

Mainland Chinese International Students and Their Familial Responsibilities in Canada

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Abstract

Chinese society has greatly emphasized filial piety and other related societal norms. This thesis explores how Mainland Chinese international students, especially those who are from one-child households, maintain their familial responsibilities while studying in Canada away from home. The research is framed by the family migration strategy literature and empirically adopts a qualitative approach. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with Mainland Chinese international students are undertaken. The findings show that as with many other types of migration, student migration, in this case, is a familial decision. To a certain extent, obtaining a foreign degree is the foundation for fulfilling familial responsibilities in the future. In addition, a new concept, *delay remittances*, is introduced as a way of conceptualizing the concrete meaning of familial responsibility for Mainland Chinese international students. The findings also show that the most significant tension for Mainland Chinese international is related to the uncertainty of how and where they will be able to fulfill their familial obligations to their parents.

Keywords: Mainland Chinese international students, familial responsibilities, filial piety, delayed remittances.

Introduction

Family is an important institution that connects individuals together regardless whether people are blood-tied or not. My research interest falls under the theme of the evolving notion of familial responsibility as experienced by Mainland Chinese international students, particularly those who study in Canada. Amongst the older generation of Chinese people, responsibility for parents, as they age, is considered as one of the fundamental obligations that children shall fulfil when they become adults. This is one of the ways through which adult children show their appreciation to their parents who endured all kinds of hardships to raise them. In the past, having more siblings meant that a given child would not necessarily be freed of this responsibility. (Logan, Bian & Bian, 1998, p. 873). One of the options was that parents could stay with only one adult child and the spouse (Logan, Bian & Bian, 1998, p. 873). In some other cases, parents could live on their own, and their adult children shared the parental care responsibilities. Since the Chinese family structure changed due to the implementation of one-child policy, it is quite likely that only one child, regardless of the gender, shall be responsible for fulfilling the responsibilities. Having more siblings reduces a child's probability of being the co-resident child (Logan, Bian & Bian, 1998, p. 873). The gender of siblings also makes a difference: if a daughter has a brother, she is substantially less likely to live with her parents. There is a smaller and not significant effect of having a brother if the child is a son (Logan, Bian & Bian, 1998, p. 873).

Nevertheless, Mainland China's one-child family policy has had a great effect on the lives of the Mainland Chinese population for a quarter of a century (Hesketh, Lu & Xing, 2005, p. 1171). When the policy was introduced, the Chinese government claimed that it was a short-term measure, and that the goal was to move towards a voluntary small-family structure (Hesketh, Lu & Xing, 2005, p. 1171). Rural residents had higher fertility rates than urban residents even before the one-child policy (Fong, 2002, p. 1100). Families with two or more children remained the norm in rural areas, where the need for sons to provide farm labour, protection from crime, and old age support made the one-child policy difficult to enforce (Fong, 2002, p. 1100). However, most children born after 1979 had no siblings in urban areas (Fong, 2002, p. 1100). From then on, the Chinese family pattern changed to a nuclear family type with parents and one child per family.

As a result of sustained economic development in Mainland China, the option of studying abroad has become more affordable for increasing numbers of Chinese families (Bodycott, 2009,

p. 350). Upon completion of their studies, some international students choose to return home while others choose to stay in the receiving countries. Due to Chinese societal norms of responsibility for parental care, many Mainland Chinese international students will eventually face an important decision: either returning to China or staying in Canada.

This study is also closely related to important trends in Canada since the number of Chinese international students has increased significantly in recent years. The population of Chinese international students is the largest international student population in Canada. The arrival of the Mainland Chinese international students to Canada has been a topic of ongoing research in Canada for the past few decades. As Peter Li (2005) points out, immigration from China rose after 1989 when Canada allowed Chinese students studying in Canada to immigrate (9). Around the mid-1990s, immigration from China expanded due to Canada's greater interests in receiving economic immigrants (Li, 2005, p. 9). As a result, it has led to the continuous arrival of well-educated and urban-based immigrants from China, changing the composition of both the Canadian population and of the Chinese Canadian community (Li, 2005, p. 9). More recently, according to the Government of Canada website, China has consistently been the top source country for international student entries into Canada and has seen its share rise from 19% in 2009 to 26% of all international student entries in 2013 (Government of Canada, 2015). The next highest source country in 2013 is India, but it only contributed 12% of the international student population to Canada in 2013 (Government of Canada, 2015). The number of Chinese international students is more than double that of India. These figures show that relative to other nationalities, there is a large Mainland Chinese international student population staying in Canada. Therefore, it is worth exploring what the unique circumstances of Mainland Chinese international students are while studying in Canada. As a result of this curiosity, initiated in my freshman year, I was motivated to conduct research on the Mainland Chinese student migration and their sense of familial responsibility while studying in Canada.

Personal Account of My Relationship to the Topic

My intent in writing about my personal relationship on the topic is to explore my own position as a Mainland Chinese international student studying in Canada. My comments here are related to the interview that I conducted with my interviewees (Appendix 1 & 2). While I was writing this section, I considered it as if I was doing an interview with myself. I am just one of the many

Mainland Chinese international students studying in Canada, my perspective does not necessarily reflect the same mentality as that of other Mainland Chinese international students, but I want to clarify my own position as a researcher before getting into the actual discussion of this topic.

I came to Canada to study when I was in Grade 10. There are always numerous embarrassing moments upon the arrival to a foreign country, such as the misuse of English words. While I was waiting for my luggage at the airport, I needed to use the washroom. The word “washroom” is different from the word “toilet”, which I learned in China. The person looked very confused until she figured out I was asking about the washroom. What’s more, when I first arrived, I found the classroom environment very different from that in China. In China, every student is assigned to a fixed classroom and the teachers go to the classroom and give lectures whereas Canadian students go to different classrooms for different classes. It took me a while to adapt to the new classroom method. I went through university and I am currently doing to Master in Sociology. Sociology is not a popular subject for most Chinese international students, and thus the people who I hang out with are typically local Canadian students.

For me, there is no doubt of the need of having friends and colleagues to compensate for the absence of the family while studying abroad. However, I couldn’t have met these people if my parents had not made the decision to send me to study abroad. I think I was too young to make the decision about where to continue my studies. One day, my parents just told me that I was leaving for Canada in two weeks. All the emotions at that time become very blurred and I do not exactly remember how I felt when I heard this news. All I remember was that I was very fearless when I flew to Canada alone. I believe I was too young to be scared and to feel anything. My family is the same as most of the Chinese urban families where there are four grandparents, two parents and myself as the only child in the family. I clearly understood the reason for coming to Canada to study because I had been told millions of times! By studying abroad at a young age, I would not need to worry about my family because I knew they would be there to support me. I never had to think about my family responsibilities because why would I have to worry about those questions when all my family members were still healthy and alive. A few years ago, when my paternal grandparents passed away, I started to think of what I shall eventually do when my parents get old and need someone to take care of them one day. I consider myself to have a close relationship with my parents, so we always talk about different topics. My mom has always been

honest about the fact that she wants me to return home eventually. They definitely want me to stay closer, but I am at an unclear stage. I cannot honestly say what my actual thoughts are.

I came to Canada to study when I was relatively young. Since, I have also slowly built up my personal network in Canada. I cannot strictly say that I do not have friends in China, but most of the people I keep in touch with right now are in Canada. If I decide to stay in Canada, then what about my parents? I would feel devastated, as I would not be able to take care of my parents to reciprocate for their ongoing love and support. As I am always aware that I am the only child in the family, the idea of taking care of my parents rarely leaves my mind. If I go back home, I shall fulfil my family responsibilities by taking care of them. However, this would involve building up my personal networks again because I have been disconnected from China for a long period of time. We discuss this a few times every year, but I feel guilty that I cannot provide them with a definitive answer. Personally?, obtaining permanent residency or even citizenship is something that I want to achieve one day. At least it symbolizes a partial success in Canada, but the process is long due to Canadian student migration policies. I am already half way through the process; It would be tough for me give up at this point. If I can successfully get citizenship in Canada, I am worried that it will be too late to start a career in China?

This personal dilemma, which arises as a result of broader social transformations, has inspired me to explore whether other Mainland Chinese international students have met similar problems. I was curious to hear from others: how did they navigate this situation that we share? This is an instance of what C. Wright Mills famously identified, in the *Sociological Imagination*, as the intersection of “personal troubles” with the “public issues” (Mills, 2000, p. 12).

This thesis conceptualizes Mainland international students in Canada as an instance of family migration. I build a model of this type of migration that explores changes to the contemporary middle-class Mainland Chinese family to explore its relationship to filial piety. My sense of responsibility to my family, I believe, is an instance of filial piety. However, as I will show through the qualitative analysis of my interview data, although filial piety remains an important dimension of the migration strategy, it is more flexible than I had initially realized. Since the particularities of contemporary Chinese society might be less well known in Canada, I begin with a first chapter that spends some time drawing on scholarly literature to identify those characteristics of contemporary Mainland Chinese society that are more relevant to my research. In the second chapter, where I present my literature review, I discuss research predominantly

dealing with migration. In my third chapter, I present my statement of the problem, my research questions and theoretical framework and methodology. Chapter four presents the findings and Chapter five provides a theoretically informed analysis and discussion of the families. I conclude by identifying some promising avenues of future research.

Chapter 1: Context

Introduction

The notion of filial piety has greatly influenced parent-child relationship of East Asian peoples for centuries (Sung, 1995, p. 240). There is no doubt that filial piety is not unique to the Chinese people. Confucianism has had significant impacts on Asia, and even around the world. Other countries like Korea and Japan, also practice filial piety. Indeed, East Asian nations have shared the ideals of filial piety (*Hyo* in Korean; *Xiao* in Chinese; *Ko* in Japanese) for many generations (Sung, 1990, p. 610). Values associated with filial piety are reflected in the ritual and propriety of the peoples of these nations (Sung, 1990, p. 610). In Japan, public respect for elders and exhortations of filial care have been strongly reemphasized in recent years through new social movements (Sung, 1990, p. 610). In China, people still retain an equally consistent attitude toward their parents and family relationships (Sung, 1990, p. 610). Ho (1996) suggests that Confucian filial piety exceeds all other cultural ethics in Chinese culture with respect to its historical continuity, the portion of humanity under its governance, and the encompassing and imperative nature of its precepts (Zhang & Bond, 1998, p. 402).

The traditional basis for such values is the teaching of filial piety, which has long dominated the cultures of the aforementioned nations (Sung, 1990, p. 610). Despite the differences in the East Asian countries, the ideals of filial piety are very similar (Sung, 1990, p. 611). Typical ideals reflected include the following: showing respect for parents, making physical and financial sacrifices for parents, fulfilling responsibility to parents; repayment of debts to parents, devotion to parent care, sympathy and affection for parents, deep concern for the well-being of parents, making parents happy and comfortable, carrying out difficult or unusual tasks for parents, performing ceremonial duties of ancestral worship, ensuring the continuity of the family line, and in general conducting oneself so as to bring honour and avoid discredited by the family name (Cheung & Kwan, 2009, p.181; Sung, 1990, p. 611; Zhang & Bond, 1998, p. 403).

In a society where filial piety is practiced, elderly people are valued instead of being alienated. Filial piety inherently entails a “respect-the-old” ideology (Sung, 1995, p. 24) and is also the root of many virtues (Sung, 1990, p. 611). What Confucius is said to have demanded of a filial son and his spouse was not only the formal fulfillment of obligations to the parents, but also the expectation that it be permeated with respect and warmth (Sung, 1995, p. 240). Material goods alone do not suffice since a son owes his parents material and spiritual support in his parents’ old

age. Filial piety essentially teaches the rule of behaviour and directs offspring to repay parent love and care (Sung, 1995, p. 241). Taking care of parents should not be considered as a pure obligation. Instead, it should be an opportunity to show how much the parents' sacrifices are appreciated. Parents devote their love and support to their children when they were young without complaining. When the children grow up, they should also keep this in mind and return as much as they can. Confucius envisions harmonious relations between all members of society, and the touchstone of these moral relations is filial piety (Sung, 1990, p. 611). Every person has to learn to think of the family first from an early age because it is the starting point of the individual in society.

Scholars argue that filial piety is one of the paramount guiding ethics governing social behaviour in Chinese societies (Zhang & Bond, 1998, p. 402). It has been particularly emphasized by Confucian scholars throughout Chinese history as regulating interpersonal and intergenerational relationships amongst Chinese people (Zhang & Bond, 1998, p. 402). Filial piety proposes how children should behave toward their parents, living or dead, as well as toward their ancestors (Zhang & Bond, 1998, p. 403). It has long been recognized that the precept has significance beyond the limits of one's family. It justifies not only absolute parental authority over children but also the authority of the seniors in generational rank that is over that of the juniors (Zhang & Bond, 1998, p. 403). The normative ideal is that harmony be pursued by Chinese people in their relationships with nature, self, and other individuals. One of the characteristics of a culturally salient "social-orientation" personality is that a Chinese person can under certain circumstances be expected to sacrifice his or her own interests and suppress his or her own desires to achieve and maintain harmonious relations with other people (Zhang & Bond, 1998, p. 405). It is not worth fulfilling one's own desires if this is based on hurting others. Although individualistic conceptions originating in Western culture have exercised a pervasive influence, a strong endorsement of filial piety can commonly continue to be observed (Zhang & Bond, 1998, p. 403).

In order to contextualize filial piety's important role in Chinese society, this chapter draws on scholarly literature from the area of Chinese Studies exploring the following themes: China's one-child policy, gender preference in China, filial piety in Confucianism, filial piety in contemporary China, contemporary Chinese family and filial piety.

China's One-Child Policy

China's one child policy heavily influenced the children born after 1979 (Hesketh, Lu & Xing, 2005, p. 1171). Recently, officially since 2016, the Chinese government has started to implement the two-child policy, which abolishes the one-child policy after three decades of enforcement. The one-child policy deeply influenced the family as an institution in urban settings. The introduction of the one-child policy coincided with rural economic reforms that created the economic conditions in which more children would be economically advantageous for rural families (Deutsch, 2006, p. 367). The economic reforms also intensified the age-old Chinese preference for sons (Deutsch, 2006, p. 367).

In 1979, the Chinese government began to work on an ambitious program of market reform following the economic stagnation of the Cultural Revolution (Hesketh, Lu & Xing, 2005, p. 1171). At the time, China was home to a quarter of the world's people, occupying just 7% of the world's arable land. Two thirds of the population were under the age of 30, and the baby boomers of the 1950s and 1960s were entering their reproductive years. The government saw strict population containment as essential to economic reform and to an improvement in living standards. Thus, the one-child family policy was introduced (Hesketh, Lu & Xing, 2005, p. 1171).

Enforcing the one-child policy has always been difficult for the whole of the Mainland Chinese population. It is commonly argued that parents prefer sons because their perceived net value is higher than that of daughters (Das Gupta, Zhenghua, Bohua, Zhenming, Chung & Hwa-Ok, 2003, p. 168). In the traditional mindset, having more children, especially boys, means more power to do things in the future (Das Gupta et al., 2003, p. 168). The argument is that sons can help on the family farm, and provide old age support to their parents while daughters have much less to offer (Das Gupta et al., 2003, p. 168). Regardless of its name, the one-child policy actually only applied to a minority of the population, namely, urban residents and government employees where the policy was strictly enforced with few exceptions (Hesketh, Lu & Xing, 2005, p. 1172). Resistance in the countryside led to a de facto two-child policy there (Deutsch, 2006, p. 367). Approximately, 70% of the people living in rural areas are allowed to have a second child after five years, but this sometimes applies only if the first child is a girl (Hesketh, Lu & Xing, 2005, p. 1171). Acceptance of compliance with the one-child policy was much greater in urban Chinese contexts (Deutsch, 2006, p. 367). In 1986, one half of the fifth graders in Beijing had siblings, whereas only 20% of the first graders did, and only 10% had siblings by 1989 (Deutsch, 2006, p.

367). The government could exercise more control over the urban than the peasants' population because the urban registration entitles one to employment and important welfare benefits, such as housing, health care, and children's education, which could be withheld for violations of the policy (Deutsch, 2006, p. 367). As this thesis will explore, the strict enforcement of the one-child policy in urban settings has put students who choose to study abroad as international students in a difficult situation. They have to attempt to simultaneously manage the demands of their culture of origin with the opportunities associated with migration in a globalized world.

Gender Preference in China

In China, son preference is sometimes also attributed to Confucian values (Das Gupta et al., 2003, p. 154; Short, Zhai, Xu & Yang, 2011, p. 913). "One must have at least one son," which originally reflected absolute obedience to traditional norms as "not having offspring is the most unfilial act" (Yeh et al., 2013, p. 281). Sex birth ratios after 1980 show a disproportionate number of boys, which suggests either an increase in sex-selective abortion or in female infanticide (Deutsch, 2006, p. 370). In addition, all rural families whose first children were daughters were extended the option of having an additional child in 1989 (Deutsch, 2006, p. 367). This clearly indicates a traditional preference for boys entrenched in official Chinese policy. Son preference has led to widespread abuses against women, primarily in the countryside where there have been reports of forced sterilization, abortion, and violence against and abandonment of women who produce daughters (Deutsch, 2006, p. 370). Unlike Western societies, where adult daughters report more frequent contact with their parents than do adult sons, in traditional Chinese society, with its strong patriarchal family system, "a married-out daughter is like spilt water¹" (Zhang, 2009, p. 256). When women get married they leave their home, their lineage will be absorbed into their husband's lineage (Das Gupta et al., 2003, p. 168). In other words, traditionally it was frequently believed that daughters brought no economic value to their birth parents. (Zhang, 2009, p. 257). Until fairly recently, parents would live with unmarried children of both sexes, or one could say that unmarried children were still living with their parents. However, it was rare to live with a married daughter in Chinese society. Explanations of son preference place much emphasis on the fact that sons can provide old age support as well as doing the difficult tasks in the fields (Das Gupta et al., 2003, p. 168).

¹ 嫁出去的女儿等于泼出去的水。

What's more, Chinese society has strong commonalities in their kinship system, which is patrilineal. It affects the way daughters are received in a family. Many societies are patrilineal and patrilocal (Das Gupta et al., 2003, p. 181). Patrilineality refers to "passing on the main productive assets through the male line, while women may be given some movable goods in the form of dowry or inheritance" (Das Gupta et al., 2003, p. 160). This restrained "women's ability to sustain their economic level without being attached to a man" (Das Gupta et al., 2003, p. 168). Patrilocality involves "a couple residing at the man's home, which goes hand in hand with inheritance" (Das Gupta et al., 2003, p. 168). This description would broadly fit many societies around the world. Why then is strong son preference manifested only in some societies and not in others? The answer to this lies in the extent of flexibility in the logic of patrilineal kinship. In China, ancestor worship added another dimension to the need to have a male offspring. There are elaborate and explicit beliefs about the afterlife and the need for performing the rituals of ancestor worship to ensure the welfare of the departed souls. With the implementation of a one-child policy, gender preference becomes under assault. It also changes the reproductive dynamics of the family.

Prior to the one-child policy, some Chinese feminist argue, Chinese women could not autonomously exercise reproductive choice (Deutsch, 2006, p. 370). The cultural preference for sons, however, did not disappear; for instance, in order to protect gender equality, midwives are prohibited from releasing the gender of the foetus. The most significant change, however, is the fact that taking care of elder parents becomes mandatory for the only child, regardless of gender. Arguably, this has changed family dynamics, increasing the value of daughters to their parents (Deutsch, 2006, p. 370). Although it may take longer to deconstruct the patrilineal norms and behaviours in Chinese societies, some researchers point to important changes. For instance, Chow and Zhao (1996) show that one-child Chinese families continue to practise child centeredness regardless of whether the child is a boy or a girl (53). The one-child parents tend to believe that their only child is the sole bearer of meaning and hope in their lives, and thus they have more time and energy to spend with the only child (Chow & Zhao, 1996, p. 53). Fong (2002) shows that parents' attitudes toward daughters are changing because of their singleton status (Deutsch, 2006, p. 371). The author also argues that Chinese parents' increasingly support and are proud of their daughters' achievements (Deutsch, 2006, p. 371).

Filial Piety in Confucianism

Prior to the appearance of Western powers in the mid-nineteenth century, East Asian polity, society, and culture had been interrelated with Confucian ideals: political governance, social ethics, and even the habits of the heart in China, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan were characteristically Confucian (Tu, 2000, p. 195-196; Yum, 1988, p. 375). The flexibility and adaptability of the Confucian teaching to different styles of leadership, education, and organization, and the family has meant that it has had a wide appeal in the region (Tu, 2000, p. 196). Confucianism has been such an integral part of East Asia, unlike Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, that is often perceived as a regional phenomenon rather than a world religion (Tu, 2000, p. 196). In the philosophical and cultural history of East Asia, Confucianism has endured as a basic social and political value system for over one thousand years. Confucianism was institutionalized and propagated both through the formal curricula of educational systems and through the selection process of government officials (Yum, 1998, p. 377). One reason why Confucianism has exerted a much stronger impact than the other religious or philosophical systems of East Asia (Buddhism and Taoism) is because it is a pragmatic and present-oriented philosophy (Yum, 1998, p. 377). According to Max Weber, “It is also more realistic than any other system in the sense that it lacks and excludes all measures which are not utilitarian” (Yum, 1998, p. 377).

Confucianism is a philosophy of human nature that considers proper human relationships as the basis of society (Fan, 2000, p. 4; Yum, 1998, p. 377). In Confucianism, rules are spelled out for the social behaviour of every individual, governing the entire range of human interactions in society (Fan, 2000, p. 4). Confucianism sets forth four principles from which right conduct arises: *jen* (humanism), *yi* (faithfulness), *li* (propriety), and *zhi* (wisdom or a liberal education) (Yum, 1998, p. 377). The fundamental principle, *jen* (humanism), almost defies translation since it sums up the core of Confucianism (Yum, 1998, p. 377). Fundamentally, it means warm human feelings between people and graded according to one’s relation to them (Yum, 1998, p. 377). *Jen* is like a seed from which springs all the qualities that make up the ideal man. The actual practice or embodiment of *jen* in daily life is closely related to the concept of reciprocity (Yum, 1998, p. 377). In fact, the Chinese character for reciprocity describes “like-heartedness” (Yum, 1998, p. 377). Therefore, if a person knows how it would feel to be the other person, to become like-hearted, this person should be able to empathize with others.

The second principle of Confucianism is *yi*, meaning faithfulness, loyalty, or justice (Yum, 1998, p. 377). As the definition suggests, this principle also has strong implications for social relationships. Like *jen*, *yi* is a difficult concept to translate. It may be easier to understand *yi* through its antithesis, which is personal or individual interest and profit. According to the principle of *yi*, human relationships are not based on individual profit, but rather on the betterment of the common good. *Yi* refers to “a long-term, obligatory interpersonal relationship” (Yum, 1998, p. 378). It is the binding rule of social interaction. According to *yi*, reciprocity is not necessarily immediate, nor does it have to be promised since both parties understand that they are bound by *yi* (Yum, 1998, p. 378). Sometimes obligation can be reciprocated by the next generation (Yum, 1998, p. 377). If *jen* and *yi* are the contents of the Confucian ethical system, *li* (propriety, right, respect for social forms) is its outward form. As an objective criterion of social order, *li* was perceived as the rule of the universe and the fundamental regulatory etiquette of human behaviour (Yum, 1998, p. 378).

