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WEALTH AND ACCULTURATION:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF WEALTH DURING
CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ACCULTURATION

A Thesis

Presented to
the Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Linshan Fu

March 2014

Advisor: Bernadette Marie Calafell

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Abstract

With the increasing number of Chinese international students coming to the United States every year, a more in-depth understanding of these international students' acculturation is necessary and urgent. Given the fact that past researches mostly describe Chinese immigrants, migrants or international students as oppressed cultural adaptors, who cannot avoid being marginalized; who suffer from various adjusting problems; and who have to make use of acculturative strategies to adapt to the new country, this thesis takes the factor of wealth and its relation with class, status and power into account during Chinese international students' acculturation under the globalized context. Instead of sticking to the stereotypical view of regarding Chinese International students as simply marginalized group, this thesis explores the possibility of these students as power negotiators in their everydayness of life by using the methodological tool of interview.

Acknowledgement

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere and endless gratitude to my advisor Prof. Bernadette Marie Calafell for her continuous support of my study and research. I hold great appreciation for her patience, diligence, enthusiasm, intelligence, and immense knowledge. Her guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Dr. Roy Wood and Prof. Luis Leon, for their encouragement, insightful comments, and hard questions.

I also thank all of my fellows in the department of Communication Studies of the University of Denver, for their thoughtful ideas, inspiring research directions, as well as encouraging support.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank my family: my parents Renjie Fu and Ling Wang, for giving birth to me at the first place and supporting me spiritually throughout my life.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the newly released statistics by the *Institution of International Education*, the United States hosted 723,277 international students during the 2010/11 academic years, of which students from China ranked first, amounting to 157,558. Given Asian countries' tradition of paying high attention to children's education, and given the economic growth rates of China averaging 10% over the past 30 years¹, more and more Chinese parents can afford the large amount of tuition to send their children abroad to further education.

Compared with students coming to the U.S. twenty or even ten years ago, whose sponsor mode was scholarship oriented, contemporary Chinese international students are much richer. Rather than pursuing "traditionally Asian occupied majors" such as Mathematics and Physics, students today would rather study Business, Art or Media². A large number of Chinese students coming to the U.S. nowadays are self-sponsored. This phenomenon is especially popular among undergraduate students seeking bachelor's degrees. Concomitantly, recognizing

¹ World Economic and Financial Surveys World Economic Outlook Database, International Monetary Fund, 09 July, 2013, Web, 10 December, 2013.
http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2013/01/weodata/weorept.aspx?sy=1980&ey=2018&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&pr1.x=40&pr1.y=0&c=924&s=NGDP_RPCH%2CPPP&grp=0&a=

² Mei Han, *Evaluate the change of Chinese international students' major* (透视中国留学生专业之变) Sina Blog, July 6th, 2009, Web, December 10th 2013.
http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_5ed581ea0100eadp.html?tj=1

Asian students' family wealth and their capacity of purchasing power, a lot of European countries, as well as Canada and the United States, are devoting efforts to enroll more international students in order to improve educational profits.

Though literature on the cultural orientation, acculturation and ethnic identity of non-White Americans has grown significantly as the U.S. becomes a more cultural diverse country, the largest number of empirical studies have focused on Latina/o/Hispanic Americans (Ying, Lee, and Tsai 428). There are only a handful of empirical studies, not even to say qualitative studies done in terms of Asian, and particularly Chinese international students' acculturation process (Kuo and Roysircar 161).

Past research mostly describes Chinese immigrants, migrants or international students as oppressed cultural adaptors, who cannot avoid being marginalized unless they are continuously importing culture from the host country (Gordon; Tseng and Newton; Chen; Oropeza). They suffer from various adjusting problems, such as learning the new language and having trouble with the completely different academic life. They also have to make use of acculturative strategies to adapt to the new country.

Undoubtedly, the cruel process of acculturation is unavoidable when people come to a new country/culture. However, by overlooking the factor of wealth and its relationship to class, status and power, these past studies continuously depict international students as a highly disadvantaged group and rarely present the possibility of these students as power negotiators.

As a Chinese international student in the United States, I can obviously feel the huge differences between students coming twenty or thirty years ago, which is popularly depicted as a disadvantaged muted group in both academic and public fields, and these contemporary international students, especially in terms of their confidence, self-assessment and purchasing power. As a graduate student in the discipline of Communication Studies, a lot of questions linger in my mind, such as: What is the origin of these differences? To what extent are these differences related with the increasing wealth among Chinese international students? How much can wealth effectively ease their discomfort during the process of acculturation, etc.? Of all these puzzles, the overarching research question I have is: “Can wealth create spaces of agency, buffering Chinese International students’ discomfort/pain during acculturation?” Or to be more specific, “does there exist a positive relation between international students’ wealth and the degree of acculturation?”

Life is a contested journey, filled with dilemmas and contradictions. W.E. B. DuBois describes African Americans in *The Souls of Black Folk*, “an American, a Negro; Two souls, two thoughts two reconciled striving; two warring ideals in one dark body” (215). Chinese International Students experience similar circumstances. On the one hand, they are marginalized cultural adaptors, who come from an isolated, “exotic” and age-old Asian culture; whose country was once trampled by western power; on the other hand, they are children coming from the upper middle class or even the upper class, who are qualified to enjoy the countless privileges in this money worshipping society. Consequently, this

thesis, under the methodological principle of critical qualitative studies, sets out to delve into Chinese international students' disadvantaged acculturation positions on one hand, but also to explore the possibility and potentiality of these Chinese international students' role as power negotiators, overcoming the oppressed status of cultural adaptor through the use of wealth, testifying whether wealth can act as a space of agency and buffer Chinese international students' discomfort/pain during acculturation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Acculturation

The first official and also classical definition of “acculturation” was offered by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits in 1936: “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture pattern of either or both groups” (149). With the complexity in cross-cultural adaptation, scholars from different backgrounds have developed various perspectives to conceptualize and measure the complicated process of acculturation, involving

“the group-level approaches commonly observed in anthropological and sociological studies and the individual-level approaches predominant in communication, social psychology, sociolinguistics, and more recently in cultural anthropology and psychiatry” (Kim 11).

Two distinctive models of acculturation have been identified in the previous literature, depending on whether acculturation is seen as uni-dimensional or a multidimensional/bi-dimensional process. The most well-known uni-dimensional model comes from Gordon, who claims that everyone would assimilate and become absorbed into the dominant group eventually (69). It assumes that as individuals become more acculturated to their host (or majority)

culture, they necessarily will become less enculturated within their native (or minority) culture (Phinney, 499-514). As Van de Vijver and Phalet interpret, “migrants may differ in the speed of the process, but the outcome invariably is adaptation to the mainstream culture” (217). However, with more and more research done in the area of acculturation, such as Berry’s, the uni-dimensional model is confronted with more and more challenges and doubts, especially under the context of globalization, with “the sheer magnitude of migration” (Van de Vijver and Phalet 217) and “a climate in which more cultural maintenance of migrants are accepted” (217).

In contrast to the one-way cultural adaptation model, many scholars have come up with a more dynamic way to capture of the acculturation process (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault and Senecal; Kagan and Cohen; LaFromboise *et al.*; Szapocznik, Kurtiness and Fernandez; Hutnik; Oetting and Beauvais; Sayegh and Lasry; Zak). Of the various multi-dimensional/bi-dimensional frameworks used to develop different models of immigrant acculturation, they all share the similarity of using orthogonal dimensions such as biculturalism and intensity of cultural involvement, degree of ingroup and outgroup ethnocultural identification, and assimilation vs. retention of heritage culture (Bourhis, et al 376). For example, in Bourhis, et al’s interactive acculturation model, people’s degree of acculturation is considered not only from the side of immigrant groups in the host community, and also from the side of the host community, as well as the interpersonal and intergroup relational outcome that are the product of combinations of immigrant and host community acculturation orientations (379). According to Kagan and

Cohen, acculturation is a process of multiple interacting factors distinguished by different behavioral, cognitive, affective and demographic attributes and by different levels, varying from cultural assimilation to cultural transmutation (133).

In addition, setting about the acculturation study from the 1980s, Berry proposes that there are two major attitudinal/strategic issues to be considered in people's daily encounters with each other with regards to how to acculturate.

According to Berry,

“these issues are: *cultural maintenance* (to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for); and *contact and participation* (to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves)” (9).

Under these two measurements, the acculturation strategy, which is composed of four different types, comes into being: *Integration* (individuals have an interest in both maintaining their original culture and engaging in interaction with other groups); *Assimilation* (individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures); *Separation/Segregation* (individuals hold on to their original culture and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others); and *Marginalization* (individuals have no possibility/interest in maintaining the original culture and also little interest in having relations with others) (9).

Acculturative Stress and Acculturation Variables

Along with the process of acculturation, a concomitant effect exists; that is, the acculturative stress. Referring to Lazarus and Folkman, Chen indicates that

stress occurs when individuals perceive that they are to encounter a harm, a threat, or a challenge that may exceed their resources (49). For people who newly migrate or immigrate to a new environment, it is normal for them to encounter differences and difficulties. In this way, acculturative stress is “a reduction in mental health and wellbeing of ethnic minorities that occurs during the process of adaptation to a new culture” (Lueck and Wilson 48) and it is usually defined as a negative behavioral and emotional response attributable to the acculturation experience (Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok 492-509). Within the different levels of stress, Sodowsky and Lai’s research in 1997 pointed out that there were corresponding acculturative symptoms, such as the affective response (i.e., anxiety, sadness, guilt, nervousness); behavior responses (i.e., suicidal ideation and attempts, drinking, procrastination, and violence); psychosomatic symptoms (i.e., backaches, stomachaches, and headache) (227-228). Evaluating international students’ statuses as ethnic foreigner, cultural migrator and language novice, past research highly agreed that the acculturative stress might be particularly intense among international students (Leong and Chou 185-208). In this way, Tseng and Newton further specified and classified international students’ adjustment issue as general living adjustment (e.g. adjusting to local food), academic adjustment (e.g. language improvement), socio-cultural adjustment (e.g. suffering and dealing with discrimination) and personal psychological adjustment (experiencing homesickness) (591-592).

Based on this four-dimensional model by Berry, Sodowsky and Maestas extend Berry and Kim’s discussion of acculturative stress evaluation aspects by

proposing four considerations to estimate individual's acculturation stress. The four factors are: the nature of the dominant society (including factors such as its pluralistic or assimilationist ideology), the nature of the acculturating group (Berry identifies five most vulnerable groups by their nature: immigrants, refugees, native peoples, ethnic groups and sojourners), the mode of acculturation adaptation chosen, as well as the demographic, social and psychological characteristics of the acculturating individual that can mediate the acculturation and stress relation (139).

Berry's four-dimensional model of different acculturation modes, also takes into account the different variables in influencing the acculturation process, which he calls "Acculturation Framework" (14). In this framework, variables of acculturation can be divided into two categories: the group or cultural level phenomena, which are mainly situational variables; and the individual or psychological level phenomena, which are predominantly personal variables. In the group level category, considerations of the society of origin, with its political context, economic situation; and the society of settlement, with its social support, dominant ideology, are mentioned. While in the individual level division, immigrants/sojourners' age of resettlement, gender, status, language proficient are considered.

Ethnic identity, related both to the society of origin and the society of settlement, to a great extent, can be ranked as a most important and at the same time inevitable consideration when evaluating minorities' acculturation process, as Sodowsky and Lai distinguished and compared acculturation and ethnic identity

by stating that “Acculturation adaptation is a response to the dominant group, and ethnic identity is a response to one’s ethnic group” (213). Within Sodowsky and Maetas’ interpretation, the relationship between acculturation and ethnic identity can be described as a push-and pull psychological phenomenon: One feels both the push to acculturate to the dominant society and the pull toward one’s ethnic group (134).

Referring to Taifel and Turner, ethnic identity is defined as the aspect of an individual’s self-concept that is derived from his or her knowledge of membership of a social group (or groups), together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Sodowsky and Maetas 145-146). Similarly, Smith states that ethnic identity is the “sum total of group members’ feeling about those values, symbol, and common histories that identify them as a distinct group” (183). In regards to social group, Smith defined an ethnic reference group as:

“people who share a common history and culture, who may be identifiable because they share similar physical features and values and who, through the process of interacting with each other and establishing boundaries with others, identify themselves as being a member of that group (181).”

In the many empirical studies done with the inclusion of acculturation, acculturative stress and ethnic identity among minorities, research finds that Asian Americans as a group are less ethnically identified compared with other minority groups; first generational immigrants are more ethnically clarified than second or third generational immigrants, and thus suffering less stress related to ethnic identity (Ying and Lee; Kuo and Roysirar; Roysircar and Maestas).

Closely related to ethnic identity, another inevitable variable to discuss is culture and cultural difference. Intercultural adaptation, both related to one's own/original ethnic community and to members of the host society, bear critical importance in the adjustment experience of individuals undergoing cultural changes through its interpersonal channels (Kuo and Roysircar 164). As Sodowsky and Lai argue, acculturative stress can vary depending on the level of differences between the ethnic and the new host culture (223). It is suggested that the more commonality people's origin and host culture share, the easier acculturation will be; thus the less acculturative stress will exist. Conversely, the more disparity between people's origin and host culture, the more difficult acculturation be and more acculturative stress will develop. Besides the previous two elements, people's "physical appearance as compared to the majority [also] cause difficulties in establishing interpersonal relationships" (Urban and Orbe 119), which vividly reflects the embodied culture and expressive identity.

A lot of research about the different degrees of acculturative stress among different peoples with distinctive cultural backgrounds is done on-campus. For example, Chapdelain and Alexitch's research pointed out that there existed a negative relationship between the degree of cross-cultural differences between international students' countries of origin and the host society and the degree of interaction with hosts (180). As research indicates, Asian immigrant students encountered values and customs in the U.S. that contradicted those of their country of origin, especially in terms of cooperation versus competition (Lynne 19-34), collectivism versus individualism (Yeh and Inose 77; Triandis 506), and

hierarchical relationships versus equality of relationships (Sue and Sue). To illustrate, whereas students from collectivistic cultural background would regard close relationships as the priority (Markus and Kitayama 224), American students may tend to emphasize aspects of individualism, such as independence, assertiveness and self-reliance (Cross 673). Consequently, many international students perceive social relationships in U.S. culture to be “rather superficial and feel disappointed and discouraged with their interpersonal connection” (Yeh and Inose 16).

For the reason that many American cultural values are based on White, European norms, international students from Europe, particularly those proficient in the English language, experience less contrast in cultural patterns of behavior and value systems, which not only allows for a smoother adjustment in their daily interactions, but also enables them to be more likely to effortlessly fit in with the majority (Yeh and Inose 23). In contrast, those in the United States whose cultures of origin are in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and those who follow Islam, Buddhism, and Catholicism experience more acculturation-related problems than those of European and Spanish or Latin descent and are Protestant (Sodowsky and Lai 223) who are culturally proximal to the White American U.S. society. Compared with Europeans’ comparatively easy transition from the origin culture to the host culture, Asian and African students encounter more cultural shock and challenges in making friends (Alreshoud and Koeske; Constantine et al.; Manyika; Trice). Also, a lot of traditionally accepted and domestically widespread norms and behaviors in their country of origin may be misunderstood

or even ridiculed in the new environment, which can create confusion and discomfort for new immigrants (Lynne 19-34). Furthermore, such large cross-cultural differences often prevent international students from forming close relationships with American students (Mallinckrodt and Leong 71), thus contributing to acculturative stress.

