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Routes to a Western Undergraduate Degree: Chinese Families' Mobilization of Capital and Flexible Citizenship

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education

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Abstract

Today, an increasing number of Chinese families send their children to study in the West to open up future opportunities. While studying abroad has a long history in China from late Qing dynasty (1836–1911), in the last couple of decades Chinese student mobility occurred on a much larger scale. Chinese families view an undergraduate degree from the West as a way to enhance career opportunities and familial social status. My study examined Chinese families' intentions and strategies to gain advantage in their transnational trajectory. Specifically, I explore how forms of capital accumulate and transfer through transnational educational routes. Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) notions of capital and habitus, as well as Aihwa Ong's (1999) concept of flexible citizenship were employed in this study as complementary frameworks to understand Chinese families' exploitation of study abroad.

This research employed exploratory qualitative study methodology. Semi-structure interviews were conducted with 23 families (one parent and one student in each family). Each of these families had a child who had studied or was studying in a Western country. Nine key informants, including study-abroad agents, recruiters, principals, and ESL teachers, were also invited to share their knowledge in this research.

This study affirms that the formation of Chinese families' flexible citizenship is a trend driven by cultural and social forces in Chinese national and local contexts with

neoliberal permeation. These multilevel forces include social, cultural, political, and economic roots, which are interwoven in complex ways. My participants strategically mobilize their various forms of capital in order to develop flexible citizenship, but they also face challenges and lost partial cultural and social capital in China.

Insights developed in this study will benefit the following audiences: educational scholars who are interested in student transnational mobility in both China and the West; Chinese international students themselves and their families; officers working at Canadian academic institutions who are recruiting international students; and educators, principals/teachers/study-abroad agents who are working with international students, specifically Chinese students.

Key words: Chinese international students, flexible citizenship, capital translation, cultural capital, social capital, habitus, transnationalism, mobility

Summary for Lay Audience

Increasing numbers of Chinese families send their children to study in Canada to experience the diverse cultures, learn English, and improve individual and/or family social status. To achieve these goals, these families need to employ and accumulate personal and/or familial social resources. Chinese students' transnational movement is impacted by globalization and multilateral economic/political factors. This research aims to investigate Chinese transnational families' flexible strategies to obtain resources (social, cultural, and linguistic) in their educational trajectory.

I have interviewed 23 families who had sent children to study in Canada. Also, I talked to nine educators including ESL instructors, principals, and study-abroad agents, who had working experiences with Chinese international students. All in all, 55 people were interviewed in this research. Some interviews were conducted face-to-face and some were completed via phone or Skype upon requests from participants. I investigated why these Chinese families chose to send their children to the West. I uncovered the skills and resources needed in order to study in a Western country, and I also looked at challenges and frustrations that Chinese international students faced while studying abroad and how they responded to these challenges.

Chinese international students' strategic choices of furthering their education in another jurisdiction are impacted by multilevel forces that have social, cultural, political, and economic roots which are interwoven in complex ways. These factors include the impacts of intense academic competition in China, policy changes in the

Chinese context, and changes in cultural attitudes towards experiencing education in another country. It is challenging to claim which factor outweighs others because of how these factors intersect and because the interaction process is complicated.

My participants hoped to use economic resources in exchange for working experience in the West, competency in English, as well as, to some extent, networking in the West. Simultaneously, they lost partial proficiency in Chinese, cultural familiarity, and social connections in China.

Acknowledgments

I send my heartfelt thanks to my co-supervisors Dr. Paul Tarc and Dr. Melody Viczko for their patience and support, and their constant encouragement, which functioned as a driving force during this challenging academic journey. From the first draft to a final dissertation, my supervisors devoted a great amount of time and energy to support me to finish this program. Dr. Paul Tarc set me a good example as a rigid scholar and researcher with critical thinking. Every step that I have made was undoubtedly guided by his wisdom and instruction. His knowledge of international education and his understanding of international students' experiences facilitated my accomplishment. My experience of working with Dr. Paul Tarc has transformed, and will continue to transform me, from a fledging educator to a critical researcher and scholar. I also owe my sincere and earnest gratitude to Dr. Melody Viczko for her wisdom as a critical scholar and her consistent support during my academic journey. I am privileged to work with Dr. Viczko; her insightful contributions have made the completion of this dissertation possible. Her constant encouragement facilitated my transition from a master's to a PhD student. Her guidance and mentorship have inspired me all the way.

I am grateful to Dr. Prachi Srivastava for serving on my advisory committee and taking the time to read my work and providing insights. She helped me tighten my dissertation at my thesis' final stage. Dr. Prachi Srivastava's provocative comments led me to think profoundly on my research and strengthened my findings.

I owe my participants a debt of gratitude; they have taken their time to participate in my study, which made my dissertation possible. Not only were they willing to share their experiences and knowledge, they also actively helped me forward my research information to people they know. Without that, I dare not imagine that I could talk to 23 families in one year. I am grateful to every conversation that I had with my participants who provided me with reflective thoughts that became a solid foundation of this thesis.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my family for their support. I finish this dissertation while taking care of my two lovely daughters—Anna Liu (刘晔菡) and Angelia Liu (刘佳钰) who made me get used to reading papers and writing thesis while seeing them running around me. My academic life grew along with their healthy growth. I have to say that I owe a lot to my mother (吴艳芝) who accompanied me from my master's degree in Vancouver to my PhD in London Ontario and helped me take care of my children. Without her support, it would be a long way for me to finish my study. My deepest thanks should go to my dearest husband, Qingwen Liu (刘青文) who continuously supports me, both financially and emotionally. In the past four years, our family had to be separated from time to time, had to travel back and forth from China to Canada in order to accommodate my study. This transnational-living style benefited me as a transnational researcher and helped me better understand my research and my participants.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Today, an increasing number of Chinese families send their children to study in the West to open up their future opportunities. Data from the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE, 2018) shows that among 494,525 international students in Canada, 140,530 students originated from China, which constitute 28% of all international students. Among these international students, one-seventh of students are teenagers who are recruited into secondary programs in Canada (CBIE, 2018).

It should be noticed that globalisation and the influences of the market economy have profound impacts on Chinese education (Guo, Guo, Beckett, Li, & Guo, 2013), which further implicate Chinese student transnational movement. From this perspective, Chinese students' transnational movement can be regarded as a response to globalisation and the market economy. For example, "[u]nder China's market economy, English has become a requirement for decent employment, social status and financial security" (Guo, et al, 2013, p. 248). Therefore, one purpose of Chinese student transnational migration is to increase their English proficiency in order to be competitive in a market economy in China, as well.

Driven by globalisation, educational marketization manifests itself by focusing on the needs of students as educational clients and following marketing logics to operate an educational institution by responding to students' choices (Hanson, 1992; Harvey & Busher, 1996). Permeated by neoliberalism, international education was regarded as a commodity, and international students are considered as ideal pool for revenue

generation, especially facing decreasing of educational funds. Influenced by educational marketization, Chinese mobile students and families' are attracted to use their familial social capital to earn symbolic capital (a Western degree) since the latter was highly valued in China due to neoliberal calculations in Chinese market economy.

Compared to peers from previous generations and other countries, Chinese youth are studying abroad at a younger age (Popadiuk, 2010). There is also an emerging type of cross-border movement taken by Chinese international students called *youxue* (游学: study tour), which may be thought of as short-term tourism with educational purposes. According to my past working experiences, the concrete goal of the majority of young Chinese students is to obtain an undergraduate qualification in the West. However, literature shows that Chinese families strategically pursue this objective across time to increase familial/personal social capital and raise social status (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Wu & Tarc, 2019). Accumulation of various forms of capital (economic, cultural, and social) through experiencing diverse cultures and acquiring proficiency in Western languages is highly valued in China (Chen, 2006; 2007; Fong, 2011; Ong, 1999; Soong, 2016).

This study examines the formation of "flexible citizenship" (Ong, 1999) of Chinese transpacific families, their capital accumulation as well as translation in their transnational undergraduate education. In this study, families are defined as Chinese nuclear families, rather than extended ones. The main focus of this research requires weaving together Bourdieu's forms of capital and notion of habitus with Ong's

concept of flexible citizenship to understand Chinese families' pragmatic intentions and strategies. Anthropologist Aihwa Ong coined the term "flexible citizenship" in her empirical studies of Chinese diaspora and migrations to describe mobile middle and upper-class people who navigate their lives under conditions of heightened transnationalism. Ong (1999) looked at "transnationalism not in terms of unstructured flows but in terms of the tension between movements and social orders" traversing political borders (p. 6). Therefore, Ong maintains paying attention to the governmentality of the state, "which is strained by the condition of transnationality" (p. 214). Ong (1999) regards the state as an agent. She explained that this governmentality is "a strategy of graduated sovereignty that subjects different segments of the population to different mixes of disciplinary, caring, and punitive technologies" (p. 22). With such understanding of individual transnational mobilities and pragmatic functions of the states, Ong (1999) argued that

[The flexible citizen] is not simply a Chinese subject adroitly navigating the disjuncture between political landscapes and the shifting opportunities of global trade. His/her very flexibility in geographical and social positioning is itself an effect of novel articulations between the regimes of family, the state, and capital, the kinds of practical-technical adjustments that have implications for our understanding of the late modern subject (p. 3).

Understanding in this way, flexible citizenship is not just about mobility or freedom of Chinese transnational families but about the state and steering subjects as well.

I find the construct “flexible citizenship” useful for my study, which explores how Chinese families that have children pursuing an undergraduate degree in the West are using and advancing flexible citizenship via education routes. These families benefited from governing techniques of graduated sovereignty by accessing opportunities to send children abroad. In these routes, these Chinese students improve their competency in English, learn Western cultural skills, and connect with new peers, all of which can be regarded as capital accumulation in a new cultural regime. Here, capital accumulation is different from capital transferring. The latter refers to the exchange of one form of capital to another. For example, these international students obtain new *cultural* capital, such as proficiency in English by using their previous *economic or social* capital such as money or their social *guanxi* (关系: social connection), which can be understood as capital transferred either from one person to another or gained from social networks.

For Chinese adolescent students, I considered four main routes by which they access Western undergraduate education: (1) achieving a high enough score on the *gaokao* (高考: National College Entrance Examination) in China, and then applying to a Western university; (2) studying in an international school in China; (3) studying in a private international school in the West; or (4) studying in a public school in the West. The term “international school” in route 2 refers to the variations of foreign-curriculum programs that exist in Chinese social contexts, including private international schools, international departments within schools, and dual-track programs within schools. Each distinct pathway constitutes a transnational educational

trajectory of Chinese students accessing Western education. In these transnational spaces, capital is accumulated and translated as forms of flexible citizenship (Ong, 1999).

1. Problem Statement and Research Questions

This study sheds light on how Chinese families use “study abroad” as and for flexible citizenship. I explore familial intentions and strategies in sending children to the West and their experiences in forming their flexible citizenship. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between forms of capital and flexible citizenship in the different transnational paths of these Chinese students. Specifically, I am interested in how capital accumulates and transfers through transnational mobility, from what beginnings and towards what possible ends.

This investigation illuminates the intersections of transnational educational trajectories, and the students and their families’ use and development of flexible citizenship. The overarching question is: How do transnational schooling pathways constitute and advance flexible citizenship? To answer this main question, this research addresses the following sub-questions:

- (1) What larger conditions and forms of capital enable entry to a pathway? How do these forms accumulate and/or (potentially) transfer in each of the four transnational schooling routes?
- (2) How do class and gender shape the qualities of Chinese families’ flexible citizenship?

The phenomena of social mobility, transnational social capital, and the strategic choices of Chinese families across each route are my focus in this study. Student mobility across national borders from East to West can also be considered as a response to growing neoliberal globalizing forces (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Fong, 2011; Waters, 2008). This study illustrates how these families utilize their economic, social, and cultural capital by taking advantage of different educational opportunities that allow them to transfer previously acquired capital (i.e., social, cultural, economic, and symbolic) and accumulate new capitals in advancing flexible citizenship.

2. Significance and Implications of this Research

This research contributes to the field of cultural sociology of education in terms of grounding theories of Chinese families' social mobility, and how they understand their own experience and future aspirations from both gender and class perspectives. Insights developed in this study will benefit the following audiences: educational scholars who are interested in student transnational mobility in both China and the West; Chinese international students themselves and their families, as well as officers working at Canadian academic institutions who are recruiting international students; educators, principals/teachers/study-abroad agents who are working with international students, specifically Chinese students. Investigating Chinese students' motivation in mobility and documenting their lived experiences within these four pathways as transnational spaces will provide insights to Canadian schools accepting Chinese

international students, which in turn might help these students better navigate their future educational routes in the West.

This research deploys Bourdieu's theory of capital to investigate Chinese transnational students' formation of flexible citizenship. Therefore, this research aims to scrutinize and build upon Bourdieu's work from an empirical perspective. For example, this study shows that with increasing competition in study abroad and in finding employment, converting forms of capital (on a transnational scale) has become more complex and difficult. Previously, a Western qualification as symbolic capital might be easily converted into a good job in China; now it appears that higher degrees/levels of cultural capital (sometimes combined with social capital) are necessary to be competitive in the job market in China; this include being fluent in English and having good understanding of Western cultural norms that can aid future transnational corporate work. This shift can be seen in a number of my participants who not only seek Western qualification and English proficiency, but also desire employment experience to develop English and technological competence within the Canadian workplace before returning to China or another country. In this light, this research suggests that capital exchange or translation can be complex, provisional and contingent.

Additionally, this research uses Ong's flexible citizenship as complementary theoretical framework to understand Chinese families' intentions and strategies in sending children abroad. Therefore, building upon Ong's work, this research aims at examining Chinese transnational families who are eager to send children to the West

for education. This research identifies flexible citizenship as a form of habitus of Chinese families. Connecting outer structure and inner human agency, habitus, as transferred from parents to children, facilitates student's development of flexible citizenship, to a certain extent, via their transnational study.

Last but not least, this research provides insights to Canadian policy makers. Findings of my research indicate that many of the more recent generation of Chinese international students plan to return to China upon completion of their study in Canada. It is true that immigration plan has been a driving force for Chinese families to send their children to Canada (Soong, 2016); still, many student participants admitted that they would be more willing to go back to China after securing permanent resident status. Compared with participants that Chen (2006; 2007), Fong (2011), and Soong (2016) have studied, student participants are more willing to cast their eyes towards migrating back to their home country rather than staying in Canada. They made such decisions because of recent economic booms in China. Therefore, this research broadens the transnational student-migrant nexus that previous scholars (e. g., Soong, 2016) have defined to a transnational student-migrant-returnee nexus.

3. Coming to the Study

I could never have imagined that one day I would study in a Western university, not to mention in a PhD program. I was born in a rural area of an ethnic autonomous county in the northeast of China. After successfully writing the *gaokao*, I was accepted by an advanced university in China. I can still remember my feelings when I

watched American TV and movies; the beautiful scenery and the way people communicate and socialize in the West represented a reality totally unfamiliar to me. In my spare time, I read some works by famous Chinese educators as well as those by Westerners. Because of the research, I developed a strong awareness of the respective problems and differences in the field of education between the two societies. All of these factors contributed to my aspiration to go abroad to learn. Unfortunately, my family could not afford expensive tuition fees and the high cost of living to allow me to study in a Western country. From this point of view, my family was in a situation different from the situations Ong had studied, i.e., families who were upper or upper-middle class in China, and even different from the cases of most of my participants. I have to admit that my family, at that time, lacked the capability to facilitate my flexible citizenship. When I was in my thirties, I used up my savings to come to Canada to study for my master's degree. I came with my 4-year-old daughter while my husband kept working in China to provide financial support for my family because we had family-care responsibilities for our child and for our parents. During this period, my daughter and I travelled back and forth between China and Canada. Since I was a grown-up, it was much easier for me to reconnect with my previous friends while at the same time making new friends in Canada.

In the past two years, the conversation between me, as a researcher, and my participants reminded me of the precarious, uncertain, and nervous situation I had felt when I first came to Canada. When hearing their stories, I recalled the contradiction I had experienced and the tension I had dealt with as an international student. Even

today, I remember the helplessness and loneliness that I felt during that transition period. I did not know where to seek support. I dared not talk to my supervisor and felt embarrassed to discuss my feelings with my classmates, most of whom were non-Chinese. It was a desperate situation for an international student without enough cultural, social, and linguistic capital in Canada.

Looking retrospectively, viewing myself as a typical Chinese international student like the subjects in my research, I understand that these feelings of displacement were more a question of how to find belonging in the host community. In this regard, “host community” refers to a community that international students physically live when they travelled abroad. This insider positionality as Chinese international student allowed me to gain richer understanding when working as researcher, i.e., outsider. I understand what my participants told me from both their perspective and from a researcher’s perspective.

My knowledge of the Chinese culture and the common challenges facing Chinese students, as well as my professional knowledge intersect in one story. This story is shaping my life and simultaneously shaped by my life. Also, this story speaks to my participants who have similar experiences. In this light, there are important relations to consider in this research: the relation between my past and present; the relation between me as an international student, an educator, and a researcher; the relation between my past experiences and my relationship with the Chinese/host community; as well as the relation between me as a researcher and my participants. Before beginning this paper, I did not know how the specific relations would emerge. At the

beginning of this research, I felt a gap between me, as researcher, and my participants, as recognized by Clandinin (2013) in her research. But after listening to the stories of the Chinese international students, I, as a former Chinese international student, felt as though that gap was filled with conversations formed by me, the researcher, and by my participants, and at the same time by me as a Chinese international student in the host community. Honestly, their stories evoked resonance in me, which reminded me of the transition experienced by Chinese international students. This co-composed understanding was reflective of my own experiences as an international student, an educator, and now as a researcher, as well as those of my participants. This resonance made me feel comfortable with my participants; it helped to make visible what was invisible.

I never thought of my practices in the same way as described by my participants. I am not sure what kinds of impact this research experience may have on the lives of my participants, but it has certainly changed my way of observing, thinking, and living. Through interpreting data collected in this research, I have gained a better understanding of my past experiences with a new lens, which provides me a good opportunity to understand my unfolding life in the West. This state of “remaking” or “reinventing” who we are, especially given our inherent liminal condition as newcomers, reflects an important process that every Chinese international student goes through when integrating into the host communities. Simultaneously, this process of integration casts light on how Western universities should consider the inclusion of Chinese international students in these learning communities beyond simply focusing

on higher enrollment numbers. In this making and remaking process, I have noticed the contradiction between Chinese international students' aspirations of studying in the West, to obtain English linguistic capital, and their daily practices or reactions, including their unwillingness to speak English outside the classroom; and their struggle to further their flexible citizenship via a Western education.

4. Definition of Key Words

In this dissertation, I employ terms largely based on those developed by Ong (1999) and Bourdieu (1986). In order to keep them consistent across this dissertation, I would like to lay out the definitions of some common terms in this introductory section.

Habitus: In Bourdieu's (1994) formal definition of the term "habitus," it refers to a property of social agents (whether individuals, groups or institutions) that comprises a 'structured and structuring structure' (p. 170). It is 'structured' by one's past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing, educational experiences and cultural background. It is 'structuring' in that one's habitus helps to shape one's present and future practices (Maton, 2008, p. 51).

Habitus is an important notion of Bourdieu to connect outer structure and inner human agency. People's daily practices are impacted by many social factors as well as their personal/familial habitus. For Bourdieu, habitus can be transmitted from generation to generation. International students felt difficult in adjusting in a Western country, partly because they lack habitus that are favoured by local culture.

Economic capital: Economic capital “...is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). Economic capital is important because it is the form of capital most easily converted into other types of capital.

Cultural Capital: Cultural capital refers to “[a] form of value associated with culturally authorized tastes, consumption patterns, attributes, skills and awards” (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002, p. x). Normally, proficiency in an official language and familiarity with cultural norms are considered as cultural capital.

Social Capital: Social capital refers to “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possessions of durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). Typically, personal connections are social capital according to Bourdieu.

Symbolic Capital: Symbolic capital is “[a] form of capital or value that is not recognized as such. Prestige and a glowing reputation, for example, operate as symbolic capital because they mean nothing in themselves, but depend on people believing that someone possesses these qualities” (Webb et al., 2002, p. xv-xvi). Normally, earning an official degree is accumulating symbolic capital for students.

Transnationalism: Ong (1999) looked at “transnationalism not in terms of unstructured flows but in terms of the tension between movements and social orders” (p. 6). Mitchell (2009) regards transnationalism as “a movement or set of linkage that occur across national borders.... its growing popularity indicates the heighten

interconnectivity of people and things that now flow across *borders* and *boundaries*” (p. 772).

Flexible Citizenship: “The cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions” (Ong, 1999, p. 6). Ong has broadened citizenship from a legal definition to cultural logics that agency deploys when facing various conditions. In terms of Chinese international students, flexible citizenship refers to how they respond to changing conditions and how they strategically accumulate capital in their transnational trajectories.

5. Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation has eight chapters. Chapter One introduces the research study. Chapter Two presents a context review: a historical review of Chinese student cross-border mobility and the emergent social conditions that enable student migration from China to the West. Chapter Three presents the theoretical frameworks guiding this study to investigate motivations of these transnationally mobile students and their families as well as how they translate capital through the four pathways defined in this research. Chapter Four presents a review of previous literature on student transnational mobility; Chinese student transnational mobility specifically; factors influencing Chinese students’ choice to study abroad; alternative pathways taken by Chinese students to Western education, and experiences of Chinese students in the West. Chapter Five explains the research methodology I used in this study. In Chapter

Six and Seven, key findings are presented according to the research questions. Chapter Six employs Ong's (1999) formulations on "flexible citizenship" to investigate social conditions that affect Chinese families' formation of flexible citizenship. Chapter Seven discusses the qualities of flexible citizenship as well as capital accumulation and exchange in this process. Chapter Eight revisits the major research questions to highlight generative findings and their implications.

Chapter Two: Historical Overview: A Coarse Periodization of Student Mobility

from China to the West in Modern Times

Chinese international student mobility began along with the migration of its people (Fong, 2011), which can be traced back to the 1800s. In 1847, Western missionaries provided financial support to three Chinese students named Hong Rong, Sheng Huang, and Kuan Huang to study in the United States. It was considered the beginning of the Chinese student transnational movement (Wang, 1992). Thereafter, the Chinese international student movement was based on China's efforts to build a modern society by learning from other Western countries.

For Chinese mobile students who are agents in this process, the decision of studying abroad doesn't take place in a political vacuum. Instead, geopolitical bilateral/multilateral relations and state interests, both political and economic, are typically at play in students' cross-border movement. As such, social, economic, and political contexts in China play crucial roles in regulating Chinese student transnational mobility. Specifically, Chinese students' migration is influenced by Chinese policies towards student mobility across national boundaries.

Zheng (2010) discovered that in China's context, studying abroad is not a pure educational phenomenon; it has political implications. For example, when China closed its door to other countries and tightened its policies towards studying abroad, it was extremely difficult for students seeking an opportunity to study in a Western country. Given a concern of "brain drain", Zhao (2014) suggested the Chinese

government constrained student transnational migration from China to other countries (Zhao, 2014). Spring (2015) defined brain drain as follows: “Migration involves the movement of educated and skill workers from low-income nations and rural areas to more prosperous nations and/or urban centers, which often results in brain drain” (p. 188). The policy in such period raised difficulties for Chinese students to study overseas, even at their own expense.

In recent years, in response to globalization, the Chinese government encouraged students to study in other countries, with political agenda of reverse brain drain (Zhao, 2014). Here, the reverse brain drain is what Spring (2015) called brain circulation, whereby “some migrants return to their home countries or become transnational with homes in different countries” (p. 189). In this social context, Chinese students possess a different amount of agency in their transnational mobility process with some ability to determine their residence based on their possession of capital to enable such mobility.

The present surge of student transnational mobility for educational purposes can be understood as a response that these mobile young travellers made when they faced national policy changes which have impacts on, and continuously influence their cross-Pacific movement. In other words, the Chinese state acts as a flexible agent to maximize its political interests with neoliberal calculations (Ong, 2006). This chapter will focus on the periods from the early 20th century to the present, mapping Chinese international students’ transnational migration as well as the social contexts based on previous research.

1. A Coarse Periodization of Student Mobility from China to the West

Based on the investigation of the seven periods of Chinese international student mobility in the 20th century, I find both continuities and discontinuities in their cross-border migration process. A range of continuities can be identified. First, there are continuing waves of student transnational movement from China to the West, although sometimes under negative geopolitical contexts and/or national regulations. For example, during the Maoist era of isolation (1966–1976) and the Dengist period of tight restrictions (1986–1993), we saw student flows from China to other countries. Despite the slightly decreased number of students in these two periods, this movement continued to some extent. Second, the number of students moving across borders is increasing except during the isolation periods. This increasing trend contributes to the exchanges of cultures, knowledge, and technologies, which further benefits the development of both China and other host countries, socially and economically.

Second, this movement has been and continues to be shaped by social, economic, and political issues, both in global and local contexts. As Liu (2016) claimed “International Education [embodies] national interests, both politically and economically” (p. 3). We can clearly see the impacts of national and mutual national interests on student mobility and vice versa.

On the other hand, I also find discontinuities when examining this history. First, students as individuals have more agency when they control the decision-making processes to study in other countries. In terms of agency, this research follows the definition provided by Webb et al. (2002) which refers to “[t]he idea that individuals

are equipped with the ability to understand and control their own actions, regardless of the circumstances of their lives” (p. ix). At the beginning of this student mobility trend, students were selected by the Chinese government and funded by the state. However, in recent periods, students can choose their own educational destinations without state funding. As such, the relationship between citizenship and sovereignty has changed. This change empowers self-supported individual students as agents in their own migration process.

Second, the purpose of their travel across borders varies from seeking more economic and life opportunities to obtaining better life quality such as food safety and less-polluted air quality (Liu, 2016). In the early stages of the Chinese student transnational movement, one of the motivations to study abroad was to strengthen their home country (Song, 2003). However, given to new problems arising in China, Chinese students who possess more agency than peers in previous generations began to consider education in other countries based on their personal and/or familial needs, albeit these needs are shaped by state technique of government.

In examining the periods of the Chinese student transnational movement, it is also necessary to understand how this movement was shaped under geopolitical and national conditions. A negative implication for the sending country is the concern of brain drain, but there is still the potential of brain circulation. Positively, however, student transnational movement can enrich students as individuals with multicultural and multilinguistic abilities and foster global awareness, which will benefit their global competitiveness, but also potentially global and international cooperation.

Furthermore, the flow of Chinese students across boundaries facilitates culture and knowledge exchange between countries, which can be considered as a response to globalization. From my investigation, I conclude that Chinese transnational student movement is currently in a new period and this trend will continue in the era of globalization. All Chinese student movements have been and will continue to be dynamic and neoliberal market-driven combined with government control.

2. Period 1: Late Qing Dynasty Period (1836–1911)

The Qing dynasty maintained its political control over China from 1644 until 1911. Zheng (2010) reported that in this period, “in order to popularize Christianity in China, the Western missionaries selected the appropriate students in China and sent them to European countries to study religion and Western culture” (p. 55). From 1872 to 1875, given the Self-Strengthening Movement in China, the Qing dynasty selected and sent 120 children, including Tianyou Zhan and Ouyang Sai, to the United States, but withdrew them in 1881 given financial and security considerations (Wang, 1992). This movement was further diminished by Chinese losses in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894–1895 that was launched by Japanese imperialists to annex Korea and invade China (Ji, 2011). Students were either financially supported by the Qing government or by their own families and/or friends in their attempts to acquire Western cultural and technological knowledge in the transcultural and transnational learning process. Their major purpose was to strengthen the power of China.

In 1901, the Qing dynasty embraced a new policy to select and send young elite Chinese to study in developed countries, particularly in Japan. Over the following 10 years, over 40,000 Chinese students travelled to Japan (Ji, 2011). From 1909, the Qing government began to select young Chinese to study in the United States. From then on, the United States came to be the top priority for Chinese students. Compared to the casual selection process to study in Japan, those who hoped to study in the United States had to overcome a more vigorous selection process. From 1909 to 1918, 499 Chinese students, including Yiqi Mei, Shi Hu, and Kezhen Zhu, were sent officially by the Qing government to study in the United States (Ji, 2011). But most of these students were financially supported in lieu of the government paying indemnities to the United States following the Boxer Rebellion (Ji, 2011). In the first 10 years of the 20th century, over 50,000 Chinese students studied in Japan (Song, 2003).

Apart from this self-motivation of the Qing government to learn Western knowledge, advanced technology in particular, the mutual relationship between the Qing dynasty and other Western countries played an important role in pushing Chinese students to study in the West. The United States was the first Western nation to support the Qing dynasty in sending students to the West through its forgiveness of the Boxer Indemnity (Wang, 1992). Under these circumstances, Chinese students who chose to study in the United States increased from 500 in 1910 to 650 in 1911. We can conclude that student transnational migration in the late Qing dynasty (1840–1911) was mainly facilitated by the government (China and the host country) and religious groups based on their own various purposes.

3. Period 2: The Republic of China Era (1912–1949)

Given the unstable political conditions in 1912 following the collapse of the Qing dynasty, the number of students who chose to study in the West decreased from 650 in 1911 to 594 (Wang, 1992). This number rose slowly with the increasingly stable political environment in China. In 1914, there were 1,300 Chinese students studying in the United States and the number increased to 1,500 in 1917. Subsequently, the student transnational movement was directly influenced by the government's policies, political conditions in China, as well as the broader political conditions in the world, such as World War II (1939–1945). For example, during the second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), the Chinese government tightened its policy with regard to sending students abroad. There were only 193 students studying in the United States from 1938 to 1941 (Wang, 1992). After the government opened up its policies, 170 students studied in the United States and 358 students in 1943 (Wang, 1992). After the victory in the war against Japan, 730 Chinese students were selected to study in the West in 1946; among these students, 75.89% chose the United States as their destination (Wang, 1992). This trend was assisted by the economic conditions in the United States and the great mutual relationship between the two countries. Simultaneously, an increasing number of students chose France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and western Europe (Song, 2003). During the upheaval period of the Civil War (1946–1949), only 300 Chinese students chose to study in other countries (Song, 2003). Before the establishment of the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.), over 5,000 Chinese students and scholars stayed in other countries, 3500 in the United States,

1200 in Japan, 443 in the United Kingdom, 197 in France, 50 in German, 20 in Denmark, and 20 in Canada (Song, 2003). In this period, we can see the profound influence of political factors and mutual relations among countries on Chinese student transnational mobility.

4. Period 3: The Autarkic Maoist Era Phase I (1950–1965)

In 1949, P.R.C. was built after the civil war that lasted for several years. Student mobility from China to other countries was facilitated by this new political change.

Zheng (2010) explained that

After the establishment of the P.R.C. because of the common belief in socialism and China's urgent domestic demand for modernization construction in industry, science and technology, in 1950s and 1960s, China quickened her pace to dispatch students to the Soviet Union and East Europe for studying and obtained great help of cultivating talent in sophisticated technology for China's scientific frontier from the Soviet Union. (p. 55)

Given the isolation of China from other Western countries because of the Cold War (1947–1953) between the communist world and the capitalist world, the fundamental conflicting ideology between these two worlds, as well as the socialist society that China hoped to build, in September and December 1950, the first 35 students were dispatched to other socialist countries, such as the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria (Cheng, 1999). From 1950 to 1965, a total of 12,000 students were sent to 29 countries, such as the Soviet Union, East

Europe, North Korea, and Cuba. Among these students, most were sent to the Soviet Union because of the good relationship between the two countries and the many construction projects aided by the Soviet Union (Cheng, 1999). During this period, the Soviet Union was politically considered as the “older brother” of Chinese modernization.

At the same time, in order to build good relationship with other Western countries, China began to send students to the capitalist countries. From 1957 to 1965, a total of 200 students travelled to Italia, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark (Cheng, 1999). Due to the deteriorating relationship between China and the Soviet Union in late 1950s and early 1960s, the number of Chinese international students decreased sharply. From 1961 to 1963, only 300 students were dispatched to the Soviet Union and East Europe. Compared to this decreasing trend, more students, with a number of 1,000 students from 1964 to 1965 were sent to other capitalist countries including the United Kingdom, France, and Germany (Cheng, 1999). Most students who were dispatched in this period finally came back to China and played important roles in the development of China, economically and socially (Cheng, 1999). As one can see, in this period, Chinese student transnational movement was still influenced by mutual relationship between China and other countries as well as national ideologies, either socialist or capitalist.

