

**CULTURAL IDENTITIES OF CHINESE VISITORS TO  
THE UK: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF STRUCTURE  
AND AGENCY**

Submitted by Man Tat Cheng, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

This exploratory research seeks to understand the practices and experiences associated with Chinese tourists from the People's Republic of China to the UK, both the reception by UK citizens and their own reflections of self. This PhD situates individual experience within collective historical structures and contemporary socio-political and economic forces. It investigates the partial identity of Chinese individuals through the frameworks of globalisation, nationalism, post-colonialism and traditionalism. These frameworks are empirically driven, which offer explanations to Chinese visitors' public identity and self-identity, which are interconnected and interdependent (Alcoff, 2000). *Identity* has become a prism through which various aspects of contemporary life are exposed and observed (Bauman, 2001). The debate between structure and agency (Archer, 1982) is the key to address this dimension of identity. This study will establish a set of perspectives that attempts to understand contemporary Chinese people, drawn mainly from historians' scholarly efforts. These perspectives involve the role of the Chinese state, historical contingencies and consumer capitalism (i.e. structure) in conditioning contemporary Chinese people's values and behaviours.

Following Sandberg and Alvesson (2011), this research is drawn from problematisation of existing theories. It is a response to the dominance of quantitative empirical research that concerns business marketing and a lack of in-depth exploration into the values, and political and socio-cultural implications to Chinese individuals. It calls for a departure from essentialist and deterministic perspectives of Chinese culture; and from the uncritical analysis of the political context of the development of tourism in China (Nyíri, 2006). In so doing, the thesis has employed multiple methods to explore virtual media spaces, and tourism spaces where it is possible to observe the identities of Chinese visitors. Adopting documentary source analysis, discourse analysis, ethnomethodology and ethnography, the research explores particularities, deeper meanings and subtleties associated with the practices and narratives of Chinese visitors.

Drawn from two sample news articles from *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail*, it is found that Chinese visitors are represented primarily through shopping patterns, which were however appropriated by online readers, who utilised a range of discourses (e.g.

anti-immigration, economic dependency, international trade relations) to frame and discuss the Chinese subject (Weimann, 2000). This set of public identity of Chinese visitors is considered as UK's host nation perspective, which was not expressed by English employees in retail servicescapes (Bitner, 1990). Adopting ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1976), I worked alongside these workers and attempted to illicit their responses to Chinese visitor behaviours. Their presentation of self (Goffman, 1967) suggests that their authentic views were not obtained.

With the aim to dwell into the subjectivity of Chinese individuals, I travelled with a group of Chinese students who came to London for a three-week educational tour. I observed their experiences in the classroom, during sight-seeing and relations with their host families. I conclude that the Chinese state has not extended cultural authority (Nyíri, 2006) in UK tourism and pedagogical spaces. Following Zhang and Schwartz (1997), after Derrida (1994), I adopted the theory of *critical inheritance* to investigate how Confucian values are adapted and redacted in contemporary China. To explore students' gift consumption practices through the deconstructed framework of guanxi and filial piety, I discovered that students were not free from disassociating filial love to consumer goods.

Many students had a strong patriotic identity, shaped by anti-Western sentiments, expressed in quotidian ways of speaking and action (Billig, 1995). With respect to global identity, they distinguished themselves from the peer through their appreciation of Western popular culture (Bourdieu, 1984), and exhibiting an aspirational identity (Hall, 1996b). Although institutional Black racism (Fanon, 1986) is prevalent in China, students' individual morality was found confronting racial prejudice, observed from their relationships with host families. Chinese individuals are historically and politically conditioned, however they negotiated wider structures in both their home society and in a culturally different environment.

The researcher is influenced by the cultural studies tradition (Hall, 1980) and post-positivist realism (Moya and Hames-Garcia, 2000), which rejects the position of epistemological relativism. This research topic arose from the connection between public issues of social structure, relating to China and its international relations, and the researcher's personal observation and sensitivities towards conflicts that could be described as relating to the politics of place arising from these issues (Mill, 2000).

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This exploratory research seeks to understand the practices and experiences associated with Chinese tourists from the People's Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China in the thesis) to the UK in 2013 and 2014, both the reception by UK citizens and their own reflections of self. In theoretical terms, it aims to explore Chinese cultural identity (sense of self identity and public identity) through the frameworks of globalisation, nationalism, post-colonialism and traditionalism, in order to connect the agency of historical structures and tradition, the hegemony of the political state and globalised cultural power, to the conscious beliefs and practices of individuals in the present. Temporally, the thesis acknowledges that historical traditions shape individuals, even though they may not be consciously aware of this shaping. Spatially, the thesis explores identity, attitudes and behaviours in different geographical contexts, as Chinese people are shaped by environments when resident at 'home' and when visiting as tourists 'overseas'. Tourism brings Chinese visitors into contact with those who are visibly, materially and culturally different. These patterns of visitor behaviours are under media scrutiny and reportage of Chinese tourists shapes the imaginary of host residents and Chinese tourists alike. In order to say something meaningful about Chinese tourists visiting the UK, therefore, this thesis focuses on what Chinese people experience everyday under an authoritarian regime in the present globalised and modern era, but paying attention to the diverse historical and geographical contexts in which Chinese identity has been constructed vis-à-vis the 'other'. In so doing, the thesis seeks to provide a more nuanced account of tourist practices and narratives than ahistorical accounts of tourists.

The research aims to contribute to literature about Chinese tourism and the tourism literature in general. It is argued that the former overlooks political and socio-cultural impacts, and maintains essentialist and deterministic perspectives with respect to Chinese culture. With respect to the tourism literature more generally, the thesis explores both virtual spaces and encounter spaces, in which we are able to observe the relations between host and tourist, rather than treating "host" and "tourist" as fixed and discrete entities. In response to post-structuralist tourism research that focuses on existential experience, this research attempts to account for the structures that influence

individual tourists' values and behaviours. It aims to contribute to knowledge about contemporary Chinese identity and social structures of China using tourism as a method through tourist consumption in Western geographies.

The research explores Chinese identity in four spaces: the public identity of Chinese tourists portrayed by (i) the UK mass media and (ii) web 2.0 users of UK media content who actively negotiate and circulate views around Chinese tourists in the UK; the public identity that is observed in (iii) the servicescapes of retail environments in which Chinese visitors and members of the host nation intermingle and interact; (iv) the self-identity of Chinese visitors, observed through longitudinal data gathered with Chinese students during their stay in the UK as part of a pedagogical travel group. Overall, the thesis studies tourism phenomena, paying specific attention on how Chinese individuals negotiate wider structures in both their home society and in a culturally different environment.

## **1.1 Significance and contribution of the thesis**

### **1.1.1 Contribution to Chinese tourism literature**

The rapid growth of Chinese travelling in the UK in recent years and its socio-cultural impacts involving both visitors and local people, are insufficiently addressed in the tourism literature. The discourse about economic dependency is observed in the media. In 2013, 196,000 Chinese visitors came to the UK in 2013 – a 79.1% rise compared to 2010. In terms of visitor expenditure, Chinese tourists spent £2,508 each, which is four times the overall average spend by foreign visitors (VisitBritain, 2015). The small number of Chinese visitors is viewed by the UK tourism and retail sectors as a great loss of income, which is reiterated by the UK government (Goldhill, 2014). The Home Office (2014) announced that steps were being taken to align the process of applying for a UK visa with the Schengen visa process in China. The patterns of visitor behaviours are under media scrutiny, as observed from the news about Chinese tourists (see page 171), condition tourist-host relations.

In the tourism literature, there are three trends with respect to Chinese outbound tourism. Firstly, the majority of research is informed by business marketing, operations and management perspectives, typically focusing on tourist motivations, characteristics, expectations, satisfaction and shopping patterns, in which the majority of studies adopt quantitative methods. In the handful of studies that explore the socio-cultural impacts of

Chinese tourists; amid 98 papers from 29 peer-reviewed journals from 2005 to 2014, only 20% focus on socio-cultural implications (see p.34). This research explores this neglected area.

Second, in the study of the socio-cultural aspects of Chinese tourism, the dominant approach of viewing Chinese culture is static, essential, and overlooks the tourist's agency in a culturally different environment. In this sense, explanations and interpretations of Chinese tourist behaviours are viewed through totalising structures, such as the Confucian value system. This forges a stereotypical identity of Chinese people. I argue that, in order to understand Chinese tourist behaviours in the cultural context, we should not ignore the role of the Chinese state in shaping culture. Specifically, I explore the theory of critical inheritance to explain the contemporary practices of Confucian values.

Third, research on the political context of Chinese tourism has been uncritical. The foci are mainly on state policies, but not the wider political environment. This thesis builds on the work of Nyíri (2006, 2010), an Hungarian anthropologist who specialises in researching Chinese mobility and state hegemony. He argues that domestic tourism in China is heavily regulated by the state, and there were signs of extending this authority to overseas territories. Therefore, this research explores if the Chinese state intervenes in overseas Chinese tourism production in the UK and how nationalistic sentiments are observed from Chinese visitors in the UK. Therefore, to address the tourism literature, this thesis explores Chinese tourists in the UK, with particular attention to the interwoven complex of structure and agency; that is the historical shaping and existing forces that condition Chinese individuals. In so doing, the thesis makes a distinctive and original contribution to the nascent literature that deals with this phenomenon.

### **1.1.2 Contribution to studies of host-visitor relations and tourist identity**

The thesis aims to form a dialogue with the tourism literature surrounding the exploration of host-visitor relations and identity (see p.54). Firstly, it is difficult to locate a genuine gap in the literature about host-visitor relations, since the diverse cultural exchanges involved in these relationships are not bounded by established grand theories. For example, the traditional host-visitor paradigm is not adequate to explain the flexibility and fluidity of contemporary relations between these two actors. For example, acculturation (Nuñez, 1963) and demonstration effect theories (Turner and Ash, 1975) are not observed in specific tourist regions. The implication for this research

is that, in order to understand how the British host nation's perspective of Chinese visitors, we need to specify what aspects of identity are being brought into focus. Also, to capture the perspective, a number of spaces are explored, i.e. mass media spaces, blogosphere, servicescapes and pedagogical spaces.

Secondly, the thesis addresses the approach of researching identity in the tourism literature. It identifies that there is a trend of focusing on the agency of tourists. Recent post-structuralist theories of these relationships have emphasised the reflexivity of the tourist, as they reflect upon their encounters with difference, i.e. different peoples, cultures, places and lifestyles (e.g. Desforges, 2000; Noy; 2004). These theories are characterised by an emphasis on individual experience. I will discuss this trend and review *Annals of Tourism Research* from year 2005 to 2014 (see p.34), in order to identify research interests in three aspects, namely: tourist narratives, tourist performance and structures. This research seeks to situate individual experience within collective historical structures and contemporary socio-political and economic forces. Tourists have agency, but it is important to recognise the limits to this agency and the ways in which tourist behaviour is structured. Therefore, this research seeks to explore how Chinese individuals negotiate external forces of structures.

### **1.1.3 Contribution to understanding of contemporary Chinese visitors**

The two key terms that connect the thesis are *Chinese identity* and *tourism*. There are many markers of our identity; and a variety of aspects (e.g. class, gender, political or national identity) are explored by various disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, geography, political science, et cetera. I am specifically concerned with how Chinese identity can be understood from a tourism perspective. The specific context of tourism for Chinese people – middle class visiting Western geographies – as this thesis argues, offers a perspective to understand how their identity is structured in contemporary China. MacCannell (1976) uses this perspective to understand the modern life of Western metropolis by observing Western tourists travelling overseas. He concludes that modern people (as deduced from Western tourists) actually embrace modernity in the West. Drawing upon structuralism, tourism is employed to explain home social structures. Bauman (1997:93) believes that tourists are 'a metaphor of contemporary life'. This thesis is inspired by using tourism as an approach (see p.135), which seeks to draw conclusions from Chinese practices and experiences in UK spaces, in order to understand partial reality of contemporary China.

## 1.2 Rationale of the study

This research topic arose from the connection between public issues of social structure, relating to China and its international relations, and my personal observation and sensitivities towards conflicts that could be described as relating to the politics of place arising from these issues. Developing research questions from reflection upon the confluence of social structure and personal subjectivity is part of a long tradition in social science research (Mills, 2000). The burgeoning transnational movement of Chinese people to Western countries in recent years has intensified more diverse forms of contacts between cultures, which happen in communities (migration), pedagogical spaces (educational institutions), corporations and firms (trade and businesses), and leisure travel consumption spaces (tourism). Chinese citizens in the West embody a set of worldviews characterised by their socio-economic and political status, situated in Chinese society governed by socialist authoritarian rule, economic liberalisation and neoliberal thinking (Zhang, 2010). In this thesis, I am concerned with those Chinese individuals who have economic capital to taste and enjoy Western lifestyles and commodities. The significance of these forms of transnational movements is multi-faceted. This research is an attempt to understand contemporary Chinese subjects through the phenomenon of leisure travel mobility in the West, i.e. the UK. Tourism research has been described as an inter-disciplinary or post-disciplinary (Coles et al., 2006) subject of enquiry, which offers opportunities to make this attempt. In terms of theoretical framing and methodological flexibility, the tourism literatures provide a mode of enquiry that is sufficiently flexible to account for the multiple identity positions of tourists as research subjects. Tourist behaviours could be viewed as unreflexive and habitual (Edensor, 2001; Andrews, 2005). Tourists could undergo transformation through a reflexive process in a *different* place (Desforges, 2000; Haldrup and Larsen, 2003). They could also carry wider social discourse from home society (Moore: 2002; McCabe; 2005). The potential of tourism studies is recognised in this research, as Franklin (2003:2) comments:

tourism is inseparably intertwined into everyday life, infused into the culture and society, a central component of modern society identity formation and engagement.

Hollinshead et al. (2009:430) further remind us that we should investigate how institutions and interest groups, in the case of this thesis the Chinese state, are producing

the discourses that could be manifested in tourism spaces, in his words “worldmaking”. Therefore, I view tourism as one approach to understand perhaps certain aspects of Chinese subject, through an exploration of Chinese visitors who are encountering culturally different cultures and landscapes in the UK.

What are the public issues linked to social structures that are reflected in Chinese persons’ subjectivities as they participate in transnational mobility? According to Mills (2000:9), ‘an issue, in fact, often involves a crisis in institutional arrangements, and often too it involves what Marxists call ‘contradictions’ or ‘antagonisms’’. A few examples of these contradictions serve to illustrate the kind of tensions that can arise. With respect to nationalism, during the running of the 2008 Beijing Olympics torch relay, tens of thousands of Chinese migrants and students living in Canberra rallied to express anti-West sentiments (against pro-Tibet activists and Western media), using propaganda originated during the time of the Cultural Revolution (Nyíri et al., 2010). With respect to racism, a Chinese translator working in Cameroon published an popular online essay amongst Chinese bloggers, about his prejudice towards Black people, using skin colours and phenotypes to explain different development status’ among countries, and openly criticising Chinese girls marrying Black men (Cheng, 2011). With respect to the rejection of Chinese cultural authority, Chinese state-funded Confucian Institutes established in overseas universities and colleges to promote Chinese language and cultures, have drawn resistance, protests and cancellations of partnerships because the party-state was found to be involved in restricting academic freedom, conducting surveillance of Chinese students and promoting pro-China ideologies (Hopkins, 2014).

These public issues involve presentations by, and representations of, Chinese subjects, clashes of ideologies, and disputes about political and cultural authority. The examples above in effect have their particularities and by no means have I intended to generalise from the individuals involved in these events to a wider population of Chinese tourists. However, we should not ignore the role of social structure in shaping certain collective values, acts and motives. These structures have led not only to public issues to be debated at arms-length, but have also impacted my own experience as a researcher, providing a valuable source of reflection in this thesis.

These personal experiences appear from time to time in my everyday life. For example, I found that many of my Chinese colleagues appeared to be very patriotic and unaware of the constructed nature of their own nationalism. In these circumstances I had to avoid



discussing headline news about China or to simply censor my authentic views, with the aim to uphold an “optimal or professional social relationship”. This censorship became difficult when discord between Hong Kong and China intensified in recent years, especially in the summer of 2014, when tens of thousands of Hong Kong people started a civil disobedience campaign, blocking arterial routes in central business districts. This campaign battled for a distinctive national identity and political rights opposing the Communist regime. In another setting, I was troubled when I was in London’s China Town, seeing two Chinese restaurants named Great Leap Forward and People’s Communes, which were a campaign and a social unit respectively that were set up for boosting economic growth, but finally led to famine and the deaths of 45 million people from 1958 to 1962 (Dikoters, 2011). More importantly, these names are just symbolic for humanistic catastrophes in recent Chinese history. I find myself uncomfortable when I sense that my “Chinese phenotype” has a bearing on an encounter with people of other nationalities, which perhaps characterises how I am being perceived and stereotyped. For this I have to stress that my worry is not racial discrimination, but the working of representations and stereotypes that are naturally favourable to assumptions and the essentialisation of a person’s values and behaviours. I have also been puzzled over my cultural identity. Unlike those people who take pride in their tradition and heritage; I struggle to find a solid historical and cultural foundation on which to anchor my identity or simply be proud of. The problem is how to position or re-discover Chinese traditions as well as British colonial legacy.

My personal experience and public issues are then connected, surrounding by changes brought by Chinese subjectivity and a variety of social structures. This PhD project enables me to trace what values are being threatened and what should be cherished, and to examine whether my personal evaluation of my experiences and reflections upon differential treatment are justified. This process is known as the sociological imagination (Mills, 2000). I could have told a completely different story as a person from Hong Kong studying at a UK university. Honestly I did meet a “countryman” who did not see the public issues I suggested as important and my personal experiences of cultural prejudice as significant. I will explain in the next section the assumptions informing my sociological imagination.

### 1.3 Assumption of the study

Perhaps the issues and personal experiences I discussed above are viewed by some people as the “dark side” of China. One of the most common defending arguments is that the economic development in China has improved the population’s life. Many of them would not deny the problems of China, but the subsequent argument is that other countries (often Western countries are listed as examples) also have their own problems and each country should have its unique development pace and trajectory. These perspectives are part of a concept known as “Chinese exceptionalism” (for example, see Rozman, 2012; Zhang, 2011). Chinese exceptionalism is particularly welcomed by Chinese people. Chinese exceptionalism contains the view that negative events, such as restrictions on civil rights, are the necessary trade-offs in order that China becomes a modern nation. I do not attempt to enter a debate around development theories. My concerns are that, for instance: people do not have freedom to access public information; children are subject to pedagogical indoctrination; and political dissidents suffer from oppression; people’s values are shaped by capitalised market economy, under regulatory effects of political states state socialism. These ways of thinking about social and cultural phenomena come from Cultural Studies (Hall, 1980), which is emancipatory and oppositional in that it is informed by critical theory that assumes injustice. It is legitimate for researchers from the Cultural Studies tradition to address inequality and exploitation, based on revisionist and humanist interpretations of Marxism (Crossberg, 1995).

Constructivism has a limited role in terms of the assumptions of this research. It can describe the construction of various positions, but is unable to evaluate these positions from a moral perspective. If I adopt a constructivist approach to tackle this research topic, it is unable to form a critical dialogue between people who have differing ontological perspectives about China. In fact I am sympathetic to some pro-China perspectives, for I understand their social position. However, I do wish to share with them my justifications of my critical “dark-side” perspectives. To tackle this challenge, I adopt post-positivist realism. Pratt (1984) proposes that each of us tell our fragment of truth and when we put together these fragments we have a better truth eventually. Post-positivist realism is not claiming what is the truth, but it does not avoid pursuing the truth (Moya and Hames-Garcia, 2000). It recognises that individual experiences are not personal constructs; rather it is determined externally by the outward system, shared by other individuals (Mohanty, 1993). Post-positivist realism respects an individual’s *real*

experience that arises from his or her social location, but when individuals' *real* experiences are compared, we need to carefully examine the theories (episteme) behind these experiences and work out how this assignment brings us close to reality. Therefore, for this PhD project, my assumption is more about epistemological reflexivity and critique. I aim to critically and carefully explain the theoretical foundations that could perhaps offer explanations for the practices and opinions of Chinese subjects, whilst acknowledging that the thesis is written from a particular social position, based on observations in particular times and places. Amid many forms of Chinese transnational mobility, I attempt to carry out this task in tourism spaces, with the aims and objectives detailed below.

#### **1.4 Aims and objectives**

The thesis aims to explore the cultural identities of Chinese visitors with reference to the theoretical frameworks of nationalism, globalisation, post-colonialism and traditionalism in UK tourism spaces. *Identity* has become a prism through which various aspects of contemporary life are exposed and observed (Bauman, 2001). The frameworks above are empirically driven, which offer explanations about Chinese visitors' public identity and self-identity which are interconnected and interdependent (Alcoff, 2000). One dimension of this research is to explore these two forms of identity. For public identity, the researcher first analysed wider host nations' perspectives of Chinese visitors; and second, closely observed English employee exchanges with Chinese customers in servicescapes. To delve into the self-identity of Chinese visitors, the researcher adopted an ethnographic investigation by travelling with a Chinese student group who came to London for a summer school programme. Another dimension that is critically explored is the shaping of these Chinese identities. The debate between structure and agency is the key to address this dimension of identity. This study will establish a set of perspectives that attempt to understand contemporary Chinese people, drawn mainly from historians' scholarly efforts. These perspectives involve the role of the Chinese state, historical contingencies and consumer capitalism (i.e. structure) in conditioning contemporary Chinese people's values and behaviours. Then, in the empirical setting, when I attempt to make sense of the narratives and praxis of the Chinese student group, the analytical framework is to investigate how they are structured and to what extent they are able to negotiate (i.e. personal agency) these structures in UK pedagogical spaces. Below are five objectives that contribute to these overall aims.

### **1.4.1 First objective**

The first objective is to investigate the host nation's perspectives of Chinese visitors in virtual mass media spaces and blogosphere. This objective is an attempt to understand how the general public in the UK perceive, feel and talk about Chinese visitors, which is external to the latter group. This public identity is not a representative perspective researched from the quantitative paradigm. I will explore what these perspectives are and how they are narrated, circulated and negotiated among a population. Not every individual in the UK has a chance to meet or talk to a Chinese tourist; people are dependent upon information and facts about the subject, which according to Mills (1967) are interpretations and representations. Weimann (2000) recognises the role of the media that mediates a reality in the form of 'constructed mediated reality' (CMR), which is then consumed by audience to form 'perceived mediate reality' (PMR). The media I focus on is the mass media, in which the attention is not upon how reportage of Chinese visitors is generated, but what CMR is actually presented within newspapers. Blogosphere is where readers' comments and responses are observed, constructing the PMR with respect to Chinese visitors. Bailey and Bryson (2006) employ de Certeau's (1984) notion of strategies and tactics to distinguish CMR and PMR. Building upon this approach, I analyse two news articles and two respective blogs from *the Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*. The rationale of exploring mass media spaces is the large readership of the press. Blogosphere offers rhizomatic interactions among participants from different backgrounds, illustrating how perspectives could be interacted and circulated in quotidian spaces.

### **1.4.2 Second objective**

The second objective is to explore English workers' perspectives on Chinese visitors in servicescapes. The public identity of Chinese visitors is characterised in tourism spaces, namely a popular gift shop. The researcher worked in the shop alongside a predominantly English team. The main purpose of this fieldwork is to get into the front-stage and back-stage spaces (Goffman, 1959) of the English workers, and observe exchanges between them and Chinese visitors. The rationale underpinning this objective is that perspectives of Chinese visitors are mediated by frequent contacts in a retail environment, which are believed to be different from how the general public perceive the subject. It is noteworthy that this form of Chinese visitors' public identity is co-constructed by the researcher and his English colleagues, in which the cultural and ethnic differences between them had a role in what attitudes and narratives could be

observed. Therefore, in order that readers could participate into the process that leads to interpretations of English workers' perspectives, Geertz's (1973) method of thick description is adopted and the researcher's relations with the English colleagues are reflected.

### **1.4.3 Third objective**

The third objective is to investigate whether the Chinese state has extended cultural authority in UK tourism spaces. It is directly related to understanding if Chinese visitors are subject to Chinese state interventions on what and how UK attractions should be seen and how visitor experiences are subsequently articulated and communicated. The objective is informed by Nyíri's (2006) observation that domestic tourism in China is heavily regulated by the state. Tourism landscapes are harnessed to hail the heroic past of the nation and celebrate the glory of its modernisation, supported by patriotic education. These acts of totalised and discursive cultural control, in Nyíri's (2006) term *ortholalia*, aim to cultivate a national and political identity of Chinese people. Nyíri (2010) suggests that these efforts of *ortholalia* begin to be present in transnational locations, in the form of administrative control of tourism. This third thesis objective builds upon Nyíri's research agenda by exploring if Chinese state authorities are interfering in the management and operation of a Chinese-own tour firm based in London. The researcher travelled with a Chinese teenage group who came to London for a three-week summer tour, organised by this tour firm, and conducted an in-depth interview with its owner afterwards.

### **1.4.4 Fourth objective**

The fourth objective is to explore experience of Chinese students in UK pedagogical spaces. The first two objectives are concerned with the work of representations and perceptions, which constitute public identities of Chinese visitors who perhaps have little control in construction. By contrast, the fourth objective is an endeavour to explore the sense of self of Chinese visitors, through the researcher using ethnographic investigation. The authentic self-identity I attempt to explore is drawn from my observations and interpretations of individual Chinese students' narratives and performances during their stay in the UK. Thick description (Geertz, 1973) of events, analysis of diaries and presentation of their dialogues, altogether invite readers to scrutinise the process of how identities of these Chinese students are constructed. The iterative process of analysis and theorisation began at this stage, grounded in their

values and behaviours observed in the classroom, retail shops and attractions, and from their interactions with host families. Their consumption practices and the ability to appreciate Western popular cultures (Veblen, 1899) are connected to a distinct global and modern identity (Bourdieu, 1984). Anti-Western and Japanese sentiments are observed in quotidian ways of speaking and act (Billig, 1995). This banal national identity is explained by the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1978; Rose, 1996). The post-colonial identity associated with Chinese society is reflected by the institutional racism of business practices that source host families in the UK. The attitudes of students towards their host families also reveal the discourse of White privilege and Black inferiority (Fanon, 1986). These observations will be compared to historical and contemporary events under the working of respective frameworks.

#### **1.4.5 Fifth objective**

The fifth objective specifically addresses the theoretical framework of traditionalism, which inquires into how Confucian values in contemporary China might differ from traditional Confucianism. This objective is to examine Chinese visitors' (i.e. students) gift shopping patterns, with reference to the concept of filial piety and guanxi. The rationale of exploring Chinese Confucian identity is that this identity has a strong bearing of a Chinese person (Ong, 2005) and gift consumption is a major activity for many Chinese tourists. A critical analysis of the Chinese students' narratives of their gift shopping motives and purposes is drawn from the theory of *critical inheritance*, originated by Derrida (1994) and developed by Zhang and Schwartz (1997) with reference to Chinese Confucian values that are forged and adapted in contemporary China. I will analyse Chinese ancient Confucian classics and historical and recent development of Confucianism in Chinese society, in order to argue that contemporary Confucianism is a redacted version, shaped by the Chinese state and consumer capitalism. Then, I attempt to offer explanations as to the nuances of Confucian values held by Chinese students with respect to their traditional Chinese identity.

#### **1.5 Research issues**

The assumption of this thesis is that Chinese people have been experiencing a rigorous process of adaptation to the intertwining forces of globalisation, nationalism and post-colonialism and traditionalism. This section aims to outline the context of the issues with which this thesis is concerned. Literature about the issues will be more extensively discussed in Chapter 4.

### **1.5.1 Globalisation**

With respect to globalisation, it is concerned with the Chinese middle class attitudes and experiences of the Western life style and cultural consumption. It is my contention that there is a desire for the West which can be observed in cultural consumption. Globalisation is connected to the discourse of modernity, with the former being the process through which the status of being modern and advanced is achieved. Globalisation is associated with an accumulation of cultural and social capitals in order to assert differences or create exclusions. The economic reforms in China, associated with the policies of the late 1970s that opened the country to globalisation, cultivated profit-making as a guiding principle of society. Now the new middle classes have the resources to encounter the West through transnational mobility and cultural consumption. The thesis explores how Chinese visitors perform their distinguished identity within the new wealthy population, through competitive forms of material and non-material consumption.

### **1.5.2 Nationalism**

Chinese nationalism is constructed through hierarchical notions of ethnic and racial identity that are attached in the historical imagination and imperialism (Unger, 1996; Townsend, 1996). Chinese nationalism is observed in different forms, and can be observed in domestic and overseas Chinese communities (Nyíri et al., 2010). The state propaganda aims to nurture patriotism that is grounded on inherited anti-Western sentiments (Gries, 2001; He, 2012; Siu 2012). Chinese individuals from diverse demographic and socio-economic backgrounds express different forms of national identities (Wu, 2012; Nyíri et al, 2012). This explains the nationalistic sentiments of different groups, such as entrepreneurs, factory workers, and overseas middle-class Chinese students. It aims to critically discuss a variety of contexts of Chinese national identity, which enables an exploration of how national identity is represented by the Western mass media and how Chinese visitors exhibit nationalism.

### **1.5.3 Post-colonialism**

Chinese post-colonial identity is connected to racial hierarchy and the vision of modernity. I expand on these themes when exploring the historiography of Chinese race in Chapter 3, in which Black racism and White supremacy is historically conditioned. In Chapter 4, the thesis pays attention to how the English language conflates the racial privilege of White people, which exists in the contact between them with Chinese

people. The racial view held by Chinese people is a manifestation of their particular post-colonial identity. Black racism (Fanon, 1986) is institutionalised. White race is structurally perceived by Chinese people as a positional 'good', which objectively exists, and can be observed in quotidian spaces. Conceptualising this identity, it is helpful to understand the encounter between Chinese visitors and British citizens.

#### **1.5.4 Traditionalism**

Traditionalism is referred to as an attitude pertaining to a conservative approach to traditional cultures. It is a respect for values and principles, and a way of life shared by people. The meaning conveyed by traditional is not an essentialist one in which cultural origins are deemed to be fixed and recoverable (Williams, 1961). Therefore, the *traditional* values are viewed as embedded in the historically conditioned social and cultural structures of China, which will be exemplified in the historiography of Confucianism. It discusses the concept of critical inheritance (Zhang and Schwartz, 1997), which means that certain Confucian values are selected as the cultural marker of Chinese people. For the empirical work, it focuses on the junction between Confucian filial piety and the practice of gifting behaviours of Chinese visitors. Shopping for souvenirs for friends and family members is universal in Chinese culture. Therefore, through capturing the narratives of Chinese respondents, we can understand the association between material consumption and filial love.

This thesis is not value-free; whilst the intion is not to provide a moral judgement on Chinese people, it aims to provide an account on the complexity of how different external forces are conditioning the Chinese identity and their real experience in receiving, adapting, negotiating, or confronting these forces.

#### **1.6 Limitations and delimitations**

I have identified two main limitations of the study and have established the boundaries accordingly. First, the thesis has taken a risk by exploring many aspects of the identity of Chinese visitors, because the analysis and theorisation have followed an iterative process. This approach was not initially planned, but adapted during the research process, in which I found it difficult to connect empirical observations to the original literature reviewed. The major reason is that, the literature about Chinese tourism drawn from the discipline of Tourism Studies is not adequate to offer meaningful explanations to empirical findings. Also, my understanding of social and cultural theories was insufficient to fully make sense of what was observed and perceived. Therefore, the



thesis has adopted a grounded approach (Suddaby, 2006). I kept looking for relevant theories to situate the observations, which is called “constant comparison”, a core concept given by Glaser and Strauss (1976). The research foci associated with fieldwork were subject to research findings of the previous fieldwork, known as ‘theoretical sampling’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1976). The limitation of this approach is the trade-offs of rich and diverse debates of these individual aspects (e.g. national identity and post-colonial identity), with each of them could be explored on their own in great details. As a result I could just pick the central debates from the theories that are relevant to the Chinese context, which means that a monologue on a specific concept is not afforded. In other words, the thesis should be viewed as an exploratory research. I will identify the areas that worth future and in-depth research.

The second limitation is about the language ability of the researcher. It has direct implications on first, the capacity for the researcher to convey his thoughts and abstract ideas to words; second, the quality of communications between the researcher and English-speaking informants; and third, the quality of writing - whether correct English usage is demonstrated. English is my second language. A PhD thesis requires high level of English competency. This is a great challenge for me as a non-native researcher. For the fieldwork where I worked alongside English colleagues, I found it difficult to understand entirely what they said. Therefore, some data was lost because of this and it categorised a particular relationship between the researcher and the English workers. I will emphasis this cross-cultural research background in that empirical chapter. In terms of the time spent on writing, I had to use a disproportional amount of time to craft the thesis. The trade-off is the time that should be used to read more widely. This also cost my supervisors’ time and effort to understand my meanings as well as to improve my English by heavy editing. To control this limitation, I have given up presenting some abstract theories and ideas (e.g. Laclau’s (1990) floating signifiers and details of psychoanalysis). Also, since I aim to ensure readers fully understand the meaning of my writings, I use more words to present an idea, which makes the thesis perhaps exhausting.

## **1.7 Conceptual framework**

A board conceptual framework of the thesis is summarised in Table 1. This is developed after conducting the literature review, data collection and analysis. It serves as a signpost for readers to unpack the complexity of the thesis.

**Table 1 – Conceptual framework**

<b>Research protocols</b>	
Research subject	Chinese visitors to the UK
Frameworks to explore contemporary Chinese identity	globalisation, nationalism, post-colonialism and traditionalism
How individuals experience, and are shaped by the issues	identity (Structure and agency)
Temporal	historical and present
Spatial	at home in China and as tourists in the UK
Research spaces:	(i) online mass media spaces (public identity) (ii) online blogosphere (public identity) (iii) servicescapes (public identity) (iv) pedagogical spaces (self-identity)
Methods	(i) discourse analysis (ii) discourse analysis (iii) ethnomethodology (iv) ethnography
Main theories explored:	(i) critical inheritance (ii) governmentality (iii) constructed mediated reality (iv) perceived mediated reality
Contribution to tourism literature	(i) explore relations between Chinese tourists and UK citizens (qualitative and focusing on values) (ii) study Chinese tourist behaviours in a non-essentialist conception of culture (iii) study the political context of overseas Chinese tourism (iv) explore host-visitor relations in multiple spaces (v) investigate how the wider social structures influences individuals

Source: author

## **1.8 Overview of chapters**

The buildings of theories and analysis in this thesis have been iterative, which means that the thesis has adopted a partially grounded approach in which I have embraced these concepts to account for aspects of Chinese identity. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 aim to provide the context for, and explanations of what is observed and found in the later empirical chapters. Chapter 2 begins with representations about China that we are able to observe in the media. Readers will be introduced to the particular issues with which the thesis is concerned, and which Chinese visitors experience every day. I will agree that the insufficient attention is given to these issues, and there is misrepresentation of Chinese culture in the tourism literature in explaining contemporary Chinese tourists. Therefore, the approach to address the literature is based on Sandberg and Alvesson's (2011) problematisation, which proposes that research questions could be drawn from challenging the assumption of existing theories. First, I will point out that understanding of Chinese visitors should develop from qualitative/socio-cultural perspectives, departing from the quantitative/business marketing perspective. Second, it points out the apolitical research agendas of existing tourism literature. Third, building upon the work of Nyíri's (2006), I will provide a critique on Li's (2008) essentialist perspective of Chinese culture, which has framed the existing tourism literature on Chinese tourist behaviours. This research topic is relevant to the wider host-visitor literature and tourist identity literature. I will discuss how the thesis is situated in, and contribute to the literature.

Chapter 3 is an historiography of Chinese race and Confucianism. It uses primary and secondary sources from a wide range of disciplines to highlight the way in which race and Confucianism are articulated over time. This chapter is divided into two major sections. The first section argues that Han Chinese is an artificially and historically shaped construct. I will explain how racial hierarchy has been developed from historical and mythical race narratives, which was reinforced in the twentieth century (Dikotter, 1992). I will draw studies from scholarly work (e.g. Hevi, 1962; Sampson, 1964; Snow, 1988; Liu, 2013) to debate the race relations between African students and the Chinese host nation in the 1960s in China. This review offers a foundation of explicit Black racism and White supremacy, which is supported by contemporary events of racial discrimination in China (Frazier and Zhang, 2014). Chinese racial prejudice is closely connected to nationalism and the discourse of Chinese modernisation. The aim of the second section is to essentialist organising of Confucianism. I will examine the

historical development of Confucianism, in which it was challenged in the early twentieth century (Chow, 1960); manipulated by Mao Zedong's Communist regime in the 1960s and 1970s (Lu, 1999); debated and adapted in the 1980s because of the internal conflict between the liberal leaders and conservative leaders (Cheng, 2012; Yu, 2008); and redacted by Chinese scholars entrepreneurs through the framing of governmentality (Foucault, 1978; Rose, 1996). The central aim of this section is to deconstruct the formation of contemporary Confucian identity. Following Zhang and Schwartz (1997), after Derrida (1984), I will employ the theory of *critical inheritance* to demonstrate that conformity, collectivism and hierarchy are critically inherited Confucian values. Filial piety and guanxi are the epitomes of these Confucian values.

Chapter 4 provides the theoretical framework of the thesis. It aims to bring macro theories used to conceptually frame Chinese tourist behaviours into a meaningful connection with empirical observations. The four frameworks are nationalism, globalisation, post-colonialism and traditionalism. Earlier in this chapter (p.14) I have provided a brief introduction of these frameworks in the context of contemporary China.

Chapter 5 documents the methodologies adopted by the thesis. It first aims to justify the position of the thesis in researching the cultural and political context of Chinese tourist behaviours, in which the researcher is influenced by the cultural studies tradition and post-positivist realism. I will then discuss the respective strengths and weaknesses of the methods that are employed as they relate to the objectives. The UK virtual mass media spaces and blogosphere will be explored to understand the host nation's perspective of Chinese visitors, for the reason that everyday information and opinions that are disseminated, discussed and negotiated (Weimann, 2000), could be observed and captured by researchers. I will then discuss how we could explore social structures in tourism spaces, drawing the work of MacCannell (1976) and Urry (1990). In order to understand the public identity of Chinese visitors in servicescapes (Bitner, 1990, 1992), I will explain how ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1976) is adopted to illicit responses from the English workers in a gift shop. For the ethnographic investigation in pedagogical spaces, I will critically discuss the principle of the classic anthropological approach and multi-sited ethnography used by contemporary tourism researchers (e.g. Nyíri, 2003; Andrews, 2005). The Rationale for grounded theory will be explained with reference to how it is applied to this research, namely constant comparison and theoretical sampling (Suddaby, 2006). The quality of data will be evaluated through

Guba's (1981) criteria of trustworthiness. I will explain my social position as a researcher, which has framed the development of knowledge and worldviews. Finally, the ethical considerations involved will be detailed.

Chapter 6 to 9 are empirical chapters. They are organised by the empirical settings, but cross-cut with the theoretical themes identified in Chapters 2 to 4. The theoretical relevance of the data involved in these empirical chapters are introduced earlier in the aims and objective section (see p.9). Chapter 6 (addressing objective 1) explores how Chinese tourist behaviours and issues are reported by the UK mass media, in which two news articles from *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail* are analysed, followed by explorations on the blogosphere of the respective news article mentioned. Chapter 7 (addressing objective 2) explores the servicescapes of a retail environment, i.e. a gift shop in a popular tourist destination in the UK, in which Chinese visitors and English workers intermingle and interact. As a member of staff working alongside my English colleagues in the shop, I observed that culture conditioned the encounter experience.

Chapter 8 (addressing objective 3 and 4) explores both the production and consumption of a study tour participated by a group of Chinese students in their early teens travelling and learning in London for three weeks in the summer 2013. I conducted an in-depth interview with the tour firm owner who was an ethnic Chinese and had already obtained British residency. He was an informative respondent, who was able to explain that there was no state intervention in the Chinese-owned business and operation of the educational tour industry in the UK. For the consumption of pedagogical spaces, I travelled with the student group as a volunteer, which enabled us to build a relationship and for me to conduct close observations of experiences in the pedagogical spaces. The chapter presents the students' behaviours in the classroom, during site-seeing and relations with host families. It explores students' self-reflections of the journey, in which a mix of emotions evolved surrounding their identification as a Chinese, with the stimulation of a culturally different environment.

Chapter 9 (addressing objective 5) explores the shopping patterns of Chinese visitors. This chapter draws empirical findings from observations of gift consumption in the gift shop and in the study tour, with particular attention paid to how Chinese visitors talk about their motivations and perspectives in pedagogical spaces. In the gift shop, the fleeting presence of the visitors enabled me to observe general patterns in habits, preferences and behaviours when shopping souvenirs. The Chinese students shared with

me what and why they bought souvenirs and for whom, which enables me to connect my analysis to Confucian values.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF TOURISM LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is first to provide a background of the research topic. This background is necessary to understand because it shapes the interpretations made in the empirical analysis chapters and is frequently drawn upon throughout the thesis to explain or situate the arguments put forward in the thesis. The second aim is to explore what is already known about Chinese outbound tourism and tourists within the extant tourism literature. Although tourism cannot be described as an academic discipline, perhaps, it does consist of a community of scholars whose research privileges the tourist as a central unit of analysis. Therefore, it is important to consider how tourism researchers have attempted to account for the attitudes, behaviours and motivations of Chinese outbound tourists. The chapter seeks to identify the important contexts that ought to inform any research into Chinese outbound tourists, and goes on to demonstrate that there are significant gaps in the existing knowledge base within the tourism literature. The chapter, therefore, is structured in two parts.

Section 2.2 is the background context of the thesis, which introduces the background and phenomenon of contemporary China that has informed the PhD project. It consists of data, events and phenomena that provide a setting for the issues this research addresses. This section critically introduces China with reference to its political and cultural significance. The examples chosen are all observed in public spaces, which are shared by the whole nation and are under scrutiny by the international media.