In addition, there are a lot more detailed studies focusing on Asian or Chinese culture in particular, and its comparison with Western culture, as well as its influence on communication, which is closely related to minorities' acculturative stress/satisfaction.

Based upon previous literature, Gao stated that, in the Chinese culture, individual is “group-oriented, other-directed, relational, collective and interdependence” (467) rather than western individuals who are more self and personally oriented. Behind these basic descriptions is China's historical and philosophical theory—Confucianism, which includes five cardinal principles, guiding and requiring a very specifically stratified social networking treatment. As the most basic social, cultural and political value system, Confucianism has rooted in and directed China's social operation for over one thousand year by “being institutionalized and propagated both through the formal curricula of the educational system and through the selection process of government officials” (Yum 376), as well as through the generational communication and instruction within the family. When putting Confucianism under the context of interpersonal relationships, and evaluating its influence on interpersonal communication, Yum specified Confucianism's effect on Eastern-Western Cultural Communication in

eight aspects, which is Particularistic versus Universalistic Relationships; Long-term, Asymmetrical Reciprocity versus Short-term Symmetrical or Contractual Reciprocity; Ingroup/Outreach Distinction; Informal Intermediaries versus Contractual Intermediaries; Overlap of Personal Relationships and Public Relationships; Process-versus Outcome-Oriented Communication; Emphasis on Indirect Communication versus Emphasis on Direct Communication; Receiver versus Sender-Centeredness (374-384).

Moreover, there is another popularly discussed particular cultural phenomenon in China-- “Face” or “Lian/Mian Zi”. Although some scholars distinguished “Lian” from “Mian Zi” (Shi; Hu; Mao), they both can still be generalized as a self-esteem related ideology, which is closely intertwined with one’s public image based on judgment of the community, and which must be put under the evaluation of social network or interpersonal communication. Acting as a highly dynamic and complicated social ideology, Chinese face has sophisticated social functions, such as regulating behavior, maintaining harmony, and directing social interactions during interpersonal communication (Shi 27). To illustrate, as Chinese culture pays great emphasis to group connection, other people’s comments/remarks weigh a lot in term of individuals’ interactions and thus influence people’s public images (Gao 469; Shi 577). In this way, people have a set of concerns and behaviors that should be appropriate and in accordance with social expectations. Put into practice, if people’s behavior does not satisfy public expectation, an individual will regard herself or himself as “losing face” and suffering from “condemnation by the group for immoral or socially disagreeable

behavior” (Hu 46). In addition, once face is lost, it is highly possible that one’s social image is seriously damaged and hardly is able to regain respect and social integrity (Shi 27). Consequently, it is deeply agreed upon that individuals should think twice before actions and also act carefully in order to not “lose face” and keep a good social network.

On the other hand, the United States’ preoccupation with individualism and related concepts, such as equality, fairness and justice, exist as greatly distinctive from China’s detailed and complicated social communicational value system. This surely will cause Asian international students to encounter tough cultural adjustment processes.

Furthermore, besides variables such as ethnic identity and cultural difference, Chinese international students, like other Asian international students also need to deal with another extremely important variable daily--the distinctive educational environment, which further influences students’ academic performances. Past literature has pointed to the close relationship between international students’ academic performance, acculturative stress, and their corresponding attitudinal satisfaction towards cultural adaptation (Donald and Denison; Campbell and Li; Shi; Holmes, Leung). Considering Asian traditional cultures devoting attention to children’s education, education and its close relationship with acculturative stress should also be especially paid attention. A lot of Chinese international students leave China to pursue western styled education for the purpose of getting rid of the test-oriented and highly competitive educational system in China, and because of appreciation for the educational

philosophy in U.S. They still inevitably face academic adjustment in the new territory, “where there are different patterns of teacher-student interaction, classroom cultures, academic requirements and expectation, and different concepts and definitions of what constitutes good teaching and learning” (Campbell and Li 376-377).

Greatly influenced under the Confucianism value system, a power hierarchy exists between students and teachers in Chinese cultures (Hofstede 303-320), which requires students to respect their teachers during any communicational occasions, either in classroom or after school. In this way, students would expect “paternalistic leadership” from their teacher (Pratt 301-319) and are allowed to speak only given the opportunity by their teacher (Hofstede 303-320). Challenging and questioning the ideas of their teacher may appear to be foolish and time wasting (Pratt 301-319; Greenholtz 122-130) and will “potentially cause loss of face to all concerned and disrespect to the teacher” (Holmes 22). Whereas the classical educational ideals, pursued by the western culture, grow out of the Socratic dialogical practices which feature “questioning, criticizing, refuting, arguing, debating and persuading” (Major 85), and which seeks to “produce public speakers and at the same time, to invigorate thought through verbal prowess and public oration” (Shi 577). As Shi pointed out, one notable characteristic of American college classrooms is the frequency of interactive activities. Students in the class are not only invited or required to engage in spontaneous intellectual exchange with other classmates, but at the same time, with their teachers as well. To demonstrate a successful acquisition of

knowledge, students are expected to actively participate in both classroom discussions and out-of-classroom group activities. Active participation and involvement in classroom activities is highly encouraged and appreciated (577).

Many empirical studies following the topic of cultural educational difference and its influence on different people also prove that students from Asian countries are less satisfied with their overall learning experiences than respondents from other countries (Campbell and Li 377).

Additionally, macro perspectives in light of the assimilation policies and the acculturation ideologies of the dominant groups are also introduced in weighing the acculturation stress experienced by individuals. Murphy stated that societies with assimilationist policies cause higher acculturative stress levels than pluralistic societies (Lueck and Wilson 48). Following this study, Berry, Lain and Taylor's study of Canada also pointed out that the multiculturalism and ethnic attitudes in Canada made Canada a comparatively easier country for immigration and enabled immigrants/sojourners to suffer from less acculturative stress (Berry 332). When evaluating the United States' immigration policy, it is widely acknowledged that the U.S. is much more friendly to immigrants than a lot of western countries. According to the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* published in 2012, the inflow of new legal permanent residents from China ranked second, next to the country of Mexico, amounting to 81,784.³

Of course, besides the above group leveled variables like ethnic identity and culture disparity, in influencing international students acculturation and

³ US Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, <http://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics>

acculturative stress, individual leveled factors, such as language fluency, peer support or social connectedness, also influence their acculturative stress, as well as their performance during acculturation. For instance, Berry and Kostovcik's research shows that an individual's "previous contact with the host country, multilingualism and the prior experience of an urban, culturally pluralistic setting correlate with lower acculturative stress" (Lueck and Wilson 48).

Intercultural competence, referring to one's concern about social competence, academic and career competence, and cultural competence, encompasses the extent to which ethnic minority individuals engage in social affiliation with both co-ethnic members and members of the dominant group (Sokowsky and Lai 228). Ward coined the term "sociocultural adaptation" to evaluate individuals' skill to execute effective interactions with host nationals (425-426). Considering language's role as the channel of information exchange, shouldering the responsibility of the performance of social competence, academic and career competence, and cultural competence, as well as the fact that Chinese international students' strong and negative self-consciousness about the English proficiency influenced by their face ideology (Shi 582), it is widely acknowledged that linguistic factors is one of the most challenging issues faced by many Asian international students (Mori 137) and have a significant impact on acculturative stress (Ying 59) regarding the many other more barriers caused by language barriers. To illustrate, limited English language proficiency may compromise some international students' academic performance, which in turn, may block international students opportunities to gain respect and trust from their American

peers, and thus causing psychological discomfort (Pedersen 11; Mori 138; Yeh and Inose 16). Functioning in a new community with native speakers, second language learners with inadequate second language communicative skills may easily find themselves labeled incompetent (Blackledge 345), which may affect both how second language users perceive themselves and how they are perceived (Pavlenko 117). What's more, ineffective second language communication (Lynch 23), plus Asian culture's de-emphasized emotional expression (Uba), inhibit Asian immigrant youth from expressing their feelings, which increases their acculturative stress.

As Gallagher claimed, second language proficiency or the ability to communicate effectively in the second language lies at the core of a range of theories of intercultural communication (54). Instead of viewing communication as an isolated issue, Gallagher contends that communication should be regarded as "transactional" (55), which Gallagher specifies by saying

"Communication is the going exchange between person and environment in which one confronts environmental demands. When successful, it allows one to realize personal goals, indicating an adaptive level of social functioning. Communication's role as an interface between person and environment underlies a comprehensive view of cross-cultural adaptation as 'the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or re-establish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environments' (Kim 31)."

Moreover, Bourdieu went one step further to argue that "language should be viewed not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for power

through which individuals pursue their own interests and display their practical competence” (Shi 576). Pavlenko additionally described language as a form of symbolic power, manipulating social distinctions, which are “continuously produced and reproduced through the active use of language and symbolic power”(Shi 576). Besides, Norton also stated there is a crucial role played by power relations during the social interactions between language learners and target language speakers (12). Following these arguments, many empirical studies focusing on the unequal power relation between second language users and language natives also prove their validity by pointing out second language users’ significantly limited access to opportunities (Goldstein; Menard-Warwick; Norton).

Next to the study of acculturative stress according to different peoples, there is further research about the different acculturative stress among different subgroups within the same ethnic people. According to Ying’s division, Chinese/Chinese Americans can be separated into three groups: accompanied minors who migrated with their parents during childhood, unaccompanied minors who migrated without their parents during adolescence, and unaccompanied adults who migrated without their parents during adulthood (410). With the research outcome, Ying finds unaccompanied minors are the most vulnerable group, obtaining the strongest Chinese ethnic orientation and suffering from the most serious condition of acculturative stress (410). Compared with Chinese immigrants, most of these unaccompanied Chinese kids or adolescents are “parachute kids,” “little overseas students,” and “Visa students” (Kuo and

Roysircar 161). Different from immigrants, they are sojourners “who have the desire to return to their own homeland and often remain culturally, religiously, and geopolitically isolated from American culture while maintaining close ties to their native country” (Lueck and Wilson 48). In this way, it’s not hard to understand why these Visa students’ adaptation differs from the experience of immigrants. They suffer from more acculturative strain and isolation (Kuo and Roysircar; Leung; Zheng and Berry) for the reason that they not only face problems such as negotiating between various multicultural environments and dealing with discrimination and stereotypes, language barriers, cultural adaptation, inter-group conflicts, and in-group pressure, experience troubles suffered by other nonimmigrants (e.g. native-born) youths which are associated with their developmental status, such as seeking individual identity and independence apart from the family (Kuo and Roysircar 144), but also additional issues related to cultural differences with the host country and emotional adjustment to being away from the country of origin first and returning back to home country ultimately, which as Castles summarizes “they do not have the opportunity of deciding to what extent they want to interact with the rest of the population, and to what extent they want to preserve their own culture and norms” (161). In regards to these Visa sojourners’ experiences in light of their well-being, Kuo and Roysircar, through a review of literature (162), identified three serious aspects of acculturative stress: (1) significant cross-cultural adjustment difficulties (Hwang and Watanabe; Kuo; Lin); (2) significant education-related concerns (Chow; Lee); (3) substantial psychological problems (Cheng; Chunag; Lin).

Besides, as Yeh and Inose pointed out that “it is also important to understand [international students’] sense of social connectedness in addition to their satisfaction with their social support system” (17). Lee and Robbins define social connectedness as an aspect of the self that manifests the subjective recognition of being in close relationship with the social world, which directs individuals’ feeling, thoughts and behaviors in social situations. In this way, individuals with a high level of connectedness can form relationships with others and participate in social groups and activities much easier than people who lack connectedness. On the other hand, people who have a lack of social connectedness will be inclined to experience low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression, which can be generalized as acculturative stress during the acculturation process (Yeh and Inose 17).

Besides these prevalently significant variables such as ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and educational, etc. factors in influencing one’s acculturation, there are other variables like the age of arrival, the length of stay, family’s educational background, interpersonal competence and etc., which all count during individuals’ acculturation process and the level of acculturative stress. To illustrate, Sam and Berry found that the interpersonal variables (i.e., close contact with parents, perceived parental attitudes, number of friends) were among the strongest predictors of acculturative stress for immigrant adolescents in Norway (17-20).

Of course, on the other hand, discrepancy exists in the literature regarding the effect of variables, such as the gender-acculturative stress relationship. While

some scholars (Choi 88; Thomas 138) report no significant results, other researchers (Berry et al. 503; Klimidis et al.) report significant relationships. According to Berry et al.'s report, greater stress levels are indicated for female migrants.

Moreover, with the speedy technological development, as well as the pervasiveness of mass communication, a lot more research has begun to pay attention to the influence of mass communication (i.e. Internet, broadcast and TV) in regards to the acculturative stress. It was noticed that media exposure allowed sojourners to become more open to and accepting of the distinct values and customs of the host culture (Urban and Orbe 120). At the same time, the rise of the Internet also has dramatically expanded immigrants and sojourners pre-departure knowledge of the host country and after arrival acculturation strategies (Ye; Yang; Jing; Yang et al.), making them less stressful in acculturation.

In fact, attention should be paid to the fact that variables don't exist alone. They are interrelated, influencing the ultimate outcome of acculturation and acculturative stress as a whole. For example, Perrucci and Hu's research demonstrated that both academic and social satisfactions were closely related to contact with U.S. students, language skills and perceived discrimination (491). Leung's report pointed out that academic satisfaction was positively correlated to social self-efficacy and negatively correlated to loneliness among Chinese immigrants and international university students in Australia (257-258).

Acculturative Strategies

Researchers investigating cross-cultural adaptation have relied extensively on some notion of person-environment fit/harmony or (dis)equilibrium, which owe much to a transactional framework of stress. For the purpose of easing stress and regaining mental health, both theoretical and empirical studies are done to evaluate the effectiveness and popularity of different strategies in distinctive cultures (Moore and Constantine; Mori; Bang; Nebedum-Ezeh; Ng; Marsella; Lee; Toomey; Ting-Tommey et al.), which are mostly linked with the notion of coping. A stress and coping framework examine the cultural factors and the circumstances surrounding migration and the acculturation process, and how these impact the cognitive and affective baseline for stress and coping (Berry; Ward *et al.*). When facing harmful/threatening environmental or social stimulus, individuals will act accordingly, engaging in effortful coping behaviors to manage the stress itself and the stress reaction that it has induced (Gallagher 57-58). For instance, Lazarus and Folkman have identified two major approaches: problem-focused coping (attempting to change or solve the problem); and emotion-focused coping (attempting to regulate the emotions associated with the problem) (44). Later, Endler and Parker identified a third one: avoidance-oriented coping (844). Actually, according to Berry, despite of these various coping strategies, the key distinction resides between active and passive coping, made by Diza-Guerrero in 1979 (19). From another perspective, Seiffge-Krenke differentiates functional coping from dysfunctional coping (294). However, it should also be noticed that the host cultural environment is also very important. For example, the active

coping strategy may “have only limited success if the problem lies in the dominant society, especially if there is little interest in the dominant group in accommodating the needs of acculturating individuals” (Berry 19).