5. Period 4: Maoist Era Phase II: Isolation (1966–1976)

During the 10-year period of the Cultural Revolution, there were still some exchanges, but the Chinese government generally stopped dispatching students to other countries. Given the separation and hostility between national relations and the 10-year Cultural Revolution, China isolated itself from other countries, particularly from capitalist countries such as the United States. During this period, capitalism was politically and socially considered taboo, and teaching and learning of foreign languages were not allowed, even at high schools and universities (Fong, 2011). Under this social and political condition, China “was delinked from the capitalist world economy” (Ong, 1999, p. 37). In the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution, China sent out only 337 students to 21 countries around the world (The Chinese Ministry of Education, 2008). In 1972, only 20 students were sent to France and 16 students were sent to the United Kingdom (Cheng, 1999). As Fong described, China, to some extent, withdrew from the global system by itself (Fong, 2011).

6. Period 5: Dengist Period Phase I—Opening up Post-Reform Student Migration (1977–1985)

In Deng’s period, China began to open up to the West with the hope to achieve modernization and to start its open-door and reform policies. China changed the traditional way of dispatching students only to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (The Chinese Ministry of Education, 2008). It began to renew its historical ties with Western countries by considering the United States, Japan, Canada, and Western

Europe as educational destinations for Chinese students after almost 10 years of isolation mentioned in the previous section. During this period, students were selected and financially assisted by the government. This trend was impacted by the global geopolitical context in the 1970s. Given the influence of significant historical contexts of the normalization of U.S.-China relations in the 1970s, student migration began to flourish under the name of cultural exchange (Liu, 2016). As Liu (2016) reported “After mainland China restarted the study-abroad program in 1977, most students and scholars were sent through state-sponsored exchange programs” (p. 51). In this period, the Chinese government released an important policy, *Guan Yu 1977 Nian Xuan Pai Chu Guo Liu Xue Sheng De Tong Zhi* (Notice of the Selection of Chinese Student for Overseas Studies in 1977) which reflected a positive attitude towards education exchange among nations (Zheng, 2010).

In the 1980s and 1990s, the policies of “reform and opening up” (改革开放: *gaige kaifang*) transformed China and the lives of most Chinese people. China signed the agreements with the United States, the United Kingdom, Egypt, Canada, and Holland in 1979; Italy in 1980; Japan in 1981; Germany, France, and Belgium in 1981; and Australia in 1986 (The Chinese Ministry of Education, 2008; Song, 2003). In December 1978, the first 50 students took the flight from China to the United States, which was a milestone for Chinese student transnational mobility after the Cultural Revolution (Cheng, 1999; Song, 2003). As Ong (2006) reported “[s]ince the Tiananmen crackdown (1979) [sic], thousands of mainland Chinese students have flocked to American universities for training in similar fields” (p. 151).

In the 10 years from 1978 to 1989, a total number of 96,100 students were dispatched by the Ministry of Education. Among them around 30,000 students were state-supported (Song, 2003). In the same year, a total of 1,750 students were dispatched to 32 Western countries (Cheng, 1999). The number increased dramatically to 1,777 in 1979; 2,124 in 1980; 2,922 in 1981 (Cheng, 1999). From 1979 until 2000, over 450,000 students were dispatched by the Ministry of Education to over 100 Western countries. Among these students, 200,000 studied in the United States, 55,000 in Japan, 38,000 in Canada, 36,500 in the United Kingdom, 26,000 in Germany, 17,800 in Australia, 16,300 in France, and 11,800 in Russia (Song, 2003). This number does not include those who were self-supported or financially supported by their families and relatives (Song, 2003).

Before 1981, self-supported transnational mobility was strictly controlled by the government, especially for some groups such as scholars in the universities, engineers, and journalists (Cheng, 1999). After the Chinese government opened up policies towards self-supported study abroad in 1981, the number of students who chose to study in another country increased dramatically. In 1983, over 1,000 students pursued their education in other countries, which was funded by their own families or relatives. According to Liu (2016), “In December 1984, China introduced the ‘Provisional Regulations on Self-Funded Students Studying Abroad,’ which made it easier for students to go abroad based on their own initiatives and funding” (p. 19). In 1985, this group of people increased to over 10,000 per year (Cheng, 1999). At the same time, the number of students who were funded by the government rocketed up to

14,998 from 1982 to 1985. Most students chose the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France, Japan, and Australia as destinations (Cheng, 1999).

Liu (2016) reported that

[a]mong the 43,000 study-abroad applications approved in 1997 by the Bureau of Exit and Entry Administration of China's Ministry of Public Security, 38,000 were self-sponsored students, 1,906 were directly sponsored by the state, and 2,442 were dispatched by their respective work units. Among the over 300,000 Chinese students studying abroad in the two decades after 1978, 50,000 were sent by the state, 94,000 by their respective work units, and 160,000 supported themselves (p. 19).

Contrary to the previous periods when Chinese student cross-border movement was supported by the government, in this period, the policy regarding self-supported study abroad fostered the number of students who chose to pursue their education abroad.

7. Period 6: Dengist Period Phase II: Tight Restrictions for Seven Years (1986–1992)

Given the increasing number of students who chose to study in other countries, the Chinese government decided to tighten restrictions on student transnational movement due to concerns of Western spiritual pollution/brain drain. This restriction regulated both state-funded and self-supported student mobility, and the number of Chinese international students decreased slightly correspondingly—from 10,000 in 1985 to 4,676 in 1986. In 1988, there were only 3,786 students dispatched by China to other countries and around 5,000 self-funded students (Liu, 2016). Following the

Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, an increasing number of students decided to study abroad due to considerations of political security. As Liu (2016) remarked, “Their settlement abroad was facilitated by legislations in host societies such as the 1992 Chinese Student Protection Act in the United States ... which allowed them to stay and apply for permanent residence” (p. 21).

Liu (2016) further documented that “[T]he number of students taking the TOFEL [Test of English as a Foreign Language] test in Beijing was 285 in 1981, the year the test was first offered. It increased to 2,500 in 1983, 8,000 in 1985, and 18,000 in 1986” (p. 22). In 1989, over 40,000 Chinese students took the TOFEL and Graduate Record Examination (GRE) test compared to 30,000 in 1988. There were over 56,000 self-supported students studying abroad in 1990 because of special immigration for Chinese students in Western countries (Cheng, 1999). Despite the restrictions, the number of Chinese students who chose to study abroad increased from over 70,000 in 1989 to 170,000 in 1991, and 190,000 in 1992. In 1990, a new policy was released by the Chinese government regarding the service period of international students (服务期: *fuwuqi*). According to this policy, graduate students (研究生: *yanjiusheng*) and undergraduate students (本科生: *benkesheng*) have to serve China for at least five years after they finish education abroad; whereas two-year or three-year college students (专科生: *zhuankesheng*) have to serve China for at least two to three years. Despite political constraints and post-Cold War anti-American sentiments in China, this period witnessed a decreasing and subsequently increasing curve of student transnational mobility across borders.

8. Period 7: Present Socialist Era with Chinese Characteristics (1993 till present)

In 1993, the Chinese Education Commission *Notice on Issue Concerning Studying Abroad at a Self-financed Study Abroad* stipulated that secondary school graduates, self-funded college students studying abroad do not charge higher education training fees, and stipulated that doctoral graduates travel abroad at their own expense. This policy aimed to support the needs of Chinese students to study abroad at their own expense with a purpose to adapt to the needs of accelerating reform, opening up and construction. Chinese government officially confirmed the guidelines for studying abroad: support studying abroad, encourage returning to China, and come and go free. These national guidelines have created politically safe space to encourage Chinese students travel to other countries for pursuing their education. To better understand this Socialist Era with Chinese characteristics, it is important to look at Ong (2006), whose work insightfully captured the intersection of capitalism, governance, and the mobile subjects embedded within the logics of neoliberalism as exception (explained further below). Ong (2006) regarded the Chinese state as a flexible agent with neoliberal logics in the globalization era. According to her, governments incorporate neoliberalism as part of the “mobile calculative techniques of governing” (p. 13). She argued that in Asian social contexts, “governments have selectively adopted neoliberal forms in creating economic zones and imposing market criteria on citizenship” (p. 1). That has a profound influence on the relationship between the government and the citizens. Ong argued that the state adopts a creative and flexible way to manage its sovereignty (Ong, 2006, 2012), and

in redefining sovereignty, she regarded the state “as an ever shifting assemblage of planning, operations, and tactics increasingly informed by neoliberal reason to combat neoliberal forces in the world at large” (p. 99). According to Ong, “[states] can be highly variable and pragmatic in practice, responding swiftly and opportunistically to dynamic market conditions” (p. 100). This flexibility of neoliberalism allows efficiency in governance, effectiveness in regulating citizens, and it enables practical sovereignty in the condition of East Asia.

Furthermore, Ong (2006) proposed two conceptions—neoliberalism as exception and exceptions to neoliberalism. Neoliberalism as exception refers to governmentality of non-Western jurisdictions, mainly in East Asia where local governments adopt a market-driven neoliberal technique to control their population and sovereignty. This creates a certain kind of privileged “few who have been favored by affirmative action policies and by an ethnic form of pastoral care” (Ong, 2006, p. 82). In China, the logic of exception allows the state to redefine its governance and its relationship with the population within centrally planned socialist China (Ong, 2006). By emphasizing Confucian moral values, the Chinese state does not mimic the Western way, but develops a new model with Chinese characteristics.

Exceptions to neoliberalism refers to the exclusion of “populations and places from neoliberal calculations and choices,” which means even though the government adopts a neoliberal and flexible attitude of governmentality with some populations, the state carries out more *direct* political and economic control in some areas. In Chinese milieus, for example, a *hukou* (户口) system can be regarded as an exception to

neoliberalism. The government regulates population movements by this system of government-administered household registers while simultaneously the masses are encouraged to be self-governed, self-reliant, and self-disciplined through the neoliberal market mechanism. In China, a *hukou* (户口) system is a type of household registration system within which a person/family is attached to a specific geographical location where they are registered. Many benefits, education in particular, are linked with this system, which means a person/family cannot take advantage of national benefit system if they are living out of their *hukou* (户口) area.

In this dynamic relationship between neoliberalism as exception and exceptions to neoliberalism, citizens who are well-educated, skilled, and self-motivated are treated as worthy subjects. In Chinese social contexts, the state government allows flexibility and promotes students' study abroad while maintaining some control over citizenship and loyalty.

Zheng (2010) observed that “[s]ince the 1990s, the adoption of a socialist market economy has improved China’s economic situation, thus the number of students studying abroad at their own expense has risen rapidly” (p. 9). In this changing historical period of the post-Cold War context, especially with rapid growth of the economy, China engaged and actively participated in global capitalism and globalization due to considerations to improve competition among the world.

Webb et al. (2002) defined globalization as “[t]he cultural, social and economic movement that displaces people, goods, and values from local or national settings and makes them subject to global forces” (p. xii). The educational movement of Chinese

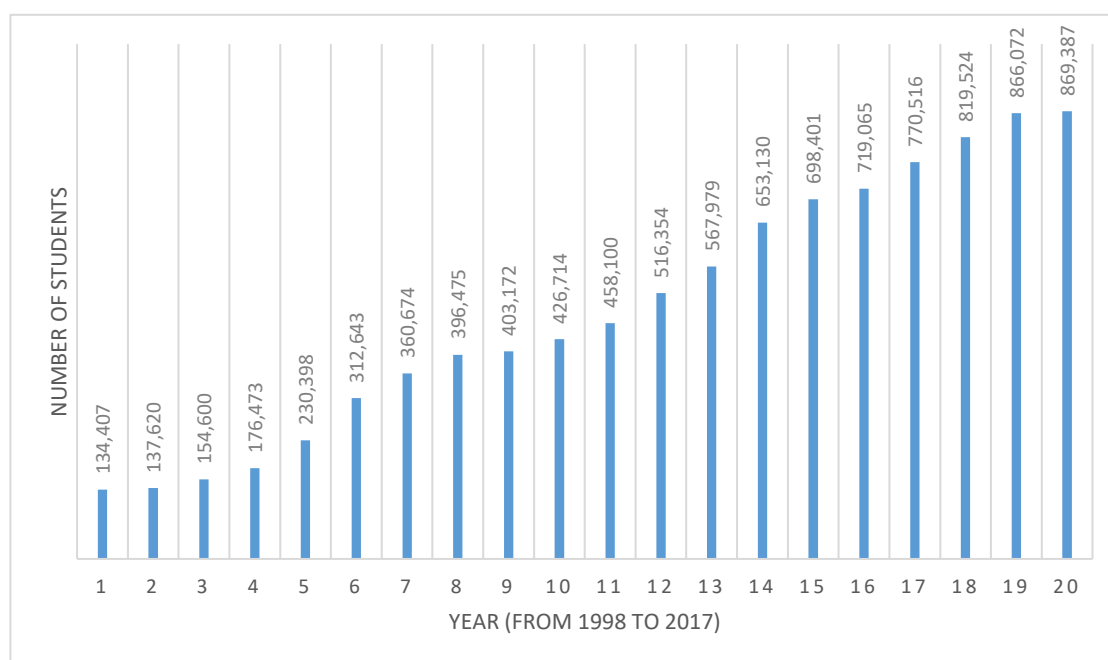
students is redefined and transformed within the overlapping spaces of state policies, international relations, and their own intercultural learning in the global era of market-driven neoliberalism. On one hand, the social and economic changes, especially the market-based economic reform in the 1990s, contributed to the growing number of Chinese students choosing to study abroad namely, “study-abroad fever” (出国热: *Chu Guo Re*) in mainland China (Ong, 1999). On the other hand, policy changes in Western countries strengthened this trend of study-abroad fever. For example, in the United States,

[t]he 1992 Chinese Student Protection Act was largely a political campaign idealizing the United States at the end of the Cold War as the leader of the free world, saving Chinese youth from the communist tyranny. The creation of the H-1B “specialty worker” visa in 1990 and its expansion in the following decades indicated the global economic restructuring and the growing economic nationalism in the design of American immigration policies. (Liu, 2016)

The policy changes continued to foster and heighten the fever to study abroad. Given the terrorist attacks in the United States of September 11, the United States tightened visa policies. Chinese students turned their attentions to other Western countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom. “The Ministry of Education [of China] simplified the review process of applications for self-supported overseas studies in 2002 and China’s government enacted new regulations to provide positive assistance to those who want to study abroad” (Zheng, 2010, p. 62). As Fong (2011) reported “[i]n the 2000s . . . processes of globalization, fertility decline, and rapid economic growth combined to make transnational migration increasingly possible, even for Chinese citizens who lacked those advantages” (p. 38). The number of outbound students originating from China increased dramatically in this period.

Compared to 698,401 students studying outbound in 2012, the number rocketed to 869,387 in 2013, which is an increase of 24.48%. Among these students who studied abroad in 2013, most of them chose the United States, Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Canada as destinations (UNESCO, 2019).

Table One: The Number of Outbound Students Originating from China (1998–2017)



Data resources: UNESCO (2019)

Other than what has been mentioned above, another policy change—educational reform—had profound influence on Chinese student migration. Zheng (2010) claimed that “[t]he educational reform in China, especially with its expanded college enrollment after the 1990s, has also contributed to the surge of student migration in the 2000s in several ways” (p. 9). This educational reform increased the college enrollment rate, but the unemployment rate has been increased accordingly since more qualified graduates compete for limited positions. As Zheng reported, “In the late 1990s and the first two years of the 2000s, there were around one million or less

college graduates, with the employment rate ranging from around 77 to 97 percent”

(p. 9). Liu (2016) had similar findings:

The number of graduates increased from 1.337 million in 2002 to 1.877 million in 2003 and continued growing up to 6.110 million in 2009, while the employment rate decreased from 80 percent in 2002 to a range of 70 to 74 percent in the years that followed. The number of unemployed graduates accordingly increased from 0.267 million in 2002 to 0.563 million in 2003 and then to 1.589 million in 2009. (p. 36)

Given this increasing unemployment rate as well as degree inflation, many Chinese families considered sending their children to the West to earn a Western degree which was more favorable in the job market in China. In other words, seeking education in the West functioned like a market-driven calculation to improve competency.

In this period, there was an increasing demand for talented students with international views and familiarity with different cultures to contribute to the economic growth of the Chinese society. Based on an assumption that international talents with Western knowledge would return to China serving the society,

The Ministry of Education simplified the review process of applications for self-supported overseas studies in 2002. Since November 1, 2002, no higher education cultivation fee is paid by students who wish to study abroad. And the process of reviewing applicant’s qualification was cancelled. In addition, China’s government enacted new regulations to provide positive assistance to those who want to study abroad. (Zheng, 2010, p. 9)

Given the steady and strong economic growth in China, even in the global economic recession after 2007, the number of Chinese international students was still slightly increasing. Benefiting from these positive policy changes and geopolitical contexts, Chinese students were intrigued by the opportunities of cross-border movement.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Frameworks

In this study, I explore how social, cultural, and economic capital are used and sought after in Chinese international students' transnational routes. Bourdieu's forms of capital and notion of habitus act as useful lenses to interrogate their self-consciousness and their self-adjustment process in the transnational experiences. How do Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital help us understand Chinese students' mobility? For these Chinese international students, studying abroad disrupts their previous social and cultural networks; their prior cultural and social capital do not easily transfer to the host country where they continue their further education. Their familial social status does not tend to provide advantages in Canada. The question remains as to how Bourdieu's conceptions work on a transnational scale.

Drawing on conceptual framework from Bourdieu's forms of capital and notion of habitus, I will examine how social capital is transferred or reproduced for Chinese students by studying in a new country; how the habitus (de)contributes in their transforming process. In this research, I try to understand the link between social capital in their home country and the accumulation of social capital in the host country. I am specifically interested in examining how Chinese international students who own little Western social capital can navigate the Canadian education system that requires the possession of specific cultural capital including linguistic ability.

When I first designed my research, my primary intention was to deploy theoretical tools provided by Bourdieu's forms of capital and notion of habitus to

investigate Chinese families' transnational movement. I considered students and their families mostly as individual agents in this movement with the assumption that students' choice of studying abroad was mainly determined by their families or themselves. After reading the academic literature, I realized that student choices can be understood as a result of complicated interactions between different levels: macro (globalization/cultural norms/super-national organizations), meso (national/local/institutional policies), and micro (students/parents/families/individual experiences) (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Fong, 2011; Liu, 2016; Waters, 2008). At the macro level, the influence of globalization and the impacts of neoliberal super-national organizations on local settings facilitate international student movement across borders. At the meso level, the policies from China underpinned by logics of neoliberalism as exception (Ong, 2006) assist the transnational migration from local levels to other countries. In terms of the micro level, students are agents with neoliberal calculations in the movement process. The movement process simultaneously receives impacts coming from both macro and meso levels. At the same time, the older and more recently formed educational pathways facilitate this movement process. I found Bourdieu's and Ong's theories to be compatible, offering constructs to understand my participants. Ong (1999) proposed flexible citizenship as cultural logic for Chinese transnational families, (re)formed with the deployment of various forms of capital and the heritage of habitus. Simultaneously, the deployment of various capital further (re)constitutes the formation of flexible citizenship with emphasis on individual human agency. Therefore, I would argue that Chinese transnational families use "flexible citizenship"

in capital accumulation and translation to strategically respond to the changing social conditions and the trend of globalization, as mediated by cultural logics. At the same time, this accumulation and translation enable these families to further perform their flexible citizenship. Therefore, in this research, Ong's (1999) flexible citizenship and Bourdieu's (1986) notion of capital/habitus are resonant theoretical frameworks for examining Chinese students' cross-border education.

1. Bourdieu's Forms of Capital and Habitus

Bourdieu's forms of capital and habitus offer a way to understand the meanings and uses of transnational mobility within and across social structures. Soong (2016) stated, "the individual social positionality for transnationals, straddling between their inherent specific social structures back home and adapting their individual embodied dispositions to either reproduce or reconstruct their capacity and agency in the host country" (p. 43). Undoubtedly, the educational choices of Chinese families are shaped by their familial/personal habitus and various forms of capital that they obtained in their daily lives both in their home and host country.

1.1. Habitus. The essential characteristic of habitus is relational. Bourdieu deliberately used the term to examine the structure of practices or the underlying principle with the purpose to resolve the philosophical problem of dualism or "subjectivist-objectivist split" (Webb et al., 2002, p. 32). Subjectivism is "a perspective asserting that social reality is produced through the thoughts, decisions and actions of individual agents" (Webb et al., 2002, p. xv). The thought of

subjectivism focuses on human being's inner agency, such as how people think and believe, which drives one's daily practices. On the contrary, objectivism means "peoples' actions and attitudes are determined by objective social structures such as those relating to class, ethnicity, gender and language" (Webb et al., 2002, p. xiv). In the context of objectivism, how people act and behave is determined by objective outer structure, such as cultural principle.

The notion of habitus conceptualizes the relation between the outer objective social structure and the inner subjective personal experiences by describing how social facts become internalized (Maton, 2008, p. 53). In Bourdieu's (1994) definition, the term "habitus" refers to a

property of social agents (whether individuals, groups or institutions) that comprises a 'structured and structuring structure' (p. 170). It is 'structured' by one's past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing, educational experiences and cultural background. It is 'structuring' in that one's habitus helps to shape one's present and future practices (Maton, 2008, p. 51).

Maton (2008) concluded that "[h]abitus is the link not only between past, present and future, but also between the social and the individual, the objective and subjective, and structure and agency" (p. 53). The term "habitus" was used by Bourdieu to examine the structure of our daily practices, and according to Webb et al. (2002), it can be understood as: "the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that generally stay with us across contexts.... These values and dispositions allow us to respond to cultural rules and contexts in a variety of ways..., but the responses are

always largely determined—regulated—by where (and who) we have been in a culture” (p. 36–37). Therefore, habitus is socially embodied and has the capability in shaping social agents’ thinking, behaviour, and even taste under present conditions.

To Bourdieu, habitus “is transmitted within the home” (Sullivan, 2002, p. 149). In this regard, the way we think and the decisions we make are impacted by our culture, traditions, as well as what we have been taught, both in school and at home. All these will have unobservable influence on our future. Webb et al. (2002) discussed how the educational experiences of migrant children were affected by their habitus under the light of Bourdieu’s theory:

[a]lthough a lower class migrant family may strive to get its children educated, the habitus of the children will, in advance, disqualify them from success, both in the sense that the children will signal, in everything they do and say, their unsuitability for higher education, and as a corollary, the children will themselves recognize this, and more or less expect failure. (p. 24)

For my participants who came from a different cultural and class background, habitus might impact their educational experiences in the West in a subtle way.

1.2. Forms of capital. Bourdieu (1986) expanded the definition of capital from an economic sphere to investigating processes of social and cultural reproduction.

According to him, various forms of capital, such as cultural capital, can be transferred between generations. The forms of capital include four types: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. Among these, economic capital “is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in

the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). Economic capital includes “financial and material possessions one owns” (Perez, 2009, p. 139) and it functions as the root for all other types of capital. According to Moor (2008), other forms of capital such as social and cultural capital could be defined as “transubstantiated” forms of economic capital.

Cultural capital refers to “[a] form of value associated with culturally authorized tastes, consumption patterns, attributes, skills and awards” (Webb et al, 2002, p. x). Bourdieu (1986) used the concept of cultural capital, which consists of familiarity with the dominant culture, linguistic knowledge and soft skills, as an explanatory approach to interpret the unequal educational success of children from different social background. He highlighted the contributions the educational system has made as “...the reproduction of social structure by sanctioning the hereditary transmission of cultural capital” (p. 244). According to him, stratification functions of the educational system are accomplished with the assistance of cultural capital, which can be transferred between generations. Cultural capital, as per Bourdieu (1986), “...is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications” (p. 243).

Bourdieu (1986) distinguished three states of cultural capital—“the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), [...]; and the institutionalized state, a form of objectification” (p. 243). Knowing their mother tongue, home culture, and traditional heritage are

dispositions within the Chinese international students that Bourdieu referred to in the embodied state. These dispositions create life-long effects on the students when they study in a foreign country. In the objectified state, cultural capital presents itself through the carrier of cultural goods. Thus, through cultural consumption within Western institutions, such as book reading (especially reading in English, a foreign language), Chinese international students are producing their special identities. The kind of car they drive or the brand they choose when consuming electronic products, for example, signifies a kind of prestige. As for the institutionalized state, proficiency in the official language or professional qualification can be regarded as a kind of cultural capital. This institutionalized cultural capital is more valuable when an individual gets into the labour market to find a job.

As for the concept of social capital, it has close linkage to social connections, which Bourdieu explained as follows:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possessions of durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248)

In this sense, *guanxi* (关系), i.e., personal network in Chinese culture, whether built within the family, classroom, or workplace, is a kind of social capital. Bourdieu (1986) explained that social capital “is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility” (p. 243). Although in current Chinese context, imperial titles were officially dissolved,

social capital can be translated into agents and their familial social and class status, which facilitates their choice of studying abroad, and therefore, benefits the accumulation of economic capital.

In the definition provided by Bourdieu, symbolic capital refers to resources available to an individual in the forms of honour, prestige, authority, and recognition. Webb et al. (2002) explained that symbolic capital is “[a] form of capital or value that is not recognized as such. Prestige and a glowing reputation, for example, operate as symbolic capital because they mean nothing in themselves, but depend on people believing that someone possesses these qualities” (p. xv-xvi). From my understanding, obtaining a degree from the West can be regarded as a kind of symbolic capital from the perspective of Chinese parents and students in this research.

Bourdieu (1986) explained that social and cultural capitals can be converted to economic capital and vice versa. Conversions between forms of capital presuppose specific labour, involving expenditure of time, attention, concern, etc. (p. 252). He regarded the convertibility of these types of capital as “the strategies aimed at ensuring the reproduction of capital” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 253). Therefore, the aggregation and reproduction of capital is a cyclical process involving raising the agents’ social status. Cronin (1996) identified the close relationship between cultural capital and economic capital; he looked at it as individual agents tending to keep or improve their position in the social fields by means of transferring economic property into accumulated cultural capital through education systems and cultural consumption. This translation has conversely productive effects on social agents’ future economic

success as well as upward social trajectory. For Chinese families in a transnational zone, how this translation is accomplished by choosing one of these four schooling pathways, and how economic capital is converted to social capital and vice versa needs further investigation.

Ong (1999) detected a contradictory practice that Chinese families often utilize, which involves maintaining patriotic devotion and loyalty to the motherland by keeping linkages while planning for escape routes, such as encouraging offspring to leave their homeland and to seek investment opportunities in other countries. To Ong, this contradictory practice can be explained as flexible citizenship, which comes from “the familial strategies of regulation” (p. 117–8). She further defined this practice as “family governmentality” (p. 118). Here, she combined Chinese Confucian values of family interests with their daily norms and practices of regulating children. The logic that underpins this contradictory practice is the logic of maximizing family interests by accumulating new capital, which means familial interests outweigh the interests of individuals as well as concerns for the wellbeing of the nation-state. Children who are strategically sent to study abroad by the family are expected to sustain or enhance the familial social status and class by achieving cultural and symbolic capital in the host country, such as attaining fluency in English and obtaining a Western college degree. The perception is that this practice will not only benefit the children themselves but, most importantly, promote familial prosperity and interests.

2. Strength and Limitations of Bourdieu's Forms of Capital and Notion of Habitus

Bourdieu's conception of capital and the notion of habitus have enormous influence in the fields of education studies when examining the link between cultural and class reproduction as mediated by the education system (Sullivan, 2002). However, in empirical research, scholars have interpreted forms of capital in different ways. For example, according to Ong (1999) and Wang (2013), overseas credential is symbolic capital (p. 90) while Webb et al. (2002) and Waters (2008) regarded it as cultural capital in their various research reports. On the other hand, while Ong (1999) regarded interpersonal relations (*guanxi*) as habitus (p. 25), Webb et al. (2002) considered them as social capital. In Ong's perspective,

Guanxi networks in Southeast Asia are historically contingent; they are a kind of (post) colonial habitus, that is, they are the dispositions and practices that emphasize pragmatism, interpersonal dependence, bodily discipline, gender and age hierarchies, and other ethnic-specific modes of social production and reproduction in diaspora and under foreign rule. Such overseas-Chinese habitus have ensured that the emigrant family has survived for generations while evading the discipline of the colonial (and later, the postcolonial) states, with their special regimes of othering Chineseness. (p. 116)

Given a lack of clarification on the definition of cultural capital and symbolic capital from Bourdieu, scholars used these two conceptual tools based their own understanding. There is also the lack of consideration of gender, race, and ethnicity in this theory. In the current globalized cosmopolitan society, culture plays its role

interlocking with the issue of gender, race, and ethnicity. By providing a single measurement, “the complexity of cross-class, dual-income, and trans-national family structure” (Ball, 2006, p. 6) are conveniently ignored by social capital theory in practical empirical research.

3. Ong’s Conceptions of Flexible Citizenship

This study investigates Chinese student transnational migration through four educational pathways as transnational spaces. Ong (1999; 2006; 2012) provided resources to understand the factors involved in the adoption of the pathways and their effects on transnational social class making. In order to understand Ong’s conceptions of flexible citizenship, it is necessary to introduce the notion of transnationalism. According to some scholars, “‘transnationalism’ has been recognized to be a consequence of the latest wave of globalization” (Lionnet & Shih, 2005, cited in Soong, 2016, p. 21).

Transnationalism has a profound effect on the development and mutations of migrants’ strategic choices and vice versa. To Ong (1999), transnationality is “the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space—which has been intensified under late capitalism . . . It denotes both moving through space or across lines, as well as changing the nature of something” (p. 4). Based on this definition of transnationalism, Ong (1999) proposed the concept of flexible citizenship, which can be used as a useful lens to interrogate Chinese migrants in the dynamic circumstances. Flexible citizenship, according to Ong, is

the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions. In their quest to accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena, subjects emphasi[s]e, and are regulated by, practices favoring flexibility, mobility, and repositioning in relation to markets, governments and cultural regimes. (p. 6)

Ong differentiated the meaning of citizenship from the traditional orthodox definition that refers to civil rights or legal nationality within a country. Ong (1999) explained that “flexibility in geographical positioning is itself an effect of novel articulations between the regimes of the family, the state, and capital” (p. 3). For Ong, flexible citizenship is related to strategic capital accumulation as a response to the changing environment. Ong (1999) created a new way to think about “the transnational practices and imaginings of the nomadic subject and the social conditions that enable [an individual’s] flexibility” (p. 3).

Deploying Ong’s flexible citizenship as an analytical lens in her research, Fahey (2014) explained, “The flexible citizen is adept at strategically re/positioning themselves with regard to certain cultural regimes (including structures of meaning such as nationality, class mobility and social power), governments and markets in order to accrue social and economic gains” (p. 237). Flexible citizenship responds to the dynamics of social control; it includes strategies of capital accumulation, such as family dispersal and relocation, the acquisition of a Western education, choice of school location, buying property, and obtaining a green card, all of which are part of their aims to integrate in the host country imbed in by the host country. As Fahey

(2014) suggested, “[s]ome of this strategic flexibility . . . involves considering the advantages that the location and status of the education institution will give these students, other kinds of ‘flexibility’ or opportunistic decision-making is influenced by the difference between education systems” (p. 238). For example, the education-driven Chinese migrants adopt such a flexible strategy by sending their children to the West to seek high quality education; sometimes, simultaneously obtaining permanent residency or citizenship in the host country, while one or both parents remain in China.

Ong later (2006) proposed the concept of “graduated citizenship” (p. 78) to analyze the relationship between the government and the governed in response to global capitalism. Graduated citizenship privileges “the elites [who] are showered with economic, social, and political benefits” (Ong, 2006, p. 88). Most of my participants may be considered to be governed by a form of “graduated citizenship” to some extent, as they are privileged economically, culturally and politically that allowed them to maneuver while still being controlled by the state. For instance, Chinese populations were regulated by the household registration system, called *hukou*. People without local *hukou* lost their rights to access public education and health insurance in that local region. This variegated citizenship produces economic and political maximization of the state underpinned by neoliberal logics. Ong (2006) noted that the fluidity of market with neoliberal calculations shapes the flexibility of sovereignty, which further produces flexible citizenship. Thus, flexible citizenship is formed under neoliberal calculations of the government when facing global

competition, which Ong defined as “graduated sovereignty” (Ong, 2006). For example, the Chinese government grant limited freedom to some specific areas in the country as economic zones, governing with policies to increase economic exchanges. In this sense, Chinese families become flexible citizens by making strategic choices and decisions to accumulate forms of capital and to go beyond the nation’s territory to mobilize these forms of capital in order to enhance their social status. Strategically, choosing to study abroad promotes flexible citizenship, which is supported and steered by the Chinese state, and can be perceived under the logic of neoliberalism as exception. In this way, the Chinese state strengthens its sovereignty beyond national territory. For example, by developing “loyal” citizens who can contribute to the nation from beyond Chinese borders.