There are five codes of ethics included in Confucianism, which regulates the five basic human relationships, loyalty between king and subject, closeness between father and son, distinction of duties between husband and wife, obedience to orders between elderly people and younger, and mutual faith between friends (Fan, 2000, p. 4; Yum, 1988, p. 376). As Fan (2000) points out, three out of the five principles refer to family relations, demonstrating the centrality of the family in Chinese society (4). Additionally, the first two relations, filial piety and loyalty, are generally deemed the most important in the Chinese society (Fan, 2000, p. 4). What’s more, Confucius always used only the male versions of language to define family relations, which clearly supported the Chinese system of male property inheritance (Fan, 2000, p. 4).

Scholars argue that Confucian principles significantly influence representations of family interactions and relationships in China, with the virtue of filial piety as the cornerstone of Chinese social structure (Zhang & Goza, 2006, p. 153). Confucius believed that there was no greater crime than failing to practise filial piety (Zhang & Goza, 2006, p. 153). It requires not only financial support and instrumental care, but also filial virtues (Cheung & Kwan, 2009, p. 181). The Confucian idea of filial piety is derived from the core notion that one’s existence is solely due to one’s parents (Hwang, 1999, p. 169). Filial duty forms a large part of the concept of care in Confucianism. The reason that a person should fulfil their filial duty lies in the duty of reciprocity (Koh & Koh, 2008, p. 368). In other words, a person should reciprocate their parents' love. If a

child does not provide care to his parents in the appropriate manner, she or he does not fulfil the most crucial duty and will be morally punished (Koh & Koh, 2008, p. 368).

Younger people must respect their ancestors and elderly people. Within Confucius representations, the father is the undisputed head, and parents often expect unquestioning obedience from their children (Lim & Lim, 2004, p. 35). Such obedience is encouraged at an early age and is maintained continuously between the child and their parents, even after adulthood and after the adult has started a family of his or her own (Lim & Lim, 2004, p. 35). The expectation is that Chinese people should consistently practise these norms and values throughout their entire lives, and are responsible for passing on the norms and values through to the next generation. Regardless of how the society progresses, the ideal is that conformity and family solidarity should remain in practice. (Lim & Lim, 2004, p. 35).

In China, filial responsibility of elder care is taken for granted and the majority of older parents are supported by their adult children (Chen & Silverstein, 2000, p. 43). However, according to some scholars, conditions are not conducive toward the practice of filial piety amongst the young: the parents care for the children rather than the other way around (Bell, 2010, p. 206). More broadly, there is widespread concern about the resilience of filial piety, particularly given the pace of economic modernization in China (Cheung & Kwan, 2009, p. 181). The concern is evident in state support for and legislation concerning filial support, and more broadly in the rehabilitation of Confucianism (Cheung & Kwan, 2009, p. 181).

Cheng and Chan (2006) suggest that there could be a fundamental difference in the norm for filial responsibility between East and West. Filial responsibility in the West is meant to fill the needs of the parents when they are not able to take care of themselves whereas in the East, “where Confucian ideas take hold, filial care is supposed to demonstrate how devoted the children are to the parent, and thus instil a sense of being esteemed no matter what” (Cheng & Chan, 2006, p. 268). Given such a subtle difference in the meaning of filial responsibility, and thus, in the future discussion, taking care of older parents in the Chinese context is related to physical, mental, and financial perspectives.

Chinese Families

Given the fact that the one-child policy was accomplished more successfully in urban than in rural areas, the birth rate is lower in urban areas (Sheng & Settles, 2006, p. 296). Therefore, the

three-person family consisting of father, mother and an only child has become one of the main family patterns in China in urban areas (Sheng & Settles, 2006, p. 296). Old kinship patterns have fragmented and the “4-2-1” (four grandparents, two parents and one child) family structure has emerged as the new dominant form (Zhang & Goza, 2006, p. 154). In addition, due to the implementation of the policy, some scholars argue that the only child in the family is likely to become selfish because he/she receives all the love of the family, being spoiled by both parents and grandparents as the treasure of the family and undermining the reciprocity required to return the love and support to their older parents (Deutsch, 2006, p. 369). The era of the only child coincides with a period of increasing prosperity in China (Deutsch, 2006, p. 369). Chinese families have unprecedented purchasing power, and their children may exert a bigger influence on family purchases than any children in the world (Deutsch, 2006, p. 369). Nonetheless, most parental purchases are directed toward their children’s educational needs (Deutsch, 2006, p. 369).

Certain social services such as nursing homes, homemaker services, and home health, are considered as outrageous in the context of filial piety because they represent a denial of responsibility of taking care of parents (Aroian, Wu & Tran, 2005, p. 101). Aroian, Wu and Tran (2005) further explain: “[if] people put their parents in a nursing home, this is Chinese behaving like Americans. They think taking care of elderly people is the government’s business” (101). Chinese elderly people, it is argued, want a public demonstration that their children cared for them (Aroian, Wu & Tran, 2005, p. 101). Eastern cultures worship dependence, reciprocity and obligation (Sheng & Settles, 2006, p. 294). Luborsky and McMullen (1999) find that Chinese elderly people are likely to rely on their children for financial support and caregiving in later life and “readily accept help without embarrassment” (Sheng & Settles, 2006, p. 294). However, Sheng (1991) argues that to the extent that economic security and current good health allow, Chinese elderly people like to have independence and the scope to make their own decisions (Sheng & Settles, 2006, p. 294). Chinese families maintain interdependence and obligation through mostly symbolic occasions, when there is not a specific need for care. Status values are enacted on top of actual interdependence and mutual respect (Sheng & Settles, 2006, p. 294).

Parents' Relationships to Their Children in China

It is necessary to also look at the relationships between Chinese parents and their child to further understand its unique features. Bond and Hwang (1986) summarize the three essential aspects of Confucian thought including: “(1) a person is defined by his or her relationships with others, (2) relationships are structured hierarchically, and (3) social order and harmony are maintained by each party honouring the requirements and responsibilities of the role relationships” (Chao, 1994, p. 1113). Chinese parenting styles are often thought of as being “authoritarian”, however, as researchers have argued, this does capture the functioning of Chinese parenting styles (Chao, 1994, p. 1113). The “authoritarian” concept is associated with “hostile, rejecting, and somewhat uninvolved parental behaviours toward the child” (Chao, 1994, p. 1113). However, instead of enforcing standards on the child, parents frequently want to preserve harmonious relations in the family as well as show concern concerns and care for children (Chao, 1994, p. 1113; Chau & Landreth, 1997, p. 76). Xu, Farver, Zhang, Zeng, Yu and Cai (2005) also discuss the meaning of authoritative parenting styles in a Chinese approach. Chinese parents are more likely to adopt an authoritative rather than an authoritarian or controlling parenting style when their standard of living has become higher such that their basic goals of child survival and health are met (Xu, Farver, Zhang, Zeng, Yu & Cai, 2005, p. 524).

Lim and Lim (2004) suggest that even in the context of immigration and acculturation Asian parenting styles continue to persist. Seen from a Western perspective, extreme parental controls over adolescent decision-making could be considered as “infantilization” (Lim & Lim, 2004, 29). However, this can be interpreted as filial piety from an Asian cultural perspective (Lim & Lim, 2004, 29). Lim and Lim (2004) point out that low levels of expressed warmth may not be equated with a lack of love and care even though it can become dissenting for immigrant children in Western societies (Lim & Lim, 2004, p. 29). For the parents from immigrant families, culture has a significant impact on parenting styles, and the traditional values and practices that are deeply rooted in Confucianism still have a great deal of influence on Chinese child-rearing practices (Chau & Landreth, 1997, p. 76). The strongest value is filial piety, which includes children’s obligation to respect their parents and the responsibility of the adult children for their elderly parents (Lim & Lim, 2004, p. 35). Parent-child relationships are hierarchical and characterized as formal, with clearly prescribed role relationships and lines of authority (Lim & Lim, 2004, p. 35). Parental control, obedience, strict discipline, filial piety, respect for elders, family obligations, maintenance

of harmony, and negation of conflict are emphasized in Chinese parenting, which most of the concepts are conflicting from the Western societal values (Chau & Landreth, 1997, p. 76). In traditional Chinese families, family interactions and structure are largely shaped by the teachings of Confucius, which stress filial piety and hierarchical relationships (Lim & Lim, 2004, p. 35).

Filial Piety and Chinese Modernization

China has been known for centuries for its traditions of respecting the old. While this tradition has been weakened in the modern era, it continues to remain as the most important value underlying the practice of supporting the old in present-day China (Chow, 1991, p. 209). Filial piety serves as the guideline for parents–child interaction and the traditional basis for harmonious intergenerational relationships within Chinese families (Yeh, Yi, Tsao & Wan, 2013, p. 278). China, however, has been a communist country since 1949, emphasizing ultimate loyalty to the nation (Yeh et al., 2013, p. 280). In principle, communist ideology rejects parental authority and any other forms of social hierarchies such as gender stratification, as a result it inevitably considers filial piety as authentically repulsive (Yeh et al., 2013, p. 280). This was particularly expressed in the context of the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976, which mobilized the young to rebel against their parents, severely harming the ethical basis for intergenerational solidarity (Yeh et al., 2013, p. 280). Except for the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution when the family system was in disarray and children were told not to respect their parents, filial piety has generally been observed in China while the family system has overall remained intact.

China is a latecomer in terms of economic modernization, having experienced rapid yet incomplete social transformation due to dramatic economic growth subsequent to the “reform and opening up” period (Yeh et al., 2013, p. 280). Changing filial values under the country’s consolidated regimes have arisen from commercialization rather than democratization (Yeh et al., 2013, p. 280). However, the pace of modernization and its impact on filial piety are likely to be varied within China especially between urban and rural areas. Thus, the changing meaning of filial piety in China is ambiguous and lacks consensus. Considering China’s modernization process and the currently prevailing policy, the changing trend of filial piety in China may be better characterized as “commercialization of the intergenerational relationship” (Yeh et al., 2013, p. 280). Having presented key elements to contextualize the research in this thesis, I now move on to the literature review in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Generally, immigration has various impacts on the receiving country and the sending country. People migrate for different reasons. As a result of immigration, many societies become culturally plural, which means that people from many cultural backgrounds come to live together in a diverse society (Berry, 1997, p. 7). In many cases they form cultural groups that are not equal in economic or political power (Berry, 1997, p. 7). These power differences have given rise to popular and social science terms such as “mainstream”, “minority”, and “ethnic group” (Berry, 1997, p. 7). Immigration in general has many economic values for the receiving country, such as the excess aggregate demand for domestic goods, the balance of payments, per capita income and the distribution of the national product, the stock of human capital, which is known as the brain drain controversy, and labour shortages (Epstein, 1974, p. 175). What’s more, even though opinions vary on the overall impact of highly skilled migration, there is a consensus that the movement of the highly skilled is now a key feature of increasingly globalized education and labour markets (Gribble, 2008, p. 25).

Migration literature generally agrees on several key factors which motivate individuals to move around, such as human capital investments, socioeconomic status, familial considerations, social networks, and local opportunities in places of origin compared to opportunities abroad (Kanaiaupuni, 2000, p. 1311). Even though it may seem that moving to another place is an individual behaviour, migration decisions and migration outcomes might not be necessarily neutral to the needs and constraints facing the migrants’ families who stay put (Lauby & Stark, 1988, p. 473). Migration decisions are made within a context of socially recognized and mutually reinforcing expectations that reflect several dimensions between individuals and their families in the context of societal institutions (Kanaiaupuni, 2000, p. 1311). As a result, migration is frequently best understood not as an individual decision but as a family strategy.

One of the differences between the student migration and the migrant workers is that the students receive from home while migrant workers sending money home from the receiving countries. Regardless, both the students and the migrant workers frequently have to be separate from their families. How can we understand the willingness to endure this separation? What motivates families to be separated from other members? What kinds of tensions does this create?

In what follows I explore different patterns of family migration strategies, namely those of Philippine, Mexican, Korean and Chinese migrants. Before discussing the following cases, it is necessary to indicate that the research's focus is on student migration population and I do not assume that temporary migrant workers only come from certain countries like Philippine or Mexico or international students only come from Korea or China. My intention is to discuss different migration situations to explore parallels and differences between the migration of Mainland Chinese international students and these other migratory situations. Specifically, to see how the notion of family strategy might be used to conceptualize the unique circumstances of Mainland Chinese international students in relation to the students' obligations to their family. Following this, I also briefly review literature that has explored student migrants' integration in general, and that of International Chinese migrant students in the United States.

Family Migration

People cross boundaries physically and move to other places in search of more opportunities. Migration generally refers to “moving across a national border [and is] often with the purpose of settling for a period of time” (Goldin, Cameron & Balarajan, 2012, p. 1). Canada and the United States are nations with large numbers of immigrants (Nichols & Tyyskä, 2015, p. 248). Most of the immigrants are from Asia, with the three leading source nations in 2011 being Philippines, China, and India (Nichols & Tyyskä, 2015, p. 248). In the total Canadian population, 19.1% are members of racialized groups and three quarters of them are immigrants (Nichols & Tyyskä, 2015, p. 248). Economic motivation remains the main reason for most immigrants to leave their country.

Family Migration – The Philippine Case

The Philippines was once a leading economy in Asia, yet it has suffered economic depression since the early 1980s and remains burdened by substantial foreign debts and periodic political turmoil (Lan, 2003, p. 137). In 1974, the Marcos administration initiated the “labour export policy”, which intended to be a “temporary measure” to ease massive unemployment levels and to bring in foreign currency, but it became “permanently temporary” in the following decades (Lan, 2003, p. 137; Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2005, p. 47). Nowadays, the Philippines has become the biggest labour-exporting country in Asia and is ranked second in the world only after

Mexico (Lan, 2003, p. 137). Domestic helpers, cleaners, and other service occupations account for half of the female migrant labour force in the Philippines (Lan, 2003, p. 137).

The most obvious form of ongoing transition is through remittances to family members back home. The Philippines is a prototypical labour export country with Manila, the national capital, serving as an important hub in global migration circuits (Barber, 2008, p. 1266). Due to the poor economic development in the country, many Filipinos choose to work abroad in order to economically support their families. Unlike many migrant workers, the Filipinos have an advantage in the global labour market because of their English proficiency (Lan, 2003, p. 134). Filipino migrant workers are known for their adequate education and English proficiency. The cultural and linguistic heritage of their colonizer from the U.S. ironically became a valuable human resource for Filipinos to seek economic opportunities elsewhere. Intrinsically, they possess a competitive advantage over migrants from other countries in the global labour market (Lan, 2003, p. 138).

In many countries, migration streams to the cities have been dominated by men because of the gendered and structural expectation that they perform the role of a financial supporter of the family. Yet in the Philippines, women's migration is as widespread as that of men. In addition, the remittances and goods shipped back enhance living standards and local economic wealth in villages and towns across the country (Kelly & Lusi, 2006, p. 839). Unsurprisingly, 60% of those who take on new contracts in foreign labour markets are women (Barber, 2008, p. 1267). Given the gendered nature of contemporary Philippine migration, particularly relative to women's employment in demeaned service jobs, this is a significant contribution to the national economy (Barber, 2008, p. 1267).

As Lauby and Stark (1988) suggest the migration movement of men is different from that of women (473). Women perform different roles from men in society, the economy and the family. Consequently, the reasons for their migration may also be different. In many cultures daughters are under the control of their parents to a greater degree than sons, and, correspondingly, the migratory behaviour of women may be influenced more than that of men by familial considerations (Lauby & Stark, 1988, p. 473). Despite the differences in household strategies and in migration patterns, the desire to help their families is one of the major reasons why women decide to go to work abroad (Asis, 2002, p. 75). The economic vulnerability of their families strongly influences women's decision about working abroad because it secures short-term and immediate economic

return. Most women rarely consider migration for personal ends but for the family's well-being (Asis, 2002, p. 77). Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2005) also suggest that Filipinas are more reliable than Filipinos because migrant women tend to be more responsible and send more money to the family (50). As Lauby and Stark (1988) point out, "[Filipino families are] willing to rely on daughters to supplement their incomes because traditionally daughters maintain close ties with their families of origin even after marriage" (485). Filipina workers are excluded from the options for permanent settlement and family reunification due to their contract-based employment contracts (Lan, 2003, p. 192).

However, the significance of remittance income and the increasing dependence on such sources of income for survival partially explains why more and more migrant workers are willing to endure emotionally painful separations from family members. Even though the temporary female migrant workers working abroad secure the economic needs of the family, it also introduces stresses into the family. The significance of women's migration has raised a debate over the impact of migration on the Philippine family and for children with absent mothers (Barber, 2008, p. 1271). Transnational intimacy does not provide full intimacy to the family (Parreñas, 2005, p. 333). The joys of physical contact, the emotional security of physical presence, and the familiarity allowed by physical proximity are still denied to transnational family members.

Family Migration – The Mexican Case

Mexican migrant workers also have a long history moving to the U.S. to seek seasonal or temporary job opportunities. During World War II, the United States introduced the *bracero* program to admit temporary agricultural labourers from Mexico to meet labour shortages, which partly emanated from conscription of American employees (Lucas, 2005, p. 234). Migrant farmworkers constitute almost half (42%) of the population employed in seasonal agricultural work in the United States (Munoz-Laboy, Hirsch & Quispe-Lazaro, 2009, p. 608). According to the National Agricultural Workers Survey, the farmworker population in the United States is predominantly (80%) male and young (two thirds are younger than 35 years of age) (Munoz-Laboy, Hirsch & Quispe-Lazaro, 2009, p. 608). It has been further estimated that 80% of migrant farmworkers in the United States are immigrants and that over 90% of these individuals are of Mexican origin (Magaña & Hovey, 2003, p. 75). Most farmworkers are married and have

children. They are also poor, with a median personal income between USD \$2500 and USD \$5000 (Munoz-Laboy, Hirsch & Quispe-Lazaro, 2009, p. 608). Migrant farmworkers are individuals who migrate from one location to another to earn a living in agriculture (Magaña & Hovey, 2003, p. 75). They generally live in the southern half of the country during the winter and migrate north before the planting or harvesting season (Magaña & Hovey, 2003, p. 75). Unlike the Filipino case mostly consisting of women, the farmworkers are mostly made up of young men. The flow of labour migration between Mexico and the United States is the largest in the world. The typical Mexican migrant intends to work in the United States temporarily with the idea of accumulating savings and returning home to make use of them (Sana & Massey, 2005, p. 513).

Some common stressors that farm migrant workers face include being away from family and friends, rigid work demands, poor housing conditions, low pay, hard physical labour, and lack of transportation or unreliable transportation (Magaña & Hovey, 2003, p. 79 – 81). In addition, Mexican migrant workers also have language barriers and most of them go to the States with an undocumented status (Magaña & Hovey, 2003, p. 80 – 81). Unlike the Filipinos who frequently use English, most Mexicans speak Spanish. What's more, their needs and rights cannot be guaranteed as a result of a lack of legal status. They are frequently subject to exploitation by employers and crew leaders leads to low wages, not being paid on time, inaccurate amounts in paychecks, and being excessively charged for supplies (Magaña & Hovey, 2003, p. 81). As a result, it is difficult for them to guarantee regular fixed remittances.

In both the Filipino and Mexican cases, regardless of the difference in the gender of migrants, providing financial support for the family influences the decision to work abroad. However, short-term improvements may lead to long-term problems (Skeldon, 2008, p. 3). Remittances may improve human capital but, in doing so, may lock certain populations into dependence upon further outmigration (Skeldon, 2008, p. 9). Migrant families do not have sufficient assets and resources to maintain intimate transnational relations.

Despite all the potential family risks that each migrant family might face, it shows that migration is not an individual decision made by an individual actor. Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2005) use the “household theory of labour migration” to demonstrate that decisions to migrate are rarely reached by individual actors without consideration of household needs (47). According to this theoretical perspective, labour migration is an economic strategy exercised by the

household to allocate human resources rationally in order to increase familial income (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2005, p. 47). To a certain extent, all migrants are influenced by the constraints, opportunities and objectives of people around them and especially by the needs and resources of their families (Caces, Arnold, Fawcett & Gardner, 1985, p. 5-6; Lauby & Stark, 1988, p. 473; Sana & Massey, 2005, p. 510). Labour migrants might understand the possible family risks that they will possibly face, but providing financial support is the primary goal for the family. As a result, the migrant workers are willing to take risks for the family. Indeed, there is a short term economic benefit for migrant workers working abroad, but they might face other challenges and risks that affect them in the long run.

Student Migration

International students are considered as immigrants in the receiving countries because they stay in the countries for a period of time with the purpose of pursuing a degree. International students play a distinct and increasingly recognized role in international migration systems (Szelényi, 2006, p. 66). Winters (2011) suggests that it is highly human capital areas that attract people to move to a particular city to pursue higher education (362). Many students develop location-specific human capital, such as relationships with local employers and friends, and these local attachments often make their current location the best place to start their careers and families (Winters, 2011, p. 362). Many international students try to remain in the destination country after graduation and get a work visa to join the workforce. Therefore, the local economic prospect is very important to the international students and their parents when they decide their study destination.

Some international students study abroad by themselves while others are accompanied by their parents, more specifically, with one parent staying abroad and another earning money in the sending countries. The latter phenomenon is referred to “split-household transitional families” (Jeong & Belanger, 2012, p. 259) or “astronaut family” (Waters, 2002, p. 118). Their familial arrangement generally involves the overseas migration of mothers and their children to English-speaking countries, mainly in the United States, Canada, or Australia (Jeong & Belanger, 2012, p. 259). Fathers remain in the home countries as breadwinners, working and sending money to their families overseas, and occasionally travelling to visit their families (Jeong & Belanger, 2012, p. 259). Those people generally come from the upper and middle-class backgrounds

(Jeong & Belanger, 2012, p. 259). The main objective of this type of student migration is allowing children to be educated in the English language and for the sake of the children's education, parents are willing to maintain a fractured family life for a long period of time even taking the risks of the possibility of a family dissolution (Jeong & Belanger, 2012, p. 262; Waters, 2002, p. 123). Much student migration can be understood economic migration projected into the future. For the purpose of this research, the main focus is the international students who study abroad alone. As a result, the following literature review will look at the international students who study abroad by themselves.

International Student Migration – The South Korean Case

In addition to the rapidly growing number of South Korean immigrants, many Koreans come to Canada to pursue their educational and career objectives with temporary permits (Kwak, 2012, p. 90). The rapid growth in a number of international students and visitors from South Korea has been phenomenal since a visa exemption was granted to Koreans in 1994 (Kwak, 2012, p. 90). In the late 1990s, South Korea was the leading source of international student inflows to Canada (Kwak, 2012, p. 90).

In one study, South Korean international students were asked why they decided to study abroad, the interviewees' answers were largely structured around a traditional model of migration that concerned "push" and "pull" factors (Kwak, 2012, p. 93). The push factors focused on the negative aspects of Korean society and its educational system, and the pull factors involved considering Canada as a good destination for international education (Kwak, 2012, p. 93). Similar to most East Asian countries, South Korea is known to have a highly competitive and stressful educational system (Kwak, 2012, p. 94). In South Korea, education is believed to be the only way to elevate one's social status (Kwak, 2012, p. 94). Therefore, Korean parents intensively put efforts into educating their children to enable them to seek admission to the best schools at almost any cost (Moon, 2011, p. 164).