In addition, people with different cultural backgrounds come up with different acculturation strategies for the reason that certain coping patterns and behaviors are encouraged, rewarded, and deemed as appropriate while others are not in a particular culture (Yeh, Arora and Wu 58). To illustrate, in the individualism-oriented Western culture, which emphasizes independence, self-control and self-expressions, the direct problem-focused and emotion-focused coping styles such as confronting others or speaking up in order to defend oneself, may be preferred and valued ways of dealing with problems and stressors; whereas in collectivism-oriented cultures, such as Asia and Africa, which pay attention to harmonization, people will tend to utilize the coping strategy of changing themselves, and seeking help and support from family members or peers rather than changing the situation (Yeh, Arora and Wu 58; Moore and Constantine 330). For example, research argues that many international students, when taking the action-based coping strategies, may handle with psychological problems by sharing them with and seeking support and advice from family members and friends among many African, Asian, and Latin American international students (Moore and Constantine 331; Mori; Bang; Nebedum-Ezeh; Ng). Simultaneously, forbearance, which is defined as the tendency to minimize or conceal problems or concerns so as not to trouble or burden others (Moore and Constantine 331), is the most noticeable coping strategy in acculturation among

Asians (Moore and Constantine 331; Yeh, Arora and Wu 62). Instead of exposing problems to others, and bringing about conflicts or burdens, individuals often obtain a stronger willingness to sacrifice and endure distress by themselves (Marsella; Lee; Toomey; Ting-Tommey et al.) Specific examinations are also discussed and conducted to explore the underlying reason for such a phenomenon, which point out the ideological influence generated by the Chinese traditional ideas as Confucian ethics, Buddhist ethnics, Taoist ethics or even “Face” culture (Moore and Constantine 331; Gao 469; Shi 30).

The Introduction of Agency as Socioeconomical Status in Chinese International Students’ Acculturation Evaluation under the Globalized Context

To be an agent, according to William, “means to be capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform social relations to some degree” (20). Likewise, agency arises from individuals’ control of resources, “which means the capacity to reinterpret or mobilize an array of resources” (20). Putting agency under the framework of stress and coping strategies during the acculturation process, it is fair to argue coping approaches and their corresponding resources act as agencies in buffering individuals’ levels of stress. As Thoits argues, “agentic acts do not necessarily result in desirable outcomes, but it is reasonable to expect the problem-solving efforts of mentally healthy persons to be efficacious more often than not” (312). In this way, compared to past research,

which focuses on the stereotypical one-way cultural adaptation mode of Chinese international students, and which scarcely put positive agencies into consideration, I strongly suggest future studies investigating their acculturation process take into account of the agency of socioeconomic status under this globalized context, which, acting as negotiable power, is capable of buffering acculturation stress and can lead to more fluent acculturation processes.

Since Karl Marx's discussion of class and social order, wealth has always been considered as a very important measurement in the economic field and political field, but also sociology and communication. Actually, when Berry first introduced his model about acculturation framework, he also included the consideration of immigrants and sojourners' economic situation of their original country and ones' economic condition in evaluating one's acculturation process or acculturation strategies (15).

However, among the large amount of literature on the topic of acculturation, there is scarce attention paid to immigrants/sojourners' socioeconomic status. The little literature I found is Barankin et al. 1989, study which indicates that immigrants who achieve and/or maintain middle-class status would prefer assimilation over other modes of acculturation; Ullah's research in 1985, which finds second-generation Irish adolescents in England found that lower socioeconomic status adolescents were more likely than middle socioeconomic status adolescents to identify themselves as "Irish" than as "British" (Farver, Bhadha and Narang 14); and Florsheim's study, which, despite the inclusion of socioeconomic status, did not take socioeconomic status very

serious since Florsheim deemed that the socioeconomic status variables were not that obvious among Chinese families (148). Though these three studies mention socioeconomic status as a predictor in acculturation, their references are comparatively old, and also their perspective is mainly focus on immigrant families.

The reason for the lack of studies focused on socioeconomic status in the process of acculturation might be the following: 1) The traditional studies of acculturation from the perspective of dominant countries. In spite of the fact that acculturation is defined as a four-dimensional strategy according to Berry's model, lots of scholars still maintain a stereotypical idea that acculturation is either based on whether one chooses to be accepted or be marginalized. And there is no space left for negotiation; 2) Compared with the current globalized free flow of capital, commodity and people, people didn't migrate that often in the past. Even if they migrate, they would prefer to become permanently located in a place, having a whole family; 3) People who immigrate to the dominant countries usually don't obtain enough social economic power to negotiate with the dominant power. Under such three circumstances, socioeconomic status is rarely taken into account among immigrants or sojourners.

However, I would call for more studies to take into account socioeconomic status during the analysis of acculturation, especially international students' acculturation for the following reasons:

1) In our contemporary world, capitalism has become globalized and people from the "Third World" may also obtain countless amounts of property,

gaining enough social economic power to negotiate their once disadvantaged position. By looking into the cost of attending universities in the U.S., it is not hard to tell that students who can afford their tuition almost all come from middle-class or upper class families. Their status, through their capability to consume lots of luxury goods, can be negotiated and upgraded.

2) According to Berry's definition, acculturation is mutual; it is a process that can bring about changes in both (or all) groups in contact, rather than only among non-dominant groups (330). Therefore, it is fair to say that the dominant culture also experiences change under years of acculturation processes under the globalized context. It is no longer only the non-dominant group that is influenced by the dominant culture. Simultaneously, the dominant culture is also affected by the many non-dominant cultures, making itself more inclusive. As Berry points out some societies are even accepting of cultural pluralism resulting from immigration, taking steps to support the continuation of cultural diversity as a shared communal resource (703).

3) Besides the trend of globalization, which enables non-western countries to become familiar with western culture, and at the same time western countries are encouraged to get to know non-western cultures, a significant process named glocalization is also taking place. Created by Robertson in 1995, "glocalization" is short for "global localization," which is further argued by Lui and Stack that people do not accept foreign cultural forms blindly; instead they localize them to suit their needs (Tong and Cheung 56). In this way, non-dominant cultures will

also try to negotiate with the dominant culture and make it as acceptable for them as possible.

4) With the success of the various anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and anti-westernization movements happening all over the world, defending native lands and protecting original cultures, people are more and more against cultural homogenization. They would like to cherish their own cultures and maintain them.

5) Berry's new study of immigrants' acculturation status in 2006, which includes 13 participant societies, points out that the number of immigrant youths from 26 different cultural backgrounds who chose the integration profile are the most frequent. They are able to consume another culture but at the same time maintain their original culture (334). Afterwards, Berry modified his four dimensional acculturation strategies by changing assimilation into the idea of the "melting pot," integration into "multiculturalism" under this globalized context corresponding to this research (332).

6) As is pointed out under the subtitle of Acculturation Stress and Acculturative Variables, favorable peer support and social connectedness is positively related to the lower level of acculturative stress among international students acculturation. In this way, considering the fact that there are more and more Asian international students belonging to the same ethnic group, especially Chinese international students, coming to the U.S. to further their study, they will surely ease each other's concern in terms of cultural adaptation and its following stress.

7) In addition to the relationship between peer support/social connectedness and the acculturation stress experienced by international students, technology and the speed of information flow are also proved to have beneficial effect in terms of individuals' acculturation. Consequently, situated in this information age, students have much more informational access to their host country, which in turn, greatly eases their acculturation stress.

8) Compared to previous Chinese generations, the contemporary Chinese young generation has a more positive attitude towards self-actualization or success. Maslow argues that self-actualized people are more likely to utilize their potential and capacities fully. Likewise, Leung also points out that "self-actualization (self-fulfillment) is relevant to levels of stress" (9). In this way, it is fair to say that the contemporary Chinese international students will suffer from less acculturative stress with their higher confidence and positive attitude towards self-actualization.

Though I finally located two recent articles that mentioned the importance of socioeconomic status in measuring acculturation among adolescents (Farver, Bhadha and Narang 11; Kuo and Roysircar 152), they regard socioeconomic status as only one predictor of acculturation rather than paying it extensive attention. Consequently, after reviewing the literature in the field of acculturation, I would like to call for more studies to take into account people's socioeconomic status in this globalized context. Moreover, it is also a worthwhile investigation in response to D. Soyini Madison, Dreama Moon, Kent Ono, and Rueyling Chuang's call to bring a critical lens into Communication Studies.

Instead of emphasizing the scientific based, positivist and functionalist oriented model, these critical scholars ask for more consideration of power when conducting research in the field of cultural studies and intercultural communication. For example, Madison proposes a critical lens as unsettling both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control (5); Martin and Nakayama argue a critical perspective as “one that addresses issues of macro contexts (historical, social, and political levels), power, relevance, and the hidden and destabilizing aspects of culture” (Halualani et al. 18); Moon advances her appreciation of critical scholars’ behavior of problematizing the notion of adaptation as “power-neutral” and “linear process” (41).

Therefore, under the principle of critical consideration, Mendoza notes that culture needs to be understood as “at once the site: governance, production, contestation, and assertions of new, old, and emergent/ing identities” (84) particularly within the more contemporary context of globalization and the logic of commodification. It is no longer a static and “present-oriented” process (Martin, Nakayama and Flores 11), nor solely stigmatized discourse within the dichotomy of oppression/disenfranchisement (Madison 97). In fact, culture is “multifaceted and constantly in flux” (Chuang 26), which requires scholars to “scrutinize intersections of nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, and classes” (Collier xii), especially when seeking the dynamics in intercultural communication.

Referring to these critical scholars' argument, it is fair to say that acculturation is still a very disadvantageous and cruel experience for people from non-dominant culture, yet, with the trend that some people from non-dominant cultures become richer and richer, obtaining a lot more socioeconomic capital than ever before, it would be wise to take into account socioeconomic status, analyze its influence on acculturation and recheck the stereotypical idea of discrimination among the dominant people through a critical perspective and qualitative methods.

Chapter 3: Starting off for the Journey: My Position, Method, and Field Work

My Position

-- “Where do you come from?”

-- “I come from China.”

-- “Who are you?”

-- “I am a Chinese.”

Learning English from the age of ten, I can still clearly remember that the above two dialogues were the first several English sentences I learned. Together with them, are “Hello”, “Hi” and “How are you?”

Actually, I didn’t think much about this phenomenon until I came to U.S. to further my master’s education two and a half years ago. To be Chinese, used to be so normal as the ethnic division in China’s eastern coastal area is quite simple and every single person around me was Chinese. Not until I arrived in the U.S., another country, and officially started my life in the U.S., did I gradually realize that I could be different and I was actually different.

The label of being Chinese has been attached to me since the day I was born--on my face, in my blood, throughout everything I am familiar with. “China” and “Chinese” are not only two cultural and historical ideas, mixed with common

memories and widely accepted rituals, deeply rooted in people's mind, and even, entwined with them, are a political idea fully utilized by politicians to intense ethnic identity and concrete its governance.

As a Chinese citizen, I came to the United States to chase my "American Dream", a dream of being more cultivated, more knowledgeable, more critical and thus being more prosperous and successful in the future. I thought, American education, with its good reputation, could help me to better reach these goals. However, what I found by the way of studying in the U.S., living in the U.S., and exploring in the U.S., was much more complicated than I thought. The real society, filled with cultural connotation, historical context, and political barrier, was crueler than the imagined world in my naïve mind. Individuals' effort do not count alone. The same importantly, or even much more significantly, is people's race, nationality, culture, appearance, and communication capability.

Though I devoted efforts to make adjustment and tailor as many aspects as possible to catch up with the new world, such as my academic performance, my English proficiency and my understanding towards American culture, I could still smell a strong scent of awkwardness when compared to other students. I can't speak English fluently, nor do I hold the identical linguistic accent. I don't understand my classmates' jokes, nor can I clearly express my own thoughts. I do not possess the same skin color, nor do I have the similar body shape. I am not interested in the U.S.'s latest news, nor do I fully understand American culture and immerse myself elegantly into the classroom... What happened? ! What can I do? ! I was totally lost in the U.S.

Under such a circumstance, I became more and more interested in people who shared similar experiences as me; who are my soul mates; and who, with their “exotic” yellow skin and black eyes, have the magical ability to engage in a soundless but highly self-assertively and self-expressively embodied performance. Chinese international students, my group and my allies!

On the other hand, as a graduate student in the discipline of Communication Studies, choosing intercultural communication as my focus, I am also highly absorbed in pondering, exploring and analyzing not only the superficial phenomenon of Chinese international students’ cultural adaptation, but also the detailed process and the many complex causes behind it—What kind of influence does acculturation really bring to international students? What does the acculturation process really look like when putting it on fresh bodies? How do Chinese international students evaluate the U.S.? What are the many variables in effecting individuals’ acculturation? To what extent can these variables exert influence?

Additionally, borrowing critical perspective from communication scholars like D. Soyini Madison, Dreama Moon, Kent One, and Rueyling Chuang, etc., I would like to introduce more agentic factors into Chinese international students’ acculturation evaluation, especially agency around individuals’ socioeconomic status. The reason that China, as the second largest economic entity, is becoming more and more prosperous on the globalized stage, and at the same time, there are more and more young students with high family income come to the U.S. to further their study. In this way, the idea of conducting a qualitative study to

investigate the influence of wealth during Chinese international students' acculturation came to mind.

Method

Interviewing and Personal Narrative

The method of interviewing is one of the most basic tools in conducting qualitative research in the field of intercultural communication. Informed by a critical lens, the method of interviewing should be given with more attention as Chuang argues that “the scientific or positivist paradigm might not adequately account for human experience, worldview, spirituality, and (hyper)reality” (26). Ono furthers Chuang’s view by pointing out that even a lot of critical work fails in derives their work “from the urgency of the material life circumstances”, even principally and experiential (94). Madison validates the method of interview by saying:

“The beauty of this method of interviewing is in the complex realms of individual subjectivity, memory, yearnings, polemics, and hope that are unveiled and inseparable from shared and inherited expressions of communal strivings, social history, and political possibility. The interview is a window to individual subjectivity and collective belongs: I am because we are and we are because I am.(26).”