4. Strength and Limitations of the Concepts of Flexible Citizenship

Ong (1999) insightfully captured the dynamic relationship between capitalism, governance, and subjects embedded within the logics of neoliberal flexible citizenship. Participants in my study, i.e., international Chinese students, are conditioned by the economic and political factors as well as their own cultural norms, mediated by Chinese institutions (state, schooling, family) such as Confucianism. They reported that, seeking an undergraduate degree in Canada means having to confront cultural and linguistic conflicts in their daily lives, which means they are conditioned by different cultural norms as well when they are physically abroad. The lens of flexible citizenship aids my understanding of my potential research

participants, the social contexts in which they are living, and the governance of the state. Ong (1999) regarded “flexible citizenship ... as strategies to accumulate capital and power” (p. 6), which leads me to understand the practices of my research participants. Simultaneously, the educational choices of Chinese families for their children are redefined and transformed within the overlapping spaces of the state policies and their own self-imaginings in the global era of market-driven neoliberalism.

However, some limitations exist in this theory. First, as Soong (2016) noted, “although [international students] have a strong motivation to remain in the host country, their stay is bounded by their temporary visa status” (p. 38). In such a condition, their mobility might not fall into categories of “flexible citizenship” as in the case of Ong’s participants—Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs—since international students differ themselves from immigrants. Second, given the age characteristics of my participants who are younger than Ong’s participants, they might have a less developed sense of citizenship as Ong’s adult participants. Finally, as Lin (2012) pointed out, “Chinese” is a variegated group and Ong’s (1999) notion of flexible citizenship failed to “attend to the presence of *other* variants in the Chinese transnational experience” (p. 137). From this point of view, the theoretical lens of “flexible citizenship” potentially frames Chineseness as a collective whole that overplays the stereotypes of the Chineseness as calculating neoliberal subjects. I need to be cautious about its application in understanding my specific participants who exist in contemporary China and in different social contexts.

5. Conclusion

Ong's notion of flexible citizenship deepens my understanding of the families' perceptions and uses of Western undergraduate education. Bourdieu's concepts of capital/habitus, especially the idea of capital accumulation and transfer, facilitate my investigation of Chinese families' strategic choice of different educational pathways for their children and student transnational social mobility. These pathways organized the relationships between state, families, and capital, as well as nationalism and flexibility. Combining these theories requires the awareness of class, gender, and ethnicity. From my understanding, flexible citizenship emphasizes flexibility at a transnational scale and it represents a key part of habitus. Since the argument of Ong's (1999) flexible "cultural logics of capital accumulation" is based on the understanding of Bourdieu's forms of capital, the latter represents part of Ong's overarching flexible citizenship. As a result, this study will incorporate both the notions of capital/habitus and the concept of flexible citizenship as aligned analytical approaches. These conceptualizations provide the foundations for the study and are employed in a complementary way.

Chapter Four: Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to position my current study in this field. Four strands of literature contribute to my understanding of Chinese families' educational choices for their children. The first strand discusses student international mobility and Chinese student transnational migration; the second reviews factors influencing student transnational movement from China to the West; the third reviews alternative pathways taken by Chinese students to Western education, and the fourth strand discusses experiences of Chinese international youth in a Western country.

1. International Student Movement (ISM)

This study focuses on investigating Chinese students' cross-border mobility and their families' translation of capital along with their formation of flexible citizenship. Given this research interest, it is necessary for me to examine literature on international student movement. Under this category, I have located two strands of literature: student transnational movements and Chinese student transnational migration.

1.1. Student transnational migration. Student transnational migration is a two-way movement between home countries and host countries facilitated by local and global policies (Liu, 2016; Zheng, 2010). This migration is not a pure mobility per se, but "is full of social, cultural and political meaning" (Brooks & Waters, 2013, p. 115). It is underpinned by policies and related to cultural exchange among countries. The transnational student motilities happen between colonizing countries and colonized

countries. In contemporary context, there was increased transnational student migration within the Global South such as China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and India specifically. However, in this current study, I focus on East-West student movement. The core reality of this student transnational mobility is geographically uneven, involving mobility from East to West, and from non-English speaking countries to English speaking countries (Brooks & Waters, 2013). Brooks and Waters (2013) linked motivation of student mobility to a wider context of specific local and global policies, concerning for example, more relaxed immigration standards in some countries. They teased out “the emergent geographies of student mobilities” (p. 20) and claimed that the majority of international students travel from Asian to Western countries. King and Raghuram (2013) categorized international student mobility into three types: credit mobility is to fulfill degree requirement of home schools; degree mobility has the purpose of earning a degree at host schools; and less formalized mobility “involves various voluntary or mandatory schemes of shorter duration, such as summer schools and field-trips” (p. 129). The first form refers to a comparatively short time of study in host countries, which contributes to the whole-program study at home country while the second one is related to the phenomenon that students stay in the host destination for a whole-program period in order to earn a degree or diploma in the host country. In my research, I define student transnational mobility as the latter type where students move across border for the purpose of overseas credentials.

In discussing the mobility of East Asian students, Brooks and Waters (2013) pointed out the significant impact of family on East Asian student educational

migration. They asserted that “[m]igration for education is rarely an individualistic pursuit, but enlists directly other household members” (p. 51). Their research examined student mobility from a top-down perspective (national-level policies), which contrasts with my research in which the issue is examined from below (personal and familial motivations). However, some points of their research contribute to my understanding of how the structure impacts student mobility. Soong (2016) focused on international students with Asian origins in Australia; she found that these Asian students have to constantly negotiate their identities due to their uncertain and unstable status in Australia. Soong (2016) concluded that this “reveals how multiple and conflicting logics of belonging and imaginings of ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ contribute to new understandings of contemporary transnationalism, international education-migration nexus and identity” (p. 4). Soong provided a scenario of education-migration nexus taken up by international students in Australia, “in connecting one’s imagination of future possibilities and actualizing desire through such ‘education-migration’ trajectories” (p. 3). Although the social context of Soong’s research and mine is different, this nexus contributes to my understanding of my participants’ situation.

Lee and Koo (2006) linked the phenomenon of “wild geese fathers” (p. 533) with their globalized familial strategy for their children’s education. Their research investigated a form of transnational families—Kirogi families in Korea. These families are normally separated in two countries—Korea and a Western country, mostly in the United States. Through interviews with the eight fathers from Kirogi

families, Lee and Koo (2006) examined the rationales of the Kirogi families for sending their children abroad, which include the avoidance of competitive educational system in Korea and the importance of learning English. Their findings can apply to Chinese families and facilitate my understanding of educational strategies of my participating families.

Instead of investigating student educational mobility from Korean to the West, Kim (2010) looked at the Kirogi phenomenon in another Asian country—Singapore. According to Kim (2010), “Korean Kirogi is identical to Chinese families of Hong Kong and Taiwan who are termed ‘astronaut husbands’ and ‘parachute/satellite children’” (p. 274). This investigation of Kirogi transnational education movement provides me with further understanding of international student movement (ISM) in different social context. According to Kim (2010), most educational mobility from Korean to Singapore shows relatively short-term study from a few months to two or three years, compared to long-term movement of Chinese students to the West. The reasons for these Korean families, lower- or middle-class background, to choose Singapore as a destination include avoiding competition in the Korean educational system, providing a better lifestyle to their children, and seeking opportunity to learn English and Chinese simultaneously. Kim (2010) put his emphasis on the aspiration of these educational migrants to acquire global human capital and cultural capital, namely, English and Chinese. He pointed out that studying in Singapore is considered a “second chance” (p. 295) for some Kirogi children who are not academically competitive in the Korean educational system. However, this second chance cannot

guarantee a bright future for all Kirogi children despite their own efforts and support from their families. This study has close relationship with the research that I undertake, in which I will look at four educational pathways of Chinese students. I am questioning what experiences my future participants might have in the pathways their parents choose for them, and what different experiences are there across these pathways. According to Kim (2010), these Kirogi children and families also get stuck between Korean and Singaporean educational systems, cultures, and languages.

Among scholars who investigate student transnational migration, Sin (2009) studied the aspiration of international students of Malaysian origins who studied in UK universities. Sin (2009) found “the convertibility of enhanced cultural capital into higher levels of economic capital or exchange value in the labour market” (p. 291). Sin’s finding illustrates Brown’s (1995) conception of “educational parentocracy, where it is explained that within a fee-paying system, a child’s education is determined largely by the wealth and wishes of the parents” (cited in Sin, 2009, p. 290). This finding is important to my research because most of my potential participants will comply with a fee-paying system to access Western undergraduate system. I consider Chinese families’ practices as familial strategies, but whether these strategies are educational parentocracy in Chinese cultural context deserves further investigation.

1.2. Chinese student transnational migration. Among cross-cultural travellers, a significant number of students involved in transnational migration come from China (Fong, 2011; Li & Bray, 2007; Liu, 2016; Soong, 2016). Compared to their peers

originating in other regions, international students from China are younger (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Fong, 2011; Kim, 2010; Lee & Koo, 2006). This transnational mobility of Chinese students is facilitated by study-abroad intermediaries who function as critical players in assisting Chinese students to study in other countries (Fong, 2011; Liu, 2016).

As per Ong (1999), Chinese families with middle-class background or above consider sending their children abroad for educational purpose, particularly to a Western country. She asserted that ethnic Chinese who rely on economic capital for conversion into cultural capital use “strategies of accumulation beginning with the acquisition of a Western education” (p. 95). The decision to study in a Western country facilitates their class reproduction. However, contrary to Bourdieu who believes that economic, cultural, symbolic, and social capital are mutually convertible, Ong (1999) suggested that “it is primarily economic capital that is being converted into all other forms of capital, not the other way around” (p. 91).

Biao & Shen (2009) examined the translation and conversion among various capital, such as economic capital, social capital, political capital, and cultural capital, by studying Chinese international students’ mobility from home country to other host countries. They found that in the new era, “different types of capital—the social, cultural, financial and political—became actively convertible to each other, and furthermore the exchange and convergence between them became increasingly intensified and concentrated in a top stratum of the society” (p. 513). This also suggests that the exchange of forms of capital is now possible with elites. This article

deepened my understanding of exchange and conversion of different types of capital. Biao & Shen (2009) insightfully proposed that types of capital should “maintain relative autonomy from each other for the exchange to be sustainable” (p. 514). They inspired me to think about the scale of capital conversion. For instance, local degree/local knowledge is a kind of capital for Chinese students, but has low scale of conversion because of local scale. International degree/knowledge, comparatively, has a larger scale of conversion due to its larger spatial scale (p. 514).

Some researchers such as Zhang, Sun, and Serra (2013) examined Chinese student migration from a gender and/or class perspective. Their studies were one of the few that focused on Chinese female student migration. The authors stated that participants who have plans to study abroad are the only child of their families. Contrary to previous critical voices towards the one-child policy in Western academia, this research articulated the positive contribution of the one-child policy in promoting educational gender equity in China. Additionally, the authors revealed that Chinese female students who are willing to pursue their further studies overseas have medium-high or high-class status; this provided a class angle on students’ decision-making processes. This finding echoes Hagedorn and Zhang (2010) who asserted that cultural changes, such as the one-child policy, have contributed to an increased ability among Chinese families to support the single offspring, especially their daughters. Fahey (2014) described the emergence of an elite feminized mobility when focusing on the interrelated dynamics of gender, race, and class. Based on the notion of flexible citizenship by Ong (1999), Fahey (2014) proposed the idea of “flexible feminism” (p.

238) to facilitate the understanding of the subjectivity of elite girls in the context of globalization. Simultaneously, Ong (1999) pointed out that “the appropriate racial and cultural origins that are stereotypical markers of racial prestige in Western democracies, and the effectiveness of [Chinese students’] accumulation strategies are conditioned and limited by their racial and social origin” (p. 96). All the above research shows that possibilities for capital accumulation are affected by intersections of class, gender, and race.

Clearly, research on transnational student mobility has begun to appreciate Chinese familial strategies in terms of educational choices (Abelmann, Newendorp, & Lee-Chung, 2014; Lee & Koo, 2006; Waters, 2005; 2007; 2008). Yet, scant attention has been paid to how Chinese families manipulate their economic and social capital through the choice of different schooling pathways for their children. The integrated Chinese and Canadian curriculum programs in mainland China represent indeed a transnational space, a pathway towards Western education that provides a “second chance” for students from middle-class families (Hayden, 2006; 2011; Schuetze, 2008; Waters, 2007; 2008; Zhang, 2012); however, few studies have been conducted to investigate student motivations on taking such programs, their familial social status, and lived experiences (Brooks & Waters, 2013). There are also not much research looking into the choices of studying in public or private schools in the West, i.e., the other pathways to accessing Western education (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Fong, 2011; Popadiuk, 2009; 2010; Soong, 2016).

I reviewed studies that investigate Chinese student transnational movement in all the senses described above, with particular attention on to how Chinese student mobility is positioned in the literature. While many studies investigated Chinese student mobility and the acculturation process, comparatively few studies were centered on investigating the combination of ethnicity, class, and gender (exceptions: Fahey, 2014; Zhang et al., 2013). I hope this research can help fill in the existing gap in the reviewed literature. A more comprehensive study of the four educational pathways towards Western education for Chinese families; a comparison of what is gained and lost in the pursuit of these four routes; and an understanding of how social capital is accumulated and translated across these four educational routes are therefore warranted. This study will address these issues by examining capital accumulation and translation associated with the different schooling pathways chosen by Chinese families, and the exploration of flexible citizenship through differentiated pathways towards Western education.

2. Capital Pursuit of Chinese Students' Transnational Movement

For Chinese students, the rationale for selecting a Western university is multifold. In this section, push factors that influence student transnational movement from China to the West will be examined for the purpose of interrogating the social-economic roots underpinning this cross-border movement trend. These factors, situated in the Chinese context, vary from personal motivations to national policies, and will be

interrogated socially, culturally, economically, and politically to better understand student global flow from China to the West.

First, when Chinese students decide to study abroad, a major motivation for them to study in the West, Canada in particular, is to accumulate Western cultural and symbolic capital (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Chen, 2006; Fong, 2011; Waters, 2005; 2008). Specifically, obtaining proficiency in English is a major attraction for middle-class students to study in the West. While a few studies addressed the relationship between Chinese students' decisions of studying abroad and the obtainment of cultural capital (Li & Bray, 2007; Popaduik, 2009; Waters, 2008; Wong, 2012), comparatively few studies have examined the aspect of symbolic capital and how it is converted into other types of capital. Popaduik (2009) mentioned political, economic, and academic reasons that motivate Asian adolescent students to study abroad. She also observed other motivations: the interest in learning new things, new language, meeting new people; the belief that a foreign degree will enhance and advance one's career; and personal interests, curiosity, and a sense of enjoyment about going abroad (p. 230). This finding suggests that cultural capital accumulation is one of the motivations underpinning Asian youths' decision-making of studying abroad.

Second, the rising of the middle class also plays a profound role in pushing Chinese youth to study in a Western country. According to Zheng (2010), "family background and parents' social-economic status still influenced students' decisions regarding further study abroad..." (p. 6). Students from low-income families might choose to continue their education in Asian countries or in their home country (Chen,

2007) instead of a Western country. Chen's findings echo the arguments of Zhang, Sun & Serra (2013), who revealed that Chinese female students who are willing to pursue further study overseas have a medium-high or high-class status. In examining student transnational migration, and the relationship between globalization, regional, and individual factors, Li & Bray (2007) suggested that class status is one of the factors pushing students from China to other countries to keep or enhance their social status. Indeed, student migration is a strategy for Chinese international students and their families to enhance their social and class status (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Fahey, 2014; Fong, 2011; Ong, 1999; Schuetze, 2008; Waters, 2008; Zhang et al., 2013).

Third, immigration plans have an important influence on students' decision-making process. To some extent, studying in the West is a familial strategy towards personal or future family flexibility by earning permanent residency (Soong, 2016; Wang, 2013; Waters, 2005; 2008). Waters (2005) who examined the place of education in family migration strategies noted that some Asian students choose Canada as a destination because they can apply for immigration after their graduation from Canadian higher education—according to Canadian immigration policy. This finding echoes that of Chen (2006) which indicated that “[t]he international student population [in Canada] has been viewed by many as a pool of preferred potential immigrants” (p. 78). From this perspective, studying in the West is a familial strategy towards future personal or family flexibility by earning permanent resident status (Ong, 1999; Soong, 2016). Waters (2002) also looked at the relationship between

education and the reproduction of middle-class status in Hong Kong as well as the nature of familial immigration strategies in their quest for education.

Fourth, culturally positive attitudes towards studying abroad constitute another push factor. As mentioned above, students' practices of studying abroad are not only driven by their own agency, but have also been impacted by structural factors. Therefore, student cross-border migration is not only influenced by the macro level of globalization and internationalization of higher education, but is also impacted by the meso level of culture in their home country. The Chinese cultural attitude towards studying abroad plays a vital role in students' decision process. This is confirmed by Chen (2006) who found that "[s]tudying abroad [is] viewed positively in China..., but it [is] perceived negatively in Japan" (p. 83). Also, Zheng (2010) studied the implications of cultural attitudes on student transnational mobility; he noted that "contemporary Chinese people are adopting a more open attitude towards the outside world" (p. 75). In this perspective, Chinese cultural principle towards studying abroad has significant impacts on Chinese students' practices. It is difficult to believe that all Chinese teenager students have the capability of making decision regarding study abroad solely by themselves since Chinese people are deeply influenced by the Confucian concept of filial piety (孝: *xiao*), a convention that is based on superiors and subordinates (Ong, 1999). For this reason, Chinese families make the study-abroad decision together, sometimes, for their familial interests in particular. These findings show the social and cultural implications of cultural norms on the student decision-making process.

Fifth, the avoidance of taking the National Higher Education Entrance Examination is another push factor. Zhao (2014) explained the exam system as follows: “The National Higher Education Entrance Examination, commonly known in China as *gaokao*, is an examination held annually in China, which is an academic prerequisite for entrance into almost all higher education institutions. Students must take this examination in their last year of high school, and it determines their academic learning achievements” (p. 25). A few studies (Wong, 2012; Fong 2011) addressed the relationship between *gaokao* and the study-abroad decisions of Chinese students. Fong (2011), for example, explained:

Many told me that they wanted to study abroad because they had failed to get into a sufficiently prestigious college program in China. Standards for the kind of education that would have been prestigious enough to keep them in China varied widely. Some were unable to get into any Chinese college at all; others had been accepted to Chinese three-year college programs (*Zhuanke*: 专科) but failed to get into Chinese four-year college programs (*Benke*: 本科), and still others were graduates of relatively prestigious Chinese four-year college programs who nevertheless thought that their degrees were still not prestigious enough to make them full social and cultural citizens of the developed world. (p. 74–5)

Differentiating her research from the previous ones that analyzed Chinese migration from a political perspective, Waters (2005) investigated the importance of overseas education in the familial capital accumulation process while focusing on Chinese family unit. Waters (2005) found that the transnational mobility of Chinese families is

actually underpinned by their children's academic failure or success. This logic impacts these families' education as well as immigration decisions. Some Chinese high school students who are not confident in writing the *gaokao* would consider attending universities in other countries. This is confirmed by Popadiuk's (2009) findings, wherein she pointed out how academic factors affect Asian students' mobility processes. Some students are not competitive when taking their college entrance examinations in their home countries and seek opportunities to continue their higher education abroad. Similarly, Li and Bray (2007) indicated that some Chinese students who failed *gaokao* have to repeat one or more years to re-sit that examination, and others seek opportunities to study outside mainland China. Therefore, failure to enter university in their home country drives Chinese youth to pursue further education in another country with the purpose of obtaining symbolic capital abroad. To those students, studying in the West represents a "second chance" or "back door" to formal education. These findings show the social implications of the *gaokao* on the student decision-making process and suggest how researchers are supposed to interpret "second-choice" in cross-cultural studies.

One must note that Chinese students furthering their education in another jurisdiction are impacted by multilevel force that have social, cultural, political, economic, and historical roots, all interwoven in complex ways. These factors include the impacts of globalization, policy changes in the Chinese social context, intrinsic personal motivation, and changes in cultural attitudes towards experiencing education in another country. It is challenging to claim which factor outweighs others because of

how these factors intersect and because the interaction process is complicated. For instance, as agents in the transnational movement, individual students have their own motivations to justify their decision-making process, but they are still influenced by multilayer external forces.

3. “Second Chance” Taken by Chinese Students to Western Education

In this section, I will review literature that examines the different educational pathways by which Chinese students access Western education. Each of these routes represents a “back door” for them to reach their future educational destination, i.e., the West (Brooks & Waters, 2009; Fong, 2011; Waters, 2005; 2007). Sending children to the West through “back door” is a familial strategy in terms of educational choices (Abelmann et al., 2014; Brooks & Waters, 2009; Kim, 2011; Lee & Koo 2006; Waters, 2005; 2007). Here, using a back door culturally suggests using access to social capital within the familial contacts and structures, to provide a second chance for children in terms of having students avoid the potential risks of failing the *gaoko*. Waters (2007) touched on two types of educational pathways that Chinese, Hong Kongers in particular, explore—international schools in Hong Kong and schools in Canada. Given her research focus, “the role of ‘education’ in the formation of transnational professionals in contemporary Hong Kong” (p. 477), Waters linked alternative schooling for children from upper- and middle-class background with their distinctive group identity. Waters (2007) regarded both types of school as sanctuary schools for Hong Kong emigrants, especially for those who are more likely to fail or have failed

the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). This is “fundamentally a family pursuit” (P. 481) for upper- and middle-class families. This alternative second chance shelters children of upper- and middle-class background from failure in local educational system and secures their future education in the West because a degree earned from the West is more valued by the local employment market.

With regard to international school in China, Zhang (2012) conducted a case study on integrated Chinese and Canadian curriculum programs in an international school in mainland China. Schuetze (2008) studied Canadian offshore schools in China where Canadian curriculums were used. However, few studies investigated student motivations on taking such programs, let alone their familial social status and lived experiences (Brooks & Waters, 2013). The choices of studying in public schools or private schools in the West have become other pathways of accessing a Western education (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Fong, 2011; Popadiuk, 2009; 2010; Soong, 2016). A more comprehensive study of the four educational pathways towards Western undergraduate education for Chinese families, a comparison of the gains and losses in pursuit of these four routes, and an understanding of how social capital is accumulated and translated across these four routes are therefore warranted. Most literature that I have reviewed links academic failure in local educational system with student transnational mobility.

4. Youth's Learning Experiences in the West and Early Study Abroad (ESA)

There is a body of literature that investigates experiences of Early Study Abroad (ESA) students, particularly Chinese students who pursue their studies in the West or in Canada (Chen, 2006; 2007; Karuppana & Bararib, 2011; Kuo & Roysircar, 2004; Popadiuk, 2009; 2010; Zheng, 2010). Since these students travel on their own, cross border at an early age, they are more vulnerable compared to their adult peers (Karuppana & Bararib, 2011; Kuo & Roysircar, 2004; Popaduik, 2009; 2010). Kuo & Roysircar (2004) reported that these young cross-nation travellers are always faced with “high levels of acculturative stress and have low acculturation levels” (Cited in Zhao, 2014, p. 32). Since they came from a different cultural background, these students feel difficult when they make the adjustments. International youth often require extra efforts to adjust to new multicultural environments and are confronted with discrimination and racism (Wu & Tarc, 2019). Short (2002) identified challenges faced by immigrant youth including weak academic literacy skills and limited English proficiency. Other researchers also explored racism from local students/instructors, and homesickness experienced by these international youth especially when they feel discriminated (Kuo & Roysircar, 2004; Popadiuk, 2009; 2010).

Given the above constraints, some Asian ESA students, as shown in Shin's study (2013), realized their difficulties in learning “authentic English,” which is “constructed as a key source of symbolic capital in Korean class distinction” (Shin, 2013, p. 532). These students and their families, as reported by Shin (2013), gave up on cultural capital accumulation and worked instead on acquiring the symbolic

credential of the degree. Shin's research sheds light on neoliberalism calculation of transnationalism in a globalized era. When I keyed in "Early Study Abroad," I found that most literature focused on South Korean middle-class families who are eager to send their children to a Western country, and who "use overseas experiences for the accumulation of capital and class mobility" (Song, 2018, p. 80). In this perspective, ESA functions as a familial pragmatic strategy in facilitating children from middle/upper-class background to acquire authentic English and then broaden social inequality (Song, 2018). According to Shin (2014), ESA provides Korean middle-class youth alternative paths to "acquire high-status Western educational and linguistic capital, without going through the arduous Korean education system within which they would have to compete with the Korean elites" (p. 100). Unfortunately, as Shin noted, these young transnationals and their families "enter another social hierarchy in which they are marginalized as ethnoracial minorities" (Shin, 2004, p. 100). This is similar to Ong's finding (1999) when she investigated the Chinese mobile entrepreneurs who had a difficult time breaking into the upper-most levels of social status. Of course, families who are financially marginalized and disadvantaged will have limited opportunity to study in a Western country due to unaffordable tuition fees and living expenses (Fong, 2011). In this sense, those who do have opportunities to study overseas have a stronger economic foundation than their less-advantaged peers (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Ong, 1999; Waters, 2008). However, at the same time, as international students in a host country and/or students with aspiration towards Western education, these ESA students find themselves in a dilemma when making

their decision to study in the West. In their home country, as privileged members of society, they are exceptions because they have more opportunities to grasp political and economic privileges (Ong, 1999). However, these privileged youth find themselves in an uncertain situation in their host country due to their potential lack of cultural and social capital (Fong, 2011). The host country may welcome them because they can afford high tuition fees for international students, but they are still considered culturally deficient in terms of ethnicity according to Ong (2006) and Shin's (2014) findings.

5. Concluding Comments

In this chapter, I reviewed studies that investigate student transnational movement in all the senses described above, with particular attention on how Chinese student mobility is positioned in the literature. The four domains of literature reviewed are summarized as follows—First, I identified literature that examines student transnational migration and Chinese student mobility. Without this, I would not be able to develop further discussion about the social context of Chinese students' cross-national movement. Second, I examined literature about factors influencing Chinese international student transnational migration to gain better understanding of Chinese families' educational strategies and their reasons for encouraging international students to study abroad; this deepens my understandings of capital and capital translations in the case of Chinese migrants. Third, I reviewed literature related to various pathways that Chinese families choose for their children in order to obtain a

clearer idea on why Chinese international students might choose a *particular* educational pathway. Finally, I looked at the adjustment process of internationally mobile Chinese youth and Early Study Abroad. Literature on Chinese international students' experience helps me understand their familial strategies and challenges, and how they face difficulties in a new country. These four domains of literature help to formulate the following discussion about family strategies used by Chinese families to send their children abroad.

Some literature that I reviewed slipped into methodological individualism; they looked at student migration as a personal decision that is beneficial to transnational migrants themselves (except: Raghuram, 2013; Waters, 2006). In my research, the emphasis is on the interaction of the state, cultural logics, and Chinese families. As I have discussed before, family plays an important role in Chinese community (Ong, 1999), but previous research did not pay enough attention to habitus of Chinese families, which is crucial in Chinese families' class making between generations. Previous literature focused either on students or their parents. Even for those who realized the family-oriented characteristics of the Chinese society, most got only one-side opinion from the Chinese families instead of the dual perspectives from both parental and children. Although most important familial decisions tend to be culturally made by elders in one family, children are also given enough respect and voice in their own educational decision in current Chinese social context. By acknowledging the characteristics of Chinese society and the importance of family unit, I will try to supplement the missing part of the literature, illuminate the class making of some

specific families, and compare and contrast with the existing literature. However, it should be noted that instead of using flexible citizenship to homogenize these students, I intend to expand my horizon on Chinese transnational migrations since Chinese are variegated and this is the case for mobile Chinese families/students.

Chapter Five: Methodology

1. Epistemological Position and Paradigm

In this research, I interrogated capital accumulation and translation in Chinese students' transnational migration process as well as other dimensions of their flexible citizenship. Their flexible citizenship emerges within a nexus of self-consciousness, transnational mobility, transnationalism, and social regime. My research required qualitative insights of depth, details, and individual meaning from the perspectives of Chinese international families/students due to the type of questions being asked: What transfers and accumulations become significant in Chinese students' transnational migration? And how are flexible citizenships employed and shaped through transnational spaces that are constituted by the four transnational schooling pathways identified in this research?

I interrogated perceptions of participants socially (e.g., familial social status/community forces) and culturally (e.g., Chinese cultural norms), which suggests that my understanding comes from a qualitative subjective stance. My research question was situated within an interpretivist perspective in that I sought to obtain understanding of the formation of flexible citizenship by beginning with the participants' own perceptions, and by including their lived experiences in Canada (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 102). As Crotty (1998) explained, interpretivism “looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world” and “often seeks to describe and understand the participants’ and/or

researchers' meanings and understandings" (p. 67 as cited in Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009, p. 694). As such I gained increased knowledge regarding Chinese nuclear families by interpreting how these students perceive capital accumulation and translation in their self-shaping trajectories within both Chinese and Canadian social contexts (Lincoln et al., 2011, p.102).

More specifically, my research was well situated in a social constructivist paradigm due to my epistemological positions. Recognizing my lived experiences as an immigrant from China, I realized my position as a researcher, and the relationship between me vis-à-vis the data generated by my research subjects (Lincoln et al, 2011, p.102). Also, the choice of my interviewing methods allowed me to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality which is multilayered and complex, and which is socially constructed, including the context, researcher, and participants (Lincoln et al, 2011, p. 105). This method of investigation attests my consciousness of a multilayered reality. I entered the research scene with research questions, and I had conversations with my participants, all these worked together to co-create the understanding of flexible citizenship formation of Chinese families. Through their lived transnational experiences, their stories of fears, struggles, aspirations, and their description of worries and frustrations, my participants and I have not only co-constructed the knowledge from a multiple perspectives and in a personalized way, but also in a way that was socially embedded. Therefore, I embraced the idea of a "multiple realities" (Creswell, 2007, p. 18) that are socially and experientially based, and I have the intent to report this multiple reality. I relied as much as possible on the participants' views of

the situation, and I observed how these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically (Creswell, 2007).

2. Methodology

An exploratory qualitative research approach was selected for this study because it allowed me to obtain a comprehensive view of the four different pathways under investigation via my participants. This methodology “places emphasis on the practical aspects of research (e.g., what works best for answering the research question), the context (e.g., what is most appropriate given the contextual conditions), and potential consequences of the research (e.g., the social or political implications)” (Nastasi, Hitchcock, & Brown, 2010, p. 308). In my research, I focused on emerging data that directly and/or indirectly assisted my understanding of Chinese families’ strategies towards obtaining Western education, and how social capital is manipulated and translated in their transnational spaces.

3. An Interviewing Method

Seidman (1998) argued that “the adequacy of a research method depends on the purpose of the research and the questions being asked” (p. 5). In my research, given the research problems being probed and research questions being asked, a qualitative technique of interviewing was deployed. As Seidman (1998) explained, “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 3). Interviewing facilitated my understanding of the social context in which Chinese families make their choices and

the meaning of these choices (Seidman, 1998). I intended to have a conversation with families to learn about why they choose one of these four pathways instead of the others, and how capital is accumulated, translated, and converted through the pathway that Chinese families choose. Interviewing method was used with the understanding that knowledge is co-constructed and produced inter-subjectively. As is argued by Patton (2002), “[t]he purpose of interviewing [...] is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective” (p. 341). This method allows participants to “respond in their own words and to express their own personal perspectives” (Patton, 2002, p. 348). Knowledge obtained from participants’ perceptions through interviewing research method allowed me to understand their own interpretation of their experiences.

