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Policy Transfer Across Borders: An Actor Network Analysis of Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in China

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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

Adopting a critical approach to policy analysis, this qualitative comparative case study uses Actor Network Theory (ANT) to explore the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China, the adaptations of the discourse as observed in the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* (PSfP) (MoE of the PRC, 2013), and the enactment of the PSfP in schools. While most studies researching the PSfP are limited to the context of China, this dissertation situates the policy in the global convergence of leadership standards, and highlights the nature of policy transfer, which is multi-directional and political. Focusing on the notion of enactment, the study also addresses that the enactment of policy is both relational and multiple.

The findings suggest that in developing the PSfP, different types of actors were either enrolled or marginalized depending on their connections with government departments. The global discourse on leadership standards has also been adapted by emphasizing: 1) the authority of socialism, China's Communist Party (the Party), and the State; 2) morality; 3) student overall development; and 4) cultures and traditions. Another four themes were identified in terms of the enactment of the PSfP: 1) Everybody is responsible for his/her own duties; 2) Morality as moral education and moral leadership; 3) Student academic performance is the key; and 4) Cultures and traditions are essential.

In my analysis, I identified three assemblages (the assemblage of leadership standards, the assemblage of adaptations, the assemblage of enactment), and further interrogated the alignments and tensions between the policy adaptations as observed in the PSfP and the enactment of the policy. The assemblages are configured through the power relations among heterogenous types of actors, including the State, the Party, government departments, universities, think tanks, school leaders, schools' physical settings, and intergovernmental

organizations. The transfer and adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards to the Chinese context, as well as school leaders' enactment of the PSfP are all produced through those sociomaterial interrelationships, within which the actors make meanings of their relationships with others, manage to achieve balance among different interests, and devote to promote their own agendas.

Keywords: educational leadership, standards, Actor Network Theory, comparative and international education, policy analysis, critical policy analysis, China

Summary for Lay Audience

This dissertation explores the transnational flows of policy ideas by presenting a case of a standards-based policy introduced in China, namely, the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* (PSfP) (MoE of the PRC, 2013), which outlines the responsibilities, competencies, and practices that are expected for principals' and vice-principals. Predominant commonalities have been identified between similar standards from non-Chinese contexts, and the major dimensions outlined in the PSfP.

This study firstly explores the process of the development of the PSfP, and then sheds light on the ways in which the standards outlined in the policy are contextualized in China by highlighting four themes, including: 1) the authority of Socialism, China's Communist Party (the Party), and the State; 2) morality; 3) student overall development; and 4) cultures and traditions. The dissertation also offers a discussion of how the PSfP has been put into practice by principals and vice-principals in schools. Four themes emerged from the findings: 1) everybody is responsible for his/her own duties; 2) morality as moral education and moral leadership; 3) student academic performance is the key; and 4) cultures and traditions are essential.

A further interrogation of the alignments and tensions between the standards identified in the PSfP and school leaders' practices is manifested to address the conclusion that the development of the PSfP, the contextualization of leadership standards in China, and related practices of school leaders all rest in the interrelationships within which agenda setting and practices are both driven by divergent interests, negotiations and compromises.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANT: Actor Network Theory
CCSSO: Council of Chief State School Officers
ELCC: *Educational Leaders Constituent Council*
ILSAs: international large-scale assessments
ISLLC: *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium*
MoE of the PRC: Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China
NCR: New Curriculum Reform
NGOs: non-government organizations
NPBEA: National Policy Board for Educational Administration
NPM: New Public Management
OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment
PRC: People's Republic of China
PSfP: *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals*
PAS: Principal Accountability System
TALIS: Teaching and Learning International Survey
The Party: China's Communist Party
TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“校长是一个学校的灵魂。 [A principal is the soul of a school.]”

陶行知 Tao Xingzhi

1.1 The Global Leadership Turn

Globally, there is an infatuation with introducing standards for school principals and vice-principals. In most cases, these standards outline the responsibilities, competencies, and practices that are required for “successful” and “effective” leadership. In addition to offering guidelines and criteria, those leadership standards have been increasingly used in leadership preparation programs and the professional development as well as evaluation of principals and vice-principals. National standards for school leaders, administrators, and headteachers have been introduced in Australia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Ireland, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Global Observatory of Leadership Standards, n.d.). To cite a few examples, Australia introduced the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014). A document entitled the *Référentiel métier des directeurs d'école* [*Professional Framework of Reference for School Directors*] was introduced by the French Ministry of National Education (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, 2014). The New Zealand Ministry of Education also developed the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals: Principals as Educational Leaders* outlining leadership qualities required for school leaders (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008), and different versions of leadership standards at national level have been published in the United States, such as the *Educational Leadership*

Program Standards: 2011 ELCC Building Level (National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2011) and the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (NPBEA, 2015).

Leadership standards have also been produced at regional or sub-national levels. In the United States, all 50 states have published state-level leadership standards. Other examples of this trend include the *Principal Quality Practice Guidelines* (Alberta Education, 2009), *Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in British Columbia* (British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, 2016), and *Ontario Leadership Framework* (Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013) in Canada. Hong Kong published the *Continuing Professional Development of Principals* (Education Bureau for the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2002), and Scotland produced *The Standards for Leadership and Management: Supporting Leadership and Management Development* (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012).

Moving beyond geopolitical boundaries, we also see leadership standards being developed across regions. For example, a document titled *The Art and Science of Leading a School-Central 5: A Central European View on Competencies for School Leaders* was created in 2013 resulting from international co-operation among Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Sweden (Schratz et al., 2013). In addition to policies and governmental documents, some countries, such as Netherlands, Singapore, and Slovenia initiated collaboration between governments and universities or agencies, and produced standards and frameworks for principal preparation and training programs (Global Observatory of Leadership Standards, n.d.).

Various types of actors have engaged in the development of leadership standards across the world. Some leadership standards were developed by professional organizations. For

instance, in the United States, the *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium* (ISLLC) standards were developed by the NPBEA. The *Professional Standards for Educational Leadership* (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2015), which was published in 2015 to replace the 2008 ISLLC standards, was developed by NPBEA and the CCSSO. The CCSSO is one of the member organizations of the NPBEA. The two professional organizations guided the development of the document involving researchers as well as practicing leaders from both school and district levels (NPBEA, n.d.). There are also standards, for example, the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals: Principals as Educational Leaders* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008) released by government departments such as a Ministry of Education.

However, neither government departments nor professional organizations normally act alone. They work along with others to produce specific leadership standards that are adopted in the preparation, development, and evaluation of school leaders. For example, the *Ontario Leadership Framework* (Ontario Institute for Educational Leadership, 2013) was developed by the Ontario Institute for Educational Leadership. The Ontario Institute for Educational Leadership was brought together with a number of professional organizations (e.g. Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario, Ontario Principals' Council) by the Ontario Ministry of Education (Ontario Institute for Educational Leadership, n.d.). The Ontario Institute for Educational Leadership was funded as a key organization to support the development of the Ontario Leadership Strategy, which is an action plan of the Ontario Ministry of Education aiming at improving student achievement and well-being by promoting school and system leaders' skill development (Ontario Institute for Educational Leadership, n.d.).

Moreover, some universities have developed their own leadership standards and provided independent programs for school leaders' preparation and professional learning. Other

universities have worked with government departments. For instance, the National Institute of Education at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore worked in partnership with the national Ministry of Education to provide professional learning programs for selected education officers who “are experienced and well-qualified educators, with a background of successful experience in both teaching and management” (National Institute of Education, N.D.).

In addition to directly developing leadership standards and frameworks, there are also actors engaged in promoting the development and adoption of leadership standards. For instance, intergovernmental organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have published a series of documents to support educational leadership reforms. These documents define the roles and responsibilities of effective school leaders particularly in improving school outcomes (OECD, 2019). To cite one example, in defining school leaders’ responsibilities, the OECD includes practices such as “goal-setting, assessment and accountability”, improving student learning, and “providing higher degrees of autonomy with appropriate support” (OECD, 2008, p. 3). The documents also encourage the development of leadership frameworks to be used in leadership training and professional learning (OECD, 2008). Another document published by the UNESCO links effective leadership to student academic performance in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and calls for attention to school leaders’ responsibilities in monitoring and assessing student learning outcomes (Vaillant, 2015).

The spread of these leadership standards represents a “leadership turn”, which embraces this increasing focus on school leaders’ work and sees school leadership as a policy priority (Riveros & Wei, 2019). Principals and vice-principals have been positioned as the key actors that

influence student learning (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008; Riveros, Newton, & Burgess, 2017; Riveros, Verret, & Wei, 2016). Thus, as noted above, a significant number of jurisdictions have produced and adopted leadership standards, attempting to achieve improved student learning through effective and successful school leadership.

Recognizing this global leadership turn, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MoE of the PRC) introduced a policy entitled the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* (hereafter the PSfP) (MoE of the PRC, 2013) in 2013, as an attempt to standardize school leaders' responsibilities, competencies, and practices, and promote the school leaders' professionalization. This policy is the focus of this doctoral study as I am interested in the travel of those policy ideas related to school leadership to specific context, such as China.

1.2 Introducing the PSfP

As stated in the PSfP document, the main purpose of introducing the policy within China is to promote the professionalization of school leaders, build high-quality leadership teams, and further promote a balanced development of compulsory education. The specific purposes of the PSfP are: 1) to outline the fundamental competencies that are required for qualified school leaders; and 2) to provide references for developing standards that can be adopted in the assessment and evaluation of both practicing and aspiring school leaders, as well as professional learning programs (MoE of the PRC, 2013).

The policy includes three sections: “基本理念 [basic concepts]”, “基本内容 [content]”, and “实施要求 [requirements for implementation]”. The basic concepts section defines the rationales that are foundational and central to the development of the PSfP. These rationales include “以德为先 [morality as the first priority]”, “育人为本 [student overall development as

the basic], “引领发展 [leading development as the major responsibility]”, “能力为重 [building competencies as the focus]”, and “终身学习 [life-long learning]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013).

The content section identifies six dimensions of school leaders’ responsibilities. Within each dimension, ten standards are outlined in accordance with the knowledge, competencies, and practices that are expected for school leaders. The six dimensions include: 1) “规划学校发展 [planning for school development]” which refers to the responsibility to lead and set up the directions for the development of the school; 2) “营造育人文化 [building a culture of promoting student overall development]”, including emphasis on moral education, building school cultures, and the need to acquire the knowledge concerning characteristics of student moral and psychological development; 3) “领导课程教学 [leading curriculum and instruction]”, meaning ensuring teaching and learning are the core practices in schools, supervision and cooperating in curriculum development, and using data and technology to improve teaching quality; 4) “引领教师成长 [leading teacher growth]”, that is, providing the opportunities for and meeting the needs of teachers’ professional development, promoting collaborations among teachers and staff, and establishing the standards and rules for teacher evaluation; 5) “优化内部管理 [improving internal management]”, meaning ensuring practices from all aspects that are connected to the school priorities, and the capacity to organize and manage both individual and group work, 6) “调试外部环境 coordinating with external environment”, that is the capacity to negotiate with public relations, and to establish collaborations between the school, government, families, communities, and institutions (MoE of the PRC, 2013).

The third section lists the requirements for implementing the policy. The PSfP only applies to principals and vice-principals of full-time compulsory education (Grade 1 to Grade 9)

schools. Education government offices at provincial, municipal, and autonomous region-levels are encouraged to develop leadership standards based on local contexts. The policy also serves as the major reference in school leaders' professional learning programs developed by universities and related organizations (MoE of the PRC, 2013). A copy of the PSfP can be found at the end of this dissertation (Appendix 1). I also translated the document into English. (See Appendix 2.)

1.3 Proposing the Study

A discourse is a “system of statements whose organization is regular and systematic, consists of all that can be said and thought about a particular topic, as well as who has permission to speak and with what authority” (Foucault, 1972, p. 216). Some scholars have noticed a global discourse constituted by a convergence of leadership standards emphasizing a particular set of normalized leadership practices (O’Reilly & Reed, 2010; Riveros et al., 2016) that can be observed in leadership standards shared across various jurisdictions (Centre of Study for Policies and Practices in Education [CEPPE], & Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013; Murakami, Törnén, & Pollock, 2014; Pont et al., 2008). Moving away from a linguistic approach which understands language as an explicit and direct reflection of the world, this Foucauldian perspective of discourse concentrates on the subjectivities, knowledge, and norms that are legitimized and internalized through discourses (Foucault, 1972; Lingard, Hayes, & Mills, 2003).

Interested in the travel of the global discourse on leadership standards, the ways in which the discourse has been adapted to the Chinese context as observed in the PSfP, as well as how the PSfP has been enacted in schools, in this dissertation, I aim to explore the following questions:

1. Which types of actors have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, and how are they interrelated with one another?
2. How has the global discourse on leadership standards been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP policy?
3. How has the PSfP policy been enacted by principals and vice-principals in schools?

1.3.1 Self-positionality. In addition to the fact that little is known about the questions I listed above, my interest in this topic also originates from my personal background and experience: I was born and went to schools in Beijing, China where I collected my empirical data used in this dissertation. As many of my peers, I had limited connections with my principals and vice-principals when I was in schools in that Chinese school leaders are on the top of the hierarchical structure within schools and are difficult to be reached by individual students (Qian, Walker, & Li, 2017; Zhong & Ehrich, 2010). Therefore, while understanding school leaders particularly principals being the top authority within schools, and noticing the launch of the PSfP which aims at providing guidance and evaluation criteria for school leaders' work, I am curious about the power relations between policies and practices, as well as the effects of the discourse constituted through the PSfP.

Moreover, I left China in 2010 after completing my undergraduate education in Beijing. During my experience of studying in Canada and the United States, I have observed more similarities than I expected in education policies between the two countries and China. The alignment between the core dimensions outlined in the PSfP and the leadership practices identified by the global dominant discourse on leadership standards as I will mention in the next chapter is one of those similarities. Therefore, I developed this study due to my interests in the

transnational flows of policies as well as the ways in which such policies have been taken up in specific settings such as China.

My personal background and experience have mirrored the dilemma of being an insider/outsider, which is often discussed by researchers in the field of comparative and international education. The discussion of a researcher's positionality as an insider or outsider is related to the reflections of his/her perspectives, assumptions, and interpretations about the phenomena and norms encountered during the research process (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014). My previous experience of growing up and going to schools in China have provided me some insider perspectives in that to certain extent, I am familiar with the context of my research. While my disconnection from the Chinese context due to my more recent experience of living and studying in Canada for over eight years has "[made] the familiar strange" (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014, p. 61) considering the rapid changes happening in China that can be noted both through media and my communications with families and friends.

Consequently, it would be problematic to identify myself as either an insider or an outsider to the context of my research taking into consideration that the distinction between the two identities is ambiguous (McNess, Arthur, & Crossley, 2016; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014; Robinson-Pant, 2016). A researcher's identity is neither fixed nor stable. My positionality, or my identity is fluid due to my transnational experience. Spending a prolonged period in Canada, a country which is contextually different from China, I have numerous chances of comparing and reflecting upon the cultural and social norms that I encountered and took for granted in daily lives in China. Throughout the research process, I often find myself in a "third space", which is perceived as between the insider and outsider (McNess et al., 2016). Researchers working in this third space, like myself, engage with more than one social, cultural, and political context. One

major strength of those researchers is that they are more sensitive to the context of their research by showing sympathy to the research context while “retaining systematic rigour and an important degree of detachment from the culture and world view being studied” (McNess et al., 2016, p. 31). Based on my background and interest in education related issues in China, I therefore decided to carry this study. Next, I present a brief summary of the theoretical and methodological frameworks of my study.

1.3.2 Theoretical and methodological lens of the study. My positionality in the third space has shaped the theoretical and methodological lens of this dissertation. Even though interested in the constitution of the standardized leadership policy launched in China as well as its effects, I did not limit the scope of my study to the Chinese context. Instead, I perceive the PSfP as part of the transnational policy flows. To do so, I adopt the notion of policy transfer (Beech, 2006a, 2006b; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000) as an analytical lens to explore the process within which policy ideas, particularly those attempting to standardize school leaders’ competencies, responsibilities, and practices, have traveled across borders. More importantly, built upon this analytical lens, I shed light on the transfer of those ideas to China, and the ways in which those ideas have been adapted to and enacted in the Chinese context. Furthermore, this study is a critical policy analysis, which perceives policy texts as a result of negotiations and power relations among heterogenous stakeholders across different levels (Ball, 1993; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). I also adopt the concept of enactment (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012) to focus on school leaders’ practices rather than the effectiveness of the PSfP policy. Moreover, Actor Network Theory (ANT) has been used to guide the design, development, analysis, and writing up of my study (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Latour, 1999a).

In line with the critical approach of policy analysis as well as ANT, I chose qualitative comparative case study as my methodology and conducted a three-scale (vertical, horizontal, transversal) comparisons in this study (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009). In this study, data resources include document analysis, interviews, and observations. First, document analysis was conducted to understand the global dominant discourse on leadership standards, the development of the PSfP, as well as the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP. To understand the enactment of the PSfP, semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirteen principals and vice-principals from one primary school and five secondary schools. Observations were also conducted on the physical settings of those six schools, and five school leaders' practices involved in the enactment of the PSfP. Document analysis was also conducted on those documents collected during my interviews and observations. All of the schools in the study were in Beijing, China. As it is important to have an understanding of the broader context within which the study took place, I provide some background details about the administrative organization of the Chinese State and the Communist Party in China, as well as the administration of education through the National Ministry of Education and departments of education at various levels. This overview helps with my understandings and analysis of the roles and relationships among the types of actors in the processes of policy transfer and enactment.

1.3.3 The Sociopolitical Context of China. The leadership of China's Communist Party (the Party) has been well-established, and significantly emphasized in every aspect of the country since 1949 when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded. As the sole political power, the Party exercises its agency through its representatives at various levels. At the top of the system, the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee exercise the power of the Party's

Central Committee, and lead the National Congress of the Party. The Party has its agencies and representatives throughout the country within different levels of government departments and non-governmental organizations such as companies and schools. The Party's leadership is "political, ideological, and institutional" as reflected in five aspects: "1. to organize and exercise leadership over the country's legislative and law enforcement activities; 2. to maintain leadership over the armed forces; 3. to provide leadership and manage the work of officials; 4. to organize and mobilize society; 5. to give importance to ideological and political work" (Li, 2016, p. 14).

The State exercises its power through the National People's Congress. The National People's Congress exercises its agency mainly by:

- 1) amending the Constitution and overseeing its enforcement,
- 2) enacting and amending basic laws governing criminal offenses, civil affairs, state organs, and other matters,
- 3) electing and appointing members to central state bodies, and
- 4) determining major state issues (Li, 2016).

Even though the National People's Congress is led by the National Congress of the Party, the State's agency in decision-making has become more prominent, which I will discuss with regard to the relationships between the Party and the State in Chapter 6.

The State Council, or the Central Government, is the highest administrative authority in China, and the Ministry of Education of the PRC is administrated under the State Council. There are also organizations (e.g. National Bureau of Statistics), administrative offices (e.g. State Council Research Office), and institutions (e.g. Chinese Academy of Sciences) directly under the administration of the State Council (State Council of the PRC, n.d.).

Under the State Council, there are three levels of administration: provincial-level, county level, and township level. Provincial-level divisions are directly under the administration of the State Council. There are four kinds of provincial-level divisions: province, municipality, autonomous region, and special administered region. There are twenty-three provinces, five autonomous regions (e.g. Tibet and Xinjiang), two special administrative regions including Hong Kong and Macau, and four municipalities such as Beijing and Shanghai. Schools in the municipality of Beijing are the focus of this study.

Divisions at provincial-level have their own governments, and develop their own policies under the laws and regulations launched by the State Council. As autonomous regions have large populations of minority ethnic groups, more legislative rights are granted to those regions compared with provinces and municipalities. Under the principal of “one China, two systems”, the two special administrative regions, namely Hong Kong and Macau, operate under their own jurisdictions of laws while maintaining their place in a unified China (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2016).

The Ministry of Education of the PRC is the agency of the State Council that oversees education throughout the country. At the provincial level, there are departments of education or education commissions that are in charge of education. Provincial-level divisions are further subdivided into county levels and township levels, and the responsibilities of compulsory education lies with county-level administrations. At the country level, bureaus of education are in charge. Policies and regulations launched by the MoE of the PRC are implemented by local departments of education or education commissions. Local departments of education or education commissions also formulate policies that correspond to national policies with specific methods and guidelines added (OECD, 2016; Zhu & Zhang, 2013).

1.4 Outline of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I provide a review of literature from four perspectives: the background of and critiques toward leadership standards globally, the global convergence of leadership standards driven by New Public Management (NPM), researching policy transfer, and leadership standards in China.

Then, I demonstrate my analytical approach and theoretical framework in Chapter 3. In addition to explaining my critical approach to policy analysis, I illustrate the central ideas of Actor Network Theory (ANT), which is the theoretical framework guiding the development and analysis of my study, the ontology and epistemology in ANT, as well as the theorization of agency and intentionality from the perspectives of ANT. In the chapter, critiques toward ANT are outlined, and I offer my responses accordingly. I also demonstrate the challenges of using ANT and the reasons why ANT was chosen as the theoretical framework to guide my study.

In Chapter 4, an overview of the methodology is offered. I start with introducing qualitative research and case study. Attention is given to the methodology of my study, namely comparative case study by demonstrating the three-scale comparisons I undertook. I then illustrate the research methods, including interviews, observations, and document analysis, involved in this study. I also elaborate how my data was processed and analyzed. After that, issues related to validity, feasibility, and ethical considerations are outlined, and the methodological limitations of my approach are demonstrated.

Following the chapter of methodology, in Chapter 5, I present my findings in relation to the process of transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, the ways in which the discourse has been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP, as well as how the PSfP has been enacted in schools. The types of actors which have been involved in transferring

the global discourse on leadership standards, and how are they interrelated with one another are explained. Then, I elaborate on the themes that are identified in relation to the policy adaptations in the PSfP, as well as the enactment of the policy.

Chapter 6 presents my discussion regarding to the theorization of the three assemblages (the assemblage of leadership standards, the assemblage of adaptations, and the assemblage of enactment) identified in this study. By tracing the types of actors along with their interrelationships, I manifest the configuration of the process of transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, the adaptations of the discourse to the Chinese context in the PSfP policy, as well as the alignments and tensions between the standards outlined in the PSfP and the enactment of related standards. The actors and their interrelationships that have constituted the assemblages are traced and analyzed to understand the power relations in the processes of policy transfer and policy enactment. I also offer a discussion on the performativity of the assemblages with particular attention on the production of school leaders' identities and legitimacy. In the last chapter, I revisit the study, highlight the significance of the study, and also provide suggestions for future research.

1.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have set the global stage of this dissertation by providing a snapshot of the transnational fascination toward introducing school leadership standards that attempt to standardize school leaders' responsibilities, competencies, and practices. This fascination of standardizing the school leaders' work has also been observed in China, where a policy document entitled the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* (PSfP) was introduced in 2013. The PSfP was launched to provide the standards for promoting school leaders' professional development and identify six dimensions concerning school leaders' work.

These standards outline the knowledge, competencies, and practices within each dimension. Interested in the transnational flows of policy ideas as well as their adaptations and recontextualization, in this dissertation, I intend to explore the types of actors involved in the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China, and how they are interrelated to one another. I also explore the ways in which this global discourse has been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP. And finally, I aim to understand how the PSfP policy has been enacted in schools. In the next chapter, I turn my attention to reviewing the research literature that shaped my study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

In this chapter, I provide a review of literature related to the issues explored in this dissertation. After this overview, I start with providing the background of the spread of leadership standards, and the review of the major critiques toward the fascination of leadership standards across the world. Then, I review the scholarship comparing leadership standards from different jurisdictions which illustrates a global convergence of leadership standards. The relationship between the convergence, which is represented by evident commonalities within those standards, and NPM is demonstrated. A review of literature on policy transfer in education is also presented in this chapter. Next, I highlight the limitations of the existing literature on policy transfer, and explain how this dissertation will address these limitations. The last section offers a review of studies on the implications for developing Chinese leadership standards, as well as research specifically focused on the PSfP policy. The limitations within those studies, and the ways in which my study fill these gaps, are provided.

2.2 Leadership Standards Globally: Background and Critiques

2.2.1 Background. Due to the shifting local and global contexts, changes in school leaders' work, such as a call for greater accountability and the intensification of principals' work, have been observed by numerous researchers. Examples of the shifting contexts include changing demographic patterns, increased student mobility, changing labour markets, and the rapid development of technologies (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn, & Jackson, 2006; Murphy, 2014; Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2017; Pont et al., 2008). The changing contexts have created new challenges for the work of school leaders, as well as increased expectations for school leaders in response the contexts. As a result, we now see calls

for the development of more efficient leadership preparation programs, selection processes, and evaluation systems for principals and vice-principals (DeVita, Colvin, Darling-Hammond & Haycock, 2007; Pollock et al., 2017). At the heart of these programs, processes and systems is the idea of successful and/or effective school leaders. However, concern has been raised by researchers regarding the lack of clarification and definition of “success” and “efficiency” in school leadership. Many terms in the literature on educational leadership, such as “instructional”, “transformational” and “distributed”, have been used vaguely, and have caused confusion for school leaders and researchers (DeVita et al., 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood et al., 2008; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

There has been a push for adopting leadership standards that address school leaders’ contemporary work in principal preparation programs so that principal candidates can better understand the responsibilities and expectations for their future position (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Wildy, Pepper, & Luo, 2011). The introduction of leadership standards is proposed as necessary in that both aspiring and current principals’ practices need to be measurable (Murphy, 2017). Ingvarson et al. (2006) state that “[it] is difficult to place a value on teaching and school leadership without a capacity to evaluate the practice of teaching and leading” (p. 8). Therefore, leadership standards are established to provide explicit measurements for school leaders’ preparation and evaluation when facing the increasing competition and the roles of schools in preparing students for the global market (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Furman, 2012).

Some researchers have examined the use of such standards in leadership development programs and accountability systems (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Stevenson & Cooner, 2011; Wildy et al., 2011). For example, Catano and Stronge (2006) explored the congruence between principal evaluation instruments and leadership standards in the United States. They conclude

that the ISLLC standards (CCSSO, 1996), firstly developed in 1996 as a set of tools for the assessment of principal licensure and certification, help principal candidates better understand their responsibilities and expectations for the position. Catano and Stronge (2006) also assert that there are strong alignments between principals' work and the ISLLC standards, and therefore leadership standards will contribute to the improved effectiveness of leadership preparation programs. In a more recent book, Murphy (2017) reviewed the historical development of different versions of the ISLLC standards and highlights the theoretical and empirical foundations of those professional standards for school leaders. He asserts that although the ISLLC standards were designed primarily for principal preparation programs, the standards are also potential frameworks for principal evaluation and accountability systems particularly because they are measurable.

The fascination toward standardizing the definition of successful and effective school leadership also originates from a recognition of the significance of school leaders' roles in student learning and school reforms. School leaders' capacities are viewed as the key to successful education reforms. It is argued that principals have to be "diagnosticians" equipped with a set of skills to identify problems and provide staff with positive directions (Leithwood et al., 2004; DeVita et al., 2007). This drive to develop leadership standards is also directed by the research that links effective school leadership with student achievement. One of the most cited pieces of literature on this topic proposes that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching" among school-related factors in terms of the impact on student learning (Leithwood et al., 2008, p. 27). It is argued that school leaders play key roles in improving student learning by shaping school conditions, influencing teachers' motivation, and creating a collaborative and professional sense of community within schools (Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood et al., 2008).

Moreover, particular leadership styles such as instructional leadership and distributed leadership are proposed to have positive influences on improving student learning outcomes by supporting teachers' professional development (Bolden, 2011; Harris & Spillane, 2008; Portin, et al., 2009). It is these assumptions that drive the push to develop standards outlining what school leaders should be and what it means to be successful and effective school leaders.

2.2.2 Critiques. Even though leadership standards have been widely adopted, a large number of scholars have raised critiques regarding the introduction and the use of leadership standards. First of all, professional standards for school leaders have been criticized for being decontextualized (English, 2003, 2006; Davis, Gooden, & Micheaux, 2015; Louden & Wildy, 1999; Militello, Fusarelli, Alsbury, & Warren, 2013; Niesche, 2013). Louden and Wildy (1999) argue that leadership standards “describe an ideal performance in a generalized context” (p. 398), and are too vague to be used either as guidance or for evaluation. For example, the ISLLC standards (CCSSO, 1996) identify professional knowledge such as systems theory as required to meet the standards. Louden and Wildy (1999) argue, however, that it is unclear to what extent school leaders need to demonstrate their knowledge to achieve the standard that school vision is shared and supported by the whole school community. They also assert that the ISLLC standards outline a high level of performance in school leadership, nevertheless, there is no space for practices either above or below the standards. This assertion echoes the conclusion of another empirical study, which examined the enactment of ISLLC standards at the national level and the North Carolina Standards for School Executives at the state level in the United States (Militello, Fusarelli, Alsbury, & Warren, 2013). Arguing that leadership practices cannot be standardized, the researchers conclude that “there is no one way leadership practices are lived in schools” (p. 85). Militello et al. (2013) also point out the tensions between the pressure of enacting standards

and the demands and expectations that have placed on school leaders in real school contexts (p. 85).

Furthermore, introducing such standards and defining “best practices” for school leaders have been criticized for creating a closed system, which denies the practices and values not listed in the documents, and limits further theoretical development and innovation in practice (English, 2000, 2003, 2006; Niesche, 2013). Specifically, the standardization of leadership practices as a global discourse is considered “an expression of power knowledge” that normalizes particular knowledge and practices (English, 2003, p. 31). Usher and Edward (1994) suggest that normalization often appears to be neutral, but in fact it is a “manifestation of power” (p. 103). Norms classify knowledge by excluding, and the knowledge and values that are excluded by the standards and criteria of evaluation are seen as deficient and unqualified. In particular, equity and social justice are often found undervalued in leadership standards. For example, in examining the leadership standards from Queensland Australia, Niesche (2013) argues that “power is exercised through [these documents] as a form of governmentality” (p. 227). Adopting a positivist approach of educational leadership, the continuing development of leadership frameworks in Queensland draws upon a set of fixed capabilities with significant focus on effective leadership while less value and attention is placed on contextual issues related to race, social class, and gender. Similarly, Galloway and Ishimaru (2015) adopt a critical view on the proposed revisions of the national leadership standards in the United States (CCSSO, 2014, 2015), and argue that by merely focusing on the pursuit of equitable student outcomes, the newer version of interstate leadership standards continues to fail to address the challenges and barriers that “traditionally ‘othered’” students have encountered (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015, p. 374). Even though “equity and cultural responsiveness” is included as one of the dimensions in the standards (CCSSO,

2014, p. 20), the authors of the standards limit the definition of equity only in relation to student learning outcomes (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015).

In another example, the ISLLC standards along with the Educational Leaders Constituent Council (ELCC) standards (NPBEA, 2011), which have been used as guidelines for leadership preparation programs at many universities and organizations in the United States, are criticized for ignoring the societal context around race in educational leadership (Davis et al., 2015; English, 2006). Adopting a Critical Race Theory framework, Davis et al. (2015) analyzed the extent to which the language of ISLLC standards 2008 (CCSSO, 2008) and the national ELCC standards (NPBEA, 2011) address, or fail to address the issue of race. The authors conducted a contextualized race-related keywords research on the two leadership standards documents. They observed that the keywords of diversity and culture/cultural are used in a general way with no hint suggesting their meanings regarding related functions. For instance, in the ISLLC standards, culture is contextualized as school culture, and “diverse” is used as the same meaning with “different”. The authors also assert that a conflation of culture, climate, and school culture was found in the examination of the ISLLC standards and ELCC standards. Instead of valuing the diversity of cultures, a traditional definition of school culture, which is more connected with “the collective, established norms of a school and its sense of group efficacy” (p. 352) is embedded in the standards. More importantly, there is a lack of discussion on school leaders’ cultural competence, especially their awareness of equity and social justice issues. Davis et al. (2015) conclude that “the ISLLC and ELCC standards present a colour-blind narrative that presumes effective, equitable school leadership can occur with minimal to no considerations of race, despite overwhelming evidence that race affects the work and preparation of school leaders” (p. 357). Therefore, they call for the development of leadership standards that recognize race as an

influential aspect of school leadership, and encourage school leaders to take action and make a difference to the lives of marginalized and underrepresented students.

It worth noting that in response to these critiques, some jurisdictions have published updated leadership standards to address the needs and expectations for school leaders concerning issues such as equity and social justice (Riveros & Wei, 2019). For instance, the two recent documents, the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (NPBEA, 2015) and the *National Educational Leadership Preparation* standards (NPBEA, 2018), published in the United States, have both been found to recognize the importance of equity and justice. Moreover, both standards explicitly encourage school leaders to support students to overcome structural challenges such as those related to race (Farley, Childs, & Johnson, 2019; Larochelle-Audet, Magnan, Potvin, & Doré, 2019). In addition to the United States, the province of Alberta in Canada also introduced a document entitled the *Professional Practice Standards* (Alberta Education, 2018) in 2018. As those updated versions of leadership standards were published just recently, only a limited number of studies, such as those I just mentioned, have been found to pay attention to the evolution of leadership standards. In the next section, I review the studies conducted from a comparative perspective that have highlighted the global convergence of leadership standards, and also illustrate how this policy convergence related to educational leadership is driven by New Public Management (NPM). A review of the literature exploring the influences of NPM in the Chinese education system is also provided.

2.3 Convergence of Leadership Standards and New Public Management

2.3.1 Global convergence of leadership standards. As noted earlier, existing literature has highlighted considerable commonalities among standards and guidelines for school leaders across various jurisdictions. Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins (2006) draw upon

two pieces of literature (Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003), and synthesize four sets of leadership practices being crucial for improving employee performance, on which most leadership standards, regardless of the social, cultural, and geo-political contexts, have been built. These four sets of leadership practices include “building vision and setting directions”, “understanding and developing people”, “redesigning the organization”, and “managing the teaching and learning programme” (Leithwood et al., 2006, p. 6-7), and can be identified in many leadership standards from heterogenous jurisdictions (CEPPE & OECD, 2013; Ingvarson et al., 2006; Pont et al., 2008; Riveros et al., 2016; Walker, Bryant, & Lee, 2013; Wei, 2017).

For instance, the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles* outlines five sets of school leaders’ professional practices, including 1) leading teaching and learning, 2) developing self and others, 3) leading improvement, innovation, and change, 4) leading the management of the school, and 5) engaging and working with the community (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014). Similarly, the leadership standards published by Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Sweden identified five domains of leadership practices, including learning and teaching, school change, as well as leading and managing self, others, and the institution (Schratz et al., 2013).

To cite a few other examples, the core areas of school leadership outlined in the leadership standards from Hong Kong include “strategic direction and policy environment”, “learning, teaching and curriculum”, “principal and teacher growth and development”, “staff and resources management”, “quality assurance and accountability”, as well as “external communication and connection to the outside world” (Education Bureau for the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2002). Correspondingly, the *Leadership*

Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in British Columbia outlines eight standards, and the major focus of these standards, such as “values, vision, and mission”, “supervision for learning”, “curriculum, instruction and assessment”, “management and administration”, and “community building” (British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, 2016, p. 8), are overlapping with leadership standards in other jurisdictions.

Moreover, similarities in terms of the values and ideologies driving the expectations for school leaders are also found among leadership standards from different jurisdictions. For instance, Murakami et al. (2014) compared policies and guidelines adopted by principal preparation programs from Canada (Ontario), the United States (Texas), and Sweden. Their study concludes that standards for principals from all three jurisdictions have a power-distributed orientation. Principals are expected to distribute their power of decision-making to some degree among different institutional levels. Second, emphasizing student achievement and learning outcomes instead of innovation and diversity, the idea of competition is dominant in the leadership standards from these three jurisdictions. Third, an emphasis on being proactive is evident in all three documents in the sense that principals are expected to make changes and transform their schools (Murakami et al., 2014).

2.3.2 School effectiveness, New Public Management (NPM), and leadership standards. The transnational convergence of leadership standards emphasizing similar domains of leadership competencies and practices did not emerge from a vacuum. Generally, most standards were developed based on particular school of scholarship, and are embedded in particular ideologies and values. As Magno (2013) writes:

standard-setting, a rational approach to organizational management, is the foundation of programming in the field of educational leadership. With certified school leaders

performing against common standards, schools can run more autonomously and efficiently. Thus, the advent of standards fit directly with neoliberal values of accountability, autonomy, and efficiency. (p. 40-41)

To be more specific, leadership standards are well grounded in functionalist literature on school effectiveness (Ingvarson et al., 2006; Møller, 2009), in which the effectiveness of schools is evaluated based on its performance in delivering and implementing the “externally pre-determined standards” such as a national curriculum (Hall, Gunter, & Bragg, 2013, p. 471). In the examination of the theoretical foundations that have informed the formulation of leadership standards, commentators have been noticed that most literature on effective leadership, particularly the work of Kenneth Leithwood (e.g. Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2008), is central to leadership standards produced in various social and cultural contexts (CEPPE & OECD, 2013; Ingvarson et al., 2006). A study by Leithwood et al. (2006) concludes that almost all successful and effective leaders, including those working in both school and non-school contexts, adopt a similar repertoire of leadership practices. The fundamental task for leadership is believed to improve employee performance, and “such performance is a function of employees’ beliefs, values, motivations, skills and knowledge and the conditions in which they work” (Leithwood et al., 2006, p. 6).

The same argument has been made with respect to school settings. This emphasis on effectiveness and the adoption of leadership practices has also been widespread in education systems and has thus emerged as a dominant paradigm in education (Hall, 2013; Hall et al., 2015; Magno, 2013; Verger & Curran, 2014). NPM refers to the reform trends in which public sectors, such as educational institutions, have extensively adopted management theories and practices from the business sectors (Tolofari, 2005; Verger & Curran, 2014). Driven by NPM,

existing standards for school leaders globally emphasize “the instrumental purpose of schooling—raising standards and performance as measured by examination results.....and frequently articulated within a lexicon of enterprise, excellence, quality and effectiveness” (Gewirtz, 2003, p. 32). Furthermore, in the field of educational leadership, principal preparation programs have been found to extensively refer to professional training programs offered in other sectors such as business (Hallinger & Lu, 2013; Walker et al., 2013).

The essence of NPM mainly involves the marketization and privatization of public services. Some specific actions include promoting decentralization and autonomy through reducing governmental involvement in public service provision, establishing explicit standards for performance measurement, as well as promoting greater competition through emphasizing customer satisfaction (Dempster, Freakley, & Parry, 2001; Tolofari, 2005; Ward et al., 2016). Managerialism is proposed as an essential ideology underpinning NPM (Tolofari, 2005; Hall et al., 2013). It is solution-oriented and places significant emphasis on accountability, innovation, and performativity (Møller, 2009; Ward et al. 2016). O’Reilly and Reed (2010) have clarified the relationship between managerialism and NPM by saying:

the former is understood to denote primarily a belief in the importance and efficacy of management as a system of organizational co-ordination, and the latter is understood as a set of management practices, techniques and precepts in the public sector informed by the former. (p. 961-962)

In the context of educational administration, a transfer of power from local authorities to school levels is noteworthy in terms of personnel, budget, and school planning. School leaders are positioned as the only leaders within schools and are responsible for holding schools accountable for student performance in standardized tests (Hall et al., 2013; Leithwood et al., 2008; Levačić

& Woods, 2002; Møller, 2009; Pont et al., 2008; Raab, 2000; Tolofari, 2005; Riveros et al., 2017).