With the method of interviewing, people are afforded the opportunity to narrate their own stories and experiences. As Langellier claims: “identity and experience are a symbiosis of performed story and the social relations in which they are materially embedded: sex, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, geography, religion, and so on” (“Two or Three Things I Know For Sure” 129). In this way,

personal narrative is especially pivotal to bring about the lives of those marginalized and muted experiences, as well as those mundane communication practices of ordinary people (Langellier 126). For Chinese international students, they are naturally muted people not only for their difference as seen through the dominant culture, for the one hundred year's historical humiliation, for China's national position as a third world country and a developing state, but also for their potential lack of fluency in speaking English. They are not allowed a decent opportunity to speak in public, but even more, they may have no idea about how to organize vocabularies in an articulate way.

Additionally, views forwarded by traditional scholars of Chinese international students become the master narrative, lacking further complexities under this dynamic and globalized social context. With the use of interviewing in this project, new realms of meaning that “permeate beyond rote information” will be displayed (Madison 25). The opportunity of rewriting, or at least re-evaluating, these previous but pervasive master narratives, empowering this marginalized group with a powerful means of survival and liberation will also rise up (Dallia 493). In fact, rather than proceeding to analyze these Chinese international students without deeper recognition, I will try to “understand them on their own terms first” (Chuang 45); rather than viewing the interviewee as an object, he/she should be highlighted “as a subject with agency, history, and his or her own idiosyncratic command of a story” (Madison 25).

Moreover, personal narratives revealed in the process of interviewing will present detailed information about the “subjective, contextualized, and relieved

accounts of social life” (Halualani et al. 74); the racial operations in daily life and the intricate ways in which people of color challenge dominant narratives (Dallia 493); and the contested, complicated “double consciousness” (Tedlock 333) between the contested structural and personal frames. For Chinese international students, they are inferior minority on one hand, but middle class, and even upper class in terms of family’s socioeconomic status on the other hand. By using the method of interviewing, Chinese international students are allowed with a space to address to their simultaneously dialectical story of being situated in a disadvantaged acculturation position, and also explore the possibility and potentiality of their roles as power negotiators, overcoming the oppressed status of cultural adaptor through the use of wealth.

Dialogic Performance and Reflexivity

Conquergood proposed the idea of dialogical performance as an ethical/moral position in conducting ethnographic studies. According to his interpretation:

“The aim of dialogical performance is to bring self and other together so that they can question, debate, and challenge one another. It is a kind of performance that resists conclusions; it is intensely committed to keeping the dialogue between performers and text open and ongoing.” (9)

Though this method is advanced under the conversational situation between one people and one culture, and other people and culture, it is still illuminating for the reason that instead of positioning the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee as hierarchical, it describes the relationship between researcher and the researched as exchangeable and mutually beneficial. In fact, instead of positioning myself as a graduate

researcher, I need to examine myself as an immersive part of these Chinese International Students, who are experiencing more or less the same structural and personal struggles in the classroom, on the campus, in the local community and in the whiteness-dominated United States. Opening every vocal, visual, tactile, and spiritual organ in our body, we arouse aroma and feel each word, each expression and each movement's affect between us. By keeping critical simultaneously, I try to investigate: Are we regarding each other as sisters and brothers coming from the same collective nation state and suffering from similar situations when we are speaking Chinese? Do we feel each other's calling and belongingness by sharing similar experience? What is my relationship with these Chinese international undergraduate students? How much are we alike?

At the same time, the paradigm of dialogic performance requires the researcher to stay not only participatory and also reflexive in conducting a study targeted at people sharing the same culture and nationality with me. As Calafell indicate: "participatory epistemology allows the ethnographer access not only the other ways of knowing him or herself, but also allows him or her access to various types or texts, both oral and written" (179). In addition to analyzing these Chinese international students' embodied personal narrative, and situating these narratives into the bigger context of cultural, historical and economical capital, I am also situated in an urgent position to evaluate my own embodied experiences, emotions and thoughts. As Ellis says:

"I start with my personal life and pay attention to my

physical feelings, thoughts, and emotions. I use what I call systematic sociological introspection' and 'emotional recall' to try to understand an experience I have lived through (xvii).”

In this way, besides taking the angle of observing Chinese International Students pursuing undergraduate study at a private Midwestern university from their position and through my eyes, I also need to set off my survey by reflexively examining myself from their standpoints. Following Calafell's methodological approach (180), I also assume a performance ethnography approach that allows my insight and reflexivity as a Chinese graduate international student to make sense of what I was observing and participating in by addressing to my interviewee's narrative, as well as my own experience. What kind of influence does acculturation really bring to international students? What does the acculturation process really look like when putting on fresh bodies? What am I thinking and feeling when they talk about their discomfort, struggle and helplessness during acculturation? What kind of comment will they have on me, etc.?

Furthermore, experience as narrated is neither self-evident nor straight-forward (Peterson and Langellier 136). Actually, all narratives have a political function (Langellier "Personal Narrative" 271). They are embodied, situated and material (Langellier "Storytelling in Daily Life" 8). "What if the researcher is a white person?" "What if the researcher is an African American?" "What if the researched person is a European?" "What if..." etc. Therefore, it is necessary to be reflexive and explore the deeper meanings through people's narrative content,

mode of narration, and the positionality of the storytellers in relation to the structure of relations and institutions constituting the surrounding context (Halualani 74). Critical race theorists Mari Matsuda, Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, and Neil Gotanda argue that convincing analysis “should be grounded in material, lived and deeply felt experiences in order to better account for minority racialized experiences” (Halualani 74).

Poetic Transcription

Once the audible text is in hand, there is the question of how to make a visible record of its sounds. *—Dennis Tedlock*

Introduction of The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation

Poetic transcription, modeled by Soyini Madison in her publication of “Story, History, and Performance: Interpreting Oral History Through Black Performance Traditions” and “That Was My Occupation: Oral Narrative, Performance, and Black Feminist Thought” (Calafell 179), dedicates to embrace literal words together with “the movement, sound, and sensory body that give them substance” (Madison “Story, History and Performance” 46). Rather than placing words in blocks of prose and divorcing them from the actions and meaning of their speaker, poetic text transcribes “the story or oral narrative in varying lengths and positioning words and phrases in a manner that projects that qualities of the human voice and body” (46). In this way, performer’ every breath, every rhyme, every tone, every sigh and every connotation are expressive and reflective. As Madison argues:

“by placing words on a page to resemble the rhythm of the

human voice and the speaker as a social-historical being that colors each word based on that existential fact, the text comes closer in capturing the depth inherent in the indigenous performance...” (Madison “That was my occupation” 217).

For Chinese international students, they are a group characterized as reserve and modest. They are not good at expression, nor are they paid much attention to. Through the way of transcribing their words into the form of poetic text and thus conveying them with socio-contextual spaces for reflection, I try to privilege Chinese international students’ both saying and said.

Field Work

With the University of Denver IRB’s permission, participants in this study included five Chinese undergraduate students, three males and two female, studying at a private university in the Midwest, with various majors and different resident length. The reason for choosing undergraduate students as my research group is based in the fact that compared with the cost for attending graduate schools, the average cost of undergraduate students is 20.9% higher than graduate students according to the statistics released by U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) in November, 2011. In addition, considering that a lot of International graduate students meet the minimum age requirement to take a part-

time job as a TA or RA, or offered with scholarships, the actual cost of attending graduate schools is much less than undergraduate schools. Therefore, it is fair to say that Chinese international students, who have the capability to come to the United States to finish their undergraduate degree, come from families with high incomes, which can be categorized as an upper middle or upper class families.

This study focuses on groups who meet the following criteria: 1) have reached the minimum age of 18; 2) Chinese international students pursuing undergraduate education; 3) the total amount of time in countries which use English as the first language is no more than 4 years.

This study also requires students who agree to the survey to participate in an interview on a one to one basis. By seeing the participant recruitment information on public board or through personal emails, they were introduced fully to this study. The risk for these Chinese international students was minimal, if any. They received the benefit of sharing their own stories in public, and transforming their stereotypical images of being a marginalized group without any right/power of speech.

The recruitment methods were as follows:

- 1) Students were recruited through a local Internet Peer Network of Chinese Students named QQ group (Chinese MSN group).
- 2) Students were recruited through a Chinese forum of Chinese Students & Scholars Association at the university,
- 3) Students were recruited through the university's language center.
- 4) Students were recruited through the snowball sampling, having

participants contact others who meet the recruitment criteria and expanding the criteria to students at other U.S. institutions.

The whole study is divided into two big parts, and every student participating in the study is asked to finish the two parts. The first part is about basic information related to interviewees' demographic data, such as the age, sex, the length of residence in the U.S., as well as the occupation of their parents and the family income per year. The second part is a 60-90 minute face to face interview at random spaces of the students' choice, including Starbucks Coffee Store and Bean Tree. Interview questions in the second part included 17 general questions, which can be further divided into four sections: the Warm-up Questions regarding students' driven force of coming to U.S. to study; the first category of Main Questions concerning individuals' acculturation experience in the classroom; the second category of Main Question relevant to students' wealth and life in U.S.; and lastly, General Questions referring to interviewees' plan after graduation. As the interview is designed from an ethnographic and unstructured approach, the actual communication between the interviewer and the interviewee varies according to the specific situation. The detailed content may not include all of the 17 questions as shown in Appendix A, and may also have other questions outside the list. The whole process of interview is audio recorded with interviewers' permission. Also, participants were notified several times that they have the right to pause the interview at any time to reduce any potential risk.

Chapter Four: Narration

Getting Rid of the Chinese Education System, Dreaming from America, But WHAT?!

The contemporary Chinese education, as inherited from the historical Chinese education system, which is utilized by the government to better manipulate management, as well as to serve for the notably Chinese Examination System “科举制度(Keju Zhidu)” to select government officials, pays great attention to the relationship between the teacher and students. The teacher performs as the authority, leaving little space for students to disobey. Considering the large population in China, a rigid and standardized examination system is regarded as the best way to select talented people. Though being affected by the western ideas with the Chinese government’s opened-up policy in the late 20th century, the coexisting Chinese education, especially the fixed examination system, still stays as highly dehumanized compared to the western education system, which operates in a much more flexibility way. In this way, more and more Chinese families began to send their children to western countries, such as U.S., to pursue a better education, expecting a higher starting point for their children to dream from.

Criticizing the Chinese education system mainly in two aspects--the rigid classroom atmosphere, such as the hierarchical relationship between the teacher and students, and the standardized examination system, my interviewees all narrated their dissatisfaction, resistance, disagreement and even fear towards the Chinese education system.

As the youngest male student of my five interviewees, Tory, who had only stayed in the U.S. for 9 months, explained the driving force for U.S. education:

*“I am not a good fit for the domestic high school education in China,
Considering my level (the academic performance in school), especially my
level in High school,*

I cannot enter a good university within the examinations.

What’s more, the Chinese EXAMINATION-oriented education,

Is Not At All, suited for people with the character as me.

Because, I ONLY expect to learn stuff that I am interested in,

Instead of stuff I don’t know at all, am not interested at all!

In High school, I chose science as my major.

*But I STILL need to learn liberal arts during the first two years in High
School,*

However, I was NOT interested in it At All.

I need to learn it by ROTE and memorize them MECHANICALLY,

And then pass its examination.

I REALLY DO believe,

Such kind of MANDATORY education, as called the spoon-feeding way of teaching,

Is EXTREMELY unsuitable for me.”⁴

Likewise, Nancy, who had spent one year in U.S. as a high-school exchange student before entering into university, and who encountered with the least cultural discomfort during the acculturation process, also expressed her great dislike towards the Chinese education by comparing it with the American education:

“Chinese education system ‘SCARES’ me,

For me, it is not a fit.

Because I have NO idea about what I really want,

I have NO idea about what my major is.

As you know,

The major in China is: you choose the major first,

And then when it comes to universities,

Even if you have not got a good outcome during the university entrance examination,

You still “STICK” to your major.

It’s like the following fours years in Universities is Totally Depended on the university entrance examination,

So I am a little afraid of it.

⁴ All transcriptions are translated into English from Chinese and they are notified by quotations; I use capitalization to mark changes and emphasis in volume and tone. The same with the following blocked italics, quoted from my five interviewees.

*Whereas in U.S.,
Their university educational system is
UNDECIDED,
You are allowed to attend classes At Your Interest.
You are able to dig into yourself
and know more about yourself.
That's what I want.”*

Indeed, the university entrance examination in China, widely recognized as obtaining the power of “一考定终身(Yikao Ding Zhongshen)⁵”, has an immense effect in orienting students' future life. After three years' tough education in high schools, all students are required to go through a big examination event collectively, which, including several small tests categorized according to subjects, takes place only once a year. To finish the whole examination, it usually takes two or three days. All students are strictly watched in case of any cheating behaviors. Therefore, the university entrance examination, together with students' obtained score, is students' sole opportunity to check their performance in high schools, ultimately determine whether they are qualified to enter a university, what kind of universities they are competent to enter, what kind of major they are certified to choose and perhaps what kind of people they are likely to become. Though, as a Chinese international student, who spent 16 years under the Chinese educational structure back in China, and who seriously suffered from the torture of the rigid

⁵ Can be literally interpreted as “determining the following fortune for individuals' whole life with one examination”, it is used to describe the importance of the examination as it obtains the power of orienting people's future life.

examination system in China, I am still quite impressed by Nancy's choice of the word "SCARE". What a substantial and negative influence the examination has brought to Nancy so that she is able to share such a horrible but extremely vivid word. With the word of "Scare" as well as her comparison between Chinese education and American education, Nancy insinuated her mixed emotions of fear, anger and worry towards the Chinese education.

On the other hand, the United States of America, stands as the "most developed country in the world", with the most attractive "American Dream", as well as a high reputation for education quality, is simultaneously and naturally regarded as the perfect or ideal destination for Chinese students to further their education. In this way, for most Chinese families, if they have the capability to pay the high tuition for U.S. education, they would all like to send their children to the U.S. for a more comprehensive education, in terms of not only the academic aspect, but also experimental knowledge like the U.S.'s political, economical and social operation, etc., which is described by Benny as "镀金(Du jin)", which can be literally interpreted as adding gold onto the surface to make the product more glorious. Benny, 22 years old, male, had spent around 4 years in America. He is the only interviewee who had already received a "Green Card" for him to legally stay in the U.S. as long as he likes.

Another interviewee, Mike, 21 years old, who has spent almost three years in the U.S. for undergraduate education mentioned:

"I would like to gain the following abilities through my experience in U.S.:

First, it's about experience, experiencing what is really in life.

Secondly, it's about ability, such as my ability in dealing with emergency.

As our parents are not by our side physically, (we need to) deal with these stuffs ourselves.

At the same time, the language ability as well as professional competence.”

Born with pretty dreams, and filled with parents' best blessings, Chinese international students set off on their journey for the U.S. But the exotic life outside the home country is more real and cruel than these students ever expected. With the “Only One Child” Policy in China, the majority of these interviewees come from families with a single child. Plus the fact that “studying” is regarded as a priority in Chinese families, children in China have no idea about what real life looks like, as their parents and grandparents have helped them to take good care of everything except studies. In this way, leaving their beloved parents or grandparents, their familiar environment, their own ethnic country, learning to take care of themselves and setting up a totally new life in another ethnic country is enormously difficult.