4. Data Collection Procedure

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with three distinct groups: parents who have chosen one of these pathways for their children; students who are 18 years or older, who have accessed a Western university through one of the four educational pathways; and other key informants who worked with Chinese international students (i.e. recruiters, counsellors, principals). One criterion for participant recruitment is that a parent and a student should come from a same family. If potential student participants hope to participate in the current study, but their parents are not willing to conduct the interview, the potential student participants would be rejected by the researcher since these research aimed to look at Chinese family’s transnational trajectory from a family’s perspective. Recruiters, counsellors,

and principals were chosen as key informants because they have rich knowledge of national and global policies and individual instance of Chinese student transnational mobility through their work experience. These key informants provided information about Chinese international families' motivations, social status, and future expectations.

I interviewed 23 families in total and nine key informants. In each family, I interviewed one parent and one child. I did not purposefully target recruitment at either mothers or fathers in my research, but in reality, more mothers participated in the study than fathers, which potentially showed that mothers were more involved in children's education within my participating families. Therefore, 55 participants were interviewed in total. Of these 23 families, five were recruited through route one (public schools in China), four families through route two (international schools in China), seven families through route three (private schools in the West, Canada, and the United States), and six families through route four (public schools in the West).

I interviewed parents and students separately guided by different protocols. Most are common questions such as questions about skills/resources, *gaokao/hukou*, and social connections. The interview location was chosen at the convenience of the participants; some occurred in Beijing, China, and some in Toronto, London, and St. Catharine, Canada. Some interviews were conducted through WeChat (a popular social media App in the Chinese community), or by phone when participants requested it. Some interviews were conducted in Mandarin and some in English depending on participants' preference.

For parent participants, I asked about their own educational experiences, their social connections in the West, and types of skills/resources they need to put children in a specific pathway, etc. Interviews with parents aimed to explore their main motivations, how they manipulate different capital and resources, and how they perceive their familial capital in the transnational space through the choice of schooling pathways for their children.

For student participants, I invited them to share with me their actual experiences in Canada, and the skills/resources needed to study in the West. I also asked them to link *gaokao* and *hukou* with their decision to study abroad. Interviews with parents and students were kept separate in order to get their independent opinions. Data from the interviews with students studying in Western universities documented the pathways they took in the past as well as their lived experiences—challenges, frustrations, and future aspirations.

As for the educators, they had the opportunity to tell me about their working experiences with Chinese international students, the benefits for the students to study in Canada, and the ultimate familial expectations for Chinese students' future. Interviews with key informants unraveled the social relations shaping Chinese families' choices, Chinese students' adjustment process, as well as their understanding of pathways. Interview data from the non-family participants were used to triangulate data gained from parents and students. Also, I have identified one emerging pathway: transferring from a Chinese university to a Canadian university.

Each participant (parent/student/key informant) was interviewed for a maximum of two hours with one follow-up interview. As mentioned above, parent and student from the same family were interviewed separately in order to obtain independent information. I explained to participants the purpose of keeping these interviews separate. Also, some families requested to have the interviews conducted separately (such as Jessica's family and Gu's family) due to their own familial problems. For some participants (such as Lily, Max, and Xiaobao Wei's family), although their home was chosen as the interview place, and they chose the same interview time, they preferred to be interviewed separately. Only one family (Alice) has been interviewed together. Although this family admitted that there were communication problems between Alice and her mother, they still preferred to be interviewed while the other was present. The rest of participants were interviewed at different places and at different time. Follow-up interviews, mainly through WeChat, were conducted if further clarification was needed.

5. Participant Recruitment Procedure

Letters of information about the current research (both in English and Chinese) were disseminated at educational fairs, educational events, and through the researcher's personal network in Beijing, China. Beijing has the greatest portion of Chinese students eager to study abroad, and it is where the largest concentration of state-certified study-abroad agents is located in China (Liu, 2016). The same information was advertised on the campus of one university in Ontario. I contacted the

international office and the Chinese Students' Association at the university, seeking their help to advertise the information of the current research via their email list.

The inclusion criterion was that potential participants should have experiences with Canadian education. For the student participants, they should have studied or were studying in a Canadian university or college. For parents, they should have children who have studied or were studying in a Canadian university or college. For key informants, they should have experience with Chinese international students who came to Canada through one of these four pathways. Participants were self-selected; they contacted the research team after having read the recruitment letters.

Information about the current study was spread widely in the hope that interested participants would contact me, but this sampling technique could not directly attract potential participants. After the first participants got involved, the interviews were conducted in the form of "snowball sampling" (Creswell, 2011 p. 146). This strategy was accomplished through two ways. First, after the interview, participants recommended other persons who were willing to share their opinions with the researcher. Second, the information of current research was forwarded to potential participants by a third person from the researcher's personal connections. After the first round of interviews, I conducted a preliminary analysis of the collected data. When I finished the preliminary data analysis, I conducted follow-up interviews with the participants via phone or WeChat when necessary.

I kept a researcher's journal when conducting the interviews to validate the information collected from the interviews. As Ortlipp (2008) suggested, "Keeping and

using reflective journals enabled [researchers] to make [their] experiences, opinions, thoughts, and feelings visible and [is] an acknowledged part of the research design, data generation, analysis, and interpretation process” (p. 703). Through the use of a researcher’s journal, my thoughts and my observations during interviews, which were not visible in the transcribed data, were reflected at the data analysis stage.

Interviews with participants were audio-taped. I transcribed the interviews. Text files were created and converted into computer files for analysis. Each participant was provided a chance to review and/or confirm the contents of the transcriptions in electronic document format. No substantive changes have been made by the participants. However, two parent participants asked me to delete information about the institute that they were working for and their annual familial income. Data gained from the interviews were organized into computer files according to participants and interview locations.

Table Two: Number of Participating Families and Key Informants

Type	Numbers	Confirmed	Interviewed
Public schools in China (<i>gaokao</i>)		Five families	Five parents and five students
International programs in China		Four families	Four parents and four students
Public schools in the West		Six families	Six parents and six students
Private/international school in the West		Seven families	Seven parents and seven students
Transfer from Chinese university to Canadian university		One family	One parent and one student
Educators		Nine	Eight including principal in high school, ESL teachers, study- abroad agents

5.1. Basic information of participating families. In this section, I will provide basic information about my participants, such as parental education, occupation backgrounds, familial annual income, social economic status, as well as countries where they have travelled before they came to Canada. Among 23 participating families, many came from economically developed cities in China such as Beijing, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, and Shenzhen, or coastal city such as Dalian and Qingdao, whereas others originated from inland and less-developed regions in China, such as Daqing, Luoyang, Tianjin, Wuhan, Zhenjiang and Zibo. The destinations of student participants were mostly Calgary, Hamilton, London, St. Catharine, Toronto, Vancouver, and Waterloo, in Canada. The majors of student participants were diverse ranging from Accounting, Computer Science, Education, Engineering, Finance, Law, and Medical Science. The occupations of parents varied from accountant, business owner, doctor, government officer, nurse, police officer, and teacher. Although I asked

the participating families to self-report their class status, and most of them defined themselves from middle class background, I still looked at their annual income, their educational background, what they usually do in their spare time, their tastes, hobbies, and community involvement which drive me to think about their habitus. The class definition of these families basically relied on self-reporting, hence has limitations. For example, some people under-report or over-report their status. For example, for Kim's family reported themselves as middle-class with an annual income of around CAD 60,000 per year, while Max's family also defined their class status as middle-class but with an annual income of over a million CAD. Interestingly, Xinyuan's family reported themselves as middle-upper class with an annual income of around CAD 40,000–60,000.

Table Three: Information of Participating Families

Pseudonym	Parental education and occupation	Students' educational experiences in Canada	Annual income (currency rate in June, 2018: 1:4.9) and class status	Countries travelled before they came to Canada
Angelina's family	Elementary school Owns family business	Angelina was accepted by a Canadian university in Ontario where she finished her secondary program in a public school. She has been in Canada for two years. She was in a public school in the southern part of China prior to moving to Canada.	CAD200,000–400,000/year (middle class)	South Korea, Thailand, and Canada
Alex's family	Father: MBA from the United State Mother: BA	Alex has been in Canada for five years. In 2003, she came to the United State to study in an elementary school while her dad sought	Up to CAD 200,000/year	The United States and Canada

	Father worked for a state-owned company; mother works in the States	a study opportunity there. Prior entering a Canadian university, she studied at a public school in the United States.		
Alice's family	Both high school Worked for state-owned railway station	She has been in Canada for over 15 years. She graduated from a public school in north China before coming to Alberta. When I conducted the interview, she quit her job as auditing manager and focused on taking care of her kids.	Over CAD 20,000/year; working class	None
Blueyuan's family	Father: College; Mother: Vocational school Father was a teacher first and then created his own business; Mother worked as an accountant in their family company	Blueyuan came to Ontario three years ago and was accepted by a Canadian university. He studied in an international program first, and then came to a private school in Ontario.	CAD 100,000–160,000/year; middle class	Europe (for charity)
Chen's family	Both BA Mother worked for the government; Father worked in a famous university in Beijing	Chen has been in Canada for five years after graduating from a Chinese public high school.	Not willing to disclose but defined their familial class status as middle class; Mother: CAD 50,000/year, working class	None
Dabao's family	Father: College; Mother: Vocational school	Dabao has been in Canada for two years. She was transferred from an international program to a private school in Halifax.	CAD 600,000–1,020,000/year plus other investment	Father: Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Europe

	Own their family business	Upon our interview, she was studying in a Canadian university in Ontario.	earnings; upper-middle class	Dabao: Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Europe, Thailand, Africa, and Tanzania
Elliot's family	Father: BA; Mother: BA; Teachers in local high schools	Elliot has been in Canada for almost five years. He was accepted by a Canadian university upon graduation from a private international school. He was searching for a job in China when I conducted the interview with him.	Over CAD 40,000/year Mother: working class Elliot: middle class	New Zealand, Australia (father travelled on business to learn about educational system in other countries); Mother: South Asia (for pleasure)
Gu's family	Father: BA; Mother: BA; Mother is a manager in a retail company	Gu has been in Canada for three years. He was studying in private schools since elementary school. He graduated from a private high school in Ontario and was accepted by a university in British Columbia.	CAD 60,000–80,000/year ; middle class	None
Jack's family	Father: BA; Mother: BA; Mother: works for a national bank; Father: works for national power company	Jack has been in Canada for over one year. He studied at a private school in Ontario and got an offer from a Canadian university.	Not willing to disclose familial annual income; middle class	Parents: Japan, Holland, and Canada: travelled for fun; Jack: The United States, Australia
Jessica's family	Father: BA Mother: College	Jessica has been in Canada for seven years after graduating from a Chinese public school. Upon the	CAD 40,000/year; between	None

	Mother works in a hospital as a nurse; Father works as a math teacher in a university	interview, she was studying at a master's program in Ontario.	working class and middle class	
Kim's family	Father: Master's degree in Marxism Mother: Master's degree in Psychology	Kim has been in Canada for 3 years. She graduated from an international program in her hometown and was accepted by a Canadian university. When we talked to each other, she was in her PhD program.	CAD 60,000/year Mother: working class Kim: middle class	Parents: Malaysia (travelled on business conference), South Asia Kim: England
Lily's family	Father: BA Mother: Master's degree Father was a teacher	Lily has been in Canada for over six years. She was accepted by a Canadian college in Ontario after graduating from a public school in Canada.	CAD 60,000/year Middle class in China; working class in Canada	Hong Kong, China
Longgu's family	Both graduated from vocational schools; Own their family business	Longgu has been in Canada for almost seven years. He studied in a private school in Ontario and ended up with a Canadian university. He worked as an engineer when we conducted the interview.	There is no exact amount of income (higher than working class)	Father travelled on business to Russia
Max's family	Father: EMBA, Mother: BA from a normal university; Owned family business	Max has been in Canada for almost five years. He studied in a public high school in Ontario and was accepted by a local Canadian college.	Around or over a million CAD/year; middle class	Father travelled a lot to Europe, North Pole, and South Pole; and father also studied EMBA in Singapore
Ren's family	Father: PhD in Medical science;	Ren has been in Canada for eight years. She studied in a public school in the United	CAD 80,000 /year; middle class	The parents worked in the United

	<p>Mother: graduate from a vocational school Both work in a hospital</p>	<p>States, and then international program in China. After graduation, she was accepted by a Canadian university. When at the time of our interview, she was doing her PhD program in Canada.</p>		<p>States, travelled and attended academic conferences (the United States, Europe, and Canada) Ren: the United States</p>
Sally's family	<p>Father: BA Mother: College degree Father owns family business, mother works as an accountant</p>	<p>Sally has been in Canada for less than a year and was going to attend a Canadian university upon graduation from a private school in Ontario.</p>	<p>CAD 40,000/year ; between working class and middle class</p>	<p>South Korea, Singapore</p>
Sam's family	<p>Mother: BA in Arts; Government officer</p>	<p>Sam has been in Canada for eight years. After graduating from a Canadian public school, he ended up with a Canadian university. When we conducted the interview, he was preparing for the CPA examination while working.</p>	<p>CAD 40,000–60,000/year; middle class</p>	<p>The United States, Canada, Europe, South Asian, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Thailand</p>
Tom's family	<p>Father: BA; Mother: BA; Own her own business</p>	<p>Tom has been in Canada for six years. He graduated from a private school in Canada and was accepted by a Canadian university. When we conducted the interview, he was studying in a masters' program in civil engineering.</p>	<p>CAD 80,000–120,000/year; middle class</p>	<p>None</p>
Wiki's family	<p>BA; Teacher first, and then the family created their own</p>	<p>Wiki has been in Canada for two years. She studied at a public school in Canada and was accepted by a Canadian university in Psychology.</p>	<p>CAD 120,000–140,000/year (between working class and middle class)</p>	<p>None</p>

	family business			
Xiaobao Wei's family	Father: Master's degree Mother: BA Worked for the government and then own their family business	Xiaobao Wei has been in Canada for more than three years. She graduated from an international program in China and was accepted by a Canadian university in Ontario.	Unknown/middle to upper class	Thailand. Parents did not have many chances to travel abroad because of their occupation.
Xinyuan's family	Both BA Work for the government	Xinyuan has been in Canada for almost five years. She studied in a private college first and then returned back to a Chinese public school. Finally, she ended up in a Canadian university.	CAD 40,000–60,000/year; between middle-upper class	The United States, Europe Mother: the United States, Italy
Zhuang's family	Both BA Both work as educators in China	Zhuang has been in Canada for seven years. He graduated from a public high school in China and was accepted by a Canadian university. When we conducted the interview, he was studying in a master's program.	Not willing to disclose; middle or middle-upper class	South Africa, Japan, the United States, Malaysia, Thailand
Zed's family	Father: BA; Mother: BA; Father: music teacher Mother: police officer;	Zed has been in Canada for seven years. He was transferred from a Chinese university to a Canadian university.	Mother: CAD 60,000/year; working class Zed: CAD 100,000–200,000/year; working class	Asian countries

Also, in this study, I interviewed nine educators, including the principal of a Chinese high school, ESL professors, and study-abroad agents.

Table Four: Key Informants' Information

Pseudonym	Years of working experience with Chinese students	Occupation
Bob	28 years	Principal of a Chinese public high school
Emma	9 years	Self-employed study-abroad agent in Tianjin, China
Eric	1 year	Marketing manager of a Canadian college
Judy	9 years	ESL professor of a Canadian college
Linda	7 years	ESL professor in a Canadian college
Louise	30 years	ESL professor of a Canadian college
Rex	2 years	Self-employed agent in Canada
Tina	15 years	Study-abroad agent in Beijing, China

6. Data Analysis

In this study, I tried to understand flexible citizenship of my participating families. In my analysis, I treated the collected data holistically. My primary data resources came from the parents because they have a more longitudinal perspective. I also wanted to hear the voices of students who had actual transnational education experiences. Sometimes, the comments from parents and students resonated with each other, but sometimes, there were divergent. For example, in Zhuang's family, Zhuang admitted that if he wrote *gaokao* successfully, he would not choose to study abroad, while his mother told me that the family's decision to send Zhuang abroad had no relationship with *gaokao* at all.

Triangulation was used in this research to determine the consistency of data collected from the three sources of participants, and the research findings were compared to the findings of the literature reviewed. Therefore, data collected from key

informants were used in triangulating data or supplementing data from Chinese families. In this sense, the results of the interviews were triangulated by three sources: interviews with parents, their children, and key informants.

I used a combination of inductive/deductive method in my data analysis process. The reason I chose this method is that I used structured interviews that were created under my theoretical frameworks. After data have been collected and transcribed, I went back to my research questions and theoretical frameworks; a set of themes such as “the quality of flexible citizenship,” “accumulation of capital,” and “translation of capital” were then created before the actual data analysis process. Thematic analysis was conducted on the interview data to understand (1) the strategies Chinese families undertake to manipulate different capital when choosing one of the pathways; (2) how these pathways mobilize transnational social capital and cultural capital; (3) how gender intersected when Chinese families develop their flexible citizenship. Attention was paid to the accumulation and translation of capital, such as economic capital and social capital, deployed by Chinese families, and conversion among different forms of capital. In particular, the analysis aimed at identifying the accumulation and translation of capital when Chinese families chose the pathways towards Western education, which in turn directs us to understand their flexible citizenship in the transnational space.

Transcripts obtained from interviews were divided into different parts and labeled according to the main idea of each segment. These labels were used as codes and were related to my listed themes; they were used to describe the underlying meaning of the

segments of text. The codes that I used were one or two words that could summarize the data. I paid attention to words or ideas that have been repeated several times such as “*gaokao*,” “connections,” and “challenges.” I also focused on ideas that relate to my analytical theories such as “flexible citizenship” and “capitals.”

After the coding process, I created categories that helped me bring relevant codes together. Themes were developed from codes generated from the coding process. I grouped the succinct codes of similar nature into categories that are clearly related. These categories functioned as sub-themes, such as the losses and gains of social capital; this way, it helped me create main themes to answer my research questions. The interlinked sub-themes facilitated the formation of the main central theme. In the categorizing process, I got ordinary themes such as “capital translation” as well as unexpected themes such as “significance of educational pathways.” I also got themes that I felt difficult to be classified such as “flexible citizenship as habitus.” For each theme, I labeled them by using abstract words such as “deploying flexible citizenship.” Through this process, I was conceptualizing my collected data.

“Saturations are achieved when the coding that has already been completed adequately supports and fills out the emerging theory” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 601). Overlapped and redundant codes such as *fengshui* (风水: property placement determined by geometry) were eliminated in the current research. I also used new codes to combine the precious two or three codes such as “patriotism,” and similar codes were put together to form potential themes for investigating the educational choices of Chinese students and the flexible strategies adopted by Chinese

families. Data that cannot provide evidence for the major themes of flexible citizenship formation and capital translation were set aside. The findings were interpreted with caution and regarded as indicative rather than definitive because of the small number of samples.

With regard to researcher's position, I realized that my position as a researcher was an instrument in a qualitative research (Patton, 2015). As an interpreter of this research, I used preconceived theories and concepts that came from my theoretical frameworks, which provided me analytical tools for interpreting data. I also realized that, as a Chinese diaspora in Canada as well as a Chinese international student in Canada, I was both insider and outsider when conducting this research. I understand that "all research is interpretive and that the researcher should be self-reflective about role in the research, how interpreting the findings, and personal and political history shapes interpretation" (Creswell, 2011, p. 259). Stories of my participants resonated with my past experiences. All of these facilitated my understanding of their frustrations and motivations, which helped me dig deeper into my data.

7. Authenticity and Trustworthiness

Authenticity and trustworthiness of this qualitative research were ensured from three perspectives—internal validation, researcher bias, and research ethics. To ensure internal validation, two strategies of triangulation were employed in the data collecting process—the use of multiple methods and various data sources. In terms of multiple data collection methods, with the exception of interviews that were

conducted with the participants, I kept a researcher's reflective journal to check against what has been collected in interviews. With regard to the use of multiple sources of data, this research obtained interview data mainly from three sources, parents, students, and key informants, who have different perspectives. Follow-up interviews helped to ensure trustworthiness as well since follow-up interviews might happen with the same people (Merriam, 2009).

Additionally, "member checks" (Merriam, 2009, p. 215) functioned as another method to ensure internal validation of this research. Alice and Chen were invited to read and provide comments to my preliminary analysis. As Merriam (2009) suggested, "although [researcher] may have used different words (it is [researcher's] interpretation, after all, but derived directly from [participants'] experience), participants should be able to recognize their experience in [researcher's] interpretation or suggest some fine-tuning to better capture their perspectives" (p. 217).

The interviewing methodology adopted in this study facilitated me, as both an outsider and an insider, to "work with the hyphens" (Fine, 1994, p. 135), i.e., the relationship between myself and the participants. Theoretically, as a researcher with diaspora background, I am an outsider of this research and my participants are insiders. However, as a cultural insider, I am aware of the risks within this position even though I recognized my cultural sensitivity and the power relation between these families and myself. These risks reflect the bias to bear in mind when I conducted the research (Bishop, 2005). Also, the role of researcher is not as authoritative as I used to

assume since the understanding of familial strategies was co-constructed by me as a researcher and the families who participated in the research. As per Patton (2015), a researcher is “the instrument” (p. 22). He stated that “[y]our background, experience, training, skills, interpersonal competence, capacity for empathy, cross-cultural sensitivity, and how you, as a person, engage in fieldwork and analysis—these things undergird the credibility of your findings” (Patton, 2015, p. 3). Being a cultural insider, I might take Chinese culture for granted and might be too close to the Chinese culture to ask critical questions (Bishop, 2005). For instance, as a marketing manager who recruited Chinese high school students to Canadian secondary schools, my experience might cause bias in my questions when probing and analyzing data. In my research, I tried my best to minimize potential biases by keeping research journals and triangulating data collected through different sources.

8. Limitations of this Study

Some limitations have been identified in this research. First, when I designed my research, I intended to use four educational pathways as analytical tool to understand Chinese international students’ transnational trajectories. But at the end of data analysis, I found out that the pathways per se could not function as analytical tool at all. Most of my participants were not concerned about the various pathways; they seemed to go with whatever pathway that was the most familiar or recommended by the study-abroad agent or their friends/relatives.

The second limitation of this research is the limited time to collect data. Given the budget and my family obligations, I had to collect data within one year. Also, during this one year, some interviews were conducted via phone or WeChat due to the participants' request. If I had a chance to talk to them face-to-face, more nuanced information might be obtained from their face expressions and body language. I might have also collected more sensitive information such as salaries or social class characteristics that some participants were reluctant to provide.

Third, in the current research, I had to rely on comments from parents who are carriers of Chinese cultural logics and who have longitude perspective with regards to Chinese student transnational movement. Perceptions of students or key informants weighed less important compared to that of the parents.

Fourth, I asked my participants to self-report their families' class status. I understand that with the self-reporting and soft data, it is difficult to know really what effect their study abroad experience has with regards to flexible citizenship. Moreover, the potential capital transfers and flexibilities development are still in progress. One would need to go back to the student participants and parents to understand the long-term effects of their study abroad experience.

9. Ethical Considerations

I sought permission to conduct the investigation before collecting data. Every effort was made to protect the privacy of the participants throughout the interview process and research report. The privacy of the participants was protected in two

ways. First, the researcher had direct contact with the participants who shall remain anonymous in the presentation of the results of the study. Although direct quotations from the interviews were used, participants were given a pseudonym, and all identifying information was removed from the report. Secondly, to further protect anonymity of the participants, data collected was aggregated prior to reporting the results, and was securely stored by the research team. When the information the participants shared in the interviews was used in the report, participants were not identified by name. Additionally, the interviews required the consent of participants and the research purpose was explained to them. Before conducting the interviews, the study was submitted to the Office of Human Research Ethics of Western University for approval; all participants received copies of relevant forms such as letter of information and consent form. Participants may refuse to participate, to answer any questions, or to withdraw from the study at any time. Protected by passwords, the electronic files of the transcriptions will be saved for five years in the researcher's computer and will then be deleted. Last but not least, ethical obligations were observed when interviewing multiple family members (i.e., parents and their children); privacy and confidentiality were also taken into considerations when interviewing each participant separately.

Chapter Six: Social Conditions that Affect Chinese Families' Development of

Flexible Citizenship across Pathways

In this chapter, I discuss the socioeconomic conditions that facilitate Chinese families' transnational migration choices. This chapter argues that the formation of Chinese families' flexible citizenship is neither a phenomenon happening by chance, nor a simple response to globalization, but a trend driven by cultural and social forces in Chinese national and local contexts with neoliberal permeation. These forces interact with each other, pushing Chinese students to consider studying in a Western country towards advancing their own/familial flexible citizenship. In this chapter, I will examine, through various perspectives—national, social, cultural, and personal, the conditions that enable Chinese families to develop their flexible citizenship. This will enrich our understanding of the formation process of flexible citizenship. Before going into the main analysis, I will begin by discussing my original hypothesis, i.e., flexible citizenship might show distinctive features based on the pathway chosen in the pursuit of an undergraduate education in the West.

1. Significance between Parallel Pathways

In this section, I discuss the four educational pathways that I have identified in my research. When I first designed my study, I was under the assumption that distinctive differentiations exist across various educational pathways through which Chinese students' access Western education. I expected that Chinese families would speak about strategically selecting one specific educational pathway toward Western

undergraduate education, which might have close linkages with families' various forms of capitals and habitus. In such strategic decision-making processes, families might demonstrate distinctive characteristics as being grouped by different pathways, suggesting reasons why they might choose one pathway over another. However, when I went into the field and began data collection and the analysis process, I found that the pathways themselves were not as fixed as I had first assumed in that the majority of my participants (parents/students) were not informed about the different educational pathways when making decision to travel abroad. Nevertheless, I was able to carry out the research without shedding light on the particular differences between the multiple pathways.

The participating parents made pragmatic and familial decisions on their choice of transnational educational route. Some students made their own decisions about where to study (e.g., Dabao, Jessica, Kim, Sally, Tom, Viki, Xiaobao Wei). Others had the decisions made solely by their parents (e.g., Alex, Eric, Gu, Longgu, Zed). This reveals that parents choice plays an important role in the influx of Chinese students in the West because culturally Chinese children oblige themselves to the “cultural logic” of filial piety (孝: xiao).

In Zed's case, for example, he was not satisfied with his school experiences in China, and was transferred to a Canadian university when he finished his first year at a university in China. He wanted to study in the United Kingdom, but his parents insisted on sending him to Canada because they had relatives there.

Some students told me that they were forced to study out of China. Alex, for instance, studied at a public secondary school in the United States and was then accepted by a Canadian university. At the time of our interview, Alex was doing her PhD program in the United States. She explained,

First of all, when I was in high school, it wasn't my choice. It was mainly because of my family. They let me go, and I went.... Regarding to go to college abroad! . . . actually I didn't want to go, but they let me go I never said that I wanted to stay there. (Alex, p. 2)

As for Gu, a boy who studied in a private high school in Canada from Grade 11, reminded me several times during our conversation that it was not his own decision:

Let me remind you again, this is not my choice...Technically, it is my mother's choices, my father did not care about it.... They may think I did not have any right to... you know, participating in this kind of decision-making. (Gu, p. 2)

Gu explained that he had not been involved in the decision-making process either in choosing to study abroad or choosing the field of studies at the post-secondary level. Four years later, when he enrolled in a Canadian university, he still asked himself why he came to Canada, which, to some extent, contributed to his mental health problem. "I'm tired of school . . . why am I here?" (Gu, p. 7). Among my 23 student participants, three students (e. g. Gu, Jessica, and Max) admitted openly to me that they suffered from depression or mental health issue. The same report came from study-abroad agents (e.g. Emma and Tina) who told me that Chinese international

students that they know suffered from drug, alcohol, and even suicide tendencies due to their struggle when studying in the West.

Another participant, Chen, who failed *gaokao* in China after finishing her secondary program in a Chinese public high school with high ranking, admitted that she did not know what to do next when she knew she was rejected by her dream university in China. Her mother made a decision on her behalf to send her to Canada.

In another case, Elliot's parents who were educators in China, chose to send their son to an international program located in their hometown because they both noticed that the boy lacked self-confidence when facing the overwhelming academic challenges at school. Regardless of who made the decision, whether it was the parents or the students, there was no significant difference across the educational pathways.

In deciding to study abroad, some international students or parents were influenced by their friends or classmates (e.g., Angelina, Max's father, Tom's mother, Viki). Angelina, for example, made the decision based on his classmate's recommendation, and later she enrolled in a public school in Canada. As she explained:

It was when my father asked me like this. Where would you like to go? If you go abroad, where would you go abroad? Then I asked my classmates before [my father] asked me. [My classmate] recommended Canada. I asked him why. He said that the cost of education in Canada was not high... So he advised me to come [to Canada]. So when my father asked me, I told him that I wanted to study in Canada. (Angelina, p. 12)

In the case of Max, his father, who owned an educational company in China, sent his son to a Canadian public school because of his friends who were working in a school district, even though he had no idea of the differences between public and private system in Canada. “It happened to be that some of my Canadian friends went to my school to communicate. Then I took this opportunity and at the time I did not realized that there was a private company or a private schools... I just follow their advice” (Max’s father, p. 2).

Not everyone had social connections in the West; some other participants, like Max’s father who did not have knowledge about Western education and Western schools, followed the instructions of the study-abroad agents on the kinds of school that Chinese students should attend (e.g., Alice’s mother, Angelina, Jessica, Longgu, Longgu’s father, Max, Sam’s mother, Tom’s mother, Viki’s mother). Some parents admitted that they follow the suggestions of the agents because of their lack of knowledge of Western countries and Western education. As Tom’s mother explained, “This is actually more of an offer provided by [an agent]. I did not do much homework myself” (Tom’s mother, p. 10).

Similarly, Viki was sent to a Canadian public school by her family when she was in Grade 11. Her mother had the same story: "Of course, we certainly don't understand anything. We just follow [an agent's] arrangement" (Viki’s mother, p. 3). She further explained,

Because we are not particularly aware of this foreign education, then if I choose to let her go out, I will definitely find one, like looking for an agent, study abroad agent or

something like this, because we don't understand it, I will definitely seek help from these study abroad companies to finish application packages. (Viki's mother, p. 11)

As for Longgu, his father admitted that his son was forced to study in a private high school in Canada, and the decision was made simply based on an agent's presentation:

Because when he was in high school at the time, when a teacher from [a study abroad company] was presenting to us... Then the teacher said that it is useless even students can be accepted by Peking University. So at that time, I'd just let him go. He went out and I forced him to go abroad. (Longgu's father, p. 3)

Another example, Jessica, a student who studied at the master's level, did not give it a second thought but just followed an agent's suggestion to make the decision of coming to Canada. "I didn't seem to think of Canada at the time. I met an agent and that gave me a flicker. [Laughter] . . . I just heard him saying it was good, I thought it was good, and I came here" (Jessica, p. 1).

Apparently, it was Chinese families' pragmatic strategy to follow the agents' suggestions which would facilitate their children's access to Western education, as confirmed by Alice's mother, "The whole thing is arranged by the agent, who gave us advice on the choice of school, accommodation" (Alice's mother, p. 3). The reason why these families relied so much on the agents was because of their unfamiliarity with Western education, as Alice's mother told me, "It was the information of that time. It was lacking for me. I didn't understand much more. It was only given to me by the agents. And I attended lectures talking about studying abroad" (Alice's mother, p.

11). Consequently, her daughter, Alice, was sent to Canada upon graduation from a Chinese public high school.

Linda, an ESL professor who helped a lot of Chinese international students at her college because they prefer talking to teachers with Chinese origin, had the same observation: "There is a large part of agents' recommendation" (Linda, p. 3). As a conclusion, following agent's suggestions was an important strategy for some of my participating families in sending their children abroad, and this strategy did not vary significantly among the four educational pathways.

2. A Rising China with Neoliberalism Characteristics

Flexible citizenship is not what Chinese families in this study possess by nature; it is a characteristic that these families develop by strategically responding to changes that they encounter in their daily lives. The notion of flexible citizenship brings the individual into dialogue with the state, which operates as a mechanism that sits well in Bourdieusian thoughts that reconcile tensions between agency and structure (i.e., agential individual and structural forces mediated by the state). In this section, I will investigate from a macro perspective the social conditions within which my participants' flexible citizenship was formed and advanced. I argue that flexible citizenship is achieved in relation to the mechanism of the nation state. My participants developed their flexible citizenship in the context of an economically rising China, which was defined as neoliberalism as exception by Ong (2006). In a globalized social context, neoliberalism as exception was "introduced in sites of

transformation where market-driven calculations are being introduced in the management of populations and the administration of special spaces” (Ong, 2006, p. 3–4). Specifically, in China’s social contexts, the main issues that triggered my participants to further develop their flexible citizenship abroad are rising educational fees and the *hukou* system.