Koreans perceive English as a symbol of egalitarianism and democracy when introduced by American and British Christian missionaries (Moon, 2011, p. 165). Evidence of "English fever" or "English madness" or "Englishisation" in education can be seen in many different developments in South Korea (Moon, 2011, p. 165). At the initial stage, most of the young international students who study abroad did not make the decision, the parental decision is

influenced by parents' dissatisfaction with the education system in Korea and the role of English as an international language (Moon, 2011, p. 163). Since education is highly related to the social prestige, parents decide to send their children to study abroad with the intention that they will attain a degree from one of the top universities and English proficiency in their career. Kwak (2012) point out that many Korean companies believe that learning English means more than the capacity to speak another language. It also comes with the assumption that students should be familiar with the Western culture thoroughly as they must have the opportunities to interact with the foreigner students and the culture. This will be eventually beneficial in South Korean companies in the increasingly competitive international market (Kwak, 2012, p. 89).

International Student Migration – The Chinese Case

In the absence of a scholarly research providing a broad overview of Chinese student migration, I will discuss research looking at this phenomenon in the United States. It is an important country in terms of Chinese student migration, and a country that shares cultural similarities with Canada. With the opening-up of the Chinese economy since its economic reforms in the 1970s, there has been significant migration flows from China. Whilst in traditional migration theory emigration is driven by conflict, poverty, environmental degradation, most Chinese migrants are amongst the better-off people benefited from the economic development (Shen, 2005, p. 430). In the past two decades, there has not only been an increase in quantity, but also a more diverse flow, particularly with the emergence of student migration. Rapid economic growth in China requires a vast amount of highly educated workers in the labour market and thus adds more incentives for medium and upper class Chinese families, especially those in the coastal areas (which are in the forefront of economic reform), to send their children abroad to seek advanced education opportunities (Shen, 2005, p. 430). It is reported that India and China have the biggest proportion of international students in the United States who do not plan to return to their home country (Lucas, 2005, p. 245; Sarkar & Rashmi, 2015, p. 191). This opens up new possibilities for my research as how the Mainland Chinese international students shall fulfill their responsibilities if some of them do not intend to return home and what their thoughts are when they make such a decision.

There are both push and pull factors for Chinese families to send their children abroad. Parallel to South Koreans, the prestige of foreign degrees and advancement in English and

foreign languages are the key factors for securing a well-paid job in China (Shen, 2005, p. 430). The fierce competition for National University Entry examinations together with family pressure for university education has also pushed the study abroad wave (Shen, 2005, p. 430). The education system in China, with a four-year bachelor degrees and another two years for Masters qualifications, is lengthy compared with some European countries such as the UK (Shen, 2005, p. 430).

Obviously, there are many international students coming from all around the world. Since this research focuses on the Chinese international student population, only a few Asian countries are selected to be discussed in the literature review. Comparing the Korean and Chinese student migration cases, reveals that, similar to the family migration strategies, the decision of studying abroad is also a collective rather than an individual decision. The expansion of education has led to increased competition in the schools also precipitating the process of “credential inflation” (Waters, 2005, p. 366). Overseas education offers something rarer and consequently more valuable than the norm in the home countries even though it may no longer true when student migration increases massively. As a result, attributable to the societal pressure in the home countries, parents who can afford to send children to study abroad do so to enable them to receive, in their definition, a “better” education than at home. In both Korean and Chinese cases, social success is based on academic success.

Academic success leads to social success because it is believed to enable a student to get a prestigious job and later accumulate financial ability to replicate the social status that parents have, but this is not an easy process to achieve. Comparison and competition always exist amongst people who are in the same generation in Asian societies, and thus staying on the top means standing out in the competition. The whole journey of attaining success probably starts when the student is only a toddler. Some parents start to worry about looking for a high-ranking kindergarten for the child because it is closely related to getting into a great elementary school. During the whole elementary school period, students not only learn school materials, but also other extracurricular ones to continuously stay on top of the invisible and yet stressful competitions. Up to this stage, there are two types of situations. The first situation, which occurs to a small proportion of people, is getting admission into one of the highest-ranking universities and continuing to stand out of the game. In this case, they might or might not choose to study abroad. The second situation, which happens to most of the people, is that students cannot get

into the top universities. In these circumstances, parents might be worried that if their child remains they will not be successful in the future. Therefore, they might consider sending the child to study abroad because a foreigner credential might make the child stand out in the future. Getting a degree from a high-ranking university symbolizes the child is more special than others who do not have the opportunities to do so.² Overseas education is perceived as the most pivotal means to escape from the fierce competition prevalent throughout the local education system. Most families believe that the success of the children and the reproduction of their family's middle-class status are related to specific academic credentials (Waters, 2005, p. 367).

However, unlike the family migration strategies described above in the context of Philippine and Mexican migrants that seek immediate remittances to send home, the student migration population seeks long-term "remittances". Remittances have to be understood differently in the context of international student migration. It is clear that students do not in a literal way remit. However, there is a future remittance of sorts resulting from the expectation that children will provide economic support in the future and have the economic security to support their parents emotionally and physically as they age. This differs from some other family strategies that also focus on study abroad. Family decisions to send children to study abroad with the intention of obtaining foreign credentials, prestigious jobs, is a search for long-term economic need rather than seeking to meet an immediate one.

In addition to receiving foreign education, some international students have invested heavily in migration (Singh & Cabraal, 2010, p. 25). For example, the policy in Australia linking education and migration is aimed at getting "designer migrants" to satisfy the needs of a younger professional labour force at little cost (Singh & Cabraal, 2010, p. 21). For example, since 2001 permanent residence (PR) in Australia has been an important reason for some international students seeking education in Australia. Migration is the main driver for those who plan their education with a PR in mind (Kwak, 2012, p. 105; Singh & Cabraal, 2010, p. 21; Robertson, 2011, p. 103). Although it may seem that there is a bright future waiting for the students after they graduate, the reality might not necessarily be as easy as they thought. Most of the job openings are directed to local students (Lee & Rice, 2007, p. 401; Kwak, 2012, p. 104). Being excluded from employment due to their international status is one example (Lee & Rice, 2007, p. 401).

² According to the author's personal experience.

What's more, despite the fact that many international students aim at obtaining PR after graduation, the period is very time and emotionally consuming. Residency always signifies a further distancing from their family because the process of obtaining citizenship is relatively long (Robertson, 2011, p. 112). Even though obtaining citizenship might be part of the family strategy for most international students, there are definitely some struggles and conflicts in the process. While Alberts and Hazen (2006) see families back in the home country largely as a force that draws international students back, the family paradoxically acts as both a push and a pull (Robertson, 2011, p. 112). Both informal and formal social ties play important roles in students' migratory behaviours (Szelényi, 2006, p. 77). This influence was most readily noticeable in students' relationships with friends and families (Szelényi, 2006, p. 77). Desires to secure citizenship for their family's future urges them to stay, yet the longing to be with the family urge them to return home (Robertson, 2011, p. 112). The costs involved in accumulating capacities for mobility are perceived as significant sacrifices (Robertson, 2011, p. 112). Gaining PR only represents the end of one phase of their journey toward full membership and toward reunion with their families (Robertson, 2011, p. 112). Additionally, the majority of the students have to work for low paid and low-skilled jobs in the period between obtaining their qualifications and obtaining their residency regardless how high they achieve academically (Robertson, 2011, p. 110).

Chinese Student Migrant Experience

In 1978, the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping promoted the sending of 860 students and scholars to study abroad. A survey conducted in 2001 by China's National Bureau of Statistics shows that most Chinese families invest one third of their income in their children's education (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002, p. 85). This is driven by the belief of Chinese parents that a good education will guarantee a better future (Waters, 2005, p. 366).

With one third of family income likely to be spent funding study abroad, economic push factors such as improved employment should not be underestimated as determinants in decision-making (Bodycott, 2009, p. 363). Students who study abroad have employment options either in the host country or at home. Those who choose to return home with a foreign degree or who stay on and work in the host country will have better prospects and a brighter future. From a cultural perspective, influenced by the traditional aspect of family life known as "filial piety", such

graduates will then in turn be better placed to provide future support for parents (Bodycott, 2009, p. 363). Studies of single-child families in Mainland China have shown the child feels especially responsible for their parents' happiness and well-being, which is a lifelong obligation and one that can be reinforced, and not diminished by a period of study abroad (Deutsch, 2006, p. 366). Parents see studying abroad as a way to ensure the best for their child, which in turn will provide longer-term social and economic benefits for the family (Bodycott, 2009, p. 364). This is due to the one-child policy in which parents are under pressure to make their child a winner with a single child to raise (Kallgren & Fong, 2004, p. 1104). Chinese parents willingly make sacrifices for the sake of the child's education (Zhang & Carrasquillo, 1995, p. 2). As seen in the previous chapter, regardless of how times change, many families still firmly practice filial piety, especially in single-child families of Mainland China (Deutsch, 2006, p. 385).

In the case of Chinese international students, the pursuit of credentials and prestigious jobs not only potentially reproduces the family prestige, but also a strategy to enable Chinese students to take care of their parents in the future. To be successful, the strategy requires that the student be away accumulating educational capital, work experience and even permanent residence. However, these create problems for the Chinese family where the expectation is not just economic security in parents' old age but also emotional and physical support. Students are torn between returning home for familial responsibility and staying in the receiving countries (Robertson, 2011, p. 112).

The Uncertainty of Being International Students

As Sandhu (1994) suggests, international students appear to have more adjustment difficulties than exchange students and local students; exchange students have a social support system provided by the host families, while enjoying their time in the host country (231). The experience of international students is more uncertain, not knowing when they will be able to return home (Sandhu, 1994, p. 231). Sometimes it is frightening and difficult to establish a sense of belonging because the demands of the host culture might be different with regard to many aspects of one's own culture and the lifestyles (Sandhu, 1994, p. 230).

The seriousness and severity of emotional pain associated with migration is so real and traumatic that it has been given many special names to understand the situations of international students. "Ward (1967) called it 'a foreign student syndrome', suffering from an extremely high

level of anxiety-related problems but having no recognizable physical signs and symptoms” (Sandhu, 1994, p. 230). “Zwingman (1978) called the migration experience of foreign students a phenomenon of ‘uprooting disorder’ with identifiable psychological symptoms of alienation, nostalgia, depression, and sense of helplessness” (Sandhu, 1994, p. 230). In some severe cases, their profound sense of helplessness and hopelessness may be an indication of depression (Mori, 2000, p. 139). What’s more, the international students may get frustrated by the transitory nature of their status in the host country and by the uncertainty about their immediate future (Mori, 2000, p. 139), which is applicable to the Mainland Chinese international students. Some students may feel guilty about living a “wealthier” lifestyle than that of people in their own country (Mori, 2000, p. 139). Even though international students face more problems in the host countries, international students sadly have fewer resources than their counterparts to solve their adjustment problems (Sandhu, 1994, p. 230).

Cultural Impacts on Immigrants

Although international students choose to study abroad to experience different cultures, it does not mean they leave their culture behind once they live in another country. As Faist (2010) points out, symbolic ties in cultures transmit meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities such as public and private activities (210). Cultural retention usually goes hand in hand with adaptation of new elements. Immigrant culture can thus never be identical with the country of origin culture. Much evidence points to the thesis that cultural practices and meanings do not simply disappear (Faist, 2000, p. 214). Ong (1999) illustrates that the social and cultural life overseas Chinese is a particularly rich and complicated form of transnationalism because the Chinese diasporas retains a strong relationship with China and host countries (Ong, 1999, p. 17). The transnational flows and networks have always been the key dynamics in shaping cultural practices, the formation of identity and the shifts in state strategies (Ong, 1999, p. 17). Furthermore, culture is seen as a set of core values which underlie social interaction amongst Chinese people. As a result of socialization and other reinforcing factors, these core values tend to change only gradually, over generations rather than years. (Lockett, 1988, p. 486).

For immigrant Chinese, being Chinese and being American may be negatively related to each other. Unlike the American-born Chinese (ABC), immigrant Chinese are immersed in Chinese culture prior to their migration (Tsai, Ying & Lee, 2000. p. 305). In all contexts of their

lives, they are Chinese. Once they move to the United States, however, they encounter contexts that are American (Tsai, Ying & Lee, 2000. p. 305). To function effectively in these contexts, they must adopt certain aspects of American culture and abandon certain aspects of Chinese culture. Therefore, as immigrants become more American, they may become less Chinese (Tsai, Ying & Lee, 2000. p. 305). If occurs to Chinese immigrants, could it happen to the Mainland Chinese international students as well?

Furthermore, for Chinese immigrants, the relations between levels of engagement in Chinese and American cultures and their notions of being Chinese and being American may change over time (Tsai, Ying & Lee, 2000. p. 306). As immigrants spend more time in the United States, their levels of exposure to, and experiences with, Chinese and American cultures change (Tsai, Ying & Lee, 2000. p. 306). Prior to migration, Chinese immigrants view themselves as solely Chinese. This may be particularly true for individuals who remain in their Chinese homelands until adolescence, during which they may begin to form a Chinese identity (Tsai, Ying & Lee, 2000. p. 305). Immediately after arriving in the United States, it is likely that they continue to view themselves as Chinese. For them, being Chinese is natural, intuitive, and effortless. Being Chinese is both internally and externally experienced as part of their self-concept (Tsai, Ying & Lee, 2000. p. 306). As immigrants spend more time in the United States and their facility with American culture increases, they may begin to internalize being American (Tsai, Ying & Lee, 2000. p. 307).

Conclusion

To summarize, the migration literature suggests the importance of conceptualizing migration as a family strategy rather than just an individual undertaking. Family strategies are frequently an attempt to maximize income and even chances of survival. In addition, the use of remittances for consumption and investment can only be fully understood through a ‘whole-household economy’ approach (Castles, 2000, p. 272). My review shows that there can, nonetheless, be important differences for instance between Mexican and Filipino migration, but also be between migration to work as opposed studying. I have also reviewed the literature looking at the particularity of the experience of Chinese international students. In the next chapter, I draw on the literature reviewed here to develop a theoretical framework that outlines a family migration strategy for Mainland International Chinese students.

Chapter 3: Statement of the Problem, Research Questions, Theoretical Framework and Methods

Introduction

In chapter one and chapter two, I have drawn attention to some differences between Chinese and Western families. These are not absolute differences and there is a lot of variation within both. However, scholars do identify differences in family values that are linked to different cultural traditions and to the empirical patterning of family life. As previously mentioned, Chinese families heavily emphasize the interdependence of family members. The notion of independence is less central than it is in Western society. In the latter, it is frequently associated with the idea of independence.

Nevertheless, even though taking care of older parents is a norm for the Chinese, some students typically do not want to live with parents even if they anticipate living in the same city and other studies show an increasing preference for both generations of separate residences, especially amongst the well-educated due to the rise of individualism (Deutsch, 2006, p. 383). Individualism today competes with the traditional collectivism of the Chinese family (Deutsch, 2006, p. 383). Students, whether the only child or not, anticipate a future in which they will rely on the market rather than the family, live on their own, and pursue their own ambitions sometimes in defiance of their parents' preferences (Deutsch, 2006, p. 383). While Western societies stress autonomy, Chinese culture traditionally deemphasizes individuality and focuses on the interdependence of the individual. Does this mindset also apply to the Chinese international students studying abroad while they are directly exposed to the Western ideas? What is more if the strategy of "delayed remittances" requires reciprocity is this compatible with new ideas of autonomy? What happens to filial piety in this case? Can filial piety be maintained at a distance?

Research Questions

My main research question for this study is: "how do Chinese international students balance family responsibilities while living in Canada?" Some sub-questions that I want to look at include the following: what Chinese international students understand their family responsibilities to be? How do Mainland Chinese international students perceive the concept of autonomy after spending a proportion amount of time in Canada? Do they consider the importance of family responsibility

when they arrive the same as after spending a certain amount of time in Canada? How does the Mainland Chinese international student population balance between their familial responsibility and their future?

Theoretical Framework

Chinese Family Strategy: Delayed Remittances

Unlike the situation of Filipino and Mexican migrant workers, which typically requires immediate remittances to be sent home, that of international Chinese students can be conceptualized in terms of delayed remittances. As seen earlier, there are an increasing number of Chinese families that are becoming more financially capable of sending their children to study abroad. This migratory choice can be related to Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital"³ and its relationship to social reproduction (Waters, 2006, p. 180). As previously discussed, despite the fact that there are many different reasons and motivations for people to migrate, frequently migration is not an individual action. Instead, it is co-determined by the family members of the migrant's household. Whether in search of a job opportunities or education abroad, it makes sense to look at the migrant's family context.

For instance, there is a widespread perception that local employers in Hong Kong have a strong preference for graduates who have overseas university degrees over those with a local university degree (Waters, 2006, p. 180). The local media frequently emphasizes the inadequacies of formal education throughout East and Southeast Asia whilst simultaneously observing that local graduates are effectively excluded from many of the most desirable occupations (Waters, 2006, p. 180). In addition, demand for higher education has traditionally been driven by expectations of its ability to raise the economic and social status of the graduate (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 82). For people in less developed countries, limited access to education in their own countries leads to a significant rise in the number of international students studying overseas (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 82). As a result, many families decide to send their children to study abroad to obtain foreign credentials with the hopes of future success. Needless to say, families play a central role in the migration process regardless of whether the people are migrants, workers, or students.

³ Bourdieu (1986) argues that cultural capital exists in three circumstances: "institutionalized" by the academic qualifications, 'embodied' in the attributes and characteristics of the person, and 'objectified' in material artefacts" (Waters, 2006, p. 180).

What makes contemporary Mainland Chinese students distinctive is that most of them are the only child in their family. It means that parents are more willing to devote time and money on the only child, who represents a future hope for the security of the family. In an effort to secure a better-off future, many families, who are financially capable, decide to pay for their child's more expensive foreign education because it is understood as a strategy that contributes to securing the child's future. This can also be conceptualized as a long-term investment in the child, with the hope that the child will obtain a prestigious job after he/she finishes school. Ideally, the student not only knows English well, but also has different cultural experiences that are perceived as being valuable in the Chinese labour market. In the context of filial piety ideology, the child will be in a better position to take care of his/her parents when they get old.

As for the student migration population, most travel abroad with the intention of obtaining a foreign credential, and reproducing the family's social class in the long run. Frequently it also involves securing permanent residence (PR) status as well. This migratory process then provides an important means by which the middle-class families seek to reproduce their social status across generations, such as through academic recognition and distinction (Waters, 2006, p. 180). But it is also challenging for international students to achieve all these goals in a short period of time. Since Chinese society heavily emphasizes interdependency amongst family members and the requirement that children stay as close to their parents as possible, students who are away from home may encounter difficulties in maintaining the integrity of their family ties. Students cannot assist their parents whenever they might need help. Therefore, while waiting for their PR, the physical distance sometimes makes the students feel torn between being homesick and obtaining a permanent residence. The family strategy therefore requires students to spend an extended length of time away from their parents; this is antithetical to the requirement of proximity. It is the extended period of the family strategy of delayed remittances in a country that understands familial obligations differently that I think might create important tensions in the family strategy of Chinese students.

Filial Piety and Responsibility for Elder Care

In order to further develop the framework, I now summarize and conceptualize my discussion of filial piety and the responsibility for elder care introduced in chapter two. Family remains a key social institution for the transmission of values associated with filial piety. Consequently, family

orientation remains important to most Chinese individuals. In addition, most Chinese are taught that group interests are always above individual interests. This orientation differs from the Western one that generally tends to value independence and self-reliance. An international student can potentially experience the conflicts between these two opposing orientations while studying abroad. The conceptual framework I am developing attempts to provide the means of exploring these issues. In other words, I am not saying that this is the case but given the findings in the scholarly literature, it is reasonable hypothesis to test.

It is important to recognize that there is, of course, a lot of empirical variation in reality. For instance, filial piety is likely to vary across the urban/rural setting and even according to the type of dwelling available in urban settings. Similarly, despite the importance of autonomy in the west, much variation can be expected for instance between south European countries, where extended family ties are stronger, compared to those in North America. What is more, even within the U.S. and Canada, one would also expect important variation. For this reason, we draw on the Weberian notion of the ideal type to develop a concept of filial piety.

Weber invented the term “ideal type”. It is a term that bundles past and present, giving shape and sense to disparate, empirically observable attributes (Wachholz & Stuhr, 1999, p. 330)). The core is the discrepancy between this invented ideal type and what once can observe empirically (Wachholz & Stuhr, 1999, p. 330). Filial piety is an attitude, a value, and a behavioural prescription that evolved as part of a structured set of five relationships central to the representation so of behavioural norms in East Asian society, including Chinese society (Liu, Ng, Weatherall & Loong, 2000, p. 213). I propose that the concept of delayed remittances, as it applies in the context of international Chinese students, is very much tied to the social relationships that are constructed around the notion of filial piety. Filial piety can be understood as the moral glue that underpins the strategy of delayed remittances. In order to explore what role it plays in this Chinese family strategy, I develop an ideal type of filial piety that I will be able to use in my analysis of the data. Since the research’s focus is on Mainland Chinese international students, I explore filial piety in relation to Chinese society.

Table 1: The Ideals of Filial Piety

Elements
1. Gratitude: always feel great about the love and support that parents provide

2. Reciprocity: always return the love and supports to parents
3. Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial: provide monetary support if parents need it - Emotional: provide it when parents need it - Cohabitation: live with parents when they get older to provide physical support - Proximity: if the children cannot live together with their parents, they should try to stay in a closer place just in case if their parents need their help
4. Self-Sacrifice: parents' matters always come first and are always superior to personal matters
5. Economic Success: this becomes the priority for all the things happen. With a decent and stable job, the adult children could have stable income to not only support themselves, but also provide the support of their parents. Without the economic success, the adult child has to always look for financial opportunity, which takes away the opportunity to provide physical support to their parents.

In the ideal of filial piety, children should stay close to their parents in order to provide physical support when required. However, the migration strategy means that when students study abroad, they cannot provide the in-person physical support to their parents. Although they can contact them via phone and other social media, it is not quite the same as frequently being “physically” present. Additionally, given the extended time of the separation, it is reasonable to wonder whether it changes the nature of the relationship of filial piety between the students and their parents.

Chinese Autonomy and Western Autonomy

Another important aspect of the success of migratory status revolves around what might happen to the sense of responsibility engendered by filial piety when the students find themselves in social-cultural context where responsibility is understood in a more individualistic sense. In order to conceptualize this aspect of the migratory experience of Chinese students, I proceed to develop the ideal types of Chinese and Western autonomy.

Though not excluding diversity within, Chinese and Anglo-Western cultures are profoundly and fundamentally different in their valuing of autonomy, independence and family

obligations⁴ (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 260). Chinese people have been characterized as possessing traditions of respecting parental authority and downplaying individual autonomy in the service of family cohesion and solidarity (Fuligni, 1998, p. 783). Many observers have cited the existence of these norms within Chinese families, emphasizing the importance of parent-child hierarchies and the obligations of children to their families (Fuligni, 1998, p. 783). As we saw in chapter 2, Chinese culture has emphasized filial piety and responsibility for the family, placing family needs above individual needs, the interdependence of family members, and the importance of conformity to the rules of good behaviour (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 260). The expression of individual needs and desires is culturally marked as selfish, and individuals are expected to accept authority, especially that of the family (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 260). In contrast, Western cultures, in the context of modernity, have increasingly valued the needs, rights and achievements of the individual, with a positive valuation of self-reliance, individualism, personal freedom, and independence (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 260). Conformity, obedience, and an orientation towards the collective good are generally perceived as less desirable (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 260). These differences between Chinese and Western values have been captured in the individualism-collectivism dimension (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 260).