Section 2.3 of the chapter is a review of the tourism literature. There are two aspects of this literature to which the thesis aims to make a contribution. First, Chinese outbound tourism has been researched predominantly through a business marketing and commercially-orientated approach. The socio-cultural implications of Chinese tourists are typically ignored. When they are addressed, the approach to culture is deterministic; that is, some essential notion of culture is deemed to determine behaviour. Another oversight of the tourism literature exploring outbound Chinese tourism is that it is apolitical, bracketing issues of power and identity. Third, the chapter extends this critique of the literature and introduces the work of Nyíri's (2006, 2010), which has

been overlooked in the tourism literature. Fourth I provide a critique of the dated host-guest paradigm, which has been hitherto used as the main paradigm to explore the social and cultural dimensions of tourist encounters. Fifth, the review turns to explore the recent research literature that explores tourist identities. The aim here is to demonstrate the importance of a focus on both tourist agency and the ways in which that agency is structured.

## **2.2 Background: walking through contemporary China**

### **2.2.1 People Republic of China**

China is a sovereign nation-state, known as the People's Republic of China (PRC). The PRC is a member of the United Nations, a position it adopted in 1971, when the membership of the UN passed from the Republic of China (i.e. Taiwan) to the PRC. Taiwan contests this ruling and is seeking independent membership of the UN to the PRC, but until the PRC relinquishes claims on Taiwanese sovereignty the UN is unlikely to provoke the PRC by granting Taiwan this right. In the PRC, the Chinese Communist Party has a dominant role in ruling the country. China is a one party-state, which is written into the constitution:

The victory of China's New-Democratic Revolution and the successes in its socialist cause have been achieved by the Chinese people of all nationalities, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, by upholding truth, correcting errors and surmounting numerous difficulties and hardships.

(The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, 2004, n. p.)

The Communist Party overrules the country, with the party leading the constitution, military, legislative, executive and judiciary system.<sup>1</sup>

### **2.2.2 Chinese as civilisation**

Another dimension of *China* is that it is a civilisation, in a sense something beyond an 'achieved state or condition of organised social life', forming a 'conscious historical or cultural contrast with barbarism' (Williams, 1976:57-78). The name *China* in its language means 'the Middle Kingdom'. Viewing its central territory as the most civilised place in the world, China historically has a belief in its own cultural superiority. China has this in common with other nations, whose historical sense of

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<sup>1</sup> Xi Jinping is at the same time the party leader, the state president and the chairman of the military commission.



exceptionalism is part of their national mythology and still continues to inform contemporary policy (Madsen, 1998; Merom, 1999). In the 2008 Olympic Beijing Games, we saw how the PRC was eager to impress the world in the opening ceremony. The extravaganza highlighted historical Confucian culture, including scientific and technological achievements.<sup>2</sup> The state has successfully portrayed that nowadays China has claimed the legacy of the common historical past (Anderson, 1991). These are not only representations of China for a worldwide audience, but it consolidates citizens' sense of national pride in the success of the nation. This is to view *China* in a cultural sense given a particular place and time. Critical inheritance is the theory used to explain Confucian identity of Chinese people, which will be discussed from an historical perspective in Section 3.4 (p.75). Its implication to how Chinese view their own traditional culture is discussed in Section 4.5 (p.119).

### 2.2.3 Who are Chinese?

'Chinese' is an essentialist construct, because it assumes that there is something that distinguishes Chinese people from non-Chinese. In the United States of America there is an ethnicity called Chinese American; in Great Britain it is called British Chinese and so on. The Chinese component of which refers not to the political identity, but to the wider cultural bearing of the people. One's biological inheritance is an important marker of Chinese identity. For example, Roger Yonchien Tsien, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2008, is widely regarded as a Chinese American. Tsien was born to biologically Chinese parents in the States, but he does not write or speak Chinese. However, his phenotype or ancestral heritage makes him Chinese, as observed from how he is presented by the official website of the Nobel Prize (Nobelprize.org, 2015) and his Wikipedia entry (Roger Y. Tsein, 2015). That Tsien received his PhD from the University of Cambridge is perceived as an honour by the university. The university's webpage constructs the tie between China and the university as follows:

Cambridge alumni include the poet Xu Zhimo, the author Louis Cha, the Nobel Laureate Roger Tsien, and ..... Today, Chinese students form the largest international group from a single country at Cambridge.

(University of Cambridge, 2014:n.p.)

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<sup>2</sup> The display includes such as calligraphy, martial arts (kung fu) and inventions of compass, paper, gunpowder and printing. The show has reinforced and picked the Chinese symbols in addition to chopsticks, pagoda, lion and dragon dance found in China towns or cheongsam (mandarin gown) wore by celebrities.

It is expected, presuming that you do not know the appearance of Tsien, that you have formed a mental representation of his phenotype – which is not typical of the Uyghurs or Kazakh from Xinjian, Tibetans or Mongols, or any other races residing in the PRC. Readers would most probably associate Tsien in a category called the “Han” Chinese, which is claimed to be an homogenous group by the PRC and the container of common ancestral origins and shared cultures (Dikötter, 2006). When Tsien was asked by Chinese journalists from the PRC in Stockholm about whether he was a Chinese, used Chinese language and what the significance of his achievement was to Chinese scientists (Liberty Times Net, 2008), he answered:

I was born and raised in the United States, and I could not speak a lot of Chinese. So, I don't think I'm a Chinese scientist, rather I am an American.

(Lin, 2013:n.p.)

This example demonstrates how popular it is to identify a Chinese person by racial taxonomies, which emphasises physical attributes and “common blood”. The journalist explicitly revealed that he or she was in possession of a racial worldview. Being Han, one is expected to be able to use the Chinese language and possess or practise certain Chinese cultures or traditions that non-Han PRC citizens are not. These questions are acceptable if people want to know more about his nurturing and education. However, what about the question asking about the relationship between a successful biological Chinese who was awarded the Nobel Prize and the implication for other Chinese scientists? This is an explicit racialism, which leads one to ask the following questions. How has this racial theory intertwined with cultural superiority evolved and become constructed as national identity in China nowadays? How does it serve to construct race relations when Chinese people meet “others”? These questions will be explored in an historiography of race in Section 3.3 (p.58). It is argued that racial prejudice is explicit in contemporary China, which is framed as post-colonial identity, will be discussed in Section 4.4 (p.116).

#### **2.2.4 The ‘West’ through the eyes of the Chinese state and people**

This research focuses on Chinese identities that are performed and represented in the geographical West. It positions the ‘West’ as a crucial constituent in shaping of ‘Chineseness’, in which different forms of power, such as state apparatus, wars and diplomacies, technologies, market rationalities and modernisation ideology play a role

in how the 'West' is encountered, reacted, battled, manipulated and imagined by both Chinese regimes and people. 'West' is a complicated concept, which academics consider in different ways when debating the relation West to non-Western cultures. For the following sections, 'West' has these conceptions: in a geographical sense as a place that people travel to; a symbolic term that represents globalised cultural content (e.g. movies, National Basketball Association) that is mainly from Anglo-Saxon States; a geo-political term that frames ideologically the United States as a threat to China; or a representation in which the West is civilised, enlightened and liberal that is linked to orientalist discourse (Said, 1978).

### **2.2.5 Chinese nationalism**

In 2008, Western protestors sought to disrupt the progress of the Olympic torch as it passed through world cities (e.g. Canberra). On these occasions, Chinese nationals (e.g. international students) sought to protect the torch from attacks by protestors. The emotionally charged Chinese nationals used this opportunity to protest against Western media portrayals of the recent riots in Tibet. Clashes were reported between the Chinese nationals and the Western protesters. Major capital cities were filled with patriotic songs and slogans from the Maoist era were chanted in Mandarin (Nyíri et al., 2015). In Canberra alone, an estimated 20,000 students turned up (Johnson, 2008). At this time the Chinese Embassy refused to comment on local media reports that it organised transport for the mass demonstration (Dyer and Smith, 2008). Whilst this thesis does not seek to answer the question of where these specific expressions of nationalistic spirit originated from, it does seek to explore the structural relations that might explain the expressions of nationalism by Chinese tourists whilst on vacation in the UK. A variety of theories of Chinese nationalism will be discussed in Section 4.3 (p.108).

### **2.2.6 Chinese transnational mobility**

We start from the late 1970s in China, when Chinese president Mao Zedong's promise to the proletariat was broken and China was in a state of despair associated with material and spiritual poverty, because of the Cultural Revolution and Anti-Right Campaign. When Deng Xiaoping came to power, ideology gave way to economic policy reforms. Modernisation policies embraced the once-despised Western market capitalism, which have finally brought enormous wealth and prosperity to China. And now, the new middle classes are building a global identity. Specifically in the form of

migration, education and tourism, China's new middle classes arrive predominately in Western countries such as North America, Western Europe and Australia. Since 2009, China has ranked top among all countries of origin for migration to 34 OECD countries (OECD, 2013).<sup>3</sup> In 2013, there was a backlog of more than 45,000 applications seeking approval to migrate to British Columbia (as of January 2013). The applicants are estimated to have a minimum aggregate wealth of £7 billion (Young, 2014). China is also ranked first for international students, with the majority of students studying in the West (Xinhua, 2013).<sup>4</sup> Chinese tourist numbers are now catching up with those of emigrants and students. Applications for Schengen visas by Chinese citizens has seen the highest growth rates from 2009 to 2012 (European Commission, 2014).<sup>5</sup> In 2013, nearly 1.5 million Chinese visitors used a Schengen visa to travel in 26 countries in Europe.<sup>6</sup> The following section discusses how Chinese tourists look for Western experiences through tourism.

### **2.2.7 New grand tour – Chinese tourists in Europe**

An article named *Chinese Tourists: A New Grand Tour* (The Economist, 2010) opens up the debate of the arrival of affluent Chinese in the West. Grand Tour refers to the young elites of the aristocracy who travelled to France and Italy, known as the roots of Western civilisation, to pursue intellectual interests from the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the popularisation of mass tourism in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Embarking on a Grand Tour represents gender and class distinctions. The analogy matches with some points made by the article: the noble vs the new middle class; the art and high cultures vs luxuries; and travelling as a manifestation of distinction. The new Grand Tour itinerary is not without Paris (Louis Vuitton) and Bourdeaux (Château Lafite Rothschild). They have learned about brands which are either more expensive in China than Europe, or in most cases,

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3 The top 3 countries in terms of migration into The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2009 and 2011 respectively: China (460,000; 529,000), Romania (271,000; 310,000) and Poland (220,000; 274,000). OECD countries include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxemburg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States.

4 From 1978 to the end of 2012, more than 2.6 million Chinese studied outside the country. In 2012, 399,600 Chinese studied abroad, in which 74% in United States, Britain, Australia, Canada and Japan.

5 Applications of Schengen via from China has a 250% growth rate from 2009 (597,430) to 2013 (1,497,178) (European Commission, 2015)

6 As of February 2015, Schengen visas are issued by the European Union for citizens from non-EU countries to travel in the Schengen Area for up to three months. There are 26 countries in the Schengen area. It is noted that Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the UK are EU members but not Schengen members. While Iceland, Norway and Switzerland are Schengen members but not EU members (European Union, 2014; Schengen, 2014).

not available in China. A trip to Europe and to purchase is to act out desires. However, the particularity of Chinese tourist consumption is that they visit some places unpopular with Europeans, in which those places are only meaningful to the host Chinese nation, ‘shaped by China’s fast-developing consumer culture and by distinctive quirks of culture, history and politics’ (The Economist, 2010). For instances, Chinese visitors go to Trier (the birthplace of Karl-Marx); Metzingen (Hugo Boss); Luxembourg (‘a pocket-sized country.....for Chinese ‘to knock off another country with minimal effort, allowing for extra boasting back home’ (Economist, 2014); and Lucerne and the Swiss Alp known as Mount Titlis (where a Chinese gymnast who claims to have seen a vision of Buddha and “as a result” he won a gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics). Chinese consumption in the West is both material and symbolic. It is argued that the desire for Western experiences is cultivated by the state authored global capitalism in the home nation, which will be discussed in Section 4.2 (p.103).

### **2.2.8 Responses of the party-state**

Nevertheless, the party state has adopted new strategies of cultural control to manage networks of Chinese citizens in foreign lands (Nyíri, 2010). Recently, the intervention became explicit as the state attempted to censor any negative opinions of China at a conference held at the University of Durham (*Durham City News*, 2014).<sup>7</sup> With respect to Western consumption, most activities are regarded as legitimate and encouraged by the party state, because consumption is *the* way to maintain the fast growing economy, and GDP growth is considered to be equivalent to development. However, the cultural products themselves are despised as “mirages and ghosts” of the West, a view which suggests that consumption does pose a veiled ideological threat. To the state, the problem of the West has become cultural (Zhang, 2010). The West has changed the socio-cultural landscape through virtual space; i.e. technological advancement and the formation of new media has transformed communication from broadcaster-audience to individual-individual. This goes hand-in-hand with the consumption trends of Western cultures, which have stimulated the domestic cultural industries to innovate to meet the changing taste. This propagates the practice of freedom of speech and certain

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<sup>7</sup> The student-led conference on 15th Nov 2014 discussed the future of Hong Kong’s democratic status and relationship between China. It was joint-organised by four societies, including Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CASS), an association sponsored by the Chinese Embassy. The organiser of the conference was contacted by the Embassy which imposed restrictions on the discussion that ensured there would be no ‘negative impacts’ on China.

democratic values. These are the so-called Western ideological values that the party state seeks to combat, as they perceive that the younger generations are attracted to these ‘Western’ trends. That is why China’s former president, Hu Jianto, at the beginning of 2012 greeted the 1.4 billion with this statement:

We must clearly see that international hostile forces are intensifying the strategic plot of Westernizing and dividing China, and ideological and cultural fields are the focal areas of their long-term infiltration.....the international culture of the West is strong while we are weak.

(Wong, 2012:n.p.)

The current president, Xi Jinping, reasserts the imperative of ideological control, and orders Chinese higher institutions to promote “ideological guidance” and expand Marxism studies (Hunwick, 2014). The state effort received feedback that some schools have banned all Christmas activities and banners of anti-Western messages were observed: “strive to be outstanding sons and daughters of China, oppose kitsch Western holidays” and “resist the expansion of Western culture” (*The Guardian*, 2014). How they accepting, negotiating or confronting the state power, is the research focus of the thesis.

### **2.2.9 The “cultural turn” – rejuvenation of Confucianism**

The party-state launched the “back to tradition” movement in the 1990s in response to the political upheavals in Eastern Europe, the fall of Communism and the Tiananmen Square crackdown. The state believes that pedagogy is a critical arena to cultivate the value of stability and harmony (Yu, 2008). Moral education has become an imperative in the school curriculum. In academia, domestic and international academic conferences were organised to promote Confucianism as the traditional values. Confucianism has also been exported overseas. One often cited example of internationalisation is the expansion of Confucian Institutes that support the teaching of Chinese language and culture, now 400 spreading across 108 countries in 2012, with some of them co-operating with local universities (Hanban, 2014). This is to use Confucianism as the source of cultural attractiveness. Chapter 3 will detail how the role of Confucianism in Chinese cultural politics.

### **2.2.10 Representations of Chinese by the Western media**

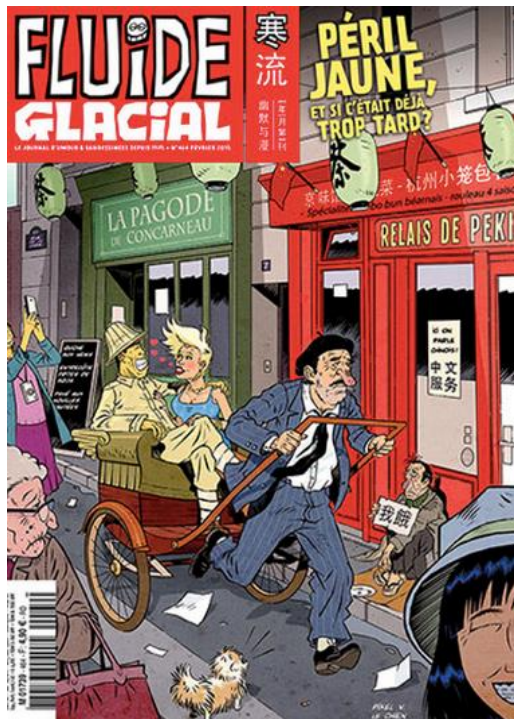
What is the image of the Chinese portrayed by the Western media? An analysis of two pictures aims to briefly introduce one way to answer this question. Each picture is

situated at the perceived poles of positive and negative images of Chinese. Figure 1 is the cover page of a popular French comic magazine *Fluide Glacial*. The cover is a radical and satirical drawing that portrays Chinese communities in Paris (Fluide Glacial, 2015). Figure 2 is a picture used by *The Economist*, a popular news magazine, as an illustration when reporting on the growth of Chinese tourists coming to the West (*The Economist*, 2014). The picture represents a positive, traditional and “healthy” image of Chinese people.

I have no intention to pass on my own comments on the motives behind the use of the drawing and the image, based on the fact that I simply do not know the decision making process of producing a magazine. One might feel that the satirical cartoons and the use of “yellow peril” is racism, but there is another view that claims readers should not read things out of context. For example, France 24 (2015), an international channel argues that *Fluide Glacial* aims to mock those French people who hold a stereotypical perception on Chinese people. And how are they mocked? The magazine’s answer is to ridicule the Chinese. The Economist’s editorial line is economically liberal. It presents a positive view of middle class tourists in Europe. However, it does not mean that we can always draw a conclusion that they use a “happy-family” picture so as to support the growing business opportunity worldview. It is therefore not helpful to analyse the production of Chinese images. What is important is the real effect it has reflected or created – be it to satisfy the readers (gratification theory) or to influence the readers (cultivation theory). From a realist point of view, the readers see the message and it is negotiated and circulated. Barthes (1972) is pessimistic of the ability of the readers to distinguish whether a picture is a myth or the construction of myth, as he argues that the African soldiers saluting to French flag is taken by readers as a reality, i.e. French imperialism. To Barthes, what the readers need is certain cultural knowledge but not a code to interpret an image. In other words, readers only know *what* is presented but not how and why it is presented; then, even though a good or bad image is constructed it has real effects. The Signified of one image can be transposed onto another through association. Consequently this circulation creates a public identity, and in a further analytic implication, affects the sense of self identity of Chinese.

Building upon Barthes’ mythology, an analysis of the UK media content about Chinese tourists enables us to locate the signified meanings of Chinese tourists. By further exploring online bloggers’ comments on Chinese tourists, it creates a chance to observe

the reception of image – interpretations of signs in the virtual spaces. Therefore, representations or responses of the West that I am concerned with, point not to the state of a particular issue, but the aggregated and represented image of Chinese people. The theories of the role of media and Web 2.0 practices will be critically discussed in Section 5.3 (p.132).



**Figure 1 – A French magazine’s satirical cover of Chinese in Paris**

**Cover story:** Péril jaune, et si c’était déjà trop tard?  
(Yellow Peril; is it already too late?) (15 Jan 2015)

**Source:** Fluide Glacial (2015)

### 2.2.11 In search for identity

In sum, we can see how Chinese individuals are experiencing various forces. The middle classes have developed particular consumption patterns observed both in transnational mobility and in the domestic entertainment industry. Now the Chinese state tries to intervene in domestic pedagogy and cultural spheres. It tries to export Confucian culture to gain international support. At the same time the growing economic power and overseas Chinese communities are under the scrutiny of the Western media. I see it as a challenge to the Chinese people, as Zhang, a Chinese anthropologist states:



**Figure 2 – The Economist’s article about the growing middle class Chinese travelling overseas**

**Heading:** Coming to a beach near you: How the growing Chinese middle class is changing the global tourism industry (19 April 2014)

**Source:** Economist (2014)



What further complicates the Chinese situation is the attempt to combine economic liberalisation, neoliberal thinking, and socialist authoritarian rule at once.

(Zhang, 2010:215)

This thesis aims to explore how these phenomena, conceptualised as globalisation, nationalism and traditionalism (see Chapter 4), have challenged the wider debates regarding the identity of Chinese people – be it the sense of self, personal aspirations, public image or international perception. It is also found that the discourse of modernity, which is highly relevant to these concepts.

### **2.3 Review of tourism literature**

The second part of this chapter elaborates what the thesis seeks to contribute to the tourism literature. It has identified three main aspects. For the tourism literature that is involved Chinese outbound tourists: (i) it is a response to the dominance of quantitative empirical research that concerns business marketing and a lack of in-depth exploration into the values, and political and socio-cultural implications to the Chinese tourists; (ii) it is a call for a departure from essentialist and deterministic perspectives of Chinese culture. The thesis takes into account the fact that tourists have agency, but that how tourist behave is historically structured; Culture is relational, which means that it always needs to be studied vis-à-vis another culture; and (iii) it is a response to the uncritical analysis of the political context of the development of tourism in China. It builds upon the work of Nyíri's (2006) thesis of Chinese tourism with reference to the Chinese state cultural authority.

The second and third aspect of the tourism literature involved is not limited to China. I argue that, when studying host-visitor relations, we need to pay attention to what particular aspect of identity we bring into focus; grand theories (e.g. host-guest paradigm) do not encompass certain categorical definitions of identity into the relations. Another aspect is about studies surrounding tourist identity. This research intends to explore tourist agency through capturing their narratives and performance, as well as the ways in which the associated values and behaviours are structured.

#### **2.3.1 Dominant quantitative overseas Chinese tourism research**

Chinese tourists began travelling outside China, in terms of mass tourism, since the start of the millennium. The first group of Chinese tourists coming to the UK was in 2005 (BBC, 2005). Academic interests into the overseas Chinese phenomenon are primarily

in business marketing and management, and operations. The research direction of the majority of studies is always connected to motivation, perception, satisfaction and consumption patterns, in which the aim is to formulate tourism business strategies that are deployed to boost sales volume or inform tourism policies. The research focus is then to make generations and segmentations of tourist values and behaviours by means of using quantitative methodology. The socio-cultural implications of Chinese overseas tourism are ignored. This set of assertions is drawn from a systematic review within the literature database available to the present researcher. A keywords search was applied to identify the relevant literature from 2000 to 2013 September.<sup>8</sup>

The keywords utilised were “outbound Chinese tourists”, while synonyms of these terms, such as “overseas”, “traveller”, “visitors” were also included. Hundreds of returned papers were screened and filtered to ensure that they are relevant to the required criteria of the review as explained in due course. In total, 97 papers are identified from 29 peer-reviewed international journals, in which 22 are categorised as “tourism journals” as specified in the grey boxes. Table 2 shows the number of papers published by each journal in terms of the research orientation (business marketing and operations perspective vs wider political and socio-cultural and value-based) and methodology (quantitative vs qualitative) adopted by the paper. The division between the two research orientations is not a rare dichotomy, which means that a particular aspect of Chinese tourists explored might contain the ideas of both orientations. The next filter is based on an examination of individual papers, in which it evaluates how in-depth the author defines value. If a study just portrays the surface values of the behaviour (e.g. curiosity of culture, fondness of luxury brands) without seeking to provide meaningful interpretations or underlying principles of the way in which the values are structured, it will fall to the “Business” group. Nevertheless these cases are rare. The distinction between quantitative and qualitative is obvious. There are small number of papers that adopt a mixed approach (e.g. mixed or multiple methods), the judgement is on which one is the imperative methodology. Research notes, conceptual analyses and reviews are all qualitatively oriented.

It is found that, of the total 98 papers, 80% focus on the business marketing and operations associated with overseas Chinese tourists. Coincidentally, 78% from both

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<sup>8</sup> The search engine includes EBSCO, Emerald, Ingenta, Proquest, Sage, Science Direct, Taylor and Francis and Wiley. The period of the search is from late August to mid-September 2013 in the library of Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

research orientations employ quantitative analysis. There is a very strong correlation of using positivist perspectives to quantify data associated with motivational or satisfaction level; there are only 7 “business” papers using qualitative methodology. Critical analysis of Chinese subjects is in general associated with culture, history, mobility and social structures that have strong implications on Chinese outbound tourists. However these studies were not identified by the practical keywords that are used to locate the studies. The qualitative review in the next section is a solution to this limitation.

#### **2.3.1.1 Prevalence of Chinese culture determinism**

This section seeks to critically analyse how researchers in the tourism literature explore the deeper meanings and interpretative tradition, in order to understand the socio-cultural aspects of tourist behaviours and values. It includes not only the “S/C” papers that drawn from the journal publications from 2000 to 2013 as shown in Table 2, but also research studies published from 2013 to 2015 February, as well as some important literature about Chinese tourism that is not published in conventional tourism-specific publications. It aims to critique the dominant approach of viewing Chinese culture in the tourism literature, which is static, totalising and ignores the tourist agency in a culturally different environment. A speculation is that these works employ Hofstede’s cross-cultural dimensions in an uncritical manner. It draws on two rare empirical works that avoid the said problematic conception of culture from the tourism literature, namely Dung and Reijnders (2013) and Ong and Cros (2012).

#### **2.3.1.2 The forever Chinese culture**

When inspecting culture we cannot escape how to approach ‘culture’. The problem of the tourism literature is that Chinese culture is seen as essential and unchanged entity. Within the limited literature that concerns how Chinese tourist behaviour is structured, authors often immediately trace back to a few thousand years ago in search for Confucian values to account for what is happening to present Chinese people, as if Confucius is the arbitrator of *the* Chinese culture. Mok and Defranco (2000) construct a conceptual framework of dominant Chinese cultural values with the aim to offer a “Chinese manual” for tourism managers in the West, in their preparation for the expected visitor arrivals from China. The authors use Hofstede's (1991) “Cultural dimension model” to account for the relatively collectivist and submissive characters of Chinese people. Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions of national cultures was developed from a large scale survey conducted at IBM subsidiaries in 53 counties from 1967 to

**Table 2 – Research orientation and methods associated with Chinese outbound tourism**

Journals	Total number of papers	B	S/C	Quan	Qual
Annals of Tourism Research	2		2	1	1
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	9	8	1	6	3
Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	1		1	1	
Current Issues in Tourism	3	2	1	1	2
Far Eastern Economic Review	1	1		1	
Royal Dutch Geography Society	1		1		1
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	1	1		1	
International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research	1	1		1	
International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration	3	3		3	
International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management	1	1		1	
international Journal of Tourism Research	5	5		5	
Journal of China Tourism Research	21	14	7	13	8
Journal of Consumer Marketing	3	2	1	3	
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	1	1		1	
Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing	4	2	2	3	1
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	4	3	1	3	1
Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	2	2		2	
Journal of International Consumer Marketing	1	1		1	
Journal of Travel & Tourism	1		1		1
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	5	5		4	1
Journal of Travel Research	9	9		9	
Journal of Vacation Marketing	4	4		3	1
Mathematics and Computers in Simulation	1	1		1	
Research in Transportation Economics	1	1		1	
Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	1	1		1	
Tourism Geographies	1	1		1	
Tourism Management	7	7		7	
Tourism Management Perspectives	2	2		2	
Tourist Studies	2		2		2
		78 (80%)	20 (20%)	76 (78%)	22 (22%)
<b>Total number of papers</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>98 (100%)</b>		<b>98 (100%)</b>	

Remarks: (i) B – business marketing or operations, focusing on motivation and satisfaction  
(ii) S/C – wider political, socio-political implications, focusing on values and structures  
(iii) Quan – quantitative methodology  
(iv) Qual – qualitative methodology  
(v) “tourism journals”, for the names of the journals contain the keywords, i.e. “destination”, “hospitality”, “leisure”, “tourism”, “travel” and “vacation”

Source: author

1973. A fifth dimension was added in 1991 based on Confucian values called “Long Term Orientation”, with the participation of students from 25 countries (excluding China). The critiques of Hofstede’s model are many, according to Soares et al. (2007), such as the identification of the dimensions was subjective and arbitrary (Fernandez et al., 1997); the survey was conducted by employees of only one company (Schwartz, 1994); whether the dimensions are applicable to all nations (Schwartz, 1994; Erez & Earley, 1993); four or five dimensions are not enough (McSweeney, 2002), and the IBM data is old and obsolete (McSweeney, 2002). As a large-scale quantitative study that researches cross-cultural differences, some of these criticisms are not fair, such as questioning its representability or applicability to every nation. Rather, the issue is how researchers use this set of tool. Hofstede (2002:5) defends his work by saying this:

The organizational culture study tried to identify the values component that differentiated organizations within the same country rather than similar organizations across nations.....I never claim that culture is the only thing we should pay attention to. In many practical cases it is redundant, and economic, political or institutional factors provide better explanations. But sometimes they don’t, and then we need the construct of culture.

Hofstede clearly states that the model reflects the organisational cultures rather than cultures of the host nation. To Hofstede, culture is discrete; however it does not mean that he ignores wider structures and institutions. The categorisation of culture is necessary in the positivist tradition. The criticisms exhaust Hofstede (2002). The problem concerns how researchers use Hofstede’s work more sensibly. Some tourism researchers use Hofstede’s model to support their claim of the essential Confucian values possessed by Chinese tourists. For example, Hoare et al. (2010) account for the overseas dining experiences of Chinese people, in which “face”, “trustworthiness” and “harmony” are identified as the three core essential values. Kwek and Lee (2010) study Chinese tourists in Australia in a group packaged tour and the image of Queensland portrayed by destination promotional materials of Queensland to the Chinese market (Kwek and Lee, 2013). For these respective projects, the Mandarin speaking researcher uses the Confucian framework to interpret the findings: (i) the group tourist behaviour is a manifestation of “harmony”, “guanxi” (“special Chinese inter-personal relationships”) and “conformity”, and (ii) the using of images of women wearing bikinis on the beach is not appropriate to appeal to the potential Chinese customers, in which she explains,

But from a Chinese cultural perspective, public exposure of the body is a socially unaccepted behaviour and is therefore an extremely rare sight for a MC (mainland) tourist to experience at home. When one of the four greatest virtues of a woman is considered, which is her chastity.

(Andrea and Overfield (1994:n.p.) quoted by Kwek and Lee (2013:121))

A similar methodology to approach Chinese culture is found in the work of Pearce and Lu (2011) and Fu et al. (2012). The common pitfall of these studies is to place Chinese culture as a determinant of Chinese behaviour. There are four problems involved. (i) These studies ignore the way in which human agency is structured and historically conditioned, in different contexts and to different degrees. (ii) Traditional Chinese culture, privileging Confucianism, is not stationary and “uncontaminated”; it is a living tradition and one should expect to research a cultural process rather than a static phenomenon (the “critical inheritance” of Confucianism in China is discussed on p.75) (iii) These studies ignore the multi-faceted conception of ‘culture’, which can be seen in social and cultural practices and rituals (structures) that also influence the tourists, which is influenced by institutions such as government, media or religion. (iv) Chinese tourists are away from ‘home’, entering into a culturally-different environment, in which the issues of race, ethnicity and nationality are framing behaviour.

### **2.3.1.3 Rejection of cultural determinism**

Among a very few studies that address these issues, Dung and Reijnders (2013) and Ong and Cros (2012) are concerned with the problems of (iii) and (iv), in which they bring a fresh insights into the complexity of tourist culture. Dung and Reijnders explore how the travelling patterns of Chinese visitors to France are framed by popular media representation (American Hollywood films) and the discourse of Self and Other, i.e. Chinese vs Western culture. The research recruited online members of popular travel websites and asked for their touring experience in Paris with respect to their pre-visit expectations, on-site experience and post-visit reflection. To the respondents, the image of Paris was bourgeois culture, individualism and civilisation, which is a product of a complex intersection of ethno-racial discourse and media representation. Travelling to Paris is an actualisation of the imaginary, though the reality had finally taken over the fantasy. Ong and Cros’s study of Chinese backpackers to Macau employs the same methodology as Dung and Reijnders’s. They explore the travelling experiences shared by online bloggers on Chinese travel websites. They focus on what they term “post-Mao” generations – people born after 1980s and 1990s – who are being represented as

self-centred and materialistic. They found that the post-colonial gaze of Macau is framed by media representation, this time it is a popular drama produced in Hong Kong. The authors conclude that the backpackers present a behaviour that differs from demonised cultural representations, which is ‘built on maintaining and developing friendships and communities, both virtually and through lived travel experiences’ (2011:750)

These studies do not specifically mention Confucian culture, but they do vividly connect personal agency to the power of popular culture and the media world. Secondly they view ‘culture’ as praxis rather than an essentialist provision that pre-assumes and defines individuals. Their approach refutes the deterministic perspective of culture, because it is unable to meaningfully interpret the complicated and relational deposition of cultural practice. At the same time it forges a stereotypical identity of Chinese people. Nevertheless, when discussing Chinese culture, it is almost impossible to disregard its political context and the role of the Chinese state, which is also the heart of the debate that is untouched or being ignored in the tourism literature.

### **2.3.2 Uncritical reflections on Chinese political structures**

Amid the limited researchers who are interested in the political implication of Chinese tourism, the most significant scholars are perhaps either from the disciplines of Geography (Li, 2008) and Anthropology (Nyíri, 2006). My contention is that their work asks a fundamental question of tourism of China, in which it explores the junction between culture and politics. It is disappointing to find that only a handful of “tourism scholars” pick up these debates or respond to their propositions. A generous explanation would be the fact that these geographers or anthropologists normally do not publish within the tourism related journals. A less generous one is that their work is side-lined, because they do not fit the business orientation that pervades tourism studies. A more general observation is that “tourism scholars” are apolitical and more awareness of the political reading of tourism spaces is needed. In this section I will elaborate this argument in three areas.

First, I will review the work associated with the political context within the tourism literature, in which many scholars analyse given policies of the state rather than looking into the political context. Second, I will open the debate of Li (2008) and Nyíri's (2006) around the construction of place. The former scholar holds that nature in China is an instinctively and naturally-inherited place that embraces Chinese tradition. The latter

scholar takes a political reading of place, in which it is constructed by the state cultural authority. Third, I will describe how the thesis builds upon Nyíri's work through empirical data collection and analysis.

### **2.3.2.1 Chinese tourism's political context in the tourism literature**

Many authors like to begin their papers with an introduction to the policy background of China's tourism. Tse's work (2008, 2011) is a typical example of this scene setting exercise. Tse and Hobson (2008) analyse a range of forces that shape the trend of outbound travelling using a marketing framework. With respect to "political force", they briefly reference others' work: Deng's "socialism with Chinese characteristics" model that emphasises market liberalisation and socialist authoritarian control (Richter, 1983); capitalism creates leisure (Fulcher, 2004); socialism promises an equalitarian society (Newman, 2005). Without critiques of what has been introduced, they move on to talk about tourism policies and regulations and how the state promotes "civilised behaviours", as illustrated in a booklet, for citizens travelling overseas. Tse (2011) publishes another paper, which this time uses actor-network theory (Law, 1992) to package his ideas, which are by and large the same as the previous paper. In comparison, Mak's (2013) work tells more about the historical political structures that inform tourism policy making. He specifically addresses the political ideologies of China based on leadership of the party-state. He focuses on the international global economy, in which the concern is how the Chinese state political-economic policies are responding or playing a part in the global environment. However, his approach of analysis, akin to the style of economic analysis, involves concrete policies (e.g. WTO) and hard figures such as tourism receipts, infrastructure expenditure and exchange rates. These studies have some value, but the problem is that these overlook the process by which politics, rather than policies, structure tourist behaviours.

Below are the only three empirical studies I have observed that explore some deeper meanings associated with China's politics. Chan (2006) observes the exchange between Chinese tourists and Vietnamese tourism workers. In her analysis, Vietnamese tour guides have institutionalised Chinese chauvinism by orientating their interpretations towards the discourse of modernisation and desire for alluence as a marker of social status. They are also aware of Chinese nationalism, which means that they avoid any sightseeing points that recall conflicts between Vietnam and China. Rowen (2014) works on the contradiction between political identity and its relation to ethnic Chinese



identity. He discovers that when Chinese visitors encounter Taiwanese people, they admire the decency and charms of the Taiwanese, to the extent that they cohere with what is perceived to be the essential ground of Chinese identity. However, their patriotic “rationality” means that the promotion of Taiwanese identity is met with irritation, incredulity and intolerance. Cheng and Wong (2014) explore some recent diplomatic political conflict manifested in travel agency by using ethnographic methods to investigate Chinese nationalism vis-à-vis Japan in Shanghai in late 2012. The study is significant because that period saw a territorial row between China and Japan over the Diaoyu islands (China) / Senkaku islands (Japan).<sup>9</sup> The findings uncover the social implications of the dispute. According to the respondents, pressure from the mass media and employers (state-owned enterprises) construed a trip to Japan to be an unpatriotic decision. Some travellers avoided this labelling, on the grounds that they claimed to be disinterested in politics and insisted on following their travel plans. A revisionist discourse is also observed in posters designed by the travel agency, which play on the message that Chinese people should go to Japan to enjoy the seafood caught around ‘their island’.

These studies have opened up multiple dimensions that researchers can utilise to explore the political contexts associated with tourism related activities. For example, I am interested to know more about the mechanism in which the Vietnamese internalise Chinese chauvinism and nationalism. Likewise, are there any official guidelines for the Taiwanese tour guides to help them deal with Chinese tourists? For the study in Shanghai, how is the background of the respondents related to the differing nationalistic expression? The next section explains why tourism research into China in general, and this thesis, should pay attention to the wider political environment.

### **2.3.2.2 Verdict on construction of Chinese tourism culture**

This section begins by introducing a debate about the construction of Chinese culture. The debate revolves around a naturalistic view of the Chinese cultural tradition and that of a state-authored national culture. The former is promoted by a Chinese scholar Li (2008), whose views provide an appropriate introduction to this debate. The eloquent expression and endorsement of Chinese culture by Li (2008) provides an extensive footnote for those authors who have a strong faith in Chinese culture. Li argues that

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<sup>9</sup> ‘The dispute has rumbled relatively quietly for decades. But in April 2012, a fresh row ensued after outspoken right-wing Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara said he would use public money to buy the islands from their private Japanese owner.’ (BBC, 2014)

there is a unique way of seeing, “the Chinese gaze”, that determines the development of tourism in China. Locating herself at the junction between the Western culture and scholarship, and Chinese culture – ‘of this Chinese culture, this Chinese society, and these Chinese values’ (2008: 495) - Li establishes a critique of the Orientalism of Western knowledge (Said, 1978), in which the author uses the Grand Tour and Michael Palin’s worldview of travelling to demonstrate the patriarchal, “Us vs Others” and “modern (civilisation) vs primitive (nature)” construction of Western knowledge. The paper elaborates the argument by highlighting the dualistic meanings attached to nature tourism, in which Western “ecotourism” is based on anthropocentric notions of conservation and sustainability; whereas the human in Chinese constructions of “nature-based” tourism is an integral part of nature, existing in a status of *harmony*. The specific meaning of *harmony* invoked, is different from Western notions of a state of concord in inter-personal relations, because it draws from the cosmology of Confucianism, and related constructions in Daoism.

What is Li’s Chinese gaze then? The only concept established by the author of the gaze, as opposed to Urry’s tourist gaze, is that it lies in the relational feature between the tourist and the touring object (the nature), rather than the tourist gaze that is based on seeing the difference (Urry, 1990). To Li, the construction of nature (the ultimate tourist sites in China) is a natural and uninterrupted process. In other words, both tourism production and consumption is the legacy of the traditional Chinese values. Here we should review Li’s storyline of the tourism development of China: first of all there is an overall assumption of this story, which is to accept that, the relations between human and the nature exists in a status of *harmony*. This cosmology is then based on the given Confucian and Daoist cultural identity of a Chinese. Li has not theorised whether this identity is innate or acquired. The nature is then connected to human in a particular Chinese way. This connection is made possible by two things. The first thing is high culture - ancient Chinese poets, artists and emperors who expressed their appreciations of a specific landscape through the second thing – calligraphy – into historical literature and paintings. Calligraphy is a symbolical container that connects the present Chinese to their ancestors. The question arising here is - how is this calligraphy related to tourism production and consumption? Li’s answer is that the physical landscape has to be ‘permeated with human cultural and historic heritage (quotation of Li’s (2008:501) referencing Ding et al. (1988)). This is also the way *harmony* between human and the nature is achieved. Finally, in order to trace the ancestral famous ancient literati and

their sacred way of appreciating the nature, the only way is to trace the footprints, discovering which cave they have lived in, the stone touched, the river crossed and so on. In order to turn the experience tangible, man-made pavilions and temples are built, rock cliff engraved, garden and ponds re-visualised. She concludes that:

When western tourists look at the Yangtze they see a river; the Chinese see poems replete with philosophical ideals and human emotions, an entry into the world of shan shui classical literature where both man and nature enjoy a shared relationship

(Li, 2008:509)

### **2.3.2.3 Political reading of landscapes**

According to Li, tourism of China is to relate place to the authentic Chinese cultural tradition, which is not a mass produced manipulation of tourist experiences and is not grounded in seeing the difference (Urry, 1990). The sense of place or place identity is concerned by cultural geographers since 1970s, in which they pay attention to the meaning of place that is lived out and experienced by human (Relph, 1976; Butterfield, 1983). Li's thesis of tourism place and space is that it is the Chinese cosmological understanding of nature that shapes the landscapes into spaces of generation, restoration and appreciation of Chinese culture. Li's thesis naturalises all other structures involved in the construction of place. To justify this proposition is to hail the deterministic value of Chinese culture. Her thesis is problematic in three aspects. First, the author homogenises tourist behaviours (to appreciate the meanings and cultural associations of the poems and literature), which contains assumptions sympathetic to elites and mythology. I am not convinced that ordinary tourists would possess the claimed higher cultural nurturing to appreciate the literary work. If I were to draw an analogy to explain Li's proposition, it would be a claim that all international tourists who visit the Imperial War Museums in London have considerable knowledge of WW1 and WW2. While they are encountering the exhibits with their five senses, they are drawn into an introspection of the cruelty of wars. However, there are visitors who are not as educated as others, so they may not be able to explore the significance of the exhibits; and there are visitors who just treat the museums as one of the must-see attractions in London. Li (2008) would assume that all Chinese visitors possess Confucian values, who have sufficient knowledge of Chinese ancient history and literature, and invoke sentiments about the life stories of ancient literati or kings, and their relationship with nature. It is perhaps an over-ambitious requirement of an ordinary Chinese citizen.

Second, who orders the construction of landscapes that are inscribed with poems in the form of calligraphy? We should not rule out that the political and economic forces are driving tourism activities from smaller and larger extent. Third, do people have the agency to visit a particular landscape other than Li's "Chinese gaze"?