2.1. Rising educational costs in China compared to Canada. From my personal experiences, many Chinese parents assumed that educational fees in Canada are higher than in China. However, that is not the full story in my research. The percolation of neoliberalism into education has brought increased fees in China. In my research, I asked participants about their educational costs in both China and Canada. I found out that educational costs in China could be higher than in Canada, which is contrary to common beliefs that Chinese parents will save money if they choose to keep their children in China (e.g., Angelina, Angelina’s father, Blueyuan’s father, Chen’s mother, Gu, Jack’s mother, Linda, Max’s father, Tom’s mother, Viki, Viki’s mother). Given the current neoliberal environment in China, Chinese parents pay high fees on extracurricular classes (e. g. Blueyuan’s father, Lily’s father, Viki’s mother). Even after Chinese students are accepted by a local college or university, they have to pay extra tuition fees to study English in tutoring schools because English is a language that is highly valued in modern China when they seek career opportunities upon graduation.

Chen was among a few Chinese students who seldom studied at tutoring school, as her mother told me: “Honestly speaking, the cost of education in China is not cheap

at all. The cost of public schools is very cheap, but according to my friends and colleagues, they have to send children to one-on-one classes. The annual private tutoring cost is more than RMB 100,000 (CAD 20, 408)” (Chen’s mother, p. 10).

Max’s father, who became a millionaire by operating his family tutoring schools in his hometown, added the following: “In addition to extracurricular training tutoring, I feel that the cost of this tutoring course is also quite expensive” (Max’s father, p. 6).

Attending tutoring school is a rising trend in China, but this is not the only factor that pushes educational fees higher than expected in China. Some parents had to pay fees in selecting a school if their children’s *hukous* were not in the area they lived

(Blueyuan, Blueyuan’s father; Ren). Some families need special social connections (*guanxi*: 关系) to find a space for their children through backdoor by paying sponsor fees. This is the case of Angelina’s father, who had to raise six children without local *hukou* where the family was based; as he said, “Actually, tuition is not expensive . . .

We have to pay for sponsorship because we do not have a local *hukou*” (Angelina’s father, p. 5). Fees paid to schools under the name of donation are an additional financial pressure for many Chinese families.

2.2. We are exception to neoliberalism in China. As I mentioned Chapter Two, China has opened up policies to encourage young students to experience Western education from 1993 till present (see Period 7: Present Neoliberal Era). However, despite this neoliberalism calculation, we can still detect exception to neoliberalism at the national level. Exception to neoliberalism was proposed by Ong (2006) in that, “citizens who are [...] lacking in neoliberal potential may be treated as less-worthy

subjects” (p. 16). As per Ong, agents who have neoliberal potential are well-educated, skilled, and self-motivated, and they have more chances to be privileged. She observed “a detachment of entitlements from political membership and national territory, as certain rights and benefits are distributed to bearers of marketable talents and denied to those who are judged to lack such capacity or potential” (p. 16).

To illustrate Ong’s point, for instance, Sam’s mother was a government officer who benefited a lot from this official position to travel around the world. Sam explained, “[My mother] had travelled abroad on business . . . to Europe, Japan, the United States, Canada, and Australia . . . it was very convenient for government officers in China to have business trips” (Sam, p. 4). Well-travelled parents have more chances to facilitate their children’s flexible citizenship in their future lives because they have more exposures, and thus more opportunities to gain wider knowledge and experiences through travelling. Some participating parents benefited from China’s other neoliberal policy—study abroad funded by the state—such as Alex’s father who was selected and sponsored by the institution that he worked for to study in the United States: “At that time, 50 employees were selected to study MBA [in the United States] in the institution I worked for . . . so I took the exams and passed it, and I was sent out” (Alex’s father, p. 10). This experience benefited his only daughter, Alex, who was introduced to formulating her flexible citizenship as an international traveller at an early age.

Every coin has two sides. Xiaobao Wei’s father is, on the other hand, an officer who cannot travel abroad because of the new Chinese government segregated policy:

“You know government officials, they did not have much opportunities to travel abroad. My father’s passport was kept by the government, so he had never thought about travelling abroad” (Xiaobao Wei, p. 6). Xiaobao Wei’s father benefited as a communist government employee rather than a neoliberal subject, he is typical of those who possess high levels of social and cultural capital, who are exception to neoliberalism because of their stable job with power. However, as in Xiaobao’s father’s case, they are not allowed to travel abroad because their freedom is limited. They are exceptions because they are still part of the communist regime; thus, not able to access free market strategies. These people have become elites within the communist structure, but they are examples of neoliberal as exception; they are indeed more communist subjects than neoliberal subjects. According to my knowledge, current Chinese government is reluctant to allow those who work at a relatively high management level for state-owned institutions/government to travel freely out of country due to concerns of brain drain and/or capital flight. These people who work for these types of institutions are normally considered privileged and more-worthy subjects, but they are also constrained by more state control. Thus, we can see how Ong’s definition of “exception to neoliberalism” from less-worthy subjects to socially/economically privileged subjects is broadened in this sense.

According to Ong (2006), “exception to neoliberalism” refers to exclusion of “populations and places from neoliberal calculations and choices,” which means even though the government adopts a neoliberal and flexible attitude towards governmentality, the state remains in direct control in some areas, politically and

economically. Ong took Russia as an example where “subsidized housing and social rights are preserved even when neoliberal techniques are introduced in urban budgetary practices” (p. 4). In Chinese milieus, a *hukou* system (household registration policy in China) can be regarded as an exception to neoliberalism. The government regulates population movements by this system while at the same time, the masses are encouraged to be self-governed, self-reliant, and self-disciplined by the neoliberal-market mechanism. Some of my participants developed their flexible citizenship by responding to China’s exception to neoliberalism policy: the *hukou* system (e.g., Blueyuan, Lily, Longgu). Zhao explained this system:

The *hukou* system in China dates back to the Tang dynasty in the seventh century. The assumption underpinning this policy was that population migration should be controlled. If a student takes classes in one of the high schools in “A” province because his or her parents are working there, the student must go back to his or her hometown to take the national examination when he or she is in the last year of high school. The problem is that the curriculum is controlled by the province, and is quite different in the various provinces. It is a nightmare for a student who is schooled in “A” province to take the National High Education Entrance Examination in “B” province. This student will definitely be evaluated as having a poor academic performance due to these differences. In order to give children more opportunities to study in universities, many parents are eager to send their children abroad when they are close to finishing their high school education. This explains why increasingly

more juniors choose to study overseas in their earlier years than previous generations.

(Zhao, 2014, p. 25–26)

Chinese families can physically move and settle down in various places, but they cannot do it without costs. Given their *hukous* are officially registered in a specific area, they forego rights and benefits, especially in education and public health. Some Chinese students have to study abroad because they do not have a local *hukou* (e.g. Blueyuan, Blueyuan's father, Lily's father, Linda, Rex, Viki, Viki's mother). Rex, working as a study-abroad agent in Canada shared with me a story about his student: "There is a student whose family is Handan, Hebei province. However, the parents settled in Beijing since he was in elementary school. This means that he could not write *gaokao* in Beijing, but to return to his place of origin . . . Therefore, it was the only choice for the family to send him abroad" (Rex, p. 5). In this light, what could be considered as a controlling mechanism by the state (to regulate population movement) ended up being a factor that facilitate flexible citizenship? In this process, capital, particularly economic capital, plays an important role. But it is not *hukou* per se that acts as a factor in advancing Chinese families' flexible citizenship, it is the combination of *hukou* and *gaokao*. Viki and Chen explained the intricacy: "The junior high school classmates did not have local *hukou* in Beijing. Then they just can't write *gaokao*. So when they were in high school, they went to international high schools and later on study abroad" (Viki, p. 7).

Some cases are more complicated than this. For Kim, even though she had a local *hukou* in her hometown, she chose to give up *gaokao* because her *hukou* is in Henan

province, which is highly competitive in *gaokao*. In other words, *hukou* was a pushing factor in her decision-making process, as she said: “Actually, I don't think this is a direct relationship... but actually I am afraid of *gaokao*. On the one hand, it is also related to *hukou*.” (Kim, p.12).

As discussed before, my relatively elite participants possess economic and social capital with flexible citizenship characteristics; they have capabilities to overcome difficulties. One parent, for example, tried to move his son's *hukou* to Beijing or Shanghai through agents' help because their familial *hukou* was not desirable. Upon failing the attempt, he sent the boy abroad (e.g. Longgu's father). All of these shows that agency-structured dynamic happens wherever my participants confront difficulties within the nation as well as across regions. Nonetheless, even though my participants possess capability in controlling their decisions and practices, their agencies have limitations and are constrained by outer structural impacts such as policies or culture. And since neither agency nor structural factors are static, my participants as individual agents are always ready to make dynamic adjustment according to these changes.

3. Valuing Western Education

The rise of neoliberalism (and its exceptions) is not the only social condition that facilitated my participants' development of their flexible citizenship. It is useful to tease out another layer of the social condition to understand the formation of flexible citizenship since its development is culturally mediated. In this regard, it is necessary

for me to investigate those families who showed willingness to send children abroad, particularly in response to their transnational imaginary. As with previous findings (i.e., Brooks & Waters, 2013; Chen, 2006; 2007; Fong, 2011; Popaduik, 2009; Soong, 2016; Wang, 2013; Waters, 2005; 2008), my Chinese families maintain positive attitude towards Western society and Western education. These attitudes or transnational imaginations of studying abroad play an important part in the Chinese families' decision to send their children to the West. This section will discuss the transnational imaginations of Chinese families, which foster their pursuit of flexible citizenship.

So, how do my participants imagine and employ cross-border transnational travel/education? And what do they think about the West? For instance, Jack told me that his parents supported his decision to study abroad because the family had positive attitude towards further education in the West:

Because I am going abroad, I am not going to study at a university only for its brand and ranking, and even I am accepted by Tsinghua University in China, it is only a title of a famous school. I prefer the living and study style in the West, as well as the development of foreign countries, I am more inclined to study abroad, even if I cannot be accepted by an undergraduate program abroad, maybe I will study abroad when I study at master's level. (Jack, p. 7)

This positive attitude towards Western society, conveyed by most of my participant-families, directly influenced their judgment on Western educational system and the quality of Western education. It was this positive attitude that made them want to send

their children abroad, thus facilitated their development of flexible citizenship in return.

Gu's parents insisted on putting their son in a private Canadian high school because of this positive attitude despite Gu's unwillingness to leave China:

When he was in Grade 1 at elementary school, we had an idea to go outside to see the world and go to the world like my sister. Being influenced by one outside, how to say, this kind of world-class communication, because from our Chinese perspective, the quality of Chinese K–12 education should have advantages in comparison with that in the world. However, the quality of university education has certainly not been as advanced and superior as in Canada and the United States. We also want our child to get the best education. (Gu's mother, p. 1)

As we can see, my participants perceive Western education as a higher quality education; thus, sending children to access Western education was a way to accumulate new cultural capital to assist their growth.

Another reason why these affluent Chinese families want to send their children abroad is because of their aspiration of a future in the West; this is another factor that pushes these cross-cultural travellers to study abroad—the aspiration of earning a permanent residency, or having more freedom in travelling back and forth between China and the West. Sam's mother articulated this thought:

Previously, if you get a green card, It is also possible for you to come back to work in China, but now there are many people like that. Domestically, this is not an exclusion of such people who have such a green card or foreign passports. Then if you think I

am in Canada, I have a few years... Later, I still feel that I am accustomed to living in Canada, [if] I want to go back to Canada, then there is a green card, you can also have a retreat place if you want to return. (Sam's mother, p. 11)

It is interesting to hear that most parental participants referred to permanent residency right as green card, as how it is normally referred to in the United State. This shows us the U.S. dominates the study-abroad imagination of these parents. Sam came from a fast-developed city in China, and his mother had a stable descent job; she possessed enormous social capital in China. But this mother still chose to send her only child to Canada given the considerations mentioned above. This aspiration of future freedom in travelling between China and the West strongly motivates Chinese families to send their children abroad. The right to live abroad functions as a retreat for the middle-class new rich in China. They are drawing upon their transnational frame of reference. For instance, Sam's father was very strategic in putting his son in Canada given its proximity to the United States.

There is another advantage in Canada. I think it is possible to attack and retreat . . . If he really wants to enter the world economic tide to play the tide, he will go to the United States in one step... How big is this market? The pyramid is here. If you don't want to do that, you want to be an ordinary citizen who can read under the tree in the sun, Canada is also very good... For other things, if he wants to go to the United States in the future, he wants to choose to stay in Canada, even if he wants to go back to China, I think that no matter how you choose, he will have a lot of future. (Max's father, p. 9)

In the case of Max's family, their decision of sending children abroad and their choice of Canada as an educational destination was underpinned by neoliberalism calculations of "attack and retreat." By the term "attack," Max's father means his child can seek a great amount of opportunities if he is ambitious and aggressive in building his careers; whereas by "retreat," he means his child can easily choose to satisfy himself by leading a comfortable and easy lifestyle. We can see from what we have discussed above that these families instrumentally send their children to the West. These neoliberal agents with ambitions have their transnational imaginations towards the West, and these imaginations function as a push factor in these cross-cultural travellers' migration trajectories.

4. Intensive Pressure from the One-Child Families

From what has been discussed above, we can see that neoliberal social context and transnational imaginations function as push factors for Chinese families to send their children abroad. However, we still need to answer another question: why these families?

Other than external pressure discussed above, these families also experienced intense pressure within the only-child system. In China, a special generation called the only-child generation exists because of China's one-child policy. In fact, most student participants in my study are the only child in their families with the exception of Angelina, Blueyuan, Dabao, and Max. As the only child of their family, the majority of my students are the focus of their whole family, which made them feel pressured

since their parents/families have much higher expectations towards them. (e.g., Alice, Gu, Jack, Max, Ren). As Gu's mother said "Because there is no second child or no third child, then all the love and resources are concentrated on him. We expect that he is always better than we are and that he can live at a higher social status than we are" (p. 6). Such familial expectations changed from the parents' generation to the students' generation, as Max said:

I mean from educational experience, because in [my parents'] time, in fact, the first thing was that there were many children in the family, and the parents were not so focused on one person. Then on the other hand, they did not have so high demands on the children. For example, children were not expected to study in college because there were so many choices in society at the time. Many people went to work without studying at school, which was a social phenomenon. But in our generation when the policy was changed. The only child, so the parents' expectation is very high, and it will be similar to pressing the child and forcing the child to succeed. (Max, p. 4)

Being the focus of the whole family and carrying such high expectations, the only child of Chinese families have much more pressure than those of their previous generations. Being the focus of the entire family is a pressure for these children, which triggers them to flee to another country, thus leading to their pursuit of flexible citizenship. Alice, the only child in a family with a working-class background, explained her motivation to study abroad:

Perhaps a rebellious puberty at that time which caused me to feel depressive at home.

I just wanted to go abroad. I watched a movie called *My Study Abroad*. It talked about

a group of Chinese students studying abroad in Japan. The film was particularly shocking to me . . . The film was a film in 1997... they actually had a lot of hardships. When they went abroad, they really were poor. When Chinese people went out to work, they learned how to work while studying. It was very hard. They had to work for a long time, and they will not be able to return home until late at night so that you can sleep for a short time every day. But on that bitter day, it was shocking me. Did you know that it is the life of an only child? . . . Sometimes being over focused is also a pain. (Alice, p. 2)

Obviously, as a special generation in Chinese history, the only-child generation has special interests and needs; these children hope to minimize parental pressure (e.g. Alice). Alice further explained that “People like us want to get rid of the impact the original family has on us. The longer you go abroad, the stronger such idea is. I don’t want to be at the mercy of my parents. I wanted to have my own life” (Alice, p. 13).

However, this did not occur in a vacuum because these children can successfully travel to the West given the familial financial foundation established by their parents who pay to cover their expenses.

5. Social Status and Cultural Care of Not Losing Face (Mianzi: 面子)

As we have discussed before, culturally, Chinese parents have high expectations on their children because they care about “keeping face” (*mianzi*: 面子), as suggested by my participants, including educators and parents (Alice, p. 13; Jack’s mother, p. 4;

Ren, p. 11; and Zed's mother, p. 6). In traditional Chinese culture, losing face means losing respect from others. Jack's mother explained:

When he studied in China, I was very strict with him and put more emphasis on how many points he can get, because we can only look at points in China, which is very important. It is different from Canada. Yes, so sometimes there may be pressure on him because if you get less points, and then you're on the back of the rankings. When I attended the teacher and parents' meeting, I didn't have any "face" (Mianzi: 面子).

(Jack's mother, p. 4)

Not only did parents admit that they culturally care about keeping face (Mianzi: 面子), these cross-border young travellers noticed this phenomenon as well. Alice, a typical only child of her family talked about Chinese parents' sense of "face" from her own experience. To some extent, her pressure came from parents who care about their familial "face":

So I think that the cultural difference between the East and the West is sense of honour and disgrace, and we Chinese love "face" (Mianzi: 面子). It means that we Chinese live by "face" and live by honour and disgrace. Actually, after you go abroad, this kind of so-called level of improvement through education is not very important to us. What I want to pursue is a kind of comfortable life. This kind of comfortable life is not necessarily in my parents' eyes, which is the level of improvement. For example, my parents and I were in such contradicting situation recently. I was doing an audit before, and I did a good job. I was a manager. When I have a second child, I quit my job and put down my work because I decided to take care of my kids for a while. So

from my parents' point of view, it seems to the Chinese people that they just cannot understand it. (Alice, p. 13)

As singletons in the family, these children have intense pressure from their family; they hope to avoid such pressure through studying abroad, a flexible strategy to keep a distance from their original family. Apparently, the only child among these Chinese international students feel the high expectations and huge pressure from their parents, partly because of Chinese people's cultural sense of "face" (*mianzi*: 面子). Within Confucian-heritage countries, especially Chinese culture, failure of children, especially academic failure, means losing face for the whole family. For Chinese families, losing face (*mei mianzi*: 没面子) is an insult not only to parents, but also to the whole family. Therefore, in order to avoid losing face in competitive Chinese modern society, Chinese families are more willing to assist their children to grasp more opportunities in the West and develop their flexible citizenship.

6. Intense Competition at Home

As discussed in the previous section, Chinese families care about saving face, especially for families with only one child. Assisting children to avoid intense competition in China functions as a means of saving face by avoiding their children's failure, especially academic failure in their home country. In this regard, we have to look at academic competition in the Chinese social context. In my study, these Chinese families utilized flexible citizenship by strategically avoiding intense competition, particularly heated academic competition in China. Many participants

told me that they were positioned in a situation constrained by *gaokao* (except in Zed's case). Some participants failed *gaokao* (e.g., Chen, Jessica, Louise, Zhuang). For example, Chen was academically successful at her high school, but she failed *gaokao* upon graduation from high school. She said she would prefer to stay in China if she could achieve a high enough score in *gaokao* and enter her dream university (Chen, p. 2). Under such a condition, these Chinese international students deployed their flexible citizenship to respond to this situation by choosing to study in another country.

Almost all my participants told me that they would not choose to study in an undergraduate program in Canada if they were accepted by a first-class university in China (e. g. Alice, Alice's mother, Angelina, Blueyuan, Chen, Emma, Gu's mother, Jack's mother, Jessica, Louise, Rex, Sally, Vik, Xiaobao Wei, Xinyuan's mother, and Zhuang), but at the same time, most said they would still choose to study abroad upon their graduation from university, probably at their master's level.

Zhuang was at the final stage of his master's study when I conducted the interview with him, he said to me: "I think if I get [required] grade and go to the universities that I am interested to go, I will definitely stay in China" (Zhuang, p. 6). Zhuang admitted that he chose to study in Canada because of his failure in *gaokao*, and he used the word "definitely" which indicates that he would not choose to study abroad if he had a good opportunity to study in China. When answering the same question, Alex's father also used the word "definitely" two times: "In that case, I will definitely choose another option. If she could be accepted by a first-class university in

China, I will definitely send her to study in China. And later on, she could apply a master's or PhD program abroad" (Alex's father, p. 11).

For these Chinese families, they prefer to keep their children in China if the latter could demonstrate success in *gaokao*. For example, Xinyuan's mother admitted that she would not send her daughter abroad if the girl was accepted by a first-class university in China. Linda, the ESL professor who was educated in China and had years of working experience with Chinese students in both China and Canada confirmed the idea:

If a Chinese student is admitted to a good university, he/she may not choose to come to Canada, or may wait until he/she finishes his/her undergraduate studies at home and learn English. After all, during undergraduate four years, he/she can master English better and then apply to a master's degree. (Linda, p. 8)

One can see that Chinese students would rather study at local universities with good reputation. Viki, for example, went to a Canadian public school after she finished her Grade 11 in China, she said, "I may want to go to school at Tsinghua University and go abroad after I finished my undergraduate program because I want to experience university life in China, and then apply to a graduate school to experience both countries" (Viki, p. 8). Apparently, these Chinese students responded to avoid unexpected and less-desirable situation by initiating their own agency to help them deploy their own flexible citizenship.

Some families utilized their economic and social capital to find a backdoor when they anticipated their failure in *gaokao* even before they wrote it (e.g., Alex, Alice,

Angelina, Blueyuan, Elliot, Gu, Jack, Kim, Lily, Louise, Ren, Rex, Sally, Sam, Xinyuan, Xiaobao Wei). For these families, anticipating failure in competitive China pushes them to employ their flexible citizenship to pursue their further education abroad. Under such condition, a student without flexible citizenship cannot access the opportunity to study in another country. Xinyuan, for example, never expected that she could succeed in *gaokao*, as she explained,

Gaokao is certainly a relevant factor. I don't know how many students write *gaokao* in China, but [my hometown] may have more than 200,000 people! For more than 200,000 people, I don't know how many students can be enrolled in a first category university. But I cannot score more than 600 points with a full points of 750.

(Xinyuan, p. 6)

Interestingly, some parents did not admit that they sent their children abroad because they failed *gaokao* even though the students themselves said *gaokao* was the main reason for them to choose to study abroad. Zhuang's mother was among those: "I don't think it has anything to do with *gaokao*. He is my only child, so I wanted him to travel abroad and get some practices" (p. 5). As we have discussed in the previous section, Chinese families care about keeping face (*mianzi*: 面子); utilizing flexible citizenship by sending children abroad to avoid losing face in case they fail academically in highly competitive China is a practical strategy for these families.

In my study, I found that even Chinese parents themselves are scared of *gaokao* because of intense competition (Linda, p. 7; Rex, p. 5–6). A study-abroad agent Rex who had lots of working experience with Chinese families told me that

Many parents realized that they are very afraid of *gaokao*; that is, they are very afraid to let their children experience *gaokao*... Therefore, because these parents have gone through *gaokao*, and also know that pain. Therefore, many parents send their children abroad in order to evade the Chinese *gaokao*. (Rex, p. 5–6)

Thus, sending children abroad is a strategy for these affluent Chinese families to escape from intense competition in China, particularly avoiding *gaokao* with the purpose to facilitate their success. This shows that these internationally mobile travellers and their families have deployed their flexible citizenship when they decided to study abroad because their academic future was limited in China, especially for those who failed *gaokao*. Sending children to the West requires Chinese family to pay expensive tuition and living costs. It might be unaffordable for families who do not possess economic capital. But for my participating families, they were able to use their financial foundation to facilitate their familial decision in sending kids abroad. Other than this, social capital such as connections in the West, play a critical role in Chinese families' decision-making process. For these families, they deployed social capital, *guanxi*, in the West, to facilitate their children's cross-border movement, which in turn is another way for these families to build broader *guanxi* network in the world.

7. Rising Middle Class in China

I have discussed competitive academic environment in China, cultural imaginations towards travelling abroad, as well as neoliberal calculations in Chinese

educational system in the last sections. What remains is the socioeconomic status of these cross-culture families. This is an important question because not every family can afford to send their children to a Western country. Therefore, in this sub-section, I will examine the social conditions that facilitate the formation of flexible citizenship from the perspective of socioeconomic status (SES) because socioeconomic background directly influences students' choice in cross-border migration to develop their flexible citizenship (See Table 2 in the Chapter 5 on methodology).

I made determinations on the status and class in this section based on self-reporting data of these families. I mainly relied on participating parents' perspectives instead of taking objective measurements because, for me, social class was difficult to be measured only by numbers. I paid attention to other soft clues as well such as families' tastes, hobbies, and preferences for activities in their spare time, with a purpose to facilitate my understanding of their social class positions. I am aware of the participants' potential over- or under-reporting of their familial situation. In order to get additional insight on families' SES status, I teased out related information from parents, students, and key informants. I also went back to my research notes, which provided me with impressions of my participants and their families. For example, if a student told me that he/she would take care of their family business upon graduation, I surmised that he/she were privileged with relatively high socioeconomic status. However, if I went back to participants' demographic chart and found that his/her family had annual income of CAD 60,000, I would not consider this information as accurate.

It is evident that students without solid financial foundation have limited opportunity to study in a Western country, or even in their home country. Those students who are economically marginalized or are in a disadvantaged situation encounter various difficulties when attempting to further their education in an English-speaking country because it is difficult for them to afford the expensive tuition fees and living expenses. Students from low-income families might choose to continue their education in Asian countries or in their home country (Chen, 2007) instead of a Western country. Chen's finding echoes the arguments of Zhang, Sun & Serra (2013), who revealed that Chinese students who are willing to pursue their further study overseas have medium-high or high-class status.

In the past 20 years with China's rapid economic growth, a larger upwardly mobile middle class has emerged (Ong, 1999) due to expanding business opportunities. Neoliberalism discourse suggests that subjects take care of themselves as individual actors optimizing their economic advantage. Within this condition, many participants chose to "plunge into the ocean" (下海: *xiahai*), a metaphor Ong used when she described, "plunging workers into labor markets now penetrated by global capital" (Ong, 1999, p. 39). The Chinese metaphor *xiahai* means people have to fight for themselves when they decide to devote to market-driven conditions. Otherwise, they can stay on board which secure their safety. This "plunging into the ocean wave" has impacts on most of my participants, as well as helping them to become a new-rich middle class. Some of my parent participants broke their "iron bowl," that is, their guaranteed employment (铁饭碗: *tiefanwan*) to embrace global capital in the free

market influenced by capitalist (e.g., Blueyuan's father, Dabao's father, Lily's father, Longgu's father, Tom's mother, Viki's mother, Xiaobao Wei's father). In China, "iron bowl," (also known as "iron rice bowl") refers to stable jobs prevailed in the operating mode of planned economy that guarantee lifetime employment. Such "iron bowl" job refers mostly to civil servants who work for the government or those who work for government-owned institutions.

Xiaobao Wei's father was an example, as Xiaobao Wei said, "[M]y parents used to work for the local government, and later on, they built their own company" (Xiaobao Wei, p. 1). They were able to accumulate their social capital when they hold the "iron bowl," which helped them a lot in building their own careers. Dabao's father recounted a similar experience: "I was assigned a job at a state-owned institution upon my graduation. Later on, given my family reason, I was transferred to another institution. One year later, I just quit my job and plunge into the ocean" (Dabao's father, p. 1). In China, "plunging into the ocean" means breaking the "iron bowl" and seeking employment opportunities in non-state-owned institutions or building their own business. Blueyuan's father is in another scenario. He and his wife both had to quit their jobs as teachers at their hometown because of the one-child policy. According to this policy, parents will be punished to have a second child. For this family, the first child was a girl, but they were eager to have a son because boys are preferred according to their local culture (Blueyuan's father). They did not have other choices but to leave their hometown as well as their guaranteed employment and plunged into the ocean in another province.

Some parents never had an “iron bowl,” but they benefited from this neoliberalizing era in China (e.g., Angelina’s father and Max’s father) even though they were not from free market zones. Max’s father, for example, set up his own business in the 1990s, and the business grew faster than expected because of the fast development of the Chinese economy in the past few decades when mobility of capitalist is emphasized. As Ong (1999) observed, Chinese families “renegotiate relations between citizens and the nation-state, between state power and diaspora capitalism” (p. 57). This “plunging into the ocean wave” prepared emerging new rich from an economic perspective.

Class status has close relationship with the family’s economic status because “class refers to a family’s economic status, parents’ educational level and wealth, their place of residence, and social networking” (Block, 2014, cited in Song, 2018, p. 82). In my research, most participants self-defined their familial social status as middle class or upper-middle class, except three families (e.g., Alice, Sally, Zed). These three families believed their family should be categorized as working class. Participants categorized their class status mainly based on their annual family income and other factors such as their hobbies and frequency in travelling abroad, especially to English-speaking countries. Regarding their familial annual income, some participants, either parents or students such as Jack, Longgu, Xiaobao Wei, and Zhuang, were not willing to disclose how much their families earned each year. Four families such as Angelina, Alex, Dabao, and Max had an annual family income of over CAD 204,000. The average annual income of the rest of the families is around CAD 80, 000.

Normally, in China, the tax rate is 3% for annual income less than CAD 7,200; 10% for annual income over CAD 7,200 to 28,000; 20% for annual income over CAD 28,000 to 60,000; 25% for annual income over 60,000 to 84,000; 30% for annual income over 84,000 to 132,000; 35% for annual income over 132,000 to 192,000; and 40% for annual income over 192,000.

My participants have various understandings of class status. For example, a student told me that his familial class status is middle class economically, but lower than middle class level socially, which is mixed socioeconomic status. As Tom explained,

If you look at it from the economic side, I think my family should be classified as middle class! But if you look at it from other perspectives, it may be, if it is said, if it is about social status, it may be possible slightly lower, because I feel like it is . . . it's not just about the economic aspect, it's also related to social network, or what the circle your family belongs to. So if you look at the other two things . . . it's not as good as the economy, so I mean just saying it's slightly lower, but I didn't say it was particularly low. (Tom, p. 1)

Beyond the economic side, these new rich were well educated. Other than Alice's mother and Angelina's father, other parents earned a college degree or higher. Some even earned a PhD degree in medical field (e.g., Ren's father). In other words, most participating parents possess significant symbolic and cultural capital in China. Also, these middle class participants were well travelled. Only five families (Alice, Chen, Gu, Jessica, and Tom) did not have experience of travelling abroad either for fun,

study, or business. For the rest of the participating families, they had lots of experience travelling abroad, which boosts their cultural capital accumulation.

From this perspective, by sending their children to study in a Western country, these new-rich parents hope to reproduce their class status by providing their children the chance to acquire English proficiency and to gain Western experience, which is valued in China within the context of globalization. Family social status provides Chinese international students financial advantages in making the decision to further their education in another jurisdiction. Therefore, the emergence of middle class with spending power can be considered as a push factor for Chinese adolescent students' decision to study abroad and to further develop their flexible citizenship because these new rich possess capital that allows for expenses, tuition fees, and travelling abroad.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the conditions upon which Chinese families choose transnational educational routes for their children. I discussed national policies, cultural attitude, and individual factors that motivate Chinese families to send their children abroad and to develop their flexible citizenship. It's important to note that Chinese international students furthering their education in another jurisdiction with a purpose to develop their own/familial flexible citizenship are impacted by multilevel forces that have social, cultural, political, and economic roots. They are all interwoven in complex ways. These factors include the impacts of intense academic competition in China, policy changes in the Chinese context, and changes in cultural

attitudes towards experiencing education in another country. It is challenging to claim which factor outweighs others because of how they intersect and because the interaction process is complicated. As agents in the transnational movement, individual students have their own motivations to understand, control, and justify their decision-making process, but they are still influenced by multilayer external forces. Positively, however, student transnational movement can enrich students as individuals with multicultural and multilinguistic abilities and foster them to be more flexible citizens with global awareness. These abilities which become forms of cultural and symbolic capital can benefit their future opportunities.

Chapter Seven: Performing Flexible Citizenship

In Chapter Six, I explored the social conditions within which my participants developed flexible citizenship. Cultural, political, and economic forces have interacted together to have impacts on the formation of their flexible citizenship. My participants utilized their flexible citizenship and thereafter hope to advance it through pursuing further education in the West. However, they do not possess flexible citizenship by nature, especially when they physically lived in a different cultural context. Flexible citizenship is more a particular transnational pathway that comes with potential benefits, losses, and challenges. In this chapter, I will discuss my participants' performing of flexible citizenship in the host setting. This chapter will be divided into four sections. The first part will investigate demands of flexible citizenship. The second part will explore capital accumulation and exchange when my participants employ their flexible citizenship. The third section discusses utilizing capital in the West to fit in and further my participants' flexible citizenship and the last section will examine flexible citizenship from a gender perspective.