Further scholarship has documented a shift of focus from managerialism to leaderism. Leaderism is conceptualized as more personal and adaptable with an attention on organizational change while managerialism is described as heavily relying on rational planning and being lack of flexibility (Hall et al., 2013; O'Reilly & Reed, 2010). In more detail, in contrast to traditional managers, leaders are constructed with an emphasis on the affective aspect of person-hood and as being equipped with capacities in arousing passion among staff to work toward shared visions and goals. Leaders are visualized as open to reforms, risk-taking, and responsible for related consequences while traditional managers depicted as being reluctant to changes and pursuing negotiated compromises (Newman, 2005; O'Reilly & Reed, 2010).

In promoting this shift, leadership models such as transformational leadership and distributed leadership have been widely adopted. Such leadership models highlight school leaders' competencies in overseeing transformative process, and moreover, the need to share leadership at school level (Hall, 2013; Hall et al., 2015). However, the commitment to promote such a shift is argued as "a discursive softening of the harsher edges of managerialism", which still firmly resides within the movement of NPM (Hall et al., 2013, p. 485). Critics argue that there are more commonalities such as emphasizing effectiveness and school autonomy, than disparities between managerialism and leaderism. Additionally, the proposition of distributed leadership also suggests a clear differentiation between those who are responsible to lead school transformation and those who follow the lead and are distributed with certain degree of authority. In other words, both managerialism and leaderism position school leaders as single leaders

within schools (Hall et al., 2013; O'Reilly & Reed, 2010). That is to say, as O'Reilly and Reed (2010) propose:

“Leaderism” provides an overarching discursive framework within which the ideological and technical limitations of orthodox NPM—that is, its continued adherence to a managerialist ideology and practice that is fixated with the perennial problem of preserving organizational rationality and efficiency in the face of political and emotional distortions to hard business logic—are potentially overcome by an innovative discursive synthesis that combines consumer choice and professional agency in a vision of “new public service leadership for the twenty first century. (p. 971)

In short, leadership standards that explicitly define expectations for school leaders across the world are primarily driven by NPM, which has been prevailed in both Western and non-Western countries. This convergence of leadership standards seems to verify world culture theorists' assertion that education systems in different jurisdictions are becoming increasingly similar, and the policy copying of Western models, such as leadership standards built upon the NPM in the case of this dissertation, has led to this global homogeneity (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Spring, 2008). Nevertheless, I propose the need to take a contextualized understanding of both the global convergence of leadership standards, and the influences of NPM on education systems. In the next section, I will illustrate the influences of NPM on the Chinese education system.

2.3.3 NPM in the Chinese education system. The Opening-up reform is one of the reforms in China that have resulted in major changes within the country from economic, social, cultural and political aspects, as well as in the country's relationships with the rest of the world. The reform was initiated in 1978 with an attempt to promote China's modernization with

particular attention on economic growth. Specific strategies of the reform include increasing agricultural and industrial production, as well as attracting foreign investment (Liu, Li, & Feng, 2008; Nolan, 2001). The reform also signifies mainland China moving away from a fully state-controlled economy to an economic system with neoliberal characteristics (Nolan, 2001; Urio, 2012).

At the beginning of the 1980s, China began to introduce policies in public administration with evident NPM features such as privatization and decentralization along with mechanisms including performance management and financial auditing with the purpose of further improving the country's economic efficiency (Urio, 2012). In education system, decentralization was initiated in 1985 when the Party decided to gradually align China's educational development with the emerging market economy within the country (State Council of the PRC, 1985). Both authorities and financial responsibilities are transferred from central government to different levels of government departments within provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities, cities, districts, and rural communes (Hanson, 1998; Hawkins, 2000; Wong, 2008).

As explained above, NPM has redefined professionalism in education around the world by reframing professional practices, standards and evaluation criteria. Major literature exploring the effects of NPM on the Chinese education system is situated in the area of higher education. One study was found to recognize the influences of NPM on teacher professionalism in Chinese primary and secondary schools. Wong (2008) documented the effects of educational decentralization on the constitution of teachers' professional identity, or their sense of professionalism. In the study, competition among schools in China was found to be intensified due to educational decentralization in that schools compete with each other attempting to gain greater recognition from local government departments. In such a situation, differences in the

constitution of teacher professionalism were found between teachers from public schools and those from private schools. Wong (2008) asserts that teachers from public schools develop a sense of managerial professionalism within which teachers are more outcome-oriented by pursuing academic excellence while teachers from private schools are more market-oriented and place major attention on parental satisfaction.

Professionalization, which is the process shaping the constitution of professionalism, has been a key concept in the Chinese education system (Wu, 2007). Wilkins (2014) defines two routes to professionalization: professional activism and legislation. The route to professionalization through professional activism promotes the belief in “true autonomy”. Advocates for professional activism criticize legislation for its production of mass regulation, and argue that professionalization can only be achieved through professional development, networking, and collective efforts that do not require permission (Wilkins, 2014).

By legislation, either government or a sector directed by government functions as the major actor in setting regulations. This route to professionalization “depends on political patronage, and it can be repealed, creating expedient solutions that last only until future politicians take a different view” (p. 157). In addition to professional development activities within schools and through related programs, professionalization in the Chinese education system has been promoted through legislation. Policy initiatives that identify teachers’ responsibilities and provide regulations for teacher certification as well as professional development have been launched by the MoE of the PRC aiming at positioning China in a world-class education system through improving teacher competencies (Li, 2012, 2016).

Similarly, before the introduction of the PSfP, some studies have proposed the need to develop a standards-based policy to provide guidelines for the professionalization of school

leaders (Chen et al., 2011; Wei & Gao, 2010; Zhu & Yang, 2009), and the PSfP was officially launched in 2013 as an effort of China to further promote school leaders' professionalization (MoE of the PRC, 2013). Nonetheless, little research has given attention to the relationship between NPM and policies concerning educational leadership in China such as the PSfP in the case of my study. In this dissertation, I will discuss related issues by paying particular attention to why the global discourse on leadership standards has been transferred to China as well as the enactment of the PSfP.

In light of these perspectives, I propose the need to take a contextualized understanding of NPM and its influences on leadership standards as have pointed out by some researchers (Dempster et al., 2001; Møller, 2009; Verger & Curran, 2014). Moreover, by exploring the effects of leadership standards in specific context such as China in the case of my study, I will provide further insight into the transnational flows of policy ideas, which is the focus of this dissertation. In the next section, I will offer a review of the literature on policy transfer, the analytical lens which is adopted in this dissertation to contextualize the transfer and adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards to the Chinese context, as well as the enactment of the leadership standards in China.

2.4 Researching Policy Transfer

Rather than seeing education systems throughout the world as becoming a singular model of education dominated by the neoliberal ideology, in this dissertation, I contend that there are various of ways in which a global model, such as a global dominant discourse on leadership standards, are interpreted and contextualized in different contexts (Apple, 1996; Spring, 2008). To better understand the situated contexts that have constituted the interpretations and adaptations that occur during global flows of policy ideas, as well as the enactment of those

policies in schools, I chose policy transfer as an analytical lens to elucidate the transfer and the adaptations of the global dominant discourse on leadership standards to China in the PSfP, and the enactment of the PSfP in schools.

2.4.1 Clarifying the concept. Policy transfer or educational transfer is not a new topic in the field of comparative and international education. In addition to transfer, terms such as borrowing, copying, appropriation, assimilation, and importation have also been used to refer to the phenomenon of learning from other education systems (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). The majority of the literature in this field has frequently used the term policy borrowing, which is part of the broad descriptor policy transfer (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014). However, the term borrowing has received a lot of criticisms (Phillips & Ochs, 2004), which I will outline below in order to justify the use of the term policy transfer in this dissertation.

Firstly, the flows of policy ideas are multi-directional, and the term borrowing implies a traditional understanding of policy movement believing that the travel of policies is a one-way process. By using the term borrowing, there is an implication that the process can be traced from one country to another through explicit references and citations in policy documents (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). This understanding of policy movement ignores the fact that all stakeholders in a policy process have agency, and the decision that has been made is a result of the interactions and negotiations between multiple actors. The intensification of globalization has led to a more complicated process of policy movement, in which various countries and drivers are involved at the same time. What has been called “global policy convergence” is no longer the result of copying process from one country to another, but “everyone working toward a shared global script” such as international competition, privatization, and NPM (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014, p. 51). As in the case of this dissertation, there has been a massive adoption of leadership

standards, and evident similarities shared among those standards in defining successful and effective school leaders. In this policy convergence, it is difficult to trace and map out the route of the travelling of those leadership standards.

Secondly, the term borrowing suggests a hierarchical relationship between the lender and the borrower, meaning the country or jurisdictions who lends the policy is dominant and owns the ownership of the policy, and the country who borrows is expected to give something back in return (Steiner-Khamsi, 2000). A number of scholars have realized the issue of system equity in policy transfer, which especially can be observed in the cases of developing countries importing education models from developed countries or intergovernmental organizations (Beech & Lista, 2012; Magno, 2013; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000). In these cases, the resources and support gained through borrowing are viewed as more attractive and valuable than the borrowed policies. Nevertheless, this is not the case in which the global dominant discourse on leadership standards has been transferred to China. Considering these limitations of the term policy borrowing, I use the term transfer instead of borrowing in this study. After clarifying the reason why I use the term policy transfer instead of policy borrowing, in the next section, I demonstrate the key concepts that are essential to my dissertation.

2.4.2 Adaptation and recontextualization. As mentioned earlier, the major responsibilities, competencies, and practices identified in leadership standards from various localities are almost identical as a result of the dominance of NPM as well as its influences on education reforms such as those related to educational leadership. However, the transfer of the global dominant discourse on leadership standards across heterogenous contexts will not necessarily contribute to worldwide homogeneity in leadership standards or school leaders' practices. Many researchers studying policy transfers have proposed the need to take a

contextualized understanding of policy movement; that is, in what ways changes are made to policies in the process of transfer, and how policies are interpreted and put into practice by related actors such as school leaders, teachers, and students (Apple, 1996; Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Spring, 2008).

In this section, I touch upon two key concepts in policy transfer, which are central to my study: adaptation and recontextualization. Adaptation is found to be a common theme in many of these studies, which focus on how policy makers make revisions to foreign policies based on an understanding of their local context (Beech, 2006a; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, 2014a; Tan, 2016). In one of the most famous quotes, Sadler (1979) writes:

We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. (p. 49)

It is unusual that certain educational policies are transferred from one context to another without any changes. Adaptations can be observed more often. Studies researching the issue of adaptation document what features are selectively transferred and what changes are made during the process of education policy transfer (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, 2014a). The extent of changes made to the transferred policy depends on the adaptability of the policy, which is evaluated based on the comparability between home and foreign contexts. The adaptations made in a transferred policy are also significantly influenced by key stakeholders who may facilitate or impede the transfer process depending their own agendas (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014; Tan, 2016).

Recontextualization is another key theme in researching policy transfer. It refers to the process in which the adapted policy is put into concrete practices in the “new” setting.

Recontextualization is predominantly shaped by local contexts as “schools are attached to a given territory and influenced by the specific experiences and identities of the communities they serve and help to construct” (Beech & Lista, 2012, p. 372). This recontextualization of globalized educational reforms has been researched extensively by scholars in the field of comparative education, in particular from a lens of policy transfer (Beech & Lista, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). The attention on recontextualization uncovers the complexity of policy transfer by showing that various policy actors can create a shared vision on introducing foreign models during the initial contact with global educational policies, but later on, recontextualization is a consequence of the involvement of divergent interests during policy application (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014a; 2014b), as Cowen neatly explains “as it moves, it morphs” (Cowen, 2009, p. 315). In this dissertation, I adopt the notion of enactment originated from a critical approach to policy analysis (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 2017) to further unfold the recontextualization of the global dominant discourse on leadership standards in schools, which I will explain in detail in the next chapter.

In short, I draw upon this literature on policy transfer to illuminate how the global discourse on leadership standards has transferred and adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP policy. I also pay attention to the recontextualization of the PSfP by focusing on its enactment, which is how leadership standards outlined in the PSfP are put into practice in schools. More importantly, in this dissertation, I unveil the discursive aspect, or the politics of policy transfer as I will explain in the next section.

2.4.3 The discursive aspect of policy transfer. In addition to the two key concepts mentioned above, scholars researching policy transfer also pay attention to the discursive aspect of policy transfer. They argue that many references to foreign education systems are concerned

with general guidelines and contested ideologies, such as neoliberalism, standardization, and outcome-based education, rather than specific practices or models (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Studies conducted by those scholars have touched upon the discursive aspect of policy transfer and proposed that transfer is often a result of political interrelationships among various stakeholders (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Policy transfer occurs at the discursive level as an effort to balance the power relations between international and domestic key players, and also to gain local interests such as recognition and support from foreign agencies and allies (Silova, 2004; Spreen, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

To cite one example, similar to many transferred models in European countries, which are not concrete in practice, the educational reforms focusing on modernization and girls' education in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been used as strategies to position themselves as modernist nations and gain broader recognition from their international allies (Ridge, 2014). A modern nation state has been defined with a universal set of best practices and education priorities shared among Western countries, which are disseminated and normalized through international standardized tests and global comparisons reported by international agencies. Education for girls and modernization as economic development have been essential concepts in these international reports. Attempting to differentiate themselves from other less economically developed countries in the Middle East, these three countries introduced a series of initiatives to emphasize the importance of girls' education and its contribution to economic development. Ironically, Ridge (2014) reflects that local boys were reported to have poorer school performance and lower enrollment rate in higher education compared with girls.

In addition, these governments were found to be reluctant to make any practical changes in their education systems as they largely rely on the support of local conservative groups who want to preserve their religious and national identity with little change. Ridge (2014) concludes that the transfer of the global discourse related to girls' education in these three nations strategically shows their effort to appear as building a modern, world-class education sector to their international allies, but has resulted in neglecting the real needs and challenges of their domestic context. At the same time, by only transferring the discourse without introducing specific practices, policy makers avoid challenging the authority of local stakeholders and therefore achieve a balance of power relations between foreign and domestic interest groups.

Similarly, Silova (2004) examined the discursive educational reform in Latvia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. At the end of 1990s, a new discourse on multiculturalism and ethnic integration began to emerge in Latvian educational policies. However, the school systems separating Latvian students from Russian students remain unchanged. The only difference is that Russian language schools, who are associated with Soviet/Russian state instruments and nests of Soviet occupants are now referred symbols of multiculturalism and pluralism (Silova, 2004, p. 78). As such, Silova (2004) asserts that the introduction of multiculturalism education to Latvia is an example of how politics have played out in policy transfer, resulting from global pressures and the game of local politics. She concludes that transferring broad guidelines for multiculturalism education development was a strategy of Latvian government to meet the requirements brought up by international agencies such as the European Union to join the Western alliance. Instead of leading to a global convergence in educational practices, the adoption of "the language of new allies has been used skillfully by the local agency to research

other ends, including a reconciliation of international pressures for multiculturalization with the local politics of Latvianization” (Silova, 2004, p. 86).

Now I turn to an example of the politics in educational policy transfer related to the flows of the global dominant discourse on leadership standards. In Magno’s study (2013), she exemplifies the power relations among heterogenous actors in transferring leadership standards to Mongolia. The Ministry of Education in Mongolia introduced an education reform in 2008, funded by the Asian Development Bank, and shifted its compulsory education from 10 years to 12 years. The main purpose of this reform was to allow Mongolian students to participate in PISA and TIMSS, and also to improve their performance in those assessments. One focus of the reform was educational leadership. Various leadership training programs, both sponsored by the Ministry of Education and provided by non-government organizations (NGOs), were introduced to Mongolia. The materials and theories used in the in-service leadership training programs were largely from North America. Moreover, in 2008, the Mongolian Ministry of Education introduced national leadership standards which identify improving student learning outcomes and ensuring consistency within the education system as central to educational leadership. In the same year, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conducted a large-scale assessment and reported the responsibilities, knowledge, and skills that are perceived as important by school leaders in Mongolia. The report addresses the needs of leadership training for Mongolian school leaders with an attempt to ensure Mongolia adopt the similar leadership standards as proposed by those intergovernmental organizations (UNESCO, 2008).

This example of education reform in Mongolia sheds light on the politics in the transfer of the dominant leadership discourse toward the NPM agenda. Intergovernmental organizations

(the Asian Development Bank and the UNESCO), NGOs, and the Mongolian Ministry of Education reached an agreement on the transfer of the discourse to Mongolia. The Mongolian Ministry of Education intended to make the Mongolian education system compatible with the global trends in education development particularly through improving student performance in PISA and TIMSS. In order to promote leadership standards, intergovernmental organizations worked with the Mongolian Ministry of Education, and provided funding and other resources such as training materials through NGOs.

2.4.4 Externalization as a strategy of legitimation. Some scholars have also argued that through externalization, or simply put, references to policies in other contexts, policy transfer has been used as a strategy to legitimate newly introduced policies, as well as those involved with contested ideologies (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Schriewer, 1990, 2012; Spreen, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000). Universal standards and international dominant discourses disseminated by intergovernmental organizations have been frequently cited as a source of legitimation to give leverage in pushing through and increasing the credibility of particular domestic initiatives (Spreen, 2004; Tallberg & Zürn, 2019). In other terms, externalization, which is the use of external reference, is a device frequently adopted in policy transfer to produce legitimacy (Schriewer, 1990; Waldow, 2012).

One form of externalization as proposed by Schriewer (1990) is externalization to world situations. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the transfer of policy ideas is multi-directional, and no longer limited to the process of policies and models traveling from one location to another. As education systems across the world begin to share increasing similarities especially in terms of the discourses adopted (but not necessarily specific practices), it has become exceptionally difficult to identify the origin of an idea, and to trace the route of its

travelling (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014; Schriewer, 1990). Therefore, instead of referring to one or several particular education systems, a reform idea is often highlighted for its worldwide recognition. In this study, I also present a discussion on how externalization has been used to legitimate the school leadership reforms in China in the process of transferring the global dominant discourse on leadership standards to the Chinese context.

2.4.5 Limitations in existing scholarship on policy transfer. Existing literature touching upon policy transfer has been found limited particularly for the use of term “transfer”. In more detail, most studies researching policy transfer have focused on a single case in which one policy model is transferred from “the global” or from particular jurisdictions to a new context. Adaptations and recontextualization of the model are then studied in the new context. Less emphasis is placed on the fact that policy transfer is often a multi-directional process, and the fact that “the global” is actually created in local jurisdictions. As Larsen and Beech (2014) argue that “[the] global is not just some space, out there, without material basis. It is produced in local settings” (p. 200). To better understand the question of why a particular policy is transferred, more attention is needed on the constitution of the global within local settings. To address this point of view, my dissertation not only explores which types of actors have been involved in the production of leadership standards in China, or in the process of transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, but also sheds light on how the introduction and the adoption of the leadership standards produced in China has further contributed to the transnational flows of the discourse.

In the sections above, I reviewed the research literature on educational policy transfer. Differentiating from policy borrowing, the term policy transfer moves away from the traditional hierarchical relationship between the lender and the borrower, and focuses on the agency of all

actors within the process of policy transfer (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014). Moreover, I explained two concepts related to policy transfer, adaptation and recontextualization, which are central to my study (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000, 2012, 2014a). A review of studies highlighting the discursive aspect of policy transfer was also provided (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Magno, 2013; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Furthermore, I addressed the argument proposed by some scholars that externalization in policy transfer is often used as a strategy to legitimate newly introduced or contested policies (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Schriewer, 1990, 2012; Spreen, 2004). Lastly, I identified the limitations of existing literature on policy transfer and touched upon the ways in which this dissertation will address these perspectives. In the next section, I offer my review of literature on Chinese leadership standards and identify the limitations in that body of scholarship.

2.5 Literature Review on Chinese Leadership Standards

In this section, I review existing scholarship on Chinese leadership standards. The review includes 1) studies conducted to inform the development of the standards, and 2) studies researching the PSfP policy. Distinction has been made between two concepts: analysis for policy and analysis of policy (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). In this dissertation, analysis for policy refers to research which was conducted to inform the development of the leadership standards in China. Analysis of policy is a more academic activity, and giving attention to understand why a particular policy, such as the PSfP was developed at a particular time, what its analytical assumptions are, and the effects it might have (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

2.5.1 Analysis for Chinese leadership standards. This section starts with a review of literature focusing on the analysis for the policy. A few studies were published before 2013 when the PSfP was launched. The authors of these studies, who are all Chinese scholars, noticed the

global convergence of leadership policies which aims at standardizing school leaders' practices. They called for the introduction of such a standardized leadership policy in the Chinese context and argued that China needs to catch up with this global education reform trend. These researchers also examined leadership standards from non-Chinese context and asserted that when developing leadership standards for Chinese school leaders, it was critical to learn from others (Chen et al., 2011; Wei & Gao, 2010; Zhu & Yang, 2009).

For example, a comparison was conducted by Wei and Gao (2010), which included national standards from Australia, the United Kingdom, and state standards from Connecticut, Iowa, and Ohio in the United States, as well as regional standards from Scotland. The authors highlighted noticeable commonalities between the seven policy documents, and summarized these commonalities into six aspects, including: 1) promoting school leaders' role as instructional leaders; 2) emphasizing school leaders' responsibilities in teachers' professional development; 3) encouraging collaboration among school leaders, teachers, and staff; 4) improving accountability and evaluation systems; 5) developing relationships between schools and communities; and 6) promoting the development of personal moral capacity. The authors argued that these aspects were critical for Chinese school leaders as well and the conclusions from these comparative studies were conceptualized as the theoretical foundations for the construction of Chinese leadership standards.

Similar findings were proposed by Zhu and Yang (2009), who reviewed both the content and the background of leadership standards from New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition to summarize the commonalities about the knowledge, capacities, and responsibilities required for successful school leaders as identified across these three jurisdictions, Zhu and Yang (2009) suggested that all three policies were introduced during the

time when new educational reforms were initiated in the public education systems in the three jurisdictions. As school leadership was seen as the key to educational reforms, an immediate call for increasing accountability and standardizing school leaders' practices had led to the initiation of such leadership standards.

The studies reviewed above indicate that before the MoE of the PRC initiated the development of the PSfP, some Chinese scholars had already acknowledged the transnational prevalence of adopting leadership standards. Those scholars proposed the need to introduce such standards for school leaders in China. They also highlighted the commonalities shared among the standards they reviewed, and argued that those commonalities could be transferred to China. After the introduction of the PSfP, related studies were also conducted by Chinese scholars, which are reviewed next.

2.5.2 Analysis of the PSfP. In terms of analysis of the PSfP policy, major literature, such as Ai (2013), Liu et al. (2017), and Gao (2015) illustrated the policy-making process and reviewed its content. I will not review these studies here in that these studies provided a reiteration of official documents and speeches delivered by the MoE of the PRC. I will touch upon the policy-making process of the PSfP later in my findings in relation to the questions of which types of actors have been involved in the production of leadership standards within China, and how they are interrelated with one another.

Only a few studies were found elaborating on the adoption of the PSfP in schools. Findings suggested variations in the extent to which the leadership standards were put into practice. For example, two studies conclude that the PSfP was not implemented in that the policy was used neither for school leaders' evaluation nor in professional learning programs (Gu, Ma, & Teng, 2017; Tan & Li, 2016). Built upon their findings, Tan and Li (2016) argue that “实施中政

策的可操作性较弱 [it is not practical to implement the PSfP]” (p. 3) considering that there is a wide variety of regional disparities in China. In this dissertation, I adopt a different perspective towards policy and its adoption by focusing on the concept of enactment. By focusing on policy enactment, I am attentive to not the effectiveness of policy, but the contextual and material process of interpretation and translation as I will elaborate in the next chapter (Ball, 1993; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

In contrast to the two studies above (Gu et al., 2017; Tan & Li, 2016), the findings from another study suggest that the PSfP was adopted as the major framework in the development of a professional learning course. Wei (2016) presented a case from Shanghai in which a professional learning course was developed based on the PSfP. The course is composed of four sessions, including lecture, reading, writing, and discussion. After the lecture session, school leaders were asked to read the literature related to the PSfP, and wrote about their real experiences reflecting on the knowledge, competencies, responsibilities and practices outlined by the standards. In the last session, course participants were encouraged to share their writing and engage in discussion with others.

Moreover, in the other study, Ning and Zhang (2018) conducted a quantitative research and compared leadership styles between male principals and female principals in translating the PSfP into practice. In leading school development, the authors assert that female principals paid more attention to school traditions while male principals were more innovative. Concerning school management, female principals were found to spend more time in demonstrating caring and developing relationships with teachers. Furthermore, differences were observed in terms of collecting and using data to inform decision-making. More female than male principals were found to use the Internet, or more specifically websites both within and outside China, to access

and collect information about education reforms and development. Alternatively, male principals were suggested to prefer traditional resources such as books, newspapers, and journals. Lastly, female principals were proposed to be engaged in coordinating with external environment more than male principals. More focus was placed on collaboration with parents and students' involvement in public service.

2.5.3 Limitations of existing scholarship on the PSfP. Above, I provided a review of literature researching leadership standards in the Chinese context. The scholarship involves analysis for the policy which was conducted before the official launch of the PSfP to inform policy development, as well as analysis of the policy reviewing the policy-making process and exploring the enactment of the policy.

Existing scholarship on the topic is limited in the following aspects. Firstly, current studies were conducted adopting a traditional perspective of policy analysis, which perceives policy-making as a linear process (Dye, 2008) and pays little attention to the power and politics among various actors within both policy-making and the adoption of the PSfP (Ball, 1993; Ball et al., 2012). A standards-based leadership policy is assumed to be needed for the Chinese context due to the pervasive adoption of such standards in Western countries (Chen et al., 2011; Wei & Gao, 2010; Zhu & Yang, 2009). In terms of translating the PSfP into practice, limited attention is given to school leaders' contextualized practices. Secondly, as noted above, some researchers identified the commonalities of leadership standards outside mainland China and argued that these commonalities can be transferred to the Chinese standards (Wei & Gao, 2010; Zhu & Yang, 2009). Nonetheless, no research is found exploring the adaptations and re-contextualization of the transferred standards. Consequently, this dissertation aims to fill those gaps in current research.

2.6 Summary

The transnational prevalence of leadership standards arises from the concern that there is a lack of clarification on the definition of successful and effective school leaders (DeVita et al., 2007; Leithwood et al., 2008). Despite critiques of leadership standards such as their decontextualized nature as proposed by some scholars (English, 2003, 2006; Davis et al., 2015; Niesche, 2013), predominant similarities are found among leadership standards across heterogenous jurisdictions with emphasis on a similar set of leadership practices (CEPPE & OECD, 2013; Ingvarson et al., 2006; Riveros et al., 2016). This global discourse on leadership standards has been driven by the dominance of NPM (Hall, 2013; Verger & Curran, 2014). To take a contextualized understanding of NPM and the global discourse on leadership standards, I use policy transfer as an analytical lens in this dissertation. Policy transfer emphasizes the agency of all actors in the process of transfer, and focuses on the power relations among those actors (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Spreen, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000). Before the introduction of the PSfP policy in China, several Chinese scholars have noticed the transnational trend of adopting leadership standards and proposed the need and suggestions for developing such standards in the Chinese context (Chen et al., 2011; Wei & Gao, 2010; Zhu & Yang, 2009). After the PSfP was officially launched, more studies were published to demonstrate the policy-making process, as well as to explore the adoption of the standards (Gao, 2015; Ning & Zhang, 2018; Tan & Li, 2016). It is worth noting that many of those studies were conducted from a traditional rationalist approach of policy analysis as will be explained in the next chapter. Therefore, this dissertation is theoretically and methodologically significant in adopting a critical perspective, and Actor Network Theory (ANT) as the theoretical framework to analyze the following questions: 1) which types of actors have been involved in transferring the global discourse on

leadership standards to China; 2) how has the global discourse on leadership standards been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP; and 3) how has the PSfP been enacted by principals and vice-principals within schools. In the next chapter, I address my adoption of the critical perspective and ANT in this study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Overview

This chapter starts with a clarification of my analytical approach, which is a critical approach to policy analysis. I distinguish the traditional rationalist approach with the approach I adopt in this study, and elaborate on the key concepts that are essential to this dissertation. Following the discussion of my critical analytical approach, I present my choice of Actor Theory Network (ANT) as the theoretical framework through illustrating the essential ideas of ANT, related ontology and epistemology, as well as a theorization of agency and intentionality from the perspectives of ANT. Next, I present the critiques of ANT and offer my responses accordingly. I also acknowledge the challenges of using ANT in this study. While understanding these challenges, I demonstrate the reasons why ANT is still chosen as the theoretical framework which guides the design, development, and analysis of my study.

3.2 Analytical Approach

3.2.1 Rationalist approach to policy analysis and critiques. Developed from political science, the rationalist approach to policy analysis has been dominant with a purpose of helping policy makers solve social problems (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Before touching upon my analytical approach, which is a critical approach to policy analysis (Ball et al., 2012; Bowe et al., 2017), I begin with the main assumptions of policy analysis from a rationalist approach in order to illustrate how my critical analytical approach differs from the dominant rationalist approach.

Traditionally, a great number of policy researchers from the rationalist approach have viewed policy as a linear process which can be planned, managed, and measured. Policy analysis from this perspective often follows a set of fixed steps, including defining problems, setting goals, identifying solutions, selecting/producing policies, implementation, and evaluating

consequences. Rooted in rational choice/action theory, policy studies adopting a rationalist perspective assert that actions are goal-driven, and decisions are made based on an evaluation between costs, benefits, and outcomes (Dye, 2008).

The rational approach to policy aims at achieving “maximum social gain” and insists that there is only one way of implementing policy (Dye, 2008, p. 15). Rational policy researchers pay great attention to policy “implementation”, which focuses on the balance between costs and benefits. A policy is initiated and put into practice only if benefits will exceed costs after systematic calculation. Rational policy analysis focuses on the effectiveness of policy by evaluating whether a policy is implemented exactly as stated in policy texts (Dye, 2008). The two studies I reviewed previously, which concluded that the PSfP was not implemented in schools (Gu et al., 2017; Tan & Li, 2016), are typical examples of policy analysis adopting a rational analytical approach.

The concept of “implementation” and its use in policy studies have been criticized for two reasons. First, “implementation” implies a top-down policy process which overlooks “the jumbled, messy, contested creative and mundane social interactions” that bridge policy texts and practices (Ball et al., 2012, p. 2). By emphasizing implementation, the meaning of education policy is frequently understood as an attempt to solve problems. The process of text production and legislation is seen as governmental prescriptions and, therefore, policy analysis is seen as a tool of the authorities (Ball et al. 2012; Bowe et al., 2017; Riveros & Viczko, 2015). In this case, the agency of policy actors at multiple levels, from key policy makers to practitioners in schools, are underestimated. The struggle, conflicts, and negotiations among these actors are obscured.

Second, education policy analysis focusing on implementation overlooks the material context of policy. As Ball et al. (2012) assert, “policies are not simply ideational or ideological,

they are also very material” and are normally written “in relation to fantastical context” (p. 3), assuming that schools have sufficient resources and support to “implement” policies. Studies researching the implementation of policies pay little attention to elements such as budget, resource distribution, school infrastructure and technology that are essential mediators in the policy process (Ball et al., 2012; Bowe et al., 2017).

The rationalist approach of policy analysis concentrating on implementation and effectiveness of policies fails to address the complexity of contexts, within which policy actors make sense of policies, exercise their agency, struggle over conflicts and mediate with and through power relations (Ball et al., 2012). To move beyond the rationalist simplification and de-contextualization of policy, I adopt a critical approach to policy analysis and focus on the concept of enactment. In the following section, I elaborate on my analytical approach by discussing key concepts such as policy text and enactment.

3.2.2 Critical approach to policy analysis: policy texts and enactment. Policy researchers adopting a critical approach analyze policy texts with their focus on two points. First, they recognize that the texts of an individual policy need to be understood in relation to the texts of other documents. Policy texts are generalized and often written in response to an ideal context. Attention to intertextuality helps researchers understand essential issues concerning the time and the particular site of policy production as well as the coherence and conflicts among various policies (Ball et al., 2012; Bowe et al., 2017). Second, policy texts are viewed as products of negotiations and compromises. Not all voices are recognized in the process of policy text production. A critical approach to policy analysis explores the agency of actors that are both involved and excluded in the process of policy text production (Ball, 1993, 1998; Ball, et al., 2012; Bowe et al., 2017; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

Instead of focusing on implementation, critical policy analysts emphasize the concept of enactment by paying attention to the agency of all actors, and the complex process of which policy is interpreted and translated involving the connections and interactions between diverse actors, texts, and artifacts (Ball et al., 2012). Agency involves interpretation, the meaning-making of policies (Ball, 1993; Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011). It is a decoding process initiated by policy actors in relation to the social, cultural and historical context of both the text and its readers. Interpretation is also set within school's situated elements such as budget, staff, and location. It is presented to others by providing explanations in meetings, assigning priority, and identifying responsibilities (Ball, 1993; Ball et al., 2012). It also needs to be noted that the concept of agency as manifested by the critical approach to policy analysis could be more humancentric compared with the notion of agency adopted from the perspectives of Actor Network Theory (ANT), which I will provide more detail in the next section.

Interpretation is the engagement with policy texts, and translation involves practice. Translation is the recoding process between policy and practice. It is the process of putting policy text into practice, materials, concepts, and tactics. Translation works together with and is interwoven with interpretation. Policy enactment in terms of interpretation and translation involves the production of institutional documents such as school plans and official websites, the development of professional training, the establishment of and changes in relations and communities, as well as the identification and allocation of roles, responsibilities and resources (Ball et al., 2011, 2012). Again, the notion of translation is defined differently in ANT. I will touch upon how the notion of translation is used in my study later in this chapter.

To encapsulate these ideas, I adopt a critical approach to policy analysis in this dissertation to pay attention to intertextuality and the dynamics among actors in the process of

developing the PSfP, and adapting the global discourse on leadership standards to the Chinese context. By asking which types of actors have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China and how they are interrelated with one another, my attempt is not to simply document the policy-making processes of the PSfP, but to unveil the power relations among those actors who are involved in, excluded from, or marginalized in driving the development of the PSfP. I also explore the enactment of the PSfP policy by focusing on the ways in which the standards are interpreted and translated into practice by principals and vice-principals within schools. To do this, I use ANT as my theoretical framework as I demonstrate in the next section.

3.3 Theoretical Framework: Actor Network Theory (ANT)

3.3.1 Ontology and epistemology in ANT: a sociomaterial perspective. ANT challenges the traditional ontology of a one-world world by arguing that the world is both relational and heterogeneous (Law & Singleton, 2014). It adopts a sociomaterial perspective and holds that the world is collectively constituted by human beings and “more than human beings (objects, economies, environments)” (Mulcahy, 2013, p. 1279). A sociomaterial view of world is relational, contingent, and entangled. To put it more bluntly, ANT holds the idea that world is not merely produced by human actors but is a product of relations among both human and material actors, and therefore, “the world is practised in materially heterogeneous ways” (Law & Singleton, 2014, p. 382). This multiplicity is performed through the relational effects produced by different combinations of actors along with their interactions (Singh, 2015; Zhang & Heydon, 2016).

3.3.2 Central ideas of ANT. There is no single unified theory called actor-network theory, but some central concepts in this “disparate family of material-semiotic tools” (Gorur,

2011, p. 77). Therefore, in this section, I start with reviewing the perspectives and key concepts that are critical for my dissertation. First and foremost, it is important to clarify the definition of actor from the perspectives of ANT. Instead of referring to an individual agent, actor in ANT is “an entity whose existence depends upon their network of alliances within a shifting, heterogeneous and expansive relational field”, and an actor “necessarily mutates as it enters into, or is enrolled or mobilised into, a field of relations with other entities” (Barry, 2013, p. 414). Drawing upon this conceptualization of actor, researchers adopting ANT trace how all actors come together, hold together, produce agency, and form effects (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010). ANT does not attempt to provide explicit steps or key concepts that can be used directly in research, but offers perspectives to understand and conceptualize a process and the dynamics within a messy mix of webs. Fenwick and Edwards (2010) write:

It may be more accurate to think of ANT as a virtual ‘cloud’, continually moving, shrinking and stretching, dissolving in any attempt to grasp it firmly. ANT is not ‘applied’ like a theoretical technology, but is more like a sensibility, an interruption or intervention, a way to sense and draw nearer to a phenomenon. (p. ix)

The central assertion of ANT is that all things are relational effects. No priori distinctions, such as the local and the global, nor knowledge, power, or identities are pre-determined. They are effects of agency, subjects, objects, practices, and relations that comprise particular networks (Callon, 1986; Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Law, 1999).

This central assertion of ANT emerges from the methodological dissatisfaction toward the division between individual and structure found in earlier sociological work, or often also referred to as micro level and macro level (Mills, 1959). To be specific, researchers focusing on the micro level, which includes on-site interactions and practices, propose that merely

concentrating on elements that are explicit and visible in local contexts cannot fully make sense of existing situations. Hence, they call for a move beyond the micro level to the macro level with significant attention to notions such as culture, norms, and ideologies. Nevertheless, those notions are soon found to be too abstract, and social science researchers have felt the urge to reconnect with “the flesh-and-blood local situations” (Latour, 1999a, p. 17). Considering this dissatisfaction with focusing on either the micro level or the macro level, and the challenge of distinguishing between the micro and the macro, ANT provides an alternative perspective which does not attempt to make any differentiation between macro and micro, or between structure and individual. It focuses on “the summing up” of all interactions (Latour, 1999a, p. 17) and offers a way to understand how knowledge and practices come to be produced (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Gorur, 2011; Latour, 1999a).

Assemblage is a fundamental concept in ANT, which denotes the summing up and coming together of heterogeneous actors to form a whole. It is a mode of ordering, in which various actors work and hold together for a particular period of time. Assemblage is relational, and its conceptualization implies that there is no single arrangement of actors. Furthermore, in using a critical approach to policy analysis, I focus on enactment as involving interpretation and translation. In this sense, translation refers to the process of putting policy text into practice, materials, concepts, and tactics (Ball et al., 2011, 2012). This conceptualization of translation is more humancentric compared with the notion of translation in ANT.

While acknowledging the key factors of translation from a critical approach to policy analysis, in this dissertation, I use the notion of translation in alignment with the central ideas of ANT to trace the active process, or in other words what happens when actors assemble and perform into being (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Latour, 1987). The concept of translation in

ANT is “a form of exercise of power” (Barry, 2013, p. 414) and is related to modification (Callon, 1986; Latour, 1987). Actors’ roles are neither stable nor pre-established, but are played out in different ways depending on their combinations with and interrelations with other actors (Callon, 1986; Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Latour, 1987). That means the translation in the critical approach to policy analysis is predominantly guided by human intentions, while the concept of translation in ANT refers to the processes performed by heterogenous actors, humans and non-humans, as well as their interrelations.

3.3.3 Theorizing agency and intentionality. Human beings and material objects are boundless and their relationships are intertwined (Mulcahy, 2013). The sociomaterial approach focuses on “the material and discursive practices through which entities and their interactions are enacted into being” and “how the differential boundaries separating entities are stabilized, and destabilized” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 107). Coming from this perspective, ANT theorists give attention to not only humans but also materials by arguing that both humans and non-humans have agency. Precisely, ANT scholars distinguish between agency and human intentionality. Traditionally, agency is defined as “the capacity for an agent (usually a human) to influence broader social relations (or structures) or to actively control its own well-being” (Dwiartama & Rosin, 2014, p. 28). This old-fashioned conceptualization of agency focuses more on intentionality, which is the capacity of humans to initiate desired course of action. Nevertheless, according to ANT scholars, “action is not done with total conscious control” (Montenegro & Bulgacov, 2014, p. 119). Therefore, an ANT understanding of agency, as adopted in this dissertation, moves beyond the concept of human intentionality, and is attentive to a holist view of agency, that is to theorize agency as a collective property in response to a range of

interrelationships among various actors as well as forces (Dwiartama & Rosin, 2014; Montenegro & Bulgacov, 2014).