Mary, 22 years, who had spent three and a half year at the university for her undergraduate education in Accounting, recounted her experience and its' difference with her imagined life in the U.S. as follows:

“What I didn't imagine is the ability of independence.

Because in the previous life, I don't need to be concerned of anything for living,

Also, I have my parents to take care of me.

Before I came to U.S.

I have never went to the bank, nor did I pay the telephone bill.

Coming here, I need to consider a lot (stuff) relevant to life.”

For a person who has never done and experienced anything by him or herself alone, the life in U.S. is certainly a completely new start. Despite the fact that all interviewees have a sense about the different and difficult life that they will encounter in U.S., for example, I was told by Mary that a lot of her friends/classmates pursued their elementary education in American and then came back China for Junior and High School education, from whom she learnt a lot about life in the U.S., yet, knowledge in mind still have a tremendous difference from the actual experienced life. Students might form an idea towards the other nation and the other culture through peer students' narration, but after all, it's about imagination and evaluation. They are not real experiences vividly underwent by themselves.

Reflecting on my own experience, the situation is quite similar. Two and a half years ago, it was also my first time of stepping onto the U.S. land. I had never paid any bill by myself. I had never lived in any place where there is no Chinese food and I had to cook completely by myself. I had never been away from home for more than 1000 miles. I had never.....

Though I have learnt a lot of theoretical knowledge, as well as practical experiences about how to live a life in the U.S. from my cousin brother who is studying for his Ph.D. in America, my brain nevertheless became blank when it came to finding a living place in Denver. Denver, where is it? Denver, What does it look like? Denver, a strange place; a place I have never heard about before

applying for the University of Denver. So what's the next step? As graduate students, there is no way to live on campus. So what can I do? Is there a real estate agency? Is there a website available for me to browse apartments? What is the fairest price? Uncertainties lingered in my mind and I was so worried about my situation in Denver. Not until the day before I finally arrived in Denver, did I find an empty space to settle down ultimately. God Bless Me!

Tory also recollected his most dramatic experience on the first day he arrived in the U.S.

"I came into the U.S. territory through the Security and Customer Check in San Francisco.

Then I found my arrival flight had delayed...

I could not catch up with my next flight.

I had no idea about what I could do next.

I thought as long as I bought with the original ticket, I would be allowed to take the next flight...

But when I came inside (the airport), my flight had already gone,

And I need to go through the process of changing tickets.

But I had no idea about where is the place for changing tickets, and how to go there.

I asked a lot of people,

Finally, I found the way...

I waited for a very very long time.

But I was told,

Actually I could catch up with the flight as long as I had informed the police that my flight was leaving...

So I need to buy another ticket with another 75 dollars,

But the earliest next flight has been filled, as well as the next after next,

There was no place, and what I got is 'stand by'.

But whatever, it did not matter.

.....

I waited for three or four hours,

Finally I got onto the plane.

It was my first time in U.S.

I have no idea about what to do in such a situation.

I was so worried.

I checked all my informational material like passport, over and over.

.....

What I found when I arrived in Denver was that there was only one luggage arrived and the other one was on the flight one hour late to my flight.

I was supposed to arrive in Denver at 5:00 p.m.

But actually I got in Denver at 12:00 a.m. and arrived at home at 2:00 a.m..

However, I found I have lost everything except the passport

.....

I lost (the weight of) five Jin⁶.”

⁶ A unit of weight equal to half kilogram

Language as the Window to the Outside World, But Language is not Vocal Alone

“As competent speakers we are aware of the many ways in which linguistic exchanges can express relations of power. We are sensitive to the variation in accent, intonation and vocabulary which reflect different positions in the social hierarchy. We are aware that individuals speak with differing degrees of authority, that words are loaded with unequal weights, depending on who utters them and how they are said, such that some words uttered in certain circumstances have a force and a conviction that they would not have elsewhere.”

-- John B. Thompson

Editor's Introduction to Language and Symbolic Power

It seems that human beings are born with the skill of uttering, then saying and eventually speaking. Language, as the most important communication bridge between individuals, is an indispensable component part of a regular life. But most of the time, people just take language's existence for granted. Not until we find ourselves situated in a new area of land, a land with a completely different linguistic system, having no idea about the meaning of other people's "blablabla", obtaining no sense about how to utter, how to shoot out an intact sentence, or hold an effective and clear communication with the other side, do we

finally realize the significance of language. This is the exact situation faced by Chinese international students coming to the U.S. to study.

Though English is a mandatory course for every Chinese student from elementary schools, rather than the practical dialogical communication between individuals, it is more about theoretical instructions about the rules of English as a language, such as grammar, and the examination-oriented coaching about how to achieve a better score, or if there is any examination tricks that can be applied. There is scarcely an English teacher who is capable of speaking English fluently in most schools. In this way, for Chinese international students, their practical communication skills, such as listening and speaking, are extremely unsatisfactory.

Referring to my interviewees' experience in light of language and their acculturation experiences, they all consider language the most critical aspect of life in the U.S. since language, after all, is the a medium for communication, for knowledge and for life. Tory, as the student who has been in the U.S. for the shortest amount of time among interviewees, called to mind his fresh experience in class:

"In the beginning, I cannot understand what is said in class.

Teachers speak in a very fast speed.

I do think the American teachers' language speed is comparatively fast!

Moreover, sometimes, some teachers are comparatively friendly,

We are allowed to record,

Some other times, teachers say: 'No, this is my stuff'.

*Under such circumstance, you will become quite nervous in the class,
Because you do not understand.*

.....

I went for class with a (Chinese) classmate, and it's mathematics.

*For the reason that we have learned a few more mathematics knowledge in
domestic China, it is comparatively easier (to learn/understand the course).*

Even it's under such a situation,

*I asked my classmate (after class): 'Have the teacher given us any
homework to do?'*

My classmate's said: 'Yo, did the teacher leave us any homework?'

*I replied: 'what kind of homework does the teacher leave today? Does the
teacher really give us any homework?'*

.....

In this way,

In the beginning, you will become extremely nervous.

Because you do not know if there is homework,

Or what the homework is about,

And your homework score will be greatly influenced.

At the same time, you know,

Your homework score is related to the examination score,

And then it will be related to your GPA,

It's kind of a relation, which goes further and further.

It's like a chain."

Language, obtained and utilized by human beings, who live as a socialized group, performs the role as a communicational medium. It is the window from where individuals are able to look out into, know, and then understand the outside world. It is the stepping-stone from where people can advance into and then immerse themselves into another territory. Despite that the notion that *Silence is Gold* is sanctified and pervasively believed by a lot of Chinese people as it shows an individual as more modest, reflective and sophisticated, leaving more mysterious space for others to wonder about, for Chinese international students who have the difficulty in speaking English, regardless, silence is an awkwardness, an embarrassment, a struggle, a helplessness, and a call for help.

Moreover, Chinese international students are not temporary tourists who come to U.S. to take a small look, nor are they matured adults whose priority is to keep living in the society. Besides the regular social connection establishment and maintenance, Chinese international students, shouldering a more urgent responsibility as international students coming to the U.S., a privileged and most developed world, to modestly learn advanced knowledge, face a more competitive and ruthless situation. Language, as highly connected with the in-classroom communication with teachers and classmates, and off-classroom link with homework and examinations, bears critical importance towards not only Chinese international students' acculturation, psychological satisfaction, but also in their future development and achievements.

“Everything in the classroom, such as professor’s coaching, the homework, will after all, be rooted into language. To illustrate, physics, chemistry, and

computer, though it does not have a close relationship with language, yet, during teachers' coaching, you might do not understand, or it is possible you do not completely understand." Mike, who has stayed in U.S. for three years, summarized his thoughts.

Instead of accepting "the core intention of linguistic, namely, the intellectualist philosophy which treats language as an object of contemplation rather than as an instrument of action and power" (37), Bourdieu draws attentions to the intimate relationship between language and power, indicating language's medium role as a kind of symbolic power. At the same time, Ardener's muted group framework, which, in his opinion, widely exists in any society where asymmetrical power relationship operates, also supports the argument about the political relationship between language and authority. As Ardener indicated, "groups that function at the top of the society hierarchy determine to a great extent the dominant communication system of the entire society" (Orbe 158). In this way, subordinate group or the non-dominant group are forced to become "inarticulate" as their real experience is confined within presiding groups' communication system and thus cannot be effectively expressed (158).

Compared to people, who are able to speak English fluently, who have "American" accents, who are privileged native speakers, Chinese international students, with their deformed language proficiency, from the day they arrive onto U.S. land, have turned into a less-privileged and muted group, lost their first battle in the dynamic inter-personal relationship.

I can still clearly remember the situation when I walked into the Writing Center. For the reason that I was suggested by a professor to go to the Writing Center, I went there and asked English native speakers to make revisions, and thus to improve the understandability of my writings. The Writing Center, a quite small place, is filled with Chinese and other international students. Advisors there are all English natives. It is like the soundless announcement, confirming the disadvantaged position of international students.

Why? Just for the reason that they are born to speak English, they can be our teachers, obtaining the power to revise my work?! Though I was told that these advisor have went through a professional training about how to make advises. After all, they are just students. A lot of them are even undergraduate students. Can they really understand what I try to deliver through the word? Do they really obtain the ability to make revisions on my work?

But life continues. For Chinese international students, instead of theoretically elevating the issue of language with power as its intimacy onto a political and ideological field, their real life is more cruel and merciless, leaving little space for them to argue, or to defend. They have no choice but to looking for a safe harbor assuring and easing themselves, or desperately take the initiative and find an outlet.

For example, Mike commented on his communication experience with a very calm disposition.

“Of course, there Must be discomfort.

Why?

Because you have just lived here for three years,

While your classmates have been here for twentyish years.

Taking another perspective,

Suppose,

There is a foreigner coming for class with you in your home country,

He Necessarily will have difficulty in immersing into the classroom.

.....

It's not like you cannot communicate with them,

(The fact is,)

You just Cannot Make Yourself communicating with them like the mother tongue”

Compared to Mike's acceptable attitude towards his lack of language proficiency, Nancy, on the other hand, as the most successful sample of cultural adaptation among my five interviewees, shared with me her distinctive experience:

“Chicken wings were always my favorite food from my childhood,

At the time that my English was poor,

I desperately had no idea about how to say wing in English.

So when I talked to my host dad about what I would like to have

I said ‘chicken’, performing the action of chicken wing waving in the air with my two arms simultaneous,

Mocking chicken's uttering of ‘Gugu’ at the same time,

And also pointing to my arm by saying ‘this part’ (to my host dad).

This is how I learnt the chicken wing.

.....

At that time

My language was not good.

But I was Brave enough to say.

.....

Body language, actually is very Powerful.”

On another side, Mary, standing as an example of integrated acculturation according to Berry’s four-dimensional acculturation framework, gives a seemingly more neutral and practical suggestion.

“You just need to be a little bit more brave,

When others smile at you,

You Reply them with a smile as well.

Though you come from different countries,

Human beings’ Nature is the Same.”

Through Nancy and Mary’s narration, it seems, they both agree that people’s attitude, standing behind the technical aspect as vocal language, is a more important factor in eventually deciding individuals’ cultural adaptation outcome, which is also mentioned and described as “moderating factors during acculturation” in Berry’s framework for acculturation research (15). As Nancy pointed out: “With time, once your language improves, of course, your communication will become better and there will be less miscommunication. But as soon as your attitude is right, I think the initial conversation, and your initial involve into another culture is happening.”

*“You need to be out there,
‘Out of the COMFORT ZONE,
...
When you are with Chinese,
You share some similar background,
So you are comfortable.
But when you come to a new place,
With people you don’t know,
You are already ‘Out of the Comfort Zone’
Then at such times,
You need to ‘PUSH YOURSELF’,
You need to ‘GET OUT’
‘Maybe Initiate the Conversation or Something’.”*

Indeed, attitude is significantly important as it, to a great extent, determines an individual’s level of acceptance, as well as the potential favor towards another culture. With a positive and vigorous attitude, individuals will be introduced and welcomed by other people in a new country more easily. Also, an enthusiastic attitude, at least a supportive and encouraging attitude, will provide the driving force pushing people to get out of the comfort zone, utilizing every part of his/her body and coming up with compromising solutions when being faced with problems during acculturation. For example, just as Nancy and Mary suggested, besides the vocal language, there are body language and facial expressions to be added into human beings’ communication toolbox. But scholars should also be

cautious about the fact that, among the many different kinds of languages, only vocal linguistic systems can be culturally identified. Conveying the traditionally accepted materialistic things, institutional systems, as well as spiritual values and behaviors (though there are countries using different body language system, they are very few), vocal expressions enable people to identify one's nationality or home country by listening to their language and accent. Whereas, people's utilization of body language and facial expression actually is actually a de-cultural identification act, through which people are announcing themselves as global friendly earth citizens.

Moreover, through a respective comparison between the above three students, Mike, Nancy and Mary, it is fair to conclude that acculturation is rather diverse than homogeneous. For people who even come from the same ethnic country, the same age group, and similar family background, individuals' acculturation outcome varies according to the exact situation and to some extent, is highly related to one's personal character. For example, during the interview, it is obvious to feel that Nancy is much more open and talkative than Mike and Mary.

In addition, through my interview with five Chinese undergraduate students, including two females and three males, I found that the two females are obviously more acculturated than the other three males, which is to say, Nancy and Mary, are far more culturally open and encountered with less cultural discomfort compared to Tory, Benny and Mike. Though I cannot make a qualitative conclusion that females are more acculturated than males with the small sample I

include in this study, it will be very interesting to devote more effort to check if there exists an acculturation difference between male and female as they not only obtains different character, and also have different public image in front of others.

Living Dialectically in Two Cultures

“Now I feel a growing feeling and attachment, belongingness to the American society, but that doesn’t mean it will change my identity a Chinese in the future. So when I think about Chinese, it is always there. So I think those two emotional attachments will never be the same,” Nancy said, when commenting her root as a Chinese.

As Chinese International Students, who are spending four years of their most precious youth time staying in the United States, all of my interviewees are experiencing the valuable opportunity of becoming more reflexive and more matured by observing and undergoing the various novel events in America, putting them into comparison with their home country--China, and coming up with their own evaluations. *America and China, which would you like more* is a mandatory question required by all of my interviewees. Spending at least around one year in the United States, these Chinese international students all shared their view in terms of the respective advantages and disadvantage of America and China.

Summarizing interviewees’ responses, their answers can be generally divided into two categories: the appreciation towards the macro and objective conditions in the United States, such as the social system, and the environment;

the yearning for emotional and subjective attachments in China like the family and human friendliness.

To illustrate Nancy replied to the “China VS U.S.” question by saying:

“It’s kind of a feeling,

like being Exasperated at China’s Failure to Make Good.

Including pollutions,

The whole living atmosphere,

Maybe I would like the United States more.

.....

But like it is said,

好山好水好寂寞， 好脏好乱好快活 (Haoshan Haoshui Haojimo,

Haozang Haoluan Haokuaihuo)⁷

After all,

(You) will MISS your home,

Your friends.”