Interestingly, Nyíri (2006), a Mandarin-speaking researcher, examines the exact tourism phenomenon in China as Li explains, but draw another conclusion. While Li views the re-construction of culture as a natural response to the admiration of tradition and heritage, Nyíri (2006) argues that it is the Chinese state project to indoctrinate nationalism. Nyíri advocates a political reading of tourist landscapes in China, which takes into account the operation of power. He uses the term "scenic spots" (also the name of the book) to refer to bounded and replicated tourist zones in China, in which consumption of landscapes, heritage and ethnic performance is controlled by a standard set of cultural references, inscribed by the state for nation building purposes. Nyíri's argument is supported by his multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995) (see p.142).

Sites contain explicit patriotic meanings, in which visitors are guided by standardised state-controlled tour commentaries and infrastructure. For example, sites with a history of resistance to the Communist regime are built with infrastructure that symbolises patriotism, such as a statue of Mao or ancient heroic figures who sacrificed themselves for the king and for the dynasty. The story developed as Mao bringing the whole nation to the road of modern China. Sites are also measured by magnitude, such as the 'biggest Buddha', 'tallest pagoda', 'longest river', 'greatest mountain', and so on, on earth. This features the glory of modern China. Nyíri collects brochures and site entry tickets, in which he found how some sites convey a message of continuity with citizens. The work of the famous literati and poets, along with ancient stories are taught in the classroom, scenic spots then become a place of desire that draw students to validate this knowledge. The cultural association of the sites are constructed in accordance to the state ideology of modernisation and nationalism. To Nyíri, China's modernity is shadowed by the presence of state hegemony, which is manifested in domestic tourism spaces.

Nyíri's political reading of tourist sites are proven empirically by some scholars. For example, Timothy Oakes (1998) earlier studies villages of ethnic minorities in Guizhou; he finds that the Chinese state and the capitalist enterprises use local culture and heritage, though tourism, to exploit resources for the state modernisation and

development, and simultaneously standardise traditions and cultures of “minority nationalities” to align with nation-building project. Margaret Swain (2005) studies the cultural artifacts and landscapes of the Stone Forest in Yunnan, in which the tourist site used Ashima, an imaginary, hard working, virtual and innocent ethnic minority folk legend. Her image symbolises a sexualised and political identity, which appears in every arena in the sites as observed in the practices of written texts, souvenirs, performance, employment, and so on. In fact, the topic of politicised landscapes is researched in Cultural Studies. Raymond Williams (1973) explores English conservative literatures and novels with respect to early writers’ perspectives on English towns and cities. He warns that the countryside is often romanticised, which is clean, beautiful and peaceful as opposed to the dirty, evil and commercialised city. There is a danger that this is to naturalise the inequality of labour politics. However, research into state involvement or intervention of all sorts, still remains marginal.

Is it possible to draw a comparison between Li and Nyíri’s work? This is difficult, because Nyíri’s empirical work is drawn from a wide range of resources, in which his arguments match with objective reality (state patriotic curriculum and standardised tour commentaries that are favourable to the social stability and nationalism), and are backed up by social theories, e.g. the state effort to promote nationalism by constructing an imagined continuity (Anderson, 1984). In other words, Nyíri includes a much wider range of contextual data to support his interpretation of the tourist experience of place. It is noted that Li’s paper is published two years after *Scenic Spots*. It is therefore surprising to find that Li does not consider Nyíri’s arguments in her thesis. Although Nyíri’s work has been overlooked in the literature, Hollinshead and Hou (2009) establish a full review of *Scenic Spot* and raise questions on how to build on his work. It is not to say that the lens of state intervention is the only way to view the cultural construction of China. However, to completely ignore the influence of the political state, as with Li’s work, is to misrepresent the context in which interpretations are being forged in China.

#### **2.3.2.4 Build upon Nyíri’s perspective**

How do we build upon on Nyíri’s work in understanding Chinese tourist behaviour? Nyíri (2010) extends his investigation of Chinese state hegemony in overseas Chinese communities. A general interest in Chinese transnational mobility enables Nyíri to investigate the network relationship between overseas Chinese communities, traders and

tourists. He uses Bauman's (1987) concept of the “gardening state” to explain how the Chinese state promotes Chinese global community, whilst at the same time controlling the economic-political environment in which the Chinese inter-personal networks of Chinese-owned businesses and communities are associated with the state. The author speculates that, in the realm of tourism,

[a]s more people begin to move, the state attempts to maintain its authority over the interpretation of their movement through a heavy transnational presence in the migrant public sphere, economic and administrative control of tourism.

(Nyíri ,2010:164)

Nyíri does not specify how this control could be materialised, but Leung's (2009) findings regarding the dependency, between Chinese migrants in Europe and Chinese tourists, offers some insights. Leung concludes that the weakening of borders offers economic-political opportunities between the “Europe home” and “Chinese home”. This big diasporic community, to Nyíri (2010), is in the Chinese state’s interest as a transnational network.

This thesis examines online UK mass media spaces and online blogs spaces, and observes tourist behaviours and narrations in order to further explore how Chinese identity is constructed and represented. The former representational spaces are outside Nyíri’s concern, because he is more interested in Chinese state cultural authority and less with the reception and image making associated with overseas Chinese tourists. Whereas I am primarily interested in the identity making of Chinese tourists, in which the analysis of both virtual and encounter spaces offer an interconnected understanding of the identity. I am convinced that, on the basis of Nyíri’s evidence, state intervention is successful in shaping domestic tourism in China; his analysis of the correlation between mobility, nationalism and modernity discourse is well evidenced. However, Chinese state control over overseas tourism spaces remains under-researched. As a result, there are two questions this thesis asks based on the work of Nyíri: (i) How do Chinese tourists reflect or perform their national identity in their quest for modernity? (ii) Is there any state intervention in the production of educational tours in the UK?

### **2.3.3 The limitation of host-guest model**

#### **2.3.3.1 Challenge of the host-guest paradigm**

The host-guest paradigm/encounter had been used for many years as a tourism research framework, which is best represented by Smith (1989). Host and guest is a binary conceptualisation that belongs to the anthropological tradition, in which it presumes an asymmetrical power relation between the affluent visitor from the metropolis travelling in the periphery (Nuñez, 1978). Researchers from this tradition are concerned with the socio-cultural impacts to the host community in the “contact zone” (first cited by Pratt (1992)). This model, however, has been challenged. In the hospitality context, Aramberri (2001) argues the moral economy of the host-guest model (host’s offering protection to the guest and reciprocity involved in the relations) does not work in the present form of the political economy of mass tourism. Sherlock’s (2001:287) empirical work in Port Douglas, for example, shows that the host and guest share certain commonalities in terms of consumption practice, in which they are ‘playing with these [traditional role of host and guest] identity labels’. If we think about multicultural world cities nowadays, the racial and ethnic heterogeneity of “hosts” working in the tourism-related sectors further complicates the racial, ethnic and economic factors involved in the relations. McRae (2003) uses Said’s Orientalism to explain this global phenomenon, arguing that both the host and guest are in exile, which means that a new encounter space needs to be imagined and the liminality generated to be negotiated. The host-guest model is inadequate to account for the creation of new knowledge in these hybridised encounter spaces. With the rise of emerging economies, now the once sedentary and marginal people from the tourist-receiving regions are travelling to the West. Certain categorical depictions, e.g. power, wealth, opportunity and race may not simply map onto the binary distinction between host and guest in the ways imagined by former theories.

#### **2.3.3.2 Trend of researching host and tourist**

How has the guest-host model developed in the tourism literature? The subsequent question is what are the criteria for identifying this pool of literature? There is no an easy answer to these challenging question, because “host”, “resident” and “local people” are used interchangeably, as are “guest”, “tourist” and “visitor”. Likewise, “encounter”, “relations”, “contact” and “interactions” are also used in a casual manner. The resulting literature search yields a large volume of papers, in which a wide range of research foci, issues and methods makes it impossible to analyse a trend or a gap that is

based on particular debates around host and guest. This finding, perhaps reflects that tourism researchers are moving away from the old binary conception of the host-guest model, because these definitions (the terms) do not help researchers to explore the cultural exchanges that occur through tourism as tourists and non-tourists encounter each other. Subjective and objective constructions of the tourist, provide very different insights into the dynamics of encounters. Standard definitions are useful for measuring certain parameters necessary for policy makers and planners to calculate certain impacts of tourism, but are redundant when it comes to exploring cultural impacts and identities. From the anthropological perspective, for example, there are many studies that concern demonstration effect. The local communities are seen as victims of acculturation. Turner and Ash (1975:197-198) accuse of the tourists that, demonstration effect is an 'instrument of slow torture, through which tourists almost inevitably impose their values upon the societies visited'. Here is an example to show the shift of power relations between these two agents.

Toyota (2006) studies young single female Japanese tourists in Bali by capturing the narratives of their encounter with young Bali males. Toyota found that it has developed a trend in Bali that local males are engaging in a career – offering “passionate” services to Japanese females:

[s]elf employed male entrepreneurs hanging around the tourist areas, not only on the beaches, but in hotels, shops, cafes, restaurants, street corners, the post office, markets, stations, etc – everywhere tourists go – vie to attract female tourists.

(Toyota , 2006:171)

These Balinese men are not only looking for material benefits from the rich Japanese female tourists, but a romantic encounter, sex or even a long term relationship. It is not saying that the Japanese women are being exploited by the local men, as the author states that these women are not necessarily having a sexual contact with Bali host as presumed by the Japanese media, but Bali as a place gives them a special memory, which 'provides a base upon which to construct 'new' self-images, life styles and identities' (2006: 170-171). Acculturation theories or the demonstration effect, in this case, is not applicable either to the host or the tourist.

To conclude, if there is a trend in studies of host-guest relations, it is a shift from the host-guest paradigm, with a diversification of research focuses and approaches. Tribe



comments that the term “tourist” ‘has taken on a cross-cultural and cross-contextual ideological significance as a pejorative term with implicit political and moral implications in its use’ (2009:40). Using the same logic, “host” or “guest” and its paradigm may also convey fixed and essential meanings that frame the lens through which one views tourism. The question is whether readers are able to deconstruct this viewpoint. Therefore, it is not about the question of how to contribute to the “host-guest” literature, but how to explore the multi-faceted experiences of these two traditional actors in the tourism research. The approach of the thesis is to investigate a number of spaces, in which through the interpreting observations of the representations, embodied exchange and tourist narratives, it is possible to account for the relations between the host and tourist.

### **2.3.4 Researching tourist identity – emphasis on tourist agency**

This section addresses theories of identity. There are different definitions of, and different approaches to, identity. A key aspect of identity is the interplay of structure and agency, in which individual agency negotiates and reproduces structures. Chapter 4 introduces the specific structures that are relevant to understanding contemporary Chinese identities. That is to say, when researching Chinese tourist identities, the scope of data collection and analysis needs to range beyond individual tourist identity to include the wider historical structures and institutions shaping Chinese people in general. Resulting from this observation about how identity ought to be explored, it is important to review how tourist identity has been explored in the tourism literature. Does it emphasise agency and structure, or does it emphasise one over the other? What is the trend? The aim in this chapter is to position the research within the tourism studies literature, vis-à-vis the work on identity. First of all I discuss the macro trends of identity theory in literary and cultural studies that is influential to many disciplines, including the tourism discipline.

#### **2.3.4.1 Refute essentialist notion of identity**

‘Identity’ is a vigorously debated topic by scholars from psychoanalytic, poststructuralist and cultural materialistic (in association with the work of Raymond Williams) perspectives. The debate has influenced the philosophical underpinning of postcolonial and feminist approaches (Moya, 2000). The essentialist use of identity is prominent in the Civils Rights Movement and the Second Wave Feminism movement in 1960s and 1970s, which gave rise to the term “identity politics”, in which each

movement appealed to a particular social identity of its supporters for the cause of *that* movement (Hall, 1996b). Later, academics refuted identity politics and attempted to erase “identity”, which they claim is a false cause that brought about harmful consequences in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. ethnic clashes in Balkan Peninsula) (Moya, 2000). Scholars from the post-tradition have since dominated the theory of identity (Moya, 2000). Postmodernist theorists claim that identity is merely a social construction and arbitrary (Moya, 2000). This camp of scholars treats identity as though the individual is the author of his or her personhood, which is unconnected to outside structures. According to Alcoff (2000), for post-structuralist theorists, identity is by nature always misnamed, because no words can accurately name a particular identity (Butler, 1997), identity is then producing another layer of power, and as a result it replicates domination through violence (Derrida, 1984). The agenda of poststructuralist research is then to hail human agency and stand against structures that utilise the ‘discourse’ of essential identity to exercise power. This thought has been dominating the US literary and cultural studies (Moya, 2000). Similarly certain researchers within tourism studies have been influenced by this trend, as discussed in the next passage

#### **2.3.4.2 Legacy of post-structuralist and structuration tradition**

There are now developing avenues of thinking trying to move beyond a study of representation towards seeing tourism as a system of presencing and performance.

(Franklin and Crang, 2001:17)

This is one of the calls by Franklin and Crang in the first paper that inaugurates their journal *Tourists Studies* - a turn to the performative and existential nature of tourists. McCabe (2005:86) later saw the outcome of the call, he comments:

Instead, theory has favoured a position based on relativist and existential knowledge of social subjects’ experiences. I argue that is focusing on subjectivities, tourists studies have overlooked the importance of the wider social discourse of tourism.

The “performative turn” is part of the influence of post-structuralist perspectives, in which structures are viewed as temporary constructs that are emergent from the practices of actors, whether they are human or non-human. Post-structuralism is associated with ontologies that call into the question our ability to know the individual

building blocks that comprise relations, which nevertheless focuses attention upon the shape that processes and relationships are observed to take. My contention is that this trend has a strong implication for identity studies. Therefore this chapter now introduces some landmark studies in the tourism literature associated with this trend. Before that I briefly explain the main theories within these paradigms: (i) Thrift's non-representational theory; and (ii) Giddens's reflexivity.

Thrift (2009) coined the term 'non-representational theory' in cultural geography, in which tourism is one of the areas that is favourable for the application of the theory. For Thrift (2009), human consciousness is embedded in the body. Representation theories typically ignore the body, which therefore constitute an incomplete understanding of culture and identity. It is therefore, by exploring the in-situ embodied experience, such as how individuals move, speak, play or act, that we can capture the mundane 'presentations' and 'manifestations' of everyday life, i.e. performance, through which identity is enacted (Thrift, 2009). Performance is then situated in a particular place, time and people (Nash, 2000).

Giddens (1976; 1982) hails individual agency, in which humans are aware of the conditions and consequences of an action in the late modern world. In the flux and discontinuity of modern society, individuals have to be flexible enough to adapt to change and maintain a sense of continuity, i.e. reflexivity. The focus is self, personhood, self-identities, and it is through investigating personal biographies that we can understand the content of the reflexive processes such as the sense of self and aspirations. Since 2000, it has seen a flourishing of tourism research adopting these two perspectives both separately as well as collaboratively.

#### **2.3.4.3 Established trends in tourism studies**

Edensor (1998; 2000), Crouch (1999; 2001) and Desforges (2000), and later Haldrup and Larsen (2003; 2010) and Noy (2004), the majority from a disciplinary background in geography, are the early scholars who have initiated a research agenda adopting the notion of performance and reflexivity in tourism research. Their theoretical foundations are consistent with the direction of travel found in Giddens (1976; 1982) and Thrift (2009), and their work has paved a research paradigm that has gathered many followers. For example, focusing on the bodily experience of tourists, Edensor (1998) explores the embodied actions of different types of tourists visiting the Taj Mahal, such as how they walk, take photographs, rest, draw and write. With his analysis of the main

narratives associated with the Taj Mahal (colonial, secular, Muslim), he concludes that these narratives have shaped the performances of visitors. Edensor has not only focused on how tourists negotiate and play with the narratives as observed in their embodied performances, but successfully connects these performances to wider structures that produced the narratives. These structures are historical and political, in other words, linking the past to the present. Crouch (2001) takes another approach. He is interested in the sensuous and embodied practices of caravan holiday makers. Being in the field and holidaying as a caravan camper himself, Crouch explores the feeling of doing and the inner existential expression of identity through the mundane practices in the caravan site. The meaning of the caravan space is not fixed, which is dependent on the particular temporal and spatial participation of unique individuals (de Certeau, 1984), which Crouch (1999) calls “lay knowledge geography”.

Employing Giddens’s conception of reflexivity, Desforges (2000) explores the self-identity of British long-haul tourists through their travel biographies. Travelling experiences have become cultural capital for individuals to undergo self-transformation. Haldrup and Larsen’s (2003) work brings together the bodily self and the reflexive self of tourists. The researchers invited family members to talk through their family photos taken on holiday. Using visual methodologies to analyse the spatial and embodied practice of the images, and the narration of photographs, it is found that tourist photography has transformed places into the stages of family intimacy. Family identity is conserved through the memory locked into the family photographs.

In this elaborated introduction to the research, the aim has been to demonstrate that a focus on embodied, sensory, performance-based, reflexivity and self-transformation have become a trend observed in the tourism literature. I now attempt to use the binary concept of structure and agency to analyse this trend.

#### **2.3.4.4 Structure and agency**

The dichotomy of structure and agency, and how these two dimensions are related, has long been a debate in the social sciences. Structure relates to the language, rules and institutional resources that transcend and predate the individual that makes human agency possible; at the same time structure constraints individuals. Agency refers to an individual’s ability to act freely. However, to Giddens, such a dichotomy is a false concept, as he uses the phrase “two sides of the same coin” as an analogy to explain that structure and agency are interconnected, in which ‘structure is both the medium and

outcome of the reproduction of practices' (Giddens: 1979). If we follow Giddens's treatment of these terms, then the task of classifying the literature, into papers that emphasise agency and papers that emphasise structure, would not be possible, for the logic that one does not exist without the presence of the other, would make this a futile exercise. The structuration theory, however, is challenged by Archer (1982) such that the voluntaristic view cannot explain the varying degrees that agency is constrained. To Archer, the problem of structuration theory is that human is assumed to have the ability to interiorise the social conditions, meaning that an individual can make personal choice with having calculated all the factors in the system. Then, voluntarism implies that 'the systematic underplaying of constraints artificially inflates the degrees of freedom for action' (Archer, 1982: 464).

Archer (2003) develops the theory of internal conversation. She claims that individuals' conscious doing defines the self, who experiences and being reflexive about the actions. Different modes of reflexives are practised by different individuals: (i) 'communicative reflexives' require involvement or confirmation by others before one action; (ii) 'autonomous reflexives' is about somebody who make rational choice to pursue the best interests for oneself; (iii) 'meta-reflexives' refers to that the critical reflection of the social order and self-socialisation is involved, in order to satisfy the orders; (iv) 'fractured reflexives' makes decision making difficult and would cause distress and disorientation. It is through the processes of these different forms of reflexives, in which individuals position themselves in the society. In this sense, structures are relational to individuals, who take different actions depending how they react to existing and available social context to decide course of actions. In fact Archer also tries to combine structure and agency from critical realist perspective.

Critical realists contend that a satisfactory understanding of interaction between social structure and human agency requires that it be understood as an inherently historical or "tensed" process in which at any given moment in time social structures and people stand in temporal relations of priority and posteriority towards one another.

(Archer, 1995: 65 - 92)

To Archer, the relation between structure and agency is temporal and historically contingent. To interpret, at times structure could exert an influence in which agency is hard to assert, but at a different times this relationship could be reversed. For realists,

social structures are objective realities that are outside mental construction. It is noted, as Moya (2000) reminds us, that when we say these are *realities*, it does not mean that they are not socially constructed, but that they are not *only* socially constructed. Therefore, returning to the tourism literature, the structures that condition tourist experiences are seen as objective realities that should not be ignored. Edensor's (1998) work is a good example as to how religion, colonial status and nationalism mediate tourist experiences. This is not to say that structure should be paid more emphasis than agency in explaining the actions of tourists. My position is that they are both important to understand tourist identity. To address the literature, the question is - what is the latest trend among tourism research associated with the study of identity? What aspects of identity are explored? How do they use the embodied performance or/and narratives of tourist to build arguments? Do they consider the structure behind the exercise of tourists' agency?

#### **2.3.4.5 Researching identity – case of annals of tourism research**

To answer these questions, I review a renowned journal in the tourism discipline, *Annals of Tourism Research*. The term "identity" is used as a search word in the category "title, abstract or keywords" from the year 2005 to 2014. There are 45 papers returned, in which 20 are identified as aiming to explore tourist identity. Table 3 shows the papers in descending order by date with respect to the approach they use in these three areas, namely "narrative", "performance" and "structure". The limitation of the use a key word search is that some papers do explore tourist identity; however the term "identity" is not used. This reasons of not using "identity" boils down to (i) that the question of identity is found subsumed in a wider category of "tourist experience", in which different authors have their own language preference; and ii) that there are multiple research focuses in a paper other than just "identity". Considering that this review is a case study, which is mainly for showing the trend and approach used to investigate identity in the tourism literature, a comprehensive review of every paper of each journal during the past 10 years is not afforded.

There are three major findings. First, capturing tourist narratives (16 studies) is the most common method to understand identity, which is used more frequently compared to observing the embodied performance (6 studies) of tourists. Second, many researchers concern the self-identity and reflexivity of individuals (16 studies) during or after the journey, in which most of them (10 studies) connect the agency to social rules and

norms such as family responsibility or public perception of obesity, signified rules and conventions such as national and traditional cultures. Third, combining both narratives and embodied performance of tourists and connecting the agency to wider structures (3 studies) is not a popular research approach to look at identity.

To conclude the contribution to the literature that explores tourist identity, this thesis aims at bridging Chinese tourist agency to the wider social structures of China. It captures the doing, learning, playing, sightseeing, experiencing, encountering others, and how the participants narrate their experiences.

#### **2.4 Prospect – the way forward**

This chapter introduces the contemporary phenomena of China with the aim to draw readers' attention to the wider social structures that influence tourist behaviours and values. Therefore tourism is not a discretionary activity. The discussion of Roger Yonchien Tsien demonstrates Chinese racialism. This informs the writing of an historiography of Chinese race and Confucianism in Chapter 3, which will critically examine the construction of racial discourse and racial hierarchical worldview held in contemporary China. It also informs the framing of issues associated with globalisation, nationalism and traditionalism, which will be further discussed in the theoretical framework in Chapter 4.


A review of the tourism literature demonstrates the imbalanced research orientation when investigating overseas Chinese tourists. The main problem is on an over-emphasis on the economic side of this emerging affluent class, but ignores the political and socio-cultural implications involved. It concludes that tourism scholars should depart from a deterministic view of conceptualising Chinese culture, which shadows the multiple aspects of culture and the agency of Chinese people. It also urges the tourism cohort to pay attention to how China politics have mediated Chinese tourism in general. With increasing Chinese transnational mobility, Nyíri's work is significant to remind us that the Chinese state is playing a part in this movement. Nyíri's arguments inspire this thesis to examine how Chinese visitor's exhibit nationalism and whether the Chinese state has intervened in educational tour operations.

This research explores the relations between Chinese visitors and British citizens, but it refutes the dated host-tourist paradigm that is too narrow a perspective to consider the

**Table 3 – A list of literature about tourist identity in Annals of Tourism Research from 2005 to 2014**

Authors	Year	Papers	Forms of identity explored	N	P	S
Young et al	2014	'Up in the air': A conceptual critique of flying addiction	Psychological status of flight passengers			
Whiting & Hannam	2014	Forms of body usage in tourists' experiences of flamenco	Bodily experience of Flamenco experience in Spain			
Le	2014	Cu Chi tunnels: Vietnamese transmigrant's perspective	Auto-ethnography of reversed-migration flows in a historical and national site			
Caruana et al	2014	Tourists' accounts of responsible tourism	Tourists' narrated identity in relation to responsible tourism			
He & Harris	2014	Moral disengagement of hotel guest negative WOM: Moral identity centrality, moral awareness, and anger	Moral identity felt by hotel guests			
Culter et al	2014	The Inca Trail experience: Does the journey matter?	Bodily experience of trekkers			
Eichhorn et al	2014	Tourism: A site of resistance strategies of individuals with a disability	Disabled individuals to develop resistance strategies through tourism			
Berdychevsk et al	2013	Women's sexual behaviour in tourism: Loosing the bridle	Narratives of female tourist sexual behaviour to understand gendered and social constraint			
Prebensen et al	2013	Value co-creation significance of tourist resources	Self realisation process in co-creation of experiences			
Schwarz	2013	What should nature sound like?: Techniques of engagement with nature sites and sonic preferences of Israeli visitors	Embodied experience with respect to noise in tourism			
Kidron	2013	Being there together: Dark family tourism and emotive experience of co-presence in the holocaust past	Experience and reflection on traditional identity upon visit to dark tourism sites			
Small & Harris	2012	Obesity and tourism: Rights and Responsibilities	Self identity of obese tourists			
Falk et al	2012	Travel and Learning: A neglected tourism research area	Personal identity of travelling learners			
Mowatt et al	2011	Visiting death and life: Dark tourism and slave castles	Tourists' interaction with and interpretation of West African Slave Castle			
Caruana & Crane	2011	Getting away from it all: Exploring freedom in tourism	How cultural brokers construct a sense of freedom through promotional materials			
Cohen	2011	Lifestyle travellers: Backpacking as a way of life	"life style" travellers' narrative to understand their social world			
Olesen & Hyde	2011	Packing for touristic performances	Self-identity of tourists when they are packing			
Park	2010	Heritage tourism: emotional journeys into nationhood	Korean tourists' narration of national identity in national heritage sites			
Hung et al	2007	Little Norway in Spain: From tourism to migration	Norwegian migrants to Spain - their everyday doings and narratives of self-hood			
Palmer	2005	An ethnography of Englishness: Experiencing identity through tourism	Narratives and embodied experience of English visitors to heritage site in relation to English identity			

Remarks (i): N – Narratives; P – Performance; S – Structure

(ii):  – explored in the paper



wide range of factors that affect these relations. Finally, an extended review of post-structuralist theory and structuration theories aims to demonstrate their influence within tourism studies. It is found that researchers who explore tourist identity rely more on capturing tourist narratives and less on embodied and existential experience. This research aims to explore the agency by means of these two approaches, and analyse how they are conditioned by external forces.

## CHAPTER 3

### HISTORIOGRAPHY OF CHINESE RACE AND CONFUCIANISM

#### 3.1 Introduction

The thesis explores the contemporary identity of middle class Chinese tourists. It acknowledges that the contemporary subject is historically constructed, even though individuals may not be consciously aware of this shaping. The contention in this thesis is that contemporary Chinese nationalism and modernisation are connected to historical Chinese racial worldviews and the essential features of Confucianism. Contemporary Chinese tourist or consumer identities are not discretionary; in other words, the choices pertaining to identities are subsumed within the historical making of Chinese identity. The task of this chapter is to provide an historical perspective of two major aspects that are paramount to the Chinese identity formation, which are the main gateway to understanding Chinese tourist identity. These two aspects are Chinese racialism and Confucianism.

Writing this historiography is not a value-free assignment, because the author relies on his subjective selection of historical materials. This subjective element does not mean that the following historiography can be dismissed as postmodern relativism, because the analysis employs carefully researched primary and secondary documentary evidence, alongside a review of academic interpretations of these data, to critically evaluate the historical formation of identities. The history of Chinese racial identity and Confucianism should be understood from a critical realist framework, which construes that knowledge is always partial, corrigible (i.e. the data is open to better or worse explanations, given that reality inevitably places constraints upon academic interpretation), relative to time and space, and also the positionality of the author (see p.148). Therefore, the aim of this chapter is *first* to theorise the contemporary racial and Confucian identity from an historical perspective, which offers a theoretical lens to explain Chinese tourist behaviours. It subsequently informs the theoretical framework in Chapter 4. As mentioned in Section 1.6 (p.14), the analysis and theorisation have followed an iterative process, which means that this chapter has been inspired by the empirical observations that have driven the effort to look for explanations to these observations. *Second* this section aims to present scholarly work from a range of disciplines that explores Chinese racialism and Confucianism, in order to inform the

tourism academic community about how these aspects of identity have been theorised and to foster generalisation through inviting academic scrutiny in the process of peer review.

This chapter consists of two main sections. The first one is entitled “The Han Chinese racialism”. It aims to critically discuss that Chinese hierarchical racialism is prevalent in contemporary China, which explains Black racism and White privilege that are closely connected to the discourse of nationalism and modernisation. The second section is entitled “The Critical inheritance of Confucianism”, which aims to reveal that filial piety, conformity, harmony are critically inherited essential Confucian values, and how the party-state has appropriated Confucianism as an ideology for governance. It questions the concept of *guanxi*, a Confucian conception that claims to be a uniquely positive Chinese interpersonal relationship. First, I attempt to theoretically justify this historiographical approach.

### **3.2 What is (hi)story**

What is history? Does it that has actually happened in the past or something chosen by historians to record? Carr is a proponent of the latter view. He claims that, history is ‘both the inquiry conducted by the historian and the facts of the past into which he enquires’ (1990:55). Carr is concerned about the positionality of an historian, as he or she ought to be conditioned by the external environment such as language and cultures, thus a historian’s account is subjective. Elton (2002), for example, rejects this view and argues that it is the duty of historians to analyse the past objectively by gathering empirical data. Therefore, history is the objective reflection of the past. From a poststructuralist perspective, Elton’s (2002) view of history is impossible to realise, because whenever an historian writes a piece of work about the past, there are multiple interpretations arising from the instability of the text. For postmodernists, such a normative and universal claim to know history is false, and another example of a meta-narrative. For the critical realist, however, truth transcends language and culture despite truth being a problematic object of human knowledge. Elton’s (2002) conception of history is theoretically possible, nevertheless, it is unattainable for the fact that human beings are unable to reach a consensus of what truth is. Therefore, history, as a human construct, could be interpreted as a practice of storytelling.

To Somers and Gibson, storytelling encompasses the temporal and spatial dimensions of the past events and forms them into casual sequences:

Above all, narratives are constellations of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time and space, constituted by casual employment.

(Somers and Gibson, 1994:59)

Storytelling enables humans to question their own existence and helps them to organise themselves of their experiences in that universe. A person tells a story from his or her positions and knowledge in a particular time and place. This story embodies the identity of that person – be it race, ethnicity, nationality and place of origin. History is then a collection of human narratives that seeks to account for the existence of past events. The question is how we distinguish which narrative is more reliable and which is less. Then we need to go back to Elton's (2002) attitude to analysing data in a careful way. The answer is the careful scrutiny and adoption of historical methods. Some methods undoubtedly lead us into better representations of the past, rather than merely different representations of the past. Good historians always aim to find better explanations to account for the available data. This is my approach to writing this historiography. The point of departure is my identity as a Hong Kong national and observations of Chinese visitors in the fieldwork. Within the available time and resources, I collected the most reliable narratives (peer-reviewed journal papers and academic publications) to offer explanations that support my empirical findings. Therefore I begin by examining contemporary Chinese cultures and Chinese visitors' behaviours, and look for partial historical narratives to enlarge and challenge my own narratives. I claim not to offer generalisations of Chinese people, i.e. the god trick of pretending to a universal position. Rather, this is my narrative contributing to history which is informed by a methodology that I have begun to explain and will further elaborate (see Chapter 5).

### **3.3 The Han Chinese racialism**

This section is central to the theorisation of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Chinese nationalism is a main research aspect of the thesis, which involves the relations between Chinese visitors and British citizens, and the patriotic attitudes Chinese people hold towards the nation, as observed in the field studies. The following discussions are then important to provide explanations to Chinese tourist behaviours. Section 3.3 first introduces the origin of the racial discourses, which are used by Han Chinese and its legacy in contemporary China. Han, used as a racial term, is the absolute majority of inhabitants in China. It uses historians' interpretations of ancient Chinese literature to

trace the ethno-racial identity vis-à-vis others. Section 3.4 refers to Dikötter's (1994) work that exemplifies the manipulation of the Chinese racial discourse in historic events. The section then seeks to compare Dikötter's (1994) approach with Said's methodologies of framing Orientalism. Section 3.5 draws scholarly work from historians and political scientists who debate the race relations between African students and the Chinese host nation in Maoist time. Section 3.6 attempts to argue that White supremacy in China is closely connected to the racial projection of skin colour to material modernisation. This review offers a foundation of the hierarchical racial worldview in China, which is exemplified in recent times in Section 3.7 and 3.8. The former example is drawn from the racial conflicts in multiracial Chinese campuses; the latter from the cyberspace where a half-Han Chinese half-Black girl is explicitly discriminated against. This section aims to demonstrate three arguments. The first one is racial hierarchy, developed from historical and mythical race narratives, which is reinforced in the early twentieth century. Second, explicit Black racism and White supremacy is prevalent in contemporary China. Third, Chinese racialism is closely connected to the discourse of Chinese nationalism and modernisation (the contradictory presence of an antagonistic view towards the West and looking to the West for benchmark of reaching modernity).

### **3.3.1 Racial construction of the Han Chinese identity (primordial China)**

Unlike ethnic, regional or religious identities, racial narratives are specific in considering essential presumed biological features. Narratives of "race" attempt to root culture in nature, to equate social groups with biological units, to primordialize the imagined or real congenital endowments of people.

(Dikötter, 1994:404)

This section explains the narratives of the Han Chinese race. It involves ancient Chinese history, with respect to the dynasties, and the corresponding influences reconstructed at present. Table 4 briefly shows the timeline of a few selected ancient dynasties and these influences, which are useful for readers to refer to in the discussion. At present, people in China name themselves metaphorically as descendants of the "Yellow Emperor" (Yellow Emperor is a mythical figure that reigned in China before 2000 BCE) or descendants of "the Dragon" (Dragon is an imagined divine creature of the origin of *Han*). These labels are not used in formal occasions such as when a Chinese person introduces herself, but these terms appear in banal everyday life, in popular culture (e.g.

song lyrics and comics) or in practical usage (e.g. naming of a restaurant and an idiom used to wish others “good health as a dragon”. Figure 3 and Figure 4 give two examples: the former is a drawing of a dragon used on the cover page of the Economist to symbolise China; the latter shows the name of a Chinese restaurant in the London Town called “Golden Dragon”. To symbolise their biological roots using the Yellow Emperor or the Dragon, Chinese people use “yellow skin”, “yellow race”, “black eyes”, “black hair”, as symbolic markers typically to differentiate themselves from others such as Caucasian or Black persons. These mythologies are important in construction of the racial nationalism of contemporary Chinese (Cheng, 2011; Dikötter, 1994; Sautman, 1994).

**Table 4 – Timeline of ancient Chinese dynasties**

Time	Figure / Dynasties	Number of years	Most undebatable myths and histories of ancient and medieval China held by Chinese people
? – 2000 BCE	A mythical figure: “The Yellow Emperor”	unknown	“Yellow emperor” is a mythical figure, who is the ultimate “ancestor” of Chinese race – Han Chinese. At present Chinese people might call themselves “descendants of the Yellow Emperor”
2100 – 1600 BCE	Xia	500	Mentioned in ancient classics, but history of human activities are controversial.
1650 – 1050 BCE	Shang	600	
1050 – 221 BCE	Zhou	829	Confucius was born (511 to 479 BCE) and Laozi (founding philosopher of Taoism)
206 BCE – 200 CE	Han	406	Establishment of silk road that connected a trade network between China to the West
618 – 906 CE	Tang	288	Invention of gunpowder and printing. Strong cultural influences to neighbour nations.

Source: author

The racial term *Han* was named after the powerful Han Dynasty, which is famous for great military power that expanded the territory of the dynasty. Chinese communities outside China would refer to their race as *Han* or *Tang*, the latter also symbolises prosperity and power. We have “China Town” destinations in London, San Francisco or Toronto, but in the Chinese language “Chinese Town” is translated as “Tang People Street”. However, according to some Chinese classics, *Han* and *Tang* should not be racial terms but cultural terms, which are grounded by a political and cultural sense of place. The place in question is the *Central Plain*, which is imagined as a civilised place for the ancient Chinese vis-à-vis “barbarians”.

People in the *Central Plain* had a cultural superiority, and it operated in a centre-periphery and civilised-barbarian binary construction that privileged one term and



**Figure 3 – The Economist’s cover page – a dragon as representation of China**

Source: The Economist (2014b)

denigrated the other.<sup>10</sup> *Hua Xia*, viewed as a cultured place and a civilisation, is used as the privileged term, compared to barbarians or alien kinds. However these “barbarians” could be culturally assimilated if they conformed to *Hua Xia notions* of virtue and morality. It also represents the virtuous Confucian values hailed and practiced in *Hua Xia* by ethical kings who are the legitimate *sons of Heaven*. Viewing the cultural and material superiority of the Central Plain, the rest of the world is subordinate to the king. *Tianxia* (under Heaven) is a term that characteristics such a world.

Sinocentrism as a form of cultural superiority appears in the international scholarly platform was a manifestation of the superiority of imperial China, but it serves a discourse that contains the legacy of Sinocentrism. This cultural supremacy is supported by the ancient Chinese Confucian classics. In today’s language, this cultural self-awareness, could still hardly be an ethnicity. However, it is impossible to dissociate this



**Figure 4 – A Chinese restaurant named Golden Dragon in the London China Town**

Source: Fluid London (2015)

<sup>10</sup> Center-periphery is not Chinese exceptionalism. This is no different to how other historians have examined the construction of European national identities for example, Linda Colley in *Britons* explores how Protestant England defined itself against the French Catholics.

cultural pride from Han Chinese racial narratives. In other words, Chinese has a strong ethno-racial identity, as Dutch historian and Sinologist Dikotter states:

"Chineseness" is seen to be primarily a matter of biological descent, physical appearance and congenital inheritance. Cultural features, such as "Chinese civilization" or "Confucianism," are thought to be the product of that imagined biological group.

(Dikotter, 1994:404)

### **3.3.2 Manipulation of Chinese racial discourse (1900s)**

This section reveals how the ethno-racial discourse was manipulated by revolutionaries in China in the early twentieth century with the help of social-Darwinian theories. The methodology is to draw upon accounts by the leading revolutionaries. However, drawing insights from Said's work, researchers should pay more attention to how lay people receive the discourse, instead of taking elites' discourse for granted. There is always the danger of reproducing the 'great men history' narratives and giving the structures that made these 'great men' ongoing legitimacy.

Dikotter (1992b) offers critical readings of historical events and the texts that support elites, especially in cases where racial theories were employed for political uses in early the twentieth century when the last Chinese empire, Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911), was under the attack by revolutionaries. The method they used was to rally the support of the absolute majority of Han Chinese, by questioning the ruling legitimacy of the Qing emperor, bureaucracy and institutions, which were mainly held by Manchurians.<sup>11</sup> Constructing the ruling Manchurians as a barbarian race was a nation building campaign that aimed to revoke the Qing Empire. Leading reformists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century already started to selectively appropriate social-Darwinian theories as a source of nationalism.<sup>12</sup> Being supported by these "advanced" theories, the revolutionaries accused of the Manchurians' bringing disastrous policies to China because of their

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11 Manchurians, originating from the North East of what is now the PRC, have very similar phenotypes compared to the Han. Manchurians had ruled the last dynasty of China, the Qing, from 1644 to 1912. It was overthrown by the Chinese Revolution of 1911 led by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), who founded The Revive China Society in 1894 in Hong Kong.

12 Leading reformers Kang Youwei (1858 – 1927) and his student Liang Qichao (1873 – 1929) were inspired by Western thought, including the racial classification of human being. After two defeats in the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century, despite efforts to look to the West for military powers, Qing experienced another catastrophic failure in 1895 in the Sino-Japanese War. The reformers sought racial theories and lineage discourse to justify Chinese historical achievements, thereby seeking to boost national morale against imperialist invasion. They selectively appropriated social-Darwinian theories, combining it with Han superiority, creating new evolutionary theories that conceptualised the world as a battle for the "better races" to survive.



“inferior race”. Only if the Han regained power, it was argued, could China be returned to the virtue of Confucianism. Dikotter quotes elites’ words and texts to support his argument. For example, Yan (1959), who specialised in introducing Western thoughts and knowledge to China, offered his “expertise” to feed the nationalism campaign:

They [the White] will enslave us and hinder the development of our spirit and body... The brown and black races constantly waver between life and death, why not the 400 million of yellows?’

(Yan, 1959:22, quoted by Dikotter, 1992a)

Another example is the vision of The Revive China Society founded by Sun Yat-sen, a leading revolutionary against the Qing Empire and first president of Republic of China:

Expel the northern barbarians [Manchus], revive Zhonghua [traditional Han Chinese culture], and establish a unified government.

(Sun, n.d., quoted by Major, 2011: 271)

Dikotter rejects uncritical approaches to understanding Han identity, revealing how the Han has featured in political discourse. The Han is then an artificial construct. He does a critical review of how *Others* are being presented and ordered in China. However, a criticism of Dikotter’s approach is that he ignores the circulation and reception of this central-barbarian cosmology among different groups and classes in society (Litzinger, 1995). Said’s (1978) *Orientalism* offers an interesting comparison to Dikotter’s interpretation. First, for the seminal framing of the construction of Us and Others; and second, Said’s methodology also explores the positionality of those who write about the Orient.

*Orientalism* relates to how the Occident orders the Orient. Orientalism is an academic discipline, a system of knowledge, a discourse and a form of culture that is largely based on Anglo-French-American experience of Arabs and Islam. Said (1978) uses Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony to explain Orientalism as a collective notion and awareness of a superior European identity over the Orient. This identity is formed in civil society, rather than political society. In civil society, Orientalist discourse is produced in a scholarly form, proliferated as wisdom in academies, universities, books and institutions. Orientalist discourse has ‘very close ties to the enabling socio-

economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability' (1978:6). Said argues that the consistency of Orientalism in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries is a reflection of 'the East as career' – young Western elites consumed the opportunities of exploring the East. Large numbers of researchers and intellectuals from many disciplines wrote about the Orient, legitimising the dichotomy between East and West. Of this account, China was made a subject of Western knowledge through the Jesuits who first went to China in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the study of Sinology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Orientalism* offers insights into Dikotter's work. Its racial classification of the Occident and the Orient is rooted in the "scientific" validity of the "differences" of advanced and backward people, which is borrowed by Chinese reformers to promote racial nationalism using Han superiority. Said argues that an Orientalist career is about personal attainment, it also offers legitimacy for imperialist colonisation, which is similar to Dikotter's arguments that revolutionaries used racial discourse as the justification to revoke the "barbarian" Qing's Manchurians. However, how prevalent are racial theories and orderings in everyday discourse amongst the people who are ruled over, as opposed to the discourse of the ruling class? It is here, in answer to this question, that Dikotter's work is exposed to criticism by the framing of Said's methodology.