1. Demands of Flexible Citizenship

As mentioned above, flexible citizenship as mode of being can produce both benefits and losses. This neoliberal calculation comes with risks, penalties, and demands; such as challenges of schooling in a foreign language and culture that one needs to complete in order to reap the rewards. For instance, my participants can go back to China before completing their program—theoretically, they have this

“choice”—but if they do so, their schooling and career prospects will be further limited. Given this understanding, I will, in this section, investigate the “qualities” of flexible citizenship, as phenomenon that appears in the instances of my participants’ lives as aspects of their flexible citizenship.

1.1. Studying a foreign language. In my participants’ cross-border trajectories, the biggest demand of their flexible citizenship is that they have to study in a foreign-language-academic environment. They have to step out of their linguistic comfort zone and use English, their second language, in their studies and daily life. Therefore, language competency and confidence in the language are the biggest challenges for these Chinese students who travelled abroad. Language incompetency can hinder them from participating fully in local Canadian life and/or access other opportunities (Alex, p. 2; p.16; Angelina, p. 7; Angelina’s father, p. 7; p. 12; Bob, p. 9; Elliot, p. 5; Elliot’s mother, p. 3; Judy, p. 7; Lily’s father, p. 5; Longgu’s father, p. 6; Max, p. 6; p. 12; Ren, p.10; Viki’s mother, p. 7–8; Xiaobao Wei, p. 4; p. 8). When I talked to these transnational students, I noticed that the majority of these teenagers who were sent to Canada by their families did not have good experience at school. Some could not understand others nor express themselves in English. As Max indicated,

When I was abroad at the time, in fact, I really couldn’t speak English. I didn’t understand what my class teacher said. What I could understand was “Hi, I am good, etc.” I was always very tired after school because I wanted to find out a lot of unfamiliar words in the textbook, I had to know what he was talking about today. In fact, when I was in class, I was just like meddling . . . In fact, I was basically out of

class and I was basically solving my own puzzles or reading books there all by myself. (Max, p. 6)

As a teenager, Max was sent to Canada by his parents who had little knowledge of Western education. The first city where Max lived does not have many Chinese people and he admitted that he felt lonely, sometimes even desperate. As noted by Max, he could not “speak English;” he could not “understand.” This lack of linguistic capacity in English functioned as a demand in deploying Max’s flexible citizenship in Canada. Given this language obstacle, many Chinese international students end up dropping out of school as observed by Judy, an ESL professor at a Canadian college. Judy said, “A lot of international students from China, I would say, they do struggle with their English ... I see students who struggle with language frequently not coming to class anymore or dropping out” (Judy, p. 2). As discussed before, sending children to a Western school was a neoliberal strategy for Chinese families to develop flexible citizenship, but obviously, dropping out of school made this neoliberal calculation a vain attempt.

Furthermore, a combination of factors, such as the lack of linguistic capital and cultural skills, specifically social intelligence or soft skills, hindered my participants’ full development of their flexible citizenship. Rex, who worked as an agent to recruit Chinese students to Canada, also provided homestay services to Chinese international students. Over 10 Chinese students lived with Rex’s family, and all these students were enrolled in public secondary school in Canada. According to the agreement between Rex and Chinese parents, he needed to cook for the students, drive them to

and from school, take care of these students' after school lives, and attend parent-teacher meeting as their guardians. He told me a story of one student he knows well:

At first, he did not know how to accomplish his assignments and failed in examination. He completely collapsed, and he just did not have passion to learn. He became very negative. Also, he was not good at communication. So, his English score was about 50 points...he never had scored such a low score in his life . . . an average of 43 points (Rex, p. 7).

According to Rex, if this student had the capability in communicating well in English, he could have a better chance to succeed at school.

Furthermore, insufficient cultural capital such as communication skills, learning skills, as well as a lack of familiarity with Western academic culture made my participants feel overwhelmed. Angelina went to Canada as a teenager; she told me an experience that embarrassed her in front of her classmates:

I think the worst time was when I first came [to Canada] because I really couldn't understand anything. I could only understand "hello, how are you?" I can hardly understand the whole sentence I can only guess or ask people One time, when we went out to volunteer, I could not tell the difference between "help" and "hope" at the time... We were handing the water, then there was a girl in our school, she also went with us. And then she was a nice looking girl. I always love to make friends...I intended to express "I hope to make friend with you." But I said "I help make friend with you." At the time I was so embarrassed because all my friends laughed at me, which made me particularly uncomfortable. (Angelina, p. 7-8)

From Angelina's perspective, it was feeling embarrassed in front of peers that made her uncomfortable. Angelina said, "I really couldn't understand anything," the same response as Max. This happens not only to those whose English skill was not sufficient enough to study in the West, but for those who had achieved high enough score on International English Language Testing System (IELTS). As Xiaobao Wei elaborated, "In fact, my IELTS oral test is still very high, but after I passed it, I found that it was not very practical, and the language barrier is the first one." (Xiaobao Wei, p. 8). Theoretically, IELTS is a test that aims to assess students' English proficiency, especially in an academic environment, but for Xiaobao Wei who wrote IELTS with a high score, she still feels the challenge of the language.

1.2. Being stuck in the middle between Chinese and Canadian cultures. One aim of cross-border migration from China to the West is to gain English competency as cultural capital. However, five participants (e.g., Alex, Lily, Ren, Xiaobao Wei, Xinyuan) felt stuck between English and Mandarin because they felt that they were not good enough at either language (Alex's father; Lily, p. 17; Ren). This challenges my previous assumption that Chinese students can improve their English level while retaining their mother tongue. Lily admitted this when she said, "I am good at neither English nor Chinese. It's the half-half feeling . . . I can communicate with people in both English and Chinese...the only problem is when I have to say big words to express complicated meanings, I may not be so" (Lily, p.17).

Apparently, feeling stuck between the host language and their native language triggers Chinese students' feeling of being stuck between Western culture and Chinese

culture, partly because language is the carriage of culture. Under such conditions, some parents hope that their children can master both Chinese and Western culture in order to make flexible adjustment when they step into the real world, an expectation that Soong (2016) believes was from both the parents and the family. As Gu's mother said,

I wanted my child to access advanced education resources abroad, and let my child have a kind of worldwide perspective. I hope he will become a worldwide, comprehensive talent... I hope he will have a thorough understanding of Western cultural education and Chinese cultural education. (Gu's mother, p. 7)

Some participants do not belong to the Western culture or to mainstream Chinese culture (e.g., Alice, Ren, Xiaobao Wei), which was a major concern of Chinese parents (e.g., Alex's father, Alice's mother). This was the reason why when asked about what he would do if he had a second chance; Alex's father told me that he would keep his daughter in China until she finished university because he found that the girl was stuck between the two cultures. This echoes Xiaobao Wei's thoughts:

I feel that I am a little bit in the middle, just like feeling stuck in the middle. I don't belong, that is, my thoughts are not exactly those native to China and a Chinese who's never been abroad. The thinking is not the same as those Westerners. I am in the middle. (Xiaobao Wei, p. 5)

Such feeling of getting stuck in the middle could push Chinese students to choose foreign-owned company as an ideal working place instead of state-owned institutions upon their graduation from a Western university (e.g., Xiaobao Wei). This is what one

of the participants told me when she described her personal experience of communicating with others:

For example, when I was in high school, I started to learn study materials originated from the West. I don't even know how to express technical words in Chinese like "negative enforcement." I only know it in English and what it means in English, how does it say in English, but one day someone say to me "negative enforcement" in Chinese, and then I don't understand what she's talking about. So I'll translate it into English later and I'll know, oh she's talking about negative enforcement. Then there is the opportunity cost; I don't know what it means in Chinese, or how it is said in Chinese. So if I return home, I may go to a foreign company. (Xiaobao Wei, p. 5)

Chinese students' feeling of being caught in the middle, between two languages and two cultures, make it hard for them to communicate with their own parents as well.

Alex's father expressed his concern on this issue:

When she was with me this year, I said to my daughter, I said that your self-confidence is the most important thing. But she couldn't find the Chinese word confident in English. She could not understand it ... her understanding of some of China's cultures was not very thorough. She has always been living abroad. I think many difficulties she may face in her life are because she does not have any full understanding of Chinese culture and she went abroad. Then she accepted a Western culture. After she accepted the Western culture, she may not be fully accepted by Western culture. Then, she is in between the two cultures. What may be unpleasant in her life in the future is what I am most worried about now ... because of her current

sense of belonging, she does not have a complete sense of belonging to Chinese culture, and her sense of belonging to Western culture ... She may become a person between two cultures, which makes her very painful. (Alex's father, p. 11)

Based on her daughter's experience, Alex's father even suggested to other parents not to send their children abroad during secondary or high school level: "I sometimes talked to my colleagues and friends. I told them that never send children to the United States at secondary school level because of cultural things, you would mess up the child's thinking" (Alex's father, p. 12).

Alice, who has been in Canada for over 15 years after her graduation from high school, told me that she preferred Western culture, but it was difficult for her to fully immerse in Western culture because she was educated and cultivated in China:

I think I appreciate [Western culture] very much, but when you let me be real, I truly become the kind of person with all my heart, and I cannot. Because, after all, I lived in China till 18 years old. That kind of branding can never be changed. (Alice, p. 13)

Given their feeling of getting stuck in the middle between two languages and two cultures, some young students have difficulty in their socialization with their Chinese friends and Canadian friends. Xinyuan, for example, who travelled back and forth from China to Canada in order to pursue her ideal education, told me that she found it difficult to socialize with both Chinese friends in China and her Canadian friends in Canada:

It did matter when I return to China . . . when I chatted with my classmates. What they were talking about is new to me, which made it difficult to continue the conversation.

There's no common topic between us . . . However, I could not plug in any word when Canadians were socializing, like here they like to talk about ice hockey, because I came to Canada at an older age. First of all, I was not interested in hockey. I could not learn about vocabulary about hockey only because I wanted to socialize with them.

(Xinyuan, p. 9)

Due to such feeling of being stuck in the middle in terms of language, culture, and socialization with friends, Chinese international students might be disadvantaged in both China and Canada, as Judy pointed out,

It could be that they might be disadvantaged first because the knowledge they acquired in the West might not be readily applicable, right? ... things are just as I was explaining with the concept of like business style and business tone in English, right? Which a lot of Chinese students don't understand, right? So it could be that you know they might be missing out on learning certain cultural specific skills, right? (Judy, p.

6)

This finding aligns with Kim's (2010), whose participating Kirogi children and families got stuck between Korean and Singaporean educational systems, cultures, and languages. Such in-between status that requires one to depend on both Chinese and English linguistically and culturally seems to limit my participants from various perspectives, but at the same time, it also encourages them to develop their flexible citizenship. Therefore, theoretically and practically, this feeling of being stuck in the middle functioned as a supplement enabling my participants to form their flexible citizenship as they responded strategically to this challenge.

1.3. Communicating with instructors. Given the low competency of English skills and the different cultural background mentioned above, my participants faced challenges when communicating with their instructors, especially local instructors. (Kim, p. 5; Lily, p. 9; 10). Alex, who used to travel to the United States when she was in elementary school, who possessed more social capital in the West compared to other participants who had little chances to accumulate their Western social capital, felt difficult in communicating with professors when she was doing her BA in Canada.

I feel it is more difficult to communicate! Then because my English is not good, I feel that it is more difficult for you to make friends. It is more difficult to integrate . . . I feel mainly the reason for these difficulties is language. (Alex, p. 2)

Alex further explained that the difficulty in communication originated from different cultural backgrounds. Although she was mad, she still understood why the instructor was not willing to have a discussion with her:

I felt that the teacher was very perfunctory and did not have the willingness to discuss it with me. I was very angry . . . I think English is a key issue because she thought it was very difficult communication with me. (Alex, p. 4)

Alex used the sentence “I was very angry” to express her feelings. On the other side, some Chinese students are culturally not used to taking an active role in communicating with the instructors. Rex, the agent who had years of working experience dealing with Chinese international students told me that

The first one is to communicate with the teacher. That is, they are not accustomed to . . . Because Chinese students do not love to communicate actively and she dare not take the initiative to communicate with her teacher. (Rex, p. 3)

Normally, Chinese international students remain humble in the classroom due to the influence of a very important cultural heritage stemming from the ethics of Confucianism. According to Confucian cultural logics and ethics, teachers are authorities in the classroom and students are supposed to listen to what teachers teach and show obedience. This contributed to Chinese students' silent stereotype compared to their local peers.

From their unsatisfied learning experience in Canada, some of my student participants even detected race discrimination, which might trigger them to choose to return to China. (Lily's father, p. 6; Lily, p. 4; Xiaobao Wei, p. 15). The experience of exclusion triggered their sense of isolation, all of which made my participants feel that they were suffering from racism in Canada. Lily has been in Canada from her elementary school, and his father said, "You are new here and will inevitably be excluded, discriminated, or even be in this kind of situation that is being bullied" (Lily's father, p. 6). Given such feeling of exclusion, my participants found it difficult to have a sense of belonging in Canada, or to call the country home, as Xiaobao Wei indicated:

Maybe this is why my sense of belonging to China is so strong, that is, all my experiences are in China, and then I do not even do anything. I just flew back to [my hometown], and this kind of psychological feeling for me is also very great. This is

where I stay, but I don't have this sense of belonging in Canada, so I just think why I've always said I want to come back and want to come back, but if I go out earlier, I'm probably more likely to belong to Canada. At that time, I felt that I would choose to weigh it, that is, not only the advantages and disadvantages of the sense of belonging, but that it would be better to develop on which side. (Xiaobao Wei, p. 16)

Xiaobao Wei's statement resonates Ong's (1999) comments on "[c]onfucian value of filial patriotism" (p. 69). This sense of filial patriotism, which is another important Chinese cultural logic, was intensified when the students sensed racism from teachers and instructors at schools (Angelina, p.16; Linda, p. 6; p. 10). Linda, one of the key informants, who has been working as an ESL professor for decades, explained the contradiction between students and teachers:

Because each teacher has a personality and they may have some prejudice. Not every teacher is very open or who knows Chinese culture very well. Because many teachers here, that is, they have their own sense of superiority, or they simply do not bother to understand other countries. So they will arouse students' revulsion to some extent in the class. (Linda, p. 5-6)

Obviously, the lack of social skill in communicating with professors or instructors has positioned these Chinese students in an uncomfortable situation. Such conditions pushed my participants to develop their flexible citizenship.

1.4. Difficulties in making friends with local peers. Despite the above-mentioned pressing hopes for flexible citizenship through the development of cultural and social capital, my participants experienced difficulties in building peer relations

with local students. (Ren's mother, p. 4; Xinyuan, p. 5). Xinyuan, a graduate from a prestigious Canadian university expressed her uneasiness during her socializing experience: "The other thing is that when I was networking, I didn't know what to say I've been to networking events several times, but I just did not know what to talk about" (p. 5). Chinese international students are known for their stereotyped silence and their unwillingness to socialize. But as Xinyuan noted, she actually did try to network with local people several times, but she had little to say when she tried to do so. Given such unpleasant experience, some students even felt racism when socializing with their local peers.

The key informant and ESL instructor Linda, who originally came from China, said that Chinese international students were more willing to communicate with her about their frustrations and challenges because of her Chinese origin, same cultural background and mother tongue. She told me about a case where students felt being discriminated: "Some students in other majors just told me that all [Chinese] international students were assigned in one class and local students in another class. Then they think they are isolated as a special group" (Linda, p. 10). Linda admitted that it is not easy to determine whether it is discrimination or not when Chinese and non-Chinese students are divided into two classes. But one thing is clear—even if it was not discrimination, these international students felt isolated in their destination school.

Additionally, it is worth noting that making friends with local students was not easy for my participants (Elizabeth; p. 9; Jessica, p. 3; Tom, p. 16–17). Many

participants relied mainly on friends with Chinese origin (e.g., Alice, Ren, Tom).

Some of my participants tried to make friends with local peers, but finally gave up because of cultural difference (Ren, p. 3, p. 4; Tom, p. 6), as Tom explained,

I would say the challenges would be interaction with local students because they, again, they might expect Canada is [a] really welcoming country, but it takes time and efforts to make friends from other cultures ... It's not that's easy. So many people stay attached to their communities. (Tom, p. 6)

Tom was a boy with outgoing personality. He called me when I travelled to Quebec City for vacation. Over the phone, we had a short conversation and I could tell he was curious, positive, and good at communication. We set up the interview time, but he insisted on conducting the interview via phone. Although we had never talked face-to-face, and I did not even know how he looked like, we added each other as friends on WeChat, a popular Chinese social media, where I can see his postings. My major impression on him was he was very strategic in connecting and socializing. Most importantly, he had the willingness to reach out beyond his comfort zone, and he possessed various social skills. But even for him, making friends with local peers was very difficult.

For some participants, even though they had local friends, they still felt the relationship was not close enough (e.g., Alex, Sally). Jessica, for example, who failed *gaokao* in China and went to Canada for her undergraduate education, got my recruiting information from her cousin who was well settled in Canada. She reached out to me because her family was eager to connect with someone who was familiar

with the Canadian educational system. She felt pressured when I met her and her mother in a mall. Her mother told me secretly that Jessica was not in a stable emotional status and needed to see a psychologist. The girl was fighting against discrimination from her graduate school, at least according to this family; she suffered from racism from one instructor who failed her one course. Jessica described,

Then your life is a very small circle, because after all, it is still very difficult for them to get into a circle with local people . . . that is, culture is not the same, and if your English is not good enough, local people will feel tired when chatting with you. Maybe I'm tired, and sometimes . . . I just think it's difficult because of culture and languages obstacles . . . even my classmates cannot integrate local community.

(Jessica, p. 3)

This might explain why Chinese international students tend to stick to the Chinese community and are not willing to step out of it. Many student participants had intention to make friends of Chinese origin even when studying in the West (Alex, p. 6; Alice, p. 3; Elizabeth, p. 9; Eric, p. 6), but they encountered difficulties. Alice, for example, has been in Canada for almost 20 years, but she told me that she seldom made friends with local people, and her friend circle was built almost by her Chinese friends (Alice, p. 3). Alice believed that it was cultural background and language issues that made it difficult for her to have close friends with local peers (Alice, p. 3; Judy, p. 7).

Apparently, communicating with local peers requires these young cross-border travelers to further develop their flexible citizenship in Canada. Therefore, in order to

survive in the West, my participants relied on Chinese peers for support, and they utilized their flexible citizenship when confronted with difficulties.

1.5. Obstacles when looking back to China. Needless to say, staying in their home country, my participants would feel more in their comfort zone given the immersion of their home culture as well as their social connections in China. After travelling to the West, most of my participants still called China their “home,” and were willing to return to China after their graduation. Returning to their home country means they can have more family ties and social networks and connections to facilitate their future achievements, particularly their career development.

Previous literature (e.g., Fong, 2011, Ong, 1999; Soong, 2016) suggests that international students are privileged in pursuing further education in the West. However, to me, obstacles confronted by these internationally mobile students represent a real struggle in accumulating cultural and social capital in the West. When asked why they still choose to stay in Canada after they realized that they were confronted with difficulties and challenges in Canada, some participants positively answered that it was a good experience to learn to overcome such challenges. Some students were more positive, they wanted to prove themselves (e.g., Angelina, Blueyuan). Other admitted that they did not have any ways to go back to China, especially those who chose international schools or programs instead of public schools in China. Alex, for example, holds permanent resident status in both the United States and Canada, she is also a Chinese citizen whom we have reasons to believe possesses

relatively more freedom in choosing to study in China or in the West. However, her father told me:

Theoretically, she could come back to China to attend *gaokao*, but practically she could not do it because she was unable to pass the exam given the difference between educational systems in the United States and in China ... She had to study in the West.
(Alex's father, p. 10)

The father used the phrase "she had to study in the West" to indicate that there was actually no other options for this girl, as I have assumed. The same thing happens to Elliot who finished his high school education in an international school in China and enrolled in a prestigious Canadian university. He told me that there was no possibility for him to return to China even though he realized that he might face many difficulties in Canada. During our interview, he told me: "As I said, I did not study at a Chinese public school . . . No way, I can't go back to China. I can't go back" (Elliot, p. 15). Such a statement drew our attention to the limiting features of flexible citizenship since my participants' way back to China is blocked (at least temporarily) until they can complete their educational program in the West.

It must be noted that not every student among my participants had the desire to continue staying in the West. Blueyuan is one of them. He tried to persuade his parents to allow him to return to China to write *gaokao* because he felt that the language challenge in Canada is too overwhelming for him; but this request was rejected by his father. The father told Blueyuan that he had lost his right in writing *gaokao* because he was not registered in the Chinese educational system (*xueji*: 学籍).

For those who did want to seek career opportunities back in China, some (e.g., Elliot) found themselves not competent enough compared to those who graduated from first-class universities in China (project 211, and project 985). Universities under 211 or 985 categories are key universities according to the Chinese Ministry of Education. Elliot attended an international program in China when he was in Grade 10 and then enrolled in a Canadian university. His mother was a teacher at a local high school with high ranking in his hometown. According to Elliot's mother, "From the perspective of returning back to China, I feel that there is no advantage in returning to China . . . China still cares more about the 985 and 211 category universities in the country" (p. 4). From what have been mentioned above, I would argue that the obstacles to return to their home country place further demand on my participants to develop flexible citizenship on studying abroad, which, beyond the symbolic acquisition of capital, i.e., completing the program, requires cultural competency and cultural capital.

2. Strategic Capital Accumulation and Translation in Developing Flexible Citizenship

We have discussed social conditions and qualities that enable my participants' flexible citizenship in the first part of this chapter. But what is unclear is how my participants deploy their various forms of capital in developing their flexible citizenship. In this study, one of the main research questions asked was how various types of capital have been accumulated and translated in their personal and/or familial flexible citizenship. When analyzing the data, an important theme of capital

translation emerged and, in this section, I am going to interrogate various forms of capital that Chinese families deploy, translate, and accumulate in order to advance their flexible citizenship in their transnational migration process.

In designing this study, I mapped four educational pathways in accessing Western universities for my potential participants, but I was surprised by Chinese families' pragmatic strategies in their development of flexible citizenship. When I talked to my participants, I realized that their lives don't necessarily fit into the four pathways that I have determined for them. Life is more complex than this. This shows that students and their families use their capital quite flexibly and contingently to gain access to a Western education (e.g., Ren, Xinyuan, Zed). For example, Zed's educational trajectory shows a new pathway. He decided to transfer from a Chinese university to a Canadian university when he finished his second year at a local Chinese university. Zed's experience resonates with what ESL professor Judy said, "And I've seen perhaps I would say over about a decade I've been at [a Canadian college], I've seen about five cases where students had a degree from a Chinese university... then after that they studied in Canada. (Judy, p. 5)

Another participant, Xinyuan, who graduated from a prestigious Canadian university, had a more complex experience. She entered a Canadian secondary school when she was in Grade 11, but finally found out that she might be delayed in entering a Canadian university if she continued to study in that school. Therefore, Xinyuan made a decision to drop out and return to China and write the IELTS as a way of accessing a Western undergraduate program. She was accepted by a good Canadian

university in the end. Among my participants, she was the only one who returned to China, albeit temporarily, to further her education.

Alex was a lucky girl compared to other Chinese international students. Her family provided her with a permanent resident card from Canada, a green card from the United State, and simultaneously secured her Chinese citizenship. In this way, Chinese families instrumentally and strategically utilize their various forms of capital to boost their children's future opportunities.

2.1. Money matters: Chinese families' investment in their children's education abroad. Among various forms of capital that my participants utilized in their transnational mobility process, economic capital was seen as the most important one (Angelina's father, p. 4; Blueyuan, p. 4; Blueyuan's father, p. 7; Dabao, p. 5; Elliot, p. 8; Gu, p. 5; Gu's mother, p. 6; Jack's mother, p. 4; Jessica, p. 4; Kim, p. 8; Lily, p. 6; Linda, p. 7; Longgu, p. 6; Max, p. 5; Ren's mother, p. 6; Rex, p. 4; Sally, p. 5; Sally's mother, p. 4; Sam's mother; Viki, p. 5; Viki's mother, p. 6; Xiaobao Wei, p. 7). To Lily, for example, money matters in her cross-border movement; she explained, "I think the first resource is money. How can you go abroad without money?" (Lily, p. 6). This resonates with Viki's mother: "The resources must be at home with a certain economic basis. Well, without money, it seems that this is not realistic" (Viki's mother, p. 6). Apparently, many affluent Chinese families utilize their financial capital or economic capital to send their children to study abroad. In other words, sending children abroad can be regarded as an investment for Chinese parents (Dabao, p. 3; Gu's mother, p. 8; Judy, p. 7; p. 8; Louise, p. 21; Ren's mother, p. 12; Rex, p. 1; Tom,

p. 4; Viki, p. 4; p. 5; Zed's mother, p. 8). Viki also noted, "You have to have money first! . . . Then you have to really study and live up to it. That's the investment your parents give you!" (Viki, p. 4; p. 5). Obviously, Chinese families' deployment of their economic or financial capital into their children's education abroad can be regarded as a type of investment, as Gu's mother noted, "If you are willing to spend a lot of money, willing to let him study or something like that, it really is an investment" (Gu's mother, p. 8). This statement resonates with Rex's (the agent): "For these middle-class people I have come into contact with, their input-output ratio is still very carefully considered" (Rex, p. 1). Note that he used "input-output ratio" which is a common term for financial investment.

Nonetheless, some students regarded their parents' investment on their education as debt that they would need to pay back one day; this made them feel pressured. Tom was among those students:

Is it worthwhile for this investment? After all, it is a parent's investment. Therefore, there is pressure in the heart, which means that we cannot make it worthwhile. . . . It doesn't feel very comfortable . . . It's just like debt, just like debt, if one day's debt is one million, and then it's just not saying you don't have to give you a deadline to say when. But if you know the millions debt you have, you must feel uncomfortable in your heart unless you can really feel yourself in the heart one day. (Tom, p. 4)

The idea of "debt" in relation to Chinese families sending children to the West to access education as a type of investment was heard from all three parties in my

research: parents, students, and key informants. Louise, a Canadian instructor with over 10 years of working experience with international students further explained this:

It's something that you know that investment and their children will eventually pay off in some way. But I do think that you know it's as any of us who are parents I mean if you've only got one child, all of your hopes and aspirations are in that child and so all your love, all of your, you know, your dreams and so forth. I mean it's such a complicated emotional situation, isn't it? And you just want the best for your child and you hope that that is going to come back to you in some way, right? (Louise, p. 21)

If sending children to the West is an investment of Chinese parents, what do they expect as a return? Judy, the ESL instructor observed, "I would presume it might be similar somewhat with any parents if they make a financial investment; they really do hope for a return" (Judy, p. 8). Viki who spent two years in Canada believed that her parents invested economic capital in her education in order to help her obtain symbolic capital such as a good degree from Western country, and cultural capital such as proficiency in English (Viki, p. 5). All these could be converted into economic capital and social capital in her future career.

Overall, these affluent Chinese families pragmatically utilized their wealth and accumulated economic capital to send their children abroad in order to obtain more cultural (proficiency in English) and symbolic capital (a degree from a Western university, or a permanent residency status), all these with the aim to improving the family's prestigious and social status.

2.2. The losses and gains of social capital in transnational migration process.

Ong (1999) observed, “where there is accumulation and credit, there must be loss and debit” (p. 91). In order to gain social capital in a Western country, Chinese international students have to face the reality that they might lose social capital that they have earned or they can earn easily in their home country. Social capital, “made up of social obligations (‘connections’), is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). In this sense, habitus is a kind of social capital. Also, *guanxi* (关系) or personal networking whether within the family, a classroom or a workplace is another kind of social capital. People who have social capital in the West such as relatives and/or friends tend to make the decision to send children abroad more readily (Alice, p. 2; Alice’s mother, p. 4; Angelina’s father, p. 6; p.10; Lily’s father, p. 7; Rex, p. 4; Sam’s mother, p. 2; Tom’s mother, p. 4; Xinyuan, p. 5).

As Ong (1999) mentioned in her research, when Hong Kong elites choose schools for their children, they also consider *guanxi* factors such as whether any friends or relatives live in the country. When one person with *guanxi* connections studies in a particular school or institution, his or her siblings and friends often go to the same place. As Sam’s mother said: “I chose Canada as an educational destination because I had a friend whose daughter had already been in Canada for three years” (Sam’s mother, p. 2). The same thing happened in Lily’s family who came to Canada because Lily’s aunt was based in Toronto. In my study, these existing transnational connections seem to be more important than the kind of educational route taken.

Indeed, friends or classmates studying in the West can also be regarded as social capital for Chinese international students. They tend to have more courage to study abroad, and thereafter obtain more social connections in the West (e.g., Tom, Zhuang, Zed). However, according to my participants, these new connections would be shallow compared to other ties they made, such as roommate relationship, which is called “brotherhood” in China, which can be defined as *guanxi* (关系). This practice of *guanxi* in the Chinese community, according to Ong (1999), emphasizes “pragmatism, interpersonal dependence, bodily discipline, gender and age hierarchies, and other ethnic-specific modes of social production and reproduction in diaspora and under foreign rule” (p. 116).

Ong (1999) regarded Chinese *guanxi* as a post-colonial habitus, which benefited Chinese families, especially those who have emigrated overseas for generations. Needless to say, *guanxi* connections still play a very important role in current Chinese students’ transnational movements.

2.2.1. Social capital lost in studying abroad. In studying abroad, Chinese students lost valuable social capital that can be more easily acquired through Chinese education. For example, Xinyuan said she could obtain more social capital such as classmates if she could study in a first-class university like Peking University. “There are connections, I think in Canada, you don’t have enough opportunity to know so many Chinese students, but if you are a student from Tsinghua University or Peking University, you would have classmate resources” (Xinyuan, p. 6). In China, students are assigned into different classes even at university level, which is different from

Western system where stable classes and classmates almost do not exist. Some parents regarded this as a disadvantage, as Xinyuan's mother indicated,

The disadvantage is that she did not [have stable] classmates. Unlike domestic universities and classes in China, 40 or 45 children in one class who have deep feelings. In Canada, there was no fixed class nor fixed classmates... I think this drawback can't be compensated. (Xinyuan's mother, p. 10)

In China, connections through classmates are very important ways to build social capital, but most participants believed that they or their children lost this important form of social capital when studying in the West (Elliot, Jessica, Xinyuan's mother, Louise, Zed), or that it was difficult for them to benefit from their own or their familial social connections in China (Gu). This loss of social capital in China hindered their decision to return to China, as Jessica noted, "I just feel that I will have no contacts in China if I go back to China now" (Jessica, p. 7).

Although they lost social capital in their home country, but the social capital acquired by the international students' parents in their home country can help them succeed if they do decide to return to China (Dabao, p. 10; Eric, p. 7; Ren's mother, p. 4; Tom, p. 7–8). With the emphasis of Confucianism *guanxi* in Chinese culture, "[t]he household is the basic unit through which capital accumulation takes place" (Waters, 2002, p. 119). For example, Tom told me that "[Chinese international students' parents will have connections who know each other, or it will be easier for them to establish some connections or establish some circles" (p. 7–8).

2.2.2. Social connections obtained in transnational process. Even though my participants lost social capital, especially classmate *guanxi* that they could have earned through the Chinese educational system, they obtained more social connections in the West as a return when they study abroad (e.g., Alex, Angelina, Blueyuan, Gu, Sally, Tom, Viki, Xinyuan, Zed Zhuang). All these losses and gains are consistent with a transnational experience. For example, professors in the West are regarded as new social connection by Chinese international students. Xinyuan was pragmatic in social networking even when she studied at the university. She travelled back and forth between China and Canada, and finally ended up in a Canadian university with good reputation. Xinyuan told me how she viewed her connection with her teachers:

The new resource may be that teacher who can write a few reference letters for you because the teachers who teach in foreign countries all graduate from elite universities . . . you can establish the connection with the teacher. If I were in China, I could not have the possibility to know Stanford graduates. (Xinyuan, p. 10)

For these transnational travellers, building connections with instructors was a means of accumulating social capital, which will benefit their future.