In the meanwhile, Tory indicates his validation towards the people and the environment in U.S.A.

“China is a developing country,

You need to Make Efforts to develop the economy.

So the environment is SECONDLY RATED compared to the economy.

⁷ Can be literally interpreted as “Beautiful Mountain, Beautiful Water, yet with Great Loneliness in America; Considerable Dirtiness, Tremendous Messy, but with Great Happiness in China”, which can be understood as though America has beautiful mountains and beautiful water, yet Chinese people here feel great loneliness; Whereas in China, though dirtiness is considerable and the messy is tremendous, Chinese people nevertheless, stay very happy.

*Sometimes, we will Sacrifice the environment to
make contributions to the economy.*

*Whereas for America,
It is Already a developed country,
It does not need to make the sacrifice
.....*

*That's the reason why
The sky is Always blue in the U.S.
While in China,
It can be blue a few times,
But for the most of the time,
It is HAZE.”*

Besides the appreciation of the friendly environment in U.S., my interviewees expressed their favor towards the social system in the U.S. For example, Benny shared his dissatisfaction towards the social system in China.

“Freedom Versus Unfreedom!

*In one country,
I can feel that,
The money I make,
The lifestyle I have,
Or the purpose of life,
I have a goal.
I feel that,*

I indeed and vividly live here.

Or I can feel the government's real and exact protection.

Whereas in the other country,

I do feel,

Even if I made money,

I would die here (for no reason and unjustly)."

However, in spite of plenty of recognition in the United States, China, beyond everything, is the place in which Chinese international students are birthed, the land where they made their first step, the region where they pronounce their first intact sentence, and the ideological starting point from where they gradually form a complete system of values. It's our homeland and mother country. The emotional feeling, a feeling coming down from deep in our heart will never fade. Just like the popular saying “好山好水好寂寞，好脏好乱好快活” has conveyed, no matter how beautiful American mountains and water are, Chinese people feel great loneliness staying in the U.S. At the same time, no matter how dirty and messy the Chinese environment is, Chinese people nevertheless, stay very happy in China, because after all, it is home!

“It's a hometown, you can't decide where you are born. Like the 20 years of life is there. And your family is there. So when you think about that, it always the root of who you are.” Nancy further expressed her viewpoint.

Tory, during the interview, also echoed Nancy's statement,

“After all,

I am a CHINESE.

I have been living in China for 18 years.

I have Much More understanding towards

Chinese culture, Chinese life, and Chinese people.

(You can even describe my understanding) as clear as CRYSTAL.

Maybe in China,

I am much more familiar with

Its approach of dealing with matters.

Because I have been living there for 18 years.

I have more ideas about

How to Communicate with Chinese people,

How to Make business with Chinese people,

How to Enable others to accept my opinions.

.....

In America,

Sometimes, you will come up with some Chinese styled

diplomatic approach of dealing with matters naturally.

As you feel the American style is

Too Stiff, Too Direct.

Actually if you use the Chinese style,

You will be able to achieve a lot of goals.”

Indeed, time is the best approach. Either the duration is 18 years or 20 years, time has the ability of silently but resolutely empowering a country, a nation and a culture to construct individuals, identify individuals and label

individuals. Chinese, as a nationality, as well as a cultural identity, is connoting its existence everywhere on Chinese international students, through their appearance, their language, their behaviors, their personal characters and etc. Therefore, leaving the original territory, settling down and getting familiar with another land is extremely onerous. No matter how hard you make the effort, national and cultural habit is like the ghost keeping lingering around you as air, as atmosphere, invisible but resolved.

Being born and living in China for more than eighteen years, migrating to U.S, and living in the U.S. for only one to four years; immersed in the Chinese culture, and inculcated not only mind, and also bones and blood, with Chinese doctrines for more than eighteen years, placed in a contrastive cultural territory, and forced to give up many beliefs with only one to four years, Chinese international students are like the pendulum of a clock, swinging dialectically between two nations and two cultures: objectively acknowledging the favorable aspects of the United States on one hand, while on the other hand, helplessly generating more emotional belongingness to their nursing harbor of China. Maybe time will ease such a kind of struggling situation, dwindling Chinese international students waving degree between two nations and two cultures. Yet, it really does take time.

Besides their objective evaluations and subjective attachments, Chinese international students also encounter with cultural dilemmas in the classroom everyday.

“I would prefer to be a listener during the class,

instead of the speaker.

.....

It's actually a kind of Chinese mode of thinking:

As long as I have Mastered (the knowledge and the skill),

I will not be longing for your Recognition,

As long as I have a good examination score,

I don't need to Show Off myself as you (the American classmates) did.

I think this is something in my bone.

Chinese people will definitely have this problem.

It is fair to say it is a PROBLEM.

Because if you don't speak out during class,

.....

The teacher will treat this as an issue related to students' attitude,

Maintaining that I am not hardworking enough,

Nor do I listen to the class carefully.

.....

Because Chinese people are Not Good at EXPRESSING themselves,

Not good at EMPHASIZING their position in class.

Not like American people,

Who are so open,

In their opinion:

As long as I understand the knowledge,

I need to let others know,

*Or if I have one ability,
I need to Let others be Conscious of my Ability.*

.....

*I think it is not a good thing.
Because I am in the United States,
Instead of China.*

*You need to show your teacher
Your passion,
Your attitude,
Your emphasis towards the course.*

.....

*I hope I would Overcome these Shortcomings in the future,
Becoming comparatively more open,
Comparatively enjoying speaking out in class.”*

Being raised in a matured cultural system in China, strictly taught to be modest, be reserved and be undemonstrative, Chinese international students, from their childhood, are coached to not be proud and not show off knowledge or skills. Though these characters bring about benefits, such as Chinese people's quality of hardworking, it will surely generate numerous cultural discomforts to Chinese international students when they arrive in a completely strange country, which obtains a distinctive cultural system of emphasizing the uniqueness and value of individuals. In this way, cruel as acculturation is, if individuals don't make any

change, they will be definitely eliminated in the cultural adaptation and personal evolution battle.

“As you have already come and settled a life in another country,

You NEED to ADAPT to this country’s system.

You NEED to enable others to ACCEPT you.

As, after all, I have been living in this country.

So I think,

(You need to) become Americanized,

Think like them,

Open your mind,

Show your views and knowledge to others.” Tory added.

Wealth and Acculturation

Exploring the answer to my research questions, “Can wealth create spaces of agency, buffering Chinese International students’ discomfort/pain during acculturation”, my questionnaire includes questions like “Do you like luxury goods?” and “What if your family wealth is decreased by 50%?” to delve into the relationship between wealth and individuals’ acculturation outcome.

As children coming from families who can afford 200,000 dollars for children’s four-year undergraduate education in the United States my interviewees all come from families who have obtained a socioeconomic status as the upper middle or upper class in China. In this way, family support, as the major source of monthly income, ranging from \$1000 to \$3000 per month, enables them

to not necessarily need to take any part-time job to sustain their basic living. Instead, they can joyfully spend \$500 to \$1100 per month to pay for their leisure activities, such as shopping and dining in restaurants.⁸

I used to make the conjecture that children coming from these kinds of families may try to ease their acculturation discomfort through the consumption of luxury items as consumption is highly related to individuals' personal identity and evaluation. Through wearing luxurious clothes, carrying luxurious bags or driving luxurious cars, they are likely to show off their power and in this way, negotiate their disadvantaged position as an "exotic" cultural adaptors, as well as a disadvantaged linguistic novelty. However, while acknowledging the potential happiness and confidence brought by luxury goods, my interviewees didn't exaggerate the effect of wealth too much. Instead, they all have had rather rational understanding of wealth.

"Luxury, is a small part of life,

it cannot influence your life.

The difference between NECESSARIES and luxury.

The WEIGHTING of necessities for everyday use is heavier than luxury.

Luxury cannot satisfy your basic needs in life.

But maybe in some occasions,

.....

it might bring you,

⁸ Collected through a demographic survey before the interview, which is included in the Appendix C.

*not vanity,
it makes you happy.”*

Mike expressed his evaluation of luxury during the interview.

Rather than paying enormous attention to the emotional satisfaction brought by luxury goods, my interviewees placed more stress on the real value and the function of goods. For example, Tory, as an undergraduate student majoring in business, related his thoughts:

*“I like luxury goods,
but just for the reason of its good-looking (appearance),
it’s kind of a symbol.*

But I won’t buy luxury good.

.....

For luxuries,

I think a belt costs One Hundred is the same

As a belt costs Ten Thousands,

They are both belt.

.....

Why would I spend Ten Thousands

I can use more capitals to do more things.

Even if I give (the amount of money) to a person who don’t have a home,

It will bring me with more emotional satisfaction than getting a (luxurious)

belt.”

Benny, likewise, also expressed his opinion towards luxury in a dialogic conversation with his girlfriend:

“Stuff with (luxurious) brand is more beautiful for me.

(But I also get things without brand).

I don’t look at brands actually,

Mostly I pay attention to the style, the outlook, and the quality, or the feeling it gives to me.

I like brand,

Because it gives the feel of vanity,

sometimes.

Also usually it is with good quality.

But after all, (my consumption) depends on the quality.

For example, we purchase vegetables/fruits from the Whole Food,

The price there is expensive,

But we also go to the super market opened by Mexican People. ”

In addition, my interviewee Mike also mentioned another reason behind Chinese international students’ low profile as regards to luxury. Though great to my surprise, the reason is highly related to the Chinese culture and is fair enough.

“I Actually don’t wear (luxurious) goods a lot.

.....

I don’t want people to have the feeling (that I am rich).

Because, sometimes,

Whether you have the ability,

*To afford the price of luxury,
I don't want to (let people) have this Feeling.
Sometimes,
Such kind of feelings is not necessarily good things.
It might bring FIRE onto you.”*

Grown up in a culture emphasizing the value of reserve, modest and not showing off, individuals, even with a large amount of capitals, would not like to be paid attention to. Showing off too often might cause other peers' jealousy. Additionally, the enormous contrast formed by the wealth controller and poor cultural adaptor, might even intensify Chinese international students' awkward situation and make them more funny and being joked by.

However, on the other hand, though I didn't find any direct relation between wealth and Chinese international students' acculturation outcome, it is still fair to say that family wealth, as highly associated to students' education, students' parents' education, as well as the socioeconomically opportunities, possesses an enormous capability of creating agentic spaces for students to breath and thus achieve a better psychological attitude during the cultural adaptation process, which has been taken for granted in the eye of privileged Chinese international students.

Affording the high tuition and sending children abroad to pursue an undergraduate education is impossible for the majority of families back in China. A lot of families even have difficulties enabling their children to get a Chinese undergraduate education. Being asked the question, “what if your family wealth

is decreased by 50 percentages, will there be any change to your life,” my interviewees all revealed complicated facial expressions, mixed with surprise, shock, sad, helplessness, and calm. Two respondents answered that they would not stay in the U.S. anymore under such conditions, while another three maintained that they might still in the U.S. to continue their study, yet their lifestyle would change a lot. As Nancy indicated, “Education, after all, originates from economy’s support.”

Benny, who suffered from a horrible family trouble, recounted his real story after being cut off from most of the financial support from the family:

“It’s about Economy.

My mother used to give me thousands of dollars.

But now, when purchasing stuff,

*I Necessary need to consider about the worthiness of the goods,
as well as its usage.*

For what reason do I buy it?

Do I have enough money to get it?

But I didn’t think about it previously.

It was good.

Just got it!

That’s a big difference.”

Indeed, wealth might not directly exert positive effects onto individuals’ acculturation. It, at least, does not bring any financial trouble towards Chinese international students’ life. Instead of performing as a deprived people coming

from a developing Asian country, Chinese international students, with the considerable family wealth, are able to stand at the same financial starting point to compete with their American peers.

Besides, according to the interview data, each individual has mastered a lot of information about the condition of living and studying abroad from family relatives, friends, and agencies before leaving China. Digging into the deeper explanation for such a phenomenon, it is sound to argue that, as families belonging to the middle upper or even upper class, they have already formed a socioeconomic alliance group homogeneously performing the act of sending their children abroad for further study. In this way, wealth, alliance, generation, and education come into a perfect chain, interacting and influencing one another, and benefiting young individuals with the preparation of going abroad for study. Such a kind of generational and association affect is certainly a sense of cultural cache created by nothing but with the assistance of wealth and socioeconomic support.

For example, Mary described her group back in China as follows:

“Almost all of my friends go abroad for study.

...

I have a few classmates,

who take their elementary education in the U.S.A.,

and then come back China for junior and high school.”

Corresponding to Mary’s narration, Tory recounted his generational affect for him to come to the U.S.A.:

“I have two elder sisters,

One is in England,

The second one is in Canada.

.....

Because my two sisters go abroad earlier than me,

I am informed about the oversea life at my sisters' information.

Plus my schoolmates who also go abroad (before me),

.....

I have formed a general concept back in domestic China.”

What's more, people who possess the large amount of capital of sending their children abroad mostly benefit from Chinese government's Open-Up policy and Free Market Reform, which advocates international trade and communication. In this way, these Chinese international students' parents are usually more exposed to western ideas when compared to other parents, which further enables them to teach their children in a more open, friendly, and equal approach, and which in turn helps Chinese international students to better adapt to the more open-minded society in the U.S. To demonstrate, Nancy greatly praised her family education:

“From the time that

I was Still a child,

My parents, NEVER told me about

What I need to do.

From the time that

I was Still a child,

*If I was going to do something,
They would ask me,
Why would you make such a decision?
They always asked me ‘WHY’
After asking,
They always required me to
THINK about my behavior.”*

Wealth, besides the form the physical property, is also closely associated with shapeless assets, such as individuals’ education, worldview, system of values, peer group, confidence, and self-evaluation, etc. Wealth, acts with a quite traceless affect, actually provides a lot of agentic spaces for international students to face and ease their acculturation discomfort, which in fact have a much better performance than the visible form of wealth.

Benefits as a Co-ethnic People

While being placed in a marginalized position after migrating to the United States, being confronted with the cultural difference, and learning to transform themselves into a qualified ethnic migrator, Chinese international students are enjoying the benefits of living as a co-ethnic people at the same time.

Tory, having stayed in the United States for around one year, expressed his exact thoughts:

*“For Chinese,
Our approach of dealing with matters,*

*Our think mode,
When compared to American,
are more Flexible.
We will consider some aspects, which
Would not be considered by American People.*

.....

*Therefore, comparatively speaking,
Our idea,
Will get more Credit,
Is more Unique.
As is popularly said in China
行万里路，读万卷书 (Xing Wanli Lu, Du Wanjuan Shu).⁹*

*After all,
We have STRODE ACROSS TWO COUNTRIES,
It's like, we have already obtained
Two modes of thinking from two countries.
At the same time,
Our life experience has migrated to another country,
It's like, we have
Two Modes of Thinking,
Two Life Experiences,*

⁹ Can be literally translated as “on the way of traveling ten thousands miles, individuals also read ten thousands volumes of books”. It tries to indicate the identical importance of traveling and reading, as they are both methods of learning.