Said studies Orientalism through the analysis of academic work, lecture speeches, novels, travel writings, policy papers, poems, song lyrics, theatre lines, et cetera. He views that these are the products of personal authorities and historical authority. The methodology of *Orientalism* is to study these authorities, which is termed *strategic location*. To Said, Orientalist writers undeniably rely on knowledge and assumptions of the Orient. They need to locate themselves 'vis-à-vis the Orient' (1978:20) and their work is affiliated with particular audiences or institutions. Personal authorities are then the relationship between what is said and written and a writer's background and values, motives and purposes of writing about the Orient. Historical authority refers to the particular properties of Orientalism that have developed and evolved with the influence of a particular doctrine or culture. Under the measurement of Said's methodology, I argue that, Dikotter's work can be criticised for not adequately studying the strategic location of authority when exploring the functioning of racial discourses in China. First he does not reveal the assumptions informing his selection of texts. Second, he makes little reference to the reception and circulation of these racial references and frameworks

in the everyday social world of ordinary Chinese people. However, this is not to devalue Dikotter's insight into the subject matter, for his interpretations serve as theories to be tested in other research. To sum up, researchers should pay more attention to the reception of discourse, rather than assume that elite discourse is uncritically adopted by lay people. In the next section, with the uses of official documents of the Chinese state, it critically explores the response of lay Chinese people to African students, in which the racial relations depicts the racial worldview held in Maoist China.

### **3.3.3 African-Chinese relations – debate of Black racism (1960s)**

This section is a lengthy effort. It critically examines hierarchical racialism of China in the 1960s and 1970s, which revolves around African students' undesirable experiences living in China at that period of time. It aims to review the account of a major publication *An African Student in China* (1963) written by a Black Ghanaian medical student Emmanuel Hevi, who narrates how Black African students were racially abused in quotidian experiences in Maoist China (1962-1963). By doing so it relies on the Chinese state official documents that reveal lay Chinese people's attitudes to African students.

#### **3.3.3.1 A critical review of an African student in China**

In the early 1960s, Black scholar Emmanuel Hevi's narratives of Sino-African relations in *An African Student in China* told the world of how African students were treated in China. Hevi was a medical student from Ghana studying in Peking University, along with 118 African students from 1962 to 1963. He experienced an intense sense of Chinese racial superiority and racial demarcation. He detailed the undesirable political education that African students were given, and Chinese girlfriends being arrested for friendship with Africans. Hevi describes that African students were not 'prepared to add the burden of Yellow superiority to that of White superiority' (quotation of Hevi (1962) cited by Spivack (1963)). It was when a racial conflict arose, leading to a Zanzibari student being beaten by Chinese hotel attendants, that the African students protested with a hunger strike; eventually 105 students left China after 18 months of suffering from racism. It is ironic to read how Hevi portrays the feelings of African students when living with the "superior" Chinese.

Phlegm and sputum are spat on the floor indiscriminately during lectures.....in what relates to personal hygiene and the treatment of students as human beings, it is we Africans who must civilise the Chinese, not vice versa.

(Sampson, 1964:322, quoted by Hevi (1962))

If we follow the writer's account to analyse the relations between the two racial groups, we find that they both reject cultural relativism. The African students felt that they were superior in terms of personal hygiene; while Chinese students held a fixed ethnocentric view that they were superior, therefore, the "barbarian" African students ought to assimilate the values of the superior Han Chinese culture. The question arising is as follows: how should we treat the text and the racial discrimination claimed by the writer? Taiwanese scholar Hsiaopong Liu (2013) comments that Hevi was criticised for exaggeration and for being one-sided. The most common view is that 'he [Hevi] blames [Chinese people] in a rather over-simplified way on colour-consciousness' (Adie, 1965:193). In other words, the racism experienced ought to have been accounted for by a range of other factors and that racial discourse was not the main explanation for the discrimination that was experienced. Now we briefly review the historical context of Maoist era and then draw upon Liu's (2013) original analysis of Hevi's work using Chinese state classified official documents.

### **3.3.3.2 Together we fight the White imperialists**

In China, the 1950s and 1960s saw a bullish mood of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism. Mao proclaimed that Chinese people were leading the fight against White imperialism. African countries were allied by China in what was known as a Third World coalition. Mao uses the racial discourse to represent how the "Black" and the "Yellow" are both suffering from the imperialist power of the West so the Africans and the Chinese had to unite. Mao once befriended Africans sarcastically when he met African visitors in 1960:

[Westerners] say we Chinese are useless, we coloured people are useless, we are dirty, and we are not elegant. Our race seems to be the same with you Africans.

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives [MOFAA], 1960)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The title of the minute is Mao Zedong Meeting African Visitors.

In late 1963, the Premier Zhou Enlai visited African countries, which started a new chapter of Sino-African relations. Zhou announced a range of strategic measures to establish a closer relationship with African countries. Two propaganda posters reflect the state official policies that tried to alter the negative attitudes of Chinese citizens towards African people. The propaganda below depicts how Africans were ordered by the Chinese authority. Figure 5 shows Africans reading the *Little Red Book* that contains quotations from Chairman Mao, published from 1964 to 1976. My interpretation of the meaning of the poster, in relation to race relations, is this: African people, like Chinese, also embrace Chairman Mao and we belong to the same class, i.e. the proletariat. Now there are no *differences* between the two groups. Figure 6 depicts not only the friendship of both peoples, symbolised by the African child extending arms in welcome of the Chinese nurse, but “raises” the “inferior” status of African representation that they can be “wise enough” to be a doctor (i.e. the man dressed in a white coat). The symbolic message is that now is time to stop looking down on Black people. The significance of state official policies is explored further when we later discuss how they failed to change the racial view of Chinese people. The following section is to examine Hevi’s account by using state official documents.

### **3.3.3.3 Racism or discord?**

Hevi’s irritations at how Black African students were treated in China can be summed up in three respects: (i) the everyday experiences of the students encountering Chinese; (ii) the institutional hierarchical welfare policy; and (iii) the judgement of intellectual capabilities.

Firstly we examine the daily life experiences of the African students. In 1956, according to a report told of discrimination against Black foreigners, Chinese people were reported to have surrounded the Black people and shouted at them, whilst Chinese women refused to shake hands and kept their children away (Shanghai City Archives, 1956).<sup>14</sup> A document indicating the suffering of African students in Beijing reports that they were made a spectacle as though in a zoo (MOFAA, 1961);<sup>15</sup> another paper that aims to educate people about the appropriate etiquette when meeting with Black visitors,

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14 Memorandum, “To Pay Attention to Black Visitors”, Shanghai city’s committee of foreign services, 8 Oct. 1956. Original files are from B255-2-90-91, Shanghai City Archives

15 “Situation Briefing”, 24 May 1961, issued by Foreign Affairs Committee of Beijing City, in Situation of Students from Cameroon and Other Countries in China, 14 May 1961 to 1 Dec. 1961, #108-00695-01, MOFAA.

points out that racial abuse was the same for important Black political leaders (MOFAA, 1961).<sup>16</sup> Ghana’s ambassador in Beijing was greeted with yells of “his face is like bark”



**Figure 5 – Chairman Mao is the great liberator of the world's revolutionary people**

**Printed in Chinese:**

毛主席是世界革命人民的大救星

**Translation of printing:** Chairman Mao is the great liberator of the world’s revolutionary people

**Designer:** Unknown

**Publisher:** Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe (Shanghai People Art Publication)

**Date:** April 1968

**Source:** Chineseposter.net (2005)



**Figure 6 – The feelings of friendship between the peoples of China and Africa are deep**

**Printed in Chinese:** 中、非人民情谊深

**Translation of printing:** The feelings of friendship between the peoples of China and Africa are deep

**Designer:** Changzhoushi gongnongbing meishu chuanguo xuexiban gonggao (Workers and Farmers Group Art Creation Class in Changzhou City)

**Publisher:** Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe (Shanghai People Art Publication)

**Date:** April 1972

**Source:** Chineseposter.net (2005)

and “his head resembles a pig’s”. Evidence supporting Hevi’s report of the arrest and capture of an African students’ girlfriend is found in an investigation report for Beijing

<sup>16</sup> “Teaching People How to Correctly Treat Black African Visitors”, 9 May 1961, #117-01299-01, MOFAA

(MOFAA, 1966).<sup>17</sup> The verdict includes the “reasons” for expelling a Malawian student who was accused of having sex with a Chinese woman. She was jailed for 15 days and then sent to labour-reform education.

Second, there was an institutionalised racial hierarchy informing policy on students’ welfare. Hevi complained that European and African students were treated unequally. The former had RMB 150 monthly allowance while that latter RMB 80. Another report issued in 1961 verifies the claim.<sup>18</sup> It reveals that African students had the amount stated by Hevi, but that European students from Albania and Yugoslavia received RMB 275 (MOFAA, 1961). Chinese students found the African students’ complaints unreasonable, because the local students only received RMB 10 to 20 per month (MOFAA, 1961). Interestingly, there were no reports of a critical attitude towards European students, even though they received significantly more benefits. This indirectly reveals the racial hierarchy held by Chinese students, as they felt that Black people who occupy an “inferior status” should not be receiving more than themselves. What further upset frugal Chinese students was that the authority raised the African allowance to RMB 120 (Snow, 1988), in order to assuage the Africans for the sake of Sino-Africa brotherhood. Therefore, the state policy also conditioned the cultural distain held by Chinese civilians. The consequences of all these measures are that firstly, the African students still felt they had received unfair treatment compared to the European students; and second, Chinese students were hostile to the situation that the “inferior” Black African students were receiving better welfare than they were.

Thirdly, there is a different interpretation of African students’ disinterest in the Chinese curriculum. Liu paraphrases a report from the Ministry of Education dated 1963, that comments on students from Cameroon and other countries.<sup>19</sup> It reads:

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17 “Investigation Report”, 28 June 1966, issued by Foreign Affairs Committee of Beijing City, in Expelling Malawian Student, 28 June 1966 to 5 Dec. 1966, #108-00220-01, MOFAA

18 “About Somali Student’s Anti-China Leaflets”, 12 June 1961, issued from the Committee of External Cultural Communication to the Ministry of Education, 23 May 1961 to 26 Sept. 1961, #108-00672-02, MOFAA.

19 “Foreign Student Situation”, 16 Apr. 1963, issued by the PRC Ministry of Education, in Situation of Students from Cameroon and Other Countries in China, 16 Apr. 1963 to 19 Nov. 1963, #108-00874-03, MOFAA.

African students obviously disliked the political classes, and their disinterest made them appear dim-witted, causing the teachers to generally perceive that they were of “low culture, have poor memories, and lazy”

(Liu, 2013:137)

According to Sinologist Philip Snow (1988), African students were indoctrinated with Communist ideology. Hevi personally was anti-Communist. He challenged the teachers and expressed politically incorrect attitudes towards Chinese diplomatic policies. For example, he believed that the Chinese state interest in establishing fraternal diplomatic relations lies in the abundant primary resources in Africa (Hevi, 1962). Therefore, it is not surprising that Hevi found the Chinese teachers to be paternalistic. At this point we must recall that Sampson (1964), a reviewer for the Observer, warned readers about the explicit anti-Communist stance of Hevi. However, this warning came at a time when sympathy for Communism was still an acceptable position amongst the British Left, before the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968. We must also remember that Hevi’s stance was in line with the mainstream of anti-Communist popular opinion in Anglo-America. Political Scientist Barry Sautman (1994), in another counterpoint, claimed that the majority of African students were drawn from the elite. Can we draw a conclusion, therefore, that the Chinese educators’ prejudice towards African students was related to their political stance? Before reaching a judgement, a report reveals, contrary to Sautman’s thesis, that only six of the 43 Somalis students had high school diplomas, whilst the remainder were primary and secondary school graduates (MOFAA, 1961).<sup>20</sup> Therefore, another reading of the African student’s attitudes and behaviour is possible to that offered by the Chinese authorities. That is, the students disinterest in politics was related to the academic ability of the African students, rather than their personal or moral characteristics that could easily have been read as belonging to their racial identity.

To briefly conclude this section, I borrowed the work of Liu (2013), who validates Hevi’s narratives using classified official documents released by the Chinese authorities. I accept Hevi’s feelings and observations from the evident insult and injustice that Black African students experienced in and outside the classroom. How the Black students were treated in China is consistent with Fanon's (1986) explanation that Black people are a phobogenic object. In short Fanon’s theory refers to the emotional collective

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<sup>20</sup> The report was issued by Beijing Foreign Language Institute. Its topic is Situation Report



unconscious reaction – as a form of fear – towards Black people, which operates not in a natural biological devaluation of Blackness, but in a social and political structure of representations and values, in Fanon’s terminology, the “Negro myth”. Fanon uses psychoanalytic analysis to think about why there was an irrational fears and hatred that the White feels towards the Black. The next section mainly discusses how psychoanalysis is possible to explain White supremacy in China.

### **3.3.4 Chinese racial hierarchy – the White modernity (1960s and 1970s)**

Yellow and white are wise, red and black are stupid; yellow and white are rulers, red and black are slaves; yellow and white are united, red and black are scattered.

(Tang, 1968:468)

This explicit racist comment, cited by Dikotter (1994:407), is written by one of the famous reformers, as well as a believer of social Darwinism, Tang Caichang (1867-1900). Dikotter uses Tang’s expression of Chinese racial prejudice to argue that, since the revolutionaries’ endeavour to embed racial discourse to the definition of Chineseness (i.e. descendants of the Yellow Emperor), cultural identity organised by traditional values is replaced by the myth of blood. One critical message of the quotation is that yellow is not the most superior among all races. Now the White is conceived as an equally superior counterpart.

The history of China’s relations to the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be characterised as a twin struggle; first a struggle to resist colonial power, and secondly a struggle to emulate it. If we consider how Chinese society perceived its existence under Mao, we could conceive that the whole nation had been infused with a revolutionary spirit while concomitantly suffering socio-cultural and economic catastrophe. The humiliation brought about under imperialism and the “evil” capitalism of the West on the one hand fuels nationalistic anger, but on the other hand the strong military and economic power is greatly desired. This is witnessed in the slogan promoted by Mao in 1958:

.....we, on our part, should strive to surpass Britain in respect of output of iron and steel and of other major industrial products. In this way, the socialist world will leave the imperialist countries far, far behind.

(Mao’s slogan quoted by Jersild, 2009:np)

Under this national consciousness generated by power inequalities, the white imperialists are synonymous with power, which was understood by the Chinese people. In this sense, the inferior, dissatisfying or humiliated part of the Chinese self is projected outward and become attached to the external object: Whiteness. Therefore, the White symbolises prosperity, material abundance and good life. Historical and material analysis of power inequalities the coloniser and colonised explain the way in which White superiority has become part of the mental constructs through which Chinese people construct their identity. Now Han superiority is challenged by White superiority. Then, perhaps the White is as good as Chinese people. In this sense, the European imagination that conflated backwardness with Blackness, starting in the Middle Ages and continuing through Western imperialism and modernisation, has conditioned the racial worldview of Chinese. I will discuss the legacy of this racial prejudice in Section 4.4 (p.116) using post-colonial theories to explain the way in which contemporary Chinese identities are framed. Here, the aim is to use psychoanalytic theory to analyse the psyche of the Chinese people living in rural hinterlands in Maoist China. They lacked materials and projected their desire for modern technology and prosperity onto the Anglo-Saxon states, in which the ability to ‘become modern’ is equivalent to the biological belonging of a people, i.e. colour. The next section focuses on a recent case of explicit racism.

### **3.3.5 Chinese racialism and modernisation (contemporary China)**

Lastly, moving to the present time, I demonstrate the institutionalised racial discrimination of Black people using a discourse analysis as a case study. It examines the cyberspace debates about a popular biracial contestant in a TV show. The racial discourses appeared in the virtual spaces reveal the congruence between racial attitudes and notion of nationalism and globalisation which together contribute to Chinese identity. To save spaces for the rest of the literature, I pick one case to discuss racial discourse and practice in contemporary China. It is about the story of a biracial girl, Lou Jing, who appeared on a TV show in 2009 and stirred heated debates about her national/racial identities. The show was a platform for new faces to impress the audience with their charm, wit, voice and dancing skills. Her skin colour, rather than her performance ability, was more important for turning her into a popular star. When first appearing on the stage Lou Jing was presented by the host: ‘Our chocolate girl’, ‘black pearl’ and ‘Halle Berry of the East’, followed by hip hop music that accompanied her rapping a self introduction. The producers predicted the background of Lou Jing would

provide a focus for the show, offering substantial airtime to interview her past as well as her mother's relationship with an African American father, who left China without knowing of her pregnancy. Social media and technologies have provided an interactive platform for the public to comment upon and construct Lou Ying's identity.<sup>21</sup>

The content of blogosphere is not limited to a racial worldview or prejudice, with comments ranging from racist to anti-racist; it also contains debates that involve the definition of "authentic" Chinese identity, nationalism and modernisation. Extreme racist comments are rarely without the mention of *Black* such as 'black chimpanzee', 'black devil', 'black slave race'. Lou Jing's mother was accused of being 'truly lamentable', 'truly both low and deplorable' and having 'little self-respect'.<sup>22</sup> These comments indicate not the taint of unmarried pregnancy, in traditional Chinese values pregnancy outside marriage in China is considered an immoral behaviour, but her relationship with a Black person, and the view that she gave birth to a "pathetic" biracial child. The comparison of Black and White is also a focus. An online user argues '...white represents jade and white embraces the meaning of health, beauty and cleanness.....'<sup>23</sup> This post concludes that if a child is biracial, i.e. European- Chinese, there will be no problem.

Lou Ying was born and raised in China, speaking native Mandarin and Shanghainese, but has struggled to convince others that her Chinese cultural identity is authentic. She revealed her discomfort at being unaccepted in society: 'It was okay if I didn't speak. When I talked, people would start to discuss it'.<sup>24</sup> It was Lou Jing's insistence about her Chinese identity that "upsets" some netizens: 'our nation shall never accept the existence of this kind of shame.....she has made all Chinese lose face'.<sup>25</sup> Fortunately there were many netizens who came to the rescue of Lou Jing and her mother and

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21 I learnt about Lou Ying from Frazier and Zhang (2014), and have watched the video in late 2014 and further explored the latest blog messages about Lou Ying. I agree with the researchers' presentations and interpretations of the interview content and texts in the blogs. An additional note is that the majority of bloggers give negative racist comments.

22 Post comments on Shanghai 'black girl' Lou Jing abused by racist netizens, ChinaSmack, 1 September 2009, <http://www.chinasmack.com/stories/shanghai-black-girl-lou-jing-racist-chinese-netizens/>, accessed 11 January 2010.

23 Post comments on Wangyi zhuanfang Lou Jing: Wo shi tushengtuzhang de Zhongguo ren, (NetEase's exclusive interview with Lou Jing: I am a native Chinese), NetEase forum, 14 September 2009, [http://comment.news.163.com/news2\\_bbs/5J4GFANS00012Q9L.html](http://comment.news.163.com/news2_bbs/5J4GFANS00012Q9L.html), accessed 12 January 2010

24 Translation of Wangyi zhuanfang Lou Jing: Wo shi tushengtuzhang de Zhongguo ren on ChinaHush.

25 Post comments on Jiechuan Shanghai 'hei meiren' Lou Jing de manzui huanghua! (Debunking Shanghai 'black beauty' Lou Jing's lies!), ClubChina, 2009, [http://club.china.com/data/thread/1011/2705/14/57/0\\_1.html](http://club.china.com/data/thread/1011/2705/14/57/0_1.html), accessed 12 January 2010

condemned the racism, such as ‘strongly despise people who are racial discriminators!!! China is a tolerant nation’.<sup>26</sup> In which some comments are intertwined with nationalism and modernisation discourse.

Don’t be so narrow-minded! Our nation will never become truly strong unless we learn how to tolerate difference.

(Frazier and Zhang, 2014:244)

This blogger argues that tolerance of *difference* enforces a strong nation. It questions the claim of the mono-racial perspective of being a Chinese, and that becoming more tolerant is the trade-off for globalisation. It is difficult to look into the meaning of *difference* in this quote: for example, is this an acceptance of cultural/racial difference or an assumption of superior vs inferior difference?

Communication propels the world forward. Have you seen any ethnic group that can make progress without communication with the outside? Multiculturalism is already an unstoppable trend.

(Frazier and Zhang, 2014:244)

This blogger emphasises the importance of communication. It is more explicit about the less advantageous position African people are in, which is what the blogger means by ethnic group. Who are not an ethnic group? The user gave no indication; however, there is a clear hierarchy of peoples and some already belong to a stronger outside globalised world and some are still yet to join the global community.

To sum up this section, the countless racist comments regarding Black race and White supremacy is explicit. The website recommended many videos about White women who married Chinese men and were living in China. Blogosphere appears to universally display respect and admiration for White women. The racial hierarchy in contemporary China is exemplified in the virtual space.

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<sup>26</sup> Post comments on Shipin: Lou Jing: Wo shi tushengtuzhang de Zhongguo ren (Video: Lou Jing: I am a native Chinese), Youku, 2009, [http://v.youku.com/v\\_show/id\\_XMTE5MTA0MTA0.html](http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTE5MTA0MTA0.html), accessed 12 January 2010.

### **3.3.6 Summary – the making of Han Chinese**

I have demonstrated Han Chinese racism from a historical perspective. Identifying themselves as the descendants of the Yellow Emperor or Dragon, Chinese people have internalised the race narratives, based on ethno-racial superiority, into everyday life. This process is not natural. It relies on historical records to trace the racial prejudice of Chinese people, in which it is observed that there is a racial hierarchy conceived by Chinese people, i.e. White and Han are superior and Black is inferior. First, the overthrow of the Manchurian Qing Dynasty by revolutionaries who used anti-barbarian slogans in the early twentieth century, fortified Han Chinese superiority. Second, I refer to historians' research efforts and Chinese state classified documents to verify that anti-Black sentiments were prevalent and explicit in China in 1960s. Third, I employ psychoanalytic theory to explain the emergence of White superiority, in which the Imperial power and material advantage of the West has framed Chinese's projection of these external materiality to biological factors, i.e. Whiteness. There is then a contradictory presence of an antagonistic view towards the West and looking to the West for the benchmark of reaching modernity.

An exploration of racial abuse of a biracial girl in cyberspace shows the legacy of racial superiority: “yellow race” is better than “black race”. It also manifests the discourses of nationalism and modernisation accompanying Chinese racialism. The aim of writing a historiography of Chinese racial prejudice is to respond to the observations gathered in the fieldwork. These involve how Chinese visitors encountered the British citizens – be they White or Black, there were explicit or subtle reactions and narratives that reflect their racial attitudes. Chinese racialism is closely connected to the discourse of Chinese nationalism and modernisation. Chinese nationalism is associated with the cohesiveness of Han Chinese, which is both racially, politically and emotionally charged. Likewise, the desire for modernisation also carries racial narratives. These findings will be presented in Chapter 8.

### **3.4 The critical inheritance of Confucianism**

Confucianism is arguably a given identity to Han Chinese, because of the fact that Chinese people possess these characteristics, such as: conformity, collectivism and filial piety. This essentialist organising of Confucian values is manifested by many scholars who study contemporary Chinese behaviours and values (Chapter 2 criticises this uncritical taking of Confucian identity by reviewing the tourism literature on p.39). The

task of this part is to deconstruct the formation of the contemporary Confucian identity, in which it aims to argue that this identity is not naturally given or nurtured, but historically conditioned by multiple structures. This part of the chapter is a lengthy effort and contains a discussion of many historical events. It is important, for it firstly explains Chinese state interventions from above, in authoring interpretations of Confucian doctrine, which informs this thesis to explore state intervention in overseas tourism spaces (see Chapter 8). Secondly, it provides explanations to the consumption patterns of Chinese tourists in the UK context, in which these patterns have strong associations with Confucian values, namely filial piety and guanxi (see chapter 9).

The discussion of the whole part revolves about the concept of “critical inheritance” developed from Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*. Critical inheritance concerns the way in which an inheritance comes to being, in which inheritance is not unwitting reconstructing but a deliberately selective appreciation. First of all, in Section 3.10, it introduces the orthodoxy of Confucianism and explains how filial piety is central to Confucianism, which brings critical inheritance into discussion in Section 3.11. Section 3.12 reveals how Confucian value was challenged by Chinese intellectuals who were influenced by Western knowledge in the early twentieth century. Section 3.13 discusses how Confucianism was first selectively inherited for an effective leadership of and later entirely attacked by Mao’s Communist regime in 1960s and 1970s. Section 3.14 explains the internal party conflict between the liberal leaders and conservative leaders in 1980s, owing to their different reactions to economic reforms that brought about cultural Westernisation. This is by means of a preliminary discussion to Section 3.15, in which Confucianism was seen as a solution to solve the conflict as well as to combat Westernisation. The method to indoctrinate Confucianism is primarily through pedagogy. Section 3.16 discusses how Confucian values are used by Chinese scholars and entrepreneurs to justify Chinese capitalism, through the framing of governmentality. Section 3.17 aims to deconstruct the concept guanxi, which is the epitome of filial piety. However, my argument is that it is a corrupted Confucian value, which is cultivated to govern Chinese citizens and justify the particular political and economic system. This section aims to demonstrate the following arguments.

First, filial piety, conformity, collectivism and hierarchy are critically inherited Confucian values, which have multiple and varied interpretations of the canonical content. Confucianism is then not a given and natural identity of Chinese people.

Second, Confucianism is manipulated to serve particular Chinese political and economic purposes through the analysis of governmentality. Third, Guanxi is an ethno-racial construct, which involves sacrifice of justice for economic interests. With a Confucian façade, guanxi is accepted and practised in China, seen as an informed moral value.

### **3.4.1 Confucian identity as the ultimate life-long project**

Dating back to BCE 500, Confucianism has been the most hailed philosophy in ancient Zhou dynasty (Chin, 1979), founded on the works of Confucius and Mencius, the pupil of his only grandson in ancient China. Its fundamental value is humanistic and its practices and functions could be applied to every aspect of society, such as family relations, religion, arts, technology and politics. Although there have been adaptations throughout years, ancient Confucian classics are the canon of Confucianism. Kang Yowie, a leading Confucian thinker and political reformer of the Hundred Days' Reform in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, argues that every country has a spiritual base. It is Confucianism that has dominated China for two thousand years (Chow, 1960). In the last section we introduced ancient Han Chinese had a conscious superiority over any other people ("barbarian"). This supremacy is grounded in not only material abundance and political advancement, but morality and ethics. The moral tradition comes from Confucian teaching. Confucius places humans as the centre of the universe, and it is these humans who have consciousness and total control of their life.

Confucianism emphasises *Propriety*, which could be seen as rules, principles or orders in systems, rituals or practices in formal or quotidian experiences, in Chow (1960)'s comparison it is similar to Plato's ideas. It codifies behaviours in particular times and particular spaces. To comply with external *propriety* is to fulfil the *righteousness* that is seen as personal qualities that individuals should possess. What is the standard of this *righteousness*? In theory, Confucius believes that *humanness* is inborn and already programmed and implanted in oneself, but that is under threat from evil from evil and desire. Therefore, humanness is always a state that permits every individual to achieve through one's effort to combat evil and desire. Perhaps we could think about humanness and righteousness as a group. To Confucius, the ultimate aim of a person is to win this state of humanness, therefore one is able to practise righteousness. In ancient Chinese dynasties, Confucian identity is a fixed conception. *Propriety, righteousness and humanness* are canonical in classic Confucianism.

### 3.4.2 The classic canon teaching of Confucianism – filial piety

Confucian ethics places family relations (father and son, brothers) as the fundamental human relationship. In which, filial piety, an intergenerational relationship, is hailed as the parameter to define whether an individual is righteous. Filial piety is a starting point to understand how a Confucian society functions. In *Analects*, a collection of Confucius' ideas and dialogues with his disciples, Confucius answers his pupil Zia Wo on the practice of three-year mourning for late parents. Zai Wo proposes that one full year of mourning is enough, as abstaining from music for three years would ruin music. To Confucius, music is an important form of art that help an individual to the composedness and refinement of his characters (Steben, 2010). Confucius replied Zai Wo by asking a question:

If you were to eat good rice and wear embroidered clothes after the one-year mourning, would you feel at ease?

(*Analects* 17:21)

Zai Wo answers he would. Then Confucius responds:

But the superior man, during the period of mourning, does not feel delicious when eating good food, nor feel pleased when hearing music, nor feel at ease when he is comfortably lodged. Therefore he does not do what you propose. But now you feel at ease, then you may do it.

(*Analects* 17:21)

After Zai Wo left, Confucius comments:

Zai Wo is really inhumane! It is not till a child is three years old that it is allowed to leave the arms of its parents. The three-year mourning is universally observed throughout the empire. Could Zai Wo also show the three-year affection for his parents?

(*Analects* 17:21)

This is a classic example to explain the norm of how children are obliged to treat their parents. Nowadays, in any Chinese community, there are no known cases that children spend three years to mourn for their late parents. However, the term “three-year mourning” is a household metaphor that presents the important of filial love in Chinese society. The dialogue between Confucius and his disciple demonstrates that filial love is



the dominant form of consanguineous affection, which is fundamental to Confucianism. Confucius emphasises both the importance of propriety (the length of mourning period) and the authentic kinship love (righteousness) that a child should display to demonstrate his/her devotion to parents. Liu (2006) defends Confucius, arguing that Confucius aims not to dehumanise Zai Wo, but to stress the priority of moral emotion towards parent over corporeal desires such as good food and comfort.

Kinship love as viewed by Confucius is the ultimate root of human existence. Filial love constitutes a strong cultural identity of descent of Chinese tradition (shown in language, practices and customs). The kinship responsibility operates in a hierarchy, which prioritises one's parents, followed by his siblings and then closer and distant kin. The order is said to be framed by patriarchal blood relations. I believe that filial love is a universal attribute in human beings; however, the particularity I have observed from my friends and colleagues from China or from Hong Kong, is that they do not feel free to downplay the *content* of filial piety within Confucian teaching. It is a non-debatable and core Confucian value. People are confined with taking these values into consideration, regardless of whether or not they agree with it. However, one's interpretation of this filial love could be different from my others. For example, between me and my parents, only if I am able to convince them that I am 'living well' and ease their psychologically burden, will I be a good son. Whereas I witnessed and heard on different occasions, from friends or acquaintances that, that wealth provision is an important expression of their love to their parents. Filial love, under the framing of Confucianism, is then a tradition – the past, 'in some respects, and under some conditions, highly resistant to efforts to make it over' (Schudson, 1981:195). The interpretations of filial love is multiple but its *content* is coherent that enables the Chinese to always identify it as a unity. Then filial piety is a "critically inherited" Confucian value. The next section explains what "critical inheritance" is and how it helps us to understand the contemporary Chinese Confucian identity.

### **3.4.3 Critical inheritance**

To discuss the notion of critical inheritance of Confucianism, its aim is to understand why some aspects of Confucian values are inherited while some are not, and in which what actors are involved in the process. This is useful for us to contextualise contemporary Chinese Confucian identity. An inheritance is an element in an established way of life in the context of socialisation, which accompanies individuals

when they come to an existence. Critical inheritance involves deliberate selection and emphasis of certain aspects and downplaying of others. Reading of Derrida's (1994) *Specters of Marx*, Cavallini (2010) argues that Derrida fully performs the notion of critical inheritance in his deconstruction the text of Marx and other authors. Below is a passage of Derrida:

An inheritance is never gathered together, it is never one with itself. Its presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the injunction to reaffirm by choosing. 'One must' means one must filter, sift, criticize, one must sort out several different possibles that inhabit the same injunction. And inhabit in a contradictory fashion around a secret.

(Derrida, 1994:18)

To Derrida, the fundamental features of an inheritance are its heterogeneity and non-oppositional feature based on a selection (Cavallini, 2010). In the last chapter we have discussed that many researchers study how contemporary Chinese people practise Confucian culture (e.g. conformity, harmony), in which they understand these values as having an essential identity/presence. Central to the researchers' confidence of theorising the Confucian identity is *the* emphasis of certain undisputed and consensus features. This is what is meant by the non-oppositional features of critical inheritance. Filial piety, introduced in the last section, is an example.

Zhang and Schwartz (1997) distinguish the difference between reconstruction and critical inheritance. The former involves the denial of real events or the production of imaginary events. An example used by the authors are political readings of Abraham Lincoln explored by Schwartz (2000). Americans' opinions of Lincoln were diverse across the country and negative as seen from the writings of Southern authors. However, Lincoln's popularity grew in the Progressive Era, embodying duality of characters – both virtuous and sympathetic, and authoritarian and dignified. Likewise, Lincoln's racial attitudes were perceived differently; for Whites he was a segregationist and for Blacks, a compassionate friend (Zhang and Schwartz, 1997). Abraham is contested and therefore the history contains opposition and contradiction. The memory of Lincoln is then reconstituted and reconstructed. Critical inheritance is different. Heterogeneity is shadowed by aspects of representation that are unquestioned and unquestionable and contradictory readings are not part of public discourse. This is how Chinese people conceive the image of Confucius. It does not

mean that, the interpretations and evaluations of Confucianism are unchanging, but the content around which those interpretations are made remains uncontested, as Zhang and Schwartz states:

Each generation passes on to the next an image of him that differs from the image it inherited. This new image includes new evaluations of the different parts of Confucius's life and doctrine and changing levels of prestige, but its content remains stable. This is the essence of critical inheritance: the past serves the present interests not by unwitting reconstruction but deliberately selective appreciation and condemnation.

(Zhang and Schwartz, 1997:206)

At present when Chinese people claim that they have inherited Confucian cultures, under the framing of critical inheritance, we should not take these values as given and stable. That is to say, why are certain values selected and some filtered? Who is responsible for interpretation? The aim of this chapter revolves around these two questions. To answer these questions it relies on a critical review of historical narratives and a deconstruction of contemporary Confucian values. The next section goes back to the start of the twentieth century.

### **3.4.4 Challenge of Confucianism – the new cultural movement (1900s)**

This section reveals how Confucianism came to be attacked, marking a time when people still had the freedom to decide what knowledge to believe or abandon, in marked contrast to the ideological control under Mao's regime. Confucianism received the biggest challenge in the aftermath of The May Fourth Movement, which marks the indigenisation of Western thoughts and intellectual influences in China, embodied in the "New Cultural Movement".<sup>27</sup> A core group of intellectuals studied in the West and popularised Western philosophical ideas through translations and their publication of these ideas.<sup>28</sup> These intellectuals rallied to support "Mr. Te" (Democracy) and "Mr. Sai" (Science) in response to the continuing weak status of the nation. They promoted

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27 On May 4, 1919 students in Peking launched an anti-imperialist protest against the weak Chinese authority who signed an humiliating treaty with Japan. In relation to the intellectual impact, a popular view is that the May Fourth Movement is also defined as a period of "new thought" predated from as early as 1915 and extended to as far as 1923

28 To name a few, the Chinese translation of: Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (published in 1895); Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1901); John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1903), *System of Logic* (1902); Herbert Spencer's *Study of Sociology* (1903); Edward Jenk's *A Short History of Politics* (1904); Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (1906); Liang Qichao, a leader of the movement and philosopher, introduced the idea of the French Revolution and Rousseau work. Wang Guowei, a versatile scholar, introduced Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Kant to China.

utilitarianism and liberalism and started to critique their own traditions: the Western civilisation was said to be based on individualism that fosters freedom of thought and speech; whereas the Eastern focus on family and hierarchy was construed to stifle individual dignity, leading to conformity and inequality. Some radical intellectuals were influenced by socialism and anarchism. Science, rationality, scientific methods, evidence-based epistemology and social Darwinism were all promoted. With these new thoughts prevailing in society, Confucianism was increasingly attacked.

The May Fourth Movement was instigated by the intelligentsia, marking an intellectual, cultural, economic and socio-political change.<sup>29</sup> However, these new developments were not without critique. In defence of the Chinese and Confucian traditions, some scholars criticised the radical acceptance of Western thoughts, stirring a series of endless controversies that revolved around the merits of Eastern versus Western civilisations, Science versus metaphysics, and later, liberalism versus socialism. Here I aim to manifest that this intellectual movement had triggered free debates that were absent in the past, more in the popular domain than in academia. Before the movement it saw an attempt to import ideas from the West to save the weak empire. The self-strengthening movement in the middle nineteenth century imported Western military hardware, but refused to import Western thoughts and values. The currents of Western thoughts introduced in the early twentieth century prompted a re-evaluation of own history, religion, classics and civilisations in civil society at times after the demise of imperial China.<sup>30</sup> For example, an anti-superstitions movement and advocacy of freedom of religion coexisted. The May Fourth Movement is an intellectual revolution, offering freedom of thought to individuals. People in the early twentieth century still had the freedom to locate their thoughts along the traditional-modern scale. Whereas in Maoist China, to what extent were people able to preserve their traditional identity?

### **3.4.5 Attack on Confucianism – the Cultural Revolution (1960s and 1970s)**

The intellectual revolution had provided the soil for the Communist Party to grow and prosper. The Party finally won the civil war and founded the PRC in 1949. Here I

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<sup>29</sup> Prominent natural science based associations were established, education reforms took place, rising social status of women, progressive decline of landlord's position, increase in political activities, etc.

<sup>30</sup> While admitting the nation's economic and military weaknesses, the mentality was emperor-centric. Only hardware from the West is hailed, so the core value was "Chinese learning for essential principles/base, Western learning for practical application/function". And the motto was "learn the superior techniques of the barbarians to control the same barbarians" (Teng and Fairbank: 1979:53).

attempt to form a critical analysis of the impact of the ideological indoctrination of Mao's thoughts on individuals during the mid-twentieth century. The absolute Maoist cultism and the exclusive interpretation of Marxism-Leninism by Mao and his comrades cast Confucianism as an old and feudal culture, which was not only an obstacle for the revolutionary project of a Communist region, but an evil ideology that supported the bourgeois class, and led to class oppression. The political message, "Destroy the Four Olds and Cultivate the Four News" accompanied the start of the Cultural Revolution from 1965 to 1975. The "four olds" are old ideology, old culture and old custom and old habit. Temples, status, monuments, books, artefacts that corresponded to or symbolised Confucianism were destroyed. The idea was promoted by Mao, disseminated by state propaganda, and the mission operationalised by the Red Guard.

Chinese people learnt about anti-Confucianism in the Cultural Revolution from pictures, narratives and propaganda, however, as Hannah Arendt comments 'we never know very well how this worked [in China] in everyday life..... that is, who did the "remoulding" – and we had no inkling of the results of the "brainwashing", whether it was lasting and actually produced personality changes' (1973: xxvi). The contemporary impacts of the big project of shaping the whole population is still a big unanswered question, as Chin (1979) states, an honest reflection of the Cultural Revolution in the academic and official arena is forbidden. To answer the question, Zhang and Schwartz's (1997) study of collective memory offers some insights. They studied official newspapers published at the time of the Cultural Revolution and interviewed those who lived through the period. The finding was that the canon of classic Confucian values remained unchanged. Confucianism was manipulated earlier by Mao who hailed selective values from the teaching, namely hierarchy and deference, to legitimise the power of the Party. The ideology was despised later because of its incompatible doctrine to Maoism: it 'expose[s] the fraud of hypocritical humanism' (Red Flag, 1974, quoted by Lu, 1999:495) or that the advocacy of 'self-restraint and returning to traditions are pulling history backward' (Red Flag, 1974, quoted by Lu, 1999:495). The collective memory suggests that Confucian values were "cherry-picked" or thrown away according to political purposes. This is where we can refer to the notion of critical inheritance. In terms of social relationship, an important aspect of Confucian value is to follow order and social hierarchy (e.g. age and gender are factors). The content of these features remain unchanged. However, for long time

these are seen as crucial to harmony, now they are seen as “hypocritical humanism” and “self-restraint”; paying respects to elder generations, once a virtuous character, is now a backward feudal way of thinking that needs to be abandoned.

If Confucian values were no longer the guiding principle for China, what was the replacement? Lu (1999), a Chinese scholar teaching in the States, explores the indoctrination of Mao’s communist regime, which was too powerful for people to resist from being transformed. The author uses ideological/cultural criticism to analyse the rhetorical aspect of *Red Flag*, an official publication of the Chinese Communist Party serving as propaganda from early 1958 to 1988. Lu’s (1999) methodology is to examine the slogans, a form of ideographs, that were designed to control mass consciousness and shape individual perception of ‘reality’ (McGee, 1980). Ideographs are abstract terms carrying particular moral values that serve a political discourse. The slogans used by the Chinese Communist Party are rhythmical, extremist and emotionally charged. Shankel (1941) and Denton (1980) view slogans as ‘significant symbols’ that offer the masses the opportunity to express collective feeling and thus construct group identity, i.e., the values of society. Examples during the Cultural Revolution include:

Down with bourgeoisie reactionary authority

(Red Flag, 1966, quoted by Lu, 1999:496)

Class struggle must be talked about daily, monthly, and annually

(Red Flag (1971), quoted by Lu (1999:496))

This is the thesis of Lu that continuous indoctrination by political slogans for three decades has eroded people’s ability to think. The messages propagated are simplistic, reductionist and essentialist (Lu, 2002). Moreover, these patterns of thoughts still have ‘lingering effects’ (Lu 2002:112) among contemporary Chinese people, which can be discovered in the media and in personal speeches, as she comments:

.....the lack of conceptual clarity leads directly to the ‘banality of evil’ on a political scale. In the Chinese context, the heavy-handed and pervasive use of political slogans in both public and private settings have contributed significantly to a general thoughtlessness still evident in today’s China.

(Lu, 1999:504)

It is not the aim to discuss the catastrophe during those years, for example, in the manner of (Arendt, 1964) discussion of the ‘banality of evil’; that is how thought could be deprived under a totalitarian regime. Maoist China was one of the largest experiments in constructing human virtue and morality in history. In China nowadays, perhaps, many ex-Red Guards have forgot about, or not wanted to remember how they betrayed family members, tortured their teachers, and killed innocent people. The few who wanted to apologise had to do it in a scrutinised and restricted way. The question of whether today’s Chinese people are Confucian under this political environment is then, not about their knowledge of Confucianism, but that the collective characters and worldview have been framed through decades of thought work. That is to say, to what extent can people reflect on, or recover from the past? There was no equivalent to the Nuremburg trail, in other words, there has not been a public inquiry into the injustices of Maoism imposed on society. In Germany, parents are talking about the story of Nazism and the dangers of nationalism to their children. But there is nothing in China for people to address the wounds that have been inflicted and to begin a healing process. The palliative is, therefore, the liberalising of the economy. One hypothesis is that people now have a burning desires to get rich to compensate for their unatoned past, as guilt and consumption combine. We move on to how the Chinese state changes the ideology when the country opened to the West.