In empirical studies, Chinese youths are found to value autonomy less and conformity more than other values (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 260). They place high priority on filial piety, and respect and obedience to parents and other authorities (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 260). Given the Western emphasis on autonomy and independence, and the view of adolescence as a transitional stage to adulthood, one of the central tasks for youth in Western societies is to become self-reliant in preparation for leaving home and setting up an independent life (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, p. 260). As a result, Western and Chinese high school students differ in their age expectations for autonomy (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1991, p. 17). Generally, Chinese youths have later expectations than Western youth (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1991, p. 17). Chinese and Western cultural groups also differ in the descriptions of their family environments and in the values they endorse. Specifically, Chinese youth describe themselves as placing significantly less value on individualism, competence, and outward success and more value on tradition and universal pro-social behaviours than their Western counterparts.

⁴ Although some research differentiates amongst autonomy, independence, and individualism, I will use them interchangeably.

Triandis' (1995) argues that "the experience of autonomy corresponds less with Eastern cultures that embrace collectivistic instead of individualistic values" (Vansteenkiste, Zhou, Lens, & Soenens, 2005, p. 469). They also concur with Markus and Kitayama's (1991) argument "[autonomy] is less relevant for individuals who hold an interdependent instead of an independent self-concept" (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005, p. 469). The concepts of autonomy, self-direction, and personal freedom are less salient concerns for people in Eastern societies (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005, p. 469). Similarly, Olsen et al. (2002) and Quoss and Zhao (1995) argue that parents in Eastern societies are less focused on promoting autonomy (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005, p. 469). With regard to the Chinese cultural context particularly, the support of autonomy appears to be a less common socialization practice because of the prevailing Confucian values (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005, p. 469).

In contrast, "high emphasis is placed on conformity and family interdependence" and "the maintenance of social harmony and family support are often seen as lifelong obligations" (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005, p. 469). If the promotion of autonomy is a less culturally congruent experience in Eastern cultures, are Chinese international students' perceptions of autonomy changed as a result of their stay in western societies? Much cosmopolitanism research suggests that globalization forces have an important impact on values making them more fluid and changeable. However, it is important to understand that the way values change depends on embedded social processes. This can be seen in how increased individualization in Western Europe and the development of individualization in China have followed different paths even when they were both reacting to economic globalization.

Chinese Individualism and Western Individualism

Individualism in China is not non-existent just generally, as far as the literature indicates, less valued. It is also a relatively new phenomenon. It began to surface in Mao's period. On the surface, Maoist China was a highly developed collectivist society where individuals had almost entirely lost their freedom and autonomy as they could not even choose where to work or to reside, much less to which social or political group they would belong. At a deeper level, however, the Chinese individual was also dis-embedded, in many cases forcefully, from the traditional networks of family, kinship, communities and the constraints of the traditional, mostly

Confucian and patriarchal, values and behavioural norms (Yan, 2010, p. 492). Nonetheless, individual interests remained secondary to the group or the collective (493).

Yan argues that China and Western Europe have both had to contend with the pressure towards individualization under the impact of globalization (Yan, 2010, p. 507). In both cases, the states were forced to reduce the previous dependence of individuals on state-sponsored institutions, and the individuals were compelled to become more self-reliant (Yan, 2010, p. 507). However, there are differences in the development of individualism in both cases. Yan (2010) draws on Giddens (1991) to argue that globalization induced individualization in Western Europe started in an affluent society under political democracy where individual rights and freedom were legally protected and material needs were no longer the primary goal of social progress (507).

In contrast, individualization in China started in an economy of shortage and widespread poverty where individual rights and freedoms were suppressed for the sake of national survival and satisfaction of material needs (Yan, 2010, p. 507). What's more, modernity in China is understood as the realization of three dreams: a strong state, a wealthy nation, and a prosperous individual (Yan, 2010, p. 507). As a result, social progress tends to be measured primarily by material standards (Yan, 2010, p. 507). Second, the different departure points result in different paths to the current wave of individualization (Yan, 2010, p. 507). In Western Europe, the first wave of individualization took place with the gradual arrival of modernity during the last 300 years (Yan, 2010, p. 507). During this process, the basic liberal idea that the individual is naturally autonomous and a self-determining agent and thus born with a set of individual rights is widely accepted and various mechanisms have been created to limit the state's power in order to protect the individual (Yan, 2010, p. 507–508).

Nonetheless, Chinese culture places group interest over individual interest and the individual belongs and remains secondary to the group or the collective (Yan, 2010, p. 493). As Yan (2010) suggests, the key to understanding the Chinese case of individualization is to treat it as a specific strategy to pursue modernity (509). A common thread in the discourse and practice of the Chinese individualization is that the individual must take more responsibility and proactive actions for the sake of achieving the wealth and power of the nation-state, namely, the modernization of the country (Yan, 2010, p. 493). Therefore, though on the surface it seems that both Western and Chinese students equally value education and career, the theoretical discussion

above suggests, however, that this might be due for different reasons and for different purposes. Given this, when Chinese international students encounter new conceptions of success and autonomy, how do they negotiate this? Are they open to new conceptions of autonomy? Do they see themselves and their familial and citizenship responsibilities differently? The extent to which international students interact with local students is going to have an important impact on their contact with new notions of individualism? This in turn will depend on how well-adjusted students feel.

In order to have a better conceptual understanding of the differences between Chinese and Western autonomy. A table is created below to illustrate Chinese and Western individual autonomy as ideal types.

Table 2: Chinese and Western Individual Autonomy

	Chinese Individual Autonomy	Western Individual Autonomy
Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Downplay individual autonomy to serve family cohesion and solidarity - Family needs always above individual needs - Expected to family authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerned more on individual needs, rights, and achievements
Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interdependence of family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive valuation of self-reliance, self-direct individualism, and personal freedom
Family obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect parental authority - Lifelong obligations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central task for the youth is to learn to become self-independent in preparation for leaving home and setting up an independent life
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expression of individual needs and desires is considered selfish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conformity, obedience and collective orientation are less desirable

	- Place little emphasis on individualism	
The Cause of Individualism	- Started in an economy shortage where individual rights and freedoms were suppressed	- Started in an affluent society where individual rights and freedom are legally protected
The Goals of Individualism	- Economic prosperity - Contribute to the collective - Self-realization: economic success	- Limited state power in order to protect the individual rights

Variables Influencing Adjustment of International Students with the Local Students

In attempting to explore how international Chinese students negotiate the competing claims of Western and Chinese autonomy and its impact on their sense of familial responsibility, it is important to explore to what extent and how the students encounter Western conceptions of autonomy while studying abroad. These include factors that might either inhibit or further international student integration such as the students’ national-linguistic backgrounds, their individual personalities, their programs of study, their length of stay, and the social context (Cameron, 2006, p. 1). Drawing on the discussion in the literature review, the following variables are the most theoretically important. According to Jackson and Heggins (2003), Asian international students experience the conflicts in adjustment, communication, learning, participation, family factors, and traditional values.

Adjustment

Students attending institutions of higher education have difficulties in adjusting to the campus environment, particularly international students. International students encounter an environment in which the language, norms, laws, and the people are different from their home countries. This factor is quite the reason why Asian international students do not feel comfortable and to some degree marginalized within the academy (Jackson & Heggins III, 2003, p. 385). For most international students, entering university can be an overwhelming life and cultural transition. Trice’s (2003) study found that one of the difficulties for Asian international students in integrating

into the local society is due to their self-segregation (Trice, 2003, p. 395). Zhai (2002) pointed out that many Asian international students feel very isolated from the domestic students and the culture (8). They do not talk to others from different nationalities. International students and domestic students rarely interact. When international students first move to a new country, it is understandable that they rely on friends to help them through the transition since they are so far away from their families. Unsurprisingly, international students first befriend others of the same ethnic group because they can speak the same language and have cultural values in common. They are just naturally attracted to each other due to homophily, which is the tendency of individuals to associate and to bond with others who are similar (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001, p. 416). People normally feel comfortable hanging out with those who are similar to them. Often, these international students become more comfortable with each other as they spend more time together and they lose the motivation to make friends outside of their ethnic groups. In addition, international students sometimes encounter the rejection from the host country (Lee & Rice, 2007, p. 381).

Communication

A lack of proficiency in the English language is one of the greatest problems amongst international students, particularly those from Asian countries (Jackson & Heggins III, 2003, p. 385). For many of these international students, English is not their first language. English proficiency and culture are primarily attributed to adjustment challenges (Andrade, 2006, p. 131). Lebcir, Wells and Bond (2008) point out that it is difficult to understand a culture without understanding its language (269). Recognizing that international students experience multiple adjustments within the campus culture, navigating the academic curriculum is a challenge. Because of their native culture, their classroom behaviour may be perceived as passive and shy. Due to language barriers, they may have problems taking notes, answering questions, and writing essays. Although they have excelled academically in their home countries, marginal competence in English can affect their ability to concentrate on lectures and other factors within the curriculum.

Learning

In addition to developing their communication skills, international students also have to develop methods to be successful students. Adjustment is partially related that the degree to which the

student's native culture is similar to the American culture (Jackson & Heggins III, 2003, p. 385). For example, the first and second year international students may experience more difficulty with adjusting to collegiate life and communicating with professors than upper-class international students (Jackson & Heggins III, 2003, p. 385). It can be concluded that as international students persist through higher education, they develop strategies that enable them to be successful students. Wang and Mallinckrodt (2006) point out Chinese international students encounter difficulties because of the academic and social norms between Chinese and American cultures (422). For instance, Chinese students are usually taught to be compliant, withhold expressing their thoughts and questions until they are invited to do so by their professors (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006, p. 422). However, they are expected by the professors to actively participate in class. As a result, the international students have the pressure to quickly adapt the overwhelming environment. In addition, most Chinese international students are socialized with beliefs about the virtues of humbleness, emotional restraint, self-effacement, and saving face (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006, p. 422). When interacting in social situations, they are likely to have difficulty fitting in with the American style of social conversation, which features more direct expression of feelings and expectations of sharing at least some personal information. This process is very intimidating and overwhelming for most of the Chinese international students (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006, p. 423).

Participation

There is considerable research in higher education that links factors of involvement and its relationship with persistence, retention, and graduation (Jackson & Heggins III, 2003, p. 386). The main concerns of Asian international students seem to be their family, cultural differences, and social interaction. For Asian international students, participation seems to be centred on creating a support system with other students that share the same commonalties (Jackson & Heggins III, 2003, p. 385). Oftentimes, Asian international students participate in activities for the purposes of meeting people, having fun, and participating in activities with other international students. These types of interactions support the challenge of living and functioning in an environment with marginal language and social skills (Jackson & Heggins III, 2003, p. 386).

Factors From Family

Adjustment is difficult as a result of the distance from family members. As indicated earlier, Asian international students are here to obtain an education, get prestige from attending a foreign institution, with an emphasis on learning ways to enhance skills that can be employed in the native country (Jackson & Heggins III, 2003, p. 386). The pressure to succeed academically stems from cultural expectations and family influence. This form of pressure can be quite overwhelming for Asian international students, particularly when they are dealing with adjusting to the campus climate.

International students feel torn between wanting to return home because of friends and family in their home countries, and wanting to stay in the receiving countries to take advantage of professional opportunities (Alberts & Hazen, 2005, p. 132). For most international students, families and friends in the home country act as a strong force that draws them back home. Family and friends become more important once they are away from home (Alberts & Hazen, 2005, p. 147). However, work experience in the United States is deemed to be critical to job prospects back home for some international students from China (Alberts & Hazen, 2005, p. 139).

The following table indicates the five major elements that I theorize affect exposure to Western values. The five elements include: length of stay in the host country, the language skills of the students, culture familiarity with Western culture, the group of people the students socialize with, and the programs the students study in. If a student stays longer in Canada, is fluent in English, understands the Western culture, socializes more with the local students and the programs they study involves more local students, they will have more contact with the Western values. Conversely, if a student is different from the previous description, they will have less interaction with Western values. And thus, they are less likely to be exposed to Western values.

Table 3: The Elements Affect the Exposure of Western Values

Less context with Western values ← -	Length of Stay	More context with Western values → +
	Language Skills	
	Culture Familiarity	
	In/outgroup Socializing	

	Programs of Study	
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Putting the Theories Together

My theoretical framework revolves around the notion of conceptualizing international students as an instance of family migration strategy. It is built around the core concept of differed remittances. A Chinese family will send their child to study abroad in the hope that the training, cultural knowledge, and even participation in a foreign labour market will enable him or her to obtain a good job. In part this process can be understood as the reproduction of social class, but it is also an attempt to secure remittances in the future for the parents. This is because a well-paying job will allow the child to secure the financial and physical needs of the parents as they age. I have tried to show that there is reason to believe that the glue that makes possible the delayed remittance strategy is the sense of responsibility toward one’s parents associated with filial piety. Equally, this sense of responsibility is also strengthened by the Chinese understanding of autonomy, which I have tried to show differs from Western conceptions.

Chinese parents expect their child to take care of them when they get older. There are so many Chinese saying emphasizes this concept, such as “rear sons for help in old age and store up grains against famine⁵” and “aged with support⁶”. These sayings show a heavy emphasis on elderly care provided by the child. When a Chinese international student studies abroad, he/she is confronted with a different conception autonomy. What happens to their sense of responsibility for future care of their parents?

Given the above, it makes theoretical sense to assume that the success of the delayed remittances strategy depends on the robustness of the sense of responsibility that the Mainland Chinese students feel with respect to their parents, and the preservation of a sense of Chinese autonomy. I have also identified what I believe are the main factors that might weaken the sense of responsibility to the parents, and in turn might weaken the strategy. These include the extended separation, the open-endedness about the future, the uncertainty about the future, and the exposure to a different Western concept of autonomy, as well as the impossibility of foreseeing all of these tensions when a migration strategy is initially developed.

⁵养儿防老

⁶老有所依

Methodology

For this research, I have chosen a qualitative method, and conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with Mainland Chinese international students. These students were born in Mainland China; have lived most of their childhood there; were raised by Chinese parents/parents, and still have a permanent address in China. Semi-structured interviews offer the researcher the option of pre-planned questions and confidence that data will be reliably retained from all participants on these questions (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 128). Richards and Morse (2012) also suggest that the researcher sometimes knows enough about the domain of inquiry to develop questions about the topic in advance of interviewing but not enough to anticipate the answers and thus a semi-structured interview is appropriate here (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 127). By using this method of interviews, a researcher can design open-ended questions, arranged in a reasonably logical order, to cover the ground required (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 127). The interviewers can ask the same questions of all the participants even though they are not necessarily in the same order, supplementing the main questions with either planned or unplanned probes (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 127). A qualitative approach has been chosen as it is defined as “a research process that uses inductive data analysis to learn about the meaning that participants hold about a problem or issue by identifying patterns or themes” (Lewis, 2015, p. 473). Open-ended questions are used to “gather information, which is grouped into codes, themes, categories, or larger dimensions” (Lewis, 2015, p. 473). Since the focus of this research is on understanding individual experiences of the maintenance of familial responsibilities while being away from the family, it is more relevant to ask open-ended questions as a way of sampling a broader range of experiences. The questions are used to guide the participants and while providing them with the freedom to express their thoughts. More importantly, since there is limited previous research exploring the impacts on filial piety and familial responsibilities of Mainland Chinese international students, it is necessary to undertake a first round of exploratory data. Interviews can be audio-recorded and transcribed in preparation for analysis (Richards & Morse, 2012, p. 127). The researcher can attain first-handed data from the participants and thus it will add more new ideas to the existing fields.

It is important to clarify who is included in the Mainland Chinese international student population. The people who will be included in this study were born in Mainland China. It excludes people from Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan since they are not influenced by the one-

child policy. The students also have lived most of their childhood in Mainland China, were raised by Chinese parents, and still have a permanent address in China.

Recruitment Process

I relied on to types of sampling, convenience and snowball. I recruited some of my participants via my own social networks (convenience sample), and subsequently recruited a few participants through the introduction of my respondents (snowball sampling). I had anticipated conducting 10 to 15 interviews with respondents residing mostly in Toronto, Ottawa, London. After obtaining ethics approval from ethics board at the University of Ottawa, I initially contacted 12 participants via email for interviews, making up a sample of 6 men and 6 women. However, the last male participant unexpectedly withdrew from the interview due to a family emergency. This left me with a sample of 11 participants consisting of 6 female and 5 male participants.

Not all the participants were available for face-to-face interviews. Six out of the eleven participants chose to do face-to-face interviews and signed the consent form. For the others, I provided some options since they were still willing to participate: these included being interviewed via Skype or on the phone. The remaining five participants chose to do the interviews on the phone and provided verbal consent, which was recorded at the beginning of the interviews. Nine of the participants are the only child of the family and the remaining two participants, one female and one male, have siblings at home. One implication of this sample is that allows me to probe whether being the only child in the family affects the perception of filial piety for those students. As previously mentioned, taking care of elder parents is one of the responsibilities of adult children. Does this mean that students who are the only child have no options, but to return home eventually to fulfil this obligation? Amongst the 11 participants, two are from Math and Statistics, one a graduate and other undergraduate students; four are from Business, two undergraduate students and two remaining two graduate students. Finally, five are from the Social Sciences, one undergraduate and four graduate students. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in a private room. For the phone interviews, I conducted them in a private space from my end.

The main research questions for this study regards how Mainland Chinese international students who come from one-child household balance family responsibilities while studying in Canada and in the future. The international students, who make up my sample, when compared to their peers who remain in China experience an early separation with their families. The

environment they socialize is no longer just solely in China, instead, it is both in China and in Canada. After studying for a period of time in Canada, if they socialize with others and are fortunate enough, they start to develop their friendships, networks, careers, or even relationships while studying and living in Canada. If taking care of parents is deemed to be a norm and a responsibility for most Chinese, how, then, do these students make plans for a future that still remains uncertain?

All of these above is related to how the interview questions were set up. In the Appendix section, two versions of English and Chinese interview questions are provided. The interview questions are divided into five sections, including: (1) impression of Canada; (2) daily routine; (3) family life; (4) the future; and (5) the wrap-up questions. I will discuss each section individually in the following by starting the first section.

1 – The Impression of Canada

At the beginning of each interview, it is important to set up some easy questions to cool down the nervous vibes for participants. More importantly, the interview questions in this section aim to probe participants' initial reactions to Canada at the beginning and what they associate Canadian society with.

2 – Daily Routine

In this section, even though the questions seem to explore “integration”, I have a different intention. I am trying to understand their level of interaction with Chinese, local, and other international students, how comfortable they feel while interacting with other non-Chinese students in academic and non-academic settings, what kinds of interaction they have with Chinese and non-Chinese students. The idea here is that if students do not interact substantively with locals, they are not likely to come into contact with Western conceptions of autonomy.

3 –the Family

As can be seen in the *Appendix* section, I heavily encourage participants to share their thoughts and opinions about their family in order to understand some of the impacts of the “4-2-1” family structures. This section also opens up the possibility of understanding how participants value their family and if and how they include them in their planning for the future. In this section, it is also

important to grasp what the relationship is like for each participant with their family. Even though some of the responses of this section will be very abstract because it relates to the future, it will still provide a sense of their commitment to taking care of their parents in the future and the influence of having siblings. In addition, these questions also allow me to probe the extent to which the migration is a family strategy as I have theorized.

4 – The Future

This section is intended to see whether the participants have changed their understanding of their responsibilities to their parents as a result of their stay in Canada, especially by the recently arrived with those who have been in Canada longer.

5 – Wrap-up Questions

In this section, I explore the reasons behind why my participants chose Canada as their country of destination. There are many English-speaking countries around the world, why have they chosen Canada?

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

In the data, there are some surprising findings that I did not think about before conducting the interviews, such as the motivations behind coming to study in Canada, their perspectives on the Western notion of autonomy, the impacts and the important meanings of the one-child policy to the group of the participants and other more. In this chapter I present the findings in its raw form. Due to the small number of participants (Appendix 4), I begin by introducing all of the participants. In order to protect their privacy and personal information, all their real names are replaced by their pseudonyms. Every participant will be presented with a pseudonym, gender, age, program of study, the arrival time in Canada, Canadian cities of residency, whether they are the only child or not, and their marital status. The order is arranged chronologically based on the interview schedule. This is followed by a summary of the major findings, which I categorize for convenience but do not yet analyze. The analysis is found in the next chapter.

All the participants are currently residing in three cities in Ontario, which are in Toronto, London, and Ottawa. The participants in this sample are between the age of 20 – 28. The sample

represents three different stages: some of them are completing their bachelor's degree, some are completing their Master's degree, and two just graduated from either a bachelor's or Master's degree. I begin by introducing the respondents individually, and then I will summarize the commonalities and differences amongst all the participants.

The Participants

Grace

Grace lives in London and is currently doing her third year in Psychology. She came to Canada in her first-year university to study, first, because she believed that Canada offered better psychology programs than those in China. Even though her parents were very supportive, it was Grace who initiated the idea of studying abroad. She also shows a strong desire to obtain a permanent resident status and then to return to China afterward. She reveals a few reasons why she wants to return afterward. First, she cannot get a psychology-related job after she graduates because being a psychologist requires more than just a bachelor's degree. Second, she also explained that her parents and family wish her to return to China immediately afterward. She will return eventually because she cannot tolerate being separated from her family, but she plans to stay in Canada to work for a bit while waiting to obtain her PR. Third, she realizes that she is the only child of the family and has a close relationship with the family. That's why she must take care of her parents eventually. It is not clear why Grace wants to obtain PR even though she intends to return to China eventually. She did not say much about it except that she wants to obtain the benefits of becoming a permanent resident.

Bruce

Bruce lives in Ottawa and just started his Master's degree in Canada. He is the only child in the family. Unlike Grace, Bruce's parents persuaded him to study abroad. He explained that he probably would not have come abroad if his parents had not mentioned this idea to him. His father wanted Bruce to go abroad because of the complicated interpersonal relationships⁷,

⁷ Different hearts in different breasts – Sometimes it is hard to tell what's going on in people's minds. People should always be on guard against one another and act accordingly to circumstances. Therefore, people should know how to accommodate themselves to the situations and learn to cover up the true emotions while interacting with others, especially while interacting with the higher authorities and the peers who compete with you. There is not real friendship or pure relationship in the workplace. Obviously, it does not mean that it does not happen in other societies, but this is what people generally means by complicated interpersonal relationships.

pollution, and food safety issues in China. Bruce and Betty were in a relationship when we did the interview. According to what Betty reveals, Bruce originally thought about booking his return ticket the day after receiving his diploma, but he changed his mind after meeting Betty who wishes to stay in Canada permanently. His parents are willing to move to Canada eventually if everything happens as is planned. Regardless of where Bruce will eventually be, his parents would want to get an apartment near where he will live. He said this is just a blueprint for their family's future, but he cannot be sure how it will work out. He cannot really discuss this with his parents when they talk via FaceTime because his grandmother also joins the conversation, and it would not be appropriate to discuss this matter in her presence. His grandmother will definitely not be coming to Canada, but Bruce's parents are willing to come. Anyhow, this is a long-term and far away plan for them currently.

Kristy

Kristy chose to come to Canada out of many other English-speaking countries for a few different reasons. She wanted a better quality of education. She read different scholarly journals in the past and realized that the North American academia was very rigorous. This is why she chose to come to North America in the first place. She did not want to do a one-year Master's program because the period is very short. She also preferred Canadian immigration policies. Canadian immigration policies provide flexibility and choice. Even though she is not sure that she is going to stay in Canada after she graduates, but at least Canada gives a maximum three-year work permit to students upon graduation.