To support our idea.”

Benny, likewise, provided a quite similar opinion.

“I like chatting with people,

as well as negotiating with people.

In terms of the exact methods,

I have my own thoughts.

The AMERICAN Approach,

The CHINESE Approach,

By MIXING them together,

I FULLY UTILIZE them.

I cannot focus on eating and drinking as Chinese people do,

Because I am in the United States,

.....

I cannot just be like American people either,

Chatting in a very boring way.

That does not work.

So, I need to put them two together,

Come up with solutions.”

Actually, rather than making every effort to assimilate into the American culture, Chinese international students are benefitting from their unique role as a co-ethnic people, obtaining a great knowledge about the Chinese condition, and at the same time, having a good understanding of American situations. When they go back to China, they will be popular because they have overseas experience;

whereas when they stay in the U.S., they, are still desired persons as they deeply understand the environment in China, which is pretty important in such a globalized age.

Instead of blindly absorbing every part of the American culture, Chinese international students have a quite rational evaluation towards the value of the each culture. They have made their own choice of how much they decide to stick to Chinese culture and how much they embrace and keep to American culture. It is the exact situation as described as “glocalization”. Rather than accepting the prevalent culture indiscriminately, Chinese international students are trying to local the dominant culture according to their situation and their needs.

Through my interviewees’ narrative, I obviously feel their proud and their beautiful expectation toward the future development. To illustrate, Nancy would like to fully utilize her experience in America to increase the international communication between China and the United States:

*“I want to do something,
that can encourage the communication between China and the U.S.
Because I major in business,
So for example (in the field of) finance,
To have further cooperation (between China and the U.S.)
.....
There are still a lot of Mis-understanding,
DEMONIZATION,
CONSPIRACY theories between the two countries.*

.....

I hope I will enter into this field.”

For the Chinese international students, it seems they have went through and survived from the most difficult period filled with the lack of independence ability, culture shock, linguistic deformity, and academic malformation. Maybe there are still confusion, frustration and sadness. With a macro perspective, they are striding on a perfectly bright road, enjoying each time’s sunshine, cloud as well as raining, expecting tomorrow’s greatness.

Looking Back and Forth

Life is filled with expectation, joy, wonder, sad and loss. It is through the many reflections towards all these emotional changes happening during the journey of life, we grow up and become more mature. Being asked to evaluate their experience of coming to the United States for undergraduate education, and write a handbook to the next generation of Chinese international students, my five interviewees all actively provide their thoughts and suggestions.

Nancy, as the most successful cultural adaptor, put forward her most practical and personal advise.

“CROSS THE LINE.

The attitude,

Actually, I have done a lot of things,

That makes me to lose face

.....

*Face, whether to keep it or not,
Really does not matter.
Actually your single action,
Won't bring a quite big damage to your public image.
Instead, if you do not do it,
Others cannot completely remember you.
Also, be RESPECTFUL
AWARE that One Person Does not Generalize,
One unknown person cannot
Represent the attitude of the whole group of American people.
During the processes,
It Takes Time.
Some extend of practice,
To perfectify it.
You cannot reach all what you want
In a short moment.
Because they are all about process,
In which there are difficulties.”*

In terms of study, which is the driving force, as well as the initial cause for international students to further their study in the United States, Benny would like to mention that:

*“I feel that,
for students coming to U.S.A for study,*

they SHALL not Play (too much) after coming here.

Indeed, attending classes is the most important thing.

Only by going for class every time,

What You Have Learnt from class is

The CAPITAL for you to STAY in U.S.A..

Only by getting the graduation certificate,

Will you have the RIGHT to SPEKA in the society.”

Whereas, on the other hand, Mike illustrated his viewpoint from a little bit different perspective:

“Study is not the most important thing.

Coming to U.S.A,

You need to EXPERIENCE.

It’s another kind of society,

A society,

Which have operated INDEPENDENTLY from the society where you come from,

Which have operated for Many Many years,

Which have hundreds’ years history.

You need to experience the difference between them two.

You need to learn the American approach of dealing with matters,

The Advantages of their social systems

.....

You can bring them with you when you go back China.

*Study is not the most significant thing,
Culture, as well as its Advantageous aspects,
It is a COMPREHENSIVE experience.
You can bring them with you when you go back China.”*

Through the analysis towards the different kind of reflections and suggestions made by each international student, I can image the various experiences encountered by different international students. These reflections incorporate different aspects of the real life in the United States, distinctive culture, anonymous education, and contrastive social experiences. Chewing over these narrations, I find, the varying advice reveal students' fear, worry as well as self-encouragement towards cultural adaptation, struggle and assiduousness towards the American education and future development, regret and best wishes towards the Chinese social environment. They all vividly demonstrate Chinese international students' concrete and actual life.

In addition, it is fair to say that international students' attitudes towards cultural adaptation, are closely related to their expectation from the overseas experience and their plan for future development. For those who would like to stay in the United States they will naturally be more American Culture oriented, on the other hand, for who would like to go back to China, they will be more connected to Chinese Culture.

Acculturation, is no longer one-way oriented, one mode guided cultural adaptation. Besides the White Culture, there also exist a number of other cultures in the United States. Just like Benny maintained, “considering the large number of

Chinese people here in U.S.A., the Chinese style is also a part of the American style.” Indeed, America, famous for its ability of culture melting, has mixed White culture, with Mexican culture, Chinese culture, Japanese culture, Indian culture, Italian culture, and etc. Especially when I was interning in the United Nations Headquarters in New York, I particularly found that America is so diverse, as well as inclusive. It is filled with cultures coming from every corner of the world. Sometimes, you can even hardly name it. I am no longer the single yellow. Besides, there are brown, black, yellowish, whitish... Of course, white is still a dominant force in the United States. But I still cannot help myself thinking that, maybe in the future, with more and more immigrants and migrates coming to the U.S.A., bringing with them their own culture, it will be more and more difficulty to use the word as “acculturation”.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Finally, it comes to the stage of writing a conclusion for my thesis. I planned to finish this part around one month ago, right after other chapters. But I paused. I kept waiting because I kept wondering if there exists a conclusion for cultural adaptation.

My interest towards Chinese international undergraduate students' cultural adaptation is oriented by my identity as a Chinese international graduate student studying in U.S.A. Filled with ethnical compassion, natural belongingness, as well as academic curiosity, I set off my journey to pay attention to my allies. But it was not until the class of Critical Intercultural Communication with Dr. Bernadette Maria Calafell, did I begin to consider the cultural adaption issue as serious and urgent. Instead of evaluating cultural heritage and intercultural communication as static, we are required to examine it with a more critical viewpoint by bringing into more dynamic, contradictory, historical, political and contextual agencies.

China and the United States, people living dialectically between them, together with my experience in both nations and cultures, is my perfect study subject. China, a culture with old but historical reputation; United States, a culture with fresh but vibrant blood. China, a nation with backward but fast-growing economic development; United States, a nation with highly developed but a little

bit inert economic expansion. What will be Chinese international students exact situation? Who move from one culture to another contrastive culture, and one nation to another distinctive nation?

With more and more studies, observations and communication with Chinese international students, I became more and more confirmative that my research outcome with the research topic, as well as the research methodology, will turn to be quite useful and meaningful in the area of inter-cultural communication and acculturation. But simultaneously, I came to be more and more careful and alert when writing a conclusion for my research.

Rather than making an overall summary, I would say acculturation is quite individual, correspondingly and periodically diverse. People's family background, personal character, age, sex, career goal, etc. will all exert weight onto the periodic outcome of one's acculturation. In this way, I sincerely call for more academic attention into individuals' acculturation evaluation from a chronic and qualitative angle. Compared to the quantitative methodology, which though provides audiences with impressive and memorable numerical results, qualitative researches portrait a more real, vivid and down to earth picture. These depictions are not just stories, which happened to unfortunate people. They are the real facts that may occur to everybody, including you and me. Only by reading into every single word, every single sentence, and every single facial expression, can we really become aware of, and gradually realize the actual suffering, full of struggle, wonder, confusion and awkwardness. Consequently, I suggest to my audience to

take your time to read into my interviewees' exact word and exact expressions instead of focusing on my final conclusion.

As to my research question about acculturation and its relation with wealth, I deem that there does exist a connection between wealth and acculturation. For example, all of my five interviewees come from families with high socioeconomic status. The occupation of their parents is concentrated on professions like businessmen/women, government officials and university professors, which enable their children not only with a satisfactory material life, and also abundant opportunities. In addition, my interviewees' resident city in China are all big cities situated in developed areas in inland China or along the coast, such as the capital city in China—Beijing, the beautiful coastal city—Qingdao, and most developed cities in central China like Chengdu and Changsha. No one comes from the remote and poor countryside. In this way, it is quite fair to say that all of my interviewees belong to the privileged class compared to most peers back in China, which in turn contributes to individuals' high personal-confidence and positive self-assessment.

Besides an individual's family socioeconomic status and wealth, which helps to provide Chinese international students with more negotiable channels/spaces, such as a better previous understanding towards the many different western ideas, China's national wealth, with its unbelievably speedy development in recent 20 years, also helps to increase students' personal confidence when communicating with American peers. Compared to the highly disadvantaged Chinese students coming from a quite un-developed country

twenty or thirty years ago, the contemporary Chinese international students are more self-assertive.

However, as scholars commonly believed, cultural inequality and ethnic difficulty still widely exists. Chinese international students are still confronted with tremendous hardship in light of language barriers and ethnic polarity between Asian cultures and Western norms. From a negative position, Chinese international students are living dialectically in two nations and two cultures, admitting the various advantages of U.S.A. from a rational perspective, but naturally germinating countless emotional belongingness with ethnically rooted China. On the other hand, looking from a positive aspect, Chinese international students are also enjoying benefits as co-ethnic people, who have a good understanding towards both Chinese and American societies, which in turn helps them to form more critical thoughts when competing with other single-minded people.

Therefore, to support Chinese international students and help them to better adapt to other cultures, especially the United States, I would like to make suggestions in the following three aspects:

- 1) Considering Chinese international undergraduate students' age of 18-24, I highly advise the introduction of educational and consulting agencies to help these students to better understand the cultural difference between China and the arrival country before and after they arrive in the settling country. In addition, educational and consulting agencies are recommended to increase its influence to

assuredly make themselves known and achievable to the Chinese international students.

2) The International House, as the first and most important school sector in International Students' overseas lives, should be more public and international students friendly. Instead of acting as a privileged organizational sector, the International House should be more like a home space for international students. Considering the fact that a lot of the staff working in the international house in American universities are American citizens, who might hold cultural bias towards international students coming from other nations/cultures, I strongly recommend universities be more cautious in selecting staff working in the International House. Moreover, International Houses are also extremely welcome to hold intercultural and international events to let students better understand the globalized and culturally diverse world.

3) Considering the large population of Chinese international students in every university in the U.S.A., it is my recommendation that every university set up Chinese International Students' Associations to ease Chinese international students discomfort through the way of sharing and exchanging experiences, and holding joyful and beneficial activities with the same ethnic peers.

Ultimately, I would like to make a quotation from Nancy as the ending:

“Sometimes,

When you communicate with others,

You might put yourself right there,

As a sample of China,

As a government,
Setting up a big obstacle (for others to come to you),
Making others having difficulty to communicate with you.
It's like a tree,
If you would like to have sunshine,
To have the communication with other things in the nature,
Yet you put on a trash bag,
Shrouding yourself,
You will have no access to the sunshine,
To the new idea.”

Acculturation, however individually different, it's about adaptation and adjustment. Making ourselves more open and available, culture is achievable.

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Appendix A: Consent Form in English

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Wealth and Acculturation: A Qualitative Study of the Influence of Wealth During Chinese International Undergraduate Students' Acculturation

You are invited to participate in a study that will investigate the influence of wealth during Chinese international undergraduate students' acculturation in the United States. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a Master's Thesis. The study is conducted by *Linshan (Tracy) Fu*, a master candidate in Communication Studies at the University of Denver. Results will be used to investigate the influence of wealth during Chinese international undergraduate students' acculturation in the United States and to be as a part of the master thesis. Linshan Fu can be reached at fulinshanshan@gmail.com and (720) 840-0539. This project is supervised by the thesis instructor, Dr. Bernadette Marie Calafell, Communication Studies, AHSS, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, bcalfel@du.edu, (303) 871-4322.

Participation in this study should take about 90-120 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to around 18 questions about your experience of cultural adaptation in U.S. and your thoughts in terms of wealth as its influence on acculturation. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. During the research, you will be given with the opportunity to announce your own experience, which helps to transform the stereotypical image of Chinese international students as merely oppressed and marginalized. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be audio recorded. However, only the researcher will have access to your individual data and you won't be identified by name in any potential publications. Your response will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. Any reports generated as a result of this study will use for academic purpose only. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or you may email <mailto:du-irb@du.edu>, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs or call 303-871-4050 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign underneath if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called *Wealth and Acculturation: A Qualitative Study of the Influence of Wealth During Chinese International Undergraduate Students' Acculturation*. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____ Date _____

(If appropriate, the following must be added.)

___ I agree to be audiotaped.

___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature _____ Date _____

___ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address: _____

Appendix B: Consent Form in Chinese

告知受访者同意书

Wealth and Acculturation: A Qualitative Study of the Influence of Wealth During Chinese International Undergraduate Students' Acculturation

您接受邀请参与探讨财富如何影响中国本科留学生的文化适应的硕士论文研究，本研究由美国丹佛大学传播系硕士候选人傅琳珊(Linshan (Tracy) Fu)所执行。您可以透过以下方式与我保持联系：美国手机号 720-840-0539，或是电子邮件：fulinshanshan@gmail.com。本研究由论文指导教授，美国丹佛大学传播系副教授 Dr. Bernadette Marie Calafell 所监督。若有需要，您可以透过一下方式与她联系：美国手机号 303-871-4322，电子邮件：bcalafel@du.edu。

参与本研究将接受研究者的受访，访谈所需时间大约在 90 至 120 分钟。您将回答 18 个关于文化适应与财富的问题。参与本研究为完全自愿性质，并且符合最小的风险。然而若是您在受访过程中感到不愉快，您可以随时终止访谈。作为本研究的执行者，我将尊重您不回答任何可能导致您不愉快的问题。拒绝或中止参与本研究不会受到任何惩罚。

您对访谈的回应将会被录音，但是只有本人（研究执行者）有权利处理您的个人资料。您的访谈内容以编码的方式作为识别，并且会与您的个人资料分别放置，以便符合保密原则。任何由您访谈回应所撰写的报告均会以假名的方式呈现。然而，当本研究的任何咨询成为法院传票命令的对象，美国丹佛大学将无法避免并服从法院传票命令。此外，虽然本研究并无任何与自杀、他杀、虐待儿童、以及遗弃的相关问题，根据法律规定，当任何与上列议题相关的咨询出现于访谈回应中，我们将向相关主管机关报告。

如果您对在访谈过程中有任何疑虑与抱怨，请与 Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects 联络，美国电话 303-871-4531；您也可以传送电子邮件 du-irb@du.edu 到 Office of Research and Sponsored Programs 或是电话 303-871-4050。您也可以写信反

应到 The University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs,
2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-4820 USA 。

在此诚挚感谢您的参与，您可以保留本受访告知同意书作为参考。若是您完全了解并统一以上所述，请与下方同意署名。若您对以上任何一部分的说明任有不清楚的地方，请随时与我保持联络。

我已阅读以上说明，并了解此次研究，我同意参与此次受访。

受访者：

日期：

Appendix C: Questionnaire and Interview Schedule

Interview Questions

Title of Research: Wealth and Acculturation: A Qualitative Study of The Influence of Wealth during Chinese International Undergraduate Students' Acculturation

The following sample questions will be asked to help participants create their own personal narratives during the process of ethnographic/unstructured interviews. The interviews are left more to the agency of the participants and may or may not include all of the questions and may also answer other questions outside this list. Therefore, the order of these questions is the general plan, and may change to let the interview process flow naturally. The interview will be more of a casual conversation with the interviewee being the primary participant within the conversation. I will also ask aid questions to help participants facilitate their thoughts, such as, "Would you mind to share more details about this?" or "Do you have a story going with this?"