Furthermore, in ANT, humans are not assumed to be privileged compared with non-humans in that non-humans, the material things, are proposed to have agency as well. Both humans and material things are part of the world. They are capable of exercising agency, assembling together, acting upon, changing and being changed by each other. However, it needs to be noted that this conceptualization of non-humans does not imply that material things have will, logic, and sense of justice, but to suggest that non-human actors “[push] back on people” resulting from their particular design and laws of nature (Latour, 1992, p. 151).

From the perspectives of ANT, non-humans exercise agency through four aspects. Firstly, non-humans such as water and air act as conditions for human’s living environment. Humans do not exist and live in a vacuum (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Sayes, 2014). Secondly, non-humans are mediators added to, or participating in a set of interactions. They change and modify relations between actors (Latour, 1999b, 2002). This means that non-humans do not merely function as instruments based on human intentions, but also have the capacity to imply, suggest, and mediate. To illustrate this argument, Latour (2002) uses technology as an example. He proposes the notion of the detour to refer to the translation process in the use of technology, within which we confront the unexpected, take a detour, and either return or distance ourselves from the initial goal. He argues that it is critical to recognize how much non-humans, such as technology, have “displaced, translated, modified, or inflected the initial intention” as mediations lead to “completely heterogeneous beings” or “multiple histories” (Latour, 2002, p. 252).

Thirdly, moral choice and political sphere are not only decided by human logic but also are influenced by non-human artifacts (Latour, 1992; Sayes, 2014). In analyzing the relationships

between producer, artifacts, and users, Latour (1992) uses vehicle seatbelt as an example to illustrate how non-humans exercise agency in the interaction with humans. He demonstrates the case in which a driver puts on the seatbelt not because of his/her logically and morally choice, but as a result of not being comfortable with the repetitive and high-pitched alarm sound. In this case, the alarm is designed as a reminder, and to some extent exercises the disciplinary power to force some drivers to obey the law to fasten their seatbelts.

Critique may be raised concerning this example of vehicle seatbelt asserting that both the seatbelt and alarm are designed by humans, and therefore it is human actors who have exercised agency and influenced drivers' moral choice. In response to this critique, scholars using ANT do not attempt to achieve a final division between the agency exercised by humans and non-humans (Latour, 1992, 1999b; Law, 1999; Sayes, 2014). They adopt a "minimal conception of agency" by asking whether an entity has the ability to make a difference, and focus on "the assembling together of a network of actors of variable ontologies, of variable times, and of variable spaces" (Sayes, 2014, p. 140-141). That is, from perspectives of ANT, no actor, either human or non-human, can be understood in isolation from others.

In elucidating the configuration of assemblages, an actor, regardless of its human or non-human character, is identified depending on whether it makes a difference to the issues examined (Latour, 2005). As no actor exists independently and an actor is a network, the agency exercised by an actor is viewed as a set of social relations (Law, 1992). To exemplify this conceptualization of agency, in this dissertation, I firstly identified school leaders as one type of actor in the enactment of the PSfP policy. Even though I theorize school leaders' practices as the results of an assemblage of the enactment, I do not mean that the enactment merely originates from school leaders' intentionality. The ways in which the PSfP have been enacted in schools

arise from the collective agency of heterogeneous types of actors such as the State, and schools' physical settings. School leaders' intentionality is shaped by the situated interrelationships among these actors, as we will see further in the findings that are presented in Chapter 5. In the following section, I touch upon the major critiques toward ANT and its use in recent research. Also, I provide responses to these critiques in the context of my study. Finally, based on these critiques, I illustrate the challenges that are inevitable in conducting an ANT-guided study.

3.4 Critiques, Responses, and Challenges

3.4.1 Critiques and responses. The major critique towards ANT is that it offers limited analysis of politics and power with a significant focus on a narrative that is politically neutral (Amsterdamska, 1990; Walshman, 1997). In response to this critique, a number of ANT scholars argue that by adopting a relational approach, ANT touches upon power relations and political aspects through exploring how things are included and excluded, how some connections work and others do not, and how some linkages are enhanced by connecting to other assemblages (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Zhang & Heydon, 2016).

This response toward the critique is in alignment with the critical perspective to policy analysis I adopt in this study. On the one hand, leadership standards globally including the PSfP from China are products of negotiations and compromises among heterogenous actors. In developing those standards, there are particular actors and values (such as those associated with NPM) which are dominant while there are also actors' whose voices are not heard, ideologies not recognized, and competencies not emphasized. Therefore, in this study, I identify the types of actors who have been enrolled in the three assemblages identified in this dissertation (assemblage of leadership standards, assemblage of adaptations, assemblage of enactment), trace their connections, and explore how they have exercised their agency. I also denote the types of

actors who have been marginalized in constituting these assemblages and highlight the tensions and power relations among those actors.

To further address the critique that ANT is limited in its analysis of power, others argue that ANT is actually political in that neither policy nor practice is perceived as neutral but performed by assemblages of relationships (Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010; Castells, 2011; Fenwick, 2010; Law, 1991; Law & Urry, 2004; McLean & Hassard, 2004). Moreover, ANT theorizes realities as relational and heterogenous, and focuses on the multiple translations of interrelationships (Fenwick, 2010). In the case of this study, I also denote this notion of multiplicity by conceptualizing the enactment of the PSfP as multiple effects produced by various combinations of actors along with their interrelationships with one another.

Another critique of ANT and its use focuses on the concept of network. It is argued that the use of the term network in ANT implies a map with fixed flows of people, ideas, resources, and bonds (Frankham, 2006). Many studies adopting ANT are criticized for paying little attention to the process, resistance and effects of translation (Whittle & Spicer, 2008). To address this critique, in his earlier work, Latour (1999b) differentiates between the use of network in ANT from how it is more commonly and conventionally used in an Internet-based context. He argues that the term network often refers to an instant and direct access to information and resources with a single direction when it is used to refer to the Internet. Nevertheless, in ANT, the network is “a series of transformations—translations, transductions—which could not be captured by any of the traditional terms of social theory” (Latour, 1999a, p. 15). In addition, ANT uses the concept of assemblage to emphasize the assertion that networks are not stable. They are constantly shifting, re-negotiated and re-aligning among assemblages, and assemblages perform differently in various networks as well (Fenwick, 2010; Latour, 2005; Law, 2003).

3.4.2 Challenges in using ANT. Conducting a study guided by ANT is challenging. The major challenge is to avoid adopting conventional binaries, particularly between the local and the global, as well as humans and non-humans. ANT does not admit any pre-determined categories in that boundaries are understood as consequences and are actually difficult to trace (Gorur, 2011). Arguably, it is nearly impossible to not to use terms such as international, global, national and local considering this study adopts the lens of policy transfer. However, it needs to be underlined that my use of those terms does not suggest any divisions. To address “the global” is constituted in “the local”, I highlight the fact that policy transfer is multi-directional by discussing how the adoption of the PSfP in China has further contributed to the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards.

Furthermore, ANT does not attempt to differentiate between human actors and non-human actors. However, as Wittle and Spicer (2008) claim that “ANT is left with the impossible task of trying to gather evidence about the properties of non-human elements without involving human participants” (p. 615), which actually reinforces the dualisms it attempts to break from. They argue that a distinction between humans and non-humans is inevitable considering the material realities such as air and water (Amsterdamska, 1990; Wittle & Spicer, 2008). In this study, it is also the case that there are non-human actors, such as schools’ physical settings, which have interacted with other actors like school leaders. However, my conceptualization of actors in this dissertation is not based on their human or non-human characters, but is built upon the ways in which agency is exercised, as well as how connections are built with other actors. For example, I identified universities instead of researchers as one type of actor in developing the PSfP policy. It was those university-based researchers who conducted studies to provide policy recommendations for the development of Chinese leadership standards. Nonetheless, those

researchers' involvement was conditional in that the research projects to support the development of the Chinese leadership standards were directly assigned by the MoE of the PRC to two universities, and participation to the research process was not accessible to all researchers. I will elaborate this point of view later in my dissertation in exploring which types of actors have been involved and marginalized in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China. Recognizing these critiques and challenges, I remain with my choice of ANT as the theoretical framework of this study, and I explain the reasons in the following paragraphs.

3.5 Why ANT?

I chose ANT as the theoretical framework which guides the design, development, and analysis of my study for the following reasons. First of all, ANT is exceptionally helpful in understanding the transnational flows of policy ideas, to be more specific, the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China. By focusing on the types of actors as well as their interrelationships, ANT recognizes the fluidity and dynamic nature of the policy process and therefore helps me avoid the danger of taking the global convergence of leadership standards for granted.

Secondly, ANT is particularly useful in analyzing standards-based policies in that it does not focus on individual structures or values. Specifically, I do not conceptualize leadership standards as simply created with authoritative values and knowledge, and are imposed on practitioners to practice (Fenwick, 2010; Gorur, 2011; Nespor, 2002). Both standards and enactment are effects of complex connections, interactions, and collectives that are context-situated and constantly changing. As Fenwick (2010) comments:

An ANT-inspired treatment of a particular set of educational standards themselves as a series of networks—some of which are still in flux—recognizes the many negotiations

that lead to translations of entities at each node of the political decision enactment: specific terms of language, materials, coalitions of people, existing documents, disciplinary bodies of knowledge, and so on. ANT helps locate the many inclusions and exclusions that occur in assembling these networks of standards, which can be easily obscured in references to standards that appear to exist as inevitable and immutable. (p. 120)

Thirdly, ANT is in alignment with my critical approach to policy analysis. Even though ANT is rarely used by critical policy analysts, alignments and conceptual similarities are evident between ANT and the critical approach to policy analysis. For instance, both ANT and critical approach of policy analysis adopt an assemblage thinking of policy analysis by focusing on the get-together of multiple ideologies, policies, practices, and materials in particular places at particular times (Koyama, 2009; Sobe & Kowalczyk, 2014). This assemblage thinking builds upon the relational view of both policy analysis and educational leadership. Instead of focusing on the effectiveness of the PSfP as the rational approach to policy analysis, my study is a relationship-oriented policy analysis giving significant attention to the interrelationships among actors that have contributed to the transfer and the adaptations of the global dominant discourse on leadership standards to the Chinese context in the PSfP, as well as the enactment of the policy. The enactment of the PSfP can be only understood in relation to the connections, conflicts, adaptations, and negotiations that are interweaving in the interactions among various types of actors.

Moreover, both ANT and critical approach to policy analysis pay attention to the issue of power relations. Combining those approaches allows me to challenge the assumption that values and knowledge embedded in the standards are fixed and pre-defined, and propose that it is

necessary to unbound knowledge, values and identities from the standards. In this study, the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China, the adaptations of the discourse, as well as the enactment of the PSfP, are all viewed as effects of relations and negotiations among actors. In this dissertation, I elaborate on the issue of power and politics through tracing both the inclusion and exclusion of different types of actors, as well as the ways in which those actors have exercised their agency to either hold together or disconnect with one another at a particular time and in a particular place.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, I clarified my analytical approach, which is a critical approach to policy analysis. This approach does not put emphasis on the effectiveness of policy implementation, but instead, pays attention to the interpretation and enactment of policies (Ball, 1993; Ball et al., 2012). Aligning with this perspective, ANT is adopted as the theoretical framework to guide the development of this study. The central assertion of ANT is that all things are relational (Callon, 1986; Law, 1999). Studies guided by ANT, such as this dissertation, trace the coming together, the connections, and the power relations among heterogeneous actors (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Latour, 1992, 1999b).

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Overview

In this chapter, I illustrate the methodology and research methods adopted in this study to answer my research questions: 1) Which types of actors have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, and how are they interrelated with one another? 2) How has the global discourse on leadership standards been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP policy? 3) How has the PSfP policy been enacted by principals and vice-principals in schools? After this overview, I demonstrate the reasons why qualitative case study was chosen for my study. I then clarify the differences between comparative case study and traditional case study, and explain how comparative case study was used in alignment with ANT in my study. The next section of this chapter touches on the recruitment process, the background of the schools involved in this study, as well as the research methods (interviews, observations, document analysis) I adopted. I then manifest the procedure of data process and analysis, and after that, I illustrate the strategies adopted to validate my study. The ethical considerations and the ways in which they are addressed in my study are elaborated. Furthermore, the methodological limitations are also pointed out in the last section of this chapter.

4.2 Qualitative Research

This dissertation is a qualitative study. The reasons why I am interested in qualitative research and used it for this study are related to my epistemological and ontological perspective, as well as my beliefs about the nature of this study. Coming from a sociomaterial perspective and taking a relational approach, I value the interactions that are socially, culturally and historically embedded to form various assemblages. Qualitative researchers study multiplicity by investigating important contexts and minimizing “the ‘distance’ or ‘objective separateness’”

(Creswell, 2007, p. 18). Without being constrained by predetermined categories as used in quantitative research, qualitative research leads to a deeper understanding of the issue and allows a certain degree of reflection, which I see as an important component in my research. Also, it investigates the cultural, political, economic and historical contexts in which this study is embedded. This exploration of contexts has helped me avoid generalization (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

4.3 Case Study

Aiming at pursuing an in-depth understanding, I used case study, particularly comparative case study (also known as vertical case study) to conduct this research (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2009; Koyama, 2009; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009). Case study investigates the issue in-depth and in real life contexts (Yin, 2014). Guided by ANT, which offers relevant analytical tools to investigate the contextual and social construction of the policy process, I chose case study because it recognizes the uniqueness of contexts and “investigate[s] and report[s] the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 253). One major strength of case study is that it lets the case and contexts speak for themselves and allows for “reinterpretation” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 256). Additionally, a case study can catch detailed and unique features that are mostly ignored in larger scale data such as surveys by “[forming] an archive of descriptive material sufficiently rich to admit subsequent reinterpretation (Adelman, Kemmis, & Jenkins, 1980)” (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 256).

However, a case study can be biased and its results may not be generalizable as it “may be selective, personal and subjective (Nisbet, & Watt, 1984)” (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 256). Yin (2014) suggests that the goal of case studies is to achieve “analytic generalization” and

not to attain “statistical generalization” (p. 15). This means that the conclusions of a qualitative case study largely depend on the context of a specific situation. Therefore, my study does not attempt to provide a universal rule for policy-makers and education practitioners, but to offer ways to think about the transnational flows of policy ideas as well as the ways in which those policies are adapted to and enacted in local contexts.

4.4 Comparative Case Study

4.4.1 Why comparative case study. Comparative case study can be differentiated from traditional case study mainly from two aspects. In the following paragraphs, I articulate these aspects and explain the reasons why comparative case study was chosen over traditional case study as the methodology. First of all, there is a conflation between contexts and phenomenon in traditional case studies (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009). By emphasizing an intensive and holistic description of a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014), traditional case studies often “took historical, cultural, and social forces as explanations instead of context” (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009, p. 8). The concept of context in traditional case studies is mostly based on physical place, and is described as static elements that can explain an existing phenomenon. This misused notion of “context” has resulted in a neglect of process, which relates to the formation and constant changes of context. While in comparative case studies, context is conceptualized as an activity with focus on the agents and efforts to respond, navigate and negotiate in the historically, culturally and socially constructed worlds (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Based on this conceptualization of context, and in alignment with ANT and the critical approach to policy analysis, my study explores the transfer and adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards as well as the enactment of the PSfP in China with an attention on the processes within which heterogenous types of actors get connected and interact with each other.

Second, comparative case studies challenge the notion of bounding the case by arguing that boundaries are not defined but are effects of social actors and relationships. What distinguishes comparative case studies from traditional case studies is that traditional case studies are “set in temporal, geographical, organizational, institutional and other context that enable boundaries to be drawn around the case” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 253). Defining the boundary of a case and the unit of analysis is required to “define a specific, real-life ‘case’ to be a concrete manifestation of the abstraction”, such as individuals and organizations (Yin, 2014, p. 34). Pre-assumptions are often made on variables, context, and relationships in order to bound the case (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Even though this dissertation can be defined as a case of the transfer and the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards, as well as its enactment in Chinese context, the study pays greater attention to the agency of actors which is not limited to any predetermined boundaries as policies flow transnationally and travel transversally (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2014).

4.4.2 Three-scale comparisons. The sense of boundness in traditional case studies always leads to *scale*, the tendency to divide and distinguish global, national, and local levels (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Again, in alignment with ANT, comparative case studies challenge the argument that international and national influences are obligatory for practices at school levels (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009). Instead of trying to distinguish different place-based scales, comparative case studies dissolve boundaries and focus on the linkages and interactions among actors across geographical locations. Researchers adopting this methodology focus on the ways in which global processes and various locales mutually shape, connect with, and influence each other (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009).

Comparative case studies focus on the comparison across space and time (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). A process-oriented approach of comparisons (Maxwell, 2013) is central to comparative case studies, which adopts a more processual understanding about comparison compared with variance-focused comparisons. Aiming at unfolding processes, comparative case studies are multi-scalar and multi-sited. Instead of adopting the traditional scales such as international, national, regional, and local levels, comparative case studies pay attention to the *vertical*, *horizontal*, and *transversal* scales. Even though terms such as international, national, and municipal are sometimes used in this dissertation, they only refer to the geo-political meaning of systems or levels. These terms are neither used to refer units of analysis, nor used for the purposes of categorization, division, and construction of my study.

Aligning with ANT and the critical approach to policy analysis, comparative case studies also use the notion of assemblage, which is conceptualized as “temporary, shifting alliances or networks of people, objects, and ideas” and aims at exploring how assemblages are “amassed, organized, challenged, and defended” (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014, p. 141). Researchers adopting comparative case studies have proposed a need to conduct an analysis of *vertical* assemblages. Vertical comparisons provide a multi-level analysis of policies, organizations, relations, and practices across international, national, municipal, district and school levels. It is helpful in mapping out the actors, untangling their ongoing interactions, and tracing the flows of ideas, actions, and power relations across levels. Vertical comparisons also avoid the danger of separating the local from any outer forces, and ignoring the fact that global forces are produced by local-global interactions (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009).

As I argue in Chapter 6, there are three assemblages (leadership standards, adaptations, and enactment) identified in this study. The assemblage of leadership standards is constituted by

the connections and relationships among the types of actors who have been engaged in promoting the transnational flows of leadership standards particularly to China, and leads to the constitution of a global dominant discourse built through a convergence of leadership standards across various jurisdictions. The assemblage of adaptations contributes to the configuration of the ways in which this dominant discourse is contextualized and adapted to the Chinese context in PSfP policy. The enactment of the PSfP is seen as being produced by the assemblage of enactment within which actors in addition to school leaders assemble together and perform agency. These three assemblages are interwoven in the way that the PSfP introduced in China is perceived as part of the global convergence of leadership standards due to the evident commonalities between the document and other leadership standards as identified in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.1). Moreover, the assemblage of enactment is configured through the interactions among those types of actors who are multi-level situated.

Horizontal comparisons explore multiplicities between multiple sites as addressed by both ANT and critical approach of policy analysis. Multiple sites refer to different jurisdictions where leadership standards were introduced as well as various school sites on which the same set of leadership standards such as the PSfP is enacted. Multi-sited qualitative research like comparative case study provides a comprehensive understanding of the linkages and effects produced by various groups of actors. In the case of this dissertation, horizontal comparisons were conducted by focusing on how the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP. Moreover, by being attentive to the heterogenous practices as reflected in the enactment of the PSfP in different schools, this qualitative comparative case study traces the assembling process of actors connecting with each other, performing agency, and producing effects (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Latour, 1996, 2005).

Therefore, horizontal comparisons help me to exemplify the multiplicity of policy transfer by unveiling how actors exercise their agency in heterogenous ways in multiple sites.

Transversal comparisons in comparative case studies provide a historical view of the changes and development of linkages and relations. They connect horizontal sites to one another and to vertical comparisons across levels (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). This transversal scale of comparisons calls for revisiting the history of the institutionalization of ideologies and the development of policies (Valdiviezo, 2009). It reveals the agency, fluidity, and flexibility of policies and relations to shed light on the systems that humans have established, developed, and sustained (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). In an ANT language, actors' roles and the ways of interactions do not remain the same in terms of time and space.

To reiterate, comparative case study was chosen as the methodology of my study for the reason that it is in alignment with both ANT and the critical approach to policy analysis. I also considered the feasibility of my study in terms of potential challenges and limitations that may occur to comparative case studies. Time is a major challenge of conducting a comparative case study. A comparative case study involves exploration and analysis across multiple scales, multiple sites, and over time. Both multi-level and historical approaches of analysis requires intensive research on policies and related literature. Therefore, setting up manageable timelines was essential for designing this comparative case study. In the next section, I illustrate the research methods adopted to explore the research questions proposed in this dissertation.

4.5 Data Sources

I adopted semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis in this study. Qualitative data collected from interviews and observations was particularly used to answer my research question of how the PSfP policy has been enacted by principals and vice-principals in

schools. I collected my data from Beijing, the capital city of China, from May 2016 to October 2016. The municipality is directly under the administration of the central government, and is home to most major government organizations in China (Government of Beijing, 2018). As the historical, economic, political, and educational centre, in 2016, the city has a population of 21.72 million with 37.16% (8.07 million) migrant population (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Beijing is composed of 16 urban, suburban, and rural districts (Government of Beijing, 2018). Participants of my study were from schools located in the two inner urban districts. Both districts cover part of Beijing's historical area, and are known for the *Hutong* culture. *Hutongs* are narrow alleys or neighborhoods formed by traditional courtyard residences. The culture of *Hutong* is viewed as a representation of Beijingers' way of living both historically and culturally.

4.5.1 Recruitment process. I chose Beijing for recruitment purposefully for an easier access to participants considering my positionality and the feasibility of this study. My study includes interviews and observations with school leaders who are major actors in the enactment of the PSfP policy. I used purposive sampling (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Patton, 2002) to recruit non-randomized participants: principals and vice-principals working in public education system during compulsory stage of education (Grade 1 to 9). The sample of qualitative case studies is often purposive based on aspects of the case(s) and limits of time (Miles et al., 2014). The PSfP is a national policy specifically issued for principals and vice-principals. Therefore, focusing on the depth of the case rather than achieving generalization, I used purposive sampling to capture rich and insight information through a relatively small sample.

Snowball sampling (Cohen et al., 2007; Patton, 2002) was used as a strategy in this study for recruitment. This sampling strategy is especially effective when the researcher(s) already knows a small number of people who are related to the study, but the overall access to the

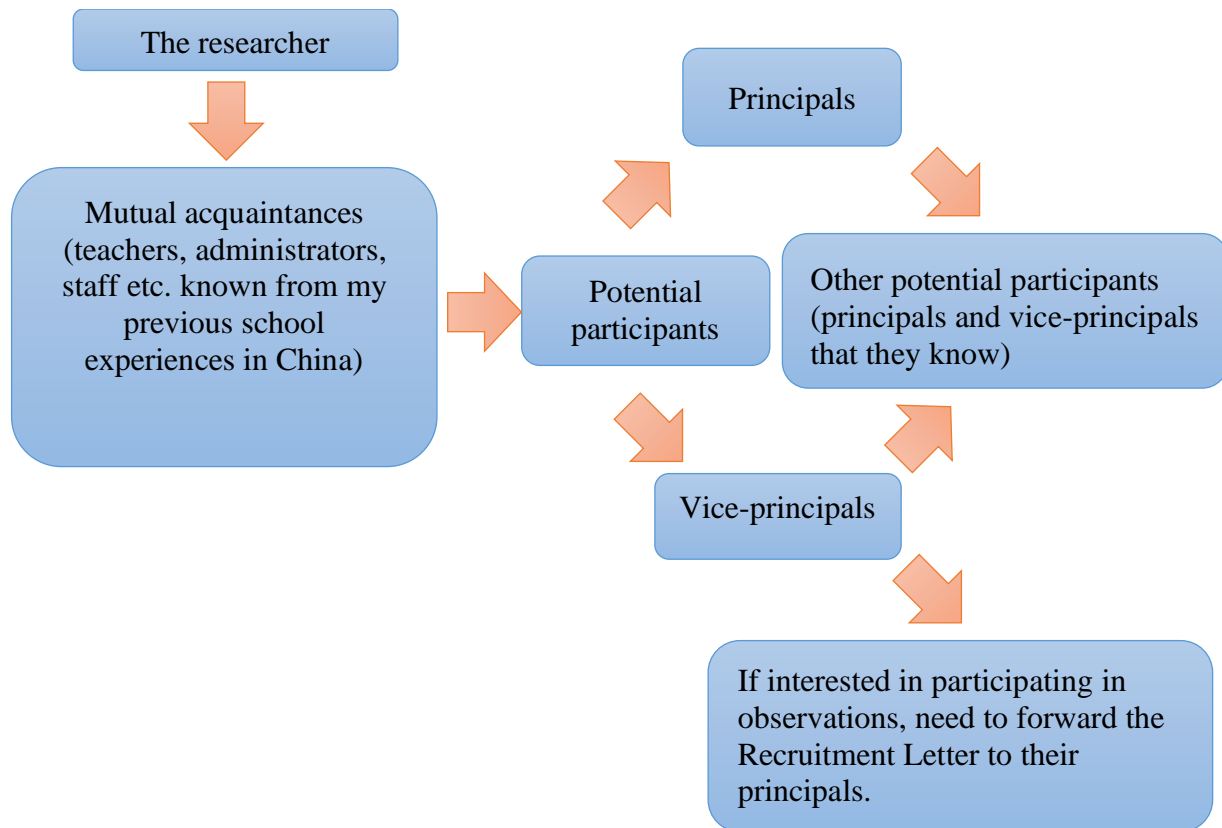
research population is difficult (Cohen et al., 2007). I adopted snowball sampling considering the following situations which might challenge the recruitment of my study. First, research topics involving policies and politics are seen as sensitive in mainland China. This is a direct result of the roles that the government and the China's Communist Party (the Party) have played in directing and influencing the adoption of ideologies and discourses (Heimer, & Thøgersen, 2006). Principals and vice-principals, who are in the formal leadership positions are especially politically sensitive as they are seen as governmental officials (Walker & Qian, 2018). They may question the purpose of the study and may be reluctant to talk. Second, quantitative research is more widely accepted in China. Inquiry approaches of qualitative research such as interviews and observations are seen as time-consuming and raise more privacy concerns. Third, my positionality differentiates myself from both foreign researchers and local researchers based in Chinese universities. Even though I did not expect to encounter any language challenge or culture shock during my field work, as a Chinese student studying in a Canadian university, I do not have the resources such as trust, prestige, and partnerships that a Chinese university might offer. Therefore, considering all those factors that could limit my access to potential participants, I chose snowball sampling as my recruitment strategy.

Before initiating the recruitment process, I had received the permission from Western's Research Ethics Boards to conduct this research (Appendix 3). The process (Figure 1) was initiated through teachers, administrators, and staff working in the setting and known to myself from my previous school experiences in Beijing. I contacted the mutual acquaintances and asked them to make initial contacts with potential participants. At the initial stage of recruitment, copies of Recruitment Letter in both Mandarin and English (Appendix 4, Appendix 5, Appendix 6, Appendix 7) were provided to mutual acquaintances and forwarded to principals and vice-

principals as well as possible informants working in public schools. Potential participants who were interested in the study were instructed to contact me directly through email. Once I received their emails, I provided potential participants with copies of Letter of Information and Consent Form (Appendix 8, Appendix 9), and asked them to forward the Recruitment Letter to other possible informants including their vice-principals. Further informants were directed to contact me directly through email as well.

Ethical review is not required for conducting social science and humanities research with human participants in mainland China. Researchers only need principals' permission for doing fieldwork particularly observations in their schools. Principals' right in decision-making concerning every aspect of their schools is legitimized under the Principal Accountability System (PAS) (State Council of the PRC, 1985), which has been fully established in China since 1985.

Figure 1 Recruitment Process



Therefore, when a vice-principal suggested that s/he was interested in participating the observation, I asked him/her to forward the Recruitment Letter to the principal first. Only when the principal granted the approval, I was allowed to observe the school setting as well as the vice-principal's practices. My recruitment selection criteria included principals and vice-principals:

1. who identified themselves as being familiar with and having been enacted the PSfP;
2. worked in public schools during compulsory education stage (Grades 1-9) in Beijing;
3. who gave consent to be either interviewed, or observed, or both interviewed and observed.

A total number of thirteen school leaders (Table 1) including six principals and seven vice-principals from six different schools (one primary school and five secondary schools) were involved in this study. Empirical data was collected from semi-structured interviews with thirteen school leaders, as well as observations of five participants' practices (Liang, Ming, Ping, Qian, Yong), and the physical settings of the six schools, which I describe next.

Table 1 Participants

School Name	School Type	Participant's Name & Gender	Position	Years in Position
Oaktree School	Secondary	Yuan, female	Principal	8
		Jian, male	Vice-Principal	3
		<i>Ming</i> , female	Vice-Principal	6
Horseshoe School	Secondary	<i>Qian</i> , male	Principal	7
		<i>Liang</i> , male	Vice-Principal	5
		Hua, male	Vice-Principal	5
Mt. Summer School	Secondary	Yi, male	Principal	6
		Na, female	Vice-Principal	4
City School	Secondary	<i>Ping</i> , female	Principal	7
		<i>Yong</i> , female	Vice-Principal	2
		Huang, male	Vice-Principal	5
Rev Road School	Primary	Hong, female	Principal	7
South Gate School	Secondary	Bing, male	Principal	8

*The names of participants who were both interviewed and observed are italicized.

4.5.2 About the schools. Having a history of over a hundred years, the *Oaktree School* was initially established by a well-known Chinese educator and politician as a small private school in the early 1900s. After the establishment of the PRC, the Oaktree School became a public school covering Grades 7 to 12. When I collected my data, the school had almost 2000 students within which about 400 of them were in Grades 7 to 9. The Oaktree School was one of the high-performing schools within the district.

The *Horseshoe School* was established in the late 1990s. It is a public secondary school (Grade 7-12) with an art focus. The school had about 590 students and 100 teachers. Different from other schools whose students only take regular programs, students in the Horseshoe School also take specific art classes as well as related training programs. Compared with regular public schools, the Horseshoe School has higher percentage of teachers majoring in art. It has its own art studios and hires professionals from art universities to support students' development in their areas of interests. Most students of the school choose to go to art universities to pursue related career path.

The *Mt. Summer School* has a history which can be traced back to the 1920s. It is now a public secondary school covering Grades 7 to 12 with a student population of over 1700. Almost half of the students are boarding students. In this school, there were over 200 teachers and administrative staff. The school is known for its student athletic association including a football team, a track and field team, and an aerobic team. The Mt. Summer School is located at an intersection of two main streets, and has the biggest campus among all the schools involved in this study.

The *City School* is one of the most prestigious schools in Beijing, which is known for its students' top performance in both university entrance examinations as well as many national

competitions such as those in science and innovation. The school was established in the early 1990s, and is one of the earliest public schools opened since the establishment of the PRC. It had over 2400 students, and about 100 international students. Many alumni of the City School are well-known scientists, artists, and politicians in China.

The *South Gate School* was established in the 1950s. It is a secondary school covering Grade 7-12. The school had a student population of over 1100 and about 120 teachers. It is well known for its student clubs, such as dancing clubs and martial arts clubs. It is also known for its sports teams including basketball, track and field, and orienteering.

The *Rev Rd. School* is the only primary school (Grade 1-6) in this study. It was a private school before the 1950s, and was changed into a public school after the establishment of the PRC. The school had less than 800 students and features art education. The Rev Rd. School is the smallest school within the schools involved in this study in terms of the size of campus.

4.5.3 Interviews. Semi-structured and one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions were used to directly gather information about the enactment of the PSfP. I chose semi-structured interviews for their flexibility and attention to reflection (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014; Cohen et al., 2007; Wengraf, 2001). Semi-structured interviews offer participants the chance to reflect and explore the issues they feel important. Although a list of predetermined questions (Appendix 10, Appendix 11) was prepared before I entered the field to collect data, I was able to restructure my interview questions and encourage further conversations during semi-structured interviews.

Interviews started with questions about participants' school settings and student composition to give me an understanding of the contexts of their schools. Interview questions then moved to their interpretations, practices, and challenges related to the leadership standards.

The goal of interviews is to understand school leaders' perceptions and lived experiences with the PSfP, as well as the effects produced by the enactment of the policy.

Both face-to-face interview and phone call interview were offered to participants depending on their availability. All participants in my study chose to be interviewed in their school offices in person. Interviews were conducted in Mandarin, and were audio taped and then transcribed by myself. Hand-written notes were also taken during interviews to record details and issues that needed my attention. Semi-structured interviews took from 35 minutes to 1 hour 50 minutes, and were paused if interrupted or participants suggested necessary. Interview transcripts were returned to participants for confirmation.

4.5.4 Observations. Interviewing data may miss information that participants were not aware of, or unwilling to disclose (Patton, 2002). Attempting to capture the complexity of policy enactment, I chose observations as another research method to “gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social situations” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 396). Observations have five major strengths (Cohen et al., 2007; Patton, 2002). First, they are context-sensitive. Policy enactment is contextual. Observations not only allowed me to capture that contexts through all my senses, but also to copy that contexts through field notes with thick descriptions. Second, observations provided first-hand data directly oriented from the settings rather than relying on second-hand information provided by interview participants. This “direct recognition” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 396) offered me more valid data as it avoided mediation created by interviewees. Third, observational data provided information that may have escaped during interviews. This information included things that interviewees were unwilling to disclose and were not aware of, as well as those were taken for granted. Fourth, observations allowed me to collect non-verbal or non-written data such as schools' physical settings and behaviors. Last, reflections and

interpretations could be included in observations. As part of my data, my reflections about what I observed in school settings are critical in better understanding the enactment of the PSfP as a process or an assemblage as I will discuss later in the discussion chapter.

In this study, two principals and three vice-principals from four secondary schools were observed. These participants (Ming, Qian, Liang, Ping, Yong) chose to be both interviewed and observed. Observations were conducted during school hours in participants' school settings. Specifically, participants from three of participating schools (Oaktree School, Horseshoe School, and City School) were observed respectively for five consequential school days. There were times when participants had an agenda, such as a meeting with government officials, which I was not allowed to attend. I either stayed in another administrator's office to debrief on my field notes, or observed other aspects of the school.

I conducted semi-structured observations (Cohen et al., 2007), which means I had an agenda before entering into the field, but I did not limit myself for this information. One of the challenges for observations is that both the settings and actors in the settings are less predictable (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, instead of being less prepared about what to observe, like unstructured observations, or being exactly clear about what to look for, like highly structured observations, I adopted semi-structured observations so that I kept myself focused on my study, and at the same time not be constrained by a fixed observation schedule (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014; Cohen et al., 2007). To prepare myself for observations, I identified the focus of my observations and developed an observation grid (Table 2) before entering the field.

The focus of observations influences the extent to which a researcher is involved in observations, and the duration of observations (Patton, 2002). In alignment with the purpose of this study, the focus of my observations was how the PSfP policy was enacted in schools. As my

attempt is not to picture school leaders' daily work, only information on the enactment of this policy was documented. There are six domains outlined in the PSfP, and these domains were the key standards which I used to decide whether something was related to my research. I situated myself as a complete observer in this study, meaning I did not involve or participate in any activities or events during my school-site observations. Attempting to capture the dynamic nature of events in a natural setting, I chose this non-interventionist, or non-participative approach, and tried to detach myself from participants' environment (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2008; Patton, 2002).

Observational data can be categorized into empirical setting, events, human, and behaviors/qualities, and program (Cohen et al., 2007; Patton, 2002). I developed my observation instruments based on these categories and the core ideas of ANT. The first category of my observation instruments was material settings and physical evidence. For example, the size of the school, school buildings, playground, school decorations, the conditions of school facilities, and the use of physical space in schools, etc. I also included artifacts that were involved in school leaders' enactment of the PSfP, such as policies, technology, and resources. The second category of my observations was events. This included planned, unplanned, formal and informal events in which principals or vice-principals played a major role, and more often involved interactions with human actors such as teachers, students, and staff. The third category considered behaviors and qualities, such as leadership distribution and collaboration.

Hand-written field notes were taken during my observations to record and visualize what I observed in each setting. Field notes are descriptive, factual, accurate, and need to provide sufficient depth and details (Cohen et al., 2006; Patton, 2002). They also can be analytical, but not judgmental. In my field notes, I intentionally avoided using vague adjectives such as "some"

or “many” to ensure the clarity and accuracy of my notes. In addition to take notes with thick descriptions, I also paid attention to my own interpretations and reflections of what was happening in a school setting. An observation grid (Table 2) was created to guide my observations. Copies of the observation grid sheet were printed on single side to ensure additional space was saved considering the flexible nature of semi-structured observations.

Table 2 Observation Grid

Date:	School Name:			Participant:				
Time	Physical settings and material actors	School location and surroundings	Human actors	Connections and interactions	School schedule	Supports	Challenges	Reflections and others

4.5.5 Document analysis. In this study, document analysis was used as another research method to understand the transfer and adaptations of the global dominant discourse on leaderships to the Chinese context, as well as the enactment of the leadership standards in China. First, I conducted a systematic review of leadership standards or frameworks from different jurisdictions as presented in the introductory chapter of this dissertation. This helped me understand the global convergence of leadership standards. In addition, the review of those documents led me to think about my analytical approach as well as my choice of theoretical framework. More importantly, this synthesis of leadership standards provided me some insight on the construction and articulation of my research questions as well as interview questions.

Second, the main document, which is the focus of this study, was the PSfP. I read and translated the policy (see Appendix 2), and it formed a central part of my analysis given my interest in the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards in the Chinese context, and the enactment of the Chinese leadership standards in school settings.

Finally, document analysis involved documents collected during interviews and observations. The sources of these documents were either primary or secondary (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Documents from primary sources included policies, government publications, school websites, and newsletters and posters exhibited in schools I observed. Those documents were either open to all or collected directly by myself during school observations. Documents from secondary sources were those collected through non-direct experiences. For example, policies or internal publications mentioned by participants. Those documents were collected for analysis only when consent to use was granted by the participants. Any identifiable information was removed from the documents to ensure anonymity, and it is for that reason that these documents are not cited here. In the following section, I explain how I analyzed the documents in my study, especially the PSfP.

4.6 Data Process and Analysis

Raw data (interview recordings, field notes, and documents) was prepared and processed by myself before analysis. As all interviews were conducted in Mandarin, I transcribed the recordings into texts without translation so that transcripts could be sent back to participants for confirmation. This process of transcribing gave me an opportunity to get familiar with interviewing data and allowed initial reflections on the data. Handwritten field notes were taken both during interviews and observations. A formal write-up was added to each piece of raw field notes to provide clarification and further explanation of what was happening when the notes were taken. Data collected from interviews and observations include a total number of 66 single-space pages of transcripts, 13 pages of observation field notes along with 7 pages of formal write-ups.

In addition, there were documents collected from participants and were allowed to be used in my study. A memo about the document such as who provided it and how it is used was included. Raw data was normally processed within two days right after it was collected. This usually happened after I returned home from interviews or observations, or during a few times when I was not allowed to observe certain activities in the school.