#### **3.4.6 Economic reforms – threat of Westernisation (1980s)**

This section discusses Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms and reveals the arising controversy surrounding its cultural implications to the society, debated by different factions within the party-state. The liberal leaders privileged the market economy. The conservative leaders feared that Western individualism challenged the legitimacy of the party leadership. This section is a preliminary to the later stage in which the party-state gradually endorsed Confucianism as the state ideology.

The 1980s was the first decade that the economic reforms took place, and was also characterised as the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

It was the time when Maoist Communism encountered bankruptcy and the nation was struggling under the burden of poverty. Deng's promise of rapid economic growth replaced the personality cult of Mao in securing the leadership of the Party (Saich, 2001). The central ideology involves economic reforms and an "open door policy". This principle is propagated through the making of ideographs. These examples are drawn from the *Red Flag*:

Focus on economic development, adhere to the four cardinal principles, and adhere to the direction of reform and open-door policy

(Red Flag (1986), quoted by Lu (1999:500))

Seeking truth from facts

(Red Flag (1979), quoted by Lu, 1999:500))

Liberation of mind

(Red Flag (1979), quoted by Lu (1999:500))

The slogans are short; however they are powerful. The four cardinal principles are central to the economic reforms, which include modernisations of (i) industry, (ii) agriculture, (iii) national defence and (iv) science and technology. In short, it is about GDP growth as well as military expansion. To achieve these modernisations, Deng emphasised in a speech that ideologies come second to economic growth, in which he rejected the debate of Chinese leaders being a reformist or a conservative, he claimed, 'more accurately, that I am from the seek-truth-from-facts school (Li (1994) citing Deng Xiaoping's speech). "Seeking truth from facts" is a goal oriented principle that avoids the fight between ideologies. Then, Deng asked people to "liberate the mind", which is to accept capitalism and privatisation of the economy (Weil, 2001). Deng Xi's famous catchphrase is a metaphor that is remembered by most Chinese people: 'It doesn't matter whether a cat is white or black, as long as it catches mice'. It is not only a household slogan that guides Chinese peoples' values and behaviours, but a national strategy made known to international investors.

Rather than speaking about the challenges faced by the state (the party leadership), it is actually more accurate to discuss the challenges presented by different factions of the party-state. The liberalisation camp, which privileged economic reforms, was



confronted by the conservative camp. It is not that the latter opposed economic openness per se, but they feared that this would be accompanied by freedom of expression and a rising awareness of political rights, which would consequently challenge the legitimacy of the leadership of the party and the interests of the party leaders (Zhu, 1999). The battle between the liberal and the conservative camps appeared in competing cultural discourses. “Bitter Love”, first appeared as a screen script in 1979 and later as a film. This was a fictional story that exposed the sufferings of Chinese people in the Cultural Revolution and the injustice of the regime. It was never publicly screened because it was criticised as being unpartriotic (Zhu, 1999), and in 1981 it was attacked by one of the mouthpiece papers of the party. The author, Bai Hua, was supported by many people in the country. However, Deng the designer of the economic reforms, supported the criticism against Bai Hua (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2011). Eventually the author wrote a self-critical open letter to the editor of that paper. Critiquing his own work, Bai Hua bowed to the party.

Liu Binyan commented in 1989 on the complexity of political ideological war (Gerdels, 1989). Liu was a Chinese writer and journalist expelled by the Party in the late 1980s because he openly criticised the corruption of the party. In an interview he reflected that, the attack on Bai Hua in 1981, and later the Campaign Against Spiritual Pollution in 1983 and the Anti-Bourgeois Liberalisation Campaign in 1987 were the regime’s top down campaigns against intellectuals who pressed for more openness of the government. Nevertheless the conservative faction of the regime was getting weaker, as seen from the short-life span of the said campaigns that lasted for from less than a month to three months. The line is then, not just economic liberal vs economic conservative, but also political liberal vs political conservative. Conservative leaders had a firm stance on retaining the authority of the leadership of the party. Nevertheless, not all of them just had concern over the power to govern; some did hope to address the moral decline and corruption. Nathan & Link (2001) assert that deregulation increased competition and inflation. Economic growth was accompanied by rising levels of materialism and the decline of morality, soaring crime rates and corruption was also one of the widespread discontents that led to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protest that asked for a political reform. Therefore, to some conservative leaders, economic reforms jeopardised the moral order of the society.

Later in the 1980s there was a sign that the politically conservative camp was losing the moral ground, because of the rising corruption. This was exemplified in the mass media in 1988. The state controlled China Central Television broadcast a documentary that stirred a heated debate in cultural and intellectual circles. The documentary, *He Shang* (Yellow River Elegy), reaffirms the racial superiority of Chinese (Dikotter, 1992b), but argues that it was the traditional cultures that made China lag behind the West on the road to modernisation. Through talking about the past, the documentary implies the autocratic political system at present. It advocates complete departure of the past tradition in order to enter the civilised and modernised world. The implication is then a political reform in modern China (Cheng, 2012). That *He Shang* was aired reflected the rising political power of the liberal camp (Yu, 2008), nevertheless it was heavily criticised for selling Westernisation and attacking the Chinese Communist Party. Earlier we talked about the new thought tides in The May Fourth Movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Western thought and knowledge was popularised by intellectuals. This fashion again prevailed in universities, but the Western tides this time contained popular culture (Hollywood entertainment) that appealed also to the mass consumers. Now the hardcore communists realised that total Westernisation would threaten the leadership of the party (Yu, 2008). The solution to shoring up the legitimacy of the party was Confucianism, which is promoted in the pedagogy and propaganda.

### **3.4.7 Rejuvenation of Confucianism – back to traditions movement (1980s and 1990s)**

This section explains how Confucianism was positioned by the Chinese state as a solution to the liberal-conservative conflict within the party, in which interpretations of critically inherited Confucian values were used to serve the interests of the party-state. Amid this atmosphere of the 1980s the intellectual circles initiated the “cultural craze”. It refers to the cultural debates about the position of Chinese culture facing Western influence, in which a revaluation and rediscovery of New Confucianism was central to the debates. New Confucianism is a neo-conservative philosophical movement dating back to early twentieth century, claiming to ‘be the legitimate transmitter and representative of orthodox Confucian values’ (Makeham, 2003:2). Deng’s Four Modernisations shaped the intellectuals’ embrace of Western civilisations, whilst there was also the fear of uprooting their own traditions (Song, 2003). Confucianism as the source of the nation’s ideological guidance gained more in popularity and the state stepped into the intellectual debates for the first time by funding a major research

project in 1985.<sup>31</sup> The state's attitude towards the Confucian discourse has turned from cautious to advocating. In an international symposium on Confucianism held in 1987, the state representative's address was:

.....In order to make China progress, the only correct way is to start from the needs of reality, critically inherit those periods of excellence in traditional Chinese culture and thought, including that of Confucianism, and at the same time, critically assimilate the reasonable elements of other cultures.

(Song and Zhang, 1991:357)

Two years later in the same Symposium in 1989, Confucius, according to the same representative, was:

an erudite scholar of high moral integrity, who devoted all his life to culture and education, and established the Confucian school. This makes him an important founder of traditional Chinese culture. Confucius and the Confucian school have played a very positive role in Chinese history, and have exerted a deep influence upon East Asia.

(Song, 2003:87)

Yu (2008) is a Chinese scholar in the States who researches moral education. He discovered that in late 1989 a village school started an experimental project teaching Chinese traditional values using the basis of Confucian values, but not the Confucian names. The party-state replicated this initiative and officially endorsed Confucianism and Confucian pedagogy as a palliative of "evil" Westernisation since early 1990s. How had Confucianism become the ideal solution to solve the accompanying problems of economic reforms? The answer lies on the critical inheritance of Confucianism – order and hierarchy, social harmony and self-discipline. Therefore, three elements could be refined that perfectly match the canonical Confucian values to the party-state authored cultural values. Order and hierarchy are equivalent to loyalty to one's country and the ruling authority, i.e. nationalism. Harmony and social stability retain the status quo of the political system, i.e. one-party rule. Self-discipline or regulation are in support of collectivism, i.e. against Western individualism.

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31 The project was called the Academy of Chinese Culture and in the Studies on Modern New Confucian Thought (Song, 2003)

Therefore, the early 1990s marks the revival of Confucianism. For the liberal camp, Confucianism not only avoids the Capitalism-Marxism dichotomy, but this ancient philosophy is now invoked as the reason for the possibility and potential of Chinese Capitalism. For the conservative camp, reformed Confucian values are congruent with their ideology, because they oppose democracy and individualism. Citizens have less awareness of political participation, thus lacking the ideological influence to challenge the status quo. For traditionalists who hoped to combat Western materialism and declining morality because of modernisation (Lee and Ho, 2005), Confucianism fills an ideological vacuum in Post-Mao China for a reconstruction of Chinese identity. Tu (2003), a leading contemporary Confucian scholar, recognises the value of Confucianism to China as it produces a moral community instead of legalist or military society, however it is too politicised.

We witness, on the one hand, the impressive historical record of the ability of the Confucians to moralize politics and to transform a legalist or military society into a moral community. Yet we must also recognize that Confucian moral values have often been politicized to serve an oppressive authoritarian regime. At the same time that the Confucian moralization of politics has become a distinctive feature of Chinese political culture, the politicization of Confucian symbols in the form of an authoritarian ideology of control has been a dominant tradition in Chinese political history.

(Tu, 2003:10)

Tu (2003) compares the function of Confucianism in ancient or medieval China to contemporary China, in which he praises Confucian values as political philosophy replaced law enforcement, harsh punishment and straightness. Confucianism is then a moral framework that guides behaviours. However, paradoxically, it has now become a tool to serve the oppressive regime. The party-state asked scholars and educators to select and package Confucian values to serve the Party. The hardcore leaders of the Party released a guideline of moral education in 1994.<sup>32</sup> The document orders:

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<sup>32</sup> These leaders are from the Central Committee of the Party. The name of the document is called Some Opinions on further strengthening and improving moral education work in schools

[Schools] must carefully study and pass on the time-honoured excellent moral ideals and behavioural norms developed over our long history, and add to them new content for our time.

(Chinese Community Party Central Committee (1994),  
quoted by Yu (2008:124)

The “new content” indicated by the state are new interpretations of critically inherited Confucian values. According to Yu (2008), a top official of the ministry of Education Lin (1994) proposes that a common morality is needed in response to the increasingly diverse lifestyles and values. The reading of this call would be that the individual freedom that comes with consumerism is potentially a threat to political elites. The challenge of interpretations of canonical Confucian values is then to design a new mode of regulation that operate culturally and through the agency of citizens. This has to be achieved in the pedagogy. Moving into the 1990s, China began to reap the benefits of economic reforms, which brings Confucianism to a new level interpretation – it is the Confucian ethic that gave rise to the success of Chinese capitalism. The next section discusses how this perspective evolves.

#### **3.4.8 Neo-Confucianism and contemporary Neo-Confucianism**

This section discusses alternative trajectories of Confucianism in temporal and geographical context, which aims to further demonstrate that Confucianism is not an essential possession by Chinese people, and that different cultural and political development results in particular “Confucian landscape”. I propose that, to explore how contemporary values and behaviours are structured by Confucianism, historical shapings should not be ignored. I will discuss *Neo-Confucianism* and *Contemporary Neo-Confucianism* to illustrate this argument. Neo-Confucianism is used to refer to a metaphysical re-exploration of Confucianism starting in the Song dynasty (A.D. 960-1279), 1400 years after the death of Confucius. It was a response to the Buddhism and Daoism, restoring a more rationalist form of Confucianism as a way of opposing as well as absorbing the former religious movements (Huang, 1999). In effect, Neo-Confucianists incorporated Buddhist and Daoist ideas. Nevertheless there are competing schools of thought contributing to neo-Confucianism, there are the rationalist School of Principle proposed by Zhu Xi and the School of Mind by Wang Yangming. The former school believed that there is an ‘universal and primordial principle that is objectively and morally descriptive’. The latter school rejected the rationalist approach, as it is the

human mind that contains such a principle. Therefore, one needs to be constantly introspective in reaching a moral state of mind (Huang, 1999). It exceeds the capacity of this thesis to tackle the philosophical underpinning of Neo-Confucianism. The argument here is that modern life in Asian countries is historically conditioned by an adapted form of Confucianism, such as nowadays exists in Korea and Japan, which have been influenced by Neo-Confucianism, the former much more than the later (Sorensen 1990; Tucker, 1991). For example, Neo-Confucianism was first introduced to Koryo Dynasty (918-1392), and became the state ideology of the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910). Sorensen (1990) argues that Neo-Confucianism influenced Chosun Dynasty more than it did in China and Japan. To illustrate how neo-Confucianism is adopted to modern daily life in Korea, Levi (2003) states that Korean funeral rites are a mixture of both Christianity and Confucianism.

The terms *Contemporary Neo-Confucianism* (used in Taiwan) or *Contemporary New Confucianism* (used in China) categorise the revival and development of Confucianism since the early twentieth century in the Republic of China. It was when the New Cultural Movement brought in Western knowledge and thoughts for intellectual debates, with an aim to apply Confucian ideas in the contemporary context. *Contemporary Neo-Confucianism* also specifically refers a group of renowned Chinese scholars (philosophers and historians) who flee from wars in China to primarily to Hong Kong, and some in Taiwan and overseas. They continued scholarly contributions not only to Confucian thoughts, but also dedicated themselves to change their home nation through education, turning their frustrations and disappointments to the uprooting of precious Chinese traditions in Maoist-China to commitment to revive Chinese culture. Generations of Hong Kong people, included me, have been influenced by these scholars' efforts. I personally studied their thoughts, which in an edited form continue to be an essential part for Chinese Culture in Advanced Level Examination curriculum. Previously I have used the work of Chin (1979) (here p.83) and Tu (2003) (here p.90), who are both critical of the Communist regime that brought moral degradation of contemporary China. Paradoxically they were two of the most influential ten Confucian scholars officially named by the Chinese state in 1986, when it was believed to be a politically-open era of China (Liu, 2008). This brief introduction of alternative pathways of Confucian thoughts has demonstrated that an ideology has its own development, depending on historical contingencies. "Confucian identity" is not an essentialist entity, how it is interpreted and lived out in daily life is not detached with

socio-economic and political environment. That is the reason for the development of guanxi under the name of Confucianism.

### **3.4.9 Confucian capitalism – explanation to economic growth (1990s and 2000s)**

This section first proposes the concept of governmentality (Foucault, 2009; Rose, 1996), for the theory explains the situation of China, in as much that individual subjectivity and self-regulatory practices are observed with respect to the political power acted on individuals. Secondly, using the framework of governmentality, it specifically discusses how Confucianism is used in the discourse of the success of Chinese economy, in which I identify two beneficiary groups who form alliances with the Party-state to produce the Confucian identity.

Governmentality is first suggested by Foucault in 1978 (Foucault, 2009) and later developed by Rose (1996). Governmentality is the theory that power is constructed through knowledge and institutions, which together constitute discourses that are internalised by individuals to guide behaviours. The theory argues that through governmentality, individuals learn to govern themselves, which is a more efficient form of social organisation. The emphasis is then about individuals' self-fulfilment more than being obedient to external authorities, in achieving the outcome of governance. The Party-state's intervention in intellectual circles, schools and popular culture is an act of creating an imagined traditional identity (Anderson, 1991). So far we have discussed how the state machine operates in order to discipline citizens, but we have yet to explore individuals' reception and response to this form of discipline. For Rose, governmentality is an analytical perspective, which means that in following Rose this thesis needs to look into the organisation and reception of governing practices. Language, in the form of persuasion, rhetoric or intrigue, should be analysed in the process of networks formation, in which governing allies could be seen if relationship between authorities, groups and institutions and their particular interests are identified (Miller & Rose, 1990).

This part explains how governmentality could be used to analyse the particular situation in China, which respect to the way in which Confucian values justify the economic growth and political system in China. They are Chinese scholars and Chinese capitalists. Confucianism is one of the scholarly interests first promoted by American scholars to explain the burgeoning economic growth of China in the 1990s. The term "Chinese/Confucian Capitalism" emerged with reference to Confucian values that are

seen as particular features “belonging” to Chinese persons. The economic miracle of recent decades is the key issue in debates. In the academic circle, Dirlik (1997), a Turkish American historian who has researched the historiography of China for over 30 years, states that cultural arguments such as strong family kinship, emphasis on education and social networks are the most frequently cited Chinese characteristics that explain the “Chinese/Confucian Capitalism”. Now, critically inherited social hierarchy and conformity returned to positive values, in which they facilitate positive interpersonal relationships and education respectively.

Dirlik (1997) had been involved in many conferences on this topic and has reviewed publications addressing this debate from the 1980s and 1990s. He was disappointed with the low scholarly standard and argues that the conferences reinforce and promote the essentialist ideas of Chinese capitalism, ‘dissolving the complexities of and disagreements over the question....keeping it in the forefront of global ideological activity’ (Dirlik, 1997:307). Nyíri shares the same frustrations as Dirlik, arguing that Chinese scholars, following in the footsteps of Western scholars, promoted themselves as intercultural experts who ‘served as bridges between Asian political discourse and Western business discourse’ (Nyíri, 2005:170).

If Chinese scholars benefit from establishing their names in academia, Chinese capitalists explicitly harvest the fruit of production brought about by an extensive workforce coming from this “particular Confucian culture”. Exploitation of factory labour is protected by repressive labour regulations under the development agenda. The vocabularies of class and exploitation (especially young women in the South of China) are suppressed and replaced by the Confucian critical inheritance, i.e.: obedience, loyalty, diligence, thrift and stability (Dirlik, 1997). These ethical values are packaged by scholars in moralising Chinese Capitalism, in Dirlik’s (1997:313) term, “‘Weberizing’ of Confucianism’. The Confucian ethic in China is said to be an Asian reflection of the Protestant ethic in Europe. Tu (1993) describes this as “the dark side” of Confucianism. In 1993, a fire in a Shenzhen factory killed 84 female workers who were trapped by locked windows and doors that prevented workers from stealing factory goods (Ong, 1997). The media commentators and journalists defended the state and foreign investors. The victims were stigmatised as unwelcome “migrants” in coastal China (Ong, 1997). However, many supporters of Confucian capitalism turn a blind eye to the



inequality and oppression. The packaged Confucian ethic explains the reaction to events such as this one.

When questioning the Confucian identity of contemporary Chinese people, we must not ignore the vested interests associated with those who support Confucian capitalism, in the above case, the Chinese scholars and capitalists. These two groups and the Chinese state are said to be an alliance under the framework of governmentality. In Chapter 2 (p.43) we have set out one of the research objectives, which is to investigate whether the Chinese state has extended cultural authority in overseas tourism operations and Chinese visitors' behaviours. This section deals with not only with the state manipulation of Confucianism, but the effects of government policy on the everyday life world of Chinese citizens. This thesis has chosen the context of the UK as a site to encounter Chinese tourists and interview the educational tour operator to gather data to explore the theories of Chinese governmentality outlined above. The next section attempts to critically discuss guanxi.

#### **3.4.10 Guanxi – proxy to deconstruct Confucianism (contemporary China)**

The preceding sections have argued that Confucian identity is not naturally given, but historically conditioned by multiple structures. This understanding is crucial to explore the consumption patterns of Chinese tourists in the UK, in which their practices are particularly associated with filial love and friendship that could be explained through the framework of Confucianism. The previous sections have discussed how critically inherited Confucian values are manipulated for the interest of the Chinese state, and Chinese academic and capitalists. It has demonstrated that China is rewriting history from above. Confucian identity is now an approved narrative of Chinese identity. This leads me to think about power and hegemony in the context of historical Confucian narratives and the intersection of these narratives with individual identity. This section deals with this intersection, i.e. Chinese people's reception of this historical and structural shaping. The approach is to critically explore a concept: "guanxi". Guanxi is widely believed to be bearing Confucian values. It is not only a popular research topic in business related disciplines, such as Management and Marketing. It is a vocabulary used by ordinary people in quotidian experiences. Therefore, guanxi can be viewed as a proxy to understand how Confucianism is appropriated, stereotyped and misrepresented. My critique of guanxi is based on two questions: First, what makes guanxi a unique Chinese construct? Second, to what extent can guanxi claim a Confucian inheritance?

I will begin with a critique of the most referenced journal paper that explores guanxi in the organisational context. Then it attempts to deconstruct the concept by pointing out its internal inconsistency. After all, I argue that the Chinese contemporary Confucian identity is an ethno-racial construct that has superficial Confucian values but lack the orthodox teaching suggested by Confucius.

#### **3.4.9.1 Guanxi – benefit in a relationship**

What is guanxi? Using Google Scholar on 14 Nov 2014, searching from 2000 to 2014, the most cited paper is Park and Luo's (2001) 'Guanxi and Organisational Dynamics: Organizational Networking in Chinese Firms', published in the *Strategic Management Journal*. It tops the list with 1,070 citations. Using this popular paper as an entry point to understand a *generally accepted* meaning of guanxi, its definition is as follows:

Guanxi is a cultural characteristic that has strong implications for interpersonal and interorganizational dynamics in Chinese society..... Chinese people and organizations cultivate guanxi energetically, subtly, and imaginatively, which governs their attitudes toward long-term social and personal relationships. Guanxi is an intricate and pervasive relational network that contains implicit mutual obligations, assurances, and understanding. It has been pervasive for centuries in every aspect of Chinese social and organizational activities.....It is thus critical for businesses in China, whether foreign or local, to understand and properly utilize guanxi in order to gain an edge over competitors.....The practice of guanxi stems from Confucianism.

(Park and Luo, 2001: 455)

The above conceptualisation of guanxi is that it appears as an essentialist cultural value and practice stemming from Confucianism. It originates and prevails in quotidian 'Chinese society'. It has a *way* of making one competitive in doing business in China and it can be learnt by other cultures. I refute its essentialist feature and that it has a Confucian legacy, whilst I agree that guanxi is a popular practice in China. Fan (2002) offers a critical analysis of guanxi in a number of aspects. First, *relationship* is not guanxi. *Relationship* here is seen as a matter of fact that includes kinships (family), connection by environment (classmates, colleagues, neighbours) and connections acquired (friends, acquaintances). The only criterion to turn any *relationships* into guanxi is that the connection is triggered by one who has a particular purpose. Second, guanxi involves reciprocity, in other words, it is a form of social investment (Butterfield, 1983) in a future resource as is the case with an insurance policy (Fan, 2002). Whether we take Park and Luo's loose definition of guanxi, or Fan's critical

examination of *guanxi*, the undertaking of *guanxi* involves intermediate or ultimate *benefits* or *rewards* that have a strong association of wealth.

#### **3.4.9.2 Why has *guanxi* become the prime aspect of human relations?**

The nature of human relations, therefore, is framed under the close scrutiny of a person's use value to another person in monetary terms. When reflecting on everyday experiences in our relationships with somebody we know, do we always think and act from the perspective of political economy? Do we calculate the *guanxi* equity somebody presents us with in a relationship? We consider also equality, morality or charity. In contrast, do we always perform a favour without thinking about the cost involved (time, money and effort). Therefore, the process and act of dealing, maintaining, or disowning a relationship is a complicated negotiation between political and moral economies. That *guanxi* first appeared in popular business writings in the West in the 1980s (Pye, 1982) is probably a reflection that these writers were concerned about matters of political economy when entering the Chinese market for the first time. Nevertheless, why does an emphasis on the use value of human relations in capitalist market economies matter? What is the Confucian element in this particular emphasis? The answer is very relevant to the political and economic situations that we discussed earlier.

Lee Kuan Yew, the first prime minister of Singapore, offered a blunt meaning of *guanxi*. It was after the Tiananmen crackdown when American and Japanese investors in China receded. Those who came to China's rescue were overseas Chinese who kept the economic miracle going.

What ethnic Chinese from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan did was to demonstrate to a sceptical world that *guanxi* connections through the same language and culture can make up for a lack in the rule of law and transparency in rules and regulations.

(unreferenced speech of Lee, quoted by Ong (1997:432))

It is not my focus to discuss a debatable topic about why entrepreneurs from Hong Kong or Taiwan invested in China at that moment. The statement contains two critical messages that define the reality of *guanxi*. The first one is that the particular political and economic environment of China is considered to be different from democracy and the neo-liberal model in the West. The second is the promotion of nationalistic empathy, packaged in racial and cultural discourse to confront sanctions from the West. These

two messages are intertwined, reflecting the spirit of Chinese capitalism. The secret of the success of Chinese capitalism lies on such guanxi connections/networks.

Hamilton et al. (1990) argue that networking is a universal strategy that is especially crucial when individuals are faced with unfamiliar environments or political uncertainty in which economic activities are not directed under legal frameworks. In the case of China under rapid transition from a closed to open economy, guanxi is a term that characterises an intense emphasis on networking, which allows entrepreneurs to achieve business targets through the *right* channels, i.e.: the persons who have political power in a country that has been ruled by law, absence of opposition parties and media scrutiny (Fan, 2002). Yang (1994) states that in China, guanxi is equivalent to corruption, bribery and nepotism. Imagine the Shenzhen factory fire in 1993 that we discussed earlier, if there was no guanxi, how could the factory owners escape responsibility for their wilful negligence? It is ironic that in China, guanxi is a pejorative term amongst Chinese businesses (in a survey completed by 275 senior managers in China, 96.3% felt guanxi was the root of corruption (Fu and Zhu, 1999), but it remains a positive cultural strategy for Western businesses investing in China. Guanxi is then a zero-sum game, where some people benefit because of their extensive networking at the expense of those who have less or none. Then, an essential characteristic of guanxi is to sacrifice justice for economic interests.

#### **3.4.9.3 Did Confucius support the economic implications of guanxi?**

If inequality and injustice are the inevitable consequences of guanxi, the necessity of Confucian support for guanxi becomes an important aspect of enquiry. It is taken for granted assumption that humans have stronger affections towards their blood relations than those without. As discussed Section 3.10, filial love is a particular identifier of Confucian teaching. It does not mean that Chinese have a stronger filial affection than non-Chinese. Rather it is the status of filial piety in traditional culture that matters, as explained in *propriety* (rules, principles, rituals). Guanxi is always conceptualised as the epitome of filial piety. Zengzi (505 – 436BC), a neo-Confucian philosopher, explains how in one of the most important Confucian texts, *Great learning*: ‘Treat with the reverence to the elders in your family, so that the elders in the families of others shall be similarly treated’. The teaching is about that one first takes care the elderly of his family, then extends this love to the elderly of other families. Fei (1948) conceptualises this organisational model of association as concentric circles. The core is the individual

and the layers of circles represent the web kitted by the individual with others. The inner circle comprises blood relations, followed by close relatives, villagers and countrymen. In other words, isn't filial piety a general universal outlook grounded in human nature? Every non-Chinese person could list countless examples of behaving in such an ordering. For example, in Philippines and Turkey, the importance of kinship ties is evident from individuals living on the remittances from their family members working abroad (Dirlik, 1997). Therefore, the question is about where the line is to drawn between personal interest and public interest. A government officer using his power to guarantee his son a job is unjust and unlawful in the West (not to say that this does not occur), whereas it is a norm in China. Confucius support family first, so as other cultures as we observe. However it should not harm the public interest. Confucius does not support the underlying principle of guanxi that put economic interests first.

#### **3.4.9.4 Function of guanxi – idealise political and economic particularity of China**

What is the implication of this deconstruction of guanxi to the Chinese Confucian identity? Chinese people have been using this vocabulary in an essentialist, fixed and unproblematic cultural construct in everyday life. Having discussed that a Chinese person claims no particular privilege in “possessing” a stronger filial love towards family members than non-Chinese, guanxi appears then to be an integral part of the construction of a Confucian meta-narrative to idealise the political and economic particularity of China. The Confucian revival lead by the Party-state through pedagogy and popular cultures utilises the critical inheritance of Confucianism such as conformity and obedience. These values define external *propriety* (codifying behaviours as principles and rituals). It requires the *righteousness* (authentic ethical mind) of individuals who truly embrace Confucian values. Confucius emphasises filial love and Zengzi expands this love to the wider community, but they do not tolerate injustice as a trade-off. Therefore, submission to authority is not unconditional, if the hierarchy is not *righteous*, being obedient is irrational in Confucian teaching.

To conclude the arguments I have made, guanxi is not a moral-ethical relationship, because it involves economic benefits. It sacrifices justice for these economic benefits. Confucius emphasises family first, similar to other cultures, but guanxi puts economic interest foremost, which is against Confucius's principle. The unique Chinese construct of guanxi is then to idealise the particular political and economic system that is beneficial to the Chinese state and capitalist interests. Can guanxi claim a Confucian

inheritance? Guanxi is developed from the critical inheritance of conformity and filial piety. Guanxi is a superficial *propriety* that could be performed without authentic *righteousness* (Goffman, 1967). The answer is yes if we count propriety as a constituent of Confucianism. The answer is no if we focus on the misrepresented orthodox Confucian heritage the Party-state and Chinese entrepreneurs which have cultivated this concept to achieve political and economic goals.

### **3.4 11 Summary – historical conditioning of Confucianism**

This section is a lengthy critical analysis of Confucianism. In Chapter 2, I pointed out that it is important to take into account the historical structures and tradition, however tourism research tends to take Confucian values as the determinant of contemporary Chinese tourist behaviours, which I argue is problematic. This section is a detailed elaboration of the argument. Throughout this assignment it uses the notion of critical inheritance to explain the deliberate selection of these certain Confucian values: filial piety, conformity, collectivism and harmony. The heterogeneous characteristics of Confucianism are shadowed by the agreed content that is otherwise non-negotiable. However the interpretations of such content are varied and manipulated by Chinese intellectuals in the early twentieth century, by Mao's Communist regime and by party leaders to maintain the state power to govern. This proves that Confucian identity is historically conditioned rather than naturally given.

The manipulation of Confucianism is achieved by pedagogical indoctrination. Confucian values as given in Chinese traditional moral frameworks are developed to explain the success of Chinese capitalism, in which Chinese scholars and entrepreneurs are beneficiaries. Using governmentality as an analytical perspective, the Chinese state's direct intervention in controlling the interpretation of Confucian doctrine is a foundation for this thesis to explore whether this government policy is extended to UK educational tour businesses. This research objective is addressed in Chapter 8.

Finally, it aimed to deconstruct guanxi, for the reasons that it is the epitome of filial piety. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (p.14), the analysis and theorisation have followed an iterative process. The consumption patterns of the Chinese tourists observed in the field study suggested that there is a strong association between shopping motives, and filial love and personal relationship. This critical analysis of guanxi provides an explanation of this association. From a macro view, the analysis of guanxi exposes internal inconsistencies, in which it embodies injustice and deviates from Confucian teaching,

whilst using a Confucian façade to mask its hidden economic motives that trade off public interest. However this view should not be seen as a totalising discourse, because no phenomenon is completely accounted for by academic categorisation and theory. The empirical work is then important to explore the agency of Chinese tourists with respect to these issues. This research objective is addressed in Chapter 9.

## CHAPTER 4

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the four theoretical frameworks that explain the findings of the research. The challenge is how to bring macro theories used to conceptually frame these practices into a meaningful connection with empirical observations. This chapter is composed post-hoc after returning from the field, which means that the analysis and theorisation have followed an iterative process rather than being apriori imposed on the data. The intention was not an aspiration to generate new ideas and avoid being “contaminated” by existing theories (i.e. to conduct pure grounded theory). The data emerged out of the context of the theories I have had previously encountered, but found unhelpful in explaining the data generated; in other words, re-exploration of the literature and streamlining has been germane to bringing empirical findings to the right debates descended from macro theories (This grounded methodology will be explained in Chapter 5). This thesis uses ‘identity’ to comprehend the present state of our living world, as Bauman observes that since the 1990s scholarly debates and theories associated with identity have burgeoned.

One may say that ‘identity’ has become by now a prism through which other topical aspects of contemporary life are spotted, grasped and examined. Established issues of social analysis are being rehashed and refurbished to fit the discourse now rotating around the ‘identity’ axis.

(Bauman, 2001:121)

The meaning of culture is now vigorously debated in terms of hybridity and individual or group differences; justice and equality in the language of “recognition” (Bauman, 2001). This proposition is adopted by the thesis, in which through identity, we are able to understand the working of structure in the frameworks of (i) globalisation, (ii) nationalism, (iii) post-colonialism and (iv) traditionalism. The historiography of Chinese race and Confucianism in Chapter 3 provides an historical perspective and justifications for the development of frameworks (ii), (iii) and (iv). The Chinese modernity discourse is connected to these framings – now arrived in individual practices, performances and desires. It starts from individuals, not only about how they



personally perceive, negotiate and feel about themselves in everyday life, i.e. subjectivity, but also how they are visible to others, collectively characterised, represented and hailed. They are the internal self identity and external public identity respectively, in which these two senses of identity are interconnected and interdependent (Alcoff, 2000). The theoretical framework begins with how Chinese modernity is connected to globalisation.

## **4.2 Globalisation and modernity**

In the early 1980s, anti-globalisation discourse attacked global capitalism, as operated under neo-liberal assumptions, for its erosion of local forms of culture and community (Ritzer, 1996). With the rise of Asian economies in the same period, there was a new discourse - the argument of “multiple modernities”. Multiple modernities attempt to challenge the Western economic-political system. For the Chinese state, the answer is Confucian modernity, which ‘appears now a better, superior, modernity – or at least as a cure for some of the ills of Western modernity’ (Dirlik, 2002:27). This section, we focus on every day consumption practices is structured by the state and interpreted by individuals.

### **4.2.1 Chinese desire for the ‘West’**

Western consumption is a contested arena between these structures – the hegemony of the political state and globalised cultural power. Jing Wang, a Chinese scholar in Cultural Studies, analyses how the Chinese state successfully creates a ‘culture as leisure as consumption’ discourse to submerge capitalised consumption that is stimulated to sustain economic growth. By launching propaganda campaigns and macroeconomic policies, it has engaged the urban population (with more money and less money) into urban leisure activities that are the key to make a cultured and modernised Chinese citizen:

The emphasis on the centrality of leisure culture as an egalitarian discourse is strategically vital to a regime caught in the dilemma of having to carry out its agenda of globalization while finding the means to mediate the contradictions resulting from uneven capital accumulation. The public, however, hardly recognized leisure discourse as governmental propaganda. On the contrary, ‘leisure culture’ was seen as a social discourse smuggled into China from abroad and camouflaged as a cultural symptom of China coming west – a giant leap towards a faceless global village.

(Wang, 2001:41)

That is to say, through consumption Chinese people gain a faux sense of being modern and civilised individuals, i.e. catching up the globalism that has long typified Western lives. Wang (2001) also argues that the Chinese public are channelled into democratic participation in consumption rather than political involvement of any sort. Wang's thesis is exemplified by Niederhauser (2012), a photojournalist and cinematographer, who visualises contemporary China through an interpretive lens that is close to the argument proposed by this thesis. The gallery was inspired by the artist's experiences in Beijing, which is the epitome of China's engagement with modernity. The photographer represents the hedonistic consumerism and desire for modernity of contemporary affluent Chinese people, whilst critiquing the social inequality and state-authored discourse of social harmony. Four series, "megablocks", "homes", "cars" and "vacations" are featured in the gallery to visualise this desire in quotidian spaces.<sup>33</sup> I would recommend readers to take a tour of the online gallery.<sup>34</sup> Here is the original text about the project found in the press release of the gallery.

Niederhauser's Visions frames the tension of desire and acquisition, the fantasy of consumer capitalism being lived out in the façades of Western imports. While China's exploding population consolidates into ever increasing urban densities, the corresponding rise in wealth enables acquisition as fantasy fulfillment as a replacement for a culture being subsumed by mass-produced facsimiles of history, normalcy, and tradition. Visions of Modernity engages Beijing's embrace of the mirage of consumer satisfaction, the quixotic pursuit of happiness through the possession of a never ending barrage of the new, the improved, the modern.

(Niederhauser, 2012:n.p.)

Methodologically Niederhauser uses images to document his view on China. The starting point, like the thesis, revolves around individuals. The gallery visualises a collective desire, which is figurative and materialisable – be it an attainable mission or a utopia. This is, in the artist's lens, a life-long modernity project of the Chinese people, who have a transformed way of imagined belongings and living in the contemporary world.

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33 "Megablocks" displays bizarrely homogenous and gigantic malls and apartments captured from the Beijing sky; "Homes" collects IKEA visitors' desirous performance on the showroom living room, bedroom or kitchen, where embodies an imagination of the future comfortable home of the middle class. Likewise, in the "Cars" series, automotive exhibition visitors indulge themselves on the luxurious driving seat and freeze the faux moments in pictures. "Vacations" gathers travel photos, presenting a perceived standard of cultured and civilised lifestyle of a modern person.

34 The is the website of the gallery <http://www.matthewniederhauser.com/visions-of-modernity/>

#### **4.2.2 Tourist consumption**

If the structures of globalised Western desires and the state hegemony are embodied in the arena of daily consumption practices, the challenge of the thesis is how to research middle class Chinese tourist consumption practices in England. Britton (1991) proposes a theoretical framework that addresses the political economy of tourism, meaning that it is an extension of a particular political and socio-economic organisation of the home nation. Britton views tourism from the critical tradition of the Frankfurt School, arguing that the ideological capitalist relations of production of tourism is masked by the language of leisure and freedom. Britton places tourism within the framework of the accumulation of cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1984; Urry, 1990), which suggests that where a person travels to, and what s/he sees and buys reflects the distinctive taste, and the social position of the person. Tourist consumption, then, is not limited to material purchases in servicescapes, but a wider conception on consuming travel experiences in the geographical West. The travelling experiences involve encountering landscapes, objects and people, which as Urry (1990) argues, are constructed and imagined through a wide range of non-tourist practices (e.g. advertisement, film, TV, magazine and videos). Tourist consumption therefore is visible to the host nation citizens and under the scrutiny of the media. This is the reason that I seek to understand the public identity of Chinese visitors by investigating representations of the media and in blogosphere.

#### **4.2.3 Modernity – accumulation of capitals through consumption**

Modernity is a desirable state of being for middle-class Chinese. I seek to explore the Chinese vision of modernity through consumption practices. The challenge is how to theorise the particular rise of the middle classes with a thirst for commodities, which is mediated by state approved capitalist economy. The classic thesis of conspicuous consumption (Veblen 2000) opens the debate for the collective making of the new Chinese leisure group. For Veblen, material possession is a display of status vis-à-vis others who have no such possession but realise this difference. The development of taste out of exclusion is not limited to material consumption (albeit it is Veblen's focus), but also an appreciation of the consumer goods:

The cultivation of aesthetic faculty requires time and application, and the demands made upon the gentleman in this direction therefore tend to change his life of leisure into a more or less arduous application to the business of learning how to live a life of ostensible leisure in a becoming way. Closely related to that requirement that the

gentleman must consume freely and of the right kind of goods, there is the requirement that he must know how to consume them in a seemly manner.

(Veblen, 2000:53)

Bourdieu (1984) develops Veblen's notions, theorising cultural capitals. Bourdieu elaborates the subtlety afforded by Veblen associated with the development of taste, which is both material and symbolic. The latter could be table manner, hobbies or credentials, in which these are comprehensible by, and acquirable from, other individuals, thus forming a group identity, i.e. a social class. Chinese anthropologist Zhang (2010) investigates both production and consumption of the Chinese new middle classes in the domain of homeownership and lifestyle.<sup>35</sup> The ethnographer highlights that the middle classes have a sense of insecurity. This is partially due to the fact that their economic superiority is not matched by cultural capital, for example, their ability to demonstrate their distinction from others through education and the performance of taste. Zhang (2010) argues that homeownership has become a remedy for the deficit of cultural capital. The rapid growth of real estate in China represents the modernisation mantra that the new middle classes embrace; a mantra that is mirrored on Western forms of home ownership, which provide the middle-classes with privacy and comfort that are valued in their own right, but also as markers of social distinction. The insecurity also drives parents to invest heavily on children's education to compensate for their own insufficiency. The future cultivated elites then carry the burden of performing the completed social status of the family to others.

#### **4.2.4 Distinction in Chinese context**

From Zhang's example, we observe many issues associated with the accumulation of cultural capital faced by the middle-class Chinese. There is a pressure, thereby a demand, to establish an identity through gathering different forms of capitals. Being a house owner means that the middle class have already distinguished themselves from the working class, but the problem is how to differentiate identities within the flourishing wealthy class that are economically identifiable? The answer is to get the children to strive for higher education. On the *distinction* thesis, what are other possible cultural markers in contemporary the Chinese context? Veblen's thesis regards tastes originate with the higher class and migrate to the lower classes, known as the trickle-

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35 The research was carried out in Kunming, South West China. Zhang as a local born ethnographer combines her analysis of political and social issues in relation to Chinese urban residents and reflects on their lives.

down model (Trigg, 2001). Bourdieu, however observes the role of the working class, who inspire the upper class to distinguish themselves from the middle class. Anthropologist Fox (2005) in her analysis of English behaviours tells us that the upper class first used to use the word “serviette” to mark their status, but when discovering its prevalence among the middle class, they use the work “napkin” which is always used by the working class. This is a “trickle around” model. The implication of Bourdieu’s model is the flexibility that allows us to analyse the trajectory of tastes. This is especially critical when we think about tastes at the present. The contemporary popular culture is not neatly demarcated or defined by class. The Internet is the decisive factor in transforming popular culture. My point here is to lift the inferior status of popular culture – one of the meanings of popular culture given by Williams (1976). In the Chinese context, globalisation brings in long-been-aspired Western commodities and entertainments, it is the latter that is accessible and universally enjoyed by those of any classes, provided that one has Internet connection at home or via mobile phone. That is why I concern the popularity of Hollywood and British film, TV series and music that could become a cultural marker of middle class identity. Now I briefly explain the aspirational aspect of identity theory that sum up the implications to the global and modern identity of Chinese middle class.

#### **4.2.5 Aspirational identity**

Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’.