Her parents also believe that there is better food security, environment, and possibly a less intense work environment overseas and thus her parents support her. She is aware of the fact that studying abroad is a big family decision because of the one-child policy. If Kristy had siblings, the siblings who stayed in China could take up partial responsibilities for the family in her absence. She wouldn't feel guilty about being away for so long. She believes that a long separation is harsh for her family. She is under pressure because she cannot succeed instantly and bring her parents to Canada. Her parents do not have a preference for where they want to stay. It really depends on the immigration policies in the future and what her capabilities are at that point. In terms of her parents, they suggest that if she wants to stay here in Canada, she should

try to settle down here permanently. If she wants to go back, she should go back immediately. Her parents do not want her to stay in Canada for a few years and then return.

Jack

Jack is the only child who comes from a single-parent family, after they separated from his father. Jack is currently doing his second Master's degree in Engineering. He previously obtained a Master's degree in China and worked a few years before coming to Canada. His mom is willing to move to Canada if he can successfully settle down here by getting a decent job. He reveals that he prefers the style of life in Canada to that of China, because in Canada it is very family-orientated. For example, he noticed that the working parents he knows that are willing to sacrifice their work in order to squeeze time for their children. They are willing to put the family and their child instead of their jobs and social lives as their priorities. This phenomenon is very unlikely in China where work is a top priority. Jack believes that he is in a good position to judge since he worked in China for a few years and thus he is very impressed by the family-orientated atmosphere of Canadian society. He feels that from the Chinese immigrants he knows, he only needs to work during office hours. They are rarely required to work overtime, which allows them to balance family and work. In his opinion, this lifestyle is rarely possible in China. He really enjoys this type of family-orientated lifestyle in Canada. He really hopes that he will be able to remain and then bring his mother to Canada. His mother does not have a preference in terms of where she will stay as long as they stay together. Regardless of what happens in the future, Jack will definitely stay with his mother because his mom has always been alone. His parents have conflicting views regarding his studying abroad. Jack's mom encourages him to experience something different. His dad disagrees because Jack had a stable job in China.

Fanny

Fanny is the oldest of three sisters. She recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business. Fanny also got a position as an investment consultant in a Canadian bank. Her parents wanted to be fair to all three of the children, so they sent them all out to Canada or Australia. She decided to study abroad because she didn't do well at the university entrance examination. If people do not perform well at the university entrance exam, they cannot get into high-ranking universities. Consequently, they will not get a decent job in the future. Fanny's mom thought this was a

tragedy for Fanny. Studying abroad could give Fanny a second opportunity. That's why her parents decided to send her overseas. The idea of studying abroad had never previously crossed her mind. Fanny believes that if this coincidence had not happened, she probably would not have studied abroad. Fanny chose Canada because one of her best friends from junior high immigrated to Canada with her family. It was her only connection at that time and thus she chose to come. Since coming to Canada, she has increasingly enjoyed the lifestyle and working environment here.

Fanny plans to settle down permanently in Canada if her parents aren't in China. She said nothing would motivate her to go back to China except her parents. Fanny comes from a big family. Her parents have six to seven siblings respectively in the family. Her parents are not willing to come to Canada because they have their careers, networking, friendships, and a big family in China, which is difficult to give up just for Fanny or even her two sisters. Fanny's parents' jobs give them flexibility to take time off from the work. If they are financially capable, Fanny and possibly her sisters can afford to have their parents come back and forth to Canada or Australia for visits. In terms of taking care of her parents, she believes she can arrange the time and share responsibilities with her siblings. Getting PR or citizenship is not a must for her. She is satisfied with her current situation. The job she works at right now is in her field of interests and also allows her to apply for PR. She considers herself as one of the lucky ones. She knows some of her friends just take jobs regardless whether they enjoy them because they just want to stay in Canada.

Cindy

Cindy is the only child in her family. She thinks getting citizenship is just a bonus after graduating, but getting work skills that are transferable is more important to her if she decides to return to China one day. The work skills and experiences she gains here will help her get related jobs in China if she returns home. She admits that family is the biggest concern for her. One day, she will sacrifice everything she has in Canada and return to China if her family needs her immediately. She revealed that she would be selfish and just focus on her own thoughts if she had a sibling at home, but that's not the case for her.

She hopes that she can apply to some top-ranking schools for her graduate study. She believes this will guarantee her a decent job in the future. She is also the only participant who

has experience working in Canadian firms. She thinks the Canadian work culture is not as fair as others might think of. Some people get their jobs through personal connections. It doesn't guarantee that the more capable you are, the higher position you will obtain. In addition, the employees sometimes complain about their jobs or their work situation. However, overall, Cindy has still enjoyed her experiences in the Canadian firm. Cindy had thought about studying abroad when she was in high school, but neither her parents nor her thought of any reason that she had to go, so they just left the idea aside. At that time, she thought it common for people to study abroad, at least in her surroundings. However, like Fanny, Cindy did not do well at her university entrance exam, so she was eager to study abroad. She only focused on North America. She chose Canada eventually because her family thinks it's relatively safer, its education is strong, and it has good economics. Interestingly, during the whole interview, she frequently used English words instead of Chinese to express her own ideas even though she chose to conduct the interview in Cantonese.

Sam

Sam is the youngest brother with two older sisters in the family. He has lived in Canada the longest of all the participants; he attended high school and now goes to university. His parents sent him to Canada because they wanted Sam to have different experiences. One of their family friends happens to live in Vancouver, and then they decided to send him abroad. If there had not been such a family friend, Sam probably wouldn't have come to Canada at such a young age or wouldn't even have come. He doesn't show a strong desire to obtain Canadian citizenship even after living in Canada for so long. Regardless if he ends up going back to China or going to another country, he definitely wants to leave Canada in a year or two after he graduates from university. However, he has not discussed this with his parents. Interestingly, Sam is the only male child in the family. Generally, boys in the family are deemed to believe that they will be taking the vast majority of the responsibilities of taking care of the parents in the future. Per Sam, his sisters believe that he will be the one that mainly takes care of their parents in the future.

Joyce

Joyce is also the only child in the family. She came to Ontario as an exchange student. She chose Ontario because her university in China had a collaborative program with Ontario and was not required to pay fees. At the beginning, Joyce and her parents didn't think much beyond this exchange program since they thought Joyce was just going away for a limited time. She slowly fell in love with the city and the school after she came to Canada, so she wanted to stay and continue to pursue her education. She would prefer to stay in Canada permanently, however, this depends on future career developments with her boyfriend. If staying in Canada is a mutual benefit for Joyce and her partner, they will stay in Canada and then try to bring their parents to Canada. If going back to China is better, they will return home afterward. She said that she wants to return home predominately also because of her parents.

Due to the complexity of the Family Reunion Visa, most people apply for Super Visas, which requires applicants to return to the home countries every two years. Joyce thinks it's torture for parents when they become older. Although her parents do not mind going to nursing home, it is still unacceptable for Joyce. Regardless where Joyce will reside eventually, she insists on staying physically close to her parents. In her own opinion, the care she provides is not only monetary or physical support, it's an emotional support that involves being close to her parents. As in the case of Kristy, Joyce reveals that she wishes she could have a sibling living in China to share the responsibilities of taking care of the parents. Joyce said taking care is more related to the physical and emotional dimension because her parents could support themselves financially.

Taylor

Taylor is the only child in the family. He originally came to Canada for academic purposes because he thought he could learn some real knowledge compared to China. He originally planned to continue on to a PhD, but he realized that he doesn't actually enjoy what he is doing right now. He wants to return to China after completing his Master's degree. He has not acclimatized to life in Canada. He cannot imagine he will have to devote his time into academic field. There is not much entertainment here. He didn't plan to immigrate to Canada, but his parents have this in mind because they believe the lifestyle and work are less intense, which is why they chose to send him to Canada. He is not even willing to go out due to what he calls the "desolate environment". This place is not cheerful enough, he claims. Taylor didn't consider that he must immigrate to Canada when he first chose. His father wants this because he believes that

immigrating to Canada is better than the competitive environment in China. If he returns to China, he admits that “20%” is because of his parents.

Betty

Bruce and Betty have been in a relationship when we did the interview. Betty is the only child in the family. Her father always wanted to send her to study abroad because he had gone to Australia for work; he really enjoyed the environment over there. He also doesn't like the political system in China due to his childhood experiences. Betty's dad also planned to immigrate to Canada under the Manitoba Province Nomination Program, but he failed. He hoped to send Betty to Canada and expects Betty to bring him to Canada after she settles down. Betty's mom would prefer she stayed in China because they can get Betty a job in China. Her mom also thinks Ottawa is too far away from her hometown. It normally takes them 26 hours by plane. She thinks distance would keep them apart. In addition, Betty's cousins have all gone to Canada or the U.S. to study, so she thinks she should also do the same thing because it's ordinary amongst her peers. She would prefer to stay in Canada, but now she struggles as her father wants to come to Canada, but her mom wants to stay in China. Betty would prefer to stay in Canada because she confesses that she is more influenced by her dad when it comes to important decisions.

Adam

Adam is the only child in Canada. He is probably the only one that didn't specify whether he would return to China or stay in Canada. He keeps emphasizing he just wants to focus on the following three to five years. When I asked him whether he had thought about taking care of his parents in the future, he insisted that he has not thought about it and refused to provide more details because he said this was abstract and in the future. He tells his parents to maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly, so that they can stay away from any kinds of illnesses, but he guesses he will still put his parents as his top priority. He emphasizes that he was more drawn to Canada rather than the U.S. because of the immigration policy.

In the U.S., work permits are given by probability, which does not mean every international student is guaranteed to stay after they graduate. Unlike the U.S., international students in Canada are guaranteed a work permit upon graduation so that they can have a transition period to decide what they want to do. I conducted this interview with him after he had

returned from China. He hadn't been home for 2 years. He witnessed the progress that China has made recently. In the interview, he constantly compared Canada/the U.S. with China. He started struggling to decide where he should stay. There is no doubt that there are more opportunities in China, but he talked about the work style and family life in China that would deter him from going back. Adam doesn't know what to do, he will need to make up his mind in the coming years. His parents definitely wouldn't come to Canada because what they have in China, such as social prestige and jobs, is so much better than what they would have in Canada. He thinks the taking care of parents is also related to physical and emotional dimensions. He believes that his parents will be more financially able to take care of themselves than he will in the future.

In general, all the participants have close ties with their families. They've all have different, yet good transitions from China to Canada. All the participants share some similarities and have some differences as indicated in the individual introduction. A few broad themes will be used to continue my reporting of the findings.

The First Impressions of Canada

In order to create a comfortable atmosphere for the interview, I asked them some general questions. For example, I asked them about their first impressions in Canada. Here is the range of responses they provided:

Bruce: "I transferred from Vancouver. I realized the airport is large as soon as I landed. When I was in the airport, I believe I met a local there. The person was super nice and enthusiastically asked me whether I needed a hand. My flight also got delayed before this meeting and thus I didn't catch the plane. And then I went to the reception desk for help. They changed me to another flight. The people there were also nice and very patient. The process was easy. It indeed gave me good first impression."⁸

⁸ “我是从那个温哥华转机的，然后下飞机的时候觉得特别大。在机场的时候吧，就遇到一个当地人，应该是当地人。人很 nice，热情。就说需不需要帮助你。然后从温哥华飞到。。。那之前，我还延误了。然后没赶上飞机。然后我就去找那个前台，给改签机票。人也非常 nice，非常的耐心给我就换了下一班的机票。而且流程非常简单，就给我换了。就觉得第一印象特别好。”

Kristy: “I feel like everyone follows the rules. I think everyone is very close; probably the city is not large. The weather here is different from Guangzhou. It is convenient. It also has a high level of division of labour.”⁹

Adam mostly thinks that compared to the U.S., Canadians are more friendly. “Compared to the U.S., Canada is quieter. This is the first impression. My second impression, I study Economics. According to my own analysis, Canada is a developed country, but everyone is on average (less economic inequality compared to the U.S.). That’s the reason why it is a harmonious society.”¹⁰

Even though some people generally have a good impression of Canada, such as people being friendly, there are always some exceptions:

Sam: “I came to Canada when I was 16. I came here by myself. Even though my dad’s friend came here with me, but I don’t know him well. So it was considered that I came here by myself. I was terrified when I was here initially. I was terrified because I didn’t know anyone in Canada. I also didn’t expect it would be so different from China because the dynamic is so different. I can’t do certain things that I got used to doing in China. I was afraid of doing everything. Compared to myself when I was in China, I was relatively more voiceless.”¹¹

Taylor: “When I first got here... I arrived at the end of August last year, and I felt it was very desolate. I went to the downtown from the airport by bus, I found everywhere was

⁹ “我觉得大家比较守规矩吧，跟住觉得人同人之间，可能呢个城市比较细，感觉人同人之间噶关系比较紧密，比较有 d 熟人社会噶感觉。跟住天气上同广州比较唔一样。生活几便利。觉得人，专业化分工好细咯。”

¹⁰ 相对于美国噶话，我觉得加拿大人更加友善。甘居住环境都比美国人要好啦，而且相对于美国甘，个个繁华咧。加拿大相对于安静 d。呢个系第一印象啦。甘第二印象，我系学经济噶，甘我噶分析咧，加拿大就系一个发达噶国家啦，但人人都好平均咯，呢个就系佢一个和谐噶原因啦。

¹¹ “我其实来加拿大，甘我个时 16 岁啦。甘个时系我一个人来噶，甘我有个爸爸噶朋友陪我一起来噶，但都唔系好熟，所以我都系见过 1、2 次面。甘都算自己一个来啦。甘来到加拿大，讲真，虽然系好惊，姐系觉得好惊因为系度无人无物系度。又再加上，姐，无预想到姐系话觉得，成个环境同中国唔一样啦。所以有 d 来到呢一到系话，系中国做开，有 d 嘢就唔系甘做咯。姐系好多嘢都好畏惧去做咯。姐系比较沉默咯，相比系国内。”

very remote and the distance between each house is also particularly large, the same as the streets where I stay. It gave me the impression that it is very desolated and not so lively compared to China. That's it.”¹²

What Surprised Them Initially?

When people are new to a place, there must be something that catches their attention as either a surprise or a shock. The participants shared their thoughts, and here are some of their responses:

Grace: “It turned out that Canada is not always safe,”¹³ even though she didn't get hurt or attacked, she was surprised that Toronto wasn't as safe as she imagined. Obviously, it's difficult to say whether this applies to Toronto in general. It could be just the neighbourhood she stayed.

Bruce: “I think it's the traffic. I did not cross the streets at the beginning because I...it is different from China. When I cross the street, and see the intersection. I just stop. I think the driver should go first, and then he also stops and tells me I should go first. When I first got here, it was a little bit difficult to adjust. I didn't know how to cross the street.”¹⁴ For Bruce, it is a process. It still takes time for him to fully adjust even though he still doesn't feel fully adjusted sometimes.

Kristy didn't find anything surprises here. She just believes everything is the way it is.

Kristy: “It could possibly be I was fully mentally prepared before I came here. And then I didn't specifically expect anything, but I wasn't scared either. So, when I got here, yeah,

¹² “我刚来。。。我是去年8月底来的嘛，然后感觉就是很荒凉。从机场坐巴士到市中心，然后就感觉到处都很荒，然后房子间的密度间距也特别大。然后路也就是，住的地方也是，就是密度很大呀。然后给人感觉就是很荒，就是跟国内比就是没有那么热闹，感觉。就是这样。”

¹³ “原来加拿大都有治安唔好噶野。”

¹⁴ “比如说，就是交通。我刚来的时候过马路，没过。因为我。。。跟国内不一样嘛，我过马路的时候，看见十字路口，就在边上站住。就感觉让他先过，然后他也站住了。然后跟我说，你先过，你先过。然后刚开始来的时候，有一点不适应。不知道怎么过马路。”

that's it. I was very open-minded towards everything, so I didn't think anything special."¹⁵

Fanny: "It charges taxes"¹⁶ and "there are more Chinese people than I imagined. And then...eh...I stayed in Toronto first when I came to Canada. I am in London right now, London, Ontario. And then Toronto was pretty good. And then I came to London and realized, compared to China, it is less flourishing, such as the city, the municipal facilities, etc."¹⁷ Fanny thinks that even though Toronto is considered as one of the large cities with a large population, it still cannot be compared with cities in China.

Compared with other participants, Jack has some deep thought after his initial arrival in Canada.

Jack: "Surprises? No. Actually, I think the Chinese, the students from China, surprisingly feel disappointed. No, I mean from the perspective of facilities and infrastructure. Because after all every perspective in China, (such as) high-speed railways, the built environment, facilities, the basic facilities must definitely be more developed than here (in Canada). People say Ottawa... Ottawa is a village, so...but there must be good perspectives here. What I think is worth praising is that even though the infrastructure is relatively older, the whole system is quiet, how to say it, quite mature. And then I feel like, how to say it, I feel like there is something, the spiritual support¹⁸, the whole societal civilization is more, more developed. It predominately reflects on the equity of the people, the quality of the people as well as the living habits. People abide by the rules, and then there is an unspoken contract, or it's people abide the rules in a tacit understanding, I think this perspective, compared to China, this perspective is indeed

¹⁵ “可能系因为我来之前，我会做好充分心理准备。跟住我又唔会话特别期待，但系又唔会特别畏惧。所以我就系觉得来到，嗯，就系甘。以呢种开放心态来对待。所以无觉得特别唔一样。”

¹⁶ “佢收税。”

¹⁷ “比我想象中中国人要多咯。跟住。。。呃。。。就系因为我刚刚来加拿大时候系系多伦多。姐系我而家系 London, London, Ontario。跟住系多伦多个时就觉得唔错。跟住来到 London 就发现，姐系，比我想象中姐系无中国甘繁华咯，姐系 d 城市，城市设施什么的。”

¹⁸ He experienced it from the Chinese immigration family he knows. The parents are able to care about balancing their time between the family and work. Jack thinks it's so much better than the parents do not have to fully devote themselves to their work. They can fully enjoy their family time without worrying about their work meanwhile.

more advanced than China. I didn't think of it before, but I didn't experience it in person."¹⁹

The Differences Between Studying in China and in Canada

The responses regarding this topic are relatively the same amongst the participants. They all agree the studying atmospheres are different in China and Canada per their own individual experiences.

Grace: "Here I rely on myself. In China, I have so many...Here predominately I rely on myself. Studying is more comfortable in China, I don't know how to say it."²⁰

Bruce: "I feel like it is stricter here."²¹ He further explains, "I feel like having classes in China, there were so many people in my class²², 60 plus people. And then playing with their phones in the class, not really paying attention, I think. And then the assignment was quite simple. A few people would do it together and copy, that's it. I feel like here, hmm...the professors relatively interact more with us. There are only 10 plus people in both classes this semester, more pressure close to the end."²³ The pressure comes from different perspectives. Bruce continues, "he asks questions. You must pay attention, and then I don't understand. Plus, the materials in different in the undergrad here from China.

¹⁹ “惊讶的地方？其实没有。其实我感觉中国人，从中国出来的学生在这边，意外地感到是失望。不，我说的是从硬件上，就是硬件设施上面。因为毕竟我们现在国家各方面呀，高铁就是，硬件设施，基础设施肯定要比这边发展很多。然后大家都说渥太，渥太华是渥村嘛，所以这个东西，但这个就是说好的地方其实还是有的。就是说比较让我觉得赞叹的地方是这边其实硬件设施它们虽然比较陈旧，但是它这套运行体系我觉得还是挺，怎么说呢，就是挺成熟的。然后就感觉这边，怎么说呢，感觉这边的一些东西就还是，它是那种精神辅助，还有整个这个社会文明还是确实比较，比较发达。就是。。。主要哦还是体现在人的平均，就是平均素质还有一些生活习惯。就是大家通过都遵守规矩，然后一种契约关系。或者是人与人之间的默契遵守下来就是与人方面就是这一系列形成下来的东西，就我觉得这个东西是，比国内，确实这方面要比国内领先，我觉得是几十年的。然后。。。这些是让我觉得比较惊叹，就比较之前想过，但是没，没有亲身体会。对亲身体会。”

²⁰ “呢度靠自己，国内就我有好多。。。呢度主要靠自己，国内就学得舒服 d，唔知点讲了。”

²¹ “感觉这边要严格一点儿。”

²² Unlike Canada, which students would go to different classrooms for different classes with different students, Chinese university students have their fixed classrooms and fixed classmates.

²³ “就感觉在国内上课的时候吧，主要我们班人多，60多个人。然后就上课玩玩手机什么的，但不怎么听吧。我感觉。然后课下作业也比较简单。然后大家几个人一块写就完事了，copy一下就完事了。感觉这边吧，嗯。。。就上课教授和我们的互动比较多。而且这学期前两门课就只有10几个人，然后压力还有点大。”

Here it is more difficult.”²⁴ He thinks there is a disconnection between China and Canada. “For example, you see, there is one class in this semester, hmm...undergrad can take it, Masters can also take it, PhD can also take it. There are two MAs in the class. We came together. We feel like we know nothing. The undergrads understand it.”²⁵ The PhD student understands it because he has done one PhD in China before. Bruce and his friends were the only two suffering in the class because there is so much they hadn’t learned before.

Jack: “I think the undergrad in China predominately focuses on mandatory education. Because my, my grades were not bad, but there were many people in my surroundings that voluntarily studied hard. I still always went to have self-study, prepare lessons before class, and review class, but because of the professors, the professors frequently cram before the exam, using the papers from the past. After I got into grad school, it was more casual.”²⁶ Jack revealed that: “in grad school, once you get in, in that system, it is guaranteed. Generally speaking, if it’s not severe, you don’t fail.”²⁷ According to Jack, that’s because the average is related to the employment rate and admission rate.

Jack further explains the difficulties he experienced in the classrooms. He believes that the Chinese express themselves after they fully prepare in their mind because they are afraid of wasting their classmates’ time. Canadian students can just be unrestrainedly, saying whatever they want in class, but Jack sometimes feels awkward express himself spontaneously. Normally, Chinese students save the questions after the class, but he thinks students are encouraged to show their concerns in the class.

²⁴ “他会提些问题什么的。然后你必须得很专注的听，然后我也听不懂。而且吧，感觉这边的本科和国内学的不一样。这边学得要难很多。”

²⁵ 比如，你看啊，这学期有一门课，嗯。。。他们本科也能选，然后我们研究生也能选。然后博士生也能选。然后我们班有两个研究生，一块来的。然后屋子里面就感觉我们两个不会。人家本科生也会。

²⁶ “国内本科其实我自己觉得还是倾向于硬性教育为主。因为我，因为我成绩还可以，但是我那会儿周围很少有人，就是说平时去用功学习的。我还算是平时经常去上上自习、预习、复习一下，但是因为老师，就是说，但是那种是很多时候还是考前突击。就是考前的时候大家都突击一下。反正就是有往年的卷子可以借鉴一下的东西，但这边我通过研究生的感觉包括研究生就更水了。国内的研究生其实挺水的。”

²⁷ 但研究生就是，一旦进了它门槛，在那个里面，其实就有一个保障了。相当于有一个人 minimum secure，但是那个意思吧，一般来说只要不是严重危机的话，不会挂科。

Joyce: “They are quite different. Because I went to university in China for two years. And then I came here in an exchange, so I went to university in both places. Chinese universities are quite relaxed. The professors give you a range of exam questions. Ten questions, maybe test 4 questions, just memorizing. But here, you need to read a lot, and then when writing papers, you need to organize a lot.”²⁸

Taylor: “In terms of university, it’s like passing the time. Just study a week before the exam is okay in China”²⁹ and “other times, because I used to have fun every single day, different kinds, skateboarding. I only prepared a week before the exam, and there was no difference in the end, so I continued to have fun. It felt like...Arts subjects, Sociology, you could forget after the exam. Didn’t learn anything after passing the exam. Here, the reading is heavy, the reading volume is a lot. And then, my English writing is not that great. When I worked on my assignments, I felt difficult initially. And then writing it slowly, here there is more pressure, more anxiety, there is a lot more time to waste in China.”³⁰

What are Canadian Values?

Originally, the intention here was to probe whether the participants would mention ideas of Western individualism or autonomy, but at least in my small sample of interviews, none of the participants’ responses mentioned this. What they have discovered regarding Canada still remains relatively on the surface. Here it is difficult to say whether they still do not have sufficient interaction with local people. Here are the responses of the participants.

²⁸ “还蛮不同的。因为我在国内读了两年的大学。然后交换生过来的，所以我两边大学都有上过。国内的大学还蛮轻松的。考试的时候老师会给你一个范围。10 道题，可能考 4 道，背就好。但这边的话，读的东西会很多，然后最后写 paper 的话，需要整合蛮多东西的。”

²⁹ “然后大学的话，国内就很混嘛。国内只要期末考前一周开始复习就 OK 了。”

³⁰ “其他时间。。。因为我在本科的时候天天都在玩儿，各种玩儿。玩滑板啊。几本考前一个星期才准备的，最后发现也没什么区别，所以就接着玩。然后学的东西都是填鸭式的。然后考完，记完，然后就忘掉了。就感觉。。。文科嘛。。。就社会学，考完也就忘了。考上了，也没学到什么。这边的话，平时阅读任务比较重，然后阅读量也特别大。然后，我英语写作很差嘛，然后来这边做作业，一开始就很辛苦。然后就慢慢写，还是这边有压力，比较焦虑一点。在国内比较混一点。”

Grace: “the need to be honest”³¹, “because I would get kicked out of school if I were not honest”³² and “they highly value keeping promises”³³.

Bruce: “eh...feel like...anyhow I don’t interact a lot with Canadians, I feel like they are quite modest, polite. When people go somewhere to buy stuff, if we are in someone’s way or block someone, or someone blocks us. Then we look at each other, and then say sorry, and then laugh. It is not like this in China.”³⁴

Cindy: “I think it could be inclusiveness. Because probably Canadian culture is quite diversified, so Canada promotes accepting different cultures, different ethnicities. So this is quite open-minded. So I think this is what Canadians value.”³⁵

Sam: “What I think of Canadians, first of all, they love their cultures. They are friendly to others who look different from them, and willing to help, teach others about their culture. It could be different people have different lifestyles, but don’t exclude others. Being friendly is the first thing. The second is to protect their own domestic culture, the protection of the environment. Even though I saw many Chinese people in Vancouver, but you can see, even though there are many Asians, but you see them with many...Chinese...English occupies 50%, regardless of the bus stop or elsewhere, they wouldn’t write English because there are so many Chinese people. In particular, protect their culture, I think.”³⁶

³¹ “做人要诚实了。”

³² “因为如果唔诚实会被人提出学校啊嘛。”

³³ “系啊。而且佢呢度好讲信用。”

³⁴ “呃。。感觉。。反正我接触的加拿大人不多，我感觉他们比较谦让。就是谦让有礼貌的人。人家去哪儿买东西的时候，我们就稍微挡，挡一下人家，又或者人家挡了一下我们。然后我们就对视了一下，然后就 sorry。然后就笑了一下。在国内肯定不会这样。”

³⁵ “我觉得可能系容纳性。因为可能加拿大的 culture 比较 diversified, 所以加拿大都比较提倡, 和加拿大的 value 就系要 accept different cultures, different ethnicities。所以呢个要比较 open-minded。所以我觉得呢个系加拿大人比较注重的 values”

³⁶ “我觉得未就系比我噶感觉加拿大人，第一首先佢地系钟意自己噶文化先啦。对其他国家唔同面孔噶人第一个反应系友善啦，同埋姐系好乐意甘去，姐系将自己噶文化教比人地啦。姐系可能大家噶生活方式唔一样，但系都唔会话一个排外啦。友善系第一个啦。第二个就系佢地对自己国家噶文化噶保护啦。姐系好似对环境特别保护啦。姐系我见到温哥华有好多中国人啦，但系你可以见到，虽然话佢有好多华人，但系你见到佢地都系有好多，姐系中文。。。英文肯定占 50%，无论系 bus 站啊，同埋系其他地方，姐系甘噶。唔会话因为好多中国人就唔会再写英文啦。姐系特别，保护自己噶文化咯，我觉得”

Taylor: “It could be politeness”³⁷ because “the people here are very friendly. Regardless whether they are staff or strangers on the street they are amiable saying hello when they see (you). And then there’s the issue of manners. It seems that if you don’t return to the same level as the manner of kindness, it does not feel well, it would be like blaming. In China, it seems to be inhospitable on the outside. Yeah.”³⁸

He continues: “Canadian culture...compared to China, there is more freedom, it’s just... freedom, more diversified. Different people do different things. In China, people only have a unified standard. Everyone is going to the same direction. Yeah, like working, marriage and children. Saying that someone is already doing something. But if you don’t do it, you will have huge pressure. It seems that everyone forces you to go to the same direction, you can say no to the direction, but there will be consequences. But here, there is not this pressure. Yeah... being lonely has advantages.”³⁹

Adam: “I think the most important Canadian... One is freedom, the other is family.”⁴⁰ He continues, “I think it’s a comparison. Comparatively, Canadians are very free, because they can go wherever. You can...not study, I can leave. I don’t have to do this job, except those who have families. It is difficult to do it in China. Because it has high levels of imprisonment, China, because it’s related to the culture. Family, I think... plus when you are here, to do the things that you don’t want, you can easily say no. It’s like asking you to go out to drink, if you don’t want to do it, say no, okay, no problem, people understand you. But in China, you say no, you still can’t do it. People will persuade you, you still say no, still can’t, you eventually still have to go. I feel like it’s more free with respect to

³⁷ “可能是礼貌吧。”

³⁸ “就是这边人的态度都很友好。就是不管是哪里的工作人员也好，还是街上随便遇到的路人也好，见面打招呼感觉很亲切。然后就是礼节的问题吧。好像如果你没有回报同样热情的这种礼貌，就感觉不太好，就会有种责备的感觉。国内的话，好像表面上都冷淡一点。对。”

³⁹ “加拿大的文化。。。可能是比国内的话要自由，就是。。自由的话，就是更多元一点吧，然后不同的人，做不同的事情。国内的话，很多人都是那种单一的标准吧。所有人在往一个方向敢的感觉。对呀，就比如说就业呀，结婚生子呀。就会说谁谁谁已经怎么怎么样。但是如果你不这么做，你就会有很大的压力。好像所有人都逼着你往同一个方向走，你不能说不能不往那个方向走，就会被那个时代抛弃的感觉。但这边的话，就没有这方面的压力。对。。。孤独也是有孤独的好处。”

⁴⁰ “我觉得加拿大人最重要啊，两点啦。一个系 freedom 啦，一个系 family 啦。”

lifestyles. Your choices are more respected by others. People can understand you, it is more inclusive, this society has more freedom. Family, I think it's... a very simple reason. If you have children, one of the two people may not work. You wouldn't work, choose to stay with the child, because it's required by law, but it doesn't happen in China. Everyone needs to earn money, to feed the family, it can't be having dinner after work. (People) like gathering with friends and having dinner in China.”⁴¹

Who Do They Hang Out With?

Regardless of the length of time the participants spend in Canada, they still feel most comfortable hanging out with other Chinese students. It is not just language, culture plays a more pivotal role.

Bruce: “Chinese students use an ‘embracing’ strategy⁴² or a few of us gather together to write assignments, study, and then choose classes together, and then there are other foreign [i.e. Canadian] students, rarely interact. But... there was interaction at the beginning. The first semester, people hardly talked to each other.”⁴³ However, there was a turning point Bruce started to have real interaction with one local student because there were not many Chinese students in the class, so they needed someone “smart” to ask for help, which is the “embracing strategy”. However, the interaction with the local student is merely asking for help.

⁴¹ “我都系话一个对比。因为加拿大人对比，真系好自由，因为你想去边度就去边度。你可以。。。唔读书，我可以走。我可以唔走呢份工。有家庭噶例外啦。甘系中国呢点系好痛苦咯。因为佢噶禁锢性好大啦，中国，因为同文化有关系。Family 噶话，我觉得就系。。。仲有你系呢度咧，同人噶关系来讲咧，你可以轻易甘 say no。姐系话带你去饮酒，做你唔想做噶野，say no, okay, 无问题啦，理解你。但系系中国你 say no, 你仲系唔得。人地仲系要劝你，你仲要 say no, 仲系唔得，你最终仲系去噶。呢个系觉得系，呢一点生活上更加自由咯。你选择更加之受人尊重咯。人可以理解你咯，更加包容咯，呢个社会，更 freedom 咯。Family, 我觉得就系。。。好简单噶一个道理啦。假如你呢度有左细路仔之后，你两个人可能会有一个人，你会唔返工，选择陪细路仔，凑细路仔因为法律规定啊嘛，但系系中国唔系甘噶。大家都系要赚钱，要养家，姐系话落班就返屋企食饭咯。中国就去钟意去朋友聚餐啊。”

⁴² Some students tend to do better in class, so other students work with those “smart” students to ask for help.

⁴³ “就中国学生都会抱团。不然就是我们几个人一块组成一个小团体，写作业呀，学习什么的。然后一块选课，然后班上其他的外国同学，接触不多。但是，一开始也有接触。刚来的那学期，肯定大家都没什么跟人说过话。”

Jack: “I know some people here, including knowing some foreigners [locals], anyhow we always talk, anyhow...but I realized I try not to interfere in their personal lives. It’s not interrupting. Anyhow I try not to intervene in their lives”⁴⁴ because “they have their own circle”⁴⁵, “their personal habits, the circles or the environment they have grown up with. There is a barrier for mutual topics.”⁴⁶

Adam: “I asked the locals, in the residence, to hang out together before, normally to play (basket)ball, or sometimes we need to finish homework before the deadline, and then we work together. But if you mean going out for dinners, I think it is still with the Chinese, never been with foreigners alone, I was with a professor once. I had high-tea with my professor once. If it’s alone, then predominately Chinese.”⁴⁷ He further explains why he feels more comfortable with Chinese despite the fact that he said he doesn’t mind hanging out with different people. He continues, “first of all, most simply it has to do with your culture and your lifestyle. You would feel much more of a sense of identity with the same ethnicity. In terms of people of different ethnicity, it’s difficult to form a long-term bond. In terms of the local resident, because we are graduate students, we have different schedules. Second, you are not that close, it’s so strange if you randomly ask people to go out. In terms of other students from other countries, to be honest, I think, lifestyles, and ways of interacting are different. For example, for example I wrote an assignment with an African girl. I, I finished all the work beforehand. Helping her once, she would think it’s a matter of course that she could ask me to help a second time, the third time, and even a fourth time. I sometimes go to library straight from home, but she never said thank you. This is about treating others and interacting, it could be normal in her country, you should help me, but I don’t think I should. Because I have my own time,

⁴⁴ “这边认识过些朋友，然后有一些包括有认识一些老外，反正就大家经常聊，就反正就是。。。但我会发现就是私生活中我，我不会尽量去打扰他们。也不算打扰，反正是不会去介入他们的生活。”

⁴⁵ “他们也有他们的小圈子。”

⁴⁶ “但只是说个别有些习惯，他们的有些圈子，或者他们从小的环境。你聊共同话题这个方面，就这些方面是有隔阂。比如说他们喜欢冰球这个我们可以补，但比如有些他们从小听什么音乐长大的，”

⁴⁷ “我有约个d本地d, local people了, residence 啦去, 一般系去打波噶。或者系姐系有时要赶作业了, deadline 啊, 甘我地一起会合作下。但系你话出来食饭, 个d 我都觉得系我同中国人咯, 未同过鬼佬单独出来食饭咯, 同 professor 一起过了。以前同 professor 一起过饮下午茶。单独出来约, 甘主要都系同中国人噶。”

my own schedule, my own arrangements. I think this is a thing, maybe the cultures are different around the world.”⁴⁸

Relationships With the Families

Most of the participants express being very close to their family. They can share all the thoughts with their families. Most of them mention the idea of “reporting only what is good while concealing what is unpleasant” with the intention of not making their parents worried for them when they are miles away. Here are some responses from the participants.

Jack: “Because my, my, my parents are divorced. I grew up with my mom. So... they divorced when I was in 6th grade. And then I grew up with my mom ever since. And then... eh... because I am the only one, my mom never got married since. Maybe she considered my feelings.”⁴⁹ “In terms of relationships with my family, I am closer to my mom. My dad, because he has his own family, probably he, he shows his love in a restrained, implicit way, I normally do not talk to my dad. Sometimes he is not active, he feels embarrassed talking to me actively. I am closer to my mom. My mom always asks me how I am doing, emotions, whether my emotions are fluctuating. I talk to my mom, to my mom weekly or talk about something else.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ “首先最简单系你噶文化同埋你噶生活方式相同。你更加之对同种族噶人有认同感（？）甘你对于唔同文化噶人，你好难话形成一个长期的纽带咯。作为同你 d local resident 咯，系嘛？因为大家读研究生，大家时间都唔一样。第二，你唔系真系话好熟。你突然间贸贸然约人怪怪地。甘你同个 d 其他国家噶同学，讲真，我觉得系，生活方式或者待人处物噶方式唔同咯。譬如话啊，譬如我同一个非洲裔噶一个女同学啦，一起做功课啦。我，其实我系全部做晒左 d 功课。有一次帮佢一次，佢，佢就会觉得好似好理所当然甘，第二次又稳我帮，第三次又稳我帮，第四次又稳我帮。我有时真系经常从屋企去图书馆，但系佢一句多谢都无。甘就系一种待人处事，可能系佢噶国家好正常，你应该帮我，但系我觉得我唔系咯。因为我有自己噶时间，自己噶 schedule，有我自己安排。可能呢个就系一个，我觉得就系一种，可能系世界各地文化唔一样。”

⁴⁹ “因为我，我是。。。我父母是离婚了的。然后我是跟我妈在一起长大的。所以。。。他们在我大概 6 年级的时候离婚了。然后我就一直跟我妈长大。然后。。。呃。。。因为我是独生嘛，我妈后面就没有再结婚。可能也考虑到我的感受之类的。”

⁵⁰ “家里人的关系，应该跟我妈亲一点吧。然后我爸的话，因为他有他的生活，而且他可能，父爱一般表现得比较沉稳，含蓄。我一般也不怎么和我爸常聊。有时候他也不主动，不太好意思主动跟我聊。然后跟我妈，我妈倒是比较亲。平时没事我妈就问我这边怎么样啊。心境，心境有波动啊？没啥波动啊？然后经常跟我妈讲一讲，然后这种，然后跟我妈经常每周在聊。或者讲一下事情。”

Fanny: “our relationship is very good. I basically talk to them about everything. My family is quite equal, the equality with the senior generation. Sometime I think when my mom says something incorrect, I can point it out directly, she listens. I think it’s very equal, it’s like friends, similarly.”⁵¹ Fanny also has two younger sisters, “with my sisters... they are not much younger than me. Two or three age differences amongst three, one year, two years, three years something like that. So we share everything.”⁵² However, Fanny also points out that she doesn’t talk to her sisters as often as her mom because of the time differences and the three of them do not live in the same places anymore, so what they perceive is not common.

Joyce: “very good”⁵³ “because my parents are very open-minded, very young. We are more like friends. And then we can talk about whatever.”⁵⁴

Taylor: “pretty good”⁵⁵. “we mostly talk about my situations. And then they share their situation. And then I listen to their different kinds of repeatedly warnings.”⁵⁶ “Yeah. I still keep some things from them. For example, I don’t feel well these two days, but I know it’s just temporary. If I just tell them, it will worry them. Or sometimes when I just catch a cold, I don’t tell them. It’s just normal.”⁵⁷

I found one thing was interesting from Betty, she probably points out the embarrassing situations for some people who intend to stay here as first generation migrants.

⁵¹ “我地关系都好好。我基本上有乜讲乜噏，姐系我屋企算系比较平等噏个种。同长辈噏关系非常之平等。姐系有时我觉得我妈咪讲唔对或者乜嘢，我可以当面同佢讲，跟住佢都会听我讲。姐系其实我觉得系非常平等，好似系朋友甘噏关系咯，比较似。”

⁵² “同我妹妹。。。因为佢地都唔系比我细好多。两个妹妹都系差，三个之间差两三岁，1，2岁，3岁甘样。所以都系乜嘢都会讲。”

⁵³ “非常好。”

⁵⁴ “因为我爸妈就是那种思想很开放，很年轻的那种。所以基本上我们都是以朋友的身份相处。然后就可以无话不说。”

⁵⁵ “挺好的。”

⁵⁶ “主要就是聊我的状况。然后给他们讲各方面的状况。然后听他们各种叮嘱嘛。”

⁵⁷ “对。有些事情可能是会保留。就比如说，这两天的状态不太好呀。但因为自己知道这是暂时的吧。如果告诉他们的话，就会让他们担心。或者有些时候生些小病啊，这方面也会保留。都很正常。”

Betty: “My dad is okay, he said he wants to come. My mom, however, doesn’t want to come. Yeah... I think...eh... they are still young, for us, I am still at the studying stage, just leave it like this for now. Later, when they get older, they need us to take care of them, regardless of whether we are successful or not, we must go back. Going back to take care of the elderly. This is for sure. It’s like... it’s unlike before, many children, you (older parents), you would go to the older brother’s, for example, staying with the older brother’s (place) for two days, and then come to ours. In the future, it’s like...eh... right now it’s studying stage, and then after a few years when the parents are still doing okay, and then it’s time for earning money. When parents need your care later on, you should, you should take care of your parents. It’s like parents living longer is my fortune. Later on, if one day parents aren’t doing well, it’s time or make choices for myself, at that point, I’ll probably already have kids, must live for the kids. Yeah, almost like that.”⁵⁸

The above represents the range of responses my interview questions elicited. In the next chapter, I move on to explore how much of my framework can explain these responses as well as how the responses raise important aspects with respect to the theoretical framework that I presented in the previous chapter.

⁵⁸ “我爸还行，他说他想过来。我妈真的就是不想过来。对，我想着就是。。。嗯。。。现在他们还年轻么，现在咱们，我还在学习阶段，先这样。等到以后真的就是说。。。他们老了，需要咱们照顾的时候，那就别管这边成不成功，那肯定就得回去。就是得回去照顾老人。这个肯定的。就是。。。而且就一个孩子，你不像是说之前，孩子多。你，你今天哥哥去，你比如说在哥家住两天，然后再换咱们。以后肯定就是，就是。。。呃。。。现在是学习阶段，然后可能再几年呢就是父母身体还行，然后就是挣钱的时候，等到时候父母珍惜要照顾你的时候，你就得，你就是照顾父母了。就是要是父母活得时间长是咱们有福气。就是等到，假设说哪一天父母不在了，可能到时候再自己选择。那时候也已经有孩子了，肯定也就是为了孩子活了。对，差不多就这样过去了。”

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The findings, presented in the previous chapter, confirmed some of our theoretical expectations while also raising surprising and unexpected questions that require new conceptual and theoretical considerations. This research, it will be remembered, aims at examining the experience of Mainland Chinese international students studying in Canada through the lens of a family strategy immigration framework. In other words, it aims to discover how this group of international students manages to balance their family responsibilities while studying and living in Canada. As I attempted to explain in my theoretical framework, implicit in the immigration strategy is the commitment or the delayed remittance of care for elderly parents in the future. The difficulties and uncertainty of studying abroad combined with the one child policy, puts these young people in a challenging position.

In this research, studying abroad should not be understood as an individual decision, but as a decision undertaken by the family. I theorized that the components of this particular family strategy, which I called *delayed remittances*. The latter term refers to the fact that the “remittances” in terms of future family support is postponed until the point where elderly parents require it. Moreover, remittances, in the framework here, refers not only to monetary contributions, but also includes emotional and physical support. All of these are to repay parents’ love and care, within the framework of filial piety. I want to discuss how well my framework accounts for the data.

The coding process sought to identify recurring themes and was guided by the literature review, context, and the theoretical framework. Considering this is a small sample of participants, appearing three times and more is understood as “frequently appeared”. There are a few dominant themes visible in the interviews including: (1) the motivations for coming to Canada to study; (2) the uncertainty of their future; (3) the habitual action of incorporating parents for Mainland Chinese international students; (4) the impacts of the one-child policy for Mainland Chinese international students; (5) the Chinese meaning of “taking care”; and (6) the absence of notions of autonomy and of individualism in their responses. Each of these six main themes have their own sub-themes that will be discussed in each of the following sections, respectively.

The Motivations for Coming to Canada to Study

The first theme of the research is Mainland Chinese international students' motivations for coming to Canada. My theoretical framework identified the option of studying abroad not as an individual decision but as one made by family members, particularly, between the parents and the child. Student migration, I theorized, is another type of family migration. It is a strategy for Chinese families to replicate or improve their family status. Regardless of who initiates the idea of studying abroad, it must eventually be validated by the family. What makes this group of students different from the migrant workers is the time gap for remitting money and resources. The majority of the students are financially supported by their parents for the duration of the study, so the money is being transmitted from China to Canada instead of from Canada to China. Three key elements must appear in the case of the Mainland Chinese student migration population, the financial capabilities of parents, their willingness to invest in their children's studies, and their willingness for this to happen abroad. For example, even though some parents were keen to send their children to study abroad long before the students came, it did not work out at the beginning because the child was not willing to come. Therefore, studying abroad is a family decision to which both parents and the child must consent.

I identified nine sub-themes underlying this section. These include (1) replication of family status; (2) "second chance" for those who fail at the senior high school or university entrance exams; (3) the family's social networks; (4) the quality of education; (5) competitive tuition fees for the Mainland Chinese international students; (6) the intention to immigrate; as well as (7) the livelihood issues. Under theme (7), it is possible to identify aspects, (a) food security in China; (b) air pollution in China and (c) working environment in China. While some of the data corresponded to what the literature review or theoretical framework suggested, other data was unexpected. Amongst the seven sub-themes, sub-themes (2), (5), and (7) did not appear in the literature review or were not predicted by my theoretical framework. Each sub-theme will be discussed in the following sections.

Replication of Family Status

As suggested in the literature review, Asian employers have a strong preference for hiring employees who have a foreign education background over local graduates, this provides an incentive for people to study abroad. It gives some families and their children, to a certain extent,

a pathway to succeed and compete for the best positions with their peers. In order to establish this pathway, financial capacity in the family is crucial. All the participants report that they are financially supported by their parents, regardless of whether they are still students or recent graduates. Even though two students have their own savings from previous jobs, they still need a large proportion of parents' financial support in order to study and survive in Canada. This suggests that this is a type of migration open to middle-class or economically able families and constitutes an indicator of family status for Mainland Chinese families. Generally speaking, it also sets up a relationship of reciprocity where students are reminded of their filial responsibility to return the love and care to their parents. Nonetheless, it does not exclusively indicate that Mainland Chinese international students and their families are rich. Some parents need to live frugally in order to finance this pattern of migration.

The initial intention for studying abroad is not always necessarily conceptualized as immigrating to Canada. On the surface, studying abroad is a trend that people surrounding my respondents engage in. The parents of my respondents believe that studying abroad will have a significant impact on their children's futures. It appears to be a component in the reproduction of a "middle-class" lifestyle because it opens a door to future life opportunities. Initially, the prospect of immigration might seem too remote to be included in the family's planning. Even though they might think of immigration, there are no immediate actions that need to take. What most parents appear to hope for is that the child can obtain a foreign diploma so that they can find a job regardless of whether they return to China or stay in Canada. The children will, probably not be able to afford to repay their parents' love and contributions until they get a job or even later when they become financially independent. This leads to the idea of the *delayed remittances*.

Given a "Second Chance"

This sub-theme newly appeared in the analysis but was not suggested in the previous literature. Studying abroad also provides a second chance for some students who have failed to meet the requirements of senior high school entrance or university entrance examinations. As known by many people, there are consequences linked to failing the senior high school entrance examination or the university entrance examination. It suggests that students will no longer have a bright future because they do not have a degree from a high-ranking senior high schools or

universities to find jobs. This means that they are less likely to be successful. Studying abroad gives some students a second chance at graduating from a high-ranking school or university, opening up the prospect of success. While asking the participants why they had chosen to study in Canada, two participants, Fanny and Cindy, indicated that they would not be in Canada if they had done well on their university entrance exams. They both believe that the poor performance on the exam was the turning point that introduced studying abroad on to their horizons. The difference between Cindy and Fanny is that, Cindy had intended to study abroad for her graduate studies because it was commonly done in her social circles, but she was forced to move up her plans because of her poor performance on the entrance exams. As for Fanny, she probably would never have considered studying abroad if it were not for her poor performance on the entrance exam.

Fanny: “A coincidence happened when I did my university entrance exam. When I did my university entrance exam, I had an allergy. And then I didn’t normally perform. And then my mom said it’s not worth it. She thought, it was a waste. Because you know, for the university entrance exam, that’s it. You should go abroad.”

This reflects the impossibility of a successful future without access to the best universities. In Fanny’s case, she didn’t do well because of her allergies. However, regardless what happens under what circumstances, everyone has only one opportunity for the exam, so her mother decided to send her abroad to overcome this failure. This also reflects the important role of the entrance exams in China.

Cindy: “There was an intention to study abroad, but they (parents) were determined, I was not. I wasn’t an ambitious person, not willing to take on the challenge. But I didn’t do well at my university entrance exam. I hated going to any of the schools available to me in China, so I had to go abroad. It’s like the feeling of suddenly growing up overnight. Thought through so many things over night.”

Fanny and Cindy obviously emphasize that studying abroad gives them a second opportunity to overwrite part of their history allowing them to start over. Interestingly, what this raises for future research is the manner in which students use the differences between Chinese

and Canadian education systems to start their education over again. Some Chinese families hire Chinese agents to apply to foreign schools, and those agents can successfully receive offers from foreign schools. It leaves some space to wonder if there is a gap or discontinuity in between two places so that people could use it to create new opportunities as well as how these discontinuities are formed in between. It makes people wonder if there is a difference between the grade systems in China and Canada so that people can use the difference to apply for some universities. This uncertainty opens space for future discussion in the Canadian education system in relation to foreign students coming from anywhere around the world.

Family Social Networks

In my research, I was curious to understand why students would choose Canada particularly out of other English-speaking countries. Canada is known to be a popular destination for students to study abroad (Armbrecht, 2015). There must be a critical point that attracts them, and the data suggest that family network could be one of the determinants. This phenomenon not only applies to the migrant workers, as suggested previously, but seems to operate on the student migration population. Some respondents revealed that they chose Canada because they had friends or family friends here. Family and friends in destination countries can play important roles in assisting a newcomer's transition. As Fanny and Sam reveal:

Fanny: "The most direct (reason) is because I have a best friend, my junior high best friend is here. Her family immigrated here. And then I feel there is someone, there is a connection here. So I chose this country, and then I didn't know anyone anywhere else, so... this is the main reason."

Sam: "Maybe Canada because my dad's friend is here. So, they, they thought he would look after me, and thus allowed me to come here. If no one were here, (I) might not be allowed (to come)."

The Quality of Education

The perception of the quality of the education attracts Chinese parents and students. Two participants including Kristy, and Cindy admit that the Canada offers above-average quality of education. It also generates public praise amongst other people who had previous experiences.

What's more, even though there is no difference in length for undergrad education, there is a huge difference for the master's graduate education. Unlike Britain and Australia, where they mostly offer one-year programs, some amongst this group of participants, were more willingly to come to Canada because the schools here offer two-year programs. This allows them to have more time to discover the place in addition to studying.

Kristy: "The first thing is the educational system. Don't want to do one year. Plus when I was writing my dissertation at that point, I went through some foreign essays, I also felt like the level of academic preciseness is pretty high. Felt like if I needed to go out, I would need to study tougher, which would give me space to grow."

Cindy: "(Parents') colleagues say that Canada's education is okay, pretty good".

Competitive Tuition Fees for International Students

Another important reason that a handful of respondents revealed for studying in Canada over America is the cheaper tuition fees. Interestingly, this sub-theme unexpectedly appeared in the data. While asking the interview questions, I only intended obtain the knowledge of why Mainland Chinese international students choose Canada over other English-speaking countries. Three students spontaneously brought up this topic. For example,

Grace: "I always wanted to study psychology. And then, Canada's tuition fee is cheaper than the U.S.. I was thinking at that point, only these two countries, but Canada's tuition fee is cheaper, so I came."

Betty: "My cousin said UO is pretty good. And then I got the offer, so I came. And then the American tuition fee is expensive. Thinking I don't have too much money, cheaper is better (laugh)."

Although it is difficult to indicate whether the tuition fee is one of the key elements that make Canada stand out in the competition because there is no existing research to study its correlation, I believe the following elements play a more directing role for students choosing Canada as a study destination.

Migration Perspective

Undeniably, in addition to Canada's adequate quality of education, the prospect of migration still unavoidably appears in the findings as proposed in the theoretical framework. Compared to the United States, there is another reason why Mainland Chinese international students chose Canada over the United States, which is migration. Nine out of eleven students admit that they intended to immigrate to Canada. In addition to high tuition fees for international students, students found that there was no guarantee of an opportunity for the students to stay afterward because the U.S. visa system goes is a lottery. It does not allow those who intend to stay to get a guaranteed chance to explore the work opportunities and the environment. They do even not get a chance to explore and experience whether they enjoy staying in this country. If students don't get selected after they graduate, they have to leave the country. Unlike the United States, international students in Canada are promised to obtain work visas upon graduation, which creates more choices for students.

Students can experience life in Canada and the work environment first and see whether they can settle down here. If they can, they can slowly begin to include their parents and family in the blueprint for the future. In addition, Canada also opens up many other visa opportunities for international students even though there are variations by provinces. In this case, we will use examples from Ontario because the participants are located in three Ontario cities. For example, the Province Nomination Program (PNP) for Master and PhD students as well as Express Entry for other students provide them chances to apply for permanent residence upon graduation. There are also some variations amongst the nine students who intend to stay in Canada afterward. Eight students did not anticipate migrating to Canada but left it open as a potential while the rest of already had the desire to strong migrate. Amongst those eight students, there are two who still have no desire to immigrate to Canada while the remaining six students changed their minds after being influenced by their surroundings. For example,

Bruce: "I later got a girlfriend. And then she changed my mind."

In addition, even though some of them did not aim at immigrating to Canada, it does not mean they would reject it when the opportunity came up. For example,

Fanny: “I didn’t purposely mean to, but I still work toward this direction. It’s like the job I have right now, it can be used to apply PR, that’s why I got it.”

What’s more, although some students did not intend to obtain an official status at the beginning, they still chose Canada because they were open to the possibility of migration in the future. The students also admit that they are aware that Canada provides more possibilities to immigration, which attracted them to come here at the beginning. For example,

Adam: “I was thinking at that point, first, you cannot stay in the U.S. after you graduate, you don’t have a work visa, right. Second, the advantage of going to Canada is you have a work visa. You could have a buffering period.”

Even though those students are given chances to stay in Canada, they still face conflicts and challenges when it comes to migration, which will be discussed later in the section.

Quality of Life Issues

Surprisingly, according to what most participants reveal in the interviews, quality of life issues also explains why they want to leave China and come to Canada. There are three sub-themes divided under the sub-theme of livelihood issues that influence their family’s decisions for them to choose to study in Canada, including, food security, air pollution, and the work environment.

Food Security

According to China’s Ministry of Health (MOH), the reasons for food poisoning include “microbe contamination, chemical contamination, poisonous animals and plants and others” (Bai, Ma, Gong & Yang, 2007, p. 481; Wu & Chen, 2013, p. 478). There are a number of documented food safety accidents occurring in China, such as polished grains with mineral oil, fake milk powder, and poisonous wine (Bai et al., 2007, p. 481; Wu & Chen, 2013, p. 478). Food security has increasingly become a concern for Chinese parents. In order to prevent their children from the possible exposure to unsafe food, they are willing to send their children to study abroad.

Air Pollution

Besides food safety issues in China, air pollution is also becoming an increasingly serious domestic issue in China. China's extensive industrial development, substantial coal-dependent energy consumption as well as increasing numbers of vehicles have led to a rise in emissions of air pollutants and carbon dioxide (Chen, Wang, Ma & Zhang, 2013, p. 1959). China now produces the largest number of major pollutants in the world, which cause serious air pollution and substantially reduced visibility (Chen et al., 2013, p. 1959). As a result, the heavy haze of January 2013, which lasted for almost a month and affected a large area, led to severe pollution and became a cause for concern both at home and abroad (Chen et al., 2013, p. 1959). People now have to wear well-equipped masks such as a gas mask in order to avoid inhaling the poison chemicals whenever the heavy haze comes. Air pollution has serious direct effects on public health in China.

Working Environment in China

Even though there is research discussing the job environment in China, mostly it is about the reasons why Chinese people are committed to their jobs in relation to Confucianism and Chinese culture values. There is not much research discussing Chinese work environment in terms of the hierarchy system that leads to "complicated interpersonal relationships". It may not necessarily be a new phenomenon since it was raised by four respondents spontaneously regardless of whether they personally experienced it or hear it from their parents. It must have already existed in China according to the findings. A few respondents revealed had personal experience and disliked working environments in China. The environment includes not only an intense workload from their supervisors, but also requires them to socialize with their friends or co-workers after work, rarely leaving them time for themselves and families. Some respondents also mentioned that this was one of the reasons why their parents had wanted to send them to study abroad.

Chinese work values are "the work-related Confucian values of Chinese societies" (Siu, 2003, p. 337), which include "collectivism, hardworking, endurance, and harmonious social relationships (*guanxi*⁵⁹)" (Siu, 2003, p. 337; Siu, Spector, Cooper & Lu, 2005, p. 278). A "three-component (affective, continuance, and normative) conception of commitment" is used (Siu,

⁵⁹ 关系, as known as the networking.

2003, p. 337). Furthermore, it has been consistently found that managers in Hong Kong have higher levels of stress than the managers in the UK (Siu, 2003, p. 338). Chiu and Kosinski (1995) argued that the perception of work stress is influenced by cultural and social variables such as values and attitudes (Siu, 2003, p. 338). As Siu (2003) indicates, the value of work is strongly emphasized and taken as the base of social order and management in traditional Chinese philosophies such as Confucianism (338). Chao (1990) suggested that “the Confucian values of trust, subtlety, *guanxi*, protecting ‘face’, and loyalty are still prevalent in organizations in Chinese societies” (Siu, 2003, p. 338). Chinese work values may serve to safeguard one’s job performance to motivate someone to fully dedicate to their jobs (Siu, 2003, p. 344). However, when work stress is very high, individuals with traditional Confucian values would make themselves work less productively (Siu, 2003, p. 344).

The three issues are interrelated with each other, as the respondents always talked about these issues together. There are four students in total who talked about the these. For example, Bruce: “He (dad) doesn’t like here [China]. He thinks the interpersonal relationships are complicated. The air quality is not good, and the food is not so safe.”

Kristy: “My dad and mom believe the foreign food is safer, the air quality is better, and then they think the life pressure is lighter than in China, the pace is slower. So they wanted me to come here.”

Jack: “Yup. Almost like 9am to 10pm. Even needed to work on weekends. It’s like you cannot say no if your supervisor wants to work overtime. And then your supervisor never means to push you to work overtime. He is just like he assigns me jobs to do before the closing time on Friday and wants it back by Monday morning. And then you should manage it. If you cannot finish it, working overtime is your problem.”

As these three motivations are newly discovered in the data, it opens up the possibilities for future research when studying the “push/pull” factors that make students migrants stay or leave. These are not necessarily the direct reasons that push people out of the country, but they appear to have some explanatory force. How much needs to be determined? “‘Push’ factors operate within the source country and initiate a student’s decision to undertake international

study” (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 82). ““Pull’ factors operate within a host country to make that country relatively attractive to international students” (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 82). Some of these factors are inherent in the source country while others in the host country and others in the students themselves (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 82).

The Uncertainty of Their Future

One of the strong themes that emerge in the findings is the uncertainty of their future. The uncertainty about the job market, the uncertainty about where they are going to settle down after graduation, the uncertainty of how to balance familial responsibilities if they decide to stay in Canada, the uncertainty of how to incorporate parents into their blueprint, and so on. Uncertainty regarding the future is an ongoing alarm ringing in their mind. Everything is subject to change because they do not know what it will be like a few years later. None of the students can confirm what their future will be. At this current stage, most of them cannot decide whether they will go back to China or stay in Canada because it still seems too early for them to decide, especially as most of them are still students.

Their goal at this stage is to finish their studies and then to get a work permit afterward or apply for the appropriate status to continue to stay in Canada, but this is what they plan for their future. No one can guarantee that they will be successful or that they will be able to bring their parents to Canada, should they choose to stay. Therefore, most of the participants are puzzled about what their future could be. The findings suggest that the key factor determining whether the students decide to stay in Canada is whether they can find a job that will satisfy them, regardless whether they are single or in a relationship. Getting a job is a sufficient means to provide promises and guarantees for the future. Even though some students have the intention to stay in Canada because they love the environment and the nature of this country, all these are based on a secure job. For example,

Joyce: “If here, the mutual development here is better than China, then we won’t go back. If the mutual development is better in China, or maybe if he goes back, I will also choose to go back with him.”

In relation to the migration decision, another big uncertainty lies on how to fulfil their responsibilities of their parents. As research suggests, Chinese families strongly emphasize

interdependence and filial piety toward parents and elder members. Family becomes another important uncertainty that pulls back the desire of staying in Canada and makes them consider the need of staying in Canada. It shows that the family is the biggest constraint that pushes students to return. Except those who show strong desire to return after working for a few years in Canada, the remaining students are subject to change according to the need of their parents. Although some would prefer to stay in Canada, they still remain uncertain since they do not know what the best method is to include their parents in their future plans yet. For example,

Betty: “Mostly it depends on how I am doing here. If I do well, even though they verbally say that they don’t want to come, they would still come. They are just afraid that you are not doing well here so they want you to go back. I think, and then I don’t want to go back because of this.”

Uncertainty regarding the future is definitely associated with international students. Students tend to experience the uncertainty of adaptation to the local society, the uncertainty of getting a job upon graduation, the uncertainty of whether or not to stay in Canada in the future and the uncertainty of how to incorporate their parents into their plans. This suggests that my framework of delayed remittances as a family strategy has some explanatory power. The process remains a family process because considerations regarding parents remain at the forefront of their decisions. Moreover, the sense of responsibility of the need to potentially be able to take care of parents justifies the expanded notion of delayed remittances.

The Habitual Action of Incorporating Parents

The cohesiveness of the family is thoroughly demonstrated amongst Mainland Chinese international students and their families amongst my respondents. Including parents as part of decisions regarding the future seems to be a habitual action, which is also another important theme appearing in the data. For example,

Grace: “taking care of families, I don’t know why I think so, but this is so natural”.

Adam: “For parents, people have emotions. You would want to take care of them. Regardless whether it’s materialized, you will need the child, right? It’s better than giving birth to BBQ pork⁶⁰.”

Joyce: “Because I am the only child, I am the only one responsible for this task. Plus, the pension system in China is not so perfect yet. Even though my parents definitely have their own savings, it’s like they wouldn’t need me to take care of them when they get older... my parents want to go to stay at some better nursing home. And then they would have company to hang out with. This is their idea, but I think as a Chinese daughter, especially, single, not single... an only child, I wouldn’t let them do so.”

Cindy: “It’s like... it’s like if two of them are at home [China], I go back once a year. If they don’t feel comfortable with the lifestyle, I think maybe I will, I will sacrifice myself. Maybe... I will postpone my goals, slowly or give some of them.”

Responses to questions dealing with how parents will be included in the future can be grouped under three general categories. These include the certainty of returning home (to be close to parents), bringing parents to Canada, and maintaining the balance between familial time in China and remaining in Canada.

The Certainty of Returning Home (For Parents)

There are only two students who show a strong desire and certainty that they will return to China after working for a few years in Canada or probably return immediately upon graduation. Besides better job prospects in China, other critical elements are the concern for the family, the inability to cope with family separation as well as strong parental desires for them to return. Under this type of family situation, parents are unwilling to move to Canada because of existing familial social networks and their perception of being better off in China. They inevitably communicate their ideas to their children so that the students can be ready for when the time

⁶⁰ “好过生够叉烧.” This originates from a famous Cantonese saying. It means that giving birth to a child is useless. If the child doesn’t do anything, parents would rather give birth to BBQ pork because they can still have it when they are hungry.

comes in the future. Consequently, students accept the responsibility to fulfil their part in the delayed remittances migration strategy. For example,

Grace: “(Family is) yeah, so important, so I want to go back later on”.

Sam: “Because it’s a family. Regardless how it is, it’s, family, yeah...eh...even though going back to China, it’s sometimes they, even though I might stay here longer, live here by myself longer, and not so used to going back to China. Regardless how not used to it I feel, regardless where you go, you would still consider them [parents]. You should stay closer to them, let them see you, that’s it.”

Bringing Parents to Canada

The second situation is that of the students who intend to bring their parents to Canada if they can successfully and stably settle down here with a job. Six respondents intend to do so.

Permanent migration is involved in this situation. Unlike the first situation, according to the participants, parents are willing to sacrifice what they have in China if necessary and move to Canada to live with their children, which is a strong demonstration of the interdependence and cohesiveness of family members. The location of family reunion is not necessarily going to take place in China; it can take place in Canada. This suggests a new way of performing the parental care in the sense that distance no longer becomes an issue for the students not being able to fulfil their familial responsibilities. This, however, does not mean that the students have to live with their parents under the same roof. If the students can settle down in Canada, their parents can plan to get a place near where they live so that the mutual care relationship is formed between the parents and the students when they have their own family one day.

Under this situation, parents may have the desire to send their children to study in Canada because this is the first step of the whole project. It reflects the idea that the decision of migration is a family decision, which also applies to the student migration population. The parents would prefer the students to come to Canada as students first and then go through the visa processes

such as PNP or Express Entry and then to bring them over under Family Reunion Visa⁶¹ or Super Visa⁶² for family members. This is the ideal blueprint for the whole family migration strategy. However, the reality of migration obstacles kicks in. The precondition for this situation being established is obtaining family reunion visas to bring parents to Canada, where the odds are slimmer compared to the Super Visa. The visa problems increase the level of difficulty of bringing parents and settling down in Canada. For example,

Bruce: “I definitely want to bring my parents here. Yeah. This is a serious issue.”

“Yeah...I urge them to do exercises every day. My current thought is that trying my best to settle down here, and then bring them here.”

Betty: “Because he (dad) tried to immigrate before, it was the... provincial nomination, but he didn’t make it. And then he sent me here, letting me, letting me settle down, and then bring him over. This is why he strongly recommended I come to Canada.”

⁶¹ Your relatives can live, study and work in Canada if they become permanent residents of Canada. You can sponsor certain relatives to come to Canada if you’re at least 18 years old and a:

- Canadian citizens or
- people registered in Canada as an Indian under the Canadian Indian Act or
- permanent resident of Canada

(Government of Canada).

⁶² To be eligible for the super visa, applicants must be the parents and grandparents of Canadian citizens or permanent residents. Dependants of parents and grandparents are **not eligible** for the super visa. However, they can apply for a regular visitor visa. The super visa applicants must also be found admissible to Canada and meet some other conditions.

Visa officers consider several factors before deciding whether an applicant is admissible. Officers must believe the applicant is a genuine visitor to Canada who will leave by choice at the end of the visit. Amongst the things the officer might consider are the following:

- the person’s ties to his or her home country;
- the purpose of the visit;
- the person’s family and financial situation;
- the overall economic and political stability of the home country; and
- invitations from Canadian hosts.

The parent or grandparent must also do the following:

- provide a letter promising financial support from their child or grandchild in Canada who has a minimum income;
- prove he or she has Canadian medical insurance for at least one year to cover the time he or she will be in Canada; and
- complete immigration medical examination.

(Government of Canada)

Maintaining the Balance between the Familial Time in China and in Canada

The third situation is for the students who intend to stay in Canada but whose parents have no desire to move to Canada. This situation is probably the most difficult amongst all three options since it requires to balance the familial responsibilities in China while distance is a significant hindrance. Three respondents are experiencing this situation. In addition, if the students later have their own nuclear family in Canada, it will increase the difficulty of balancing the family in China, in Canada as well as the working and life situation. Because this situation is not resolvable in the present, it is proposed for future examination and research.

These three situations all demonstrate Mainland Chinese international students' commitment to caring for their parents in the future, and that the migration strategy is organized by students' willingness to reciprocate to their parents. When students were asked about the reasons why they wanted to incorporate their parents into their future, most of them presented an expression of astonishment. This idea appears as unquestionable even though many struggle with trying to think about how they will be able to realize this. This phenomenon suggests the ongoing importance of filial piety and the extent to which this type of student immigration should be analyzed under the framework of a family migration strategy.

The Impacts of One-Child Policy to the Mainland Chinese International Students

Some research suggests the pros and cons of the Chinese family structure as well as the one-child policy, the data shows that the number of children in a family has an impact on the Mainland Chinese international students, which is also another significant theme in the data. However, regardless of the number of children in the family, it does not influence students' perceptions of the importance of filial piety. According to this group of participants, the students who are the only child in the family seem to be more reluctant in decision-making for their future than those who have siblings. There is a difference between respondents who are only the child and those who have siblings. Participants who are the only children in the family are aware that they have to be solely responsible for parent-caring in the future whereas the participants who have siblings can share the parent-caring responsibilities amongst themselves. Those who have siblings can make arrangements amongst each other, leaving them more space to decide what they want to do. The data also shows that most of the only child respondents would choose to return to China to take care of their parents if absolutely necessary. Additionally, the data also suggests that the

participants without siblings are much more concerned about whether they can support their parents in the future than the ones with siblings.

What's more, the data also suggests that the gender of the child is no longer an issue when it comes to matters of familial responsibility. Some research suggests that Chinese families tend to prefer sons over daughters because the eldest son is traditionally deemed to believe they are the caregiver of the family. However, this is no longer true as most families are allowed to have one child regardless of gender. Gender does not seem to be an important factor anymore through the data. Even if Fanny and her siblings are all girls, she doesn't suggest that she is set free from the family responsibilities.