I used *two-cycle coding* (Saldaña, 2016) to analyze the data in that ANT, critical approach to policy analysis, as well as comparative case studies, and more importantly, the purposes of this dissertation, require me to focus on how actors act, get together, and interact with each other across time. The two-cycle coding, which provided a more relational approach of data analysis (Miles et al., 2014) was helpful for tracing the actors and connections, and mapping the networks in my study. “Codes are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 71). When compiling information from multiple data sources, it came to my attention that data overload might happen to my research considering the variety of data forms and the density of data collected from multiple sites and across time. Therefore, coding, especially two-cycle coding, was used as a strategy of data condensation, and to discover and analyze the interrelationships between assemblages and themes (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016).

First cycle coding involved the initial assignment of codes to data chunks. Codes in this cycle were created and developed through both deductive coding and inductive coding. For instance, one of my research questions is how the PSfP policy was enacted by school leaders. As such, *deductive coding* was conducted based on the six core dimensions of the PSfP as a priori list of codes. These codes included: school planning, student overall development, student learning, teacher growth, internal management, and external environment. I also coded the data

of various resources (documents, interviews, observations) using *inductive coding*, from which new codes emerged (Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2002).

After summarizing segments of data through first cycle coding, I conducted *second cycle coding*, or pattern coding, to “[group] those summaries into a smaller number of categories, themes, or constructs” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 86). By second cycle coding, I pulled together information from first cycle coding and identified major types of actors and their interrelations in this study. Pattern codes were particularly helpful in mapping a network and visualizing the interconnections among various components. In the display of qualitative data, I chose network display (Miles et al., 2014) to present the pattern codes that depict the process of how multi-level actors, human and non-human, act across time and space in the coming-together of contributing to the transfer and adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards in China, as well as the enactment of the PSfP.

4.7 Validity and Feasibility

To strengthen and validate my study, I used methodological triangulation to minimize the limitations of each single type of research method. Methodological triangulation involved “the use of multiple methods to study a single problem or program” (Patton, 2002, p. 247). Patton (2002) suggests that the purpose of triangulation is to test for the consistency of different inquiry approaches and data sources. To enhance the credibility and validity of my study, data collection methods included interviews, observations, and document analysis. Rather than seeking consistency of results, triangulation yielded both consistencies and inconsistencies from data of various methods and sources, and highlighted the sensitivity of qualitative research in real life contexts.

Cohen et al. (2007) propose conducting research on powerful people, such as those who are in key positions or elite institutions, is always sensitive and challenging. Participants in my study involved principals and vice-principals who played leadership roles in decision-making in schools. This made my study an example of “researching up”, differentiating from traditional studies in which researchers are in privileged positions compared with those being researched (Cohen et al., 2007). The greatest challenge of researching powerful people, such as school leaders in my study, is that they might not willing to disclose information and might not disclose their true opinions or feelings. This is the situation which Heimer and Thogersen (2006) describe as one of the major challenges in doing field work in China. They opine that many interviewees in their studies adopted “Ganbunese” (*gan bu yu yan* or *guan hua*) (p. 41), which refers to the language often used in public speech and governmental announcements. The purpose of adopting Ganbunese is to imply participants’ positions as officials or their familiarity with governmental policies.

Considering the challenges of researching up, I adopted several strategies when conducting this study. Firstly, access to participants “can be eased through informal and personal ‘behind the scenes’ contacts” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 129), and this was the reason why I adopted snowball sampling to recruit my participants as I illustrated previously (Section 4.5.1). Personal connections involving emotional commitment were helpful for gaining the trust of the remaining gatekeepers and beginning the snowball process.

Secondly, gaining trust and attracting the attention of participants was critical in my study. In addition to demonstrating the purposes of my study, exciting potential participants’ interests in the study were achieved through a manifest of fully informed knowledge,

information, and terminology, suggesting “an exchange between the informed rather than an airing of ignorance” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 129).

Lastly, approaching participants with an attitude suggesting “I am here to learn” instead of positioning myself as a “privileged researcher” enrolled in a doctoral program in a Canadian university, had made my participants more comfortable and open during both interviews and observations. The organizational hierarchy within Chinese schools is dominant. There is a clear division between leaders and subordinates. Subordinates, or followers, are expected to be respectful and submissive. Principals and vice-principals are seen, and most often see themselves, as the major persons who are in charge and make decisions in their schools. Therefore, during the recruitment and data collection process, it was important for me to make sure these participants were confident in their roles as both insiders and leaders.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

“A major ethical dilemma is that which requires researchers to strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects’ rights and values potentially threatened by the research” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 51). In this dissertation, human participants were involved in investigating the research question with regards to the enactment of the PSfP policy. As mentioned earlier (Section 4.5.1), I received ethical approval from Western University’s Research Ethics Boards before initiating the recruitment process. However, there is no ethics board in Beijing’s school districts. So I did not have to obtain local ethical approval to carry this study.

During the recruitment process, all potential participants were provided with copies of Recruitment Letter and Letter of Information and Consent. To appropriately consider participants’ rights, I explicitly informed them my identity as a researcher and introduced the

background and purposes of my study. The procedures of the research were also illustrated in the letters. No foreseeable risk and harm could be identified. Participants were informed that they were free to withdraw consent or to discontinue participation during the study at any time if they experienced any discomfort or fatigue. They were also informed that participation in this research was voluntary and would not have any impact on their career. Only participants who signed the consent forms were included in my study, and they were informed that they would not receive any remuneration or compensation for participating in my study.

In addition, participants received a copy of their interview transcriptions and were asked for confirmation before preliminary analysis. Participants' initials, office phone numbers, and email addresses were collected during initial contact for the purpose of scheduling interviews and observations. To ensure confidentiality, all participants' names and identifiable information were removed from transcriptions and were replaced with pseudonyms after I finished data collection in China. No identifiable information was transferred from China to Canada. The names of the schools involved in my study were also replaced by pseudonyms. All information was kept in password-protected files. The data was encrypted and kept in a password-protected folder in the hard drive of my laptop. I was the only person with access to the laptop. The data would be securely destroyed following the procedures and standards as outlined on Western University's website (Western University, n.d.).

One of the greatest ethical considerations of my study was the dilemma of overt and covert observations. For my study, I chose overt observations in which participants knew they were being observed, mainly for two reasons. First, overt observation did not violate the principle of informed consent, and ensured participants' privacy. Second, the participants of my observations were principals and vice-principals, and only principals had the power to decide

whether I could access their school settings. Therefore, to enter the school settings, I needed permission from the principals, which required me to identify myself as a researcher at the beginning of my recruitment process. By my presence, participants were familiar with my identity as a researcher and the purposes of my study, because I interviewed them before starting observations. Even though my identity and my overt purposes of observations affected participants and influenced their practices, it provided me more opportunities to observe events and activities in schools.

Another ethical consideration concerning observations was the interactions between participants with other human actors. Two principals and three vice-principals were observed individually in their schools. Given the nature of my study, these observations involved participants' interactions, encounters with other people in the school as part of their day-to-day life. As such it was not practical to provide the Letter of Information and Consent Form, and obtain full written consent from everyone these principals and vice-principals entered in contact with. To address this concern, I prepared a brief blurb explaining my presence in the setting, the purposes of my research, and the nature of my observations. Then I asked for their verbal consent that I could continue with the observations. In the case they did not accept, I stepped aside, did not take notes and was absent myself from this specific encounter. Also, the participants were informed that they could ask me to cease observations for any part of any day, particularly for sensitive issues they felt that should not be included in the study; and then resume the observations later.

4.9 Methodological Limitations

Qualitative research as adopted by this study has evident strengths in tracing, analyzing, and understanding the relations, connections, and processes of policy transfer. One

methodological limitation in this dissertation, particularly the adoption of comparative case study is that the use of the term comparison could be haunted by a conceptual conundrum. In detail, it could be confusing in terms of what are actually compared within the three-scale (vertical, horizontal, transversal) comparisons as elaborated in some studies (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009). Using the term comparison in a study guided by ANT such as this dissertation is risky. Assumptions about pre-determined boundaries could be made between units of comparisons. Nevertheless, ANT denies any pre-determined boundaries by arguing that boundaries are consequences of relations. To avoid this conceptual limitation, I only adopted the three scales as reminders to keep in mind the transnational, historical, and relational nature of this study. More importantly, by adopting the concept of assemblage and highlighting the interconnections between the three assemblages, I make up this limitation and “[diminish] the gap between official and everyday actions and knowledges to reveal policy actors struggling, negotiating, and acting in ways that constrain or disable policy” (Koyama, 2009, p. 21).

Another methodological limitation of this study is that in examining the questions of which types of actors have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China and how have the discourse been adapted to the Chinese context, I only adopted one research method, which is document analysis, and did not interview any policy-makers or researchers who were engaged in the development of the PSfP. The major reason resulting in this methodological limitation is the fact that those education authorities are difficult if not impossible to reach. As I have demonstrated previously (Section 4.7), access to participants is challenging in studies of “researching up” such as this dissertation. This is also the reason why policy makers were initially proposed as potential participants in my ethics application submitted to Western University but not included in this study.

I address this limitation in a number of ways. First and foremost, there has been large number of studies conducted in relation to leadership standards developed in different localities including China. The academic literature as reviewed in Chapter 2 provides essential insight for understanding the ideologies and values on which the dominant discourse on leadership standards have been built upon. In the case of the PSfP, some researchers who were involved in the research projects appointed by the MoE of the PRC to develop Chinese leadership standards have published their research (Wei & Gao, 2010; Zhu & Yang, 2009). Those publications reveal the rationales, the research process, as well as the leadership standards that were proposed to the MoE of the PRC for consideration.

In addition to academic scholarship, there are also official documents published by the MoE of the PRC providing clues for identifying the types of actors and their interrelations with one another. Education officials in China are appointed by the government and serve as spokespersons of the State. The public views of education officials as presented in the media are government-controlled and predominantly homogeneous (Tan, 2019). Therefore, I collected documents that are publicly accessible to interpret the perceptions of policy-makers. Through reviewing those documents, I was able to include the voices of researchers as well as policy-makers concerning the transfer and the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards to the Chinese context. In short, existing documents including both academic research and documents officially published by policy actors such as the MoE of the PRC were rich enough to interrogate issues such as which types of actors have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, and how are they interrelated with one another.

Furthermore, concerns may be raised toward the small number of participants involved in the interviews and observations conducted to explore the enactment of the PSfP. A total number of thirteen school leaders participated in my interviews, and five of them agreed to be observed. Additionally, I was only able to conduct my study within two districts in Beijing, which are geographically closed to each other due to limited time and access to participants. Moreover, as the capital city of the country, Beijing is more economically and culturally developed compared with many other areas of China.

Acknowledging these limitations, I do not attempt to generalize my findings and conclusions to a broader range of schools in China. My research aims to provide a relational and procedural understanding about the enactment of the PSfP, and therefore generalization was neither the aim, nor was it achieved in this study. The findings and conclusions presented in this dissertation in relation to the enactment of the PSfP do not represent the broader picture of the ways in which the PSfP has been put into practice in various regions of China.

4.10 Summary

This study is a qualitative comparative case study. Differentiating from traditional case study and rooted in ANT, comparative case study focuses on the vertical, horizontal and transversal analysis of policy transfer without emphasizing the boundedness of the case. The data is rich in its variety of forms, and as the collection process was initiated across levels, school sites, and time. Two-scale coding was used in data analysis to map the actors, assemblages and interactions from a procedural and relational approach. Ethical considerations such as participants' consent and my identity as a researcher in observations were explicitly addressed. I am also aware that there are some methodological limitations in my study, and those limitations are addressed in terms of the nature of this research as well as the solidity of the research design.

In the next chapter, I present my findings on the types of actors which have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China along with their interrelationships, the ways in which the discourse has been adapted to the Chinese context, and the enactment of the PSfP policy.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings in response to my research questions: 1) Which types of actors have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, and how are they interrelated with one another; 2) How has the global discourse on leadership standards been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP; and 3) How has the PSfP policy been enacted by principals and vice-principals in schools? I begin by identifying government departments, universities, think tanks and school leaders as types of actors who were engaged in the development of the PSfP. It is also noted that professional organizations have played key roles in promoting the transnational transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards yet were excluded from the process of developing the PSfP in China. In response to my second research question, four themes emerged from my findings concerning the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context. These four themes include emphasizing: 1) the authority of socialism, China's Communist Party (the Party), and the State; 2) morality; 3) student overall development; and 4) cultures and traditions. Moreover, to answer the question of how has the PSfP been enacted in schools in Beijing, I identify four themes arising from my analysis: 1) Everybody is responsible for his/her own duties; 2) Morality as moral education and moral leadership; 3) Student academic performance is the key; and 4) Cultures and traditions are essential.

5.2 The Production of the PSfP

As noted in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, leadership standards have been produced across the globe by various types of actors. I have also noted in the literature review (Section 2.5.2), major scholarship on the PSfP has predominantly focused on reiterating the

linear process of policy-making (Ai, 2013; Gao, 2015; Liu et al., 2017). Adopting ANT, which is a sociomaterial and relational approach, my dissertation is distinguished from the studies I previously reviewed by concentrating on the agency of all actors, their connections, and the effects produced by their relationships. In detail, I identified government departments, universities, think tanks, and school leaders as the types of actors involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China through the development of the PSfP. In building the connections among those actors, power was not equally distributed. More accurately, notwithstanding the fact that the two universities and one think tank had engaged in developing the leadership standards in China, the agency of the MoE of the PRC prevailed in developing the PSfP policy. In the following paragraphs, I describe the process of the policy transfer.

In a press conference paper published by the MoE of the PRC on December 24th 2012, officials from the Teacher Affairs Division under the MoE of the PRC answered questions with regards to the background and the purposes of introducing the PSfP, the policy-making process, the main ideas of the policy, as well as the requirements for implementing the policy (MoE of the PRC, 2012). In demonstrating the policy-making process, the officials stated that the MoE of the PRC initiated the policy setting agenda in 2008, and assigned related research projects to two universities (the East China Normal University and the Shanghai Normal University) and one think tank (the Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences). It should be pointed out that those three institutions were not randomly picked, but were selected for particular reasons, or more precisely from perspectives of ANT, for how they are interrelated with one another.

First and foremost, all the three institutions are located in Shanghai, a city which is well-known for its students' performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment

(PISA) (OECD, 2015). Evidence of connections between the three institutions and government departments was observed. In particular, the East China Normal University is one of the 75 universities in mainland China directly administrated by MoE of the PRC (MoE of the PRC, 2017a), while the Shanghai Normal University has a number of research centres including the Center for International Education Study of the MoE of the PRC, which are collaboratively supported by the MoE of the PRC (Shanghai Normal University, 2014). The Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences is a think tank affiliated the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, which is one of the departments of the Shanghai municipal government and whose main functions include planning for education reforms and developing education policies in Shanghai. The Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences has been supporting the development of public policies in the areas of education, social development, and human resources development. Additionally, Dr. Zhang Minxuan, who was one of the core researchers in developing the PSfS, is the director of the Center for International Education Study of the MoE of the PRC at Shanghai Normal University. He was also the former director of the Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences (Shanghai Normal University College of Education, 2018; Wu, 2018).

School leaders were also found involved in developing Chinese leadership standards. Surveys were distributed to almost 540 thousand school leaders from 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities across China to collect the demographic information of practicing school leaders. Researchers from the three institutions also conducted interviews with 20 thousand school leaders from 11 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities in China (MoE of the PRC, 2012).

In this section, I identified universities, think tanks, government departments, and school leaders as the types of actors, which were involved in the production of the PSfP and transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China. It is worth noting that as I did not have access to policy makers or stakeholders who were involved in the development of the PSfP, the types of actors mentioned above are those which can be identified through the documents that are publicly accessible. After identifying the types of actors involved in the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China, and understanding how they are interrelated with one another, in the next section, I demonstrate how the global discourse has been adapted to the Chinese context as represented in the PSfP.

5.3 The Adaptations of the Global Discourse on Leadership Standards in China

As illustrated in the introductory chapter, the PSfP outlines a total number of 60 standards from six dimensions. There are 10 standards within each dimension, and these dimensions include 1) planning for school development, 2) building a culture of promoting student overall development, 3) leading curriculum and instruction, 4) leading teacher growth, 5) improving internal management, and 6) coordinating with external environment (MoE of the PRC, 2013).

These six dimensions significantly overlap with the dimensions identified in most other leadership standards documents as I outlined in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.1). However, adaptations were observed when examining the values, knowledge, strategies, and practices that are outlined under each dimension. In investigating how leadership standards have been adapted to the Chinese context, I conducted inductive coding whereby major themes were developed and emerged from my interpretations of the policy texts from the PSfP. We see in these findings four key themes emerging. The first theme is an emphasis on the authority of socialism, China's

Communist Party (the Party), and the State, and the second theme is an emphasis on morality. These two themes were found re-emerging throughout the PSfP document, and were identified within the first basic concept in the first section of the document. The third theme is a focus on student overall development, and the last theme is valuing the roles of cultures and traditions.

5.3.1 The authority of socialism, the Party, and the State. The PSfP puts noticeable emphasis on the roles of socialism, the Party, and the State in public education. For example, school leaders are required to “坚持社会主义办学方向，贯彻党和国家的教育方针政策，将社会主义核心价值观体系融入学校教育全过程” [persevere in the socialist orientation in education provision, implement the policies of the Party and the nation, and advocate for the infusion of socialist values in schooling] (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 1). In improving internal management, school leaders are also required to “认真听取党组织对学校重大决策的意见，充分发挥党组织的政治核心作用” [conscientiously take the Party’s suggestions into consideration concerning major decisions, and ensure the Party fully play its political core role in schools] (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 4). The role of the State in school leaders’ work is identified by emphasizing the compliance with laws, policies, and regulations at the national level. In the dimension of school planning and development, school leaders are expected to “熟悉国家的法律法规、教育方针政策和学校管理的规章制度” [be familiar with national laws, education policies, and regulations on school management] (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2). In terms of improving internal management, the knowledge about “国家相关政策对校长的职责定位和工作要求” [national policies related to principals’ responsibilities and requirements] is identified as the first piece of knowledge required for school leaders in managing schools (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 4). School leaders are also required to “不得违反国家规定收取费用，不得以向

学生推销或者变相推销商品、服务等方式谋取利益” [comply with national policies and regulations on school fees, and profiteering in any means of selling or promoting merchandise or service is prohibited] (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 4).

5.3.2 Emphasis on morality. The moral aspect of school leaders’ responsibilities, competencies, and practices is significantly emphasized in the PSfP. Specifically, the PSfP pays attention to the concept of morality and moral education. Morality is identified as the foremost among five ideological foundations that have guided the development of the policy. The concept of morality concerns with “服务国家、服务人民的社会责任感和使命感 [strong sense of responsibility and vocation of serving the country and its people]”, and moral conduct such as “职业道德规范，树德立人，为人师表，公正廉洁，关爱师生，尊重师生人格 [demonstrating strong work ethics, fostering integrity and promoting rounded development of people, being a model of virtue for others, acting with honesty and probity, and showing caring and respect to teachers, staff, and students]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 1). In leading teacher growth, school leaders are required to “开展师德师风教育，落实教师职业道德规范要求 [promote teacher moral education and ensure teachers demonstrate strong work ethics]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 4). It is also noted that school leaders are responsible for “严禁教师体罚或变相体罚学生，严禁教师从事有偿补课 [strictly forbidding corporal punishment or any disguised form of corporal punishment, and teachers participating in paid tutoring]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 4). In addition, the PSfP identifies moral education as the first priority. Under the dimension of building a culture of student development, school leaders are required to “把德育工作摆在素质教育的首要位置，全面加强学校德育体系建设 [prioritize moral education in quality education, and strengthen the development of moral education in school system]” (MoE

of the PRC, 2013, p. 2). Creating and developing a positive school culture is proposed as an important aspect of moral education (MoE of the PRC, 2013).

5.3.3 Focus on student overall development. The PSfP places emphasis on school leaders' responsibility in promoting students' overall development, which is denoted in the second dimension of the standards. In achieving the promotion of students' overall development, the standards explicitly state that neither improving student academic performance nor increasing the enrollment rates in high-ranking schools should be the only pursuit of schooling (MoE of the PRC, 2013). The PSfP also requires school leaders to “建立完善促进学生全面发展的教育教学评价制度 [establish and optimize a comprehensive evaluation system for teaching which promotes students' overall growth]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 3).

In addition, school leaders are expected to be aware of diversity and individual differences within student body. For example, the Standard 16 mentions that school leaders need to “掌握不同年龄阶段学生思想品德形成和健康心理发展的特点与规律，了解学生思想与品行养成过程及其教育方法 [acquire the knowledge concerning the characteristics of student moral and psychological development at different ages, and be familiar with related pedagogies accordingly]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2). In terms of teaching and curriculum development, school leaders are encouraged to “因材施教 [teach in accordance with students' aptitude]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 3). The PSfP also pays significant attention to students' “健康成长 [healthy growth]” and “全面个性发展 [overall personality development]”, and identifies these two aspects as school leaders' essential responsibilities (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 1, p. 3).

5.3.4 Roles of cultures and traditions. School leaders are expected to pay attention to the roles of cultures and traditions in school planning and development, and building a culture of

promoting student overall development. Specifically, school cultures, school traditions, Chinese traditional cultures, and regional cultures across the country are viewed as critical components in school development and promoting moral education. For example, the PSfP states that school leaders need to “尊重学校传统和学校实际，提炼学校办学理念，办出学校特色 [respect school traditions and school contexts, and conceptualize an educational philosophy with school characteristics]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2). In the development of school cultures, which is identified as an essential aspect of moral education, school leaders are encouraged to “精心设计和组织艺术节、科技节等校园文化活动 [plan for and organize events such as art and science festivals to celebrate school culture]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2). School leaders are also required to “热爱祖国优秀传统文化 [love the traditional splendid cultures of motherland]” and “重视地域文化的重要作用 [pay attention to the important roles of regional cultures]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2).

This dissertation began with an overview of leadership standards documents that have been used in leadership preparation, professional development, and evaluation of school leaders in jurisdictions around the world. In countries such as Australia and New Zealand, national standards have been developed (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008). In sub-regional levels (e.g. provinces and states), for instance, the province of Alberta in Canada, standards have been introduced to guide the preparation, professional development and evaluation of school leadership (Alberta Education, 2009). Across regions, there are also leadership standards being produced, and one example is the document published by Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Sweden (Schratz et al., 2013).

In my study, I conducted a review of national standards from Australia (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014), and the United States (NPBEA, 2015), as well as standards documents from the provinces of Alberta (Alberta Education, 2009) and Ontario (Ontario Instituted for Education Leadership, 2013) in Canada. My own review of these leadership standards documents, as well as related literature has highlighted evident similarities among those documents in defining successful and effective school leaders. Those similarities emphasize a number of leadership practices, including building vision, promoting teacher development, improving student learning, as well as encouraging collaborations, and therefore, contribute to a convergence of leadership standards.

This convergence of leadership standards does not emerge from a vacuum, but has been driven by NPM which promotes the adoption of management practices from business sectors in public sectors such as educational institutions. One noticeable example is the use of theories and materials from business management programs in the professional training programs offered to school leaders (Hallinger & Lu, 2013; Walker et al., 2013). Assuming that all effective leaders adopt a similar repertoire of practices, both researchers and policy-makers (e.g. CEPPE & OECD, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2006) introduce the core ideas of leadership training programs from non-school contexts to the development of leadership standards for school principals and vice-principals. Built upon my examination of other leadership standards documents, as well as a review of related literature, we can see that the convergence of leadership standards across various localities has constructed a global discourse, and this discourse has been adapted in the Chinese context by emphasizing the authority of socialism, the Party, and the State, highlighting morality, focusing on student overall development, as well as valuing cultures and traditions. In the next section, I offer my findings about how the PSfP has been enacted in schools.

5.4 The Enactment of the PSfP

As mentioned in Chapter 3, in this study, I adopted a critical approach to policy analysis, and focus upon the enactment rather than the implementation of the policy. Instead of examining the effectiveness of policy implementation, enactment pays attention to actual practices, contextualized process, and emphasizes the tensions as well as negotiations within the process (Ball et al., 2012; Bowe et al., 2017). Therefore, during the interviews, I did not limit my participants by asking them to illustrate how they put each individual standard into practice. Rather, I used open-ended questions to guide participants to elaborate on the ways in which the six dimensions of the PSfP were enacted in their schools.

Data was collected from semi-structured interviews with participants, observations, as well as documents pertaining to the enactment of the PSfP. Data was analyzed using two-cycle coding (see Section 4.6). In the first cycle coding, deductive coding was conducted using the six dimensions outlined within the PSfP, and inductive coding identified new emerging codes. During the second cycle coding, I pulled together information from the first cycle coding and pinpointed the following themes: 1) Everybody is responsible for his/her own duties; 2) Morality as moral education and moral leadership; 3) Student academic performance is the key; and 4) Cultures and traditions are essential. In this section, I elaborate on my findings with respect to these four themes. Moreover, the alignments and tensions that were found between the PSfP and its enactment are highlighted. I also remark the standards that were excluded from school leaders' practices.

It should be underlined that this dissertation does not aim at interrogating school leaders' work in general, or in other words, what school leaders spend most of their time doing. The focus of my study is the enactment of the PSfP. In addition, in light of the validity of my research, I did

not document all the practices that were found in relation to the enactment of PSfP. Instead, only those re-emerging themes were identified and included in my findings as are described in this chapter.

In addition, it is also important to address that I adopt ANT in this dissertation, and the focus of my study is the process of heterogeneous actors assembling together, interacting with one another, and performing to produce multiplicities (Callon, 1986; Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Law & Singleton, 2014). In this sense, school leaders' practices in enacting the PSfP are conceptualized as multiple effects produced by an assemblage of interrelationships. Therefore, school leaders' practices are demonstrated in the following sections, but will be unfolded into different types of actors along with their interrelations that have constituted the configuration of those practices.

5.4.1 Everybody is responsible for his/her own duties. Involving in the enactment of the PSfP, participants emphasized the notion of “各司其职 [everybody is responsible for his/her own duties]”, and underlined the dominance of the Principal Accountability System (PAS). The PAS legitimizes principal's sole leadership role within schools. Even though the term “school leaders” often refers to principals and vice-principals as it is throughout this dissertation, there have been several school leadership reforms in mainland China during which different actors were assigned the term “school leaders”. What we see in the history of school leadership reforms in China has been the swings from the PAS whereby school principals held full responsibility for their schools, and a system in which the Party officials were appointed in school leadership positions.

The shifts of the formal leadership role in schools between the Party and school principals are largely aligned with China's political movements. For instance, in the early years

(1949-1951) since the establishment of the country as a Communist state, addressing the values of democracy, schools were led by school-level administrative committees composed of representatives of teachers, administrative staff and students. Significant attention was placed on political ideology learning, and limited effort was devoted to teaching and student academic learning.

In 1952, the PAS was introduced for the first time (MoE of the PRC, 1952a, 1952b). Under this system, a principal was appointed in every school. A principal was legitimated to be responsible for every aspect of the school, such as the promotion of political ideology, hiring, budgeting, as well as student learning, and also to be accountable for school as an organization. The purpose of introducing the PAS was to reiterate the importance of education quality, and more importantly to clarify the roles and responsibilities of school principals (Fang, 2012; Zhang, 2010). However, the PAS was abolished in several political movements, such as the Anti-Rightist Campaign starting from 1957 and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), for its neglect of the Party's leadership at school level. During those periods, the Party officials were again assigned to leadership positions in schools (MoE of the PRC, 1978a, 1978b).

In 1985, a major reform on school leadership was initiated, and the MoE of the PRC re-established the PS under which principals were put in official leadership positions in schools (State Council of the PRC, 1985). This reform denotes a shift of the leadership role from the school-level Party secretaries to principals. Its aim was to improve principals' work motivation and efficiency to better meet the needs of the development of public education. Nevertheless, the PAS was not mandatory to be put into practice in all schools. This stage was a transitional period, in which more autonomy was granted to principals, and principals were encouraged to play a leading role in the decision-making process within schools.

Since 1993, when the national MoE of the PRC published the *Guidelines for China's Education Reforms and Development* (MoE of the PRC, 1993), and required all primary and secondary schools to adopt the PAS. Moreover, the PAS was explicitly legitimated in the updated *Compulsory Education Law* published in 2006 (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2006). Following the updated *Compulsory Education Law* (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2006), more policies were introduced to promote the development of the PAS. These policies include the *National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan* (2010-2020) (MoE of the PRC, 2010), *Outlines for Developing a Law-based Education System (2016-2020)* (MoE of the PRC, 2017b), and *National Education Development: the 13th Five-Year* (MoE of the PRC, 2017c). Since then, the PAS has been systematically established and further developed.

When explaining the PAS, Yong (vice-principal, City School) summarized principals' and vice-principals' roles and responsibilities as follows:

学校都是这么一个模式。学校分为校长，都是校长负责制。校长就像家长，什么都管，但又不是具体去操作。然后书记，是党政一把手，组织大家学习党的思想最新的政策文件。校长下面呢，小的学校它分为，它下面有两个副职。一个是教学副校长，管教学。一个是德育副校长，管德育。大校还有一个行政副校长，管基建后勤。所以每个学校的管理工作分工都很明确。 [All schools adopt the same responsibility assignment model. There is a principal. All schools adopt the PAS. The principal is like a parent, and is in charge of and responsible for everything. Nevertheless, the principal does not have to actually do it. Then there is a Party Secretary, who is the political and organizational leader in school. The Party Secretary is responsible for organizing learning activities related to the Party's ideology and the most updated

policies. In addition to the principal, in smaller schools, there are two vice-principals. One vice-principal is in charge of teaching and student learning. The other one is responsible for moral education. In big schools, there is another vice-principal who is responsible for school supplies, and the management of school infrastructure.

Accordingly, the assignment of responsibilities concerning management in every school is clear and explicit.]

School leaders participated in this study asserted that concerning school leadership, the PAS is fundamental for all their roles, responsibilities, and practices. As a consequence, the enactment of all policies including the PSfP, strictly follows the PAS.

Moreover, the notion of “everybody is responsible for his/her own duties” was particularly emphasized when participants reflecting on their involvement in the enactment of the standards within the dimension of improving internal management. The standards in this dimension generally identify school leaders’ responsibilities in personnel, budgeting, school safety and sanitation. Many participants in my study started with illustrating the assignment of responsibilities. They argued that school leaders’ major role is to make sure everyone is clear about and responsible for their own responsibilities. Specifically, when demonstrating the enactment of the standard about “熟悉学校人事财务、资产后勤、校园网络、安全保卫与卫生健康等管理实务 [being familiar with the practices that are involved in the management of personnel, budget, resources, infrastructure, school network, safety and security, as well as sanitation]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 4), Yuan (principal, Oaktree School) proposed:

一个人什么都干不了，全靠大家。安全财务这些都有自己的部门，各负其责，然后每个部门都有负责人。比如学校安全，有保卫干部。然后学校资源配置也是每年，或者每个学期，都由下面老师们，年级组还有教研组提出。我们今年还需要什么，

报一个计划上来。然后学校的这个领导层核心层，再看学校的发展，和需要什么，最后出一个计划。 [No school leader can work on his/her own. We work together. We have divisions for school safety and finance. Each division is responsible for its duties, and there is also a division head. For example, our school has a school safety officer in the school safety division. Every year or every semester, resources allocation starts from lower levels, meaning teachers, Grade Groups, and Teaching Research Groups report to the school leadership team about what they need. The school leadership team makes decisions based on the needs of school development, and then come up with a final plan.] Teaching Research Groups are subject-based groups within schools, in which teachers engage in professional development through collaborative work and research.

In another example, Hong (principal, Rev Rd. School) opined that in enacting the standard of “建立健全学校人事、财务、资产管理等规章制度，提高学校管理规范化水平 [establishing and updating the regulations related to personnel, budget, and assets at school level, as well as improving the level of standardization in school management]”, the key is to ensure those regulations “明确责任，责任到人，层层压实。 [explicitly clarify the responsibilities of each individual throughout all levels]”.

5.4.2 Morality as moral education and moral leadership. Aligning with my findings in Section 5.3.2, morality is a critical concept emerged from the enactment of the standards within multiple dimensions identified in the PSfP. Specifically, the concept of morality is teased out through a focus on moral education, as well as an emphasis on moral leadership highlighting the moral aspect of being leaders within their schools.

Moral education was found to be central to the dimension of creating a culture of promoting student overall development both as school leaders stated and as I observed. All

school leaders in this study emphasized moral education and its significance. For example, Yong (vice-principal, City School) said: “德育为先，育人为本。[Moral education is the priority. Student overall development is the foundation]”. This attention on moral education resonates the standard of “把德育工作摆在素质教育的首要位置 [prioritizing moral education in quality education]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2).

When discussing their practices with respect to moral education, school leaders participated in my study mentioned that there were many school activities designed to develop students’ moral and ethical characteristics. For example, Qian (principal, Horseshoe School) and Hua (vice-principal, Horseshoe School) mentioned the barter market in their school. They said that this idea of opening a barter market in the school came from a set of pictures which was popular online. The pictures compared “买家秀 [what I ordered]” and “卖家秀 [what I got]”, suggesting the risks and lack of honesty about shopping online. “我们想让学生体验这种传统朴素以诚相待的交易方式。[We want our students to experience this traditional means of trading in which both sellers and buyers are honest with each other]”, Qian said. Hua also reflected:

现在好多黑心的商人已经把“made in China”这个词黑化了，让外国人对我们国家的商品有很不好的印象。所以我们学校搞这个，也是希望学生们记住，无论走到哪儿，你面对的是谁，你的诚信，都是要摆在明面儿上的。[Nowadays, many dishonest sellers have created a negative image on products that are “made in China”. Therefore, through this activity, we hope our students to remember that wherever they are and whomever they are facing, they need to show their honesty.]

Similar evidence was also observed in the photographs of a competition exhibited on the walls of the South Gate School's hallway. Bing, the principal of the school explained that in the competition, students were asked to vote for students who had demonstrated characters such as “踏实 [steady and dependable]”, “善良 [kind-hearted]”, “勤奋 [diligent]”, and “有担当 [responsible]” in their classes. In the photographs, students who won the competition were standing on the stage of the school auditorium and were awarded with certificates of honour in the opening ceremony of a school semester. The photographs were also found to be posted on the South Gate School's official website.

In addition, moral education was found to be closely related to schools' landscape design as have emphasized by the PSfP, in which school leaders are expected to “绿化、美化校园环境, 精心营造人文氛围 [pay attention to the landscape design of schools, and cultivate a humanistic atmosphere]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2). School leaders' involvement in enacting the standards concerning creating a culture of promoting student overall development was found through their emphasis on the schools' physical settings.

For instance, in the City School, there was a corridor connecting the main building and the school museum. The corridor featured with antique wood carvings and drawings of ancient Chinese stories. The stories often hallmarked moral qualities that have been valued and celebrated through generations in the Chinese societies. To cite one example, a drawing was the story of 孔融让梨 [Kong Rong shares the pears], in which a little boy called Kong Rong insisted on giving the larger pears to his brothers, and kept the smallest one to himself. The story can be dated back to the late Eastern Han Dynasty (AC 200), and emphasizes the need to be modest and respect the elders. There were also bamboos planted beside the corridor, which are used to implicate the moralities of those who are defined as 君子 [gentlemen] from the perspective of

traditional Chinese culture. Ping (principal, City School) said: “君子守节如竹。我们把这些竹子照顾好了，也是对学生们的一种警醒。[We have been taking really good care of those bamboos. They remind our students to be the persons with the features of bamboos: integrity, honesty, and staunchness]”.

In the paragraphs above, I presented my findings of school leaders’ involvement in the enactment of the standards concerning moral education. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the concept of morality is also configured through an emphasis on moral leadership. First and foremost, among the thirteen participants, seven of them asserted that caring is a critical character of school leadership. Within the dimension of leading teacher growth, the PSfP centres on school leaders’ responsibility in recognizing teachers’ key roles in school development, and school leaders’ knowledge and practices adopted in promoting teacher professional development. In reflecting on the enactment of related standards such as “关爱教师身心健康 [caring about teachers’ and administrative staff’s physical and psychological health]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 4), Ping (principal, City School) said: “校长要把各方面都想在老师身上。 [Principals need to be care about every aspect of teachers and administrative staff]”.

School leaders’ practices contributed to the enactment of the standard about demonstrating caring were related to teachers and administrative staff’s dining experiences both as participants asserted and as I observed. All the six schools involved in this study have an independent dining hall for teachers and administrative staff which I saw during my observations. Ping (principal, City School) and Jian (vice-principal, Oaktree School) mentioned that a food nutritionist was hired to be responsible for the menu planning of the school. Yi (principal, Mt. Summer School) commented that teachers and administrative staff were encouraged to provide any information about their dietary restrictions as well as preferences.

In the dining hall of the Mt. Summer School, for example, dishes were arranged by sections, and there were two signs observed suggesting the sections for vegetarian meals and meals without pork. Moreover, the dining halls provided a space in which school leaders engaged in non-formal conversations with teachers and administrative staff. Both Qian (principal, Horseshoe School) and Ping (principal, City School) were observed to talk with teachers and administrative staff about their recent work and the needs as well as challenges. Even though I did not observe Hong (principal, Rev Rd. School), he stated that he enjoyed talking with teachers and administrative staff in the dining hall, and he often joined them for the after-lunch walk on the playground of their school. “在食堂里面很容易拉近和老师们的距离。也最容易了解到老师们的近况和困难。只有了解到真正的需求，才能帮助老师们成长。 [It is easier to get close with teachers and administrative staff as well as to learn about their conditions and challenges in the dining hall. Only by knowing their real needs can I help with their growth]” Hong said (principal, Rev Rd. School).

In addition to demonstrating caring, moral leadership is also denoted in the enactment of the standard concerning “尊重、信任、团结和赏识每一位教师 [respect, trust, unite, and recognize the strengths of every teacher]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 3). Many participants (e.g. Qian, Yuan, Jian, Liang, Huang, Hong) in this study mentioned that practices such as listening to and taking into consideration of teachers and administrative staff’s feedback and recommendations contributed to the enactment of related standards. Qian (principal, Horseshoe School) commented:

老师们，他们对学校，我抓住了很重要的一点，老师们对学校非常的热爱。还有就是对学校的了解。你要去多听多看，虚心地向老师们请教，他们对学校是非常的了

解。所以我总结就是第一，你校长得发现。第二，你得承认，你得给老师以鼓励。

[I have noticed that our teachers and administrative staff share great passion for our school, and they know the school very well. As the principal, you need to observe, to be modest, and learn from teachers and staff. Therefore, I summarize my practices into two: to recognize and to encourage.]

In another example, in both the City School and the Oaktree School, I observed photographs of officials from government departments at the district and the municipal levels being invited to major school events such as the opening ceremony and the art festival of the schools. In the City School, the photographs were exhibited in a showcase outside of the main building. In the Oaktree School, there was a cabinet showcase standing in the conference room. In the showcase, there were photographs of officials visiting the school as well as a piece of calligraph written by one of the officials. When asking about the photographs and the calligraph, both Ping (principal, City School) and Yuan (principal, Oaktree School) proposed that having officials attending their school events is a strategy which promotes teacher motivation. Having officials attending school events indicated that the schools' achievements were recognized by government departments, and this recognition made teachers and administrative staff feel being respected and appreciated.

In addition to demonstrating caring, respect, and appreciation, the moral aspect of leadership was also evident in the enactment of the standards within the dimension of improving internal management. For example, school leaders are expected to “崇尚以德立校，处事公正、严格律己、廉洁奉献 [value morality, justice, self-discipline, integrity, and dedication in school management]” which is identified in the PSfP (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 4). In illustrating their practices, many participants emphasized moral conduct such as justice, self-

discipline, and a spirit of service. They also denoted that school leaders are role models. Yuan (principal, Oaktree School) mentioned that “在人事安排上，一定要秉承公平的原则，以能力为重。在人事任命上做出的决定，得能让老师们信服。绝不能任人唯亲。 [In personnel assignment, it is critical to insist on justice and focus on candidates’ competencies. The decisions you made need to be convincing to teachers and administrative staff. Nepotism is absolutely forbidden]”. Hong (principal, Rev. Rd. School) and Huang (vice-principal, City School) also asserted that school leaders need to be self-disciplined in that they viewed themselves as the *role models* for all school members. Hong (principal, Rev. Rd. School) reflected:

别管是名校校长，还是……作为校长，首先你是一个教育实践者。你的想法，你的一举一动，都在老师学生们看在眼里。所以我时刻要求自己，要为老师们，为孩子们树好榜样。这样你的管理，你才能有威信，也能服人。 [No matter you are the Principal of a top school or what. First and foremost, you are an education practitioner. Teachers and students are watching, and they know what you are thinking. Therefore, I keep self-disciplined, and want to be the moral model for our teachers and kids. Only by doing so can you establish your credibility in managing the school and be convincing.]

In this section, I illustrated my findings on school leaders’ involvement of the enactment of the PSfP from the perspective of how morality is configured as moral education and moral leadership. In the following section, I touch upon my findings with respect to the theme of student academic performance. Tensions between the standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment are particularly addressed in the section.

5.4.3 Student academic performance is the key. This theme predominantly arose from school leaders’ involvement in the enactment of the standards within the dimension of leading curriculum and instruction. The dimension outlines the standards that are related and critical to

student learning. In the PSfP, school leaders are expected to promote a student-centred approach in teaching, be familiar with pedagogical approaches, align the curricula among national, regional, and school levels, as well as conduct classroom observations and provide supervision. In my study, all participants proposed that improving student academic performance is an essential aspect of their practices. Yuan (principal, Oaktree School) said: “学校里工作千头万绪，最硬的，还是应该以教学为中心。最能看出你校长水平的，就是教学。[Principal’s work covers many aspects in the school. Teaching and learning need to be the center of the work. A principal’s competencies are exceptionally reflected through leading teaching and learning]”.

Participants frequently mentioned practices including classroom observations and engaging in the meetings of Teaching Research Groups that contributed to the enactment of the standards within the dimension of leading curriculum and instruction. These practices are in line with those standards in which school leaders are expected to “深入课堂听课并对课堂教学进行指导 [conduct classroom observations and supervise teacher instruction]” as well as “积极开展教研活动和教学改革 [proactively organize and promote activities and reforms in teaching and research]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 3).

Providing effective feedback was mentioned as the most critical practice in classroom observations. For instance, Huang (vice-principal, City School) said:

到课堂听课，这是必须的。听课以后给人反馈，这反馈也不能……你得说到点儿上。你要说不到点儿上，人家也不信任你。你是教化学的，你去听人英语课，人家教了好多年，你去给人评去，完了你说不到点儿上，这不行。[Classroom observation is a necessity. After the classroom observation, you need to provide feedback. The feedback needs to be effective. If you are a chemistry teacher, and you are

going to observe an English class. The English teacher has been teaching for years. You are there to provide feedback, but your feedback is not effective. It is not going to work.]

During my observations with participants, I did not observe any formal classroom observations. Nevertheless, walkthroughs were frequently adopted to observe teaching and learning activities. Within the schools I observed, all classrooms have two doors, and there was a rectangle window on every rear door. Differentiating from scheduled classroom visits, the walkthroughs I observed were casual and informal. The windows on rear doors allowed school leaders to randomly stop by and observe the classrooms as they walked through the hallways.

There were three cases in which Ming (vice-principal, Oaktree School) and Liang (vice-principal, Horseshoe School) stopped by a particular classroom, and observed classroom activities for more than two minutes. These two participants explained that they would intentionally stop by the classes taught by young teachers in that many of those young teachers had shown a lack of experience in teaching and maintaining student discipline. This attention on young teachers echoes the standard of “加强青年教师培养 [promoting the development of young teachers]” within the dimension of leading teacher growth (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 4). Additionally, during my observations with Yong (vice-principal, City School), she conducted at least one round of walkthroughs during a school day. Those walkthroughs happened either when Yong had spent hours in her office reading documents or when she had to leave the school for a meeting.

In addition to classroom observations and walkthroughs, participants reflected on their practices concerning student academic performance in relation to their involvement in enacting the standards within the dimension of coordinating external environment. Within the dimension, the PSfP highlights the importance of collaboration between school and families. School leaders

are expected to “掌握学校公共关系及家校合作的理论与方法 [be familiar with the theories and approaches in building public relations, and promoting school-family collaboration]”. There are also standards identifying school leaders’ responsibilities in “建立健全家校合作育人机制，建立教师家访制度，通过家长学校、家长会、家长开放日等形式，指导和帮助家长了解学校工作情况和学生身心发展特点，掌握科学育人方法 [establishing and improving the system of school-family collaboration in promoting student overall development, introducing school initiative about home visits, directing and supporting parents to be familiar with school’s work and the characteristics of students’ physical and psychological development through approaches such as teacher-parent meetings and open days]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, P. 5).

Many participants amplified their practices in teacher-parent meetings. Precisely, ten out of 13 participants in this study commented that the major purpose of teacher-parent meetings was to keep parents informed about their children’s performance in the schools. Yi (principal, Mt. Summer School) explained:

校长在这里边的作用主要是跟家长们汇报一下学校近期的工作。尤其对初高三来说，一般校长，或者教学副校长，又或者年级组长，会统一讲一讲，咱们在区里的排名，让家长心里面有谱儿。当然每年我们都会一再嘱咐，不要给孩子施加太大压力，这种的。之后就是回各班，由班主任具体讲 [The role of school leaders in the teacher-parent meetings is to report to the parents about our recent work in the school. In the teacher-parent meetings of Grade 9 and Grade 12, either the principal, the vice-principal who is in charge of student learning, or the grade leaders would talk to the parents about the rankings in the district to keep parents informed. Also, every year we keep telling the parents not to put too much pressure on the children and something like

that. Then the parents return to their children's own classes and communicate with the head teachers.]

Other participants illustrated similar procedures of teacher-parent meetings in their schools, and argued that the teacher-parent meetings needed to be more interactive, and should not be limited to the issues pertaining to student academic and behavioural performance.

Even though there were no teacher-parent meetings during my observations within the three schools, documents about the previous meetings were found on two schools' websites (Horseshoe School and Mt. Summer School). The documents were posted to inform parents of student performance in the recent major tests. The information included the schools' overall rankings within the district, rankings by subject, and the average scores of tests by subject.

According to my findings, there are tensions between the standards that are related to school-family collaboration in the PSfP, and the enactment of these standards. The PSfP identifies teacher-parent meetings, school open days, and home visits as the strategies in promoting the collaboration between schools and families in developing students' overall growth. Nevertheless, no evidence suggests such practices. School leaders participated in my study give their major attention to students' academic performance rather than student overall growth in school-family collaboration.

It also worth noting that the PSfP identifies school leaders' responsibility in “建立完善促进学生全面发展的教育教学评价制度，不片面追求学生考试成绩和升学率 [establishing and optimizing an evaluation system for teaching which promotes students' overall growth; the improvement of student academic performance, and the enrollment rates in high-ranking schools should not be the only pursuit of education and schooling]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 3). Both of my interviews with participants and documents collected from school leaders have indicated

that there are various instruments related to student evaluation. Two examples include the codes of conduct published by the schools and the *Evaluation Criteria for Junior School Student Competencies* (Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, 2012) launched by the Beijing Commission of Education, both which pay attention to student overall development by touching upon aspects such as morality and well-being.

Notwithstanding those instruments, several participants opined that it is an unwritten rule that teaching is evaluated according to student academic performance. Moreover, in terms of school leaders' evaluation, the PSfP was not used as a reference as stated in the policy. In the light of this point, Qian (principal, Horseshoe School) proposed that school leaders' work cannot be “一刀切 [standardized]”. As such, like many other school leaders, he had been enacting the standards based on the context of his school, and not being limited by the PSfP as it was not used as an evaluation tool. Liang (vice-principal, Horseshoe School) further commented: “咱们中国现有的教育体系，目前衡量校长的这种方式方法，主要还是看成绩，还有升学率 [In the existing Chinese education system, the current method of evaluating school leaders is mainly based on student academic performance and student enrollment rate in high-ranking schools]” .

In this section, I highlighted that student academic performance is central to the enactment of the PSfP. Tensions between related standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment were found. In the next section, I illustrate my findings on the last theme concerning the enactment of the PSfP, which is related to the roles of cultures and traditions.

5.4.4 Cultures and traditions are essential. The last theme emerged from my findings is that cultures and traditions are valued in the enactment of the PSfP. Evident alignment can be identified between the standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment. As I mentioned earlier (Section 5.3.4), the PSfP pinpoints related concepts including school cultures, school traditions,

Chinese traditional cultures, and regional cultures in the standards within both the dimensions of planning for school development and building a culture of promoting student overall development. In the enactment of those standards, concepts of cultures and traditions emerged frequently.

For example, within the dimension of planning for school development, there are ten standards outlining the understandings along with the knowledge, methods, competencies, and practices that are required for school leaders in relation to school planning and development. Among these ten standards, the standard in which school leaders are expected to “尊重学校传统和学校实际，提炼学校办学理念，办出学校特色 [respect school traditions and school contexts, and conceptualize an educational philosophy with school characteristics]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2) was found as central to school planning and development. The educational philosophy of a school was seen as being rooted in school traditions and influencing the development of school cultures.

Bing (principal, South Gate School) defined educational philosophy as the theoretical foundation about the nature of education, which guides the establishment of school visions and missions. It is normally reflected in the school motto, which was the “精神 [spirit]” of the school and is passed from generation to generation. Qian (principal, Horseshoe School) also explained: “它那校训，任何一届的校长都按照这个校训走。尤其大校，名校，那以前定的校训，谁能改？都不能改。那是传统，传承。校长办学，学校发展，都只能按照这个走。[Every principal follows the school motto. No one can change it especially for big and prestigious schools. It is a tradition. It is a heritage. How a principal runs a school, and the development of a school can only follow this direction]”.

The school mottos of the three schools, which were involved in my observations, were visually evident on their campuses. For example, the City School had its school motto “honesty, loving, diligence and braveness” engraved on a landmark of the school: a bell tower on which engraved the history of the school. The Horseshoe School’s school motto “be erudite, philanthropic, self-disciplined and self-resilient” was exhibited as a piece of calligraphy work at the entrance hall of its main building. For the Oaktree School, the school motto “solidarity, diligence, practicality and creativity” was engraved on a big round stone sitting on the lawn in front of the platform where there was a flagpole with the national flag on. The stone could be easily observed as soon as someone enters the campus.

Educational philosophy was found to be built upon individual school’s history and tradition. Ping (principal, City School) remarked:

办学思想里包括对学生的要求，对学生将来成为什么样的人。也就是我们学校，办学的目的，目标。像我们学校……再往更大一点说，我们希望学生爱国兴国，成为国之栋梁。这是我们的传统。我们学校自建校以来为国家培养了很多国之栋梁。所以我们学校的任务，就是把我们的学生培养成这样的人。学校的一切发展规划都围绕着这些来。 [Educational philosophy involves the requirements for students and the expectations for what kind of people that students are growing to be in the future. It is the purpose and mission of our school. Like in our school……from a larger perspective, we hope our students to love the country and revitalize the motherland. It is our tradition. Our school has cultivated many pillars of the country since its establishment. Consequently, the mission of our school is to cultivate our students into people like that. It is the centre of school development and planning.]

On this topic, Hong (principal, Rev Rd. School) explained:

我们学校解放以后经历了好几次的大变革，改动。所以相对于很多传统老校来说，我们并没有很长的历史，没有那种历史文化的沉淀。所以一直以来，我们走的都是特色办学的路线。艺术教育，尤其是校园剧是我们学校的特色。所以从学校活动到各方面的宣传，都离不开这个特色。 [After the liberation, our school has gone through many reforms and reconstruction. Compared with many traditional old schools, our school does not have a long history, and lacks the sedimentary accretion of history and cultures. As a result, we have been following a path of developing a school with our own features. Art education, particularly drama, is the main feature of our school. Everything, from school activities to school promotion, has been focusing on this feature.]

During my interview with Na (vice-principal, Mt. Summer School), I was shown a book published by the district commission of education, in which principals and vice-principals from top schools within the district wrote about the origins of their school mottos and the development of their educational philosophies. Na reflected that the book was distributed to all school leaders within the district and was used in their professional development sessions.

In addition, the concepts of cultures and traditions were also reflected in the enactment of the standards within the dimension of building a culture of promoting student overall development. For instance, some standards in the PSfP, such as “热爱祖国优秀传统文化，充分发挥优秀传统文化的时代意义与教育价值，重视地域文化的重要作用 [loving the traditional splendid cultures of the motherland, ensuring traditional cultures play important roles in education, and paying attention to the important roles of regional cultures]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2), have explicitly underlined the roles of cultures and traditions in education even

though the PSfP does not provide any definition or clarification of these two concepts. In this case, various cultures and traditions were integrated into school cultures as denoted in the PSfP.

For example, in the enactment of the standard “重视学校文化潜移默化的教育功能 [emphasizing the subtle influences of school cultures on education]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2), school culture was found to echo both school traditions and school environment. Referring to the corridor, the bamboos, as well as a tree with almost a hundred year’s old in the school, Ping (principal, City School) mentioned:

这些都见证了我们学校的发展变迁，都是学校无法分割的一部分。所以历届校长们在开展校园文化建设的时候，也必定会参考这些因素。学校的环境，学校的形象，学校的校园文化，这些都是要相辅相成的。 [Those are the witnesses of our school’s changes and development and are part of the school. All previous and current principals take these factors into consideration when developing the school culture. A school’s environment, image, and culture all support and align with each other.]

To use another example, “diversity” was the key concept in the Oaktree School’s school culture. The school locates in a *hutong*. A *hutong* is a narrow lane often found in the historic districts in Beijing, such as those two involved in this study. It is the symbol of the culture of Beijing, representing Beijingers’ way of living, as well as the history of the city. The life in *hutong* is seen as peaceful and harmonious, away from the busy and noisy streets outside. The *hutong* in which the Oaktree School locates was quiet during school hours, but became extremely busy as there were vegetable stalls set up outside and along the school wall every afternoon. The school neighbors with small stores as well as local residence. Viewing from the outside, the Oaktree School was part of the local residence featuring with “青砖灰瓦 [bricks and tiles in bluish-grey color]”, which is the main characteristic of traditional residence in the old

districts of Beijing. While walking through the school gate, two buildings could be seen on campus. One of the buildings, which is the main building of the school, was featured the same architectural style with the school wall and the residence outside the school. Beside the main building, there was the activity centre. It was a two-stair orange building with white European pillars and windows. “我们老师管这叫‘小洋楼’ [Our teachers and administrative staff call it ‘little Western-style building’]”, Ming said (vice-principal, Oaktree School). She continued:

这校园文化建设，我一直强调的是多样性。像这个小洋楼和主楼的鲜明对比，是建筑上的一个风格。另外我们的学生社团，我们学校的管弦乐团在区里都是非常出名的。还有武术队，舞蹈队。这些文化风格上的不同，都是校园文化的多样性。这是我比较骄傲的一点。学校从外面给人的感觉，和我们的学生社团各种活动都围绕了这么一个多样性。 [I have been emphasizing diversity in building our school culture. One example is the contrast in architectural styles between the ‘little Western-style building’ and the main building. Besides, we have a student orchestra. We also have a martial arts club and a dancing club. This is what I am proud of the school. Both the external view of the school, as well as our student clubs and activities represent the idea of diversity.]

In the case of the Rev. Rd. School, the school was located in a residential community and was surrounded by residential buildings. Community service was part of the school culture, which is a community-based culture. Hong (principal, Rev. Rd. School) reflected:

从一开始，包括我之前的老校长，都强调的是校园文化要与社区文化融合。我也一直比较重视学校和街道的关系，让学生走进社区，进行一些社区服务活动。 [From the very beginning, including when the previous principal was in charge, we emphasize

the integrity of school culture and community culture. I also pay attention to our relationship with the community. We have asked our students to do some community services and be interactive with the community.]

In the Rev. Rd. School, there were photographs of students performing in an eldercare community centre posted on the walls within the school building. The eldercare community centre was observed on my way to the school, which is about ten minutes' walk. In the hallway, there were also posters with slogans such as “love my school, love my community”, and “make the community my home”. On the posters, there were students' drawings of the eldercare community centre, the community library, and other facilities such as the park and the flower beds which are close to the school.

Such evidences found in the Rev. Rd. School echo the standards that are related to school leaders' responsibilities in building school cultures as outlined in the PSfP. More than that, they also address the standards within the dimension of coordinating with external environment, such as “坚持把服务社会(社区)作为学校的重要功能，用于承担社会责任 [leading the school in serving the society and community, and taking social responsibilities]” and “积极发挥学校在社区建设中的作用，鼓励并组织学校师生参与服务社会（社区）的有益活动 [actively participating in the construction of communities, and encouraging teachers and students to participate in community services]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 5).

Furthermore, in the PSfP, school leaders are expected to “精心设计和组织艺术节、科技节等校园文化活动 [plan for and organize events such as art and science festivals to celebrate school cultures]” (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2). Traditional cultures were the key components in the enactment of the standard. For instance, activities related to Chinese traditional cultures were found as part of the school cultures of all the six schools involved in this study. The Mid-Autumn

Festival was celebrated in the South Gate School and the Mt. Summer School every year. The festival celebrates the fall harvest, and has been celebrated in many East Asian communities for over 3,000 years. Mooncakes were distributed to all students, teachers, and administrative staff. “发月饼还有思古怀今是我们校长提出的一个传统 [Distributing moon cakes and thinking for the future through reflecting on the past have been a tradition proposed by our principal]”, Na commented. When I was collecting my data in the South Gate School, there were paper lanterns hanging from the roof of the art classroom. Making paper lanterns is one of the major activities to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, and the lanterns were made by students from the previous year.

In this section, I presented my findings on the ways in which the leadership standards that are related to cultures and traditions were enacted in schools. In planning for school development, school mottos and educational philosophy within which schools' traditions are predominantly reflected. Moreover, school traditions, Chinese traditional cultures, the culture of Beijing particularly the *hutong* culture, as well as schools' relationship with surrounding communities were found as critical components in the development of school cultures. In short, the concept of culture in the enactment of the PSfP can be unpacked as school cultures, Chinese traditional cultures, and the culture of Beijing while the term of traditions is particularly referred to school traditions.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, I offered a description of my findings. I outlined the types of actors including government departments, universities, think tank, and school leaders which were involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China. I also traced their connections to identify how those actors come together in the process of policy transfer.

Furthermore, I showed how the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context by emphasizing four themes: 1) the authority of Socialism, the Party, and the State; 2) morality; 3) student overall development; and 4) the roles of cultures and traditions. In exploring the enactment of the PSfP, I also pinpointed four themes, including 1) everybody is responsible for his/her own duties; 2) morality as moral education and moral leadership; 3) student academic performance is the key; and 4) cultures and traditions are essential. Built upon these findings, in the next chapter, I provide my discussion in the light of the types of actors along with their interactions that have led to the transfer, and the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards in China, as well as the enactment of those standards in schools in Beijing.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Overview

In this chapter, I present my discussion concerning the types of actors along with their interrelationships that have led to the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China, the adaptations of the discourse to the Chinese context in the PSfP, as well as the enactment of the PSfP. Drawing upon ANT as my theoretical framework, I start with a demonstration of my theorization of the three assemblages identified in this study: the assemblage of leadership standards, the assemblage of adaptations, and the assemblage of enactment. Then, I analyze the power relations among those types of actors who have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China. After that, I highlight the alignments and tensions between the PSfP and its enactment which are conceptualized as the effects of the assemblages of adaptations and enactment. The types of actors along with their connections, conflicts and negotiations that have contributed to the configuration of the assemblages are also unveiled. Lastly, I further interrogate the performativity of the three assemblages by discussing their effects on producing identities and producing legitimacy.

6.2 Theorizing the Assemblages

Studies guided by ANT trace the interactions through which diverse actors exercise their agency: the ways in which they come together and hold together in assemblages that produce effects. These assemblages “produce force and other effects: knowledge, identities, rules, routines, behaviors, new technologies and instruments, regulatory regimes, reforms, illnesses, and so forth” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 120). Based on my analysis of data (documents, interviews, and observations), I identified three assemblages: the assemblage of leadership standards, the

assemblage of adaptations, and the assemblage of enactment, around which the global discourse on leadership standards has been transferred and adapted to the Chinese context, as well as enacted in schools.

As mentioned in the literature review chapter (Section 2.3), a global discourse on leadership standards has been built through the widespread production as well as adoption of standards for school leaders emphasizing a similar set of school leaders' responsibilities (e.g. establishing shared vision, improving student learning outcomes, providing organizational conditions, and providing instructional leadership) (CEPPE & OECD, 2013; Ingvarson et al., 2006; Riveros et al., 2016). Focusing on school effectiveness evaluated through student academic performance (Hall et al., 2013; Ingvarson et al., 2006), and referring to professional development programs from the business sector (Hallinger & Lu, 2013; Walker et al., 2013), this discourse is built upon NPM, which celebrates neoliberal values such as decentralization and privatization (Ball, 1993; Dempster et al., 2001). While understanding the core values and ideologies that constituted leadership standards across various jurisdictions, existing literature provides little insight concerning the types of actors as well as their interconnections in driving the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China through the development of the PSfP, which is one of the focuses of this dissertation. In analyzing the assemblage of leadership standards, I identified the types of actors and traced their interactions in an attempt to answer one of my research questions: Which types of actors have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, and how are they interrelated with one another?

In ANT language, an assemblage is a network of humans and non-humans brought together through connections and interrelations to perform specific functions. An assemblage is a

particular pattern of ordering, which seems to be stable, but only for a certain period of time due to negotiations achieved among various actors (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Gorur, 2011). As Fenwick (2010) writes:

ANT does not consider the policy terrain as configured by ‘powers that be’ that create and impose a set of standards. Instead, standards as well as these ‘powers’ are understood always to be effects that emerge through a series of complex interactions. (p. 120)

In this sense, by the assemblage of leadership standards, I do not refer to a list of standardized documents related to educational leadership but the summing-up of intertwined relations that have involved in the production of leadership standards particularly the PSfP in China.

Considering that the focus of my dissertation is to explore which types of actors have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, and how are they interrelated with one another, I conceptualize the production of the PSfP, as well as the transfer of the dominant discourse to China as the effects produced by the assemblage of leadership standards.

In this dissertation, I theorize Chinese leadership standards policy, namely the PSfP, as part of the global convergence of leadership standards due to the commonalities in defining school leaders’ roles and responsibilities shared among those leadership standards documents from heterogenous contexts. Therefore, I do not perceive the PSfP as a “local” policy being independent from the “global” education reforms in standardizing school leaders’ practices. The process of developing the PSfP in China is analyzed as a specific example of policy transfer to help with understanding the constitution of the assemblage of leadership standards.

In light of this perspective, I also identified an assemblage of adaptations around which actors have connected and interacted with each other, and produced the adaptations of the global

discourse on leadership standards in the Chinese context as can be identified in the PSfP. In discussing the configuration of the assemblage of adaptations, I will highlight the power relations among the actors who have exercised their agency and led to the emphasis on the authority of socialism, the Party and the State, attention on morality, as well as the focus on student overall development and the roles of cultures and traditions.

Recall that one purpose of this study is to explore the enactment of the PSfP in schools. Even though the focus of the “enactment” is school leaders’ practices, adopting a social-material epistemology and ANT, I conceptualize school leaders’ behaviours and practices as the consequences produced by an assemblage of relationships (Dwiartama & Rosin, 2014; Latour, 2005; Montenegro & Bulgacov, 2014), that is the assemblage of enactment. School leaders’ decisions are made based on their agency, but in relation to other actors as I will discuss later in this chapter. As mentioned earlier, I differentiate the concept of agency from human intentionality. In this study, the concept of agency is theorized from a holistic perspective and refers to an actor’s capacity to make a difference regardless of its human or non-human nature. Human intentionality does not exist independently but is performed in response to heterogeneous relations (Dwiartama & Rosin, 2014; Latour, 2005; Law, 1992). In this dissertation, I identified school leaders as actors in the assemblage of enactment. Even though school leaders’ agency is substantial to the constitution of the assemblage, their practices are perceived as the effects of their interrelationships with other actors instead of pure human intentions. This point is particularly evident in school leaders’ demonstration of the enactment of the PSfP. As I presented in my findings (Section 5.4), school leaders participated in this study often referred to their practices in relation to other actors such as schools’ physical settings. Practices are “ideal ‘tracers’” for the connections that have hold together the assemblage of enactment (Koyama,

2009, p. 27). In analyzing the constitution of this assemblage later in this chapter, I follow school leaders' practices to explore the actors, both human and materials, that have circulated and secured connections for a particular period of time. I also focus on these connections that have enrolled other actors and extended the assemblage beyond school boundary and across time to direct the enactment of the PSfP policy.

6.3 Assemblage of Leadership Standards

The transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards has been promoted across the globe. Leadership standards were produced by heterogenous actors as I noted in the introductory chapter of this dissertation. Recall that professional organizations have involved in producing leadership standards in many jurisdictions such as Ontario in Canada. While in the case of China, professional organizations were not involved in the development of the PSfP. ANT “notices how things are invited or excluded, how some linkages work and others don't, and how connections are bolstered to make themselves stable and durable by linking to other networks and things” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 120). In transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China, professional organizations were found to be absent from the policy-making process. This phenomenon mainly stems from the relationship between professional organizations and government departments in China. All professional organizations in China are under the supervision of governmental organizations. Specifically, those organizations such as professional organizations for school leaders are accountable to two types of governing units. The civil affairs departments of the State Council and local governments are responsible for the approval of registration; and relevant departments of the State Council such as the MoE of the PRC, and those of local governments such as municipal education commission are the governing units over professional organizations (State Council of the PRC, 1998). This “double accountability system

[双重负责制]” has largely limited the establishment and activities of professional organizations in China to its complicated application process, as well as provided challenges in building connections with related government departments (He, 2006).

In addition, even though decentralization has been one focus of the reforms in China, administration over professional organizations is still highly centralized and limited to government departments. The leadership positions within professional organizations in China are often taken by government officials. Therefore, there has been a lack of motivation to engage in non-government professional activities (He, 2006; Zhu & Yang, 2009). This control of government departments over professional organizations has resulted in the marginalization of professional organizations in the process of developing the leadership standards in China. Moreover, although not directly involved in the policy-making process, school leaders were given opportunities to be heard by participating in the research projects related to the development of the PSfP. Their voices provided implications for the adaptations of the global dominant discourse of leadership standards in the Chinese context.

Government departments particularly the MoE of the PRC was identified as another type of actor engaging in the production of leadership standards. In many cases, even though playing a decisive role in policy development, government departments exercise their agencies through inviting other types of actors to participate in developing the standards and by building connections with them. In my findings, I have also denoted universities and think tanks as another two types of actors in promoting the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China. Researchers from the East China Normal University, the Shanghai Normal University, and the Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences were involved in the process of developing leadership standards. One point needs to be clarified is that in this dissertation, I

theorize universities and think tanks rather than related programs or researchers as types of actors in contributing to the transfer of dominant discourse across the globe. The reason is that the involvement of programs or researchers in related activities is predominantly a result of the universities' and the think tank's connections with government departments. In other words, there are power relations enabling some institutions (the East China Normal University, the Shanghai Normal University, the Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences) to be enrolled in the assemblage of leadership standards while marginalizing others. In the following paragraphs, I will offer a discussion of such power relations in the assemblage of leadership standards.

An assemblage is the configuration of all things, and ANT pays attention to the power relations that have led to these arrangements. The unequal distribution of power relations has also resulted in the formation of networks within the assemblage as some actors are more closely connected than others (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Zhang & Heydon, 2016). The two universities and the think tank mentioned above were privileged to be included in the research associated with the construction of the PSfP policy due to their strong connections with government departments. As the formation of the PSfP is a state-directed process, scholars and researchers in related fields, but from other institutions were excluded from the process. This is also the reason why I identified universities and think tanks rather than scholars and researchers as active actors in the process of transferring leadership standards to China through the development of the PSfP. Not all scholars and researchers had the opportunity to present their expertise and let their voices heard, but only the East China Normal University, the Shanghai Normal University, and the Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences who are connected with government departments were allowed to exercise their agency in the process of developing the PSfP.

Researchers studying policy transfer believe that the transnational flows of policy ideas are not processes of copy and paste, and what have been transferred are often general guidelines instead of specific practices (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). My research on the types of actors involved in the production of the PSfP illustrates the similarities between the dimensions outlined in the PSfP and those identified by the global discourse on leadership standards. This indicates that China aligned its leadership standards with the global discourse. In addition, earlier in the dissertation I noted that Chinese researchers assigned with research projects by the national Ministry of Education to develop the PSfP conducted comparative studies among leadership standards from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They identified commonalities shared among those documents and proposed that those commonalities be included in the Chinese leadership standards (Wei & Gao, 2010; Zhu & Yang, 2009). By comparing the six dimensions outlined in the PSfP, and those commonalities listed by those researchers who were involved in the development of the PSfP, I inferred that the policy makers took the researchers' recommendations into consideration and aligned its leadership standards with the global dominant discourse. Nevertheless, policy adaptations have been made as can be found in the PSfP. The ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted in the Chinese context are the result of an assemblage of interrelationships, which I discuss next.

6.4 Assemblage of Adaptations

As identified in my findings (Section 5.3), the global discourse on leadership standards was adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP in four ways: 1) an emphasis on the authority of Socialism, the Party and the State; 2) an emphasis on morality; 3) a focus on student overall development; and 4) valuing the roles of cultures and traditions. In this section, I only discuss

two of the themes: an emphasis on the authority of Socialism, the Party and the State, as well as valuing the roles of cultures and traditions in that in both of these, the State has been a central actor in terms of exercising its agency in guiding and driving the agenda setting in China's education policy development. The other two themes concerning the policy adaptations are explored in relation to the enactment of the PSfP as evident alignments as well as tensions were identified between related standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment. Therefore, in this section, I first tease out the power relations between the Party and the State as two types of actors involved in the development of education policies in China. Then, I explore the meaning-making of the concepts cultures and traditions, as well as the types of actors that have driven this policy adaptation with specific attention on cultures and traditions.

6.4.1 The Party and the State. First and foremost, as mentioned above, the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context by emphasizing the authority of socialism, the Party, and the State. This policy adaptation found in the PSfP originates from the interrelationships between two types of actors: the Party and the State. I discuss the power relations between these two types of actors through their roles and the changes in their roles in China's education policy-making process. In my dissertation, I define the Party and the State as two distinguished types of actors. However, some may argue that "to distinguish the Party from the Chinese State is no easy job. That the Party organization has penetrated the State institutions so deeply can easily discourage the effort. It also incites questions of whether the exercise has any value" (Zheng, 1997, p. 11). To address this concern, the term party-state is used to refer a State like China in which a single party has the legal power over any formal political activities (Hillman, 2014). Considering that the politics of governance within China is not the focus of this study, I keep my attention to the field of education. My analysis and

discussion are drawn upon the data collected from data sources including documents, interviews, and observations. This means that any themes or assertions which may be applied to the Chinese context but did not emerge from my data will not be discussed here. Consequently, the Party and the State are theorized as two types of actors for the different roles they have played in education policy-making process as well as their interrelationships with school leaders, who were identified as another type of actor as I will discuss later in this chapter.

Traditionally, China's education policy-making has followed a strict top-down process directed by the Party and its Chairman in that education was viewed as a channel to serve political purposes. There is little room left for negotiation and consultation (Zhu & Zhang, 2013). Changes in China's education policy-making process have been observed since the introduction of the Opening-up reform. Within the early years of enacting the Opening-up reform, education policy-making was still an authoritative process with the Central Committee of the Party initiating the policy agenda. The MoE of the PRC was responsible for formulating policy details, and consultation was allowed for a small number of selected actors such as the representatives of the central Party Committee and other democratic parties, officials from governmental organizations under the State Council, and education professionals from universities as well as schools. During this period of time, although stakeholders from both the central government and public sectors had opportunities to participate in the policy-making process, the Party still retained its decisive authority in decision-making (Han & Ye, 2017).

Nevertheless, a gradual shift to a State-directed policy-making process began to emerge along with the further promotion and the enactment of the Opening-up reform. To meet the needs of enacting the reform, education policies are no longer merely developed to guide political ideological learning, but to train students capable of contributing to China's economic growth

and increasing the country's competitiveness in the global economy. Particular attention is given to subjects related to science and technology (Nolan, 2001). Therefore, the MoE of the PRC, as one of the departments of the State Council, has been driving the legitimation process in education. A substantial change during this transition is that the decision-making power in education policy-making was transferred from the Party to government departments as the representatives of the State. This change also denotes a switch from the traditional policy-making process driven by political purposes to a State-directed process with a predominant focus on the country's development agenda. Notwithstanding this shift, the Party's leadership is still predominant particularly in its institutionalization of particular values, expressively the socialist ideology and related theories (Fang & Luo, 2016).

In adapting the global discourse on leadership standards to the Chinese context, these two types of actors, the Party and the State, again exercise their agency particularly through stressing school leaders' responsibilities in adopting the socialist ideology, respecting the Party's leadership, and enacting the laws and policies as well as the reforms launched by the State. The Party is the only governing party in mainland China. The central government formulates national policies under the Party's guidelines. Even though the Party did not overtly play a decisive role in the policy-making process of the PSfP (at least not explicitly mentioned in any official documents accessible to the public), it exercised its agency through political and ideological control by ensuring the authority of socialism as I observed through my analysis of the PSfP. For example, preserving a socialist orientation in education and ensuring that the Party fully play its political core role in schools are outlined in the PSfP as important responsibilities of school leaders (MoE of the PRC, 2013). In addition, there are also policies formulated and enacted at provincial, county, and municipal levels. Nonetheless, national policies are overarching

guidelines and provide instructions for the development of sub-level policies (Zhu & Zhang, 2013). Therefore, this emphasis on the socialist ideology, the Party, and national laws and policies as observed in the PSfP is an effect of the Party and the State reinforcing their authorities in China's administrative bureaucracy.

6.4.2 Traditional cultures. The PSfP has emphasized the roles of cultures and traditions in the standards concerning school leaders' responsibilities in leading school development and building a culture of promoting student overall development (MoE of the PRC, 2013). In the PSfP, the concept of cultures is related to "traditional cultures [传统文化]", "regional cultures [地域文化]", and "school cultures [校园文化]" (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2). The term traditions is either used to refer to "school traditions [学校传统]" (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2), or used along with the term culture to refer to traditional cultures as I just mentioned. In this section, I offer my discussion of the State as a type of actor exercising its agency to promote Chinese traditional cultures, particularly Confucianism, as a source of China's soft power.

The attention to the roles of cultures and traditions as highlighted throughout the PSfP corresponds to a cultural shift in China in which "the importance of socialist ideology has given way to the notion of Chineseness" (Cheung, 2012, p. 206). As mentioned before, the State launched the Opening-up reform to promote the country's modernization and economic growth in 1978. The notion of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" was introduced to accommodate the needs of China maintaining itself as a socialist state and at the same time engaging in market-driven reforms (Nolan, 2001). In examining the meanings of the term "Chinese characteristics", Cheung (2012) notes a gradual disconnection between Chinese characteristics and socialist ideology on which the Party's legitimacy built upon. More attention has been given to the notion of Chineseness by placing significant emphasis on Chinese traditional cultures.

Nonetheless, the use of the term “Chinese traditional cultures” is problematic. Lo (2016) proposes the concept of “Greater China”, which refers to the interactions among multiple Chinese societies (mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan), and denotes the cultural variations existed in these widespread regions. Moreover, the concept has been taken for granted and used frequently as an overarching concept (Anderson-Levitt, 2012). Coming from perspectives of ANT, I question such use of the concept by arguing that culture is not something pre-existing, but the summing-up of various traditions, heritages, ideologies, and rituals, etc. As such, in this dissertation, I do not use the term ‘Chinese traditional cultures’ simplistically, but rather try to problematize the complexity and “making of meaning” of the concept (Anderson-Levitt, 2012).

Some scholars have observed this reinvention of Chinese traditional cultures and argued that Confucianism has been proposed by the State as a discourse attempting to strengthen China’s soft power (Cheung, 2012; Becard, & Menechelli Filho, 2019; Li & Li, 2019; Kwan, 2014). One well-known example is the spread of Confucius Institutes across the globe. As part of the Chinese cultural diplomacy, which is a strategy of the Chinese State to build its image on the global stage through culture exchange, increasing number of Confucius Institutes have been founded in universities overseas since 2004 (Becard & Menechelli Filho, 2019). In addition to promoting the use of Chinese language through offering related courses, the aims of Confucius Institutes also include promoting Chinese cultures both broadly and specifically Confucianism. One of the reasons that Confucianism has been given particular attention is that its core ideas such as building a harmonious society and benevolent governance are very much aligned with the discourses promoted by the State (Cheung, 2012; Paradise, 2009).

This attention on Confucianism is also denoted by some studies analyzing China's education policy development. For example, in his studies, Li (2016, 2017) proposes that a Zhong-Yong model which promotes the Confucian values "that are based on pragmatism and balanced in a kind of collective rationality and ethical commitment for personal and societal development" has shaped educational policies aligning with broader socioeconomics reforms in China (Li, 2017, p. 135). To be more specific, the assumption underpinning China's educational reforms since the twenty-first century is that higher student achievement will lead to a better quality of labour force, and therefore to promote a country's economic growth and modernization (Li, 2016, 2017; Li & Li, 2019).

To encapsulate these ideas, the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context in alignment with the State's agenda in strengthening China's soft power through cultural diplomacy in promoting Chinese traditional cultures particularly Confucianism (Becard, & Menechelli Filho, 2019; Cheung, 2012; Kwan, 2014). Moreover, the rationale, or the assumption which has been adopted by the Chinese State to support education policy development is in alignment with Confucian values that are based on pragmatism and seek to achieve a balance between collective rationality and ethical commitment for development (Li, 2016, 2017;). The influences of the Confucianism are also evident in highlighting the theme of morality in both the ways in which the dominant leadership discourse has been adapted through the PSfP as well as school leaders' enactment of the standards in their schools as I discuss in the next section.

6.5 Alignments between Standards and Practices

Assemblages are messy and in constant flux (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010). They are overlapping and interwoven by the types of actors that are multi-situated and tangled in more

than one assemblage (Koyama, 2009). The three assemblages identified in this dissertation are interlocking with each other through the shared types of actors. What I am going to highlight in this section, through ANT, is the multiplicity of policy enactment. I will do this by addressing the ways in which one type of actor plays different roles in relation to the assemblages it is situated in, as well as its relations with other types of actors (Law & Singleton, 2014; Zhang & Heydon, 2016). Adopting a critical approach to policy analysis, I do not perceive policy as a prescription to problems, but focus on the process of interpretation and recontextualization (Braun, Maguire, & Ball, 2010). To that end, I do not separate my analysis of the constitution of the assemblage of enactment from the assemblage of adaptations considering that practices are material, relational, and heterogenous (Law & Singleton, 2014; Riveros & Viczko, 2015).

6.5.1 Morality. In the section above, I identified the roles of the State as one type of actor, in promoting Chinese traditional cultures particularly Confucianism with an attempt to enhance China's soft power, as well as how the State has adopted a rationale aligning with Confucian values to shape the development of education policies in China. In this section, I further discuss the influences of Confucianism in relation to both the policy adaptations found in the PSfP and the enactment of related leadership standards. Recall that I identified morality as a re-emerging theme based on both my document analysis of the PSfP, and my findings from interviews and observations concerning school leaders' enactment of related standards. The PSfP document highlights a number of moral characteristics as required for school leaders, and school leaders' responsibilities in promoting both students' and teachers' moral cultivation. This moral aspect was also found to be essential in the enactment of the PSfP concerning the standards related to practices including constructing educational philosophies, organizing school activities, building school culture, promoting teacher motivation, and conducting managerial tasks.

Particular attention is also paid to the moral cultivation of students, teachers, as well as themselves. In this section, I will not start with tracing the types of actors and their relationships that have contributed to this focus on the theme of morality, but will provide a discussion of how Confucianism has shaped the concept of morality regarding to the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards in the PSfP and the enactment of the policy. After that, I identify the types of actors (the State and school leaders) which have engaged in, and assembled to contribute to this focus on morality.

Confucianism is perceived as the most representative of traditional cultures in Chinese societies with a predominant emphasis on moral education (Su, 2013; Tan, 2016). According to my analysis of the PSfP, moral education is explicitly addressed in the policy text as an essential component of school leaders' work especially in the standards related to promoting student overall development (MoE of the PRC, 2013). School activities that promote students' development of moral qualities such as honesty and diligence were mentioned by school leaders during the interviews, and related evidence was also observed within the schools. My findings respecting to moral education as reflected in the PSfP and school leaders' practices involved in the enactment of the PSfP mirror the Confucius' perspective in which moral education is identified as cultivating "a noble person who is characterized by superiority of mind, character, ideals or morals" (Wang, 2004, p. 432).

Moreover, Confucianism has also primarily shaped the expectations for leaders as well as the ways in which leadership has been perceived in China. In the PSfP, the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context by highlighting a number of moral qualities that are required for school leaders. In addition, moral qualities such as caring and showing respect were also highlighted by participants as critical components in the enactment of

the PSfP. This attention on the moral aspect of school leaders originates from Confucius's perspective of leadership. Confucianism proposes that an ideal leader needs to be a moral person and demonstrates caring, strong sense of duty, respect for rituals, courage, wisdom, justice, as well as trust for others (Guo, 2002; Walker & Qian, 2018). These moral qualities of an ideal leader as emphasized by Confucianism are mostly identical with those identified in the PSfP as well as those mentioned by participants in their involvement of the enactment of the PSfP.

In addition, being a role model has been identified in both the PSfP and its enactment. The PSfP policy identifies “demonstrating strong work ethics” and “being a model of virtue for others” as core competencies of school leaders (MoE of the PRC, 2013, p. 2). In the enactment of the standards within the dimension of improving internal management, the importance of self-discipline and being a moral role model for teachers and students was also highlighted by school leaders in relation to their practices contributing to the enactment of the PSfP. These findings response to Confucianism's argument that the central practice of leadership is to be a role model. Confucius asserted that verbal instructions along with acting accordingly are the most effective pedagogy. He also highlighted the ruling power of being a role model by arguing that “其身正, 不令而行 [there is no need to ask as others will comply with the order as long as a leader is acting morally]”.

In interrogating the types of actors and tracing their interconnections that have contributed to this highlight of morality as a re-emerging theme produced by both the assemblage of adaptations and the assemblage of enactment, I identified two types of actors: the State, and school leaders. Cheung (2012) argues that adopting the idea of benevolent governance, which originates from Confucianism, Chinese leaders since ancient time began to use ethical codes to address the major problems encountered within the authoritarian power relations. As I

mentioned earlier in my findings, the Principal Accountability System (PAS) has been adopted in Chinese schools positioning principals in formal leadership roles in their schools. Therefore, both the State and school leaders have been engaged with the moral aspect of leadership considering the conceptualization of leadership from the Confucian perspective, which has been identified in both the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards, as well as the enactment of related standards in the Chinese context.

To sum up, even though Confucianism is not explicitly pinpointed in the PSfP, and was neither mentioned by my participants or observed during my field work, by interrogating the ways in which the concept of morality is configured in the PSfP and its enactment, I propose that Confucianism has shaped the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards in the Chinese context, as well as school leaders' enactment of the policy. In particular, I identified the State and school leaders as two types of actors which have engaged in constituting the theme of morality especially with a focus on the moral aspect of leadership as observed in the policy adaptations and their enactment in China. In the next section, I continue to identify the types of actors along with their connections and relationships that have led to the alignment recognized between the policy adaptations found in the PSfP and the enactment of related standards as effects produced through the assemblage of adaptations and the assemblage of enactment.

6.5.2 School cultures. Even though not identified in the global discourse on leadership standards, building school culture was identified by the PSfP as an essential aspect of school leaders' responsibilities both in the PSfP policy and my data collected from interviews and observations concerning the enactment of related leadership standards. Culture in organizations, such as schools, is defined as “the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront

challenges” (Deal & Peterson, 2016, p. 28). However, this definition is limited in its over emphasis on the roles of human actors. The involvement of non-human actors in building school culture has received little attention. Recognizing this limitation and coming from the perspectives of ANT, I conceptualize school culture as neither pre-defined nor fixed, but as constantly changing and performing multiplicities due to agency exercised by various actors. In unfolding the building of school cultures as part of both the assemblage of adaptations and the assemblage of enactment, I identified school leaders, and schools’ physical settings as two types of actors involved in building school cultures.

In building school cultures, significant attention was placed on schools’ landscape design as identified in the PSfP policy, participants’ narratives, as well as my observations of the schools’ physical settings. This attention to the schools’ landscape design is unique compared to the global discourse on leadership standards which is constituted by the convergence of leadership standards from various contexts. In this study, a school’s landscape is no longer merely conceptualized as the arrangements of physical facilities such as school buildings and courtyards etc., but effects produced by interlocking interrelationships. For instance, the school culture of the City School highlighted the theme of morality again. However, this highlight on morality in the school culture was not merely an influence of Confucianism, but was also built upon the City School’s school tradition. To be specific, the City School had a tradition in educating elites to serve the country, and moral cultivation was a critical aspect in preparing students to be pillars of the country. This school tradition is a result of its school history which is distinctive compared with other schools, and also laid the foundation for the City School’s development as well as its school culture. In the enactment of the leadership standards related to building school cultures, the school’s physical setting performs as a symbol to present the

ideologies, traditions, as well as cultures that are valued within the school, which is part of the school culture.

For example, bamboo was observed in the school. Planting bamboo in courtyards has been a tradition and is associated with morality since ancient China. Bamboo signifies *junzi*, who pursue and have demonstrated moral high grounds. In Chinese classic literature, the relations between bamboo and *junzi* are explained:

A *junzi*, or a truly moral gentleman, has to compare his morality to the bamboo. The bamboo stem is firm and its joints are strong. It does not succumb to snow. This is masculine toughness. Bamboo leaves are green and stirred by the wind. This is its feminine delicacy. The bamboo stem is straight and hollow inside. It has nothing to hide. This is its loyalty. Bamboo does not stand high alone as one tree. It always grows in abundance and the plants rely on each other. This is righteousness. Although bamboo is full of vital force, it does not compete with other plants for splendiddness. This is humbleness. Bamboo prospers for all four seasons and never fluctuates. This is its constancy... (Su, 2013, p. 14)

This bamboo aesthetic is deeply rooted in the Confucian culture promoting self-cultivation. A Confucian approach of moral cultivation centres on the roles of “self”, which means that oneself needs to focus on his or her own moral cultivation. Bamboo aesthetic through various activities such as painting bamboo, writing poems about bamboo, as well as planting bamboo is viewed as a means of self-cultivation given that bamboo’s characteristics are similar to the moral qualities of *junzi* (Su, 2013). To use another example, the Rev. Rd. School has gone through many reconstructions and does not have a historical tradition as can be found in the City School. As a result, art education has been developed and identified as a major tradition of the Rev. Rd.

School. Moreover, the Rev. Rd. School is located in a residential community and is closed to an eldercare community centre. In this case, the Rev. Rd. School's physical surrounding produces its agency through providing opportunities of community service, and therefore allows school leaders to build a community-based school culture.

In addition, the agency of a school's physical setting in building school culture is also reflected in a school's architectural features. Deal and Peterson (2016) propose that architectural features reinforce school cultures by sending a message of school values and priorities. The size of a facility, such as a library or a gymnasium, and the spatial arrangements of artifacts within a building all indicate what are perceived as important for a school. In the example of the Oaktree School as I presented in my findings, the idea of diversity was central to the school culture. Precisely, as observed in the Oaktree School, the architectural design of the school buildings features a combination of both regional and Western architectural features. As the Oaktree School locates in a *hutong*, which is a narrow lane symbolizing Beijingers' way of life as I mentioned in my findings, the school's main building with evident features of traditional architecture in Beijing is well aligned with the school's surroundings in terms of physical appearance. To reinforce the idea of diversity, various extracurricular activities and student clubs as part of the school culture were developed.

The examples above have mirrored the sociomaterial ontology that "we live in a world that is materially diverse and heterogeneous" by demonstrating how practices, or put it more specific, the enactment of the standards pertaining to building school cultures are constituted by "particular material combinations and forms" (Law & Singleton, 2014, p. 382). Schools' physical settings along with school leaders acted as types of actors to produce school cultures that are culturally, historically, and materially different and changing. From this perspective, in

the enactment of the leadership standards related to building school cultures, schools' physical settings enacted to contribute to the sociomaterial aspects of school cultures that are produced through surrounding facilities, the landscape design, and the architectural features of buildings both within and beyond schools' physical boundaries. It also needs to be underlined that the same actor produces different forms in their enrollment with other actors. To put it more simply, school leaders from the Rev. Rd. School and the Oaktree School were both found to take into consideration their school surroundings in developing school cultures, yet the schools' physical settings took very particular forms within their own school contexts.

All in all, in terms of building school cultures, evident alignments have been identified between the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP and the enactment of related standards in the policy. The alignments between the standards and their enactment produced by the interconnections between school leaders, and schools' physical settings, identified as the two types of actors which are both connected to the assemblages of adaptations and enactment. School leaders' practices in building school cultures are not results of human intentions, but are the collective effects performed along with the material actors who have carried particular values such as those promoted by Confucianism, regional culture such as *hutong* culture, and school traditions. In this section, I offered my discussion on the alignments found between the PSfP and its enactment with particularly emphasis on morality and school cultures. I identified two types of actors including school leaders, and schools' physical settings that have contributed to the configuration of those alignments. In the next section, I turn my attention to the tensions that were noted between the PSfP and its enactment.

6.6 Tensions between the Standards and the Enactment

Tensions were found between the standards outlined in the PSfP and the enactment of related standards. Recall that the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards to the Chinese context are effects produced by the assemblage of adaptations, and school leaders' practices in enacting the PSfP are performed by the assemblage of enactment. I conceptualize the tensions found between the leadership standards and their enactment as the effects produced by the ways in which the two assemblages are intertwined with each other. The tensions between the leadership standards and enactment are identified from two perspectives: 1) student academic performance; and 2) standardizing school leaders' work.

6.6.1 Student academic performance. One major tension found between the PSfP and its enactment is related to student academic performance, especially their learning outcomes evaluated by standardized tests. In the enactment the PSfP policy, predominant attention was placed on student academic performance as found in school leaders' practices such as classroom observations, walk-throughs, as well as reporting examination-related rankings in teacher-parent meetings. Little evidence suggested that school leaders were more attentive to student overall development than student academic performance as is suggested in the PSfP (MoE of the PRC, 2013). This attention on student learning outcomes echoes the global discourse on leadership standards in which improving student learning is identified as a priority of school leaders' responsibilities (Hall et al., 2013; Ingvarson et al., 2006; Leithwood et al., 2008; Pont et al., 2008; Riveros & Wei, 2019; Riveros et al., 2016). Even so, one cannot simply attribute Chinese school leaders' emphasis on student academic performance to the influences of the global discourse on leadership standards in that there have been two types of actors: school leaders and

the State, who have performed and engaged in the social relations—struggles and negotiations—that result in a departure from the educational approach as proposed in the PSfP.

School leaders' emphasis on student academic performance as I found in the enactment of the PSfP mainly results from the testing system adopted in China. The testing system refers to China's high stakes testing system constituted by the national senior secondary school entrance examination [*Zhongkao*] and the national higher education entrance examination [*Gaokao*]. Due to regional disparities respecting social and economic development, obtaining higher education degrees and going to top universities have been the only path to achieve upward social mobility especially for those who were born in rural China. These standardized examinations have been criticized for having negative influences on students' development such as severe psychological pressure (Stankov, 2010), and also for failing to educate students who can contribute to the country's economic development and modernization (State Council of PRC, 1999). Recognizing the limitations of such a testing system, the State introduced a series of education reforms in the early twentieth century including quality education (State Council of PRC, 1999) and the New Curriculum Reform (MoE of the PRC, 2001). The adaptation of the global discourse on leadership standards with particular attention on student overall development has mainly reflected the core ideas already present in these reforms.

Specifically, “quality education” was firstly proposed in 1999, and recognizes the limitations of traditional test-oriented education. The aim of the reform is to replace the traditional test-focused approach of education with a quality-oriented approach promoting the overall development of students. It pays attention to moral education and encourages the development of students' capacities in innovation, critical thinking, and problem-solving (State Council of PRC, 1999). Quality education was introduced by the State as a critical strategy in

educating and developing human resources who could contribute to China's economic development and modernization of the times.

Following the proposition of quality education, the New Curriculum Reform (NCR) was launched by the MoE of the PRC in 2001 (MoE of the PRC, 2001). It aims at providing specific guidelines for quality education to support the country's modernization and future development. The NCR emphasizes a set of ideologies and values, including patriotism, collectivism, socialism, democracy, legal consciousness, social ethics, social responsibilities, a spirit of service, and environmental awareness. It aims at developing students' competencies in innovation, life-long learning, and cooperating knowledge into practice. The NCR also pays attention to student well-being by denoting the importance of healthy lifestyles, moralities, manners, and aspirations (MoE of the PRC, 2001).

In short, the adaptation of the PSfP policy emphasizing school leaders' responsibility in promoting students' overall development echoes related education reforms launched by the State attempting to challenge the deep-rooted testing system and promote a more comprehensive means of education to meet the State's needs to modernize. The standards outlined in the PSfP especially those related to moral education and ensuring student well-being are well aligned with the ideologies, values, and education approaches, which had already been proposed in the earlier quality education and the NCR reforms.

Even though the State has demonstrated its efforts in changing the test-oriented approach of education through quality education and the NCR, school leaders' work in China has still largely been driven by the testing system as I illustrated in my findings. Despite critiques and educational reforms which I just described, the testing system has been retained and prevailed in China due to its roots in both history and culture. The high stakes testing system in China can be

traced back to the seventh century, when the Civil Service Examinations (*Keju*) were conducted as the only means to select state officials. To become a state official, a candidate had to outrank other participants in the examinations at district, provincial, and national levels. With a history of over a thousand years, the Civil Service Examinations were extremely competitive in that state official was perceived as an honorable and prestigious occupation for its financial rewards and legal privileges (Kennedy, 2016; Zhang & Akbik, 2012).

Some researchers compared the current testing system in China with the ancient Civil Service Examinations, and propose a number of similarities (Huang & Gove, 2015; Yu & Suen, 2005). Firstly, the two examination systems are both centralized. Government departments at different levels play the administrative role. Secondly, the two examination systems are highly standardized in terms of their subjects, formats, and scoring criteria. Thirdly, both the ancient Civil Service Examinations and the two major examinations in the current Chinese testing system are the predominant instrument to achieve upward social mobility. Becoming a state official was the major means to change social status in ancient China. Nowadays, even though the means of building financial wealth can be various due to China's economic development reforms, going to high-ranking universities and obtaining higher education degrees are still preferred in the Chinese society especially for those who were born in rural China (Huang & Gove, 2015; Yu & Suen, 2005). Graduates with degrees from top universities have more opportunities to decent jobs, and many of those jobs offer resources and privileges that are neither accessible in rural areas nor can be easily purchased. One often cited example is that some job opportunities in municipalities such as Beijing and Shanghai provide their employees with local residential registration status. Only by obtaining local residential registration status, the employees' children can go to local schools. Schools in municipalities enjoy more resources

such as experienced teachers and teaching materials due to the regional disparity respecting social and economic development (Yu & Suen, 2005).

The testing system in China has directly contributed to a test-based education approach which prevails in the enactment of the PSfP as noted in the findings of this study.

Notwithstanding the fact that education reforms such as quality education and the NCR were launched by the State to promote a more holistic approach of education focusing on student overall development, the testing system is still clearly dominant in many aspects of the Chinese education system.

In addition to the historical root as discussed above, Confucianism has also influenced how standardized testing and student academic performance have been perceived in China. Confucianism has a long history of influencing the Chinese education systems with a specific focus on student assessment. A well-established scholarship has documented the features of education from the Confucian perspective, and one of those features is to recognize that all students are equal and to treat them fairly. Accordingly, standardized examinations such as the ancient Civil Service Examinations as well as the existing testing system are perceived as an approach of assessment which are relatively equitable for all students (Huang & Gove, 2015; Kennedy, 2016; Li, 2001). In addition, Confucianism connects social class with occupation, and scholars' strata is positioned the highest above the other three social strata including peasants, workers, and businessmen. Therefore, obtaining high academic degrees is strongly encouraged in the Chinese context, and outstanding academic performance is believed as an honour of the whole family (Huang & Gove, 2015). The historical and cultural roots of the testing system in China as I just discussed have differentiated the attention to student academic performance in the Chinese context from the broader NPM education reforms.

6.6.2 Conflict in China's education policy agenda. Conflict emerged from Chinese State's agenda in promoting the country's modernization through education as observed between leadership standards emphasizing student overall development in the PSfP, and the enactment of related standards resulting from the dominance of the testing system in China. In this section, I present my discussion of this conflict found in China's education policy agenda with regards to the interrelationship of two types of actors: the State and intergovernmental organizations.

To better understand the power relations between these two types of actors, I first clarify my conceptualization of intergovernmental organizations. Previous in this dissertation, government departments were identified as one type of actor in transferring the global dominant discourse on leadership standards to China. The two terms, "government" and "intergovernmental", are used to differentiate between the actors, not from a perspective of the often-referenced scales of the local and the global, but by the ways in which these two actors exercised their agency in this study. This differentiation between the two types of actors is in line with ANT, in which scales such as the global, the national, and the local are all theorized as effects of connections rather than being fixed and defined by geographic boundaries. To trace the ways in which intergovernmental organizations have exercised their agency and also unpack their interrelations with other types of actors, such as the Chinese State as I discuss in this section, I am particularly attentive to those organizations' activities in promoting the NPM values which the global convergence of leadership standards has been built upon.

The main argument I propose is that the preservation of the testing system in China needs to be understood in relation to the power relations between intergovernmental organizations and the State in light of China's participation in PISA. In detail, in addition to its long-standing history and roots in Confucianism, the testing system in China to some extent mirrors the

assumption that higher student achievement will benefit the country's development and modernization. This was proposed as one of the rationales supporting China's education policy development with the purpose of improving national achievement and enhancing competitiveness in the global labour market (Li, 2016, 2017; Li & Li, 2019). This assumption about the relationship between student achievement and a country's economic growth has also driven the agenda setting of intergovernmental organizations such as OECD and UNESCO through the promotion of international large-scale assessments (ILSAs) such as PISA and TIMSS. Specifically, the OECD along with a school of scholars have proposed a causal relationship between ILSAs results and economic growth. Even though some studies (e.g. Duncan et al., 2010; Feniger & Atia, 2019) have shown no evidence of causal relationship between PISA scores and economic growth, and suggest that, in fact, better economic circumstances contribute to students' improvement in academic performance, the OECD still explicitly defines PISA and TIMSS scores as indicators of economic development. As a consequence, ILSAs, especially PISA rankings, are often used as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of school systems.

Until 2018, China's participation in PISA included two municipalities (Beijing and Shanghai) and two provinces (Jiangsu and Zhejiang). China's performance, and in particular Shanghai's high-ranking, has received a lot of attention. Intergovernmental organizations have depicted Shanghai's school system as a successful model and used it as a case to promote their own policy agenda. To put it more bluntly, Shanghai's achievement has contributed to a number of leadership practices or models that have been promoted in the global dominant discourse on leadership standards. For example, one report published by the World Bank highlights the adoption of the PSfP in professional development programs offered to school leaders in

Shanghai, and proposes the adoption of the PSfP as an essential element leading to Shanghai students' top performance in PISA (Liang, Kidwai, & Zhang, 2016). In 2018, teachers and school leaders from Shanghai participated in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), which is an international large-scale survey developed by the OECD to explore teachers and school leaders' perceptions about the working conditions and learning environments within their schools. In the reports published by the OECD, compared with other jurisdictions participated in TALIS, principals from Shanghai were found to enjoy greater autonomy and have higher rate of completing training programme particularly in instructional leadership with an emphasis on improving student learning (OECD, 2013, 2018).

However, an interesting point worth noting is that both officials and scholars from China argue that Chinese students' achievement in PISA has suggested more problems than success in China's education system (MoE of the PRC, 2019; Zhang & Akbik, 2012; Zhong, 2019). They are skeptical for adopting PISA as a measurement for the quality of education particularly in terms of its focuses on academic subjects including mathematics, reading and science (National Assessment Center for Education Quality, 2019; Tan, 2017, 2019; Zhong, 2019). China's high-ranking performance in PISA is further thought to be a result of China's test-oriented education approach and the heavy academic burden placed on students. It is also underlined that the achievement in PISA does not reflect the overall student performance in China as the municipalities and provinces participated in the assessments are more economically developed and enjoy more educational resources compared with many other regions within the country (Hou, 2019; Tan, 2017, 2019; Zhang & Akbik, 2012).

By analyzing documents and reports published by both intergovernmental organizations (Liang et al., 2016) and Chinese government organizations (MoE of the PRC, 2019; National

Assessment Center for Education Quality, 2019), I tease out the interrelationship between these two types of actors with a focus on the effects of the testing system, particularly on China's education reforms and the enactment of the PSfP. Accordingly, I argue that the testing system has been preserved by the State not only for its roots in Chinese history and Confucianism, but also to gain broader international recognition through Chinese students' high performance in ILSAs such as PISA, which has been depicted as the indicator of a country's economic development and modernization by intergovernmental organizations. While recognizing the roles of PISA in guiding education policy development across different context, as well as its implications for Chinese students' competencies in the global competition, promoting student overall development has been promoted as a discourse in China's education policies including the PSfP as a response to the critiques toward and negative effects resulted from the test-oriented approach of education.

To sum up, the conflict emerged from the State's policy agenda in promoting the country's development and modernization has resulted in the tension between the PSfP and its enactment of related standards in terms of student academic performance. Even though both the PSfP policy and participants in this study indicated the need for a more comprehensive approach of education with attention on students' wellbeing and overall development, compromises were made when related leadership standards were enacted due to the dominance of the testing system in China.

As critical policy analysts argue that policy is "complex, variable, decentered and depended on work, while policy transfer rests on meaning-making practices that are uncertain and messy" (Law & Singleton, 2014, p. 380). School leaders' practices in focusing on student academic performance are results of their meaning-making of the roles of the actors including

the State and themselves, as well as the power relations among these two actors when facing the severe competition among schools in standardized examinations. While in this study, there was no specific measures or enforcement found taken by the State and government departments in Beijing to evaluate schools' effectiveness in promoting student overall development, the testing system has been used as an evaluation mechanism through school rankings in major standardized examinations delivered at both district and municipal levels within the city. In the next section, I draw my attention to the tension between the requirements to adopt the PSfP as a guideline in school leaders' professional development and evaluation, and to standardize school leaders' work as outlined in the policy, and related policy enactment.

6.6.3 Standardizing school leaders' work. The purposes of introducing the PSfP include promoting school leaders' professionalization through standardizing their responsibilities, competencies, and practices, as well as providing a major reference for professional learning, evaluation, and self-reflection (MoE of the PRC, 2013). Nevertheless, one participant (Qian, principal, Horseshoe School) explicitly opined that school leaders' work cannot be standardized (see Section 5.4.3) and my findings suggest that the PSfP initiated little change to school leaders' daily practices and was not used to guide in their daily practices due to the lack of policy enforcement. The professional development and preparation programs offered to school leaders in Beijing did not adopt the PSfP. School leaders were not evaluated based on the PSfP either.

The Principal Accountability System (PAS) was reflected by participants as the predominant guideline directing their work. As illustrated in my findings, the prevailing adoption of the PAS is derived from the power relations among three types of actors: the State, the Party, and school leaders. Under the existing PAS, principals are now legitimated as the sole leaders

and decision-makers within their schools (Yang & Brayman, 2010), which was also mentioned by participants in this study. Principals make decisions about and take full responsibility for their schools, including but not limited to teaching, student learning, hiring, budgeting, and building leadership teams. Under the leadership of principals, vice-principals are respectively assigned with tasks related to student learning and moral education.

The PAS and the global leadership turn as I noted at the beginning of this dissertation (Section 1.1) both position principals as the only leaders within their schools. Furthermore, a transfer of power over decision-making from either local authority as observed in Western countries (Hall et al., 2013; O'Reilly & Reed, 2010; Riveros et al., 2016) or the Party in China (State Council of the PRC, 1985) to school level has been noticed. Those commonalities shared by the reforms across different context are no coincidence. Recall that the Chinese MoE of the PRC re-introduced the PAS in 1985 when the Party and the State initiated the decentralization in education system to distribute both authorities and financial responsibilities from the central government to different levels of government departments as well as schools (Hanson, 1998; Hawkin, 2000; Wong, 2008), meaning that both the global leadership turn and China's reinforcement of the PAS have been driven by NPM built upon which the roles of the State have changed in educational administration. Therefore, the systematically establishment of the PAS in 1985 (State Council of the PRC, 1985) and its further development since 1993 (State Council of the PRC, 1993) mainly resulted from the State's agenda in promoting decentralization to promote the country's development and modernization.

Nonetheless, the dominance of the PAS in Chinese schools is not merely a result of the influences of NPM aligning with the reforms initiated by the State to promote China's economic growth and modernization. Confucianism has also contributed to the normalization and

maintenance the PAS, or to put it more bluntly, the authority of principals in Chinese schools. Specifically, Confucians are oriented toward a hierarchically organized system within which “everyone man knew his place and was content” (Ng, 2000, p. 46). Influenced by the Confucian traditions, individuals in Chinese societies are socialized to respect for authority which is centralized in a system. Coming from this perspective, Confucianism promotes “rule of man” by emphasizing the leadership of a single individual who is morally cultivated and “rule of law” is criticized for neglecting the values of morality (Frederickson, 2002; Jenco, 2010; Ng, 2000). This emphasis on the moral aspect of leaders is also reflected in the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP as I discussed previously in this dissertation (Section 6.5.1). Due to the deep-rooted PAS, Chinese school leaders are perceived as political officials (Walker & Qian, 2018; Wu, 2011) and therefore challenges are posed in introducing mechanisms that attempt to standardize school leaders’ practices or used for evaluation such as the PSfP in the case of this study.

In this section, I have provided my discussion on the tensions between the leadership standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment, in particular from the aspects of student academic performance and the standardization of school leaders’ work. In understanding those tensions between the standards and practices, I identified school leaders, the State, and the Party as types of actors, and teased out the connections as well as power relations that have eventually contributed to the enactment of related standards. Following this paragraph, I explore the effects or the consequences produced by the three assemblages identified in this dissertation.

6.7 The Performativity of the Assemblages

Assemblages perform to produce effects. In clarifying my conceptualization of the three assemblages identified in this dissertation (the assemblage of leadership standards, the

assemblage of adaptations, the assemblage of enactment), I discussed the performativity, or the effects produced by those assemblages (Section 6.2). First of all, the assemblage of leadership standards has produced a global discourse on leadership standards constituted through the global convergence of leadership standards. Therefore, the PSfP introduced in China, as part of such convergence due to its commonalities in defining successful school leaders shared with leadership standards from other jurisdictions, is both an effect of and also contributes to the constitution of the global discourse on leadership standards.

Secondly, the assemblage of adaptations has contributed to the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted in China as observed in my findings. Major themes such as an emphasis on the authority of Socialism, the Party and the State, attention to morality, student overall development, as well as cultures and traditions emerged as the policy adaptations produced by the assemblage of adaptations.

Thirdly, school leaders' practices in enacting the PSfP are perceived as effects produced by the assemblage of enactment. Instead of viewing practices as directed by pure human intentions, I conceptualize practices as the products of an assemblage of relationships in which actors such as school leaders, the State, and schools' physical settings and environment are interwoven and exercise their agency in relation with each other.

In this section, I provide a further discussion on the performativity of these three assemblages by focusing the professional identity and legitimacy produced by the assemblage of leadership standards, the assemblage of adaptations, and the assemblage of enactment. The effects produced by the three assemblages are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 The Effects Produced by the Assemblages

The Assemblage of	What is produced by each assemblage?
Leadership Standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the constitution of a global discourse of leadership standards 2. the development of the PSfP 3. the transnational transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards 4. the legitimacy of Chinese State’s agenda in standardizing and professionalizing school leaders’ work
Adaptations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. policy adaptations identified in the PSfP 2. the production of the identity of Chinese school leaders 3. the legitimacy of the quality-oriented education reforms promoted by the Chinese State
Enactment	school leaders’ practices in enacting the PSfP
Together the assemblages produce	
Leadership Standards, Enactment	the legitimacy of intergovernmental organizations’ NPM policy agenda in promoting leadership standards
Leadership Standards	the identity of school leaders broadly across various contexts
Leadership Standards, Adaptations, Enactment	the identity of Chinese school leaders

6.7.1 Producing professional identities. School leader, as a professional identity is “constituted through social action and discourse”, and leadership standards “are regulatory mechanisms that normalized the policy discourses on efficient leadership and ideal leaders through practices” (Riveros et al., 2016, p. 599). In this sense, all the three assemblages identified in this dissertation are interwoven together to produce the professional identities of school leaders both broadly across different contexts and specifically in China.

As I argued in this dissertation, the dominant discourse on leadership standards is produced by the assemblage of leadership standards, and therefore the assemblage of leadership standards produces an identity of school leader broadly across various contexts. As a result, school leaders are expected to play a sole leadership role within schools, pay predominant attention to student learning and academic performance, and adopt a similar set of leadership practices such as those identified as the core dimensions in the PSfP.

Moreover, school leaders' professional identities are produced during the process of translating leadership standards into specific practices. School leaders' practices in enacting the PSfP are theorized as the products of the assemblage of enactment. In the configuration of the assemblage of enactment, Chinese school leaders were also found to be the sole leaders within their schools, and expected to pay significant attention to student academic performance. This configuration of Chinese school leaders' professional identity seems to be identical with the leadership identity produced by the global assemblage of leadership standards, yet, is shaped by the contextualized power relations that have constituted the assemblage of enactment. Recall that the deep-rooted PAS, the influences of Confucianism on the conceptualization of order and authority in organizations, and the testing system in China are all factors that have contributed to school leaders' being authoritarian and to attention being directed to student academic performance. I also proposed that those factors originate from the power relations among different actors such as the Party, the State, and school leaders, and school leaders enact the PSfP according to their meaning-making of their roles and those interrelationships. In short, the identity of Chinese school leaders produced by the assemblage of enactment is aligned with the leadership identity produced by the assemblage of leadership standards, even though the productions of the identities involve different ideologies, values, and policy agendas adopted and promoted by heterogenous actors.

However, the transfer of policy discourse "does not lead to the production of common, standardised or homogenised discursive codes across the globe" (Singh, 2015, p. 367), and the professional identity of Chinese school leaders is also shaped by the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted in China. In other words, it has been produced by the assemblage of adaptations. I identified four themes in relation to the adaptations

of the global discourse on leadership standards in China. In addition to respecting the authority of socialism, and the leadership of the Party and the State, the leadership identity produced by the assemblage of adaptations emphasizes school leaders' moral cultivation, which was observed in both the policy adaptations and the enactment of the PSfP, as well as has been addressed by Confucianism. Moreover, the professional identity of school leaders produced by the assemblage of adaptations defines promoting student overall development instead of improving student learning as the focus of school leaders' responsibilities.

It needs to be addressed that there is a conflict found in Chinese school leaders' professional identities produced by the assemblage of adaptations and the assemblage of enactment. A good school leader, as defined by the PSfP, promotes student overall development while in practice, more attention is given to student academic performance due to the dominance of the testing system in China. This conflict found in school leaders' identities emerged from the conflict in the State's education policy agenda as I discussed earlier in this chapter. On the one hand, the State launched several education reforms to promote a quality-oriented approach of education, while on the other hand, the testing system is preserved in China and has hindered the adoption of a more comprehensive and holistic approach of education in schools.

6.7.2 Producing legitimacy. Another effect of the assemblages, as have argued by some scholars researching policy transfer is the production of legitimacy (Schriewer, 1990; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; Waldow, 2012). The performativity of the three assemblages in producing legitimacy lies in three ways: 1) The assemblage of leadership standards legitimizes the State's education policy agenda in promoting the professionalization and standardization of school leaders' work; 2) The assemblage of adaptations legitimizes the quality-oriented education reforms launched by the State; and 3) Intergovernmental organizations use the PSfP as an

example to legitimize their NPM agenda and further promote the transfer of the dominant discourse on leadership standards.

First of all, the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China is an effect produced by the assemblage of leadership standards. Taking into consideration the tensions between the PSfP and its enactment, especially concerning the standardization of school leaders' work, I propose that the assemblage of leadership standards legitimizes the State's efforts in promoting professionalization and the standardization of school leaders' work with the aim of modernizing China's education system. To put it more bluntly, by externalizing to leadership standards from Western countries and the global trend in adopting leadership standards, the development and the adoption of the Chinese leadership standards is legitimized. As I mentioned, the authority within Chinese schools has been centralized and Chinese school leaders' identity is more bureaucratic-oriented than professional-oriented. Due to the dominance of the PAS, standardizing school leaders' work and introducing evaluation mechanism for school leaders could be challenging and controversial, which has been confirmed in this study conducted in Beijing. Consequently, referring to the global convergence of leadership standards helps the State to legitimize itself and its agenda in developing and adopting leadership standards in China, namely the PSfP. The transfer of the global dominant discourse on leadership standards to China is an evident example of externalization to world situations (Schriewer, 1990). Even though reference to external reference was neither found in the PSfP nor in the official documents released by the MoE of the PRC, the global policy trend in standardizing school leaders' roles, competencies, and practices has been highlighted by researchers who were assigned by the MoE of the PRC to conduct research for the development of Chinese leadership standards (Chen et al., 2011; Wei & Gao, 2010).

Second, the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards is adapted to the Chinese context are produced by the interrelationships that constitute the assemblage of adaptations. The assemblage of adaptations legitimizes the education reforms launched by the State, particularly those related to the promotion of student overall development, and moreover, the policy adaptations as I observed in the PSfP are legitimized by Chinese officials and scholars' reference to Chinese students' performance in PISA. As I discussed previously, China's high-ranking performance is attributed to the country's test-oriented education approach and the heavy academic burden by both officials and scholars from China. While recognizing Chinese students' high performance in PISA, Chinese officials and scholars propose that more efforts need to be devoted to promoting a more comprehensive approach of education to improve the quality of education through various education reforms with an attempt to address the importance of moral education and well-being in student overall development. Precisely, the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards in the PSfP, which are produced by the assemblage of adaptations, are legitimized by Chinese officials and scholars' reference to PISA results, and consolidate the education reforms launched by the State to promote student overall development.

Third, the development of the PSfP and its use in leadership training programs in Shanghai are used by intergovernmental organizations to legitimize their policy agenda built upon NPM and further promote the transfer of the dominant discourse on leadership standards. For instance, one report published by the World Bank (Liang, Kidwai, & Zhang, 2016) underlines the factors that have contributed to Shanghai's high-ranking in PISA. Effective leadership is identified as one of the major factors benefiting student learning through enhancing teacher motivation and accountability. The report also highlights the positive impact of the

leadership training programs offered for school leaders in Shanghai by Shanghai Normal University and Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, in which the PSfP is adopted as a major guiding document. Moreover, the authors of the report opine that the six dimensions of leadership practices and competencies outlined in the PSfP are critical components of effective leadership which contributes to the improvement of student academic performance. Without referring to the policy adaptations as I noted in this study, the report published by the World Bank (Liang et al. 2016) highlights the major dimensions of the PSfP, which are aligned with the global discourse on leadership standards and driven by NPM, as key factors contributing to effective leadership and the improvement of student academic performance. In this sense, the assemblage of leadership standards, and the assemblage of enactment (even though not in the context of Beijing as I discussed in this dissertation) produced legitimation through the ways in which the PSfP and its adoption in Shanghai are interpreted by the World Bank.

More importantly, the World Bank's reference to the PSfP is an evident example to support my proposition that policy transfer is a multi-directional process. While the transfer of the dominant discourse on leadership standards to China is an effect of the assemblage of leadership standards, the PSfP as part of the global policy convergence has further promoted the transnational flows of the dominant discourse, which is driven by international organizations.

6.8 Summary

In this chapter, I analyzed the constitution of the three assemblages identified in this dissertation: the assemblage of leadership standards, the assemblage of adaptations, and the assemblage of enactment, around which the global discourse on leadership standards has been transferred, and adapted to the Chinese contexts, as well as enacted in schools.

In configuring the assemblage of leadership standards, professional organizations were identified as one type of actor that has been excluded in the process of developing the PSfP due to the fact that administration over professional organizations is highly centralized and limited to government departments (State Council of the PRC, 1998). Therefore, there has been a lack of motivation devoted to non-government professional activities and the development of professional organizations (He, 2006; Zhu & Yang, 2009). This control of government departments over professional organizations has resulted in the marginalization of professional organizations in the process of developing the leadership standards in China.

Actors including the MoE of the PRC, the East China Normal University, the Shanghai Normal University, and the Shanghai Academy of Education Sciences were identified as being directly involved in the development of the PSfP. School leaders were also invited to participate in the research projects to develop the Chinese leadership standards. The two universities and the think tank were included in the research associated with the construction of the PSfP policy due to their strong connections with government departments. As the formation of the PSfP is a state-directed process, scholars, and researchers in related fields, but from other institutions were excluded from the process.

Next, I focused on two of the themes that emerged from the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to China: an emphasis on socialism, the authority of the Party, and the State, as well as valuing the roles of Chinese traditional cultures. I started with a discussion on the power relations between the Party and the State in China's education policy-making process. Aligning with China's opening-up reform, the decision-making power was gradually transferred from the Party to government departments as the representatives of the State, and the Party's role is more related to political and ideological

control. Therefore, the overt emphasis on the socialist ideology, the authority of the Party and national laws and policies as observed in the PSfP is an effect of the Party and the State reinforcing their authorities in China's administrative bureaucracy.

Moreover, the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted in China by emphasizing the roles of cultures and traditions. This attention to cultures and traditions as highlighted throughout the PSfP corresponds to a cultural shift in China in which the State aims at strengthening its soft power through promoting Chinese traditional cultures particularly Confucianism. Confucianism has been given particular attention in that its core values such as pragmatism and harmony are tremendously aligned with the discourses promoted by the Chinese State.

After that, I identified two themes, morality and building school cultures, with regards to the alignments between the standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment. In terms of morality, attention has been given to morality and moral leadership both in the policy adaption as I found in the PSfP and school leaders' enactment of the policy. Confucianism promotes the moral cultivation of a noble person, and has also shaped the perceptions of leadership in China by highlighting a number of moral qualities, such as caring, showing respect, and being a role model. In constituting this theme of morality, I identified the State and school leaders as two types of actors who have both adopted benevolent governance, which originated from Confucian traditions, and addressed ethical codes within the authoritarian power relations.

Moreover, building school cultures is another theme addressed in both the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted in China and the enactment of the PSfP. Evident alignments were identified between related standards in the PSfP and their enactment with particular attention to schools' landscape design and architectural features.

Instead of merely directed by school leaders' intentions, the development of school cultures is the collective effect performed by school leaders and schools' physical settings which have carried particular values such as those promoted by Confucianism, regional culture, and school traditions.

After discussing the configuration of the alignments between the policy adaptations found in the PSfP and the enactment of related leadership standard, I identified the actors and their interrelationships that have contributed to the tensions between the standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment. Two themes emerged, including student academic performance, and standardizing school leaders' work.

In terms of student academic performance, the PSfP emphasizes school leaders' responsibilities in promoting student overall development, while in the enactment of related standards, predominant attention is given to student learning outcomes evaluated by standardized tests. This attention on student academic performance seems to echo the global discourse on leadership standards, which identifies improving student learning outcomes as a priority of school leaders' responsibilities, yet arises from the struggles and negotiations between two actors: school leaders and the State. Even though education reforms particularly quality education and NCR were launched by the State to promote a quality-oriented approach of education focusing on student overall development as reflected in the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards in China, the testing system is still retained by the State for its historical and cultural roots in China. School leaders' attention on student academic performance has been mainly driven by the dominance of the testing system.

Noticing a conflict in the State's education policy agenda emerged from the emphasis on student overall development and the preservation of the testing system, I further discussed the

power relations between the Chinese State and intergovernmental organizations. The testing system in China to some extent mirrors the assumption that higher student achievement will benefit the country's development and modernization, which is in alignment with the notion proposed by intergovernmental organizations in promoting ILSAs particularly PISA. And more importantly, the reservation of the testing system in China has helped the country to gain broader international recognition for its students' high performance in PISA. Therefore, this conflict emerged from China's education policy agenda has resulted in the tension between the PSfP promoting student overall development and the enactment of related standards. School leaders' practices focusing on student learning outcomes are produced by their meaning-making of their roles and the power relations with the other actor, the State.

The other theme related to the tensions between the standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment is related to the standardization of school leaders' work. The PSfP was introduced in China to provide guidelines for the standardization and professionalization of school leaders' work. Nevertheless, my findings suggested that the PSfP was not used in school leaders' professional learning or evaluation in Beijing, and it initiated few changes on school leaders' daily practices.

Instead, the PAS has been adopted as the predominant guideline directing school leaders' work. The prevailing adoption of the PAS is derived from the power relations among three actors: the State, the Party, and school leaders. In the history of China's educational leadership reforms, there have been shifts of the formal leadership role between Party Secretaries within schools and school principals influenced by political movements in the country. The PAS, which positions principals as the sole leaders within their schools, was established in 1985 due to the State's reform in decentralizing education. Both authorities and financial responsibilities from

central government were distributed to different levels of government departments as well as schools. This decentralization of education in China is part of the State's opening-up reform aiming at promoting the country's modernization through decentralization driven by NPM. It also needs to be noted that the dominance of the PAS in Chinese schools is not merely a result of the influences of the NPM. Confucianism has also contributed to the normalization and maintenance of the authority of school principals as legitimated in the PAS by emphasizing the notion of rule of man. Due to the deep-rooted PAS, Chinese school leaders are perceived as political officials and therefore challenges are posed in introducing mechanisms that attempt to standardize school leaders' practices or used for evaluation such as the PSfP in the case of this study.

In the last section of this chapter, I offered a discussion on the performativity of the three assemblages with specific attention on the production of identities and legitimacy. School leaders' identities are produced through all the three assemblages both broadly across different contexts and specifically in the context of China. By producing a global discourse on leadership standards, the assemblage of leadership standards produces an identity of school leader who is the sole leader within school and whose major responsibility is to improve student learning outcomes.

While investigating the configuration of the assemblage of enactment, I identified the dominance of the PAS, the influences of Confucianism, and the testing system in China as key factors that have contributed to Chinese school leaders' being authoritarian and attention on student academic performance. In light of the enactment of the PSfP, Chinese school leaders' professional identity to some extent is aligned with the leadership identity produced by the global discourse on leadership standards, even though originated from different ideologies, values, and

agendas adopted and promoted by heterogenous actors such as the Chinese State and school leaders themselves.

Furthermore, the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese context are produced by the assemblage of adaptations, and therefore, the assemblage of adaptations shapes the professional identity of Chinese school leaders in particular ways. In light of the assemblage of adaptations, school leaders in China are defined as respecting the authority of socialism, the leadership of the Party and the State, and paying attention to moral cultivation, as well as promoting student overall development.

It needs to be underlined that a conflict was identified between the identities produced by the assemblage of enactment and the assemblage of adaptations in relation to the focus of school leaders' work. Again, the focus of school leaders' responsibilities, whether to promote student overall development or to improve student learning as denoted in the PSfP or its enactment, is neither simply defined by the State nor by school leaders, but rests in the networks of relationships.

After summarizing my discussion and conclusions, in the next chapter, I revisit the main ideas of this dissertation, highlight the significance of my study, and provide my final thought in relation to the conclusions I proposed in this dissertation.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1 Overview of the Study

There has been an increasing infatuation with introducing standards for principals and vice-principals across the world. Those leadership standards outline the responsibilities, competencies, and practices that are required for “successful” and “effective” school leaders, and are used for leadership preparation, professional development, and the evaluation of school leaders. This increasing focus on school leaders' work as manifested through leadership standards has represented a “leadership turn”, in which principals and vice-principals have been positioned in the key leadership positions within schools with the focus of their work on improving student learning outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2008; Pont et al., 2008; Riveros & Wei, 2019).

Evident similarities have been observed among those leadership standards from different contexts, and have contributed to a global convergence of leadership standards. This policy convergence has constituted a dominant discourse on leadership standards, emphasizing a similar set of leadership practices such as setting goals, improving student learning outcomes, providing instructional leadership, and promoting collaborations (CEPPE & OECD, 2013; Murakami et al., 2014; Pont et al., 2008; Riveros et al., 2016). The global discourse is built upon an “already said” (Foucault, 1972, p. 27), or to put it more bluntly, NPM, which promotes the adoption of leadership practices from the business sector into the public sector, such as educational institutions (O’Reilly & Reed, 2010; Riveros et al., 2016).

Recognizing this global leadership turn, China launched a policy document entitled the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* (the PSfP) (MoE of the PRC, 2013) in 2013, as an attempt to promote the professionalization and standardization of school

leaders' work. The policy document includes three sections: basic concepts, content, and requirements for implementation. The section of basic concepts defines four rationales that are foundational to the development of the PSfP, including morality as the first priority, student overall development as the basic, leading development as the major responsibility, building competencies as the focus, and life-long learning. The content section outlines a total number of 60 standards from six dimensions, including: 1) planning for school development; 2) building a culture of promoting student overall development; 3) leading curriculum and instruction; 4) leading teacher growth; 5) improving internal management; and 6) coordinating with external environment. In the third section, guidelines are provided for the implementation of the PSfP. The policy is expected to be used as a guiding document for the development of local leadership standards, and school leaders' preparation, professional development, and evaluation (MoE of the PRC, 2013).

Moreover, the six dimensions outlined in the PSfP are mostly identical with the core ideas of the global discourse on leadership standards, and Chinese researchers who were involved in the development of the PSfP had noticed the global convergence of leadership standards, and proposed the need for China to catch up with this global trend (Wei & Gao, 2010; Zhu & Yang, 2009). Interested in the transnational flows of policy ideas, in this dissertation, I explored the types of actors which have been involved in transferring the global discourse on leadership standards to China along with their interrelationships, the ways in which the global discourse has been adapted to the Chinese context in the PSfP, and how has the PSfP been enacted in schools.

In exploring those questions, I adopted a lens of policy transfer to shed light on how policy ideas, such as the global discourse on leadership standards, have traveled and been

adapted to specific context (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000). In this study, attention was also given to the discursive aspect of policy transfer by tracing the power relations among heterogeneous types of actors (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). More importantly, this study adopted a critical approach to policy analysis. Instead of conceptualizing policy as a linear process and attempting to evaluate the effectiveness of policy, I adopted the notion of enactment to focus on the process of meaning-making, as well as the agency of all policy actors (Ball et al. 2011, 2012).

Actor Network Theory (ANT) was used as the theoretical framework to guide my research. It holds a sociomaterial view of world being relational, contingent, and entangled (Law & Singleton, 2014; Mulcahy, 2013). Noting that all things are relational effects, I traced how various types of actors have come together, held together, enacted agency, and produced effects (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Latour, 1999a). ANT is exceptionally helpful in understanding the transnational flows of policy ideas, and recognizes the fluidity and dynamic nature of the policy process. From the perspectives of ANT, I did not perceive the PSfP introduced in China as a “local” policy separate from the “global”, but conceptualized it as part of the global convergence of leadership standards. I also highlighted that policy transfer is a multi-directional process by demonstrating how the global is constituted in the local, that is how the PSfP contributed to the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards. Moreover, ANT proposes that non-human actors have agency as well. Consequently, the enactment of the PSfP was not limited to school leaders’ practices originating from their individual human intentions, but was theorized as the effects produced by an assemblage of connections and relationships among heterogeneous types of actors (Montenegro & Bulgacov, 2014).

This study was a qualitative comparative case study (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009). Similar to traditional case study, this research investigated related issues as proposed in the research questions in depth and in school contexts (Yin, 2014). Also differentiating from traditional case study, this dissertation unbounded the case by tracing the flows of ideas and relations that are across time and space (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Empirical data analyzed in this study was collected from semi-structured interviews with thirteen principals and vice-principals, observations of five participants, and the physical settings of six Beijing schools. Document analysis was also conducted on wide range of leadership standards frameworks, the PSfP in particular, and documents collected during my field work.

7.2 Theoretical and Methodological Significance

By adopting a lens of policy transfer, this dissertation leads to a better understanding of transnational flows of policy ideas (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014a). As I demonstrated, the similarities shared by transnational leadership standards can be contributed to the prevalence of NPM, within which management theories and practices from private sector are adopted in public sectors such as educational institutions (Hall, 2013; Tolofari, 2005; Riveros & Wei, 2019; Verger & Curran, 2014). Rather than seeing the global is enforced on the local, and claiming that education systems worldwide are becoming similar, in this study, I paid close attention to the types of actors that have involved in the transfer and adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards to China, as well as the enactment of the PSfP to demonstrate the very particular ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been taken up in China.

Additionally, this dissertation is theoretically and methodologically significant in the ways in which ANT and qualitative comparative case study were used. On the one hand, ANT was used as the theoretical framework to guide the development of this study by focusing on the

connections, as well as interrelations among heterogeneous types of actors (Edwards, 2010; Law, 1999). Taking such a relational and sociomaterial perspective, ANT moves beyond the traditional ontology by proposing that there is no single reality, and realities are constituted by assemblages or relations among human beings and more than human beings (Latour, 1992; Mulcahy, 2013). Therefore, this dissertation focused on the collaborative and interrelated agency of actors, both human and non-human, rather than merely focusing on individual human intentions. The study's focus on this collaborative agency highlights the fact that policy transfer is a complicated process in which decisions are not merely made based on individuals' intentions. Non-human actors such as government departments and intergovernmental organizations were identified as actors involved in the assemblages identified in this study. In addition to school leaders, the State and schools' physical settings were engaged in the enactment of the PSfP. In this regard, individual intentions are mediated through the sociomaterial relationships and interests, conflicts, and politics among all types of actors.

Furthermore, guided by ANT and comparative case study (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017), as well as a critical lens of policy transfer (Beech, 2006a; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000), this dissertation addresses the danger of adopting a binary view of the global and the local, which assumes that the global and the local are clearly differentiated and demarcated. This was achieved by offering a discussion of how the global, such as a global discourse on leadership standards, was constituted by and through the local (e.g. the PSfP). My perspective in this dissertation is that the global discourse on leadership standards is neither pre-existing nor stable, but is constituted by the convergence of leadership standards introduced in various "local" context. In this study, the PSfP is conceptualized as part of the leadership standards convergence, where essential commonalities are shared among leadership standards from different localities,

which in turn, contributes to the constitution and promotion of the global discourse on leadership standards.

However, by interrogating the constitution and the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards, this dissertation also highlights the danger of taking the global for granted. The transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China is not merely driven by NPM, which is identified as a “global” policy agenda, but lies in the power relations that are contextualized in China. For example, although both being the sole leaders within schools and focusing on improving student learning outcomes, Chinese school leaders’ identity produced by their enactment of the PSfP originates from the dominance of the Principal Accountability System in China, as well as the conceptualization of leadership shaped by Confucianism.

7.3 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

In this dissertation, based on my findings, I identified three assemblages around which the global discourse on leadership standards has been transferred and adapted to the Chinese context, as well as enacted by principals and vice-principals in schools in Beijing: the assemblage of leadership standards, the assemblage of adaptations, the assemblage of enactment.

By the assemblage of leadership standards, I referred to the summing-up of interrelated relations that have contributed to the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards, specifically to China through the development of the PSfP. Within the assemblage, I identified actors including the MoE of the PRC, the East China Normal University, the Shanghai Normal University, and the Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences involved in the production of the PSfP. Connections were traced between the three institutions (two universities and one think tank) and government departments both at national and municipal levels. The development of the PRC, or the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China is a State-directed

process, in which those actors who are connected with government departments were enrolled while others were excluded. It was also noted that professional organizations, who are often engaged in the production of leadership standards in non-Chinese contexts, were marginalized in the development of the PSfP. Professional organizations in China are under the administration of government departments, and the application processes of their establishment and professional activities are complicated. Therefore, there has been a lack of motivation for professional organizations to engage in professional activities, which could explain their exclusion in the development of the PSfP. Moreover, even though not involved in the policy-making process, school leaders also participated in the research projects related to the development of the PSfP to provide their insight on the roles and responsibilities of principals and vice-principals, as well as implications for adapting the global discourse on leadership standards to China.

The policy adaptations found in the PSfP were produced by the assemblage of adaptations. I identified four themes in relation to the ways in which the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to the Chinese contexts, including: 1) an emphasis on the authority of socialism, the Party, and the State; 2) an emphasis on morality; 3) a focus on student overall development; and 4) valuing the roles of cultures and traditions.

First and foremost, the PSfP explicitly identifies school leaders' responsibilities in following the leadership of the Party, ensuring the authority of socialism, and complying with national laws and policies. This policy adaptation arises from the interrelationship between the Party and the State, in which the Party's role is mainly related to political and ideological control, and the State, represented by various government department at the national level such as the MoE of the PRC, formulate national policies and provide overarching guidelines for the

development of sub-level policies. In the assemblage of adaptations, the Party and the State reinforced their authorities in China's administrative bureaucracy.

Second, the theme valuing the roles of cultures and traditions as highlighted in the PSfP corresponds to a cultural shift in China, in which Chinese traditional cultures specifically Confucianism is reinvented and promoted. This reinvention of Confucianism as can be observed in the widespread of Confucius Institutes across the world is a strategy of the Chinese State to strengthen its soft power through culture diplomacy. This particular attention on Confucianism lies in the alignments between Confucian traditions and the discourses promoted by the State, such as building a harmonious society. Moreover, the assumption underpinning China's education policy development is also shaped by Confucianism which emphasizes the relationship between student academic achievement and a country's economic growth.

In this dissertation, I also identified an assemblage of enactment, which was constituted by the interrelationships among actors who were involved in the enactment of the PSfP. School leaders' practices were produced by the assemblage. I theorized the alignments and the tensions between the standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment as the effects of the three assemblages, overlapping and interwoven by the actors that are multi-situated in more than one assemblage.

Two themes emerged from the alignments: morality and building school cultures. As an essential concept in Confucianism, morality as a re-emerging theme in both the adaptations of the global discourse on leadership standards in China, and the enactment of the PSfP, can be construed in two ways: moral education, and moral leadership. In detail, Confucius emphasizes moral cultivation as a critical component of education. Moreover, Confucianism shapes the conceptualization of leadership in Chinese societies. Moral leadership, or the moral aspect of

school leaders pays attention to moral qualities such as demonstrating respect, caring, sense of duty, justice, and being role models. Those qualities were identified both in the PSfP and school leaders' enactment. Built upon Confucian traditions, this conceptualization of leadership was often found adopted in authoritarian power relations. In the case of this study, Chinese schools are hierarchical and the authority is centralized due to the adoption of the PAS, and therefore principals and vice-principals who are in formal leadership roles adopt the ethical codes that were identified by Confucianism in defining an ideal leader.

In terms of building school cultures, school leaders and schools' physical settings were identified as two actors contributing to the enactment of related standards outlined in the PSfP. In enacting those leadership standards, attention was given to schools' landscape design, architectural features, and related school activities. School leaders' practices in building school cultures are not merely directed by their individual intentions, but are collectively produced along with the material actor, which is schools' physical settings. Those physical settings exercised their agency by presenting particular values such as those promoted by *hutong* culture and school traditions, and therefore contributed to the enactment of the standards concerning building school cultures.

Furthermore, two themes emerged from the tensions between the standards outlined in the PSfP and their enactment: student academic performance, and standardizing school leaders' work. In light of student academic performance, significant attention was given to student learning outcomes over student overall development, which is explicitly denied in the PSfP. School leaders' emphasis on academic performance seems to be aligned with the global discourse on leadership standards, but is actually driven by the testing system in China.

A conflict was found in Chinese State's agenda in promoting the country's modernization through education. On the one hand, education reforms were launched by the State to promote a quality-oriented approach of education and emphasize student overall development. On the other hand, the testing system is retained for its historical and cultural roots, as well as the assumption, which underpins China's education policy development, that higher student achievement would benefit the country's modernization. I further construed this conflict by exploring the interrelationship between the State and intergovernmental organizations. Through interrogating intergovernmental organizations' promotion of ILSAs, I argued that being test-oriented, the testing system in China also helps the country gain greater international recognition for Chinese students' high ranking in PISA. International organizations also interpreted the data from Shanghai's participation in TALIS in a way to promote policy ideas such as decentralization and instructional leadership, which are central to the global discourse on educational leadership. It also should be addressed that both officials and scholars in China attribute China's achievement in PISA to the heavy academic burden and the testing system, and propose the need to enforce an education approach promoting student overall development, as is highlighted in the PSfP.

In configuring the second theme emerged from the tensions between the PSfP and its enactment, which is the standardization of school leaders' work, the State, the Party, and school leaders were identified as the actors contributing to the challenges in adopting the PSfP to promote the standardization and professionalization of school leadership work. Following the political movements in Chinese history, the leadership role within schools were shifted between Party Secretaries at school level and school principals. Aiming at promoting the country's economic growth, China launched the opening-up reform in 1985 and in the same year, driven by NPM, the State initiated decentralization in education system to distribute both authorities and

financial responsibilities. The PAS was firmly established and legitimated principals' single leadership role in schools. Nevertheless, the dominance of the PAS is not merely a result of the influences of NPM in China, but also can be attributed to Confucianism, which emphasizes the maintenance of a hierarchically organized system and the respect for authority. Accordingly, Chinese school leaders are more bureaucratic-oriented, and the PAS also poses challenges for introducing any mechanisms, such as the PSfP, to standardize and evaluate school leaders' work.

After manifesting the interconnections and power relations among the types of actors that have configured the three assemblages, the assemblage of leadership standards, the assemblage of adaptations, and the assemblage of enactment, I presented my discussion on the performativity of those assemblages, with specific attention on the production of identities and legitimacy. The assemblage of leadership standards has produced a global discourse on leadership standards, which is driven by NPM, and constituted an identity of school leaders broadly across different contexts. The identity produced by the assemblage identifies school leaders as the sole leaders within schools whose major responsibility is to improve student learning.

The identities of Chinese school leaders are also produced through the assemblage of enactment, and the assemblage of adaptations. The assemblage of enactment has produced an identity of Chinese school leaders, which mirrors the identity of school leaders produced by the assemblage of leadership standards, but is actually shaped by different ideologies, values, and policy agendas promoted by various actors such as the Chinese State and school leaders themselves.

While the identity produced by the assemblage of adaptations has defined Chinese school leaders as those respecting the authority of socialism, the leadership of the Party and the State, and paying attention to moral cultivation, as well as promoting student overall development.

Conflict was identified between the identities produced by the assemblage of enactment and the assemblage of adaptations particularly in relation to the focus of school leaders' work. This conflict emerges from the conflict within the State's agenda in promoting modernization through education, and rests in the interrelationships among heterogenous actors such as the Chinese State, school leaders, and intergovernmental organizations.

In addition, the assemblages identified in this dissertation also produce legitimacy in three ways. First of all, considering the tensions between the PSfP and its enactment, the assemblage of leadership standards legitimizes the State's policy agenda in promoting the standardization and professionalization of school leaders' work through externalizing to the global discourse on leadership standards. Second, the assemblage of adaptations produces legitimacy of the education reforms launched by the State, especially those promote student overall development as found in the PSfP, and the policy adaptations are legitimized by Chinese officials and scholars with reference to Chinese students' achievement in PISA. Lastly, intergovernmental organizations legitimize their policy agenda and promote the transfer of the dominant discourse on leadership standards by arguing that the core dimensions outlined in the PSfP and the adoption of the document in training programs offered to school leaders in Shanghai have contributed to Shanghai's high-ranking in PISA.

To conclude, this dissertation addresses a research area which is important but underexplored to date. There is much research demonstrating that school leaders are essential in improving student learning and promoting education reforms (DeVita et al., 2007; DeVita et al., 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004). As a result, leadership standards outlining the responsibilities, knowledge, and competencies that expected for successful and effective school leaders have been developed around the world. These standards are recognized as indispensable for leadership

preparation, evaluation, and professional development (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Murphy, 2017). Even though a large many studies (CEPPE & OECD, 2013; Ingvarson et al., 2006; Magno, 2013; Pont et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2013) have been conducted and highlighted significant similarities among leadership standards across various context, little is known about how the global discourse on leadership standards has been adapted to and enacted in non-Western contexts such as China. This dissertation contributes to the fields of educational leadership as well as comparative and international education by filling these gaps in the research literature.

This study also provides significant implications for both policy makers and educational practitioners. In many cases, educational policies and models are transferred by policymakers after a quick visit to a foreign country, under the assumption that the effectiveness observed in the original context could be replicated in their own context. This study helps to show not only the limitations of policy transfer, but how local policies such as the PSfP might “seem” at first glance to be exact replicas of other leadership standards frameworks (outside of China), but are actually reflective of more specific Chinese cultures, traditions, histories, and philosophies.

7.4 Areas for Future Research

As I have noted that in exploring the questions regarding the transfer of the global discourse on leadership standards to China, as well as the adaptations of the discourse in the Chinese context, I only adopted one research method, which is document analysis, due to the difficulties in accessing policy makers and related researchers. Considering this methodological limitation, future researchers are encouraged to collect empirical data from those who were involved in the policy-making process of the PSfP to expand the scope of this study.

In addition, empirical data used in this dissertation was collected from two districts within Beijing. Further investigation on similar topics could cover more regions in China as

variations have been noticed between Beijing and Shanghai in terms of the adoption of the PSfP in leadership professional training programs.

Moreover, in this study, I identified connections between intergovernmental organizations and researchers based in Chinese universities. For example, a report was published by the World Bank (Liang et al., 2016), and among its three authors, two of the them (Drs. Liang Xiaoyan and Huma Kidwai) are from the World Bank and the other author, Dr. Zhang Minxuan, is a professor from Shanghai Normal University who was involved in the development of the PSfP as I mentioned previously in my findings. Future research is encouraged to explore the roles of those individuals in driving the transnational flows of policy ideas, as well as the power relations among them.

7.5 Concluding this Dissertation

This dissertation tells a story of school leaders, in which their practices are directed by the flows of power relations. For all the principals and vice-principals who have been constantly thinking about where their schools are, and where they are leading their schools, their individual intentions are mediated in the sociomaterial relationships that carry particular ideologies, values, and traditions. By offering an understanding of what it means to be a principal in China's schools today, and how the work of principals has been influenced by both local context and contexts beyond China, this study contributes to a better understanding of the ways in which a "principal is the soul of a school", as the quotation at the start of this dissertation implies.

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Appendix 1: Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals (Mandarin)

义务教育学校校长专业标准

为促进义务教育学校校长专业发展，建设高素质义务教育学校校长队伍，深入推进义务教育均衡发展，根据教育法和义务教育法，特制定本标准。

校长是履行学校领导与管理工作职责的专业人员。本标准是对义务教育学校合格校长专业素质的基本要求，是制定义务教育学校校长任职资格标准、培训课程标准、考核评价标准的重要依据。

一、基本理念

(一) 以德为先。

坚持社会主义办学方向，贯彻党和国家的教育方针政策，将社会主义核心价值观体系融入学校教育全过程，依法履行法律赋予的权利和义务；热爱教育事业和学校管理工作，具有服务国家、服务人民的社会责任感和使命感；履行职业道德规范，立德树人，为人师表，公正廉洁，关爱师生，尊重师生人格。

(二) 育人为本。

坚持育人为本的办学宗旨，把促进每个学生健康成长作为学校一切工作的出发点和落脚点，扶持困难群体，推动平等接受教育；遵循教育规律，注重教育内涵发展，始终把全面提高义务教育质量放在重要位置，使每个学生都能接受有质量的义务教育；树立正确的人才观和科学的质量观，全面实施素质教育，为每个学生提供适合的教育，促进学生生动活泼地发展。

(三) 引领发展。

校长作为学校改革发展的带头人，担负着引领学校和教师发展，促进学生全面发展与个性发展的重任；将发展作为学校工作的第一要务，秉承先进教育理念和理念，建立健全学校各项规章制度，完善学校目标管理和绩效管理机制，实施科学管理、民主管理，推动学校可持续发展。

(四) 能力为重。

将教育管理理论与学校管理实践相结合，突出学校管理的实践能力和创新能力；不断提高与完善规划学校发展、营造育人文化、领导课程教学、引领教师成长、优化内部管理和调适外部环境等方面的能力；坚持实践、反思、再实践、再反思，强化专业能力提升。

(五) 终身学习。

牢固树立终身学习的观念，将学习作为改进工作的不竭动力；优化知识结构，提高自身科学文化素养；与时俱进，及时把握国内外教育改革与发展的趋势；注重学习型组织建设，使学校成为师生共同学习的家园。

二、基本内容

专业 职责	专业要求
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一 规划学校发展	专业理解与认识	<p>1. 明确学校办学定位, 履行实施义务教育的工作使命, 保障适龄儿童、少年平等接受有质量的义务教育, 着力保障农民工子女、残疾儿童少年、家庭经济困难学生的受教育权利。</p> <p>2. 注重学校发展的战略规划, 凝聚师生智慧, 建立学校发展共同目标, 形成学校发展合力。</p> <p>3. 尊重学校传统和学校实际, 提炼学校办学理念, 办出学校特色。</p>
	专业知识与方法	<p>4. 熟悉国家的法律法规、教育方针政策和学校管理的规章制度。</p> <p>5. 把握国内外学校改革和发展的基本趋势, 学习借鉴优秀校长办学的成功经验。</p> <p>6. 掌握学校发展规划制定、实施与测评的理论、方法与技术。</p>
	专业能力与行为	<p>7. 诊断学校发展现状, 及时发现和研究分析学校发展面临的主要问题。</p> <p>8. 组织社区、家长、教师、学生多方参与制订学校发展规划, 确立学校中长期发展目标。</p> <p>9. 落实学校发展规划, 制订学年、学期工作计划, 指导教职工制定具体行动方案, 并提供人、财、物等条件支持。</p> <p>10. 监测学校发展规划的实施, 根据实施情况修正学校发展规划, 调整工作计划, 完善行动方案。</p>
专业职责	专业要求	
二 营造育人文化	专业理解与认识	<p>11. 把德育工作摆在素质教育的首要位置, 全面加强学校德育体系建设。</p> <p>12. 将学校文化建设作为学校德育工作的重要方面, 重视学校文化潜移默化的教育功能, 把文化育人作为办学治校的重要内容与途径。</p> <p>13. 热爱祖国优秀传统文化, 充分发挥优秀传统文化的时代意义与教育价值, 重视地域文化的重要作用。</p>
	专业知识与方法	<p>14. 广泛涉猎自然科学与人文社会科学知识, 具有良好的艺术修养和相应的艺术欣赏与表现的知识。</p> <p>15. 了解校园文化建设的基本理论, 掌握促进优秀文化融入学校教育的方法和途径。</p> <p>16. 掌握不同年龄阶段学生思想品德形成和健康心理发展的特点与规律, 了解学生思想与品行养成过程及其教育方法。</p>

	专业能力与行为	<p>17. 绿化、美化校园环境，精心营造人文氛围，建设优良的校风、教风、学风，设计体现学校特点和教育理念的校训、校歌、校徽、校标。</p> <p>18. 精心设计和组织艺术节、科技节等校园文化活动，充分利用好重大节庆日、传统节日等有特殊意义的日子以及学校组织特有的仪式，开展主题教育活动。</p> <p>19. 建设绿色健康的校园信息网络，向师生推荐优秀的精神文化作品和先进模范人物，努力防范不良的流行文化、网络文化和学校周边环境对学生的负面影响。</p> <p>20. 凝聚学校文化建设力量，发挥教师、学生及社团的主体作用，为共青团、少先队、学生社团、班集体活动开展提供必要条件，保证活动时间。</p>
专业职责	专业要求	
三 领导 课程 教学	专业理解与认识	<p>21. 坚持面向全体学生，因材施教，全面提高教育教学质量。</p> <p>22. 尊重教育教学规律，注重培养学生的责任意识、创新精神和实践能力。</p> <p>23. 尊重教师的教学经验和智慧，积极推进教学改革与创新。</p>
	专业知识与方法	<p>24. 掌握学生不同发展阶段的培养目标和课程标准。</p> <p>25. 了解课程编制、课程开发与实施、课程评价的相关知识和教材、教辅使用的政策以及国内外课程教学改革的经验。</p> <p>26. 掌握课堂教学以及教育信息技术应用的一般原理与方法。</p>
	专业能力与行为	<p>27. 有效统筹国家、地方、学校三级课程，确保国家课程、地方课程的落实，推动校本课程的开发与实施，为学生提供丰富多样的课程教学资源。</p> <p>28. 认真落实义务教育课程标准，切实减轻学生过重课业负担，不得随意提高课程难度，不得挤占体育、音乐、美术及少先队活动等课程的课时，确保学生每天一小时校园体育活动。</p> <p>29. 建立听课与评课制度，深入课堂听课并对课堂教学进行指导，每学期听课不少于地方教育行政部门规定的课时数量。</p> <p>30. 积极组织开展教研活动和教学改革，建立完善促进学生全面发展的教育教学评价制度，不片面追求学生考试成绩和升学率。</p>
专业职责	专业要求	
四 引领 教	专业理解与认识	<p>31. 教师是学校改革发展最宝贵的人力资源，尊重、信任、团结和赏识每一位教师。</p> <p>32. 校长是教师专业发展的第一责任人，将学校作为教师实现专业发展的主阵地。</p> <p>33. 尊重教师专业发展的规律，激发教师发展的内在动力。</p>

师 成 长	专业知 识与方 法	34. 把握教师职业素养要求，明确教师的权利与义务。 35. 掌握教师专业发展的理论以及指导教师开展教育教学实践与研究的方法。 36. 掌握学习型组织建设的方法以及激励教师主动发展的策略。
	专业能 力与行 为	37. 建立健全教师专业发展的制度，推行校本教研，完善教研训一体的机制，落实每位教师五年一周期不少于 360 学时的培训要求。 38. 关注每一位教师的发展，指导教师根据自身发展特点制定专业发展计划，加强青年教师培养，支持教师轮岗交流，推进信息技术在教师专业发展中的应用。 39. 扎实开展师德师风教育，落实教师职业道德规范要求，严禁教师体罚或变相体罚学生，严禁教师从事有偿补课。 40. 维护和保障教师合法权益和待遇，关爱教师身心健康，建立优教优酬的激励制度。
专业 职责	专业要求	
五 优 化 内 部 管 理	专业理 解与认 识	41. 坚持依法治校，自觉接受师生员工和社会的监督。 42. 崇尚以德立校，处事公正、严格律己、廉洁奉献。 43. 倡导民主管理和科学管理，坚持教书育人、管理育人、服务育人。
	专业知 识与方 法	44. 把握国家相关政策对校长的职责定位和工作要求。 45. 掌握学校管理的基本理论与方法，了解国内外学校管理的变化趋势。 46. 熟悉学校人事财务、资产后勤、校园网络、安全保卫与卫生健康等管理实务。
	专业能 力与行 为	47. 形成学校领导班子的凝聚力，认真听取党组织对学校重大决策的意见，充分发挥党组织的政治核心作用。 48. 尊重和支持教职工代表大会参与学校管理的民主权利，定期向教职工代表大会报告工作，实行校务会议等管理制度。 49. 建立健全学校人事、财务、资产管理等规章制度，提高学校管理规范化水平，不得违反国家规定收取费用，不得以向学生推销或者变相推销商品、服务等方式谋取利益。 50. 努力打造平安校园，建立和完善学校各种应急管理机制，定期实施安全演练，正确应对和妥善处置学校突发事件。
专业 职责	专业要求	
六 调 适	专业理 解与认 识	51. 坚持把服务社会（社区）作为学校的重要功能，勇于承担社会责任。 52. 坚持把合作共赢作为学校对外关系准则，积极开展校内外合作与交流。

外部 环境		53. 坚信学校与家庭、社会（社区）的良性互动是办学水平的重要体现。
	专业知识与方法	54. 掌握学校公共关系及家校合作的理论与方法。 55. 了解所在社区、学生家庭的基本情况，积极获取与学生成长、学校发展相关的信息。 56. 熟悉各级各类社会公共服务机构的教育功能。
	专业能力与行为	57. 优化外部育人环境，努力争取社会（社区）的教育资源对学校教育的支持。 58. 充分发挥家长委员会支持学校工作的积极作用，引导社区和有关专业人士参与学校管理和监督，接受改进学校工作的合理建议。 59. 建立健全家校合作育人机制，建立教师家访制度，通过家长学校、家长会、家长开放日等形式，指导和帮助家长了解学校工作情况和学生身心发展特点，掌握科学育人方法。 60. 积极发挥学校在社区建设中的作用，鼓励并组织学校师生参与服务社会（社区）的有益活动。

三、实施要求

（一）本标准适用于国家和社会力量举办的全日制义务教育学校的正、副校长。幼儿园园长、普通高中、中等职业学校校长专业标准另行制定。鉴于全国不同地区的差异，各省、自治区、直辖市教育行政部门可以依据本标准制定符合本地区实情的实施意见。本标准可在执行的过程中逐步完善。

（二）各级教育行政部门要将本标准作为义务教育学校校长队伍建设和校长管理的重要依据。根据教育发展的需要，充分发挥本标准引领和导向作用，制定义务教育学校校长队伍建设规划，严格义务教育学校校长任职资格标准，完善义务教育学校校长选拔任用制度，推行校长职级制，建立义务教育学校校长培养培训质量保障体系，形成科学有效的义务教育学校校长队伍建设与管理机制，为实现义务教育均衡发展提供制度保障。

（三）有关高等学校和校长培养培训机构要将本标准作为义务教育学校校长培养培训的主要依据。重视义务教育学校校长职业特点，加强相关学科和专业建设。根据义务教育学校校长发展阶段的不同需求，完善培养培训方案，科学设置校长培养培训课程，改革教育教学方式。注重校长职业理想与职业道德教育，增强校长教书育人、管理育人的责任感和使命感。加强校长培养培训的师资队伍建设，开展校长专业成长的科学研究，促进校长专业发展。

（四）义务教育学校校长要将本标准作为自身专业发展的基本准则。制定自我专业发展规划，爱岗敬业，增强专业发展自觉性；大胆开展学校管理实践，不断创新；积极进行自我评价，主动参加校长培训和自主研修，不断提升专业发展水平，努力成为教育教学和学校管理专家。

Appendix 2: Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals (English)

Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China, 2013

The standards outlined in this document were developed based on the National Education Act and the Compulsory Education Act to promote the professionalization of school leaders, build high-quality leadership teams, and further promote a balanced development of compulsory education.

School leaders are professionals whose responsibilities involve leading and managing in schools. The document outlines the fundamental competencies that are required for qualified school leaders, and also provides important guidelines for developing standards that can be adopted in the assessment and evaluation of both practicing and aspiring school leaders, as well as professional learning programs.

Basic Concepts

Morality as the First Priority

- Persevere in the socialist orientation in education provision; ensure a policy-oriented approach to education practices; advocate for the infusion of socialist values in schooling; exercise the rights and obligations issued by law
- Passionate about education and the work of school management; have a strong sense of responsibility and vocation of serving the country and its people
- Demonstrate strong work ethics; foster integrity and promote rounded development of people; be a model of virtue for others; act with honesty and probity; show caring and respect to teachers, staff, and students

Student overall development as the Foundation

- Insist on student overall development as the purpose of education; ensure the promotion of every student's healthy growth is school mission and the purpose of schooling; provide support for marginalized groups, and promote education equity
- Establish the correct view of talent and a scientific view about the quality of education; promote quality education; provide student-centered education and encourage student development with flexibility and rich variety

Leading Development as the Major Responsibility

- As the leader of school reform and development, the principal is responsible for leading the school and teacher development; promote students' overall development and development with their own characteristics
- Prioritize school development based on well-established research and ideologies related to education and management; develop all aspects of the school system through improving management by objectives and accountability; achieve scientific and democratic management and promote the sustainable development of the school

Building Competencies as the Focus

- Integrate knowledge of school management from research and practices, and emphasize feasibility and innovation in management
- Constantly enhance competencies in school planning and development, student cultivation, leading instruction and teacher development, as well as those required in the internal management and the adaptation and adjustment of the external environment
- Keep practicing and reflecting to improve professional competencies and skills

Life-long Learning

- Establish a belief in life-long learning, and improve practices through continuously learning
- Improve knowledge construction, and competencies in science, cultures, and humanities
- Keep pace with the times, and be familiar with up-to-date education reforms and developmental trends both within and outside of China
- Focus on the construction of a learning-centred organization, and develop school into a learning environment for teachers and students

Content

Professional Responsibilities	Professional Requirements	
1. Planning for school development	Understandings	<p>1. Have a clear vision for school goals; ensure all children and youth of compulsory school age receive quality education; pay particular attention to the rights to education of migrant children, students with disabilities, and students from lower income families</p> <p>2. Pay attention to the school’s strategic planning; collaborate with teachers, administrative staff, and students to create shared visions of school development</p> <p>3. Respect school traditions and school contexts; develop an educational philosophy with school characteristics</p>
	Knowledge and Methods	<p>4. Be familiar with national laws, policies, and regulations related school management</p> <p>5. Be familiar with the trends of school reforms and development both within and outside China; learn from the experiences of successful school leaders</p> <p>6. Be equipped with the theories, methods, and technologies for school planning, development, implementation, and evaluation</p>
	Competencies and Practices	<p>7. Analyze the current situation of school development, and diagnose the main problems faced by school development in a timely manner</p> <p>8. Get communities, parents, teachers, and students involved in school planning and development; set long-term goals for school development</p> <p>9. Ensure the implementation of school planning and development; develop work plans on a school semester and school year basis; supervise teachers and staff in developing action plans, and provide support for personnel, finance, and materials</p> <p>10. Conduct inspections on the implementation of school planning and development; adjust and improve action plans based on the situation and context of implementation</p>

2. Building a culture of promoting student overall development	Understandings	<p>11. Prioritize moral education in quality education, and strengthen the systematic development of moral education</p> <p>12. Take the construction of school cultures as an important aspect of moral education; emphasize the subtle influences of school cultures on education; take cultural education as the essential aspects in leading schools</p> <p>13. Love the traditional splendid cultures of the motherland; ensure traditional cultures play important roles in education; pay attention to the important roles of regional cultures</p>
	Knowledge and Methods	<p>14. Acquire rich knowledge in natural science, social science, and humanities, and engage in the self-cultivation in art</p> <p>15. Be familiar with the basic theories in school culture construction; be familiar and equipped with the methods of integrating cultures into school and education</p> <p>16. Be equipped with the knowledge concerning the characteristics of student moral and psychological development at different ages, and be familiar with related pedagogies accordingly</p>
	Competencies and Practices	<p>17. Pay attention to the landscape design within schools, and cultivate a humanistic atmosphere; create a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning; design school mottos, school songs, and school badges that reflect school characteristics</p> <p>18. Plan for and organize school events such as art and science festivals to celebrate school cultures; organize school activities with educational purposes on or around the dates of traditional festivals and holidays</p> <p>19. Build a healthy information network within the school to share the works of, or stories about role models that have positive influences on student development; prevent the negative influences of unhealthy popular culture, cyber culture, and school surroundings on students</p> <p>20. Collaborate with teachers, students and student clubs in building school cultures; ensure sufficient time for and support the activities of Communist Youth League, Young Pioneers, and student clubs.</p>

3. Leading curriculum and instruction	Understandings	<p>21. Pay attention to all students, and adopt a student-centred approach in teaching; improve the overall quality of teaching and education</p> <p>22. Respect the rules in teaching and education, and pay attention to develop students' sense of responsibility, and capacities in innovation and practice</p> <p>23. Value teachers' teaching experiences, and support reforms and innovation in teaching</p>
	Knowledge and Methods	<p>24. Be familiar with the developmental goals and curriculum standards for students at different developmental stages</p> <p>25. Be familiar with the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of curricula and pedagogies; be familiar with related policies as well as curriculum reforms both within and outside China</p> <p>26. Be familiar with the theories and approaches in pedagogies and the use of technology in education</p>
	Competencies and Practices	<p>27. Efficiently align the curricula at national, regional and school levels; ensure the implementation of national and regional curricula, and promote the development of curriculum at school level; provide various curricula and learning resources for students</p> <p>28. Implement the curriculum standards for compulsory education; effectively reduce students' overloaded academic burden; increasing the difficulty of curriculum is not allowed; no gym, music, and art classes or any school activities such as Young Pioneers activities is allowed to be replaced by academic classes; ensure students spend one hour in physical activities at school every day</p> <p>29. Establish a system for classroom observation and evaluation; conduct classroom observations and supervise teaching; meet the requirements about classroom observations required by the education administration offices at local levels</p> <p>30. Proactively organize and promote activities and reforms in teaching and research; establish and optimize a comprehensive evaluation system for teaching and learning which promotes student overall development; the improvement of student academic performance and the enrollment rates in schools with high rankings should not be the only pursuit of education and schooling</p>

<p>4. Leading Teacher Growth</p>	<p>Understandings</p>	<p>31. Recognize that teaching staff is the most valuable human resource in school reforms and development; respect, trust, unite, and recognize the strengths of every teacher 32. School leaders are responsible for teachers' professional development, and professional development needs to be promoted predominantly within schools. 33. Respect the rules for teacher professional development, and promote teacher motivation</p>
	<p>Knowledge and Methods</p>	<p>34. Be familiar with the requirements for teacher professional development, and be clear about teachers' rights and responsibilities 35. Be familiar with the theories related to teacher professional development and the methods in leading curriculum, instruction, and research 36. Be familiar with the practices in building a learning-centred organization and the strategies in promoting teacher advocacy</p>
	<p>Competencies and Practices</p>	<p>37. Establish a comprehensive system of teacher development; promote school-based research, and research-based teaching; ensure every teacher participating in at least 350 hours of professional development within every five years 38. Pay attention to the development of every teacher; supervise teachers plan for their professional development based on their own situations; promote the development of young teachers; encourage interdisciplinary communications; support the use of technology in teacher professional development 39. Promote teacher moral education, ensure teachers demonstrate strong work ethics; strictly forbid corporal punishment or any disguised form of corporal punishment, and teachers participating in paid tutoring 40. Protect and ensure teachers and administrative staff's legal rights and benefits; care about their physical and psychological health; establish a performance-based reward system</p>

5. Improving Internal Management	Understandings	<p>41. Insist on running schools by laws, and accept the supervision from teachers, students, and administrative staff</p> <p>42. Value morality, justice, self-discipline, integrity, and dedication in school management</p> <p>43. Promote democratic and scientific management; insist on promoting student overall development through teaching, managing, and servicing</p>
	Knowledge and Methods	<p>44. Be familiar with the requirements that are identified by national policies in relation to school leaders' responsibilities</p> <p>45. Be familiar with the foundational theories in, and approaches to school management; be familiar with the changes and trends in school management both within and outside China</p> <p>46. Be familiar with the practices that are involved in the management of personnel, budget, infrastructure, school network, safety and security, as well as sanitation</p>
	Skills and Practices	<p>47. Build a cohesive school leadership team; conscientiously take the Party's suggestions into consideration concerning major decisions in schools; ensure the Party fully plays its political core role</p> <p>48. Respect and support the democratic right of teachers and staff council's participation in school management, and report to teachers and staff council regularly; adopt strategies such as school meetings in school management</p> <p>49. Establish and update the regulations related to personnel, budget, and assets at school level; improve the level of standardization in school management; comply with national policies and regulations on school fees; Profiteering in any means of selling or promoting merchandise or service is prohibited.</p> <p>50. Ensure school safety; build and improve the emergency mechanism in schools; ensure the practice of the emergency procedures; take proper actions when emergency happens</p>

6. Coordinating with external environment	Understandings	<p>51. Serving the society and the community is an important function of schools; take social responsibilities</p> <p>52. Focus on the mutual benefits when coordinating with external relations; promote collaborations and communications between schools and external relations</p> <p>53. Positive interactions among schools, families, and society are the key indicators of the effectiveness of running schools.</p>
	Knowledge and Methods	<p>54. Be familiar with the theories in and approaches to building public relations; promote school-family collaboration</p> <p>55. Be familiar with the surrounding communities and families' basic information; actively seek information that contributes to student growth and school development</p> <p>56. Be familiar with the functions of various social services organizations</p>
	Competencies and Practices	<p>57. Improve the school's external environment, and seek resources from the society and communities to support education</p> <p>58. Ensure the positive roles of the Parent Involvement Committee; invite the communities and professionals in related areas to participate in the management and supervision of the school, and take into consideration of their recommendations in improving the school</p> <p>59. Establish and improve the system of school-family collaboration to promote student overall development; develop school initiatives about home visits; guide and help parents be familiar with the work within the school, and the characteristics of students' physical and psychological development through approaches such as teacher-parent meetings and open days</p> <p>60. Actively participate in the development of the communities, and encourage teachers and students to participate in the activities such community services and social services that are beneficial to student overall development</p>

Guidelines for Implementation

1. This document applies to the principals and vice-principals in full-time compulsory schools supported by the country and social organizations. Standards for principals and vice-principals in kindergartens, vocational schools, and senior high schools need to be developed separately. Due to the disparities among different regions within the country, departments of education at provincial, municipal, and autonomous region-levels can add further instructions based on local contexts. This document can be developed and improved during the process of implementation.

2. Departments of education at all levels should adopt this document as the key reference in the development and management of school leaders in compulsory schools. To meet the needs in education reforms and development, this document should be used to guide leadership professional development, the design of qualification programs, and the identification of the criteria for school leaders' evaluation. The document should be used to ensure the quality of leadership professional training programs, and to establish an effective evaluation and management system for school leaders in compulsory schools.

3. Universities and professional training organizations should adopt this document as the primary resource in the leadership preparation and training programs. Attention needs to be given to the characteristics of school leaders' professionalization. Training programs need to be improved according to the different needs of leadership development at different stages, with the purpose of promoting reforms related to the approaches in teaching and learning. Related training programs also need to connect professionalization with moral education, and develop school leaders' sense of responsibility particularly in relation to student overall development and teachers' growth.

4. School leaders in compulsory schools need to: adopt this document as the fundamental standard to guide and plan for their own professional development; dedicate to their work as school leaders; consciously promote their own professionalization; advocate for innovation in school management and implement related reforms into practice; actively engage in self-evaluation, and leadership training and development; improve the level of professionalization; dedicate to become professionals of education and school management.

Appendix 3: Western University Ethics Approval



Research Ethics

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

Principal Investigator: Dr. Marianne Lense
Department & Institution: Education/Faculty of Education, Western University

NMREB File Number: 108132
Study Title: Educational Transfer: A Vertical Case Study of Professional Standards for Principals in China

NMREB Initial Approval Date: August 02, 2016
NMREB Expiry Date: August 02, 2017

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Western University Protocol	Received July 26, 2016	
Recruitment Items	ENGLISH Recruitment Letter for policy makers	2016/07/22
Recruitment Items	ENGLISH Recruitment Letter for principals	2016/07/22
Recruitment Items	ENGLISH Recruitment Letter for vice principals	2016/07/22
Letter of Information & Consent	ENGLISH Letter of Information and Consent for policy maker	2016/07/22
Letter of Information & Consent	ENGLISH Letter of Information and Consent for (vice)principals	2016/07/22
Instruments	ENGLISH Interview Questions for Policy Makers	2016/07/22
Instruments	ENGLISH Interview Questions for (Vice)Principals	2016/07/22
Instruments	Research Instruments and Observation Checklist	2016/07/22
Recruitment Items	MANDARIN Recruitment Letter for vice-principals - Received for Information	2016/07/22
Recruitment Items	MANDARIN Recruitment Letter for principals - Received for Information	2016/07/22
Recruitment Items	MANDARIN Recruitment Letter for policy makers - Received for Information	2016/07/22
Letter of Information & Consent	MANDARIN Letter of Information and Consent for (vice)principals - Received for Information	2016/07/22
Letter of Information & Consent	MANDARIN Letter of Information and Consent for policy makers - Received for Information	2016/07/22
Instruments	MANDARIN Interview Questions for Policy Makers - Received for Information	2016/07/22
Instruments	MANDARIN Interview Questions for (Vice)Principals - Received for Information	2016/07/22

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 00000841.

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

Ethics Officer: Erika Basile Naoko Kamiki Grace Kelly Katalin Erans ✓ Yiskai Tian Karen Cepow

Western University, Research, Support Services Bldg., Rm. 5L50
London, ON, Canada N6G 1G9

Appendix 4: Recruitment Letter for Principals in Mandarin

研究项目邀请

我们真诚的邀请您的学校参与一项关于《义务学校校长专业标准》的制定与实施的研究项目。此项研究将包含一次 60 分钟以内的个人访谈，或者总共 5 天，每天 4 至 5 小时的观察，您也可以同时参与访谈与观察。访谈将以个人形式进行，观察将在学生上学时间内进行。参与此项调研项目纯属自愿，并不会对您的工作产生任何影响。

身为学校领导，您受邀参与此项研究项目。我们对于您在实践《义务学校校长专业标准》过程中的心得与体会很感兴趣。

如果您同意此项调研活动在您的学校进行，请把随此邮寄附上的邀请信与项目具体信息和同意书转发给您的副校长们。如果您本人也对参与此项调研有兴趣，请仔细阅读随信附上的项目具体信息与同意书。

如果您想了解更多关于此项研究的详细信息，请依照以下方式联系我们。

非常感谢。

Marianne Larsen, 博士, 博士生导师, 教授
教育政策、公平、领导力
教育学院, 西安大略大学

魏薇, 博士生
教育政策、公平、领导力
教育学院, 西安大略大学

Appendix 5: Recruitment Letter for Principals in English

Recruitment Letter

Subject Line: Invitation to participate in research

You are receiving this letter because I am asking for your permission to conduct a research in your school. The project is entitled: Educational Transfer: A Vertical Case Study of Professional Standards for Principals in China. Briefly, the study examines the formation and implementation of the Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals (Ministry of Education China, 2013). It involves participating in a personal interview that will not take more than 60 minutes of your time, or being observed for four to five hours each day for five school days, or both being interviewed and observed. The interview will be conducted in private, and observation will be conducted during school hours.

I am contacting you also because you are an educational leader and I am interested in your insights about the implementation of standards-based leadership policy in China.

If you would like to give the permission for me to conduct my study in your school, please forward the document Recruitment Letter for Vice-Principals along with the Letter of Information and Consent to your vice-principals. Please read the Letter of Information and Consent if you are interested in participating.

I have attached the Letter of Information and Consent to this email. If you would like more information about this study please contact me at the contact information given below.

Thank you,

Marianne Larsen, PhD
Professor
Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies
Faculty of Education
Western University
[REDACTED]

Wei Wei
PhD Candidate
Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies
Faculty of Education
Western University
[REDACTED]

Appendix 6: Recruitment Letter for Vice-Principals in Mandarin

研究项目邀请

我们真诚的邀请您参与一项关于《义务学校校长专业标准》的制定与实施的研究项目。身为学校领导，您受邀参与此项研究项目。我们对于您在实践《义务学校校长专业标准》过程中的心得与体会很感兴趣。此项研究将包含一次 60 分钟以内的个人访谈，或者总共 5 天，每天 4 至 5 小时的观察，您也可以同时参与访谈与观察。访谈将以个人形式进行，观察将在学生上学时间内进行。参与此项调研项目纯属自愿，并不会对您的工作产生任何影响。

关于此项研究项目的具体信息，已随邮件附上。如果您想了解更多关于此项研究的详细信息，请依照以下方式联系我们。

非常感谢。

Marianne Larsen, 博士，博士生导师，教授
教育政策、公平、领导力
教育学院，西安大略大学
[REDACTED]

魏薇，博士生
教育政策、公平、领导力
教育学院，西安大略大学
[REDACTED]

Appendix 7: Recruitment Letter for Vice-Principals in English

Recruitment Letter

Subject Line: Invitation to participate in research

You are being invited to participate in a study that I am conducting. The project is entitled: *Educational Transfer: A Vertical Case Study of Professional Standards for Principals in China*. Briefly, the study examines the formation and implementation of the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* (Ministry of Education China, 2013). I am contacting you because you are an educational leader in your school and I am interested in your insights about the implementation of standards-based leadership policy in China. It involves participating in a personal interview that will not take more than 60 minutes of your time, or being observed for four to five hours each day for five school days, or both being interviewed and observed. The interview will be conducted in private, and observation will be conducted during school hours. Participation in this research is optional, and will in no way affect your career.

I have attached a letter of information to this email. If you would like more information about this study please contact me at the contact information given below.

Thank you,

Marianne Larsen, PhD
Professor
Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies
Faculty of Education
Western University
[REDACTED]

Wei Wei
PhD Candidate
Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies
Faculty of Education
Western University
[REDACTED]

Appendix 8: Letter of Information and Consent Form in Mandarin



项目标题

教育政策转移：中国义务教育学校校长专业标准的个案研究

文件标题

研究项目信息与同意书---校长与副校长

主研究人与联系方式

Marianne Larsen, 博士, 博士生导师, 教授
西安大略大学, 教育学院
电子邮件 [REDACTED]
电话 [REDACTED]

其他研究人员与联系方式

魏薇, 博士生
西安大略大学, 教育学院
电子邮件 [REDACTED]

1. 邀请

这项研究项目在于了解《义务教育学校校长专业标准》的制定与实施。作为学校领导, 您受邀参加此项目。我们希望了解您在日常工作中是如何具体实施这些专业标准的。

2. 研究目的

2.1. 在国际范围内, 很多国家都制定了衡量校长日常工作的专业标准。目前的相关研究主要集中在西方国家, 中国校长专业标准的实施还很少有人提及。

2.2. 此项研究的目的是了解《义务教育学校校长专业标准》的制定过程与具体实施。您受邀参与此项研究的原因是之一是您身为学校领导，并且对这一领域有深刻的体会。

3. 参与此研究项目您讲花费的时间

- (1) 您将参与一次不多余 60 分钟的访谈
- (2) 或， 研究人员将跟随观察您 5 个工作日， 每个工作日观察将进行 4 至 5 小时
- (3) 或， 您将参与访谈并且参与被观察

4. 研究流程

如果您同意参加此项研究项目， 您将：

4.1 参与访谈， 访谈内容与您如何实施《义务教育学校校长专业标准》相关

4.1.1 访谈将以中文普通话进行。您可以选择访谈是否被录音。关于录音，请在此同意书最后进行选择。如果您选择不愿被录音，仍然可以继续参与此项研究。

4.1.2 访谈将在您的学校以个人形式进行。

4.2 或， 研究人员将跟随观察您 5 个工作日， 每个工作日观察将进行 4 至 5 小时。观察的重点是您如何在实际工作中具体实施《义务教育学校校长专业标准》的。观察的侧重点将主要包括六方面：学校规划，德育工作，学生学习与课程研究，教师发展与成长，学校管理，以及社会关系管理。研究人员将以手写笔记的方式进行记录您的日常工作。考虑到此项研究的目的是了解学校领导在实际工作中如何运用校长专业标准的，研究中的观察将仅集中于学校领导的日常工作。其他任何人事工作将不会被我们记录。

4.3 或， 您将参与访谈并且参与被观察

4.4 此项研究项目的参与纯属自愿。如感到任何不适，您随时有权利中止或停止参与。

5. 参与此项研究的危险

参与此项研究并没有潜在与可预测的危险。如果研究期间您感到任何不适，访谈和观察都可以随时停止。

6. 此项研究的益处

您将有机会回顾您在实践《义务教育学校校长专业标准》过程中的具体工作。这项研究项目将具体的记录学校领导如何将校长专业标准运用到具体实际工作中，并为以后的政策制定提供参考与依据。

7. 您是否有权力选择中途退出此项目？

您有权在任何时间选择退出或中止参与此项研究。

如果您选择退出此项研究，我们之前收集的关于您的数据及资料仍将运用到此项研究项目之中。在未获得您的允许之前，我们将不会再收集任何关于您的数据与资料。您有权力要求我们销毁此前我们已经采集到的关于您的数据与资料。如果您希望我们销毁与您相关的任何信息，请与我们联系。

8. 我们将如何保障您的信息不被泄漏？

8.1. 除本研究项目小组人员之外，将没有任何人或组织能获取关于您的任何信息与资料。

西安大略大学的非医药研究伦理审批委员会有可能会要求我们提供研究相关信息，用以监督此研究项目的进行。

8.2 您的姓名以及电子邮箱地址将被用于初步联系以及安排访谈与观察。为了保障您的信息安全，在之后的研究过程中，您的姓名以及任何身份验证信息都将被化名代替。

8.3 我们将对此研究项目中收集的一切数据以及信息采取严格的保密措施，如非依照法律要求需要上报，我们将不会将任何信息泄露给研究项目组意外的任何人与组织。我们将尽一切努力来保障您的个人信息安全。如果在研究过程中我们收集到的数据依照法律需要上报，我们将有权力与义务向相关部门报告。

8.4 此项研究不包含任何有计划的个人信息泄露。

8.5 我们将会把与您有关的信息安全地保存五年以上。我们将会把您的个人信息，与标有编号的与您相关的研究数据，分开保存在安全的地点。

8.6 您的姓名将不会出现在任何与此项研究相关的报告，出版物，以及演讲之中。相关数据信息将会被加密，保存在研究员的笔记本电脑中，电脑和信息资料所在的文件夹都将被加密。只有研究员可以接触到她的笔记本电脑。所有数据将会在保存期限之后通过市场标准的碎纸机以及专业的数据删除软件销毁。

9 您是否会得到补偿？

参与此项研究，您将不会收到任何补偿。

10 您的权利

参与此项研究纯属自愿。您有权选择不参与此项研究。即使您签署了此同意书，您仍有权力在任何时间退出研究，或拒绝回答任何问题。如果您选择中途退出研究项目，您将不会受到任何损失与影响。我们将随时向您更新有可能会影响您决定的任何信息。签署此同意书，您的合法权利不会受到任何影响。

11 如有任何问题，请联系

主研究员：

Marianne Larsen, 博士，博士生导师，教授

西安大略大学，教育学院

电子邮件 [REDACTED]

电话 [REDACTED]

助理研究员：

魏薇，博士生

西安大略大学，教育学院

电子邮件 [REDACTED]

如果您有任何关于作为此项研究项目的参与者的权利，以及此项研究项目进展的问题，您也可以联系西安大略大学人伦研究办公室

[REDACTED]

12 同意书

书面同意

1. 研究项目标题

教育政策转移：中国义务教育学校校长专业标准的个案研究

2. 文件标题

研究项目信息与同意书---校长与副校长

3. 主研究员及联系方式

Marianne Larsen, 博士, 博士生导师, 教授
西安大略大学, 教育学院
电子邮件 [REDACTED]
电话 [REDACTED]

4. 其他研究人员与联系方式

魏薇, 博士生
西安大略大学, 教育学院
电子邮件 [REDACTED]

一旦您签署此同意书, 我将给予您一份此文件的副本供您保留。

我以及阅读过此研究项目的详细信息, 了解此项研究的具体内容, 并同意参与此项研究。
关于此项研究的所有问题, 都已得到解答。

我同意(请选择一项)

参与访谈

被观察

— 参与访谈与被观察

在访谈过程中，您是否同意被录音：

— 是 — 否

是否同意我们匿名引用在研究过程中获得的信息资料

— 是 — 否

姓名_____

签名_____

日期_____

征求同意的研究员：

姓名_____

签名_____

日期_____

Appendix 9: Letter of Information and Consent Form in English



Project Title

Educational Transfer: A Vertical Case Study of Professional Standards for Principals in China

Document Title

Letter of Information and Consent for Principals and Vice-principals

Principal Investigator + Contact

Principal Investigator

Dr. Marianne Larsen, PhD, Professor
Faculty of Education
Western University, [REDACTED]

Additional Research Staff + Contact (optional)

Additional Research Staff

Wei Wei, PhD Candidate,
Faculty of Education
Western University, [REDACTED]

1. Invitation to Participate

This research investigates the formation and implementation (enactment) of *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* (Ministry of Education China, 2013). You are invited to participate in this study because you are an educational leader in your school, and I am interested in your insights about how you translate these professional standards into practices.

2. Why is this study being done?

- 2.1. There has been a worldwide interest in standardizing school leaders' practices through the formation of policies that regulate principals' and vice-principals' responsibilities. Existing research related to professional standards for school leaders has been conducted in Western countries. Little research focuses on the Chinese context and educational leadership reform.
- 2.2. The purpose of this research is to investigate why and how the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* (Ministry of Education China, 2013) have been

formed and enacted? You are invited to participate in this study because you are an educational leader in your school and you are knowledgeable about the field.

3. How long will you be in this study?

It is expected that you will be

- (1) either interviewed for no more than 60 minutes,
- (2) or observed for four to five hours for each day and for five school days,
- (3) or both interviewed and observed.

4. What are the study procedures?

If you agree to participate you will be asked to

4.1 Be interviewed with questions about how you put the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* (Ministry of Education China, 2013) into practice.

4.1.1 The interview will be conducted in Mandarin. There is an option if you would like to be audio taped. Please check the box at the end of this letter to suggest whether you agree to by audio taped. You can still participate in this study if you do not want to be audio taped.

4.1.2 The interview will be conducted in private, on school premises.

4.2 Or, be observed for five days, and in each day you will be observed for four to five hours during school hours. Observation will focus on your daily practices as a school leader. In particular, how the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* are translated into practice. Six aspects of your practices will be central in the observation, including: school planning, moral education, student learning and curriculum development, teacher development, school administration, and social relations management. Hand written notes will be used to record your behaviours. As this research centers on the enactment of this standards-based leadership policy, observation will only focus on your practices. No data on the others, such as behaviours or characteristics of bystanders, will be collected.

4.3 Or, be both interviewed and be observed

4.4 Participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw consent or to discontinue participation during the research at any time if you experience any discomfort.

5. What are the risks and harms of participating in this study?

Although there are no foreseen or presumable risks involved in this research. Both interview and observation can be stopped at anytime if you experience any discomfort or fatigue.

6. What are the benefits?

You will have an opportunity to reflect on your practices concerning the Chinese professional standards for school leaders. The possible benefits to society may be the development of a detailed account on how standards-based leadership policy is translated into practice, and to provide suggestions and implications for future initiatives.

7. Can participants choose to leave the study?

You are free to withdraw consent or to discontinue participation during the research at any time if you experience any discomforts.

If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that was collected prior to you leaving the study will still be used. No new information will be collected without your permission. You have the right to request withdrawal of information collected about you. If you wish to have your information removed, please let the researcher know.

8. How will participants' information be kept confidential?

- 8.1. No person/group outside the study team will have access to information collection. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.
- 8.2. Your name, and email address will be collected during the initial contact for the purpose of scheduling interviews and observations. To ensure confidentiality, your name and identifiable information will be removed from transcriptions and will be replaced with a pseudonym.
- 8.3. All information collected during this study will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside the study unless required by law. While we do our best to protect your information there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so. If data is collected during the project which may be required to report by law we have a duty to report.
- 8.4. There is no planned disclosure of personal identifiers involved in this study.
- 8.5. The researcher will keep any personal information about you in a secure and confidential location for a minimum of 5 years. A list linking your study number with your name will be kept by the researcher in a secure place, separate from your study file.
- 8.6. You will not be named in any reports, publications, or presentations that may come from this study. The data will be encrypted and kept in a password-protected folder in the hard drive of the researcher's laptop. Only the student researcher, will have the access to the laptop. The data will be securely destroyed using industry-standard shredders and data-deletion software after the retention period.

9 Are participants compensated to be in this study?

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

10 What are the Rights of Participants?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to be in this study. Even if you consent to participate you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on you.

We will give you new information that is learned during the study that might affect your decision to stay in the study.

You do not waive any legal right by signing this consent form

11 Whom do participants contact for questions?

If you have questions about this research study please contact

Principal investigator:

Dr. Marianne Larsen

Professor

Faculty of Education

Western University

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Research assistant:

Wei Wei

PhD Candidate

Faculty of Education

Western University

Email: [REDACTED]

12 Consent

Written Consent

1. Project Title

Educational Transfer: A Vertical Case Study of Professional Standards for Principals in China

2. Document Title

Letter of Information and Consent for Principals

3. Principal Investigator + Contact

Dr. Marianne Larsen
Professor
Faculty of Education
Western University
Email: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

4. Additional Research Staff + Contact (optional)

Wei Wei
PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education
Western University
Email: [REDACTED]

You will be given a copy of this Letter of Information once it has been signed.

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to be (please check one)

Interviewed

Observed

— Both interviewed and observed

I agree to be audio-recorded in this research

— YES — NO

I consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research

— YES — NO

Name (print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher obtaining consent:

Name (print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 10: Interview Questions in Mandarin

访谈问题——校长，副校长

资历/领导培训

1. 您是如何成为校长/副校长的？
2. 您参加过什么样的领导培训？
3. 请您讲一下作为校长，您拥有的资历。您是什么时候获得这些资历的？

个人历史与背景

4. 您担任校长职务有多久了？
5. 您在当前学校担任校长有多久了？

学校背景

6. 请您介绍一下您的学校 (学生组成，人口数据统计，背景，历史)
您的学校包括哪些年级？
您的学校大概有多少学生？
您的学校一个班大概有多少学生？
您的学校大概有多少借读生 (非本地户口学生)？
请您介绍一下学生群体的背景

日常工作与策略

7. 认为作为校长/副校长，您在学校的角色与职责主要是什么？
8. 请您描述一下您一天的日常工作流程

校长专业标准

9. 您是通过什么途径了解到《义务学校校长专业标准》的？您对该文件了解多少？
10. 您有该文件副本吗？
11. 您有经常参考该文件吗？多经常？

具体专业标准的实施与采用 (六项核心专业标准)

12. 您是如何，采取什么措施策略规划学校发展的？比如，您采取了什么措施来鼓励教职员工和学生达到学校的目标的？
13. 您是如何保障德育实施的？比如，您是如何创建学校，家庭，和社区有效合作的德育工作网络的？
14. 您是如何领导课程教学的？
15. 您是如何领导教师成长的？
16. 您是如何进行学校管理的？
17. 您是如何协调公共关系的？
18. 作为校长/副校长，您的工作都得到过哪些方面的支持？在具体实践这些专业标准的过程中，有哪些人或团体组织对您的工作给予过支持？

19. 我对硬件资源对校长工作的影响很感兴趣。您能具体谈一谈硬件资源，例如网络和学校设施，是如何影响您的工作的吗？
20. 您所参加过的领导培训是如何帮助您达到这些专业标准的？

挑战/困难

21. 在达到这些标准的过程中，您遇到过那些挑战与困难？您是如何克服的？
22. 有哪些个人或团体组织给您的校长工作带来过困难吗？

成果

23. 作为校长/副校长，您的工作给学生带来了什么样的影响？
24. 作为校长/副校长，您的工作给教职员工带来了什么样的影响？
25. 作为校长/副校长，这些专业标准对您个人有什么影响？

对于成功校领导的认识

26. 您认为对于学校领导来说，什么能力和职责是最关键的？
27. 您认为什么样的校领导是“成功的校领导”？
28. 如果让您参与中小学校长专业标准的制定，您会添加什么内容？
29. 在结束此次访谈之前，您还有什么想要添加的相关评论吗？

Appendix 11: Interview Questions in English

Interview Questions

- Questions for principals and vice-principals

Qualifications/Training

1. How did you become a Principal/Vice-principal?
2. What formal training do you have that prepared you to be a Principal/Vice-principal?
3. What Principal/Vice-principals qualifications do you have? When did you receive those qualifications?

History and background as Principals/Vice-principal

4. How many years have you been employed as a Principal/Vice-principal?
5. How many years have you been a Principal/Vice-principal in this school?

Background about school

6. Tell me about your school (student composition, demographics, background and history).

What grades does your school offer?

Approximately how many students at your school?

Approximately how many students in one class at your school?

Approximately how many students at your school do not have local *hukou* (residential registration)?

Please describe the demographics of the student body.

General practices & strategies

7. What do you think are your roles and responsibilities as a Principal/Vice-principal in this school?
8. Please describe your daily routine in a normal day at the school.

Leadership Standards

9. How did you learn about the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals*? What do you know about it?
10. Do you have the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals* here at the school?
11. How often, at all, do you consult that document?

Adoption of specific leadership standards (six core categories)

12. What strategies have you put in place regarding school planning? For example, what strategies have you put in place to encourage teachers, staff, and students to achieve the goals of your school?
13. What strategies have you put in place regarding students' moral education? For example, what do you do to create a collaborated network for moral education between school, families and communities?
14. What strategies have you put in place regarding student learning and curriculum development?
15. What strategies have you put in place regarding teacher development?
16. What strategies have you put in place regarding school administration?
17. What strategies have you put in place regarding managing social relations?

18. What supports do you draw upon to do your work as a Principal/Vice-principal? Specifically, who are the people or groups that influence the work you do as a Principal/Vice-principals to 'practice' these professional standards?
19. I'm interested in the material objects in the school and how they influence the work of the principal. Can you think of any ways that material objects such as internet and school facilities, influence the work that you do as a Principal/Vice-principal?
20. How, if at all, has your training enabled you to achieve these leadership standards?

Challenges/Difficulties

21. What are the challenges and difficulties in meeting these standards listed in the *Professional Standards for Compulsory Schools Principals*? How do you overcome these challenges and difficulties?
22. Are there any individuals or groups that prevent you or make it difficult for you to do your work as a Principal/Vice-principal at this school?

Effects on Actors

23. How do you see your work as a Principal/Vice-principal in this school affecting or influencing the students?
24. How do you see your work as a Principal/Vice-principal in this school affecting or influencing the teachers and staff?
25. How do you the leadership standards affecting or influencing your sense of yourself as a Principal/Vice-principal? (identity as Principal/Vice-principal)

Views about successful leadership

26. What do you think are the most critical capacities and responsibilities for school leaders?
27. How would you define "successful school leaders"?
28. Have you noticed anything that needs to be included in the standards that is not currently there? What is missing?
29. To conclude this interview, is there anything else, if relevant to this study, that you would like to add?

Curriculum Vitae

Wei Wei

London, Ontario, Canada

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy – Field of Critical Policy, Equity, and Leadership Studies 2014-2020
The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada

Master of Education – Developmental Psychology 2012-2014
University of Toronto Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Master of Education – Educational Administration 2010-2012
State University of New York at Buffalo Buffalo, New York, USA

Exchange program - English Literature 2008
University of Minnesota Morris Morris, Minnesota, USA

Bachelor of Arts - English 2006-2010
Capital Normal University Beijing, China

PH.D. THESIS

- Policy Transfer Across Borders: An Actor Network Analysis of Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in China
-

AWARDS

- Ontario Graduate Scholarship 2017 (\$15,000 CAD)
 - Western Graduate Research Scholarship 2014 – 2018
 - Comparative and International Education Society Dissertation Workshop Merit Travel Grant 2017 (\$500 USD)
 - Graduate Student Internal Conference Travel Grant 2015 – 2018 (\$4,000 CAD)
-

PUBLICATIONS

- Riveros, A. & **Wei, W.** (2019). “Standards and competency frameworks for school administrators: Global, comparative and critical perspectives”, *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27(111), 1-10. Published on Sept 23, 2019
 - **Wei, W.** (2018). [Review of the book *Policy transfer and educational change*, by D. Scott, M. Terano, R. Slee, C. Husbands & R. Wilkins], *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 186, 13-16.
 - **Wei, W.** (2017). “Education policy borrowing: professional standards for school leaders in China”, *Chinese Education & Society*, 50(3), 181-202. Published on Nov 02, 2017
 - Riveros, A., Verret, C. & **Wei, W.** (2016). “The Translation of leadership standards into leadership practices: A qualitative analysis of the adoption of the Ontario Leadership Framework in urban schools”, *Journal of Educational Administration*, 54 (5), 593-608. Published on Aug 03, 2016
-

PROJECTS

Funded by Ontario Ministry of Education

- Research Services to Updating and Revising the Four Components of Ontario Leadership Framework (2013), RFS No. 3282
Sep 2017 – Aug 2018
 - Principal Investigator: Dr. Katina Pollock, Western University

- Suspension/Expulsion Program Evaluation
Mar 2016 – Apr 2017
 - Principal Investigators: Dr. Katina Pollock, Western University; Dr. Brenton Faubert, Western University

Funded by Social Science and Humanities Research Council

- How School Administrators Translate Standards and Competency Framework into Practices
Sep 2014 – Dec 2018
 - Principal Investigator: Dr. Augusto Riveros, Western University

Funded by Ontario Principals' Council

- The Changing Nature of Vice-Principals' work
Sep 2016 – Apr 2017
 - Principal Investigators: Dr. Katina Pollock, Western University; Dr. Fei Wang, University of British Columbia

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Guest Editor

- Education Policy Analysis & Archives: Special Issue on Standards and Competency Frameworks for School Administrators: Global, Comparative and Critical Perspectives, *Education Policy Analysis Archives*

Journal Reviewer

- International Journal of Leadership in Education: April 2018, "A Descriptive Multicultural Phenomenology for Culturally Responsive Leadership", Manuscript ID TEDL-2018-0060

Conference Reviewer

- American Educational Research Association (invited): 2016 (Division G-Social Context of Education-Section 4: Social Context of Education Policy, Politics, and Praxis), 2017 (Division A-Administration/ Section 1: Leadership), 2018 (Division A-Administration/ Section 1: Leadership)
- Comparative and International Education Society: 2017 (General Pool), 2019 (SIG: East Asian, SIG: Globalization and Education)
- Canadian Society for the Study of Education: 2015 (CIESC), 2016 (CIESC), 2017 (CIESC), 2019 (CIESC, CASEA)

Conference Chair

- 2019 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada
 - Roundtable Session: Student Experiences of Education through an International Lens
- 2016-08-25 XVI World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), Beijing, China
 - Session: Leadership and Governance in Education
- 2016-04-21 Robert Macmillan Graduate Research in Education Symposium (GRiES), London, Canada
- 2016-03-27 Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Annual Conference, Vancouver, Canada
 - SIG: Globalization and Education (GE): Transfer and Internationalization in Chinese Schools and Policies

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Single Author

- **Wei, W.** (2019). Conceptualizing Policy Enactment in an Era of Globalization: Context as Assemblages. Paper presentation at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Annual Conference. San Francisco, US. April, 2019.
- **Wei, W.** (2018). From Leadership Standards to Practices: the Identities of Chinese Principals. Paper presentation at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference. New York, US. April 14, 2018.

- **Wei, W.** (2017). What Leadership Practices are promoted in Chinese Urban Schools? A WeChat Mobile App Based Content Analysis. Paper presentation at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Annual Conference. Atlanta, US. March 6, 2017
- **Wei, W.** (2016). Policy Development in an Era of Globalization: the Standards-based Leadership Reform in China. Poster presentation at the XVI World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES). Beijing, China. August 23, 2016
- **Wei, W.** (2016). Neoliberalism as a Global Discourse: the Standards-based Leadership Policies in China. Paper presentation at the XVI World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES). Beijing, China. August 25, 2016
- **Wei, W.** (2016). Educational Transfer: the Initiation of Leadership Standards in China. Paper presentation at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Annual Conference. Vancouver, Canada. March 7, 2016
- **Wei, W.** (2015). Migrant Children in China's Public Education: Juxtaposing Policy with Their Experiences. Paper presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Annual Conference. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. June 3, 2015
- **Wei, W.** (2015). Educational Transfer: A Case Study of Leadership Standards in China. Round table presentation at Robert Macmillan Graduate Research in Education Symposium. Western University. London, Ontario, Canada. April 2015

First Author

- **Wei, W.** & Riveros, A. (2016). Neoliberal Globalization: the Transnational Policy Discourses in Leadership Standards. Poster presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Annual Conference. Calgary, Canada. May 30, 2016
- **Wei, W.** & Riveros, A. (2016). Leadership Standards and Transnational Policy Discourses: A Policy Transfer Analysis. Paper presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Annual Conference. Calgary, Canada. May 30, 2016
- **Wei, W.** & Riveros, A. (2016). Education Policy in Transnational Times: Professional Standards for School Leaders. Paper presentation at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference. Washington D. C., USA. April 8, 2016
- **Wei, W.**, Verret, C. & Riveros, A. (2015). The Leader as an Emergent Identity: A Study of the Adoption of Leadership Standards in Ontario. Poster presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Annual Conference. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. June 2, 2015

Others

- Riveros, A., Myers, P. & **Wei, W.** (2019). The Global Observatory of Leadership Standards: A Digital Resource for Researchers and Policy Makers. Poster presentation at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.
- Riveros, A., **Wei, W.**, Verret, C. & Massouti, A. (2018). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Standards for School Administrators: Agency, Action, and Identity in Canadian Policy Documents. Roundtable presentation at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference. New York, US. April 16, 2018.
- Riveros, A., **Wei, W.**, & Massouti, A. (2018). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Canadian Leadership Standards. Paper presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Annual Conference. Regina, Canada. May 30, 2018
- Riveros, A., Verret, C. & **Wei, W.** (2015). Leadership as a Matter of Policy: The Translation of Leadership Standards into Leadership Practices. Paper presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Annual Conference. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. May 31, 2015