(Hall, 1996b:4)

This part aims to discuss how individuals react to the challenges posted by the fragmentation of society associated with modernity. Life in modernity is rapid and always changing with the existence of new social structures and practices (Berman, 1982). Hall’s aspirational conception of identity concerns the challenge of modern individuals, who are dragged away from the stable and uninterrupted past, known as discontinuities. Harvey (1989:12) states that modernity is ‘a never-ending process of internal ruptures and fragmentations within itself’. Giddens (1990) asserts that individuals are highly reflexive in response to these processes. For Laclau (1990), there is no single dominant organising principle of a society, thereby producing different identities. It is Hall’s reading of these theorists, which leads to his naming globalisation

as the process through which issues of cultural identity. Hall is concerned with the relocation and displacement of some populations who strategically employ available symbolic, linguistic and material resources to narrate themselves.

The process of identification starts when the subject is at a point of lack (Hall, 1996a). It is noted that this identification is triggered when there is a lack felt by individuals, who then look for resources to fill this lack. Hall has sympathy with how individuals react to insufficiencies when he theorises around the term *cultural identity*, in which the agenda of the Cultural Studies tradition lies in concerns with oppression and political struggle (Hall, 1992). However, the aspirational conceptualisation of middle class Chinese identity deviates from the oppression model, as Grossberg (1996:88) argues, we have to ‘rearticulate it [the discourse of identity] by placing it within the larger context of modern formations of power’. How the Chinese nouveau riche experience change in late modernity is multiple and complicated; they are not a homogenous group. What is interesting is how these various fractions employ strategically available material and symbolic resources to distinguish themselves. Identity is then situational, relational and is understood from a consumerist perspective, which is ‘grounded in fantasy, in projection and idealisation (Hall, 1996b:3). In this sense, Chinese desire for Western commodities and experiences could be researched by exploring consumption practice. The following questions are provoked by the framing of globalisation-modernity presented in this chapter in order to explore Chinese identity. First, how do Chinese tourists experience with respect to consumption practices in which the ‘West’ as a symbolic or material construct? How do middle-class Chinese visitors distinguish themselves from other social classes through consumption?

### **4.3 Nationalism**

This section extends the discussion of the preceding chapters. It begins by introducing the term nationalism. It explains how the Chinese state has capitalised on historical narratives of anti-West sentiment and ethno-racial pride associated with the Han Chinese, turning them into nationalistic sentiments that are favourable to its governance in accordance with the ideology of the party state. National identity, however, is appropriated and performed by different socio-economic classes in different ways.

#### **4.3.1 Nationalism – from the Western to Chinese context**

Nationalism, in the Western experience, was a crucial force in the formation of the democratic nation state. A general contemporary definition of nationalism is ‘the desire

among people who believe that they share a common ancestry and a common destiny to live under their own government on land sacred to their history' (Wiebe, 2002:5). Some scholars hold a "declinist view" in which globalisation threatens national identity, because dispersed ethnic groups from various states are given a chance to connect; in Rosenau's (1990:40) terminology, "threats from below". This argument is losing ground to another view, that nationalism is rejuvenating (McGrew, 1996). Globalisation offers international cooperation that allows states to empower themselves and strengthen their national interests (Gordon, 1988). This understanding of nationalism appears applicable to the condition of contemporary China, if we tend to believe that the sovereignty of the Chinese state is stable and Chinese people are patriotic.

Hall (1996a) asserts that the sense of belonging to national cultures is above all other identity makers such as religion, language or race. Hall writes from the perspective that individuals in modern times are de-centered and dislocated. Contemporary national identity points not only to sovereignty, but is home to the unification of members from different race, ethnicity, gender and class; in which people in a given society 'can all breathe and speak and produce; so it must be the same culture' (Gellner, 1983:43). This culture, in psychoanalytic parlance, serves as 'a discursive device which represents difference as unity or identity (Hall 1996a:617). In other words, national identity constitutes and simultaneously recruits all sorts of diverse affiliations in support of its authority to impose a universal identity for its citizens. This theory provides the context to explore Chinese nationalism, in which racial and ethnic discourse is highly subsumed within the construction of national identity.

The nature of nationalism and national identity (felt by self or perceived by others) varies from one country/nation to another. Below I shall review the literature that explains nationalism in Chinese context. In summary, Chinese nationalism is top-down as well as bottom-up anti-West sentiment and ethno-racial superiority, in which Chinese people from diverse political, economic, social and generational background exhibit a particular face of nationalism.

#### **4.3.2 Anti-US/Japan/West nationalism**

I start with a book that brought Chinese nationalism into focus worldwide. *China Can Say No* (Song et al., 1996), a collection of blatant anti-American essays, became a domestic and overseas bestseller. It attracted more than 100 news agencies around the world to satisfy inquisitive Western readers (Martinsen, 2008). It was a grass-root

initiative by five young intellectuals, albeit without scholarly arguments involved (Wang, 1997). The essays accused the US of immoral capitalism and imperialism, plotted against the rise of China. The authors claim that China could resist, given that it is a rising economic power and possesses great ethno-racial superiority. It reads:

The blue sky shall die off and the yellow sky shall stand up.

(Song et al., 1996:23)

Chinese political Scientist Wu (2012) refers this nationalistic sentiment in the 1990s as the fourth phase of Chinese nationalism: first, the revolutionaries used racial discourse to rally Han Chinese support to overthrow Manchurian Qing in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; second, the anti-imperialist nationalistic protest against weak Chinese authority, after the signing of an humiliating treaty with Japan; and third, a national hatred towards the West indoctrinated by Mao's Communist regime. We have discussed the first three phases in Chapter 3. The fourth phase of nationalism is closely connected to the previous phases of nationalism, in which the Chinese state evokes the national humiliation of the past and constructs the heroic figure of the party leadership to fight against the evil West for the whole nation (Wu, 2012). Among a number of forces that structure Chinese nationalism, I first of all discuss that it is a state project.

#### **4.3.3 Nationalism as the state project**

In Chapter 3 we have discussed how the Chinese state has shaped people by thought work. Indoctrination by political slogans from the 1960s to the 1980s has eroded people's ability to think reflexively about the historical construction of these political messages (Lu, 2002). Critically inherited Confucian values such as conformity, self-restraint and harmony are harnessed to facilitate indoctrination, which are packaged to combat imported Western culture and universal values, through propaganda and education (Yu, 2008). Gries (2004), an American scholar specialising in China's policies, argues that this pedagogical effort involves intense patriotic content, which is the root of contemporary Chinese nationalism. Gries (2001) asserts that Chinese peoples' reactions to the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 are understandable, which saw damage to American consulates' residences and worldwide public demonstrations by overseas Chinese students. The reason was that many Chinese, probably the majority, truly believed that China had been a victim since the Imperialist era (Gries, 2011). He (2012), a Chinese scholar who has organised a module



entitled “Tiananmen in History and Memory” at Harvard since 2010, expresses her sorrow when she saw irrational and raging nationalistic sentiments among overseas Chinese students. The examples cited include Chinese students at the University of Toronto publicly insulting and bullying a Chinese teacher whose seminar topic was about corruption in China (He, 2012); two MIT Japanese historians used historical drawings to demonstrate the brutality of Japanese militarism, but it was read by Chinese students as a celebration of racism. The consequence was ‘a torrent of vituperative e-mail and phone messages poured in on Profs. Dower and Miyagawa. Some were so threatening as to require police action’ (Perdue, 2006). He (2012) argues that the radicle nationalism is the result of the political socialisation resulting from “official patriotic education” and “unofficial nationalistic discourse”. The former is carried out in pedagogy and the latter is reproduced in civic society. In China, both are tightly controlled by the state. Chinese nationalism is characterised a wounded and passionate sentiment (Siu, 2012).

#### **4.3.4 Grass-root radical nationalism**

It must be stated that the Chinese state does not have full control over the outcomes associated with their policies and actions. For example, in the anti-Japan demonstrations of 2012, the public attacked Japanese consulates, damaged Japanese shops, restaurants and Japanese-made goods, nevertheless most of the shops were Chinese owned. The state stopped the demonstrations, for it assessed that the violence was actually damaging the economy and the reputation of the country. Wu (2012) argues that patriotic demonstrations are a legitimate platform for the lowest class to discharge their frustrations, as they believed it was safe to protest under the protection of the Chinese flag. Figure 7 shows a Japanese car being overturned by the crowd who are waving the Chinese flag in the anti-Japan demonstration in 2012. Figure 8 shows that, in the event, the brand label of a Japanese made camera was masked by Chinese flags. Wu further argues that Chinese nationalism is a false sentiment, once individuals are able to improve their living standard and satisfy their desires; they are likely to give up behaving patriotically. Radical nationalism, it is argued, is a compensation for the impoverishment suffered by those who do not share in the affluence of modernisation. This perspective stems from “irate youth” (in Mandarin Chinese, “fengqing”), who fiercely and blindly support the country in an anti-globalist, xenophobic and ignorant manner (Nyíri et al., 2010). While the bottom class utilises nationalism in a destructive way, some money minded Chinese are able to engineer nationalism.



**Figure 7 – Anti-Japanese protest in China**

**Title of the story:** Why is anti-Japan protest against Chinese people

**Date of publication:** 22 September 2012

**Author:** Wan (2012)

**Source:** Kanzhongguo



**Figure 8 – Chinese-flag camouflage camera**

**Title of the story:** How Chinese photogs are camouflaging their Japanese DSLRs during protests

**Date of publication:** 3 October 2012

**Author:** Zhang (2012)

**Source:** PetaPixel

#### 4.3.5 Nationalism through language use

I use the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games to illustrate contemporary China, because it is perceived by Chinese people or the West as a landmark event that “officially” symbolises China entering the international stage. This is an example that demonstrates how English language can be manipulated as a conflation of nationalism and socio-economical aspirations by an astute business man. Osnos (2008), a China correspondent of *The New Yorker*, interviewed Li Yang, a popular English educator in China and founder of Crazy English. Li Yang is famous for his “new age” teaching/selling style, emphasising personal strength and willpower to national power.<sup>36</sup> Li Yang was appointed by the Beijing Organising Committee to teach in the first official English language intensive training camp for volunteers to the Olympic Games. Osnos (2008) states that, in China, English is an ideology that is ‘strong enough to remake your [Chinese] resume, attract a spouse, or catapult you [Chinese] out of a village. Li Yang has capitalised on ordinary people’s yearning for personal aspirations and moving up

<sup>36</sup> Li Yang portrays himself as a lower class, anti-intellectual that appeals to ordinary people. He arouses the crowd’s humiliation because of their poor English and offers them the way out – by taking his lecture. Osnos witnessed that “Li swooped from hectoring to inspiring; he preened for the camera.....the day afterwards, student run together at the dawn, shouting English....the campus was scattered with lone learners, muttering like rabbinical students...” (Osnos, 2008:n.p.)

the economic and social ladder. The key to success was to mingle individual ambition with patriotism. Below is his selected motto:

The best way to love your country is to learn English, get an MBA and run a great business.

(Abley, 2005:91)

Stimulating patriotism, advocating national spirits, conquering English, revitalizing China.

(Abley, 2005:91)

Li Yang skilfully uses anti-Western sentiment in Chinese society, in the form of English language that symbolises the West, to make a fortune and promoting nationalism for the state-party. Chinese nationalism is prescribed by anti-Western ideology and contradicts Western knowledge/market capitalism closely, co-existing with the desire of personal development and liberalism, which is the skills leading to a success in the future, thereby bringing about prosperity and material consumption – a vision of modernity. However, is this moral business? Learning a global language is understandably important to make a job applicant or an employee more competitive, but it should not be associated with any nationalistic sentiment.

#### **4.3.6 Nationalism as performance of global identity**

The second example is Nyíri et al.'s (2010) explanations of the Chinese mega demonstrations against the West in Canberra in 2008. The authors observed that the majority of Chinese who rallied to express anti-West sentiments (against Western media portrayals of the recent riots in Tibet and Western protesters sought to disrupt the progress of the Olympic torch as it passed through Canberra) are young overseas students. This generation, known as 80-somethings or 90-something (born after the 1980s or 1990s) are the beneficiaries of the economic reforms of China. The authors gathered onsite posters, slogans, online blogosphere commentaries to understand their nationalistic sentiments. These overseas youngsters emphasised that they were open-minded, sophisticated, and cosmopolitan, and had global visions. Although using the slogans and songs from Maoist era, they distanced themselves from the “irate youth” who are uneducated, although they could be equally aggressive within a particular limit. They also rejected the claim that they were mobilised by the Chinese state. These overseas students from middle-class families, according to the authors, saw the

demonstration as a platform to perform democratic and fashionable lifestyles in a foreign land, through online social media to their fellow countrymen in the home nation where demonstrations of this sort are prohibited by the state. It appears that the global identity is embraced by the overseas young middle-class who employ symbolic resources to distinguish their cosmopolitan and superior status. How do they make the comparison (overseas Chinese vs China Chinese) comparable? Nationalism offers a level playing field, the online social media sets up the platform for the performance:

Rather, students use the official discourse of nationhood as just one element of a shared vernacular to reinforce a sense of community. While some contributors to the online discussion did express explicit support for the Communist Party, most were careful to distinguish patriotism from loyalty to the government.....insisted that "we do have our own stand, our own point of view".

(Nyíri et al., 2010:54)

The particular context of global and modern identity of young middle-class Chinese, stems from a shared belonging of the motherland China, in the conflation of Chinese state and culture, whereas it is clothed in certain cosmopolitan and 'Western' liberal values. The next section discusses another constituent of nationalism which is not within the anti-West conception.

#### **4.3.7 Ethno-racial nationalism**

While the popular *China Can Say No* that promotes radical nationalism was quashed in 1996, in the same year, sociologist Unger's (1996) edited *Chinese Nationalism* was published. It has been widely referenced in scholarly discussion of nationalism in China. The book surrounds a central theme that Chinese nationalism is both, about loyalty towards the state. As well as a sentiment of cultural superiority. Authors use an historical perspective to analyse the construction of Chinese identity and develop theories to explain the nature of nationalism. Chapter 3 demonstrates the conflation of Chinese race and ethnicity, in which the centre-periphery and civilised-barbarian binary construction gives rise to an ethno-racial pride self-perceived by Chinese people. This opens up debates around how to conceptualise Chinese national identity. Political scientist Townsend (1996) has developed the culturalism-to-nationalism theory, which positions Confucianism as the prime and guiding political phenomenon. Confucian ideology was absorbed by revolutionaries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century into a prototype of patriotism, in which the devotion associated with Confucian cultures was shared by the

state. Historian Duara (1996) holds a similar view to Townsend. The method is to deconstruct the historical political systems of China. He argues that each major imperial political movement involved different combinations of historical racial and ethnic narratives. In sum this volume suggests that the contemporary Chinese national identity is a special complexity:

It [national identity] comprises an admixture of political nationalism, ethnic Han identity, and a culturalist pride that is observed in allusions to Chinese civilization as a point of self-identity.

(Unger, 1996:xiii)

The anthologies acknowledge that Chinese cultural sense of belonging is a major constituent of nationalism. However, it does not consider the racial prejudice held by Chinese people in framing national identity. I assume that when the volume was published in the mid-1990s, China had minimal international exposure compared to what we observe nowadays. Now we are able to observe in rudimentary spaces (e.g. song lyrics, blogosphere) that discourses about a “strong and powerful” China often involves racial narratives. Edensor (2002) proposes that researchers should address unreflexive routines and habitual practices of everyday life of the manifestation of national identity. One of the ways is to explore popular culture. Cheng (2011) takes on this approach to explore Chinese racial nationalism. The author reviewed the lyrics of patriotic songs which were sung to celebrate the Beijing Olympic Games, and discovered that the racial narratives (e.g. “Yellow race”, “black eyes, black hair”) and imagined symbols (e.g. Dragon) are connected to the ambition for Chinese people to be powerful people in the world.

.....the Yellow Race is now marching on the world.....After 5,000 years, finally it is the time for us to show up on the stage.....black eyes, black hair and yellow skin.....forever, we are descendants of the Dragon.....

(lyrics quoted by Cheng (2011:577))

There are two research questions that build upon Nyíri's (2006) work. First, is there any state intervention in the production of educational tours in the UK? Second, how do Chinese tourists reflect or perform their national identity in pedagogical spaces?

#### **4.4 Post-colonialism**

This section builds upon the conclusion of the historiography of Chinese race in Chapter 3. There is an explicit racial hierarchy in China observed in the public media programme and in blogosphere, in which Black people are being overtly discriminated against. It uses psychoanalytic theory to analyse the psyche of the Chinese people living in rural hinterlands in Maoist China. They lacked materials and projected their desire for modern technology and prosperity onto the Anglo-Saxon states, in which the ability to 'become modern' is equivalent to the biological belonging of a people, i.e. colour. The focus of this section is White supremacy. Plenty of examples tell us that contemporary White privilege exists in the contact between Chinese people and White people. I will choose a BBC correspondent's example to begin the discussion. It then attempts to explain how English language has shaped this construct, which stems from debate around colonialism and post-colonialism (historical period after colonialism rather than critical perspective towards colonialism). It is historically conditioned by asymmetrical power relations between the West/colonist and the east/colonised. Postcolonial identity helps us to understand the encounter between Chinese visitors and English citizens.

##### **4.4.1 Prevalence of White privilege**

The debate of White privilege has a long scholarly tradition in cultural geography and postcolonial studies, especially in relation the identification 'Black'. It is beyond the scope of this research project to look into the notion of White privilege systematically as a phenomenon. However, it does seek to acknowledge the power relations that are constructed through tourism spaces. I am persuaded by Reynolds's (2008) blog to use my self-experience to explore the tie between English and White privilege. Reynolds was a China correspondent for the BBC from 2006 to 2009 and he recorded his experiences, testimonies, understandings, feelings and reflections in his BBC blog. Below is an extract of an article, "National Sentiment" he posted in July 2008.

When things are going well, this sense of national pride lives alongside a desire to make friends with the West. I know many people here who download western music onto their iPods, who complained bitterly when a local cable company made it too expensive to watch Premiership football, who learn English, and who want to go and study abroad. I've been to events where people politely ask if they can have their picture taken with me because they want to show off the fact that they've met and made friends with a foreigner.

(Reynolds, 2008: n.p.)

Reynolds is very open about his own experiences of White privilege in China: that people adore Western cultures; yearn for a Western lifestyle; and desire ‘White’ symbolic capitals. Nevertheless these desires for the ‘West’ are held in tension with patriotic against-the-West discourse. Hooks (1992) is one academic author who would praise Reynolds for his honesty. She writes about her dissatisfaction and anger at the white’s unwillingness to acknowledge the institutional racism in the States, and she explores how liberalism (i.e. the discourse of universal human rights) is used to position Black resistance to prejudice. I will come back to Hooks later when discussing my own experience in Hong Kong in relation to English language.

#### **4.4.2 English language – conflation to White supremacy**

In wider Asian context, White privilege is grounded firstly in the superiority of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that primarily comes from *linguistic capital*; i.e. English language. English perceived by policymakers in Asian countries is a tool to achieve national goals and by individuals as a gateway to success (Tsui and Tolleson, 2007). Nunan (2003), a linguist who specialises in teaching English, explores the impact of English on pedagogical policies in a range of Asian pacific countries that represent contrasting states of development and colonial background, concluding that these countries have been investing heavily on learning and teaching proficient English, thereby depriving resources from other aspects of the curriculum.<sup>37</sup> Bolton (2008), professor of English Linguistic, discusses the English proficiency in some Asian countries in both ex-colonies of Anglophone powers (outer-circle) and the most populous English-leaning nations (expanding-circle).<sup>38</sup> From the 1980s to 2000s, academia has celebrated the vitality of adapted and localised forms of English, owing to the particular socio-linguistics histories of the outer circle. However, educational, political and business leaders disapprove of local English and focus on “standards” of English. The author attributes this to the fact that Asian economies have shifted from labour-intensive production to service industry work, and the benchmark for the latter is American or British English; i.e. native speakers. For the nations of the expanding-

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37 The seven countries Nunan (2003) explores are People Republic of China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam because the author aims to capture their different characteristics in terms of economic development status, size and ex-colonial/independent sovereignty.

38 The eleven countries in the outer circle are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, The Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka. The 10 in the expanding circle are Burma, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam

circle, there has been an interest in researching the status and functions of English, because it is the door to prosperity within higher education and the global jobs market – a “marker of middle class identity” (Bolton, 2008:8).

Austrian researcher Klepeis (2012) explains how linguistic capital is converted to symbolic, economic and social capitals among White expatriates in China.<sup>39</sup> She found out that a Chinese-lookalike Kazakh was rejected in a job interview for an English teaching position at a local school. The job was given to a White Spanish expatriate whose English competency was a lot lower than the Kazakh applicant. An English male told the researcher that he did not have any experience in teaching English, but was given the autonomy to design the curriculum and paid twice the rate of the Chinese teacher who had been teaching for the previous 20 years (Klepeis, 2012). The author’s ethnographic work tries to exemplify the supreme importance of Whiteness in association with “native” and “standard” English. This argument is consistent with that proposed by Lan (2011), a Taiwanese sociologist who studies White privilege through research into high-skilled migrants in Taiwan.<sup>40</sup> In the educational sector, English teachers are predominantly White, whilst black applicants are rejected because the parents of students prefer White teachers (Lan, 2011). One African American was given an interview for an English teaching position, but experienced explicit racism in a response of the school manager, who was aggrieved that the candidate did not specify her race in the application.

White privilege goes beyond the language sphere. A White American is preferred to his Taiwanese wife in the same profession to speak in public because it is perceived that his racial identity holds more powerful and professional connotations.<sup>41</sup> The linguistic

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39 Klepeis spent more than 1 year studying and researching in Kunming, Yunan in Southwest China for her master’s thesis. She studied a Chinese Language Course in Yunan University from August to June 2009 for two semesters and returned for a field study from August - November 2011 in order to study the life of Western expatriates living in the capital. She studied Cultural and Social Anthropology at University of Vienna

40 The term Taiwanese here refers to residence in Taiwan, because more than 98% are of Han ethnicity, which indicates that Taiwan is a highly homogenous society.

41 They are both environmentalists and the American man is always invited to speak on green issues and they also wrote proposals for public funding (ibid). The American man reflects that he was the persuaded to speak, rather than his wife, in public: ‘Sometimes people listen to me better, only because I am white. I like this and I also hate it. ... Some professors ask me to lecture their students. This is impossible in the US. I cannot do it in the US. I am not very eloquent; I cannot compete with others...’

(Lan, 2011:1680)



capital is then converted to social and economic capitals such as job opportunities, social status and marriage. And it has become institutionalised in the society. For example, a blonde woman from New Zealand married to a Taiwanese man, told the researcher how her husband was admired and praised by strangers for his “achievement” of marrying a “foreigner” (Lan, 2011), which is a mirror meaning of Kelsky's (2001) term, *occidental longings*. It refers to a Japanese woman’s aspiration for romance with Western men in search for inclusion into the global society.

There are plenty of examples in Lan’s study and they all contribute to the argument that in Taiwan, English is attached to whiteness, which is highly racialised and bears superiority compared to non-white English speakers. A Caucasian with less or no English proficiency benefits from the skin colour and qualifies as English. The term “foreigner” in Taiwanese language, is tailored for the white (and there are other racist expressions for Black). Lan’s work is entirely consistent with my own experience as a Hong Kong national, although my experience has been to see how language has been constructed as part of discourses used to distinguish between UK citizens and Asian others. People in these Asian countries do not celebrate the creolisation process, for example the local adaptation of languages. I feel that this postcolonial identity should not be ignored. The question I bring to the fieldwork is: to what extent are postcolonial identities (theorised through notions of racial hierarchy) constitutive of the cultural identities of Chinese visitors?

#### **4.5 Traditionalism**

The interplay between Chinese modernity and tradition is the phenomenon that I subsequently identified as an important question to explore, for I am interested to compare how Hong Kong and China nationals differ in responding to contemporary challenges from global capitalism. However, this big objective goes beyond the empirical work that I conducted, which did not ask the respondents questions in relation to traditional identity. Therefore, I specifically explore gift consumption practices in relation to filial piety, a critical inherited Confucian value embraced by Chinese people. This section first discusses traditional cultures and then explains that the Chinese revival of Confucianism is a forging the traditional culture.

For the real promise of Cultural Studies had always been contained, not in the discovery of a new empirical subject matter, but in a ‘deconstruction’ of the very

theoretical boundaries that hitherto demarcated literature from fiction, art from culture, the elite from the popular.

(Milner, 1996:23)

This comment is based on the approach of Williams (1961) and Hall (1992), which explore the interplay between high and low culture. This approach is close to the heart of the thesis: for I do not adopt the relativist conception of culture in thinking about cultural identity, but attempt to interpret the *real* identity represented and lived by Chinese individuals. Contemporary lives are shaped by organisations and the meanings shared by those living within them – lived culture. We inherit and learn from the past through documents, arts, and all sorts of objects of particular periods – recorded culture. The process of this inheritance is not neutral. It involves selections, (re)interpretations, omissions in response to the changing organisations and challenges of the present, in William's (1961) terminology this process represents a *structure of feeling*. What shapes our understanding of culture is then a series of process of selections and reselections made by our ancestors. Through these selections individuals seek to control their way of life and maintain self-esteem. I will elaborate my structure of feeling in Section 5.9 (p.148) as a Hong Kong national. For the case in China, I feel that people are facing double challenges in this process of selection. The first one is a more universal feature in later modernity; the second one is related to the state hegemony.

Bauman (1996) theorises how individuals cope with uncertainty when entering late-modernity and the place of morality. He uses the seminal metaphor of the transition from pilgrims to tourists, explaining that *modern* identity is about how to preserve identity and keep it stable, while *postmodern* identity avoids fixation and is always open to change and adapts new options. The implication of this identity project, to Bauman's dissatisfaction, is the displacement of morality - in modernity in which orders, laws and expertise take partial responsibility for individuals; in postmodernity in which non-commitment, disengagement and responsibility avoidance lead to 'a disenchantment with personal relations' and a 'cult of sensuality' (Lasch 1979:102). I share Bauman's scepticism about the value of omnipresent postmodern strategies, adopted by many cultures in the time of globalisation, and I also believe that we are able to learn and inherit certain values from our recorded culture. This project is to be done in every culture. Are Chinese people willing to take on this project to look back to own cultural

traditions, amid the environment where the competing identity makers are available for them to aspire to?

Modernisers argue that those who support ‘traditionalism’ are reluctant to embrace change for a better future. I hold a contrasting view when theorising the traditional identity of Chinese people. Globalisation can be compatible with conserving cultural difference, although often it is working against these outcomes; nevertheless, the key hypothesis generated from the literature and my own experience is that globalisation is manipulated by the Chinese state hegemony for particular ends. The point of departure then is not an anti-globalisation thesis that positions globalisation as the handmaid of Western cultural imperialism that erodes “weaker” local cultures. My focus is on the discourse shaping how Chinese people interact with Western cultures. I have explored the literature that explains the ideological framing of the ‘West’ associated with nationalism for the purpose of constructing national cohesiveness, and also the faux sense of modernity that is designed to boost consumption. In academia and industry we see the celebration of the valuable Chinese traditional culture, known as Confucian capitalism, epitomised by Confucian values. I have critically examined that the revival of Confucianism as a state project to subordinate culture to market economy, disciplining the impoverished mass of factory workers by indoctrination to an ethos of conformity and collectivism – the critically inherited values of Confucianism. All these discussions attempt to demonstrate that traditional values are forged in contemporary China. In other words, it is my concern that in this particular interface between the global and local, Chinese people are perhaps forgetting their valuable *traditional culture*. I share the perspective of Ong, a scholar from Singapore with Chinese trait:

It was startling to me to talk to people in China who did not know Chinese history—because they were not taught it when they were growing up—but suddenly confessed to be Confucianist. I do not know what they meant by being Confucianist, but it was like a genetic blueprint. We are Chinese, so we are Confucian.

(Ong, 2005:20)

With respect to Chinese cultural identity in the framing of traditionalism, I build upon the theory of critical inheritance, in which filial piety is a critical Confucian value embraced by Chinese people. I will explore the gift consumption practices. Shopping souvenirs for parents is common in for Chinese people. The Chinese students shared

with me what and why they bought souvenirs and for whom, which enables me to connect my analysis to Confucian values.

#### **4.6 Summary – theorisation of contemporary partial Chinese identity**

Contemporary China is experiencing unprecedented economic growth and modernisation. The co-existence of economic liberalisation and socialist authoritarian rule means that the road to modernity has taken a particular form, which can be described as Confucian modernity. This thesis discusses how the Chinese middle classes live out this modernity, by doing so I focus on the identity of individuals that serve as a reflection to the modernity discourse. The empirical findings suggested that the collective representation and sense making of Chinese people could be meaningfully interpreted by particular frameworks. This chapter aims to unpack these frameworks in Chinese context and connect them to tourist consumption behaviours. I question Chinese middle class's practices in relation to the West, the state hegemony and Chinese traditions.

Globalisation to China is both a threat and opportunity. It appears that the Chinese state has successfully critically selected the most important capitalist mode of consumption, but submerged liberal and individualistic values. Through propaganda, the necessary act of Western life style and material desire is overlaid with a veneer of Confucian values and modernity narratives, i.e. being a civilised, cultured, modern and urban. The Chinese state has strategically fostered this aspirational identity for its citizens. A neglected aspect of research into the Chinese aspiration for global-modernity involves how Chinese visitors consume English tourist sites, landscapes and people, and their material consumption practises. I have chosen to explore narratives in relation to the motives of gifts bought for family and friends (to perform Confucian filial piety), because it is a proxy to examine their interpretations of traditional culture.

For the party-state, the strong Chinese national identity is a successful product that is integral to Chinese modernity. Chinese nationalism resolves two problems of the state. The first one is a lack of mandate to govern, and second, the creation of a stable society to keep China functioning as a global factory. The party-state has inherited the effective indoctrination passed down from the Communist tradition by nurturing patriotism that is grounded on inherited anti-Western sentiments. National identity appears homogenous, however contains diverse interests based on different socio-economic situations. Entrepreneurs are practically patriotic because of favourable business environments

guaranteed by the state. Factory workers are pathetically nationalistic since it is the only way to discharge their anger. Overseas middle-class students are proud of the home nation, as it offers a common language with home Chinese friends through which the later might admire their cosmopolitanism and global exposure as patriotic. Nationalism is expressed and performed, occupying themselves within a discourse of strong, powerful and globalised China. This framework enables me to explore how exactly middle class Chinese tourists exhibit nationalism and whether the Chinese state has extended intervention to the UK tourism businesses.

Finally the Chinese post-colonial identity is connected to the vision of modernity. Chinese ethno-racial superiority and racial hierarchy is apparent in the recruitment of English teachers; encountered by white journalists; and features in popular culture. I have tried to explain that white privilege is a projection, a post-colonial construction based on the superiority of English language. This framework explains the observed encounter between Chinese visitors and English citizens in the pedagogical spaces.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **METHODOLOGIES**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Methodology is principally the ‘theory of the method, including its epistemological and ontological assumptions’ (Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001:70). This chapter focuses on a number of methodological issues, and briefly discusses the methods involved in each research space. In order for readers to connect research settings and findings to the methods involved, the practical aspects of the methods, such as the choice of particular news articles and how to gain access to the field, will be detailed in the empirical chapters 6 to 8. To signpost this chapter, Section 5.2 first reflects on the present researcher’s social location when pursuing the doctoral project that is related to China and Chinese people, in which I could be accused of bias when writing from a critical perspective. It attempts to defend the thesis, ontologically by explaining my perspective on China that stems from the cultural studies tradition, and epistemologically by discussing that it is crucial to engage in the theories behind accounts of experiences and knowledge from a post-positivist realism perspective.

The five research objectives are explored in the four spaces as shown in Table 5. Section 5.3 discusses why the thesis explores the virtual spaces and the role of the mass media and blogosphere in shaping how we perceive reality. It will also discuss how discourse analysis is adopted to explore the selected news articles from British and blogosphere. Section 5.4 takes on seminal tourism theories (MacCannell (1976) and Urry(1990)) to critically explore the meaning of contemporary overseas travel of Chinese people. It tries to ask this question – how does tourism as an approach to reflect the structures of Chinese modernity? Section 5.5 discusses ethnomethodology, which is used to explore the gift shop servicescapes, in order to turn the researcher into an agent to illicit responses from research subjects. Section 5.6 critically discusses the use of ethnography in pedagogical spaces. As mentioned in the preceding chapters, the research has followed an iterative process. Section 5.7 evaluates the quality of the data. Section 5.8 explains how principles of grounded theory are adopted in the thesis. Section 5.9 explains the positionality of the present researcher. Section 5.10 discusses the ethical issues of the research.

**Table 5 – Methodologies to explore research spaces**

Types of Spaces		Research objectives *	Methodologies
Virtual spaces	Mass media spaces	1 + 5	Discourse analysis
	Blogosphere		
Tourism spaces	Servicescapes	2 + 5	Ethnomethodology
	Pedagogical spaces	3 + 4 + 5	Ethnography and Interview

Source: author

\*Research objectives in brief:

1. investigate the host nation’s representation of Chinese visitors in mass media and blogosphere.
2. explore English workers’ perspectives on Chinese visitors in servicescapes.
3. investigate whether the Chinese state has extended cultural authority in overseas tourism spaces.
4. explore the experience of Chinese students in UK pedagogical spaces.
5. examine Chinese visitors’ gift shopping patterns in the UK with reference to the Confucian filial piety and guanxi.

## 5.2 Ontology and epistemology

This section first explores the ontological question in relation to the conflicting perceptions of China held by the present researcher and by some people observed in the media, his work place and social circle. In short, the thesis has been criticised by my peers as magnifying the “dark side” of China. The verdict is probably that I do not know the ‘real’ China. However, I do not hold a positivist view that there is only one truth about China. The job of social science researchers is to critically analyse a particular *real* issue that is significant to the life of individuals. I feel that some “pro-China” comments stem from an anti-Americanism perspective and are influenced by Chinese exceptionalism, which either ignore the *real* issue that is of concern, or focus exclusively on the “bright side” of China. Constructivism can describe the construction of different positions, but is unable, given its underpinning of relativism, to evaluate these positions, that is, to pronounce which position is better or worse from a moral perspective. This has shifted the focus to the epistemological issue, in which the

departure of this thesis is the tradition of cultural studies. Post-positivist realism enables us to respect the episteme that is grounded in experience. Nevertheless it requires careful examination of the contexts and knowledges informing that experience.

### **5.2.1 Criticisms of the thesis**

The thesis has received comments that it is about politics, whilst my peers have argued that it might risk being conceived that it is a willing or unwitting polemic against China or Chinese people. Aristotle argues that ‘man by nature is a political animal’ (Aristotle, 1986) and identity politics is therefore inescapable. My association with Aristotle stems from his conception of politics that human beings virtually live in politics, in other words, politics are unavoidable and quotidian; human have values and they have speech to negotiate with others in order to form a community. Given that identity politics are unavoidable I cannot discount my feeling towards China as a Hong Kong national, which have been shaped by the recent political conflict during the road occupation movement. One construction of my motives in the thesis is that seek to support the political movement through the thesis, to propagate an anti-China message as a way to rally supporters in the academic community. I claim not to disconnect my worldview from the thesis; therefore I am obliged to inform readers of my positionality (ethno-racial and political). I seek to resolve the problem of observer bias, by viewing it as a metaphysical issue. This is central to constructing the theoretical framework of the research.

First of all, I have this question: What is your view on China? This question is too vague and needs to be unpacked in order to initiate a debate. In the tourism literature, as I observed and exemplified in Section 2.3 (p.31), researchers studying China tend to be apolitical. I suspect that this is an avoidance of the binary positive/negative treatment of China within a given set of signifying practices. Ironically this is a political correction decision itself. The connotation associated with thinking China a sign is that China is a totality construct, in which it encompasses Chinese culture, people, history, the state and so on. These things are intertwined and conflated. The implication of this connotation is that researchers seek to choose a safe agenda in their research, which is to ignore the “negative” association of China. Business marketing and operations related or traditional culture inspired agendas would be adopted one way or the other. China as sign is then highly political, which draws a binary response in a particular spatial and ethno-racial context. I personally encountered this problem – when I shared my research



topic with a Chinese colleague, such as the background context of China (see Chapter 2) and the research direction that explores Chinese nationalism and governmentality. My colleague was upset by my work, because it reveals the “dark side” of China, and I was encouraged to explore Chinese ancient classics to get inspiration – Confucianism or Taoism. This is the difficulty I have been carrying most of the time in the PhD environment. I was not able to connect my experiences and perceptions of the “dark side” and “bright side” of China in analytical terms using academic theory. This became a political issue associated with the fact that harmony among cohorts was prioritised. As a result, exchange of ideas of the research topic was stifled.

### **5.2.2 Cultural studies**

The theoretical point of departure of the thesis is Cultural Studies. Hall et al.'s (1980) *Culture, Media and Language*, and Hall and Du Gay's (1996) *Cultural Identity* have inspired the PhD. The Centre of Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, founded at 1964, was a response to the frustration of the treatment of culture – ahistorical, structural-functionalist and elitist (Hall, 1980). It broke with British sociology in the 1950s that was highly influenced by American sociology. The latter accepts a singular value system by rejecting the particularity of cultures. Cultural Studies was not solely a scholarly initiative, but was politically driven, concerning the pulse of post-war Britain, in which it intended to make cultural interventions within a reflective and historical framework. Hall was the founder of the *New Left Review*, together with Raymond Williams and Edward Thompson in 1960. This background context indicates that the theoretical foundation of Cultural Studies was explicitly emancipatory, oppositional, broadly socialist, which heavily criticised inequality and exploitation associated with capitalism based on revisionist and humanist Marxism (Crossberg, 1995). Cultural Studies concerns both social structure and agency, in which it aims to explore how structures are lived and felt, ‘[refusing] to assume that people are cultural dupes’ (Grossberg, 1995:76). Cultural Studies offers an intellectual perspective for me to understand contemporary China, in other words, this perhaps leads to an accusation of exploring the “dark side” of China. Nevertheless, this is my reality of China.

The question is, do I adopt the correct approach to exploring China? Isn't it a fact that the Chinese state censors the Internet (e.g. Google and Facebook)? Do you believe that in the classroom Chinese students have the freedom to learn non state-authored

materials? Would Gramsci's (1971) hegemony be not be a more reasonable theory to examine the situation? I witnessed in a departmental seminar that my Chinese colleague openly expressed that it was OK for China to censor Youtube and Facebook in China because they had their home-made social media platforms. Is it meaningful to explore how the structure has influenced the human agency in terms of cultural consumption? I have observed that some Western liberals and Chinese people have used similar narratives to explain away the above Chinese state measures. Left wing liberals typically project their anti-Western and anti-capitalist views. This liberal group has plenty of examples to cite, condemning the United States, from the killings of Indians in North America to more recently the CIA being accused of torturing suspected terrorist detainees, and that US-led airstrikes killed civilians in Syria. This Anti-Americanism argument is always welcomed by patriotic Chinese people, who on the other hand add on an 'unchallengeable' "Chinese exceptionalism" - China is developing and in the progress of reformations in its particular trajectory and therefore cannot be criticised as a work in progress. The Chinese have appropriated historical materialism to explain that process, which means that it is a necessary process for every country to have go through history the road to development. Therefore, we have to be tolerant of the necessary negative events accompanying the overwhelmingly positive events associated with the development to a modern country.

### **5.2.3 Limitations of constructivism**

I have never tried to exaggerate what is happening in China. What is more important is that I accept that I have no right to deny anybody's feelings or views on China. In other words, I *respect* the reality of China held by my Western or Chinese colleagues. However, I question the theories behind their reality. The underlying principle of anti-Americanism, argued by Ceaser (2003), is a construct of European thought that is shaped by continental philosophy. However, how does anti-Americanism deal with the everyday life experiences lived and felt by Chinese people under the authoritarian regime that exercises cultural authority? Here I think of the disagreement between Sartre and Camus. Sartre refused to denounce the concentration camps in the Soviet Union, in the way he did to the Nazi's. Camus was disappointed that Sartre turned a blind eye to the suffering of individuals under the Soviet regime, he wrote *The Rebels* (2000). I am not able to go into details of the philosophical underpinning of Camus about the interface between solidarity and rebellion. The critical point here is that it is possible for us to recognise the suffering of others. Obviously it is not the claim that

these anti-Americanists should fly the “Free Tibet” flag, or that the Chinese people are in a critical condition under oppression, but I expect this camp to re-visit their theoretical lens to view the world, i.e. to release other lens other than the anti-Americanism lens, or allow a syndication of all available possible lens, as Ceaser (2003:4-5) states:

It is tempting to call anti-Americanism a stereotype or a prejudice, but it is much more than that. A prejudice, at least an ordinary one, is a shortcut usually having some basis in experience that people use to try to grasp reality’s complexities. Although often highly erroneous, prejudices have the merit that those holding them will generally revisit and revise their views when confronted with contrary facts.

The supporters of Chinese exceptionalism believe that the economic miracle itself is a justification of China being on the “correct road” to modernisation. Its underlying principle is Utilitarianism, meaning that its achievements are evidently demonstrated in strong GDP growth and the ability to host the Olympic Games - “bright side”, which outweighs the trade-offs such as inequality, injustice and environmental degradation - “dark side”. Should getting rich (for some part of the population) be the imperative of a nation? I would challenge Utilitarianism with China’s own guiding principle of development – “socialism with Chinese characteristics”, for this ideology promises socialism and communism. How does it account for the “dark side”? In a wider critique, I also associate Graeber’s (2011:98) “baseline communism” that operates under ‘the principle of from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs’. In simple words it means that, by nature we do act and give away to somebody who are in need without thinking about a payback. My challenge to Chinese exceptionalism is in regard to why it ignores humanism but champions solely the capitalised market economy? If we use a social constructivist approach to view the situation, there are a number of mind-independent and theory-mediated realities. This is, however, the end of the discussion, as we can never enter each other’s phenomenal world to gain a clearer understanding, nor can we resort to an external authority to help evaluate the value of each perspective. The question of truth has become unimportant. Therefore, I reject constructionism and adopt realism to find a way forward beyond relativism.

#### **5.2.4 Post-positivist realism**

I am speaking my small piece of truth, as best as I can.....[W]e each have only a piece of the truth. So here it is: I'm putting it down for you to see if our fragments match anywhere, if our pieces, together, make another piece of the truth that can be part of the map we are making together to show us the way to get to the longer-for-world.