Although it was very difficult for my participants to build friendship with local students, they still managed to have some friends, Chinese or non-Chinese. Also, friendship built when studying in the West is another important type of social connection. Blueyuan who was accepted by a Canadian university after three years of study at a private Canadian high school said, “I gained some experience, a degree, and then those friends coming from foreign countries” (Blueyuan, p. 9). In order to have a

better future, my participants extended their social circles on purpose. As Sally explained,

After coming to Canada, I met my classmates, and then I met the senior elder sister or brother...I believe I could consult them because they have experiences at the universities. They would know some teachers and they would know something, who may also give me some suggestions in the future (Sally, p. 11).

Sally's comments are similar to Viki's, who said, "You know more people! . . . There are noble people who can help you . . . a classmate" (Viki, p.11).

Elizabeth, a professor who worked at a Canadian college believed that Chinese international students could benefit a lot including building connections with people.

I think there's a lot of benefits just like there would be for any students studying overseas. So, for example, learning a new culture, like adapting to a new culture and learning so many skills of adaptation that can help you in your job, a new job, to help you connect with people. (Elizabeth, p. 8)

Interestingly, my participants themselves became social capital for their friends or relatives who are still based in China. (e.g., Chen, Longgu, Max, Viki). For instance, Chen told me: "I think the good thing is that I know the benefits of travelling abroad and I will encourage my cousins to study abroad as well" (p. 13). Similarly, Viki said her study abroad experience facilitated her cousin who was studying in the United Kingdom at a master's level. "Now there is my sister, my cousin. She is now a graduate student in England, but she also came out after I went abroad . . . that is, I influenced her" (Viki, p. 6).

2.3. The loss and gain of cultural capital. In accessing Western education, Chinese students lost their advantages regarding traditional Chinese education and culture (Chen, p. 10; Ren, p. 9). This loss of cultural capital affected their further choices. Sam said that as an international student in the West, he lost the opportunity to catch up with what was happening in his home country which made it difficult for international students to seek career opportunities in China (p. 7).

Previous scholars believe that gaining symbolic capital, especially a Western degree would be the ultimate objective for Chinese students. Ong (2003) also stated that elites “[seek] to accumulate world class degrees and certifications that will open the door to a successful career in the international arena” (p. 50). However, my research challenges this statement in the sense that my participants emphasized working experience in the West rather than the degree itself. Some did not settle just for the symbolic capital in the West because many participants, parents, and students did not value the degree on its own (e.g., Dabao). They believed that Western working experience is a more valuable cultural capital that they would like to obtain in the West before going back to China (e.g., Blueyuan, Chen, Emma, Sam).

In the process of student transnational movement, language is a very important factor that influences their decision-making and acculturation process. According to my participants, Chinese students should possess certain level of linguistic capability (a cultural capital) before studying abroad. Many participants believed that they lost language proficiency in Chinese (e.g., Ren) but obtained language competency in English (Jessica, p. 7; Lily’s father, p. 7; Longgu, p. 9; Ren’s mother, p. 4; Sally’s

mother, p. 7; Viki's mother, p. 6; Xiaobao Wei, p. 14); however, as mentioned before, some of them felt that they were good at neither English nor Mandarin. They could not express in Chinese without the aid of English words, whereas when expressing themselves in English, they actually had to think in Chinese.

3. Flexibly Utilizing Capital in the West to Fit in and Further their Flexible Citizenship

Although many participants indicated preference to go back to China after earning a Western degree and accumulating working experience in the West, they still made an effort to fit in the local society with the purpose to advance their flexible citizenship.

3.1. Supports to face challenges. Chinese parents and students used various forms of capital to help them deal with difficulties in a new country including supporting each other as peers (e.g., Elizabeth, Sally's mother), having positive communications with parents (e.g., Alex), and engaging in religious belief (e.g., Dabao). Peer support was considered very important when they encountered obstacles, as Dabao's father told me, "Of course, there is also this encouragement for elder classmates. Especially when in Tanzania, their classmates encouraged and supported each other" (Dabao's father, p. 10). Social capital earned in the West facilitated my student participants' advancement of their flexible citizenship, as Professor Elizabeth said,

I think number one is connections with other students and connections with teachers.

So if they're able to share their challenges with another student and know they're not

alone and know that maybe students in higher levels have had these challenges, but have gone through them, it gives them hope and inspiration. (Elizabeth, p. 10)

Some students relied on friends' help in the West to overcome difficulties that they faced (e.g., Angelina, Sally). For Sally, she met some good friends who could offer her a hand when needed. Angelina, who admitted that her English proficiency was not good enough, had friends who were willing to help; they even taught her academic writing techniques:

When I really could not understand, my friends will help me and help me one by one. If we were in a rush to meet the deadline, they may help me to write a rough idea and explain it to me one by one, just like my family teacher. They provided me one explanation after another, how should you write...one friend told me that my academic writing was too poor and he would find a time to teach me on it before his graduation. (Angelina, p. 10).

Max was very upset when none of his classmates were willing to do group assignment with him. Luckily, he had one friend from another class who offered to help him:

He was actually not in our class. I told him that I am the only one because they do not want to team with me. I was very poor at English at that time. I told him so. Then he said, Oh, it is OK, I will help you. Then he helped me finish the whole project and also invited me to his house. I often went to live in his house. He actually had many friends, but I occupied his a lot of time because he was helping me. (Max, p. 6)

When talking to these students, I can tell their helplessness and sadness when they did not know where to seek help or support. I have to say that they were all lucky enough

to have one or two friends who were there to lend a hand to facilitate their adjustment process and to enable them to form flexible citizenship to some extent.

3.2. Exploiting familial social capital when returning to China. Familial social capital influenced the participants' decision on whether or not to return to China. Despite her mother's suggestions, Alice who came from a working-class family said that she dared not think about returning to China because her family did not have enough social capital in China.

My parents are ordinary working-class people who did not have enough networking in China. If my parents are government officials, and if I'm the official second generation or rich second generation, then I might return to China. As a child who grew up in a working-class family background, I have to work hard all by myself.

(Alice, p. 6)

For those students who planned to return to China, they felt that their parents would utilize their social capital in China to facilitate their job seeking and career building (Longgu's father, p. 5, Zhuang's mother, p. 7). Also, the social capital of parents can help them succeed in China (Ren's mother, p. 4). These middle-class families can utilize their social capital to help their children to find career opportunities.

If he develops his career in China, at least, I can have a guiding role for him, or have a helpful role . . . After all, I lived in China for so many years. Interpersonal relations, the domestic working environment, the domestic approach to people, we parents are very familiar with. In this regard, I can provide him help. (Zhuang's mother, p. 7)

In this regard, in their adjustment process, my participants strategically exploit their personal/familial social capital to facilitate the transaction process.

4. Gendered Qualities of Flexible Citizenship

In this research, one of my research interests is to investigate how gender plays into the strategies of flexible citizenship that Chinese families employ. In this section, I examine flexible citizenship development of Chinese international students from a gender perspective. I would argue that the qualities of flexible citizenship are highly gender-based, and are influenced by Chinese cultural principles.

When talking with my participating families, I was told that gender was not an issue when they made their decision to study abroad or to send their children to the West, which, on the surface, means that gender did not play a role in advancing my participants' flexible citizenship (e.g., Alice's mother, Angelina's father, Bob, Chen, Chen's mother, Dabao, Dabao's father, Emma, Gu's mother, Jessica, Longgu's father, Max's father, Viki's mother, Zhuang's mother). Some participants attributed gender equity in current Chinese society to the one-child policy (Xiaobao Wei, p.5; Alex's father, p. 9). Xiaobao Wei, the only girl in her family told me:

So I thought of the one-child policy in China at the time, that is, those policies that controlled the population . . . Actually it was still good for me. For example, if we had a few children except me, then I might, I can't get the resources I can now get. I may not be able to go abroad, right? And the equality between men and women may not be achieved in such a short period of time. (Xiaobao Wei, p. 5)

This girl was very straightforward and calculative. She understood that if there was a second child in her family, she might lose some resources that her family provided. In this light, the one-child policy indeed benefits girls in advancing their flexible citizenship.

During my conversations with the Chinese families, only a few participants (e.g., Elliot, Jack, Linda, Ren, Viki) recognized gender issue in the student transnational mobility process. Jack who was among them said, “I think [gender] is definitely decisive . . . Because basically most of the girls, I think they only choose to go abroad after they go to college. Only a small part of the girls’ parents can let them go . . . at high school level” (Jack, p. 4–5). Such observation resonates with Elliot’s thoughts: “I think [gender] is also a big factor . . . if the family has a girl, they prefer that she was studying at a domestic university, or go to a local school and she does not need to go far” (Elliot, p. 9). Viki was also one of those who admitted that gender plays a role, as she said, “I think if I were a boy, they might have let me out earlier” (Viki, p. 5).

Simultaneously, most parents admitted that they preferred to keep girls in China longer than boys because they wanted to protect girls more than boys (e.g., Alex’s father, Alice, Angelina’s father, Blueyuan, Blueyuan’s father, Elliot’s mother, Jack, Jack’s mother, Lily’s father, Ren, Ren’s mother, Rex, Sally’s mother, Sam’s mother, Sweet’s mother, Tom, Xiaobao Wei’s father, Xinyuan’s mother, Viki’s mother, Zed’s mother). This finding contradicts Ong’s (1999) observation—that boys are normally asked to return home to take over family business while girls have more freedom in staying in the West. For my participating families, even though they chose to send

girls abroad, they would still ask them to return to China afterwards. (Sam, p. 4; Sam's mother, p. 10; Xiaobao Wei, p. 7). Girls are expected to stay at home for a longer time than boys, as Xiaobao Wei told me, "There are so many families who prefer to keep girls with them for a longer time. If it was a boy, the family would let him go out and take a trip. A girl will be asked to return to China. There are also many examples around me" (p. 7). Many Chinese families intend to keep girls with them, and ask them to get married and give birth to a baby (Gu, p. 6; Sam, p. 4; Sam's mother, p. 10). For example, Sam explained,

As far as we are concerned, the tradition is that girls do not need to run around outside, and they are supposed to quickly graduate and then marry someone. So my mother has a colleague who sent her daughter out. After graduating abroad, the girl was asked to come back, and then she would get married and have children. (Sam, p. 4)

Such cultural aspiration imposed on girls shows that Chinese female students are expected to focus on their familial role even after receiving their education in the West. Thus, girls have more constraints compared to their male peers because they are provided limited opportunities. For example, Ren's mother taught her daughter to be family-focused: "I told her that day, your task is to have children" (Ren's mother, p. 13). As the only girl of her family, Kim said that her father expressed the same opinion:

Then my father just started to think that the girls should take a walk, but it should also be the end of the journey to get married earlier . . . My father said on my sixteenth birthday, Gee, you are 16 now. It's time to marry someone. (Kim, p. 7)

Apparently, Chinese families focus more on familial role of girls due to the influence of Confucian logics; as noted by Ong (1999), “Confucian family defines men to be in charge of both wealth and mobility, while women are localized in domestic situations or workplaces commanded by men” (p. 157). This finding contradicts Fong’s (2011), who did not agree that gender plays a significant role in students’ decision process: “Although desires and opportunities for study abroad varied somewhat by gender, the variation was incredibly small” (p. 84). Fong further explained that even though her participants were the only child in their families, gender did not play a significant role in Chinese transnational citizen’s study-abroad decisions:

[the one-child policy] created many sonless families that treated daughters the same ways they would have treated sons. The socialization and parental investment males and females had were fairly similar . . . and they consequently had similar aspirations and opportunities to go abroad. Unlike researcher who studied migrants who viewed transnational migration partly as a way to escape the gender inequality prevalent in their homelands, I did not find any large, systematic gender differences in my qualitative or quantitative analysis of Chinese transnational citizen’s study-abroad decisions, experiences, or trajectories. (p. 84)

In my research journals, my initial thought was that gender had not played an important role in these Chinese international travellers’ formation of citizenship.

However, the more I talked to my participants, especially when I transcribed the data and re-read it carefully, I noticed the nuanced message that gender is indeed an important factor in the cross-border citizenship formation process albeit in a subtle way.

Many of my participants told me that boys are supposed to be excellent and more ambitious than female peers (Alex's father, p. 5; Angelina's father, p. 4; Dabao's father, p. 3; Gu, p. 6; Gu's mother, p. 11; Kim, p.7; Kim's mother, p.6; Longgu, p. 6; Max, p. 6; p. 7; Ren's mother, p.13; Sally, p. 6; Sam, p. 4; Sam's mother, p. 10; Xiaobao Wei, p. 7; Zed's mother, p. 3). Different expectations towards boys and girls would influence their own citizenship development. For girls, Chinese families always focus on their familial role as mentioned above. Gu's mother told me that

Parents will think that I have only one girl right now, who can marry an excellent boy.

What I am supposed to do is train my daughter be good at poetry, chess and painting.

Then go find a boy who matches. The probability is still relatively high. However, the

boy is different from the girl because he must be excellent, right? (Gu's mother, p. 11)

Even in terms of education, Kim's mother believed that as a girl, Kim should not pursue her education after undergraduate study: "Girls are good to earn an undergraduate degree, do not apply for a master's degree, not to mention PhD" (Kim's mother, p. 6). Some parents even felt anxious when their girls wanted to pursue higher educational degree, as Alex's father put it,

I'm really anxious, because she's a girl! You're going to find a boyfriend, you're

getting married. She cannot waste any time. Only if she has earned an undergraduate

degree, I don't care about other things at all, and it doesn't matter I would be happy if she had not applied PhD program. (Alex's father, p. 5)

The reason why these Chinese families have different aspiration towards boys is because males are culturally regarded to be more ambitious than girls like what Zed's mother said:

Because boys should be aggressive in the community. He must be aggressive. Boys and girls are different. Boys have to have a foothold in the community or in his family in the future. The boy is, after all, the pillar of the family. Boys' responsibility is the most important at home. (Zed's mother, p. 3)

In this way, Chinese parents believe that boys will benefit from hardships that they can overcome. Sam's mother expressed this opinion:

I think it is always life. There are always some hardships and some setbacks. This should also be a stage in which a person must grow up and must experience, right? Especially a boy. There is no danger of life, then it should be the experience or should go through the experience, which will benefit his growth. After all, it is a boy! (Sam's mother, p. 10)

In my study, I believe that girls have more chances to develop their flexible citizenship given their gender vulnerability and/or racial discrimination in their cross-border educational sojourn compared to their male peers. This picture is further complicated by other factors as girls are often marginalized in traditional and contemporary gender roles, norms, and expectations emanated from both their home (China) and host country (Canada). As Rizvi & Lingard (2010) observed, "the

participation of girls in secondary and tertiary education remains generally low in most developing countries. In countries with very large populations such as China and India, girls have very poor participation rates in secondary education” (p.151). Furthermore, girls are “vulnerable to gender, class, and racial discrimination that undercuts their standing as equal citizens” (Ong, 2006, p. 15). Situated in a contradictory and unstable position by choosing to study in Canada, as classed and gendered positioned subjects, these Chinese girls confront various complexities during their transcultural sojourn in advancing their flexible citizenship.

We can see a dual aspect in the formation of flexible citizenship of Chinese female international students. On one hand, the development of Chinese social society and one-child policy facilitate the development of these girls’ flexible citizenship compared to girls in the past generations. On the other hand, unnoticed gender discrimination further allows these girls to fully advance their flexible citizenship compared to their male peers. Here we can see the subtle nuances of Chinese cultural regulation towards female, self-expectation of female students, the impacts of one-child policy all interwoven and come into play with flexible citizenship. The tension between the aspirations of Chinese female international students, on the one hand, and Chinese womanly norms, on the other hand, complicated the construction of gendered flexible citizenship of these cross-border travellers in a given Chinese situation. I am interested in new feminist-inflected spaces of agency for these young women in Canada. Ong (1999) observed that in their previous generation, Chinese female subjects used marriage as an emigration strategy to leave China. In modern China,

girls do not have to use this pathway towards Western society; rather, these emerging middle-class families utilize their economic capital and social capital (*guanxi* connections) in the West to send their daughters abroad.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to illuminate the qualities of flexible citizenship for a set of mobile students encountering structural constraints. My participants strategically intend to bypass *gaokao*, but encountered new obstacles in the West. They tried to get away from direct parental control, but most were still controlled from a distance by filial piety (孝: *xiao*), which can be regarded as part of the habitus in Chinese families. They physically left their original families, but were still controlled emotionally and remotely. For girls, they seek an opportunity to study in a Western country, but they were still influenced by Chinese traditional cultural norms. In other words, various forms of capital that my participants had acquired did not “break the bonds.” As Ong (1999) suggested, “Although increasingly able to escape localization by state authorities, travelling subjects are never free of regulations set by state power, market operations, and *kinship norms*” (my emphasis, pp. 19–20). In this chapter, I aimed to highlight the multiple difficulties that my participants faced, whether internal or external circumstances, which enabled them to become mobile but still constrained.

My participants hoped to use economic capital in exchange for cultural capital including working experience in the West, competency in English, as well as, to some extent, social capital in the West. The degree of cultural capital accumulated is

uncertain and represents a key risk. Simultaneously, they lost partial proficiency in Chinese, cultural capital, and social capital in China. Some even believed that symbolic capital earned from a first-class university in China could be of higher value than the one earned in Canada. Ong (1999) stated that economic capital and other kinds of capital cannot necessarily be converted from one to the other. My research shows that economic capital is a foundation in Chinese students' transnational migration process, but ratite.

My participants' experience echoed Ong's observation (1999) that Chinese students build and/or maintain a prestigious social status while accessing Western education. Children who are sent to study abroad by the family are expected to keep or enhance their familial social status and class by accumulating cultural capital, such as fluency in English, Western cultural norms, and symbolic capital, such as a Western college degree. As one key informant Louise said, "Well, I mean bicultural awareness, you know. They're not just bilingual but bicultural, you know . . . There will be a benefit to . . . their family in some way" (Louise, p. 21). My participants' ultimate purpose was not only to obtain individual capital in their transnational mobility process, but to increase their familial social status (e.g., Chen's mother; Zed; Alice's mother), especially for those parents who came from rural area. Moving up the socioeconomic ladder becomes an important motivation in Chinese students' transnational mobility as Alice's mother said, "Once again, I feel that it is better for the child to go abroad then to live better than we can" (p. 4). Alice came from a working class background in a less developed city in North China, her parents used up

their savings to provide her an opportunity to study in Canada. For them, studying in the West means Alice could have more chance to lead a better life than her previous generations.

This logic of familial interests helps to understand familial regimes of modern overseas Chinese who are “dispersing and localizing members in different part of the world” (Ong, 1999, p. 127). For instance, Hong Kong entrepreneurs have their business and investment in China, but displace and resettle their family in, for example, the U.S., Canada, and Australia. The husband thus shuttles between China and the place where the family resides. This is a practice of flexible accumulation to increase the interests of the whole family. It is also important giving the perception of studying abroad as a backdoor. Competitive academic pressure pushes some Chinese families to find an alternative education with good quality in the Western countries. In this way, youths from these families employ studying abroad as a backdoor to avoid heightened competition at home.

Alongside improvement of their familial social status, my participants’ transnational mobility and experience help their family, even the family in a broader term, expand their horizon (Blueyuan, p. 8; Chen’s mother, p. 13; Jessica, p. 6; Louise, p. 17; Sam, p. 9; Xinyuan, p. 8; Xinyuan’s mother, p. 7; Zhuang’s mother, p. 2) and vision by providing them opportunities to learn about Western countries and to travel to Western countries (Alice’s mother, p. 6; Chen, p. 10; Dabao’s father, p. 9; Gu, p.11; Longgu, p. 9; Max, p. 13; Viki, p. 11). As Sam noted, “And I feel that after coming

here, you have broadened your horizon and you know that there are so many ways in the world to go. If I were only at home, I could not see this” (Sam, p. 9).

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Implications

In the previous two chapters, I have explored social conditions that enable internationally mobile Chinese families/students to develop their flexible citizenship, how these transnationals perform their flexible citizenship, and how their various forms of capital have been accumulated and translated. In this concluding chapter, I will turn back directly to my research questions to further illustrate my participants' cross-border experience, and discuss several insights emerging from my empirical research.

In investigating Chinese students' transnational migration through transnational spaces defined in this research, three trends can be identified. One emerging trend is the increasing number of younger students and the wide variety of overseas programs they attended (Liu, 2016). Chinese families were not constrained to one specific pathway in sending children to the West. They have more options. For my participants, they chose international schools in China, international programs in a Chinese public school, private schools in the West, or public schools in the West. Some participants even went abroad at elementary school schools (e.g., Alex, Lily, Ren).

The second trend is that more Chinese students took *youxue* (游学) program in experiencing Western culture and educational system. A new pattern of short-term exchange programs and self-funded overseas travels called *youxue* (游学) were organized by Chinese agencies, "that is, studying abroad and observing the world as

short-term visitors rather than full-time students” (Liu, 2016, p. 36). Most participants in my research travelled a lot to other Asian or Western countries before they pursue undergraduate study to gain knowledge about Western countries or educational systems. Some participants took *youxue* (游学) program before they were physically sent out of China for a Western degree (e.g., Kim, Zhuang).

The third trend is that the logic of neoliberalism was noted in terms of three participating actors of the transnational movement: the home country, the transnational individuals and their families, and the host country. In terms of the home country, state policies have been modified to follow “neoliberalism as exception” as discussed in Chapter Two. Neoliberalism as exception refers to governmentality of non-Western jurisdictions, mainly in East Asia where local governments adopt a market-driven neoliberal segregated technique to control their population and sovereignty, which creates certain kind of privileges (Ong, 2006, 2012). In China, the logic of exception allows the state to redefine its governance and its relationship with the population within centrally planned socialist China (Ong, 2006). Ong (2006, 2012) offers the analytic of “neoliberalism as exception” to view the policy changes in mainland China which encourage geographically-privileged students to pursue their education abroad. This use of neoliberal exception provides China with human resources who have Western knowledge, advanced professional skills, and bi-cultural understandings. Transnational students play a key role in improving China’s competition in the global economy. Undoubtedly, study abroad is underpinned by the neoliberal consideration from the Chinese state.

The motivation of pursuing education in the West is underpinned by neoliberal logics from the perspective of Chinese international students and their families. Education-driven Chinese families adopt a flexible strategy by sending children to a Western country for high quality education and/or simultaneously obtain citizenship in the host country (Ong, 2006). This is partly because these families see a degree earned from a Western country as “part of the global accumulation strategy to reposition oneself and one’s family in the global arena of competing intellectual and economic markets” (Ong, 2006, p. 151). Ong (1999) claimed:

[i]ndeed, for many middle-class Chinese ..., the ultimate symbolic capital necessary for global mobility is an American college degree, which guarantees that the holder has acquired the cultural knowledge, skills, and credentials that enable the transposition of social status from one country to another. (p. 90)

For my participants, it was difficult to transfer their social status from one country to another due to their lack of Western culture, language proficiency, and social connections in the West. The reasons for students in this study to seek education in the West can be understood as part of the familial flexible accumulation of social capital. Furthermore, Soong (2016) observed: “[international students] have been encouraged by their parents to achieve residency through overseas studies, as part of a broader strategy for upward mobility” (p. 26). This insight helps to explain the educational purpose of transnational migration of Chinese students to keep or enhance their class and social status. My participants showed a similar aspiration towards seeking education in the West. However, my findings suggest that residency in the West is not

an ultimate purpose for Chinese families. Instead, they hope to find career opportunities back in China after they secure their permanent residency as a way to secure future mobilities. Again, this is a practice of flexible accumulation to increase the interests of the whole family underpinned by neoliberal logics.

In terms of the host country, there are economic interests in recruiting international students. To improve revenue generation, and in some cases, also cross-cultural communication, more traditional receiver countries such as the United States and Canada have adopted policies recruiting international students. In the Canadian social context, international students play an important role in contributing to national and provincial economies (OME, 2015). Education funding in all Canadian provinces has been under pressure in recent years, and recruiting international students has been seen as a way to fund schools, and benefit communities and their economy (Chen, 2006; Tarc, 2013). “Even though internationalization of higher education has resulted in broader economic activity, jobs and community impacts, international students are found to be treated like a ‘commodity’ by [host countries] and higher education institutions: viewed as sources of revenue” (Marginson, et al., 2010, cited in Soong, 2016, p. 28). These international students generate revenue to the host society by paying high tuition fees. Also, hosting international students can create working opportunities and can benefit local students in learning about other cultures. However, these neoliberal pressures are mediated by social and cultural logics as well and often the intercultural learning opportunities are not realized (Shin, 2013).

In the following section, I am going to tease out neoliberal calculation in Chinese transnational families' capital translation and circulation. I will then detail the character of flexible citizenship, the relationship between patriotism and flexible citizenship, and student-migrant-returnee nexus under the three trends discussed above.

1. Capital Translation in Chinese Families' Transnational Trajectories

Among my research questions, I asked about the social class locations and forms of capital that enable entry to a transnational educational pathway. How do these forms accumulate and/or transfer in each of the four transnational schooling pathways? And what transfers and accumulations become significant in each pathway? I have partly answered this question in the second part of Chapter Seven. Coming from middle or upper-middle class family background, economic capital was vital in my participants' transnational mobility process. They partly transferred their previous capital to new capital (English, Western culture, and Western social connections). In this section, I am going to address some points that I have not explicitly addressed in Chapter Seven. Lastly, based on findings of this research, I will call for future research on international students.

Capital translation and formation of flexible citizenship occur simultaneously in my participants' transnational mobility and social life. They are navigating from one position to another, consciously or unconsciously due to underpinning national, transnational, and cultural forces. Such shifting triggers their feelings of being caught

in the middle, especially in terms of language and culture, which shows that they are “on the move both mentally and physically” (Ong, 1999, p. 2). While strategically fitting in and looking forward to their own or familial future, my participants employed flexible strategies in accumulating and translating various forms of capital. In the transnational spaces defined in this research—public schools in China, international schools (programs) in China, public schools in the West, and private schools in the West—I can find not only my participants’ transnational orientations, but social, cultural, and economic capital mobility, all of which are intertwined together in the process of my participants’ transnational mobilities. Given the timeframe of study, some of the capital translation has not yet been realized. Their feeling of being stuck in the middle means transfers might be pending.

1.1. A combination is required in capital conversion process. It is simplistic to assume that a single form of capital can be converted into other forms of capital and vice versa. A combination as well as the intriguing link between various forms of capital are required to achieve translation. International credentials as symbolic capital are difficult to translate into economic capital in study abroad context. Rather, economic capital can be obtained by the combination of cultural capital and localized social capital. This explains the phenomenon of “seaweed (海帶: *haidai*),” which describes those who possess symbolic capital (international credentials) but do not have local social capital in their workplace. Symbolic capital earned from overseas alone cannot be translated into economic capital; specifically, I find that transnationalism makes conversions more problematic.

Therefore, supplementing Bourdieu, I would argue that each capital per se cannot be successfully converted into other types of capital. This translation process requires combinations of different types of capital. For example, economic capital per se cannot be transferred to symbolic capital in the form of international credentials as I mentioned above. This transfer would only happen with a combination of economic capital in the form of financial resources and cultural capital (proficiency of English). Cultural capital and social capital are not straightforwardly additive, which means subjects cannot add up their later accumulated cultural capital and social capital in their cross-country migration process. On the contrary, embracing some cultural or social capital means losing other cultural or social capital, which can be regarded as social exchange. We have seen lots of living examples of this capital acquisition and loss. As discussed in the previous chapter, Xinyuan's mother told me that her daughter gained social connections in the West while losing her valuable social capital in China. For Alex, her father noticed that his girl was stuck in the middle between two languages and cultures.

From these students' living experiences, we can see that Chinese and Western cultural capital are not mutually inclusive, but mutually exclusive to some extent. Obtaining one type of capital means lessening another type of capital. This finding challenges common beliefs that international students can gain new cultural capital while maintaining previous culture. In this light, flexibility facilitated these Chinese students transcend the binary of insiders/outside within both Chinese and Canadian society/culture. They admitted that they belong to neither part given their feeling

within a liminal space. As such, these Chinese students felt stuck between parental authority and self-independence (e.g., Alice), China and Canada (e.g., Lily), adulthood and adolescence (e.g., Alex), and mobility and being stuck.

2. Flexible Citizenship as Habitus in Chinese Families in the Neoliberalism Era

In this research, I asked how flexible citizenship is employed and shaped through the transnational schooling pathways. I have partly answered this question in the first part of Chapter Seven, but would add a point by arguing that flexible citizenship also represents a kind of habitus in the Chinese families.

My participants, who mostly came from middle or upper-middle class family background, possessed transnational habitus that aided their mobility process. Qualities of their habitus include being independent or resilient (e. g., Alice, Bob, Dabao, Jessica, Lily, Sally). Many participants believed that Chinese students became more independent while studying in Canada (e.g., Alex’s father, Chen, Dabao, Elliot). For example, Sally’s mother said, “I think the ability is definitely different from the Chinese students because after the Chinese students have gone through *gaokao*, I actually don’t feel that they can take care of themselves in their lives . . . independent capability will be improved after coming to Canada” (Sally, mother, p. 9). Jack’s mother was surprised at her son’s changes, who was the only child of this family, and who got used to being taken care of by his mother. “There is no big story. It can be seen from some small things. For example, he was able to wash clothes. Such things he has never done at home” (Jack’s mother, p. 8). To me, this resilience shows that my

participants have developed independence in a new country that getting out of their home environment enabled. As we have discussed before, according to Bourdieu, habitus connects surroundings and individuals, which means how individuals respond to their surroundings. From this research, I propose that, for my participants, flexible citizenship is a habitus constituted by families' transnational orientations and migrations. The international students and their parents possessed flexible citizenship as a precursor to study abroad, and they further advanced or in the future might advance their flexible citizenship with their experience studying in the West.

Of note, habitus transfers between generations in Chinese family. For instance, my participant Ren chose medical science as her major because her parents who are in the medical field can support her by explaining some technical words to her. According to Soong (2016) "Bourdieu's concepts of habitus asserts it is the individual that guides how he/she responds to their surroundings" (p. 43). In other words, Bourdieu's habitus connects structure and agency. As we have discussed in Chapter Three, Bourdieu insightfully created the notion of habitus to link individual agency with the outer structure to integrate the "split between objectivist and subjectivist explanations of human practice" (Webb et al., 2002, p. 31). In this perspective, in student transnational migration process, students have their own agency, which means they are "equipped with the ability to understand and control their own actions" (Webb et al., 2002, p. ix). Simultaneously, this agency was profoundly impacted by their past histories, cultural norms, their educational background, their class position, and the social contexts in which they live as largely mediated by their parents and

extended family. In this study, I would argue that flexible citizenship that my participants have developed is a type of extended habitus, which can be regarded as a “set of acquired tastes” (Webb et al., 2002, p. xi) that is associated with Chinese mobile families and students. On one hand, I noticed the structural impacts of social, culture, and policies on the formation of flexible citizenship, while on the other, I casted my attention on Chinese families/students’ individual agency in developing their flexible citizenship. Both individual agency and structural influences, which are closely connected, are linked by the habitus of mobile Chinese families/students.

3. Patriotism and Flexible Citizenship

Travelling abroad did not mean that my participants lost their love for their home country. On the contrary, many became more patriotic after their experience as international students. Some decided to go back to China because of patriotism (e.g., Angelina, Elizabeth). Angelina told me that she needed to pay back her home country, i.e., not to serve other countries after obtaining knowledge. “My parents sent me out who are patriotic, which has an influence on me. So I think if I come out, learn something, I’m going to pay back to my country, not to help other countries make money here” (Angelina, p. 19). Apparently, patriotic emotion is transmitted through Chinese families’ education and emerge when they make the decision to stay abroad or not. My participants see themselves as winners in China’s rise. Some students became more patriotic after they studied in the West, as Xinyuan’s mother told me, “This child was originally very critical towards what happened in China. However,

after travelling to the West, she became very patriotic... I now think that children became very patriotic after they go out” (Xinyuan’s mother, p. 7). This sense of pride of being Chinese becomes a main pulling factor in attracting my participants to go back to China.