Introduction of the Project and Myself

Hi, it is good to see you today. My name is Linshan Fu. Or you can call me Tracy. I am a master student majoring in Communication Studies at the University of Denver. I was born in 1989 and I came to U.S. in 2011. Great thanks for your interest in my project.

(你好，见到你非常高兴。我叫傅琳珊，或者你也可以叫我的英文名 Tracy。我是丹佛大学传播学的研究生。我出生于 1989 年，于 2011 年秋季入学丹佛大学。非常感谢你对我这个研究课题的兴趣。)

There are two major reasons that why I choose this project as my thesis: firstly, the number of Chinese international students is increasing every year and we necessarily face the process of cultural adaptation after the arrival in U.S.. In this way, investigating Chinese international students' acculturation process is urgent; secondly, past literature mostly descried Chinese international students as marginalized group, obtaining no negotiation power. However, I do believe Chinese international students have possessed more bargain capability than ever

before in this globalized society. Consequently, I would like to depict Chinese international students everyday life of acculturation through interview.

(此次的研究课题有两个出发点, 第一: 我们有目共睹中国的海外留学生在不断增多, 而同时, 所有的海外学子在来到美国后都面临着文化适应的过程。因此, 研究中国海外留学生的文化适应情况是非常重要的和急迫的; 第二, 过去的绝大多数研究文献均把中国留学生作为边缘群体, 丝毫没有和美国学生谈判的筹码, 然而, 在全球化的时代, 我相信, 中国海外靴子正在不断地增加自己的谈判筹码。因此, 我希望可以通过此次访谈, 更多的了解中国海外学子的生活。)

As I have introduced in the advertisement of this study, my project is particularly interested in understanding how wealth can influence students' cultural adaptation process in another country. My questionnaire will be divided into two major parts. In this first part, I will ask you to fill out a demographic questionnaire about some general information. In the second part, I will raise questions in terms of your initial intention of coming to U.S., your acculturation experience in the classroom, your understanding about wealth and some other general questions.

(正如我在广告中提到的那样, 我的研究特别注重于探求财富同文化适应的关系。我的问卷将会分成两部分, 第一部分主要涉及的是一些基本信息, 如姓名, 性别等; 在第二部分中, 我会提出更多详细的问题, 如你来美国后的一些经历, 你对于财富的认识等。)

Before we begin the interview I need you to read and sign the informed consent form, confirming your understanding of my research and its conditions. Please feel free to ask any questions about this form before (or after) you sign it. Next, I will ask that you fill out a brief survey that records your demographic information.

(在我们正式开始访谈之前, 我需要向你仔细阅读意向同意书, 在你确认并同意参与此次研究课题后, 请在同意书上签字。如果你有任何疑问, 请随时告诉我。)

Body

[Transition]:

Now that you have signed the informed consent document, please take a few minutes to fill out the demographic survey. Remember, you do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

(好, 谢谢你! 接下来, 请填写基本信息表, 如果你有任何不想回答的问题, 你完全可以跳过不回答。)

Part I

Name(姓名):
):

Age(年龄):

Sex(性

Major (专业): Length of Residence in U.S. (在美居住时间):
City & Providence of residence in China(在中国的居住点):
Occupation of your father(父亲的职业):
 Teacher Doctor Government Official Businessman Other
Occupation of your mother(母亲的职业):
 Teacher Doctor Government Official Businesswoman Housewife Other
Family Income (RMB/year)(家庭收入/人民币):
 100,000-500,000 (10 万-50 万) 500,000-1,000,000(50 万-100 万)
 1,000,000-2,000,000(100 万-200 万) 2,000,000-5,000,000 (200 万-500 万)
 more than 5,000,000 (大于 500 万)
Monthly income from parents (每月的生活费/美金):
 1,000-1,500 1,500-2,000 2,000-2,500 2,500-3,000 more than 3,000
Monthly expense for leisure activity, e.g. shopping, restaurants, KTV(每月用于休闲活动的开销/美金):
 500-700 700-900 900-1,100 1,100-1,300 1,300-1,500 1,500-1,700
 more than 1,700

[Transition]:

Thanks for filling out the survey. Next, we will have the interview. Do you have any questions for me before we begin the interview? Remember, you do not have to answer anything you do not want to and may ask to stop the interview at anytime. Do you mind if I tape record this interview so that I can better recount and represent our conversation? Ok, thanks. The tape recorder has been turned on, but if you would like me to turn it off at any time please let me know and I will do so.

(谢谢, 接下来我们正式开始访谈。在我们访谈开始之前, 你还有任何疑问吗? 请记住, 如果你有任何不想回答的问题, 或是想暂时中断访谈, 请随时告知我。如果没有其他问题, 我们就开始咯? 我会将我们的对话以录音的形式记录下来, 当然, 如果你不想被录音, 我也可以把它关掉。)

Part II:

Warm-up Question

- 1) As a Chinese international students myself, I am very interested in your story of coming to U.S., can you tell me the reason of why you come to U.S. to study?

(我自己也是中国留学生，所以我对你之所以来美国的原因也感到特别好奇，能谈谈你为什么来美国读书么？)

2) Before you come to U.S., have you ever imagined your life in U.S.?

- What did it look like?
- What did you expect from this experience?

(在你来美国读书之前，你曾想象过你在美国的生活吗？)

- 在你的想象中它是怎样的？
- 你期待从此次经历中获得些什么呢？)

3) After the time you have spent in U.S., could you tell me more about your thoughts about U.S. and China?

- What is the most attractive place/thing for you when staying in USA?
- What do you think of the United States?
- What is the most attractive place/thing for you when staying in China?
- What do you think of China?
- Which country would you prefer more, China and U.S.?

(当你真正来到美国后，当你在美国住了这么段时间后，你能谈谈你对中国和美国的认识和看法吗？)

- 美国最吸引你的地方是什么？
- 你觉得美国如何？
- 中国最吸引你的地方是什么？
- 你觉得中国如何？
- 你更喜欢哪个国家？)

Main Question—Acculturation Experience in the Classroom

[Transition]:

As students coming from China, we all encounter the process of adaption. In the following part, I would ask some questions about your cultural adaptation experience in the classroom.

(作为从中国来的留学生，我们都需要面对一个适应过程。在接下来的部分，我会问一些关于你在课堂上的问题。)

4) Do you feel comfortable in the classroom?

- How do you view your role in the classroom?

(你在课堂中感到舒服自在吗?)

- 你觉得你在课堂中扮演什么角色?)
- 5) Do you feel that you are valuable in the classroom?
- How much do you think you contribute to the classroom discussion?
- In which ways do you contribute?

(你觉得你在课堂中是有价值的嘛?)

- 你觉得你在课堂讨论中贡献了自己的想法嘛?
- 你觉得你的贡献表现在哪些方面?)
- 6) Were there things you found challenging in class?
- What are they?
- What is the most challenging thing?
- Will you describe yourself as more discomfort or more disadvantaged when situating in such a challenging circumstance as you mentioned above?
- What do you think is the origin of your discomfort/disadvantage?

(在你看来, 课堂上的哪些事情是比较具有挑战性的?)

- 对你来说, 最具有挑战性的是什么?
- 在这种挑战性的环境中, 你是更加觉得不自在还是觉得自己处于不利位置?
- 你觉得你这种感受的缘由是什么?)
- 7) How many American friends do you have?
- Do you like hanging out and studying with them?
- In your opinion, what's the biggest difference between them and you?
- How would you describe your relationship with them?

(你有美国朋友吗?)

- 你喜欢和他们一起出去玩, 或者一起学习吗?
- 你觉得你和他们最大的区别是什么?
- 你会怎样形容你和他们的关系?)
- 8) Do you feel you can fully display your personality among American classmates?
- Please tell me more about the reasons you think help/prohibit you from displaying your image.

(你觉得你能在美国同学面前, 全面地表现初你的个性吗?)

- 能谈谈你觉得是什么帮助/阻碍你表现自己的个性嘛?)
- 9) Are there times you feel you are more competitive and do a better work than your American classmates?

- Can you illustrate more on it?
- Do you feel it frequently or rarely?
- In your opinion, for what reason you are more competitive?

(你是否曾觉得你比美国同班同学更具有竞争性，能做出更好的东西？)

- 你能详细谈谈嘛？
- 你觉得这种情况经常发生还是非常偶尔才发生？
- 在你看来，是什么原因导致你更具有竞争性？)

Main Questions—Wealth and Life

[Transition]:

We all know, China's economy has developed with an unprecedented speed for 30 years. China is no longer the once oppressed nation. Instead, China is gaining more and more power on the globalized stage. At the same time, more and more millionaires and billionaires have emerged. Under such a circumstance, I kept asking myself about the relation between cultural adaption and wealth. In the following part, I will ask you some questions about your family wealth and the daily life in U.S. to learn more, as well as to make more sense of the contemporary cultural adaption in this consumption-oriented society.

(众所周知，中国的经济已经腾飞了 30 年了。中国不再是东亚病夫，相反，中国正在这个全球化的市场中，汲取越来越多的能量。与此同时，越来越多的千万亿万富翁出现了。在这种情况下，我也不断地在问自己关于财富和文化适应之间的联系。在接下来的部分，我会问你一下关于家庭财富和你在美国的生活方面的问题。)

10) You know, a lot of Asia people are fans of luxury goods, so am I. How about you?

- Do you like luxury goods?
- What is your favorite brand?
- What do you think is the driven force to purchase luxury goods?
- Do you feel you are a better, more beautiful, more powerful or more confident person when using luxury goods?
- ❖ Could you explain more about your feelings when you are purchasing/using luxury goods?

(很多亚洲人都是奢侈品的粉丝，对我来说，我也是，你呢？)

- 你喜欢奢侈品吗?
- 你最喜欢的品牌是什么?
- 你觉得你购买奢侈品的动机是什么?
- 当你在使用或购买奢侈品时, 你是否觉得你自己是一个更优秀, 更漂亮, 更有权势, 或是更自信的人?
- ❖ 你能具体谈谈吗?)

11) Have you ever discussed with your American classmates about any luxury goods?

- What is their response?
- What do you think of their response?
- Do you think your Americans are interested in luxuries as strong as you are?
- Do you think that your purchasing habits have differences from your American classmates?
- Do you feel that a lot of your American classmates cannot afford your mercantile?
- Will you bring some luxury goods to school, e.g. LV wallets, BMW cars, etc.
- Would you like to illustrate more on it?

(你曾和你的美国同学谈及过奢侈品吗?

- 他们的反应是什么?
- 你觉得他们的反应如何?
- 你觉得他们和你一样喜欢奢侈品吗?
- 你觉得你的购买习惯和他们有差别嘛?
- 你是否觉得你的美国同学有时买不起你的东西?
- 你会携带奢侈品去学校吗? 如 LV 的钱包, 宝马
- 你能详细说说吗?)

12) Will you classify your closest American classmates/friends as the middle class or the upper class?

- How will you define your family in terms of wealth in the United States, a middle class or the rich class?
- How will you define your most American classmates in U.S., a middle class or the rich class?
- Have you ever felt proud for your family wealth?
- Could illustrate more on it?

(你认为你最亲密的美国同班同学来自于中产阶级家庭还是上流社会家庭?

- 如果用美国的财富标准来衡量, 你会把你的家庭归类为中产阶级还是富有阶

级？

- 你觉得你绝大多数的美国同学来自于中产阶级家庭还是富有阶级家庭？
 - 你曾为你家庭拥有的财富感到自豪吗？
 - 你能具体聊聊嘛？)
- 13) Do you think your life will have some difference if the wealth of your family decreases by 50 percentage or even more?
- What do you think will be the most obvious change, e.g. education quality, purchasing ability, living environment?
(如果你的家庭财富减少了50%，你觉得你的生活会有不同吗？)
 - 你觉得，最明显的不同会表现在哪里？如教育质量，购买力，生活环境)
- 14) As is commonly seen, a lot of your U.S. classmates need to do some part time job to make money and support their living. If you are given a second opportunity to choose, to be a student with U.S. citizenship, fluent English but need to work for living, and to be a Chinese international student who doesn't need to work for living, which one would you prefer more? Why?
(我想你一定知道，你的很多美国同学需要去做兼职，如果你被上天赐予了一个选择的机会，你更喜欢做一个需要兼职的美国人还是不需要做兼职的中国留学生？为什么？)

General Questions

- 15) What's your plan after graduation?
- Do you plan to go back China after you graduate?
 - What kind of work would you like to do in the future?
(你毕业后的计划是什么？)
 - 你想回国吗？
 - 将来你想做什么样的工作？)
- 16) If you are writing a handbook for potential Chinese international students who would come to U.S., what are the top three things you would surely mention?
(如果你要写一本手册给未来的中国留学生，你会说些什么？)
- 17) Is there any story/experience/thought that you would like to share with me?
(你还有什么故事，经历，想法想同我分享吗？)

Conclusion

Thank you for your time! I enjoyed talking with you this afternoon. Please feel free to contact me at linshan.fu@du.edu or call me at 720-840-0539 if you have any questions or concerns. Please call me if you wish to retract anything that you said in the interview or want to keep private. I will strike it from the record and exclude it from my research. That being said I also encourage you to call me if you think of any clarifications or additional information that you wish to share; I am more than happy to talk with you again if you have any thoughts. I will see you in a few weeks when I return to do observations. Thanks for sharing your stories with me.

(谢谢你愿意接受此次的访谈。如果你有任何的疑问或是疑虑，请随时跟我联系，我的邮箱地址是 linshan.fu@du.edu，电话是 720-840-0539。如果你不想让你的采访信息用于我的研究，你可以随时告诉我；当然，如果你对于我以上的问题有任何新的想法，也可以随时跟我联系。谢谢！)