(Pratt (1984), quoted by Moya (2000:7))

This is Moya's citation of feminist Minnie Pratt in Moya and Hames-Garcia's (2000) edited volume that dedicates the theoretical perspective of post-positivist realism to understand identity. Post-positivist realism is not about claiming what is *the* truth, but respects the episteme of individuals. First of all, post-positivist realism does not entail positivism and ontological absolutism that insists there is one truth in the universe. It carries the realism label, because it takes the core idea of realism that human beings 'are not caught in the "prison house of language" to such an extent that we can know nothing about the world at all' (Alcoff, 2000:316). Mohanty (1993) has paved the theoretical foundation for the volume to advance the epistemic status of personal experience, meaning that the individual experience is not purely a personal construct; rather it is determined by the outward socio-cultural and political system. The outward world that constructs the system is theory mediated. That is to say, our reality of the world is not a discrete entity, which is communicable with another person's reality. However, the constructivists are not interested, or being unable to assess the truth value of the statements. Whereas the realists would claim that:

Our evaluation of the truth value of an observation may in part depend on the various theories to which we subscribe, theories that can be right or wrong.

(Hau 2000:155, quote Devitt, 1991)

Post-positivist realism is concerned more about epistemology than ontology. Realists would not avoid making truth claims (Moya, 2000), but such claims are open to revision, meaning that more accurate interpretations that challenge the "true" statement are welcomed. It always seeks a greater fidelity to the ultimate truth, rejecting the postmodernist avoidance of reaching a better truth, or positivist insistence of theory-independent objectivity that is paradoxically an idealistic claim (Alcoff, 2000). What matters is the process of this truth appropriation, drawing from as many justified statements as possible to gain epistemic validity. The way is to closely examine the

theory behind a statement. Hau (2000:159) advises that we have to consider both accuracy and error of theories:

The complex processing and evaluation of information invites a closer examination of the notion of fallibility. The criteria for evaluating theories are twofold: how well does the theory explain the features of the world, and how well does it accommodate new and specific information (processed, for example, as experience), opening itself to revision and reinterpretation?

Post-positivist realism respect an individual's *real* experience that arises from his or her social location, but when many individuals' *real* experiences are compared, we need to carefully examine the theories (episteme) behind the experiences and work out how this assignment can bring us closer to the reality. And this reality is open to revision. MacIntyre's (1988) view on tradition is comparable to post-positivist realism. MacIntyre rejects the relativist conception of tradition, for it fails to undergo a rational debate between a better and a worse tradition. Only if a tradition is committed to debate with another tradition, in which each tradition justifies itself and aims to convince another it is better, are human beings engaged in truth seeking. The end point of discourse between traditions is not to find an ultimate truth that is shared or accepted by both traditions, because a tradition could vindicate itself. It is hard to see how MacIntyre's view on tradition is materialised in the contemporary world where we see disastrous events based on ethno-racial and religious hatred. Nevertheless, while constructivists or postmodernists fail to face the problems we face today, they are remarkably shaping our experiences.

Returning to the criticisms of the PhD, my response is that, my social location shapes my understanding of China, in which the theoretical foundation is inspired by Cultural Studies. It is not my intention to emphasise the "dark side" of China, but I have observed that the "dark side" is avoided and ignored, or misrepresented and appropriated. I have explored these circumstances in the tourism literature. The historiography of Chinese race and Confucianism is painstakingly pieced together in order to justify my standpoint towards China. The empirical work (writing an ethnography with Chinese people travelling in England) is one way for me to challenge, or at least a reflection of my reality of China and Chinese people.

## 5.3 Realities in media virtual spaces and Web 2.0

### 5.3.1 The strengths of exploring mass media spaces

The first two spaces of empirical work are the UK mass media spaces and blogosphere. Investigation into these spaces aims to understand the host nation's perspective of Chinese visitors. This first objective of the thesis is not oriented to a quantitative paradigm; that is, working out a list of all possible perceptions and scoring them. The idea is to identify what these perceptions are and the ways in which they are talked about and circulated. Therefore, the challenge is to identify information and perceptions about Chinese visitors that are quickly and effectively shared among the general public. Newspapers naturally perform this function. They collect everyday information and opinions, which are then written up and edited, and finally published nationwide. Apart from the strengths of continually capturing and disseminating information, newspaper databases are generally well-kept as historical records, which are geographically and temporally boundless, cost-effective and time-efficient for researchers to obtain data and do cross-media analysis, especially in the digital age. Nevertheless, the various formats and orientations of newspapers present both opportunities and limitations for research on the host nation's perspective. Each newspaper has its editorial line that contains particular ideologies and political allegiances, although they may not be reflected in every piece of news. The implication is that, even though we assume a fact is accurately presented, the languages and pictures used produce a system of representation (Hall, 1997). Therefore, a wide variety of newspapers are likely to capture more of the diverse positions of the host nation's perspective on particular issues. The limitations of time and word limit associated with this thesis do not permit a comprehensive sample of newspapers. As a result, for the first objective, a news article from *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian* were selected. First they represent two different party-political leanings, the former being more right wing and the latter left wing. Second, the newspapers reflect different poles on the issue of race and immigration, with it being a major issue for approximately half of *The Daily Mail* readers and only a fifth of *The Guardian* readers (Duffy and Rowsden, 2005). Third, the objective requires an analysis of the respective online blog of each news article; both papers had strong online participation by readers, thereby providing sufficient data for analysis. The next section theorises the role of mass media.

### 5.3.2 Media production and media effect

Davies (2009), an investigative journalist who has been working most of the time in the British press industry since 1976, revealed the hidden practices of British newspapers he observed during his career. Lies, distortions and propaganda are produced because of corporate greed and hidden persuaders who influence what facts are to be reported. Davies's fierce criticism and pessimistic view towards the British press certainly does not mean that all practitioners of the newspapers industry are dishonest and credulous (Davies, 2009). Not only tabloids, broadsheets also present biased stories. However, there are journalists who are moral agents, and editors do not necessarily require employees to write conforming to the editorial line. Riddell (2008), a British columnist who has written for a number of papers, asserts that Roger Alton, the former editor of the Observer, allowed the paper's columnists to attack the editorial line that supported war on Iraq. The lesson learnt here is that it is difficult to be sure, (i) whether a news article reports the truth, and (ii) whether it represents the editorial line. Thus, the focus of the research is not on the production of the media content, because we do not know how a particular article is produced in the newsroom. In this sense, the central to the role of media for this research is media effect.

### 5.3.3 Constructed and perceived realities

The concept of framing is first introduced as a general understanding of media effect:

frames influence opinions by stressing specific values, facts, and other considerations, endowing them with greater apparent relevance to the issue than they might appear to have under an alternative frame.

(Nelson et al., 1997:569)

Nelson et al.'s (1997) perspective on media effect avoids the moral concern of the industrial practice, presented by Davis. Framing leads us to explore the ontological question of the information appearing in a news article. I borrow Weimann's (2000) concepts of 'Constructed Mediated Reality' (CMR) and 'Perceived Mediated Reality' (PMR) to discuss how information and real life events happening every day are consumed and received by individuals. CMR is about what is *actually* reported and framed, regardless of how well it draws on facts and evidences. The PMR of an article is held by readers after their interpretation and reflection on the words written by the journalist. Bailey and Bryson (2006), employing De Certeau's (1984) notion of strategies and tactics, conceptualise the distinction between CMR and PMR. Strategies

are about the possession of power and resources by institutions, enterprises, which are able to control environments and circumstances. Strategies characterise the non-power group, who in everyday life use ‘clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things’ (De Certeau, 1984:xix). They resist manipulation by the structures of society, creating spaces for enjoyment through negotiations and re-appropriations of these structures.

CMR embodies strategies, which are adopted by the research to describe the power of mass media that control the framing of information available for the public. How do readers employ tactics and give rise to PMR? The World Wide Web (WWW) is shifting to Web 2.0, becoming more a social web, providing a space for us to observe how tactics are working in the cyber environment.

### **5.3.4 Characteristics of Web 2.0**

The development of social collaborative technologies, such as wiki, blogs and social networking sites, characterise the concept of Web 2.0. An interesting dimension of recent interactions is the time-space compression that has been facilitated by the development of mobile technologies and the internet. These communication technologies have enabled new forms of storytelling, gossip and interaction to develop that engage mass media content in qualitatively different ways. First, the temporality of interaction has changed so that interaction can be simultaneous with the genesis of mass media content or more closely aligned with the temporalities of media distribution. Second, the spatiality of interaction has changed, so that interactions can take place in a variety of contexts in which the agents of discourse are remotely attached. Third, interaction has now become more rhizomatic, with new and multiple forms of social media providing forums for interaction that are inter-connected with established forms of communication e.g. television, radio and newsprint. The network of media interaction is also more accurately described as rhizomatic, because participants have multiple and cross cutting entry and exit points. Fourth, interaction is becoming more hybrid with participants capable of being drawn together from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and geo-political contexts, through the ‘long tail’ of private and public enthusiasms and lifestyle choices. In this sense, researching blogosphere not only involves how PMR differs from CMR, but is research into a reality resulting from interactions between temporal-spatial, and socio-cultural dimensions.



### 5.3.5 Discourse analysis

The research into virtual media spaces is two-fold. First, it analyses the mass media content, in which I select two news articles (*The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail*) in relation to Chinese tourist consumption in the UK. Second, it analyses the blogs attached to the two articles presented. The texts of the news content and blogs are treated as discourse. Discourse is a notion first introduced by Foucault (1975), referring to statements, practices and mechanisms that contribute to the “regime of truth”. This *truth* is ‘a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements’ (Foucault, 1980:133). The system is governed by the relationships of power between actors. In Chapter 3 (p.63) we have discussed how the Orient is ordered by the Western academies and institutions. (Said, 1978), through writings and art works, i.e. knowledge. *Truth* about the Orient is constructed through discursive structures that produce discursive objects. Discourse then embodies the working of these structures. To analyse the framing of Chinese visitors from the news content and blogs, is not to assume that they intended to achieve particular conscious purposes. Hall (1996c:201) provides a more common-sense definition of discourse:

A discourse is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way.

Discourse analysis of cyberspaces, involves examining a range of statements. It attempts to evaluate the most possible meanings, drawing on historical analysis of various aspects of every life practices, which are conditioned by sociocultural and political-economic factors, rather than phenomenological interpretations of statements.

### 5.4 Researching tourism spaces

The two field studies that explore tourism spaces in the UK, namely servicescapes and pedagogical spaces, are where the practices of Chinese middle class visitors were observed. What is the implication of researching overseas tourist experiences to understand how these people are structured in Chinese society? Tourism as an approach is seen as relevant way to understand how individuals respond to structures that shape their life. As Crang (1998) contends, tourism is about what tourists bring with them, such as identity, diversity, historical agencies, and what they take back with them such

as new knowledge, personal change or transition. The seminal work of MacCannell (1976) and Urry (1990) are insightful to this thesis.

MacCannell proposes that it is possible to explore travel to provide an ethnography of modernity. Combining the analysis of travel behaviours and texts, the author reveals how the modern middle class search for authenticity away from home, because life at home is alienating. Stemming from structuralism and Marxism, MacCannell employs tourism to reflect post-industrial modernity. Tourists look for authenticity elsewhere, which in turn enables them to reaffirm paradoxically their daily modern life back home, which is alienating; however this alienating way of life is preferred to non-modern life. Tourism then functions to compensate for this feeling of alienation, enabling the middle class to complete their life living in modernity, as the author states:

The middle class is the most favoured now because it has a transcendent consciousness. Tourism, I suggest, is an essential component of that consciousness.

(MacCannell, [1976] 1999:13)

MacCannell's work is closely associated with the home structure of modern society. It might not be carefully considered by some tourism researchers, who are likely to take the escapism thesis as the doctrine to theorise tourism for their work. This line of inquiry in the tourism discipline has frustrated Franklin (2003), who urgently calls for a shift that accommodates the possibility that modern tourists actually embrace modernity for reasons other than alienation.<sup>42</sup> Franklin (2003; 2004) suggests an alternative ontology with implications for the study of tourism. Nationalism is viewed not as a sui generis entity, but as a social construct of actors operating in networks; for example, the Statue of Liberty and Nelson's Column are cultural symbols that reinforce national myths through which the nation and nationalism are constructed. For Franklin, similar to Gellner (1983), it is industrialisation and the emergence of railways, and now air travel of course, that characterises modernity and brings high and low cultures into contact by connecting the urban and the rural. This generates curiosity, because people are attracted to know more about other people, objects, cultures and landscapes within their nation and then internationally. Tourism is therefore seen by Franklin as an *ordering*, adopting Latour's (1993) ontology of symmetry, i.e. giving equivalent

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<sup>42</sup> He argues that *The Tourist* was written when travelling was less popular and affordable compared to nowadays. International mobility in the 1970s was the preserve of affluent Americans and Europeans in the metropolis, who were intrigued by the simpler, rudimentary and enduring way of life outside the modern West.

emphasis to both human and non-human forms of agency. While humans make ordering attempts, other orderings of the world, such as materials and technology are interacting to shape the system.

As a theory for tourism, the two authors have contrasting views. For MacCannell, tourism is a paradoxical attempt that, on the one hand is - in search of something absent in the modern life, and on the other hand - celebrates the modernity possessed by the metropolis. For Franklin, tourism is an extension or expansion of individuals' curiosity encountered in the home environment. Franklin's critique of MacCannell's structural ontology can be extended to Urry (1990), who views tourism as a result of the binary division of everyday / extraordinary or home / away. The second edition of *Tourist Gaze* (Urry, 2002) emphasises that the gaze is mediated by tourism-related institutions such as advertisements and travel programmes, nevertheless the 'going away' thesis remains that has locked the research agenda for most tourism research (Franklin, 2004).

I have discussed that Chinese tourism is a manifestation of an embrace of Chinese modernity that is categorised by capitalist consumption – a desire for Western materials and symbols. In this context, travelling in the West is a taste of a more advanced modernity, which is perceived as a ladder on which the Chinese middle class believe that they are climbing. Nyíri (2010) closely observes how Chinese visitors are travelling in Budapest, revealing that the tourists are surprised by the 'low development' when seeing old urban settings. It appears that the Chinese middle class are searching for 'the authenticity of modernity' in the geographical West. MacCannell's thesis is then not applicable, because the Chinese do not appear to be alienated by modernity, rather, they are seeking it out as desirable as an object of the tourist gaze.

Urry's analysis of the social production of the tourism gaze pays attention to the desire to experience something out of the ordinary and the everyday, which does not explain the popularity of the Western replica landmarks in Figures 9 and Figure 10 for these are recreating the West within the everyday. Chinese tourists visiting Western attractions look for extraordinary signs, which is still a valid theory that explains contemporary tourism, nevertheless the binary of home and away has become blurred. Interestingly Urry's (2012) argues that globalisation gives rises to mobility and fluidity of cultures across boundaries, with the logical consequence that home culture and foreign culture are not necessarily different. Considering the popularity of Western cultural consumption in China (e.g. movies, dramas and manga), international tourism is more

than a fulfilment of the desire and anticipation to visit places and objects, but an actualisation of what they already consume in the “mundane” everyday home space. In this sense, Franklin’s theory of tourism grounded in curiosity and orderings, more accurately captures the contemporary condition of China.

To sum up, the consequence of thinking this way, for the arguments proposed in this thesis, is that tourism is an actualisation of the modernity that embodies Chinese desire. What is found inspiring is MacCannell’s attempt of using tourism as a method to understand the structures of the home society, which has informed this thesis. Urry’s tourist gaze is also highly relevant, which theorises how individuals’ desire is transformed and mediated by globalised cultures. Through exploring Chinese tourist behaviours in England, it might bring us closer to interpretations of Chinese modernity.



**Figure 9 – “Tower Bridge” in the city of Suzhou in Jiangsu province**



**Figure 10 – “Venetian” estate in Dalian, Liaoning province**

**Headline:** Chinese fakeaway: how the world’s most famous buildings – and even whole cities – are being cloned in Far East

**Date:** 8 Jan 2013

**Author:** Miller, D.

**Source:** *The Daily Mail* (2015)

**Headline:** Why China loves to build copycat towns

**Date:** 1 July 2013

**Author:** Morris, R.

**Source:** BBC (2015)

## **5.5 Encounter in servicescapes**

### **5.5.1 Challenges of understanding authentic views**

The second objective of the thesis is to explore English workers’ perspectives on Chinese visitors in servicescapes. It is assumed that, retail shops at tourist attractions are one of the forefronts of host-visitors encounter. Local workers having frequent contacts and exchanges with Chinese visitors could form a set of perspectives that are not

reflected in, or different from that of the general public. In terms of research design of methods, I experimented with participant observation in an English gift shop (working alongside employees for six weeks) and a large-scale survey of retail shops (self-administered questionnaires completed by shop staffs), with both methods completed in the same tourist attraction that was popular with Chinese visitors (for anonymity the place's identity is kept confidential). The potential of the former method is that the researcher gains access into the front-stage and back-stage (Goffman, 1959) of English workers, in which there could be richer and more meaningful interpretations of behaviours and attitudes driven by both the customer service protocol and their cultural values. The limitation of this method is the lack of generalisable conclusions; nevertheless it is a preferred method for exploratory research, which aligns with the overall qualitative orientation of the thesis. The decision to experiment with a quantitative method was an attempt to collect more candid views, which was not entirely possible with participant observation.

The ethnicity and cultural belonging of the researcher has placed a limitation on understanding shop employees' authentic perspectives on Chinese visitors, which will be detailed in Chapter 7. As a result, the methodological design of the research was amended to provide more adequate data for the objective. I designed a questionnaire that asked opinions about international visitors (especially Chinese visitors). An English researcher was tasked to survey local residents. The idea was partially qualitatively oriented, because we also aimed to capture respondents' reactions during the survey completion. The aim of using an English researcher was to eliminate any cultural or ethnic biases that might be introduced by the researcher being identified with any of the categories in the survey instrument (e.g. Chinese or French). However, some questions about Chinese visitor behaviour were found to trigger concerns amongst respondents about how answers to these questions were being analysed, because they were concerned with the sensitive topic of respondents' attitudes towards people of other ethnicities or races. Therefore, the researcher was concerned that respondents performed political correct behaviours when confronted in public spaces with the questionnaire survey. Therefore, this method was dismissed and a large-scale survey was adopted eight months after the first fieldwork.

The self-completed survey was an attempt to gather the authentic views of retail employees. However, on reflection, there was no way to test how authentic these views expressed actually were. Furthermore, there was no way of establishing the significance

of these views for the behaviour and practice of employees towards international visitors. Moreover, this was a convenient sample of employees, which could not support the goal of providing a more representative view than the qualitative data. Therefore, it was decided to exclude the quantitative data from the study, before the data was fully analysed. The following discussion concerning method is based on theorising the gift shop environment (servicescapes) and methodological adaptation in the field (ethnomethodology).

### **5.5.2 Servicescape**

The notion of servicescape was developed in the marketing discipline through the works of Bitner (1990; 1992). The term was used to characterise different elements in a shop that condition shopping experiences. They include the physical attractiveness of the shop (Bitner, 1990) and the environmental settings of the interior that influences interaction between staff and customers (Bitner, 1992). The experience economy coined by Pine and Gilmore (1999) argues that nowadays what customers demand is intangible experiences, which is a shift from the material valuation of a good. The triumph of the service economy is achieved by enhancing servicescapes. IKEA, the giant furniture and household goods seller, with its appealing and homely display of products and self-service operational strategy, exemplifies Lusch and Vargo's (2006) thesis about the co-creation of value. The aspect of the gift shop that I focus on is intangible and relational, which are the organisational cultures and English staff attitudes that condition the consumption experience of Chinese visitors. How do members of staff perceive the shopping patterns and behaviours of Chinese customers? How do they manage interactions with the shoppers? How do they react to what they observed and would share in the communal spaces? The gift shop servicescape is then governed by service operational guidelines, cultures of the host nation (ethnicity), demographic differences and personalities of members of staff. I will discuss these in detail in Chapter 7.

### **5.5.3 Ethnomethodology**

The original method of the fieldwork was ethnography, however, at times I found myself unable to understand the authentic beliefs of English colleagues about Chinese tourists, which means that I was unable to develop an emic perspective. This had induced me to adapt to an alternative method to obtain more meaningful data – using myself as an agent to elicit responses from colleagues. I was not aware that these were forms of “breaching experiment”, which is the core notion of ethnomethodology. In the

1960s, American sociologist Garfinkel (1967) pioneered a series of social experiments that broke social norms on purpose, such as bargaining over fixed-price items in shops or asking ridiculous questions to people on the street. That is why “breaching experiments” are used to describe Garfinkel’s (1967) ground-breaking and provocative methodology. The core concept of ethnomethodology is to analyse mundane everyday activities, which are performed by individuals without awareness. Its assumption is that our behaviours are governed by complex social and cultural rules, in which social actors accomplish routine situations through skills and tacit knowledge. Garfinkel uses the term reflexivity to describe how members simultaneously constitute the character of actions, which is a result of calculation and intelligence. Ethnomethodology offers the opportunity for researchers to break social norms, thus people’s accomplishment of ordinary lives then becomes observable, as Prasad (2005:64) states:

One reason for Garfinkel’s fascination with the “breaching” techniques stems from his conviction that when commonplace circumstances are unexpectedly ruptured, the assumptions and competencies of individuals who routinely hold them together are vividly exposed.

I reflected that my identity as an ethnic Hong Kong Chinese who had insufficient competence of the native everyday English culture, had conditioned the extent in which I was able to understand the authentic self of English staff. In other words, ethnography that privileges researchers’ ability to be fully immersed into the social world of researched subjects, failed as a methodology in the gift shop. The process of this methodological adaptations and ethical issues involved will be detailed in Chapter 7.

## **5.6 Consuming pedagogical spaces**

### **5.6.1 The strengths of ethnography**

The fourth space for the research could be categorised as both tourism and education, which is where the researcher conducted ethnography by closely observing Chinese students’ learning, travelling, shopping and ‘home-stay’ experiences for a prolonged period. Participant observation was the preferred method to explore the students’ sense of self. Potential methods that were also considered included exploring online blogs of Chinese visitors, and conducting in-depth post-trip interviews with those who returned home from travelling in the UK. These methods involve much less cost and effort; however, utilising these methods, the researcher would only have data about what respondents said, rather than also having data about what they did during their travels.

This disconnection between narrative and practice/performance is a major limitation. Close observation, therefore, was adopted to avoid this problem, with the researcher making sense of, and interpreting, the tie between speech and action. Also, a prolonged immersion in the space allowed the researcher, as a volunteer of the group, to develop companionship and in some case mentorship with participants in their early teens. This has facilitated more in-depth exploration of a sense of identity. I will further critically discuss the role of ethnography in achieving the goal.

### **5.6.2 Classic ethnography**

Ethnography is perhaps best understood historically. The modern discipline of ethnography traces back to cultural anthropology. Malinowski, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Margaret Mead, for example, are legendary anthropologists who were seriously involved in the everyday life of inhabitants of a bounded location for a prolonged period. Colonialism had contributed to the motives for Western states, intellectuals and adventurers to understand fascinating non-Western peripheral cultures. These motives stem from a variety of positions. The US government hoped to gain insights from a native understanding of Indians, for the purpose of pacification (Prasad, 2005). Daniel Miller asserts that the central role of anthropologists is empathy (interviewed by Borgerson (2009)). Anthropologists who are concerned with the consequences of cultural drift and acculturation, brought about metropolitan tourists to vulnerable peripheral cultures (Nash, 2006). This has set the research agenda of the tourism impact literature. The commonality of anthropological work, via ethnography, is to understand these cultures from the native point of view. It aims to re-present the local interpretations as much as a researcher is able to do so, rather than representations of a particular culture. In order to do so, 'going native' has been seen as a benchmark, which means that a long period of time, in terms of years, is essential to be immersed in a culture to learn about the language and the way of life. Ethnography has been appropriated and used in a variety of disciplines, such as sociology, organisation studies, pedagogy and consumer research. Whyte's (1993) ethnographic study in the urban context is a classic example.

### **5.6.2 Contemporary ethnography**

What are the measurements for contemporary researchers who claim to do ethnography? Anthropologists such as James Clifford and George Marcus, in the 1990s suggest a theoretical adaptation in response to the tide of globalisation. Clifford (1992)



questions the concept of this localisation as it ignores the complex and external relations (regional, national or global) of “a culture” and the possibility of multiple cultures rather than one culture at a given time exist in that dwelling. Nowadays ethnographers study in classrooms, organisations, hotels or even a touring coach. Clifford suggests a rethink of travelling culture, which concerns the connection, interaction and negotiation of a group with the outside world:

In my current problematic, the goal is not to replace the cultural figure "native" with the intercultural figure "traveller." Rather the task is to focus on concrete mediations of the two, in specific cases of historical tension and relationship.

(Clifford, 1992:101)

To study a culture, in this context, is not to study the people and practice in a location, but in a space. For De Certeau (1984), space is actively practised by people. With a similar proposition to Clifford, Marcus (1995) uses the term multi-sited ethnography to describe the strategy needed to map different terrains practised by the subject. The assumption of multi-sited ethnography is that people’s identity, perspectives and roles are subject to change in the increasingly mobile world, drawn from the postmodern perspective. The strategy is then to follow people, things, metaphors, narratives, biographies and conflicts. Multi-sited ethnography is used to conduct migration research (e.g. Nyíri (2003)), in which the stories of both old home and new home could be captured. In relation to tourism, Andrews (2005) followed British tourists to Mallorca, discovering British signs (e.g. fish and chips and English beers) and signals (e.g. smell of vomit – indicating English drinking culture). British tourists perform national identity in a foreign land. Selänniemi (1996) was permitted to read the diaries of the Finnish tourists he travelled with, to learn more their travel experiences.

Following Chinese students in UK pedagogical spaces, my aim is to understand how they would construct identities, in Clifford’s conception, to negotiate the outside world. The notion of multi-sited ethnography informs me to connect Chinese visitors’ behaviours and values, to the historical traditions and political factors that structure Chinese individuals. Although it appears possible to do ethnography without being bounded in a spatial and temporal locality, certain core values of ethnography should be reiterated, as (Ingold, 2014:386) asserts:

For what we could call “ethnographicness” is not intrinsic to the encounters themselves; it is rather a judgment that is cast upon them through a retrospective conversion of the learning, remembering and note-taking which they call forth into pretexts for something else altogether.

It is thick description that refers to the insightful narrative that ethnographers are able to provide for readers (Geertz, 1973). Thick description is more than giving contextual details of research subjects; it would not be possible if researchers ignore the multiple-layered and local meanings in the field (Prasad, 2005). It involves critical analysis of contradictory observations or accounts. When researching Chinese students, what is seen and heard, as well as my interpretations of these accounts and observations, will be detailed for readers to compare and engage in the interpretation process.

## **5.7 Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, the quality of data is described by a different language compared to positivist research. This section adopts Guba’s (1981) four criteria that qualitative researchers should consider in pursuit of trustworthiness. They are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Each criterion has a number of measures, in which I will identify the most relevant ones to comment on the data obtained in this study.

### **5.7.1 Credibility**

The central question of credibility is how the data collected is truthful and believable. This is relevant to minimising bias. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend “prolonged engagement” between the researcher and participants, which allows the former to make persistent observation of, and build rapport with the latter. Adopting participant observation in both fieldworks, it was my aim to make prolonged contact with the participants. I found it a helpful strategy to spend a longer time in the same setting, because patterns were observed and I was able to connect sequences of events. For example, in the gift shop where I worked as a retail staff member for six weeks, I observed the general and repeated patterns of both Chinese shoppers’ preferences and behaviours, and English employees’ attitudes. When I travelled with the Chinese student group in London, from the moment they landed to the moment they departed from the airport, I was able to observe the development of students’ perceptions and sentiments, and the change of group dynamics throughout the journey. Comparing the relationships developed with respondents in the gift shop and in the study tour, I felt

that both were positive. The mature co-worker relationship in the gift shop was circumspect and requires careful analysis to explore the meanings latent in exchanges. In the student group, companionship and mentorship developed into trusting relationships, in which the authentic selves of the respondents were disclosed. Alvesson's (2011) term, "romanticism", suggests that trusting relationships can lead to richer and more authentic insights when working with respondents. From this perspective, the data obtained in the student group tour is perhaps more credible.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) develop an important measure to demonstrate credibility, known as "member checking". It holds that if respondents have the opportunity to comment on what was being written about, it avoids data inaccuracy and/or misrepresentation. The design of both fieldworks did not permit member checking, because the gift shop work was partially covert research and the student group work involved my interpretations of the students' values and behaviours, which might not be understood by them. More importantly, I avoided chances to evoke negative sentiments (see Ethics for justification in both cases on p.151 and p.152 respectively). However, I do provide thick description (Geertz, 1973) of incidents and events for readers to evaluate my interpretations of them.

### **5.7.2 Transferability**

Although qualitative studies do not always claim to generalise findings to a wider population, their findings may have implications or be applied to another setting or a broader group (Stake, 1994). When researchers intend to make this transfer, sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork should be provided (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Again, thick description is the key strategy to offer contextual information. Denscombe (1998) suggests that the findings could be compared to other situations, thereby demonstrating that arguments or conclusions of the study could explain social phenomena in other situations. In other words, the researcher can establish a theoretical connection to existing knowledge. The purpose of this research is to understand the connection between social structures and personal agency. The rationale underpinning this aim is that the wider Chinese population is also subject to the shapings of a variety of social structures. Therefore, transferability is a natural goal of this study, which is supported by the historiography of Chinese race and Confucianism in Chapter 3 and theoretical frameworks in Chapter 4. The former discusses historical developments of particular perspectives and behaviours (e.g. nationalistic sentiments and desire for the

West), which are widespread among contemporary Chinese people, and Chinese visitors are no exception. The latter provides other concurrent events and situations (e.g. Chinese people's anti-West protests in Canberra and domestic Westernised style of consumption), which are explained through theories. This offers a parallel comparison between the findings of the study and existing knowledge.

### **5.7.3 Dependability**

The dependability of qualitative research is equivalent to reliability in the quantitative paradigm; in other words, how the same result may be obtained by using the same method of a previous study. The findings of qualitative inquiry are contingent upon time, place and culture; therefore, it is more important for a qualitative researcher to describe the research design, implementation and the methods adopted. In this research, I have placed a particular emphasis on my decision making of using particular methods (e.g. discourse analysis of mass media and Web 2.0 content) and how methods are adapted in the gift shop fieldwork (i.e. from ethnography to ethnomethodology). This will enable future researchers to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of particular methods, when they attempt to conduct research in a similar setting.

### **5.7.4 Confirmability**

Qualitative researchers perhaps are not under the same demands to achieve objectivity as positivist researchers, but they should prevent preconceptions or prejudices that would devalue the responses of informants and lead to incomplete reporting, or censoring of perspectives. How does one remove prejudices from the interpretation of data and reporting of findings? The challenge is that sometimes researchers are not aware of their own prejudices, shaped by their life experiences and bound by epistemological commitments. There are three ways to address this issue. First, employing an auditor (e.g. research supervisor or peer reviewer); second, stating the positionality of the researcher; and third, being reflexive and critically evaluating one's own opinions. Confirmability is an issue I need to address in the thesis, because the research subject is closely relevant to my personal experiences in daily life. I have explained this issue with respect to my social position and my held knowledge surrounding Chinese social and cultural phenomena (see Rationale/Assumption on p.5/p.8 and Positionality later in this chapter). Throughout the PhD journey, I have been sharing my views about these phenomena with those who are interested in the topic, especially one of my supervisors, who has been engaged in my inquiries and

introducing scholarly perspectives to make sense of certain issues. My reflexive thoughts are spread throughout the thesis; therefore, there is no one section dedicated to this aspect.

### **5.8 Grounded theory**

Grounded research was not part of the original research design. The principles of grounded theory occurred naturally during the research process, in which I changed the research focus and theoretical frameworks, informed by the observations evolved from field studies. The initial aim of the research was to explore the relations between Chinese visitors and host citizens in the UK, in order to understand how external structures would condition behaviours of Chinese visitors, through closely observing encounters between the two peoples. However, in the field studies, I found that the data obtained was not connected to the literature reviewed. It does not mean that I had found new phenomena or untouched research areas, the literature explored in the first place was unable to interpret and make sense of observations in the field. The critical moment of this data-theory disconnection was clear when I observed that Chinese students participating in an educational tour in the UK were nationalistic and perform a fondness of Western popular cultures. Although these situations involved interactions between Chinese visitors and British hosts, the reviewed host-visitor literature was unable to interpret the findings. Therefore I resolved to, for example, explore the literature of identity theory and Chinese nationalism. During this process, the data collected was analysed simultaneously, which is a core concept of Glaser and Strauss (1976)'s grounded theory - "constant comparison" (Suddaby, 2006). However, the constant comparison revealed the need to explore a different set of literature in order to address the objectives of this research. This reflection also conditions the way of data collection, known as "theoretical sampling".

Theoretical sampling is another defining feature of grounded theory, which refers to the process of data collection, in which data collected at one stage informs where to discover data and how to collect it in the subsequent stage (Glaser and Strauss, 1976). The principle of theoretical sampling was adopted in this thesis across different fieldwork locations, as well as within each fieldwork location. I found that the observed consumption patterns of Chinese visitors in a gift shop inspired me to explore the concepts of the political economy and moral economy; however, without the further accounts from respondents it is not plausible to draw meaningful interpretations.

Therefore, this inspired the next fieldwork after one year, in which I aimed to collect Chinese students' narratives about gifting motives and meanings by participating in a study tour. At the beginning of the three-week period of close observation on the study tour, patriotic behaviours and racial prejudice were observed. Therefore, I paid particular attention to probe into these issues in the subsequent period of the tour.

To discuss the use of grounded theory in the thesis, it is not to indicate that the literature is ignored to maintain an "uncontaminated perspective", or to strive for "new" theory, which are misconceptions of a grounded theory methodology, as argued by Suddaby:

The real danger of prior knowledge in grounded theory is not that it will contaminate a researcher's perspective, but rather that it will force the re- searcher into testing hypotheses.....researchers may shoot for "the elaboration of existing theory" rather than untethered "new" theory.

(Suddaby, 2006:635)

After all, grounded theory adopted by the research is not a pre-planned methodology. It justifies that it is legitimate to react to external realities by drawing alternative theoretical frameworks, rather than being shadowed by a substantive theory. It also explains how I responded to findings obtained at one stage, which shaped the research focus in the subsequent stage.

## 5.9 Positionality

No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey.

(Mills, 1967:6)

We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always "in context", positioned'.

(Hall, 1990:222)

Mills warns against conducting research with an inadequate sociological imagination. My own sociological imagination is shaped by a vision of cherishing the Chinese *traditional* cultures, as well as the influence of the party-state's cultural authority in Hong Kong. I speak as a Hong Kong national from a particular place and time. I am writing in a UK university, I actively explore my identity at times when political

relations between Hong Kong and China has become intense, to an extent that the term “HongKonger” evolved in Oxford Dictionary in 2014.<sup>43</sup> PRC Chinese officials and Hong Kong nationals have inexorable relationships owing to historical, ethnic and political factors. Therefore the problem of this research, or the opportunity for reflexive research, however one views it, relates to how I view Chinese people. My question about the cultural identity of the Chinese people is a reflection of concerns that they are choosing to uncritically adopt subject positions, and/or are being subjugated by a combination of state hegemony and the necessary subjectivities required by consumer orientated globalised capital. It is my worry that Chinese people are losing Chinese *traditional* culture.

*Traditional* culture it is not an essentialist concept, but it does embody moral concerns of fundamental importance. The question is how we interpret or select which aspects of our cultures to record and conserve. Individuals are not detached from the past, even in a nation such as China that has experienced the dissolution of tradition (Shils, 1981). The traditions that have shaped my own perspectives range from Chinese ancient classics to colonial social and cultural practices. I was born into a working class family and received most of my education in Hong Kong. This former British colony attracted affluent Chinese migrants thanks to the common law system and later between the 1930s to 1970s sheltered millions of Chinese refugees, including many intellectuals, elites and artisans from China. The colonial government adopted laissez-faire social and cultural policies, and consequently Hong Kong became a creolised hub for the cultured populations from Shanghai and Canton (South of China), as well as Western expatriates who imported their cultures. The institutions installed by the British colonial government were not demolished during the change of sovereignty in 1997 (dissimilar to the situation following Indian independence), which was a strategic consideration that has established a foundation for the morality of Hong Kong. It had developed a peculiar political landscape in which people had limited political rights in a free society under the colonial British government. This is a narrative of *my* cultural identity construction *at present* as a Hong Kong national, as someone who has experienced the virtues of traditional Chinese ethics and culture aligned with democratic institutions (unfortunately just partially functioning) in a free society. It is through the continuity of

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43 Publisher Oxford University Press recognises the significance of the distinction by adding the words Hongkonger and Hong Kongese to the Oxford English Dictionary in March 2014 (South China Morning Post, 2014)

traditional Chinese ethics and culture with democracy, which I believe can provide a model of governance that is just.

The question remains therefore, how do Chinese people interpret and select their own recorded culture? At the current time, China is rewriting history from above; in other words, the government is heavily invested in sanctioning approved narratives. This leads me to consider power and hegemony in the context of historical narrative and its intersection with individual identity. Is it just limited to Mao's establishment of the PRC and the economic prosperity brought about by Deng? What about Confucian values of equality and frugality apart from the often lauded values of "harmony" or "obedience"? What about the Taoist respect for nature or universal love in Mohism? Therefore, I hope and believe that humans have a capacity to develop moral reason and judgement that is not entirely resolved on the side of structure. In other words, humans are able to reflect upon their circumstances in the world, whilst at the same time being constrained by those circumstances.

### **5.10 Ethics**

Ethics refers to the philosophy that is 'concerned with worthiness of human actions and of systems of belief regarding what people ought or ought not to do (Gregory et al., 2009:211). Using the content from the virtual spaces (news articles and blog comments), observations in gift shop servicescapes, and participant observation with Chinese students, inevitably involved ethical considerations. The specific methods utilised in each space are detailed below. Please also find the ethical approval form (Appendix 1) on p.292. It is noted that the aims and objectives had changed, because it was written in May 2012, which was at the early stage of the research, before a critical change of direction that was made in 2014. The depth and intensity of that statement are more practical, whereas the content below is more critical and conceptual.

#### **5.10.1 News articles**

Two news articles from *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail* obtained from their online sites are analysed, in which extracts will be copied and pasted in the thesis. Although the online content is available in the public domain, both papers are the sole owners of all content in the sites. The articles are allowed to be downloaded and printed for personal and non-commercial use only. Both corporations did not mention academic use, but they provided contact details for the request of use of the content other than as permitted by these terms and conditions. I emailed *The Daily Mail* on 14 March 2012



and *The Guardian* on 15 March 2015, to request permission to use the content for a PhD thesis, and for publication of extracts in academic journals. I have not received replies before the date of thesis submission. Considering that the use of the two news articles in this thesis are for non-commercial purposes, and the thesis is not for publication, I decided to use the materials for analysis. As discussed earlier, the methodology of exploring the content is by discourse analysis, which in short aims to offer possible meanings as showed by the texts. I do not offer a true value of the comments, but invite readers to participate into the interpretation process, based on historical and wider sociocultural and political environments.

### **5.10.2 Blog comments**

The blog comments are the content submitted by online readers who contributed to the forum. Online readers who submit comments own the copyright to the comments, but this is shared with the corporation/trust that have full rights to use the content. In other words, once permission is obtained from the press, the content can be used without acknowledgement from the individual content owners. Unfortunately, I received no replies from both press organisations, therefore, the justification of using the materials is the same as discussed in the above section.

### **5.10.3 Observations in servicescapes**

This fieldwork is partially covert research. I was given permission to observe the consumption behaviours in the gift shop, as a customer service volunteer. However, members of staff working in the shop were not aware that it was a retrospective work that involved my observations and reflections of their perspectives on Chinese visitors. The question in relation to ethical consideration is whether it is appropriate to analyse individuals' behaviours without their knowledge and to deceive participants. This question is answered from three perspectives.

First, the question I ask myself was whether the research is harmful to individuals, namely the tourists and staff. Apart from anonymity and confidentiality being guaranteed, I am concerned about whether I would make them feel nervous or uncomfortable. With respect to the tourists, I did not do any interviews to interfere with their visit to the shop in order to safeguard the reputation of the giftshop and not to disrupt the naturally occurring behaviour; rather I was assisting as a member of staff. With respect to the staff, I was consulting their perspectives on certain issues in the form of small talk, in occasions when we were free from duties. For some situations I

used ethnomethodology, I made sure the questions would not make them feel uncomfortable, which I will detail in Chapter 7.

The second question is whether the research is contributing to the public good. The objective of the field study is to understand the public identity of Chinese visitors. With increasing Chinese tourists visiting the UK, the patterns of visitor behaviours are under media scrutiny and reportage of Chinese tourists shapes the imaginary of host residents and Chinese tourists alike. Therefore, it contributes to the understanding of host-visitor relations in a particular time (growing visitor arrival) and space (servicescape served by white British). What factors (e.g. race, ethnicity, culture, personal attitudes and behaviours) would shape the interaction? At present, tourism characterises regular contacts and exchanges between the two peoples at leisure spaces, which should be well documented.

Third, is the research feasible if informed consent is request? I expected that I would not be allowed access to the field if I revealed every detail of the research objective. Then, the subsequent question to ask is whether the research is worth pursuing, in a condition in which research subjects are not fully aware of themselves being explored, and in which their identities are anonymous. In other words, it returns to the first and second question. To reflect on how knowledge is accumulated; anthropologists do not necessarily obtain permission from every person from a particular culture to write about them; in pedagogy, observations and analysis of pupils' behaviours in the classroom are conducted without their full acknowledgement. It does not mean that we should disrespect research subjects, but there are times when informed consent would make particular research objectives impossible. In this sense, I consider that the research is for public good and non-maleficence; guarantees the anonymity and confidentiality of research subjects; and assures the integrity of the research process.