Echoing Kim’s mother who was proud of being Chinese, Elizabeth, an ESL professor who worked with international students, also said,

I would think because they do love their country and they love their family and their friends there . . . for my impression people are . . . Chinese people are very proud of their country, are very proud of their history and they hope to go back. And also because they’re often . . . they're here to study and learn skills so that they can take over their parents business when they retire. (Elizabeth, p. 11)

This finding reflects Fong’s (2011) findings that Chinese international students present their patriotism towards their home country after their study abroad experiences, even though our participants came from different class levels—Fong’s participants were from working class while my participants originated from middle class. Fong (2011) provided interesting glimpses of participants who at first were unwilling to study abroad. However, after studying abroad, Chinese adolescents realized that developed countries are better places than China; some of them even saw these countries as paradise. They hoped to obtain knowledge and “repay” China due to their patriotism; they reconsidered their home country (China) and wanted to make it a better place to live. In my study, transnational students came to the West with aspiration towards Western education, and they were more patriotic towards their home country after

their educational experiences. Some hope to repay China after gaining Western knowledge and even working experiences.

The sense of patriotism also seems to come from Chinese families' and students' affinity for their Chinese cultural roots and heritage. Some parents admitted that they prefer to keep their children in China to finish their university education in order to learn more about Chinese culture and keep their cultural roots. From my understanding, they hope to keep their traditional cultural roots, as Angelina's father said, "Because we are Chinese, we must learn Chinese culture first!" (Angelina's father, p. 7)

In their acculturation process, compared to other mature immigrants, my student participants had less interests in integrating into mainstream society (e.g., Zed). As we have discussed previously, some stayed in their own comfort zone without making friends with local people (e.g., Judy, Max, Zed) due to their lack of social and cultural capital in the West. As Judy explained:

I want to add one thing, I have got the sense that a lot of Chinese students and that frequently one sees with international students, I see it with Saudi students, with like Indian students and so on. They remain in their own like cultural peer groups and they will speak outside the classroom their languages and they will be immersed in their culture . . . when I make them do group work with Canadian students they do not associate with any Canadians. If there is group work and I don't design the groups, they will work in their groups and they will just talk Chinese among themselves and then try to translate it into English, right? . . . perhaps they are overwhelmed to remain

within your cultural and lingual environment and then that kind of like aspiration that learning it. (Judy, p. 11–12)

These transnational adolescents, compared to peers originated from other countries, were more eager to maintain their cultural and social connections. This sense of pride in Chinese culture was strengthened by the fast development of Chinese economy. As Ong (1999) observed, “China, which embarked upon a buoyant wave of global capitalism in 1980s, is . . . experiencing a crisis of cultural identity.” (p. 60) According to Ong (1999), the influx of global capital challenged and even, sometimes and to some extent, threatened Chinese identity as a national identity. However, after two decades, with the economic development and political impacts on global countries, it seems that the national and cultural identity has been strengthened.

4. Going Back to China after Strategically Accumulated Desirable Capitals

As mentioned above, although my student participants hoped to return to China, the majority of them planned on not to return to China immediately upon their graduation. They preferred to work in the West first and then seek career opportunities in China after they obtained additional Western cultural capital, working experience in particular (e.g., Blueyuan, Jessica, Jessica’s mother, Tom). For some students, accumulating working experience in Canada can help them find a decent job back in China. Nevertheless, to many of my participants, the ultimate goal was returning to their home country. For example, Jessica, a graduate student in the accounting field at a Canadian university who has been living in Canada for 7 years, realized that it is

very difficult for Chinese international students to find a job in China right after their graduation from a Western university because they do not have working capital. Her mother had similar thought: “If you want to find a good job, now it’s all done from here. It’s hard to find . . . you have to have work experience” (Jessica’s mother, p. 11). Even for those who had no intention to apply for immigration upon graduation, they still wanted to stay in Canada for a couple of years to accumulate working experience before returning to China. This was Blueyuan’s mentality: “I want to accumulate some work experience here and then go back, but I will not immigrate when I return home, but I will go back.” (Blueyuan, p. 10)

In this case, my participants hope to accumulate social and cultural capital through working in the West and translate them into economic capital, through career advancement, upon their return to China (e.g., Chen; Elliot, Jessica, Judy, Louise, Ren, Xiaobao Wei, Zed, Zhuang). As Chen told me,

So, now I’m accumulating my overseas work experience, because many overseas students lack of working experience of large overseas companies. I’m accumulating it. I think after I get the CPA, and accumulate working experience, then I have my diploma. When I returned to China, it will be my time and market. (p. 14)

Rex, the educator who worked as a recruiting agent of Chinese international students to Canada, and who has deep understanding of Chinese parents and families through his working experience, told me that Chinese students would be more competitive after they gained working experience in Canada: “Now there are more international students, so parents think that if you have working experience in the West, you will be

more competitive and worth more if you go back to China" (Rex, p. 9). Even for Angelina who is patriotic towards her country, admitted that she would try to seek a job in Canada first and go back to China two years later:

I will return to China, but I will not return home immediately . . . I will build up some working experience here and then go back to China . . . I may be working for two years! . . . Because if I immediately go back, I was just a pure returnee without any working experiences. (Angelina, p. 20)

We can see that my participants are more eager to accumulate cultural capital (working experience) in the West before returning to China in order to become a flexible citizen with cosmopolitan sensitivity.

5. Being Transnational

As noted, my participants strategically mobilized their various forms of capital in order to develop flexible citizenship. From their experiences, we can see that these students and their families utilized their capital quite flexibly to gain entry to a Western undergraduate program but for periods of time their educational routes were quite fixed. According to Ong (1999), flexible citizenship can "respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions" (p. 6). In this regard, my participants' flexible citizenship was not so fluid and future oriented. Some students believed that it is a backup for their families in case something happened; as Sam said, "The benefit to me and my family is that we have one more choice and we have one

more escape route. If there is any opportunity or something is happening, we can continue to work in Canada” (Sam, p. 9).

The feeling of insecurity and escape route echoes Ong's findings (1999) in which the participants are eager to hold a Western passport in case of political turbulence. Albeit in my study, Sam's awareness of political conditions represents an exception from the other participants. For those who articulated that they would have a good chance to stay in Canada were still open to opportunities to return to China (Ren, p. 12). They would choose a place to live where they would have more opportunities, without being constrained by geography (e.g., Zed). The reason why they wanted to choose to return to China was partly because of developing opportunities and its potentials (Bob, p. 12; Xiaobao Wei, p.15). This echoes Lee's (2006) findings that Chinese international students pay attention to opportunities in China given the fast development of Chinese economy.

In some ways my participants were working towards flexible futures. This is in accordance with Soong's (2016) finding that Chinese students hope to have a better life opportunity through transnational migration. As suggested by Rex, “Basically, if you ask any parent, he will tell you that I will let my child get a free life, that is, a more stable life, a more free life.” (Rex, p. 9) In fact, some of my participants would not constrain themselves in China or Canada (Tom, p. 20–21), they are flexible in finding opportunities even in other countries such as the United States (Gu's mother, p. 11; Jack, p. 9; p. 10; Longgu, p. 11; Louise, p. 15; Max's father, p. 9; Ren, p. 13) or the United Kingdom (Xiaobao Wei, p. 16). One of my participants, Jack, said,

My idea is to start with work at first and then compare development opportunities...If it is good for me to stay in Canada, I will stay. I also may choose to return to China or go to another country . . . It may be to see which country has developed better. (Jack, p. 9–10)

Resonating Jack's thought, Tom also expounded, "I'm also not sure if I prefer China more or prefer to stay in Canada . . . one more choice can provide me one more possibility." (Tom, p. 20–21) Xiaobao Wei, a girl coming from the upper-middle class told me, "I can go where I want to go. I can go to Canada this year. I will go to the United States next year. When I go to England the year after next year, why do I have to stay in Canada?" (Xiaobao Wei, p. 16)

Securing a permanent resident card in Canada is a way for these international students to have more choices. Albeit, some Chinese international students hope to immigrate to Canada given the whole family's expectations for their career development and affluent lifestyle in the West. Participants wanted to acquire a permanent resident card from Canada because of the convenience it would bring, including staying in either China or Canada at their wish. But many indicated that they did not want to become a Canadian because in doing so, they have to give up their Chinese citizenship, which means losing their flexibility since they have to apply for a visa from China. (e.g., Zed, Eric). For them, it was better to acquire a permanent resident card in Canada, as they have little desire to possess a Canadian passport.

If asked me to give up my Chinese citizenship, I think I am Chinese. Why do you want to become your Canadian? There is also a sense of pride in China and a sense of national pride. I don't want to change. (Xiaobao Wei, p. 10)

This rationale reflects Xiaobao Wei's privilege in China whose family owned a business in their hometown after her father had built up social capitals through work experiences in government. Also, it shows that my participants were using their own nationalism to enact flexible citizenship in their home country, which echoes Fong's (2011) findings that her participants "hope that such education would increase their access to social and cultural citizenship in the developed world—and sometimes to legal citizenship in developed countries—while also trying to maintain their social, cultural, and legal citizenship in China" (p. 5).

6. Student-Migrant-Returnee Nexus

It was an immigration plan that pushed some of my participants to study in the West (e.g., Louise, Bob), which echoes the findings of previous research such as Chen (2006; 2007), Fong (2011), and Soong (2016). As a Chinese local high school principal, Bob noted,

Actually, when a child goes out to study, many families hoped their children could stay in the West . . . I feel that many of the families I have contact with are still sending their children abroad, or are they hoping that this child will stay abroad if possible in the future. (Bob, p. 10)

Another key informant Louise further explained, “I think a fair number of students have immigration as something that is expectation whether it’s theirs or their parents” (Louise, p.13). Apparently, immigration is an important pull factor in influencing Chinese students’ study abroad decision-making process. In the literature review chapter, I cited Soong’s (2016) study in which she discussed a student-migration nexus where her participants hope to migrate to Australia through educational pathway. However, my study reveals a student-migration-returnee nexus.

The more I talked to my participants, the more I heard about these families’ wish to create opportunities for their children to return to China. Elliot’s mother shared with me her thoughts:

If [Elliot] wants to immigrate, I don't want to restrict him, but from my own heart, I don't want him to immigrate . . . I think that you were born in China, and surely this land is the best place for you to grow... In foreign countries, there will certainly be some conflicts in cultural life, including diet. I think the conflict is also quite large. So from my heart, I don't want him to immigrate. (Elliot’s mother, p. 12)

In this view, Chinese families still prefer China as a place to work and live, but embrace the transnationalism opportunities that experiences abroad afford them. One key informant, Elizabeth, who is an ESL professor at an Ontario public college, told me, “From what I understand, they imagine their child coming back to China and having a successful job” (Elizabeth, p. 11).

Therefore, this finding brings into question the Canadian national policy. Canada regards international students as an ideal group for immigration because they possess

higher English proficiency and are more familiar with Canadian culture. The assumption underpinning this policy is that international students will want to work and live in Canada after they get immigration status and then contribute to Canadian economic development. However, many student participants as well as educators told me that Chinese international students would prefer to return to China, if not immediately after their graduation. They prefer to work in the West first and then seek career opportunities after they obtain Western work experience. In this scenario, they hope to accumulate social and cultural capital through working in the West and translate them into new capital when they go back to China (e.g., Chen, Jessica, Ren, Xiaobao Wei, Zed, Zhuang). Even for the few who articulated that they have a good chance to stay in Canada, they are still open to opportunities to return to China (Ren, p.12). Bob, who has been working as an educator in China for 28 years, told me,

The [Chinese] domestic development in the past few years is also relatively fast.

Therefore, it may be that there are more job opportunities. So, is there a phenomenon of backflow of foreign students now? Is the return flow fiercer than before? Isn't it?

In terms of returning students, the percentage of reflux is now greatly increased. (p.

13)

My participants' decision to return to China mainly depends on opportunities and the economic development in China (Angelina's father, p. 8; Kim's mother, p. 10; Xiaobao Wei, p. 15; Zed's mother, p. 9). When asked about whether he wanted his daughter to return to China after graduation, Angelina's father said "I hope she can return to China . . . In fact, although Canada is actually a lot of land, the space for

development is not necessarily good enough” (Angelina’s father, p. 8). Economic potentials in China function as a main attraction for my participants when they decide to leave Canada and migrate back to China. The majority of my participants, including parents and students, did hope to secure a permanent residence status after students finished their education in Canada. Simultaneously, they still want to seek opportunity to return to China after accumulating working experience in the West since working experience in Canada can add points when they try to find a job back in China. Sam’s mother told me in this way:

Because China’s development is also very fast now, is it? . . . I think he has this experience in this piece of work in Canada, come back here, it will benefit his career a lot due to this fast economic development in China. (Sam’s mother, p. 11)

These students were calculating development opportunities in China, as Tom said,

When I saw that there was enough development opportunities in China . . . If I can seek an opportunity to work in a company in Canada for a while. Then when I accumulate enough experience, I can have enough ability to bring this technology back to China and then to promote it in China. (Tom, p. 20)

For Tom, introducing advanced technology and ideas from a Western country to China was a main interest to study in the West as an international student. From what we have seen, my participants employed flexible citizenship when they faced choices in their daily-life situations, and thereafter they advanced their flexible citizenship along their transnational trajectories. Detecting rising economic potentials in China while feeling pessimism in the Canadian economy, they responded by choosing to be

returnees with a Western degree and experience of Western culture in hands, while holding onto the possibility of a return to Canada through permanent residency status. Thus, as flexible and economically-privileged citizens, they are calculating their benefits and risks in both China and the West in order to pursue their desirable aspirations.

7. Conclusion

This research builds on previous research to investigate Chinese families' transnational movement. In this research, I examined Chinese students' transnational migration via various pathways to the West with a purpose to access undergraduate education. What social conditions facilitated their educational transnational mobility from China to the West, what types or forms of capital were needed in order to access Western education, and how these capitals translated, converted and exchanged along with their transnational migration process. Simultaneously, I investigated how participants deployed their flexible citizenship in their capitalist accumulation and translation processes, considering class and gender perspectives.

I conducted 55 interviews, plus follow-ups, with participants over a period of 18 months. These Chinese families representing a variety of educational backgrounds and social classes to answer my research questions. Conversations with 23 families allowed me to better understand nuclear Chinese families' transnational trajectories, their capital accumulation/translation in this process, social conditions that facilitated their decision of sending children abroad, and challenges that Chinese international

students faced while abroad, which triggered their formation of flexible citizenship. In this research, I found that the formation of Chinese families' flexible citizenship is a trend driven by cultural and social forces in Chinese national and local contexts with neoliberal permeation, and that Chinese families strategically mobilized their various forms of capital to achieve flexible citizenship. Also, in this research, I discussed how gender plays a role in the formation of Chinese families' flexible citizenship. The findings of this research suggest a number of strands for future research:

7.1. Future research. This research examined that Chinese international students were more willing to return to China after they secured permanent residency in the West (e.g., Blueyuan, Chen, Dabao, Longgu). How can we better understand the current younger generation of Chinese international students? Are they returning migrants after they secured their permanent resident cards and acquired working experience in Canada? Or should they be still defined as returning international students since they have decided to return to their home country upon their arrival in Canada? Rather than expecting international students to be excellent candidates for immigration, one should take into consideration their motivations to come to Canada, their adjustment process, and their willingness to stay in Canada upon graduation. Are they more willing to stay in Canada or are they potential returnees? More research with respect to students-migration-returnees nexus is needed to understand their motivations as international student returnees and their trajectories in transnational spaces. By knowing the incentives that drive the students' decision process in the students' perspectives, researchers can provide concrete suggestions, such as how to

improve institutional supporting system, to educational practitioners, parents, and students. Further, under larger geopolitical change, we might anticipate shifts in how Chinese students strategically choose to be mobile.

7.2. Future practice. The issue of mental health and wellbeing of Chinese international students surfaces from time to time. More research about mental health issue should be conducted with international student group since they are more vulnerable compared with local peers. In my study, some student participants felt isolated and lonely. Some suffered from depression, even were diagnosed as mental health problems. Also, reports from key informants, who had long-time working experiences with Chinese international students, revealed that some Chinese international students that they knew ended up with drugs, even suicide. Further research is necessary to investigate this issue and provide practical suggestions in facilitating international students' transition process. Admittedly the constructs of "flexible citizenship" and "capital" tend to ignore the emotional well-being of mobile students who are more than rational, calculating subjects. In the sense, new constructs need to be employed to engage this new area for research. In practice, educators who are working with international students should pay more attention to mental wellbeing of international students.

Also, findings from this research related to pathways can provide practical implications to recruiters who work for Canadian universities about how Chinese families choose Canadian universities for their children, and about "invisible" actors,

such as agents, in Chinese families' decision-making process that were ignored in the previous research.

7.3. Future policy. Most of participants reported that they were facing challenges and even racism in the host community. Judging from their unpleasant experiences in Canada, we can detect a major barrier that the host schools and communities are not addressing. We have to admit that this problem is institutional. My student participants have great difficulty in communicating with instructors and some key informants said some schools isolated Chinese international students in one class and local students in the other class. All of these instances call for extensive future research to look at international student support system from a practical perspective to smooth students' transition process. There is a need to bridge systematic educational support at Canadian schools and international students' needs. Chinese international students can respond to their surroundings by deploying their flexible citizenship, but, simultaneously, they face various challenges in this process as we have discussed before. A support system will better facilitate their acculturation process in a new country.

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Appendix I

Letter of Information and Consent form

Title: Routes to a Western Undergraduate Degree: Chinese Families' Mobilization of Capital and Flexible Citizenship.

Principal Investigators:

Paul Tarc, PhD, Education, Western University

Melody Viczko, PhD, Education, Western University

Letter of Information

1. Invitation to Participate

You are being invited to participate in this research study about the educational pathways taken by Chinese students who do their undergraduate education in the West, because you have insider knowledge on this topic.

2. Purpose of the Letter

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information required for you to make an informed decision regarding participation in this research.

3. Purpose of this Study

The main purpose of this research project is to develop a comprehensive understanding of why and how Chinese families choose educational pathways for their children that lead to a Western undergraduate education. This study will examine the knowledge, connections and resources required to take these pathways and what new opportunities and risks they open up for families and students.

4. Inclusion Criteria

Participants must be one of three distinct groups, as follows: parents who have chosen one of these pathways for one or more of their children; Chinese international students who are 18 years or older and who are currently studying in a university in Canada;

and key informants who support Chinese students and their families for study abroad (i.e. recruiters, counsellors, principals, etc). For the student participants, they will have studied or are currently studying in Canada. For parents, they will have children who have studied or are studying in Canada. For key informants, they should have experience working with Chinese families and/or students in the process of preparing to study abroad.

5. Study Procedures

You are being invited to participate in a study that we, Qinghua Zhao, Melody Viczko and Paul Tarc, are conducting.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews will be conducted with parents, students and key informants. The face-to-face interview location will be chosen at the convenience of participants. These may occur in China or in Canada. Alternatively, the interview might be conducted through Skype or by phone if participants request it. Interviews will take approximately 90 minutes and will be conducted in English or Mandarin according to the preference of the participant. The interview will be recorded and the participant can still participate in the research if they do not wish to be recorded. A short follow-up interview of 15 minutes will be conducted at a future date if there is a need to clarify responses given in the first, main interview.

6. Possible Risks and Harms

There are no foreseeable potential risks and harms associated with participation in this study. However, critical exploration of personal thoughts, opinions, and/or reflections expressed and discussed in the interviews hold the potential to cause discomfort. As

requested by the participant, any questions / discussions / explorations that cause the participant to feel discomfort or distress will be discontinued.

7. Potential Benefits

Through participating within this study participants will be able to share, express and reflect on their experiences. Some people find it helpful to share their story.

8. Voluntary Participation

There is no obligation to participate in the study; participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. No penalty will accrue as the result of not participating in our study. No information will be used in the study that will identify a particular research participant.

9. Storage of Data

All data will be locked and retained by Qinghua Zhao for a period of five years in accordance with the ethical guidelines of Western University. The Board Chair will be given an executive summary of the research results and a copy of the project upon request. In addition, the results may be presented at workshops and prepared for possible publication. There will be public access to the completed project at the Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies of the Faculty of Education at Western University. The public access will only be to aggregate / published data and not identifiable data.

10. Confidentiality

Collected data is confidential and accessible only to the investigators of this study. If the results are published, your name will not be used. Personal data to be collected

includes: full name; telephone number(s) (local and overseas); email address; and, partial date of birth (or, approximate age). If you choose to withdraw from this study, your data will be removed and destroyed from our database. All data will be retained for a minimum of 5 years. While we will do our best to protect your information there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so. Moreover, be aware that researchers are obligated to report information of illegal activity or harm done to others to outside agencies that may arise in this study. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may contact you or require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

The privacy of the participant will be protected in two ways. First, only the lead-researchers will have direct contact with the participants who shall remain anonymous in the presentation of the results of the study. Although direct quotations from the interview may be used, participants will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information will be removed from the report. Additionally, identifiable data will be encrypted in this study. Secondly, to further provide anonymity of the participants, data collected will be aggregated prior to reporting results and will be securely stored by the lead-researchers. The content of the interviews will not be shared with anyone. Please note that if the interview is conducted through Skype or by phone the connection may not be secure and confidential. All documents with your information will be identified only by a code number and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. All computer documents with your information will be secured with a password and accessible to only those on the research team. With the information you

share in this interview will be used in reports, you will not be identified by name. The researchers will use several mechanisms to ensure that it is impossible to identify you or any organization you are part of in the reporting of study results.

11. Right to Withdraw

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study (notification by e-mail, letter or phone) for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the study at any time, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed at your request. No one outside of the research team will be informed if you withdraw, and all information you provide will be permanently deleted from the research database.

12. Transcript Review

After the interview participants will have an opportunity to review the transcripts. Once we transcribe the interview we will email it to you. You can make any changes to your interview up to three weeks after receiving it. You may request that certain scenarios and/or sections of the interview be changed or not recorded. Should we not hear from you within three weeks, we will assume that you have approved the material in its original form.

13. Reporting the Research

It is anticipated that direct quotes of participants' responses and interactions in interviews will be used in the dissemination of this research. Consent to use direct quotes is confirmed or denied by checking the appropriate box corresponding to direct quotation usage in the Letter of Consent.

14. Publication

The findings that arise from our analysis will be published and discussed in aggregate terms in reports, conferences, journal articles and/or books. Some of the information you provide will be reported. If you decide to remain anonymous, we will alter your demographic information and use a pseudonym to remove the likelihood of you being identified. If the results of the study are published, your name will not be used. If you would like to receive a copy of any potential study results, please contact Qinghua Zhao.

15. Consent

Included with this Letter of Information is a Consent Form that you must sign in order to participate. This letter will be kept for future reference. Although the written letter of consent confirms participants' interest in continuing through all research stages.

Those chosen to continue with follow-up interviews will be asked to confirm further participation via verbal consent. The verbal consent script will only be used after the letter of information has been provided to / read to the potential participant.

16. Contacts for Further Information

If you require any further information regarding this research project or your participation in the study you may contact:

Paul Tarc, Principal Investigator

Melody Viczko, Research Team Member

Qinghua Zhao, Research Team Member

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics in the Support Services Building, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, N6A 3K7. There

will be public access to the completed project in the Faculty of Education, Western University, if participants wish to view the results of the research.

Consent Form

Title: Routes to a Western Undergraduate Degree: Chinese Families' Mobilization of Capital and Flexible Citizenship

Principal Investigator: Paul Tarc, PhD, Education, Western University

Research Team Member: Melody Viczko, PhD, Education, Western University

Qinghua Zhao, PhD candidate, Education, Western University

I have read and understand the Letter of Information provided above. I have had the nature of the study explained to me, have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions, and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

*Prior to the interview the consent form will be reread to you to ensure your interest in participating. Your consent form will be stored separately from the interview data.

I agree to participate in all stages of this study.

YES ___ NO

I agree to have my interviews audio recorded.

YES ___ NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES ___ NO

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym:

YES ___ NO

The pseudonym I choose for myself is:

Participant's Name (please print)

Participant's Signature (*written consent*)

Date

Your signature on this form indicates that you (1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, (2) agree to participate as a research subject, and (3) have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Researcher Obtaining Consent (please print)

Signature

Date

Sincerely,

PhD candidate: Qinghua Zhao

Appendix II

Email to International Department and the Chinese Student Association

To whom it may concern:

I am a full-time PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Western. I hope to recruit participants for my research titled: Routes to a Western Undergraduate Degree: Chinese Families' Mobilization of Capital and Flexible Citizenship. Could you please help me by sending out the following email and the attached letter of information to all undergraduate international students from China via your email system? If you do not have a separate list for Chinese international students then the message can go out to all undergraduate students as I have indicated in my message below that only interested international students from China need apply? Thank you very much for your attention and support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Best Regards,

Ph.D candidate: Qinghua Zhao

Principal Investigators: Paul Tarc, Associate Professor, Education

Melody Viczko, Assistant Professor

Dear student:

The study is entitled: Routes to a Western Undergraduate Degree: Chinese Families' Mobilization of Capitals and Flexible Citizenship. The main purpose of this research project is to develop a comprehensive understanding of why and how Chinese families choose to send their children to universities in Canada.

If you are an international undergraduate student from China, we are inviting you to participate in this research study. The interview should take approximately one to two hours to complete. If you are willing to take part in this interview, please contact the researcher Qinghua Zhao. There is minimal risk involved in this study. We will keep all comments confidential. There is no obligation to participate in the study since participation is voluntary. No penalty will accrue as a result of not participating in the study. No information will be used in the study that will identify a particular participant.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact us at any time. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Research Subject. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UWO Office of Research Services. You may request an executive summary of the study's findings by contacting me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Ph.D candidate: Qinghua Zhao

Principal Investigators: Paul Tarc, Associate Professor, Education

Melody Viczko, Assistant Professor, Education

another pathway, would you choose
this pathway again? Why?

another pathway, would you choose
this pathway again? Why?

Appendix VI

Verbal Script for Consenting for the Follow-up Interview

I have been provided to/ read the Letter of Information provided by the researcher. I have understood the nature of the study, have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions, and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in a follow-up interview in this study, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Appendix VII



**Western
Research**

Research Ethics

Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board
NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Paul Tarc
Department & Institution: Education/Faculty of Education, Western University

NMREB File Number: 109158
Study Title: Routes to a Western Undergraduate Degree: Chinese Families' Mobilization of Capital and Flexible Citizenship

NMREB Initial Approval Date: May 01, 2017
NMREB Expiry Date: May 01, 2018

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Western University Protocol	Received April 10, 2017	
Instruments	Interview questions for Parents (Mandarin Version)	2017/03/07
Instruments	Interview questions for Students (English Version)	2017/03/07
Instruments	Interview questions for Parents (English Version)	2017/03/07
Instruments	Interview questions for Educational Practitioners (English Version)	2017/03/07
Instruments	Interview questions for Students (Mandarin Version)	2017/03/07
Instruments	Interview questions for Educational Practitioners (Mandarin Version)	2017/03/07
Other	Verification of English-Mandarin Translations - Received April 12, 2017. Received for information.	
Other	Verbal Script for Consenting for the Follow-up Interview (English Version)	2017/04/12
Other	Verbal Script for Consenting for the Follow-up Interview (Mandarin Version)	2017/04/12
Letter of Information & Consent	Letter of Information and Consent Form (Mandarin Version)	2017/04/12
Letter of Information & Consent	Letter of Information and Consent Form (English Version)	2017/04/12
Recruitment Items	Email to the International Department and the Chinese Student Association	2017/03/17

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Ethics Officer, on behalf of Dr. Riley Hinson, NMREB Chair or delegated board member

EO: Erika Basile ___ Grace Kelly Katelyn Harris ___ Nicola Morphet ___ Karen Gopaul ___

Western University, Research, Support Services Bldg., Rm. 5150
London, ON, Canada N6G 1G9 t. 519.661.3036 f. 519.850.2466 www.uwo.ca/research/ethics



**Western
Research**

**Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board
NMREB Amendment Approval Notice**

Principal Investigator: Dr. Paul Tarc
Department & Institution: Education\Faculty of Education, Western University

NMREB File Number: 109158
Study Title: Routes to a Western Undergraduate Degree: Chinese Families' Mobilization of Capital and Flexible Citizenship

NMREB Revision Approval Date: May 24, 2017
NMREB Expiry Date: May 01, 2018

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Other	Verification of English-Mandarin Translations. Received May 23, 2017. Received For Information.	
Revised Western University Protocol	Received May 23, 2017.	
Advertisement	English.	2017/05/15
Advertisement	Mandarin	2017/03/17

The Western University Non-Medical Science Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the amendment to the above named study, as of the NMREB Amendment Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Ethics Officer, on behalf of Dr. Riley Hanson, NMREB Chair
EO: Erika Basile ___ Grace Kelly Katelyn Harris ___ Nicola Morphet ___ Karen Gopaul ___ Patricia Sargeant

Appendix VIII

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy

Research Area: International and comparative education

The University of Western Ontario, London, ON

Master of Education

Research Area: Educational administration and leadership

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

Master of Arts – Economics

The Central University for Nationalities, Beijing, China

Bachelor of Arts – Language and literature

The Central University for Nationalities, Beijing, China

Research Interest

Chinese Immigrants in Canada

Social Inclusion of Marginalized Immigrants

International and Comparative Education

Internationalization and Marketization of education

Cross-cultural Comparative Educational Leadership

Leadership and Organization

Culture and Diversity

Research Experience

BA thesis: *A Research on the Differences of Some Prepositions in Mongolian and English*

MA thesis: *How to bridge the information divide in marginalized rural area in China*

Graduation Paper for MED: *Analysis of Recruitment Strategies Used by Vancouver-based School Districts in Attracting Chinese Students in their International Secondary School Programs*

Research Assistant

September, 2016–August, 2018

Mapping the influence of national and international actors in Canadian higher education governance, SSHRC Insight Development Grant

Research Assistant

September, 2015–April, 2016

Dr. Viczko

Research Assistant

July, 2014–August, 2015

Constitution of transnational social space: Migrant women managing careers in science and engineering between China and Canada, Hampton Research Project at UBC

Research Project Participated:

(Dr. Hongxia Shan) *Constitution of transnational social space: Migrant women managing careers in science and engineering between China and Canada*. Funded by the UBC Hampton Fund Research Grant.

(Professor Lijun Zhang) 国家兴边富民行动规划 (2011-2015) 实施效果研究国家民委课题

(Dr. Lijun Zhang) 兴边富民行动边境县实施状况对边境州市辐射带动作用研究

(Dr. Lijun Zhang) 牧区生态移民安置及可持续发展研究 (国家社科基金, 项目编号: 11BMZ058)

Conference publications:

Zhao, Q. (2019). *Routes toward Western undergraduate education: Chinese families' capital translation and flexible citizenship*. Paper presented at 47th CSSE Conference, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Larsen, M., Zhao, H., Zhang, B., Zhao, Q. (2019). *Higher education internationalization and transnational mobilities: Problematizing student, academic/faculty and program mobility within the neoliberal knowledge economy*. Symposium-panel presented at 47th CSSE Conference, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Zhao, Q., Wu, X. (2018). *Push factors influencing student transnational movement from China to Canada*. Paper presented at 45th CSSE Conference, Ryerson University, Toronto.

Zhao, Q. (2017). *Chinese families' mobilization of capital and flexible citizenship in Chinese students' transnational mobility*. Paper presented at the fifth worldwide forum for comparative education, Beijing Normal University, Beijing.

Zhao, Q. (2017). *Analysis of recruitment strategies used by Vancouver-based school districts in attracting Chinese students in their international secondary school programs*. Paper presented at the fifth worldwide forum for comparative education, Beijing Normal University, Beijing.

Zhao, Q. (2017). *Routes towards Western undergraduate education: Chinese families' capital translation and flexible citizenship*. Paper presented at 45th CSSE Conference, Ryerson University, Toronto.

Shan, H., Pullman, A., Zhao, Q. (2015). *Gendering transnational social space: Chinese migrant women navigating careers and lives between Canada and China*. Paper presented at European Educational Research Conference, Sept. 7-11, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.

Publications:

Shan, H. S., Pullman, A., & Zhao, Q. H. (2016). The making of transnational social space: Chinese women managing careers and lives between China and Canada. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 25(2).

Peer Reviewer, CSSE and CIESC Conference Proposals (2016, 2017, 2018)

Awards:

Alma Mater Society Student Aid Bursary (2013W UBC)	CAD 5150.00
A. Hattrick Bursary in Education (2012W UBC)	CAD 600.00
University of BC Bursary (2012W UBC)	CAD 1500.00
Student Aid Bursary for Graduate Students (2012S UBC)	CAD 4850.00

Professional Memberships

Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC)
Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE)