter plot as illustrated in Figure 2. The footprint is calculated using the Ecological Footprint Quiz (Centre for Sustainable Economy 2011) and is measured in terms of the number of earths required to regenerate individuals’ annual demand on nature (WWF 2012). It is thus used as a metric measurement of sustainable living and resource consumption. The statistical analysis of the two variables, CALD Index and ecological footprint, shows that there was a weak correlation ($r = .20, n=133, p< 0.05$). There is no cause and effect in the relationship between the two variables.

An independent-samples $t$-test was also conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between the ecological footprints for Australian-born and China-born residents. This showed no statistically significant difference between the groups ($t (131) = 1.9, p >0.05$).

Figure 2 shows that though China-born migrants retain a strong interconnectedness with their ethnic identity and on this basis can be clearly differentiated from the host society on a
cultural basis, their consumption patterns in terms of ecological footprint are similar to those of Australian-born residents. Their strong interconnectedness with their ethnic identity clearly indicates the necessity for an understanding of cultural influence in their everyday activities as culture shapes or constrains ‘what individuals do’. On the basis of the existing results it is expected that an awareness of cultural influence is necessary when it comes to communicating consumption patterns that relate to sustainable living among ethnic migrants (such as China-born) and Australian-born in Australia’s multicultural society.

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Appendix

Table 1: Scales for ‘Language’ Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Response Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Language spoken at home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Only English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>English and other Western languages, e.g. French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mandarin, Cantonese and other Chinese dialects as well as English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Only Mandarin, Cantonese and other Chinese dialects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How well do you speak English?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Scale for ‘Food’ Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Response Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Food preference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Western food only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mostly Western food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mostly Chinese food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chinese food only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Scales for ‘Festivals and Celebrations’ Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Response Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festivals and celebrations</td>
<td>Participate in activities that relate to Australian culture, e.g. Australia Day, cricket</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in local council or community activities/events, e.g. Harmony Day and Heritage Week</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Scale for ‘Religion’ Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Response Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Religious affiliation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Australian-born and are Protestant, Catholic (or other Western religions(^a))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Australian-born and practise Chinese beliefs, such as Buddhism, Taoism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>China-born and are Protestant, Catholic (or other Western religions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>China-born and practise Chinese beliefs, such as Buddhism, Taoism(^b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (a) Despite national variations, European identity is deeply embedded in Christian tradition, and Western cultures are thus dominated by Christianity (Lu, Gilmour & Kao 2001; Zolberg & Woon 1999, p. 7). Early European migrants to Australia brought Christianity with them and it remains the dominant religious tradition today (Henry 2009).

(b) Chinese belief systems such as Buddhism or traditional Chinese religions which incorporate Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and folk traditions (Gladney 1994; Tong, Ho & Lin 2004; Lagerwey 2010). The interrelationship between religion and other practices can be seen in the influence of Taoist traditions on traditional Chinese medicine and folk healing practices (Lin 1981).
Table 5: Scales for ‘Local Community Interactions’ Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Response Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local community</td>
<td>1 Visit local library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Participate in environmental activities, e.g. Whitehorse Sustain-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ability Living Week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Scales for ‘Ethnicity’ Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Response Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>1 Individual’s country of birth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>China-born and baby migrant&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>China-born and adolescent migrant&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>China-born and adult migrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Mother’s country of birth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Western country, e.g. England, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eastern/Asian country, e.g. India, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Father’s country of birth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Western country, e.g. England, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eastern/Asian country, e.g. India, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (a) Baby migrants (infants, toddlers or those below school age) have longer social interactions with Australian-born people within the host society. In addition, they spend more time in Australian schools where peer group is an influential force in their development years. They thus have ‘greater exposure to diverse transmitters of the host culture’ (Costigan & Dokis 2006; Huang 1994).

(b) As adolescent migrants spend time in Australian secondary schools or higher education, host societal and peer may influence them. However, as an ethnic minority in the host society, their perception of differences between themselves and many of their peers, before they develop a stable sense of identity, may encourage strong ethnic identification. This identification would not be as strong as among those who migrated as adults (Costigan & Dokis 2006; Driedger 1975).
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christina Yion P. Ting: Christina Ting is a Ph.D. candidate with the Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia. Her research interest lies in understanding individuals’ behaviours towards sustainable living and resource consumption, such as water and energy, with particular reference to culturally and linguistically diverse groups in multicultural societies and Australian cities. With a background in geography, social studies and environmental sciences, and having worked in educational and community outreach areas that also involved both school and community education, she intends to pursue further in the area to effect changes in sustainable living and environment, especially among migrants through community education programmes and environmental activities.