Kristy: "I think, our generation is all one child. For example, in the past, maybe, for example, if my family still has other siblings, for example if I studied abroad, others wouldn't come, I don't think it's studying abroad, for example, just living abroad outside for a period of time, my family responsibility can be partially transferred to the ones who stay in China. It's like you wouldn't feel guilty for your family, it's like when you are not in China."

Cindy: "if I had a sibling. It would depend on him. If he's willing to live with parents, then I would not hesitate. I could make many decisions by my own. But now because of this, it's like my parents occupy a big part of my future decisions."

As a Chinese child, taking care of parents is a lifelong responsibility and is a key element of the student migration strategy as indicated in the theoretical framework.

The Extended Meaning of "Taking Care"

The Chinese meaning of taking care is another key theme in the findings. Amongst my respondents, taking care of parents includes different aspects. The child should repay their love to support their parents financially, spiritually, and physically when they need it. All these are the ways through which the child reflects their appreciation to their parents, reproducing the centrality of filial piety through financial support, means that the children are able to replicate or move up the familial social status. Spiritual support suggests the notion of accompanying the parents even though this does not have to be physically being there all the time. Physical support

refers to providing physical care when parents suffer physical discomfort. All these three elements make part of the “delayed remittances” that international students have a responsibility to make as their parents’ age.

The meaning of “remittances” generally implies solely a financial contribution which expresses the migrant workers sending money home from the receiving countries. In the context of our research, the financial contribution is also one of the key aspects of the concept of “delayed remittances” which involves students later in their lives financially supporting their parents as one of the methods to express their appreciation to their parents, of enacting their filial piety. However, “delayed remittances” need to be understood as having more than just a financial meaning. This term also suggests that the child’s ability to provide care to the parents. Nonetheless, care in a Chinese context means three types of care as indicated earlier. Therefore, it suggests that the term of “delay remittances” of the Mainland Chinese international students generally implies more than just a financial repayment. It also raises conceptual and empirical questions of the extent to which remittances are being delayed in other contexts. For instance, in situations where migrants are sending financial remittances to their families, are there emotional or physical remittances that are being delayed to some point in the future?

Nowadays, it is difficult to replicate family class without the supports and the foundation of the parents’ generations. As Adam reveals, which is also associated with many middle and higher class families, even though the implication behind taking care of parents has a financial sense, contemporary middle and higher class Chinese parents tend to have sufficient resources to support themselves. Therefore, while most of the participants clarified that what they meant by taking care of parents involves financial, spiritual, and physical dimensions, Adam and Joyce raised an important point in their interviews. Joyce said that the support she can provide is more emotional. She hopes that she is will be able to accompany her parents whenever they need her. She thinks that her parents have their own savings from work. Adam also mirrors Joyce’s point. In his opinion, regardless how much he can achieve later in his life, his financial achievements will not be as high as his parents’. His parents have everything in China and their quality of life is better than in Canada. It doesn’t matter how much money he sends home, taking care of his parents refers more to accompanying, to being emotionally there for them.

The Non-Existent Notions of Autonomy and Individualism

Another theme that appears in the data is the nonexistence of the notion of autonomy and individualism. As research cited in the literature review suggests, the notion of Western autonomy differs that of Chinese autonomy. As my theoretical framework suggested, if Mainland Chinese international students are exposed enough to this Western culture, there might be a tendency toward weakening the idea of responsibility for the family and as the idea of individualism grows. However, the notion of individualism does not appear at all in the data. There are two sub-themes that might explain why this might be so, the sense of insularity and insufficient contact with the locals.

The Sense of Insularity

My respondents consistently revealed that their networks were mostly within the same ethnic group partially due to the language barrier. What is more, once this circle is formed it is unlikely to include people from different ethnic groups. This creates insularity in the sense that Mainland Chinese international students are more likely to interact with other Chinese people, limiting their exposure to, it leads to the insufficient exposure of the Western culture.

Betty: “me and my friends and classmates... no interaction with classmates, basically, I don't understand what they say basically, there are difficulties in communicating. We normally see each other in the hallway, I say hello enthusiastically. No ‘how are you’, just nodding, I run away immediately. I am afraid that others would be embarrassed. And then my friends are basically Chinese. Those Chinese, they are basically pretty nice.”

Insufficient Contact With the Locals

Another reason can be related to the narrow or limited contacts they have with other groups of people or the locals. It is indicated in two themes that come from the data. The first is through their impression of Canada. When my respondents shared their thoughts and impressions of Canada, they mostly reveal that Canadians are nice and friendly. In addition, when some of them were asked about the impression of Canada, they mostly revealed that it is a multicultural country and that it is more open-minded than the United States. Disregarding the period of time they spend in Canada, their responses are relatively similar. Their impression of Canada and Canadians remains on the surface and stereotypical. Even though some people have interactions

with an immigrant family, it still remains within the Chinese community. They do not seem to get exposure to Western culture through social interaction. The second theme is with respect to their daily interaction with friends or classmates. The students still mostly feel comfortable hanging out with Chinese people. There are differences in relation to the length of time their stay in Canada. The students who recently arrived or have been here for a short period of time, feel comfortable with Chinese due to the language barriers, which is one of the principal integration obstacles for international students. For students who have been here longer, language is no longer an issue. What they care about is the instant connection and understanding between each other without further explanation.

Jack: “I know some people here, including some foreigners [locals], anyhow we always talk, anyhow...but I realized I try not to interfere in their personal lives. It’s not interfering. Anyhow I try not to intervene in their lives”⁶³ because “they have their own circle”⁶⁴, “their personal habits, their circles or the environment they grow up with. There are barriers for mutual topics.”⁶⁵

Inevitably, this barrier is challenging to break though for Mainland Chinese international students. Much research has discussed the barriers to social integration of international students, which are mostly associated with issues such as language barriers, cultures, and so on. As suggested in the literature review, it seems that international student consistently encounter social integration problems. Even though those who stay in Canada long enough and build up their own social networks, their real social network is seldom with the locals. Obviously, students still engage with the local culture through different means such as different media sources, at least they are aware of recent events. As such, it leaves space to question what the actual “social integration” of the international students is like.

⁶³ “这边认识过些朋友，然后有一些包括有认识一些老外，反正就大家经常聊，就反正就是。。。但我会发现就是私生活中我，我不会尽量去打扰他们。也不算打扰，反正是不会去介入他们的生活。”

⁶⁴ “他们也有他们的小圈子。”

⁶⁵ “但只是说个别有些习惯，他们的有些圈子，或者他们从小的环境。你聊共同话题这个方面，就这些方面是有隔阂。比如说他们喜欢冰球这个我们可以补，但比如有些他们从小听什么音乐长大的，”

A Contemporary Way to Understand Filial Piety

A new theme that emerged in the data is a contemporary understanding of filial piety. Contradicting previous findings that represent Chinese parenting style as being more authoritarian or authoritative, the interview data proposes new ideas. All the participants have a more egalitarian role with their parents. Parents are surprisingly open-minded about their children's decision-making process. For example,

Fanny: "it's like my plan is to get the PR or citizenship. I don't think it's a big deal. I mostly want to get a few years' experiences first, and then decide whether I want to return. It's not a big deal. My mom slightly wants me to go back, but they will respect my decisions."

Joyce: "Because my parents are very open-minded, very young, so we mostly hang out as friends so that we can talk about everything."

Adam: "I mostly discuss things with my parents. We are always open for discussion. They would ask for my opinions if they have any question. This is relatively better."

Most parents, in my sample, let their children decide where to settle down in the future, demonstrating that there is more equality between parents and the child's relationships, than the notion of filial piety suggests. This could lead to some new hypotheses to be tested in the future regarding how and if filial piety is articulated in more egalitarian relationships. It is not clear whether this is caused by changing norms in China, changes in the family structure, changes arising as a result of their separation from their children when they are studying abroad or new factors still to be discovered. If that data from my interviews shows that the reciprocity involved in the notion of filial piety remains, obedience and submission seem to be giving way to more egalitarian relationships between my respondents and their parents. And yet, although my respondents report that parents are open-minded about their children's, decisions, interestingly, my respondents still have the intention of making decisions based on their parents' needs and interests. This provides evidence that the idea of interdependence of family members continues to have a strong hold on my respondents.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Summary of Findings

A clear picture emerges regarding the reasons why Mainland Chinese international students decide to come to Canada for a foreign education. Studying abroad is a tool that is used by Mainland Chinese international students to reproduce the social status of the family. However, I found that the most important motivations for coming to study in Canada were the prospect of migration, as well as family or social networks. The prospect of migration generates the most responses from the students. Canada's migration policies open many opportunities for students upon graduation. Even though the students may not necessarily take advantage of these opportunities, they are aware of what choices are available to them when they graduate. Therefore, they have the open option of immigrating to Canada. These Mainland Chinese international students use study abroad as their first step toward their permanent migration. In addition, some of my respondents would not have chosen Canada if they did not have friends or relatives in Canada. Although other factors are also deemed to be important, they are all based on these two factors. The remaining factors could motivate to study in other settings rather than in Canada.

Uncertainty about the future is also another prominent concern for Mainland Chinese international students. Being reunited with their parents in the future is important to all my respondents, but most of them still do not know how, when or even whether it will happen in the future. The students who intend to bring their parents to Canada are probably the most uncertain, not knowing if they will be able to settle down in Canada, which is linked to their ability to obtain good job that provides them financial security. Financial security is crucial for their future projects. The students whose parents are not willing to immigrate cannot figure out how to balance the conflicts between family life in China and their stay in Canada. What's more, Canada's immigration policy is another element of uncertainty that overshadows their future. This topic opens up space for future research on similar topics to conduct longitudinal research and research on how Mainland Chinese students cope with the long run.

Familial responsibilities are heavily emphasized in Mainland Chinese society, at least this is what is reflected in the population I studied. For those students, incorporating parents into their future is a habitual action. It seems to occur to them naturally despite important changes in Chinese society and their experience of studying abroad. Therefore, it suggests that taking care

of parents is not really a choice, but an obligation. One that some of my respondents accept willingly. I had included contact with Western individualism in my theoretical framework to explore its impact on ideas of filial piety. However, this did not emerge as a concern for my respondents. This could partially be due to the lack of interaction with locals. According to my data, regardless of how long Mainland Chinese international students spend in Canada, their preference for friendship is still with other Chinese people, which may explain why they do not seem to contrast their situation with that of the locals. If they had had more interactions, they might have reflected on their own situations by looking at the situation of some of the local students they might have met. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Mainland Chinese students do not seek to foster their own sense individualism. They pursue financial independence from their parents and family, but even then it is partly to be able to support their parents in the future. This does not necessarily mean that parents will always require financial support of their children. Meanwhile, the Mainland Chinese international students I interviewed want to maintain a physical as well as an emotionally dependent connection with their family. If I had to rank these elements in relation to the level of autonomy that students wish to have from their parents (from low to high), it would be spiritual, physical and monetary.

Surprisingly, the findings point to a new type of relationship between Chinese parents and their children, which challenges some of the assumptions of filial piety. The relationships now appear to be more egalitarian. At this point, it is not clear what has produced this change from the parents' perspectives based on my research, but it unlocks the prospect of including parents and their children in a research design to understand why this change has taken place. This also opens opportunities for future research to study filial piety in contemporary Chinese society. Most of the existing research looks at the Chinese parenting styles in general, which may underestimate the dynamics of Chinese parenting styles. The so-called Chinese authoritative or authoritarian parenting style may not necessarily apply to all Chinese parents. At least, there is one group of people that most research under analyzes: how about the Chinese parenting styles between the Chinese parents and their child who study abroad? What makes them become more open-minded? Are those open-minded parents only a small minority in China?

Unavoidably, it is difficult to figure out how Mainland Chinese international students will balance their familial responsibilities and their future, but the data shows that there is an increasing accommodation and equality between parents and their children. In addition, it also

indicates that being the only child in the family has a significant impact on the family as well as students' future decision-making. It does not imply that students who have siblings do not have the obligations or even less obligation, but there is more emphasis on the division of obligation amongst the siblings than the only child, suggesting a more egalitarian relationship among siblings. As a result, Mainland Chinese international students, specifically those who are only children, will face more challenges and conflicts for their future. Simply put, Mainland Chinese international students studying in Canada still embody important aspects of the Chinese tradition of filial piety. Like all traditions, however, they change in order to continue existing. I introduced the concept of delayed remittances as a way of thinking about and studying the reciprocity that is so central to filial piety and to the success of migration strategy of Mainland Chinese families that send their children to study abroad. It is a modest contribution, but perhaps it might have interest to other migration researchers. Finally, in a broader sense the population of Mainland Chinese international students is increasing in Canada, this means it is worth paying more attention to this group of students.

Fortunately, I did not face major challenges during the research. The participants and I could arrange appointments for interviews. Even though I had intended to include 12 participants: an equal number of females and males, but this was not the case. I do not think it creates a distortion since gender does not seem to be an important variable in this research. Additionally, qualitative research focuses more on individual experience rather than collective experience. What's more, there are some answers that I could not obtain from this research that may require future research to look at. I have listed some of these areas above.

Limitation of My Research

Inevitably, there are advantages and disadvantages of being a Mainland Chinese international student and undertaking this research at the same time. As for the disadvantages, I might have possibly introduced certain biases and projected my own experience throughout the process, under the assumption that every Mainland Chinese student has a similar experience to mine. Therefore, I have tried to maintain a reflexive attitude when engaging in a research question that overlaps significantly with one's own experience. Due to the limited length of time for the whole research project, my resources, and my location, it was impossible to interview Mainland Chinese international students across Canada. Thus, one of the limitations of this research is that my sample

is not sufficiently representative for the entire Mainland Chinese international students who study in Canada, making this research exploratory rather than representative. Having addressed some of the disadvantages of being a Mainland Chinese international student myself, one of the advantages is that I was well positioned to recruit participants more easily. It was easier to understand their experiences and relate to them.

Some problems were predicted to occur before the actual conduct of interviews. Interacting with friends in my network is causal and informal whereas interacting with interviewees required a more professional tone. As a researcher, it was challenging to adjust the shift in the relationship while obtaining good data. In addition, as for my study population, since English is not the first language of the interviewees or the interviewer, the atmosphere would have been strange if we had spoken in English. I allowed my respondents to decide whether they wanted to express themselves in English, Mandarin, and/or Cantonese without any interpreter. The interviewees opted for being interviewed in Mandarin and Cantonese. My sense was the respondents were eager to share their experiences with me except a few of them who were not so active. The atmosphere in interviews was generally relaxed and the participants occasionally used idioms or slangs to express their emotions on certain subjects, which is unique to the local languages.

They also willingly provided more information, in my opinion, because most of them were willing to say a lot after I asked them. Unavoidably, there were also disadvantages related to conducting this qualitative research. When I interviewed my friends, sometimes they decided to tell me more or decided to skip some information because they assumed that I already knew enough background information. One of the participants revealed to me after the interview that “I didn’t think I had to tell you everything because I thought you already knew what happened”.⁶⁶ Therefore, if they decide not to reveal information during the interview, I have to ignore the stories. As a researcher, I don’t share the confidential interview material with others, but I cannot control their willingness to share the details with their significant half or their friends.

Concluding Thoughts

As much of the existing research focuses on international students predominately in the context of the United States, this research offers a better and yet narrower understanding of the Mainland Chinese international students studying in Canada. This unlocks more opportunities and issues to

⁶⁶ “有很多东西我觉得不用说，因为我觉得你已经都知道啦”。

continue future research on Mainland Chinese or other international students in Canada. What's more, Mainland Chinese international students studying in Canada are still highly embedded in relations of Chinese filial piety. However, my research suggests that the meaning of piety is perhaps changing, but not necessarily as a result of exposure to Western ideas of individualism which was one of my initial questions. These conflicts will exist for Mainland Chinese international students. The structure of the Mainland Chinese nuclear family changes as a result of a family member is absence from the household. Although remittances fall off and visits home may decline in frequency, familial and cultural links remain (Castles, 2000, p. 272-273). As Castles (2000) suggest the links between migrant community of origin may persist over generations (272). What made me start my research topic was my interest in understanding how my peers handle familial matters because I am also in the same situation. After conducting this research, I have come to realize that location, in the sense of returning to China, is no longer a key issue for some Mainland Chinese international students. I had selfishly hoped that in talking to other students in the same situation, I would be able to think more clearly about my own situation. I have realized that my personal troubles like theirs are public issues. Moreover, like my respondents, I must also navigate the uncertainty of the future at the intersection of my personal choices, my family's strategies, and cultural background and social policies of my country.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Interview Schedule

1. The Impression of Canada

- Tell me your first impression of Canada when you first arrived? Any example?
- What surprised you the most at the beginning when you first arrived? Any example?
- How has it been different from when you studied in China?
- What do you find interesting about the Canadian culture?
- What do you think is the most important value in Canada (what do they think is the most important to the Canadians)?

2. Daily Routine

- What is your program of study?
- How's your relationship with your classmates?
- Do you hang out with your classmates after class? Which ones? Why? How does that make you feel? (hangout mostly with Chinese students or other students as well)
- If you are assigned a group project by your professor for the course, how do you choose your group members?
- Can you tell me something about your friends in Canada? Can you tell me more about this?
- Please tell me about your social life (WHO do they socialize with? Mainland Chinese or local students? If they say they frequently socialize with the Mainland Chinese students, then WHY/WHY NOT?).

3. Regarding the Family

Ask the interviewees about their family structure to understand the impacts of "4-2-1" family structure.

- Tell me about your family (what's your family like? What does your mom/dad do? How many family members in your family?).
- Are you the only child in your family?
- How often do you visit your grandparents?
- How's your relationship with your family?
- How's your relationship with your siblings (if they aren't the only child)?
- Do you have a partner? Can you tell me more about him/her?
- What did they think about you are coming to study in Canada (what's their motivation for them to send you to study abroad)?
- Why did you come to Canada to study? (Family decision? → Could it possibly link to PR?)
- How often do you talk to them? How? Why is there a frequency like this?
- What topics/what do you talk to them?
- Do you discuss your future with them? (e.g., returning to China, staying in Canada? If so, how long do you plan to stay in Canada? E.g., permanent or temporary)?
- How do your parents feel about it?
- How do you think about making the decision between staying in Canada or going back to China?

- What makes you want to stay in Canada after graduation?
- What makes to plan to return home eventually?
- As you think of your future, how much do you think of incorporating your parents in your future?
- How important do you value taking care of your parents in the future?

4. Your Future

- Are you working right now? (Yes/No)
- If not, where is your money from?
- How do you think of the job that you are working right now?
- How did you see your future when arriving in Canada? Do you still see it in the same way?
- What would make you happy? How/what would make you feel successful?
- Have you changed? In what kinds of ways do you think you've changed?)
- Where do you see your future at? How does your family fit into this? (Canada? China? Both?)
- Have you discussed about this with your family?
- What are your parents' expectation for your future? What do they hope?
- How about yours?

5. Wrap-up Questions

- What city are you from?
- Why did you want to study abroad?
- When did you come to Canada?
- What are the reasons for choosing universities in Canada?
- What is the motivation for choosing the University of Ottawa?

Appendix 2

Interview Questions in Chinese

1. 对加拿大的印象

- 你当初刚开始觉得加拿大给你的感觉是怎样的？能举些例子吗？
- 一开始有什么让你觉得很惊讶的？能举些例子吗？
- 你觉得在加拿大学习和在国内学习的感觉有什么不同？
- 你觉得什么是加拿大人最重要的价值？
- 你觉得加拿大的文化有没有一些让你觉得特别的地方？

2. 日常生活

- 你是学什么的？
- 你和你朋友或同学的关系是怎么样的？
- 你会和你的同学在课余时间出来聚聚？是哪一群的同学？为什么？你感觉怎么样？
- 假如你的教授要你做一个小组作业，你会怎么选择你的组员？
- 你可以详细地和我说说你在加拿大的朋友圈子是怎么样的？
- 你可以和我说说你的社交生活是怎样的？

3. 家庭

- 你是独生子女吗？
- 你的家庭状况是怎样的（爸妈做什么的呀？家里还有谁呀？）？有和爷爷奶奶或外公外婆一起住吗？
- 你多久一次去见你的外公外婆或爷爷奶奶？
- 你和你家里人的关系是怎么样的？
- 你和你兄弟姐妹的关系是怎样的？
- 那你现在有在拍拖吗？你和他/她的关系怎么样啊？
- 你家人对你出国留学感觉如何？
- 你当初为什么会选择来加拿大学习？
- 你多久打一次电话回家？通过什么方式？为什么会有这种频率？
- 你和你家人通常会聊什么话题呀？
- 你有和他们聊过你的未来打算吗？你有想过是要回国还是说留在加拿大呢？那你会想留在加拿大多久呢？是暂时还是一直留下来？
- 你父母有什么看法对你的决定有什么想法？
- 当你要选择回国或留在加拿大，你会怎么选择？
- 为什么会想在毕业后留下来呢？
- 为什么最终想要回国呢？
- 在你未来的计划里，父母家人会成为其中一个因素吗？
- 在未来里，你觉得照顾父母有多重要？

4. 你的将来

- 你现在有在打工吗？

- 你觉得你对你现在的工作感觉如何？
- 你当初刚来到加拿大的时候，你对未来的设想是怎样的？还和你现在的看法一样吗？
- 你觉得怎样才能让你开心？让你觉得成功？
- 就现在的你和当初的你自己对比，你觉得自己改变了吗？是有怎样的改变？
- Where do you see your future at? How does your family fit into this (Canada? China? Or Both?)
- 你有和你家人谈过这些吗？
- 父母对你的未来的期许和想法是怎样的？
- 那你自己对未来的期许和想法又是如何？

5. 结束问题

- 你是来自中国哪个城市的？
- 你为什么想到了留学？
- 你是什么时候来到加拿大的？
- 有那些原因让你选择了加拿大的大学？
- 你现在在哪个大学读书？
- 你当初选择你现在就读的大学的动机是什么？

Appendix 3
The Interview Participants

Pseudonyms	Gender /Age	Program of Study	Arrival Time in Canada	Only child?	Marital Status	City of Residence in Canada
1. Grace	F/23	BA in Psychology	August 2013	Yes	Single	London
2. Bruce	M/25	MA in Statistics	August 2016	Yes	In a Relationship with Betty	Ottawa
3. Kristy	F/23	MA in Economics	August 2016	Yes	Single	Ottawa
4. Jack	M/28	MA in Environmental Engineering. He has another MA degree in Municipal Engineering in China and worked a few years before coming to CA for his second degree	August 2016	Yes	Single	Ottawa
5. Fanny	F/23	Just graduated from BA in Business	January 2013	She has two younger sisters	Single	London

6. Cindy	F/22	BA in Mathematics and Statistics	January 2014	Yes	Single	Ottawa
7. Sam	M/24	BA in Business	September 2009	He has two older sisters	Single	London
8. Joyce	F/25	MA in Sociology	January 2014	Yes	In a Relationship	Ottawa
9. Taylor	M/23	MA in Sociology	August 2016	Yes	Single	Ottawa
10. Betty	F/23	MA in Sociology	August 2016	Yes	In a Relationship with Bruce	Ottawa
11. Adam	M/26	Just graduated from MA in Economics	August 2014	Yes	Single	Toronto

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