#### **5.10.4 Ethnography in pedagogical space**

Closely exploring students' experiences in a study tour through ethnography, I have had reflections on my role in the pedagogical spaces and the meanings of the interaction between myself and students during the three week journey. Reading Ingold (2014), I reflected on the responsibility of an academic researcher. He calls for a stop to the growing trend for ethnography and return to anthropology. For Ingold, the resulting work of ethnography is to impose researchers' own finalities on whom they study and

learn; anthropology involves an ontological commitment and education. Ontological commitment refers to the promise of the term we often use – participant observation:

It is one that calls upon the novice anthropologist to attend: to attend to what others are doing or saying and to what is going on around and about; to follow along where others go and to do their bidding, whatever this might entail and wherever it might take you.

(Ingold, 2014:390)

This attention is not an objective observation of another's life, but an engagement bodily and sensuously of the crucible of other lives. It is connected to the aim of education, which is not about instilling knowledge into an other's mind, but about 'opening up new possibilities for thinking about experience' (Jackson, 1989:88). Knowledge is produced being in this process 'in the forge of our relations with others' (Ingold, 2014:391).

Ingold emphasises that anthropology has a bigger and more imperative role to play than ethnography. Encountering human and the non-human itself is a process of knowledge production, with researchers intensively involved in their social world. This is an ethically good deed. When being with the student group in pedagogical spaces, I could not help judging their behaviours and values through my own register of values. Most of the time I hid my authentic thoughts, because I expected our different world views would lead to different conclusions about the same thing. I could only be fairly honest to a couple of students about my views. The trade-off was the opportunities we might have in engaging in each other's authentic views to produce knowledge. There are two reasons involved. First, I was careful not to evoke 'sensitive' political issues. Second, being in an older/senior and more educated status, I wished for there to be a coeval status between myself and students rather than a position of unequal power. These reasons also stem from ethical considerations. To illustrate an example, I observed that nationalism was performed by some students, which was in my opinion the outcome of the Chinese state education and propaganda, but I did not express my feeling. Interestingly, they were fully aware of the power of the state machine, however they believed that they were not the ones being influenced. I could have challenged them and generated a debate, but this might risk violating the ethical boundary of safeguarding the participants from psychological harm. To sum up, I appreciate Ingold's notion of anthropological ethics, which entails the public responsibility of academic researchers.

In so doing, in my opinion, the criteria are perhaps a longer period of engagement in the field and more natural coeval status between the researcher and research participants.

### **5.11 Summary highlights**

This thesis perhaps invites criticisms of highlighting the negative aspects of China. I responded by explaining that the interpretations of observations in the fieldwork stems from Cultural Studies, which stands inherently on the side of those who live under the hegemony. If the thesis has to wrestle with other perspectives that hold other realities of China, post-positivism enables us to compare which perspective is supported by more justifiable theories. The chapter then explained the characteristics of each research space and discussed the theories of the methods employed. The virtual spaces of mass media frame the discourse of Chinese tourism, which is negotiated by bloggers and circulated in the cyberspace. The tourism spaces are explored as a method to explore the social structures of China (after MacCannell and Urry). Middle class Chinese appear to be embracing Western modernity through consumption; a trip to the West is to actualise the desire. I explained the theories of ethnomethodology adopted in gift shop servicescapes and ethnography in pedagogical spaces. Principles of grounded theory are performed during the research process, namely constant comparison and theoretical sampling. I revealed my social position as a researcher, which guides the development of knowledge and worldviews. Finally, I explained the ethical considerations involved when exploring the multiple research spaces, and reflected on wider implications of ethnics particularly in ethnography.

## CHAPTER 6

### CHINESE REPRESENTATIONS IN VIRTUAL SPACES

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the first objective of the thesis, which is to investigate the host nation's representation of Chinese tourists in virtual spaces. The role of the mass media and the role of interaction of Web 2.0 is discussed in Chapter 5. It concludes that the mass media content constructs discourses that condition individual understandings of the world. To research this constructed and mediated reality, I aim not to probe into the production of news articles, but to explore the discourses presented by the press. At the beginning of researching the media content in March 2012, I attempted to explore the trend of particular aspects of Chinese behaviours or issues covered by the press in the UK. Therefore, I conducted a content analysis as a pilot study for the years 2005 to 2012 (for explanations on the next page). I found that it is less powerful to make deeper analysis of the news content. The main analytical tool of this chapter is discourse analysis.

Adopting purposive sampling, I have selected two articles in relation to Chinese tourist consumption in the UK, which contains most relevant content to the thesis objectives. *The Daily Mail* article was published in January 2012 and *The Guardian* article in May 2014. They were chosen both because of their popularity as newspapers and strong participation in online discussion by readers. The technological advancement of mobile gadgets and Internet has given rise to a new dimension of time-space compression. Closely exploring blogosphere enables us to examine the perceived mediated reality of news content. The rhizomatic interactions of blogosphere represent more diverse audience than the traditional (print) media, which is more controlled along editorial lines for particular audiences. The online community offers a gateway to understand the British host nation's perspectives of Chinese visitors to the UK. There are three dimensions of the analysis: (i) the news content of each paper; (ii) the negotiations and appropriations of news content in each corresponding blog; and (iii) a comparison of the process of the second dimension with respect to each paper.

#### 6.2 The trend of Chinese tourist news – scoping study pilot research

The scoping study was first of all conducted in 2012. Its aim was to obtain the key concepts underpinning a research area of a preliminary stage. It is a content analysis of

news articles covering Chinese visitors in Britain from 1 July 2005 to 29 February 2012. It was not until 27 July 2005 when the first group of Chinese tourists came to the UK with a tourist visa, which marked the start of the era of mass Chinese tourists visiting Britain. *The Daily Mail* and *The Independent* were selected because they encompass views from different political positions and different formats, and that they covered more news about Chinese visitors in the UK compared to the other press: 20 articles from *The Daily Mail* and 8 articles from *The Independent* were discovered using a keyword search in ProQuest.<sup>44</sup>

Table 6 presents an analysis of the two samples; coloured boxes represent codes that appear in a news article. *The Daily Mail* has more coverage than *The Independent* hard copy. The former also covers wider contexts associated with the emergence of Chinese tourists in Britain. In summary, Chinese tourists are reported as wealthy individuals who are fond of buying luxuries, which are explained by: weak pound against strong RMB; high tax return; and gift-giving culture. The retail sectors are reported to satisfy their big customers by hiring Mandarin-speaking staff and giving their staff training sessions about Chinese etiquette. Generally the newspapers are interested in reporting the materialistic side of the Chinese tourists based on their purchasing power. These representations are constructed by sales volume figures. Their economic impacts is the main message. The representations are consistent over the years with only occasional discrepancies. The next section discusses the selection of news articles and blogs for discourse analysis.

### **6.3 News article and corresponding blogs – press selection process**

This study adopts a purposive sampling approach. It has selected two articles and corresponding blogs to explore the deeper meanings of the British host nation's perspective on Chinese visitors. It first of all aims to explore the most popular online platforms of British papers and captures wider socio-cultural and political backgrounds of readership. Table 7 shows that the average monthly audience estimates for both online webpages and print papers by age 15 years or above in 2014 in the UK (National Readership Survey, 2015). *The Daily Mail* was selected because it is the most popular middle-market tabloid. *The Guardian* represents a considerable left-leaning population

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44 The search terms are “Chinese tourists” / “consumers” / “customers” / “travellers” / “shoppers” and “UK” / “Britain” / “London”.



in the UK. Moreover, these two papers' online platforms are the most popular for reader commentaries. *The Daily Mail's* article published in January 2012 was chosen and analysed in March 2012 soon after the PhD project started. It was chosen because it is related to Chinese consumption behaviours in the UK. It contained 55 comments, which is an appropriate amount of data for close exploration of the interactions between bloggers. *The Guardian* article was published in May 2014. It was chosen because it reflects a more recent trend of Chinese consumption patterns, and it contained almost the same number of comments (56) as *The Daily Mail* article.

**Table 7 – Average monthly audience estimates for online webpages and print papers by age 15 years or above**

	Newsbrands	Net Print, PC and Mobile	Total Print
		000s	000s
1	Daily Mail / dailymail.co.uk	23,449	10,636
2	Daily Mirror / mirror.co.uk	17,484	6,847
3	The Daily Telegraph / telegraph.co.uk	16,357	3,923
4	The Guardian / theguardian.com	16,314	3,653
5	Metro / metro.co.uk	14,211	10,281
6	The Sun / thesun.co.uk	13,628	12,658
7	The Independent / independent.co.uk	10,442	2,140
8	Daily Express / express.co.uk	6,839	3,019
9	London Evening Standard / standard.co.uk	6,718	4,924
10	The Times / thetimes.co.uk	4,911	4,358
11	Daily Record / dailyrecord.co.uk	2,978	1,395
12	The Scotsman / scotsman.com	1,252	350

Source: National Readership Survey (2015)

#### 6.4 Analysis of an article of *The Guardian*

Headline: Why global recovery could depend on China's taste for luxury <sup>45</sup>

Sub-headline: Attitudes are changing in China, but Western export hopes are pinned on a swelling middle class embracing its inner consumer

Press: *The Guardian*

Published date: 11 May 2014

Reporters: Angela Monaghan and Jonathan Kaiman

Word count: 1615 words

Picture: Figure 11

45 <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/may/11/why-global-recovery-china-luxury-western-export-middle-class-consumer>





Bicester Village designer shopping outlet. British brands are particularly popular with Chinese tourists.

Photograph: Andrew Fox

**Figure 11 – An article photo of *The Guardian***

This article is a prospective prediction of the sustainable luxury consumption by middle class Chinese tourists stemming from a liberal economic perspective. The central message is that UK retail businesses ought to be optimistic about the prospect of the growth of luxury goods seekers from China, even amid signs of GDP slowdown and the Chinese leaders’ crackdown on corruption. There are plenty of reasons to be positive, if we believe the wide range of evidence the authors put together, drawn from diverse commentators such as economists, industry practitioners and Chinese domestic luxury retailers. The article begins with an introduction of popular Bicester retail village, claiming that Chinese people account for almost half of its visitors. The article references ‘a World Bank-backed report’ that ‘this supercharged purchasing power will push the world’s second-largest economy ahead of the US this year’. There are four main lines to set up the “growth” statement.

**6.4.1 The support of UK government**

The article reminds readers that the government is seeking to boost Chinese tourist arrivals, as Chancellor George Osborne has announced plans to simplify visa applications for them visiting the UK. Earlier it quotes an Asia economist (Gareth Leather) that ‘[t]he UK has missed out on this [tendency of Chinese travelling abroad] to an extent, because visa issues have meant it is as open to Chinese tourists as other

countries' (Leather's quote). However it believes that the loss will be recovered, citing a report by Barclays Bank - 'the easing of restrictions will encourage shopaholic Chinese tourists to spend £1bn a year in the UK by 2017 – an 84% increase from 2013'.

#### **6.4.2 An expected transition of growth model**

The second argument is that China is in a transition from a production dominated industry to a consumption oriented society. It cites an economist (Bob Wood) that when developing countries reach saturation in terms of using strong investment as the economic driver, the next stage is domestic consumption of goods produced by itself, which is 'the way countries move from being low-income to high-income, and it is potentially important for the UK' (Wood's quote). For the reporters, this change of growth model is 'for the long-term health of the Chinese economy – and of the global financial system'.

#### **6.4.3 Crackdown of corruption**

The reporters refer the transition of growth model as 'growing pains', for the reason that the growth rate of China has slowed down. It appears that the article speaks from the position of UK businesses, for they are affected by this transition:

China's growing pains have had unintended consequences for a luxury goods sector that has benefited from the nation's rise so far, but finds itself exposed to the vagaries of the Chinese economy'. A crackdown on corruption, announced by President Xi Jinping last year, has been an unexpected blow.

(Monaghan and Kaiman, 2014:n.p.)

It goes on to list the harm to some gift related businesses: alcohol (British drinks group Diageo and Remy Cointreau), luxury goods (watches) and restaurant trade. It confirms the consequences with comments from the consultancy Bain:

[t]he highly visible government campaign encouraging frugality and focusing on corruption had a large impact on gifting, which had been one of the major growth engines of the sector

However, the reporters tell readers about lavish and stylish domestic consumption patterns in Beijing. Sanlitun shopping district is home to fashionable young Chinese,

who now look for more sophisticated luxurious brands. A female design student was interviewed and reflected:

[t]hey [the older generation of rich Chinese] wanted to show it, but didn't have any taste. Now, people will still spend a lot of money on luxury goods, but they want to look subtle and sophisticated

This argument is supported by another respondent who is an American writer (Bill Dodson), who argues that the crackdown on corruption had little impact on the desire for consumption:

[t]hey [his women coworkers] seem to have the same level of anxiety about failing behind of the fashion times as ever'..... 'because of a lack of trust in branding – and genuine safety issues with domestic products, from food stuffs to cars, clothing and electrical goods.....

#### **6.4.4 Chinese tycoons still investing**

The article finishes with Alibaba's plan to list the company in New York, which is set to be the biggest technology stock that overtakes Facebook. Alibaba's success reflects the confidence of 231 million online Chinese customers and 8 million sellers, which generate USD 248 billion.

#### **6.4.5 Overall Analysis**

This article is more than an economic analysis written by a bullish commentator. The main argument is that UK retail businesses should not back-off from investing in luxury stores, because China's growth will not be curbed in the long term. The context of this article appearing was a minor crisis, when the Chinese state announced a growth rate of 7.4% in 2014, the slowest annual rate for 24 years - 0.1% slower than the 7.5% target. Based on this announcement, the second author of the article wrote another article entitled Hard times return as China bids to bring its economic miracle to an end in January 2015 (Kaiman and Stewart, 2015).

An article in a newspaper is allowed to depart from the editorial line as discussed in Section 5.3 (p.132). I am convinced that there was no agenda setting for this particular article at editorial level, given that I cannot identify an editorial line on Chinese

consumption; rather, it is a story line the reporters decided to take. Forecasts are not infallible, which means reporters need not to be responsible for any wrong projection. Also, a reporter writes a few articles per day, which suggests the piece would not be harshly judged. Therefore, in order to attract readers, it is more important to write an attention-seeking story.

What representations of Chinese people has this article portrayed? First of all, it avoids any mention of poverty and inequality in China, which is perhaps understandable as the article is all about luxury consumption. However, it says China is moving towards being a high income nation. This is perhaps an unnecessary point to explain the transition from the production-to-consumption model. With reference to the lavish consumers, it classifies them by tastes in an opposite binary: ‘coal bosses and corrupt officials’ vs ‘tasteful, cosmopolitan class’. The former are gift buyers who are being curbed by anti-corruption initiatives, while the latter are people ‘who are earning money honestly’ and buying luxury for themselves. The implication is that UK retail business ought to think about a shift in product lines. More importantly it sends a message to the sector, that it is morally acceptable to profit from the affluent Chinese, because they earn honestly and buy decently, which is nothing to do with bribery. A “clean” sign of Chinese people is created. As an occasional reader of *The Guardian*, I assumed that this article would elicit a response from left leaning *Guardian* readers.

### **6.5 Blog comments and interpretations of *The Guardian***

There were 56 comments contributed by 23 bloggers from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014, which are analysed as shown in Appendix 3 (p.302). These comments and my interpretations of them are presented in a table with two columns. The left column contains bloggers’ comments and the right column presents my interpretations with respect to issues about China. Readers should follow the comment-interpretation sequence in a descending order of dates. The left column retains the original wordings used by the bloggers, even though there are spelling or grammatical mistakes. I cut off some of the content that is either too long or irrelevant to the research objective, with the original word count indicated. If comments are less relevant to the research objective, i.e. representations of Chinese people, dashed boxes are used. However, most of time I offer interpretations, which help us to understand the views of particular bloggers. This enables more accurate interpretations of later comments of the same bloggers. Solid boxes mean that comments are related to this research topic, in which I use bold type to emphasis the

names of bloggers and summarise the main idea of a particular comment about Chinese people, which allows readers to quickly identify the main arguments of a blogger. A number for each comment is also assigned to indicate who is responding to whose comments, for readers to trace particular comments when necessary.

### **6.6 Analysis of an online blog of *The Guardian***

In general, the comments reflect the Guardian readership that supports left-wing politics and social egalitarian policies (Duffy and Rowsden, 2005). It is unsurprising to find this reflected in the political allegiance of the readership. For example, According to Ipsos (2010), in the general elections in 2010, 59% of The Daily Mail readers voted Conservative (with 16% Labour), whilst 46% of The Guardian readers voted Labour (9% Conservative). Many bloggers reject the economically liberal perspective of the article. Spanker999 (1) and GreatGrandDad (2, 5) exemplify anti-capitalist attitudes and many others believe more equal distribution of wealth and less consumption is better for human as well as the environment (6, 16, 20, 21, 24, 47, 48). No comments overtly support the article, only two bloggers argue that UK retail businesses should make more effort to profit out from Chinese tourists (MartinMellish, 28; Tonybillbob, 27). For this aspect, the constructed mediated reality by the broadsheet article is very different from the perceived mediated reality, with some using personal observations to reason, some using information from other sources, and some bringing in scholarly debates. A number of issues are picked and debated rationally without deviating too much from the issues involved in the article. In relation to issues about Chinese people and China, there are three dimensions we can discuss.

First, some active bloggers echo the article's claim that Chinese people have taste and class (Kimdriver, 26; MartinMellish, 28; Tonybillbob, 42). The consumption of Western luxury is a reflection of their striving for quality commodities. Second, some bloggers take the discussion further to Chinese nationalism. It starts with Etatsunique's (29) rejection of MartinMellish's (28) claim that Chinese people think highly of the UK. Etatsunique, citing historian accounts, believes Chinese state hegemony has been building anti-West nationalism through asserting authority in cultural landscapes. This implies that, Chinese desire for the West would be wiped out by the state elicitation of nationalistic spirits if there is a need to do so (31, 40). MartinMellish (30), sharing his own observations from experiences living in China, agrees - to certain extent - that a sense of historical humiliation still exists, but 'the best revenge is doing well'. For the

blogger, Chinese people have an “aspirational revenge” – as long as they attain high cultures of the rivalries, they can restore their honour. Engaging in various kinds of Western consumption is the way to acquire these high cultures.

Third, there is a debate over structure and agency. Quarrytone (32) claims that contemporary Chinese have become much less subject to the state, as observed in the online environment. The blogger thinks that Chinese identity contains both anti-Western sentiment and West-admiring aspirations, in which the state has a legitimate moral role to play. As the blogger argues, there is ‘a sense of justifiable pride in its rising power that the CCP definitely exploits as much as it can’ (34). This is not approved of by XXY52891 (35) who, despite not making judgment on a single case, still believes that the Chinese state is exercising illegitimate power over Chinese citizens.

Blogosphere enables a rhizomatic interaction, in which people from unknown backgrounds reason and debate in a cultured manner, creating a deeper level of engagement regarding the significance of Chinese luxury consumption. We move on to examine a news article and blogosphere comments published by right-winged tabloid *The Daily Mail*, two years and so earlier than the *Guardian*'s.

### **6.7 Analysis of an article of *The Daily Mail***

Headline:	Forget the Russians and Arabs. The Chinese are at the front of the queue for luxury goods in Britain <sup>46</sup>
Press:	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
Published date:	2 January 2012
Reporters:	Robert Hardman
Word count:	1336 words
Pictures:	Figure 12 to Figure 17
Full article:	Appendix 4 (p.311)

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2081473/UK-sales-Chinese-the-queue-luxury-goods.html>



Surge: Chinese shoppers swarm into Selfridges on Boxing Day

**Figure 12 – An article photo (A) of *The Daily Mail***



Lucrative: Shoppers crowd at the tills in Selfridges, on Oxford Street

**Figure 13 – An article photo (B) of *The Daily Mail***



**Figure 14 – An article photo (C) of *The Daily Mail***



**Figure 15 – An article photo (D) of *The Daily Mail***

Ready, steady, go! All this splashing out is just the start, with China expected to dominate luxury goods sales in the coming decade



Bagging the brands: Melody Wang, 24, and Doreen Nie, 20

**Figure 16 – An article photo (E) of *The Daily Mail***



Influx: Chinese tourists wait for Selfridges to open on Boxing Day

**Figure 17 – An article photo (F) of *The Daily Mail***



When analysing a news article of *The Daily Mail*, it is seemingly fair to say that the tabloid ultimately aims to stimulate readers' sensations by loud and controversial messages, playful and satirical language, and images that possess powerful significations. In this article without exception, three powerful tools are used: sensational images, overwhelmingly high sales figures, and stereotypical portrayals of Chinese characteristics. I will focus on the last two and briefly explain the power of the images to start the analysis (this research does not employ visual methodology but it is useful here to recognise the power of images). Figure 12, the first picture of the article, captures the moment when the first shoppers (in which East Asian phenotypes are observed) are rushing into Selfridges, a high end department store in London. Some are observed covering their faces and most exchanging an embarrassing smile with camera operators. Having waited overnight outside the department store, they do not want to appear in newspapers that might portray them as shopaholics. We are not sure how *The Daily Mail* reporter knew that these customers are Chinese, but the headline tells it: 'Forget the Russians and Arabs. The Chinese are at the front of the queue for luxury goods in Britain'. Furthermore, the caption under that picture reads: 'Surge: Chinese shoppers swarm into Selfridges on Boxing Day'. Although it is legitimate for us to criticise this assumption, the reporter does provide plenty of figures to support his assertion.

### **6.7.1 Chinese consumption figures**

The central message of this article is the great spending power of Chinese people on luxury goods in the UK. First of all, the reporter sets the scene by saying that 'there was keen Chinese interest in the first-floor display of £20,000 diamond Chanel watches' and a '£4,500 Sunset bag'. The reporter does not say if these items were sold to Chinese customers finally, but he offers a set of comparable figures for readers to grasp how wealthy Chinese tourists are: 'an average Chinese shopper in London's West End currently splashes out £1,300 on a normal day. The typical British customer parts with just £130' (referencing The New West End Company, a trade association of three main London high streets). This is followed immediately by a piece of information which tells an ironic situation: '[I]ttle wonder the Department for International Development just axed Britain's £40 million aid budget for China'. The article carries on with statistical figures, such as: average Chinese visitor spends £3,500 per visit in Harrods (referencing Harrods); 960,000 Chinese people have more than £1 million (referencing Global Blue but without providing the date of the figure). Linking all these figures,

Chinese people visiting the UK are being labelled as a wealthy class who are obsessed with luxury brands.

### 6.7.2 Portrayal of Chinese Stereotypes

The world's most populated country is fast becoming a nation of WAGS. Just imagine a billion Coleen Rooneys on the prowl. No wonder the upper end of the retail world is looking perky — even if some of these customers can display a haughtiness towards the staff which would make a Downton dowager blush.

(Hardman, 2012:n.p.)

The article contains many metaphors to portray the images of the conspicuously affluent Chinese. WAGS, the acronym of wives and girlfriend of high-profile sportsmen, often appears in the English tabloid press as a pejorative term to describe individuals with high levels of disposable income. First, it is interesting that Chinese shoppers are gendered and are all characterised as WAGS. Second, the reporter applies the pejorative term to all Chinese people (billion), which is obviously a rhetorical usage. Third, he expresses the view that the wealthy Chinese are not cultured and classy enough to enter the world of the upper class, to the extent that even the most snobbish character (the Dowager Countess of Grantham) featured in a British drama (Downton Abbey) would not agree with their haughty attitudes to the staff. The reporter continues:

With that sort of spending power, who cares if one or two are brisk with the staff – or occasionally rip open the packaging to rummage around inside?

Is it an observation or rhetoric? This sentence is powerful enough for readers to imagine a scene in the department store where Chinese tourists are shopping in the manner of their own “culture”. Being brisk with the staff and opening packaging are seen as a break with British cultural norms. We do not know if the author is reporting or being polemical, but more importantly it is an expression of a pessimistic acceptance of an undesirable cultural drift in exchange for profits. Seemingly it is mocking the UK retail businesses, if not the wider UK economy, that they have compromised considerably for

the lure of Chinese money, as the reporter describes of the scene of the encounter between the staff and Chinese shoppers:

Staff have even been instructed in the fine art of handling a Chinese credit card: always hold the hallowed plastic with two hands outstretched and treat it with reverence, like some votive offering.

This observation, if it is true, appears exaggerated for effect. However, the article provides evidence that suggests that department stores have been hiring more Mandarin-speaking staff to cope with the change. It creates a narrative that the nation is trading off certain cultural rules or even dignity for lucrative Chinese expenditure.

This article reports that, for Chinese customers, luxury goods in England are much cheaper and newer than in China. Gifting culture is a common practice to replace traditional forms of bribery. Not only the rich like brands: ‘The McKinsey report reveals the rather depressing fact that an ordinary office worker in China will spend up to three months’ salary on a handbag – providing it has the right logo’. The reporter confirms his excessive use of rhetoric in the whole article, here he aims to emphasise the Chinese feverish desire of Western brands.

### **6.8 Comments and interpretations of an online blog of *The Daily Mail***

There are 55 comments contributed by 51 bloggers from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> January 2012, since the article was published on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2014 on the Mail Online. Appendix 5 (p.315) shows these comments and my interpretations of the comments. Interactions between bloggers were limited, which means that many contributors just comment but do not engage in on-going conversations developed from the original comment. Therefore, I will not analyse bloggers’ attitudes as I did for *Guardian* bloggers. I will use DM for *The Daily Mail* in the analysis.

### **6.9 Analysis of an online blog of *The Daily Mail***

The majority of comments are short and definite, which aims to state a particular view or attitude rather than to engage in discussions. The debate set up by the article is mainly two-fold: first, the economic benefit accompanied by negative behaviours is a package that the British appear to be accepting; second, some Chinese tourists have become the biggest spenders while the UK government has been helping the poor

people in China through foreign aid. Many bloggers generally take on the first position, but they re-appropriate it through the controversial UK immigration debate that has lingered for years since the mid-2000s in the UK.

### **6.9.1 Immigration debate**

The immigration debate is about whether Britain should limit immigration and protect native cultural values or keep the nation as a cultural melting pot that embraces multiculturalism that also contributes positively to the UK economy. Interestingly bloggers bring Chinese people into a debate that otherwise primarily focuses on European immigrants, in which two camps are demarcated: the side that are anti-“Chinese immigrants” believe that many Chinese people are living or hiding in the UK (3, 8, 15, 24, 27). They might not reject Chinese economic contributions to the country, but worry that they are not leaving. In this sense, the anti-immigration readers are consistent with *The Daily Mail* (e.g. Paul Dacre the editor and Simon Heffer a leading columnist). The other side simply think that Chinese tourists are boosting the UK economy (4, 18, 26, 29, 42), so it is unreasonable not to welcome them – the more the better. These two camps however are not debating, because they do not attempt to justify their propositions or respond to arguments. Therefore, some bloggers interrupt and argue that the anti-immigration camp is naïve, as many shoppers are actually living in the UK (46, 55). Many bloggers take on the negative images portrayed by the article and expand bad behaviours from individual level to collective level.

### **6.9.2 Bad behaviours**

No bloggers respond to the reported bad Chinese shopping behaviours (e.g. brisk with the staff, ripping open the package and being arrogant). The closest comments are to those that refer to them as involved in a ‘shopping spree’ (24) or ‘stampede’ (53). Other bloggers associate Chinese behaviours to wider political-cultural structures: calling them ‘communist sheep’ (34); invoking Confucius to say that they are stupid (36); and mocking them by saying ‘Marx would be quite upset’ (38). I attempt not to over-interpret the bloggers, which means that what they really wanted to say is unknown. Is it just an ironic remark to individuals or the Chinese state? However, it is clear that bloggers are using these narratives to frame their perspectives towards China or Chinese people. Moreover, there are more obvious comments connected to collective moral behaviours or Chinese state overseas economy policies: Chinese people being stereotyped as unethical consumers because they trade rhino horns and elephant tusks

(17); Chinese factories producing fake products (37); and the Chinese state “colonising Africa” (31). They brought their own knowledge to blogosphere.

If we agree that there are two main themes in the article (first the British tolerance of bad behaviours in exchange for economic benefit, and second, government aid to China is unjustifiable), this article fails to prompt the bloggers to agree on these views. For the first theme, could it be the fact that the reported bad behaviours are not observed by the bloggers? It is also possible that some comments are found criticising *The Daily Mail* (4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 46). In other words, readers are sceptical about the accounts of the reporter, or more precisely, they are used to the editorial line (style) of *The Daily Mail* – being provocative more than informative. The second theme draws two bloggers to protest against the government (2, 39), but this is counterbalanced by two sympathetic bloggers who feel sorry for the extreme inequality in China.

### **6.10 Concluding remarks**

This chapter explores the two articles and corresponding blogs from a liberal broadsheet and a middle-market tabloid, as a case study to investigate the apparent public identity of the Chinese tourists through the eyes of the host nation. This is not to say that the news content and comments on virtual spaces are representative of the views of the general public. A discourse analysis of the sample enables us to understand what news content is consumed every day, and negotiation and circulation of the content that appears in blogosphere. Analysing the media content, I do not probe the specific editorial line (if there is any) about Chinese tourists, because the articles were produced in the newsrooms and unknown to outsiders.

For the *Guardian* reporters, UK businesses should keep investing amid the crackdown of corruption in China, because the wealth for Chinese’s luxury consumption is not necessarily involves corruption. *Guardian* bloggers in general agree that it is a positive desire for the West held by the new generation, while some express the concern of anti-West nationalism because of the state propaganda. A debate has started and seemingly a consensus is that desiring and acquiring the accoutrements of Western high cultures is a form of “aspirational” revenge.

*The Daily Mail* produces a story that stereotypes Chinese shoppers. This is not an editorial agenda against Chinese people, but a general agenda of the press to ridicule available targets. I have observed many other articles that poke fun and/or include

demeaning commentaries towards other ethnicities, and which simultaneously include the British as a target alongside these ethnicities. Some bloggers are clearly hostile to Chinese tourists, but it is not known whether they dislike Chinese people or if it is just a convenient way to express their own anti-immigration agenda. Some bloggers take up the economic discourse and welcome Chinese tourists. Commentaries about the bad behaviours of Chinese shoppers have invoked ideological or moral discourse (e.g. mocking their Communist and Confucian tradition and unethical trading of prohibited items in Africa). There are perhaps collective representations of Chinese people, drawn not from Chinese individual behaviours but macro narratives observed in the wider Chinese society.

The narratives we observe from blogosphere do not appear in the news articles, but are contributed by bloggers who read into the articles as well as other comments, drawn from their own knowledge and social position. This rhizomatic form of interaction enables multiple and cross-cutting entry and exit points. The advantage of analysing the Web 2.0 interaction is that it draws dialogue from a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and geo-political contexts; nevertheless we do not know these contexts. The discourse analysis captures views of wider fractions of the UK population, though the limitation is that not all comments are British nation perspectives. In sum, according to this analysis, it can be argued that public identity of Chinese tourists perceived by British citizens (perceived mediated reality) differs from the representation constructed by the mass media (constructed mediated reality).

## CHAPTER 7

### CHINESE VISITORS THROUGH THE EYES OF ENGLISH WORKERS

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter researches the second objective of the thesis, which explores English workers' perceptions of Chinese visitors in servicescapes. I gained access to a gift/book shop as a customer service volunteer and spent six weeks in the field where I had interactions with both the English workers and visitors. The main purpose of this fieldwork was to get into the front-stage and back-stage spaces of the English workers, observing how they managed their interactions with the Chinese visitors, how they comprehended a different culture and how these experiences were communicated through the communal spaces in the workplace. In the previous chapter I explored representations of Chinese visitors in the mass media and the comments of online readers; this fieldwork attempted to research the public identity through observation in a servicescape located in a popular tourist destination. Here typical forms of service encounter were observed between the Chinese visitors and English staff. This chapter focuses on the relations observed in these encounters, reserving the analysis of consumption patterns for Chapter 9.

The fieldwork was originally inspired by ethnography as a methodology, which means I sought to become immersed in the culture. Through close observations and reflection I would be able to analyse naturally occurring behaviour. However, I did find it challenging to identify the authentic beliefs of predominantly English colleagues, partly because their opinions about Chinese visitors were not a subject that was a frequent topic of communication and partly because I found it challenging to interpret behaviours, which were not always accompanied by explanations or interpretation by those observed. In other words, by attempting to read into the contexts of what the predominantly English staff said, multiple hermeneutic interpretations are constructed and I claim no rights to know precisely what they think about Chinese visitors. I sensed this problem in the shop at an early stage and adapted my strategy to act myself as an agent to elicit responses from colleagues and in my interactions with Chinese visitors. Leaving the shop, when I reflected on the field notes, I concluded that I had adopted

ethnomethodology to explore the research question. I will detail this process throughout the chapter.

Section 7.2 tells how I first negotiated access to the gift shop and set up the background context of the research environment. In Section 7.3, particular attention is paid to the organisational structure and practices of the shop. Sections 7.4 to 7.6 document three themes that involve staff attitudes towards particular Chinese behaviours. The themes are written in chronological order, which reflects my gradual immersion into the workplace and the process of methodological adaptation in the field. Section 7.7 is a methodological reflection, drawing upon the work of Alvesson's (2011), and his distinction between localism and romanticism. Section 7.8 discusses the final theme of Chinese behaviours, which records a dramatic scene about the interactions between Chinese visitors, a young English member of staff and myself. Section 7.9 is a methodological reflection on ethnomethodology adopted in the research. Section 7.10 concludes that the Chinese public identity is framed by the presentation of the English workers.

## **7.2 Gaining access**

The fieldwork was carried out during June and July in 2012. I was offered the position of a customer service volunteer at the shop. My main duties were to serve the visitors, such as selling products at the till, answering questions about products, and replenishing stock in the gift shop. There were nineteen colleagues working in shift patterns, fifteen of whom were white English. Two distinct generations were observed in the shop: six of them in their 50s or 60s, eleven younger workers in the late teens and early 20s, and two in their 30s. The staff knew that I volunteered in the shop for a research project, although they did not know it was a retrospective work that involved my observations and their views about Chinese visitors. In other words, it was partially covert research (see p.151 for justifications). Therefore, this chapter is carefully written and uses pseudonyms for the people and place (e.g. 'Neverland' replaces the real name of the destination), to protect the anonymity of the respondents, because they were not fully informed about the research objectives. The Field notes were written up at the end of each day and based on my memory of events, which means that quotations from either the staff or visitors are my recollection of what was said.

'Neverland', as I have named the destination, attracted international and domestic visitors because of its historical significance and enduring legacy. Chinese, Japanese



and Korean visitors are the most numerous Asian visitors. The gift shop I was volunteering in, was one of many in 'Neverland', but it was close to an important exhibition that had made it popular. There were two ways to enter the gift shop: either through the main door leading to the high street, or through the back door leading to a garden situated between the exhibition and the gift shop. The garden gathered many visitors, who had a chance to see short plays, especially when the weather was good. Visitors purchasing a ticket, to see the exhibition, had to pass through the garden before finishing their visit in the gift shop, which is the only exit. Visitors entering into the gift shop from the garden have to pass through a one-way turnstile that prevents anybody entering the exhibition from the gift shop, which is a space that is open to the public free of charge. The gift shop showcased a wide range of souvenirs of 'Neverland', with one third of the shop area selling books about 'Neverland'. The gift shop was geared towards serving visitors, because three tills were typically available at any one time. If it was busy in the shop, all the tills were open and each of them was operated by a member of staff to reduce the waiting time experienced by visitors queuing to pay for goods.

My multiple identities in the gift shop need to be explained for readers to understand my social position in the fieldwork. First of all, I was a researcher volunteering for a short period of time, which means that I was not anchored within the organisation that bounded worker behaviours. Second, my racial identity marks an association with Chinese people, while my ethnic identity as a Hong Kong national presents a cultural difference to the majority of Chinese visitors in the shop. Third, I was proficient in the English language, but lacked familiarity with quotidian English idioms and native English cultures, which meant that I was not considered to be an insider culturally by my English colleagues. The next section discusses the way of life in the shop.

### **7.3 Flexible firm**

This section reveals the observed organisational structure, culture, practice and the act of customer service, which is the background context for the following sections. Among the nineteen employees, only three were full-time and the rest part-time. The organisational structure of the gift shop is described by Atkinson's (1984) notion of the *flexible firm*. A flexible firm is a model used to face the uncertainty of the market; that is, there are economic benefits for organisations to be flexible in their staffing policy; in order to reduce costs and to cope with variations in demand. In a flexible firm, core

workers are full-time employees that carry out core duties and are seen as valuable assets. Core workers provide *functional flexibility*, because they are required to be multi-skilled and responsive to performing different tasks to meet changing demand. In contrast, peripheral workers are temporary or part-time staff. They focus on ancillary activities, providing *numerical flexibility* so that the number of workers can be adjusted to meet fluctuations in demand. The full time employees of the gift shop were the management team, dealing with administration, staffing, operations and stock replenishment. They were the core staff of the gift shop. The rest were all part-time staff working at the tills, pricing, merchandising and replenishing products on the shelf, and answering general inquires. Training for part-time employees was minimal as the job duties were relatively straightforward and mechanical. I was part of the peripheral work force. Many of my colleagues were university graduates and some post-graduates.

As far as I could observe, the managerial style appeared to be democratic. The manager or assistant manager rarely gave commands, but everybody voluntarily performed their duties. Sometimes they spent time on changing the window display or redesigning product displays on the shelf. I observed that some staff were interested in particular aspects of duties. For example, some preferred price labelling and some product display. They worked together as a team without following fixed job descriptions. When there were few customers, my colleagues just got together and chatted at one of the three tills. The atmosphere of the workplace was comfortable and peaceful. A general observation was that my colleagues were using the same attitudes and language to communicate with all visitors. Delivery of the sales dialogue was at the same pace and same tone for all visitors, regardless of ethnicity, age and gender, unless there was a need to communicate with visitors who did not understand the English language. There were no particular hospitality codes for serving international visitors. Since the transaction process was simple and routine, and with the aid of body language, misunderstandings seldom happened. I observed some occasional small talk between my colleagues and mainly English-speaking native visitors. The prop for small talk could be an item they were buying or a display item in the exhibition. Based upon my observations in everyday life as a consumer, I did not find recognizable differences with respect to the customer service exchanges between the gift shop and those of an ordinary convenience store. The next section starts the first theme of Chinese behaviours.

#### **7.4 Views on Chinese asking for tax refund**

These events happened during the first week upon starting the volunteering position. The value added tax (VAT) refund policy entitles international visitors to the UK to a VAT refund on goods they buy in the destination and subsequently take home. Accompanied with the comparably expensive price of luxury goods in China, shopping has been the core activity associated with a UK visit (as reported in the newspapers in Chapter 6). Designer shops and high street stores issue VAT refund forms to visitors, which was the case in the gift shop I was working in. The minimum amount for a visitor to claim for a refund in the gift shop was £30. In order for the visitors to get the refund at a UK airport, they need the shop to issue a tax refund form.

A group of about 30 Chinese visitors led by a Chinese tour leader entered the shop. They were aged in their 40s and 50s. Like most other Chinese visitors they did not speak English. Some of them relied on the tour guide, who spoke broken English, to handle the transaction. The scene that caught my attention was towards the end of their shopping visit, when the tour guide requested a tax refund at the front till. My colleagues took out a machine from underneath the counter and received receipts given from the tour leader. That was the first time I saw the refund procedure, so I had no cause to question the conduct of the transaction. The curious phenomenon was that the tour leader gathered receipts from people in the group. From my general understanding, I correctly assumed that adding up receipts was prohibited. I kept this finding to myself until Judy asked ‘Eddy, have you got any findings today?’ I told her what I saw and she said the tour guide was wrong. Judy was an English woman in her 50s, one of the longest-serving staff in the shop. She admitted that she did add up the receipts infrequently, provided that the customers belonged to a family and each receipt amounted to above £30. Of course I emphasised that the colleagues did not know that the tour guide was collecting receipts from non-family members, in order to protect them from harmful repercussions as a result of my observations to a member of the management. When I asked which people were most likely to ask for a VAT refund, Judy stressed that claiming a tax refund is not limited to Chinese visitors, ‘.....you have got American, Canadian, Philipino....’. She went on to say that it is not worth waiting for two hours in the airport for a tax refund if it is not really an expensive item.

A frequent opening topic when my colleagues and I were together at the till was about my research progress. This provided an opportunity to cross-check with some

colleagues, whether it was common for American customers to ask for tax returns. Paula, the manager of the shop in her 50s, said no. Another young colleague said mostly Japanese and Chinese. During the six weeks I was working in the shop I only saw mostly Chinese and one Arab family requesting tax refunds. A week after the conversation with Judy, a verbal notice was circulating that only a single receipt with over £30 was entitled for a tax refund. It appeared that Judy was concerned about possible malpractice, since I had revealed inappropriate practices in the shop. This exchange led me to reflect in greater depth upon the discourse of previous conversations with Judy.

When I was with Judy at the till she was using her thumb and index finger to indicate the thickness of bank notes she had seen previous visitors holding. She told me that she saw children carrying lots of money and she was worried about this practice. She was concerned for the safety of the children, presumably because she regarded their behaviour as courting the attention of criminals. She sought to explain to me how rich Chinese visitors were, even the children. My first interpretation of this episode was that Judy was involved in creating a certain impression of concern for young Chinese visitors. It appeared that the main consideration was the issue of safety rather than the discourse that kids should not be spoiled. However, perhaps Judy's comments were motivated by a desire to show good will and acceptance towards me, by showing concern for Chinese visitors, which was prompted by my ethnicity as Chinese; the underlying assumption may have been that I would naturally be concerned for the welfare of members of my own ethnic group and would respond favourably to paternal comments about their wellbeing from members of the host community. Reflecting upon her answer to my question about visitors' VAT refunds, I began to form interpretive judgements on Judy's internal conversation (Archer, 2003) (p.51). I was interested in how Judy had perceived my research aims and objectives and started to consider how Judy's construction of my motivations was affecting her discourse; in other words, I was seeking to describe any observer effects in the gift shop. Perhaps Judy had concluded that one of my goals was to record the faults of Chinese visitors. If this was the case a valid interpretation would be that Judy was trying to balance my observations of Chinese visitors indiscretions, by outlining the mitigating circumstances in which this behaviour occurred and to highlight the naivety of visitors to qualify any generalisations I might make that was connected to ethnicity or race. As Judy tried to balance my "preoccupation" with Chinese visitors' bad behaviours. This kind of interpretation went

into my field notes, at which point I started to think that I could be an agent to elicit responses and important data. The next section records an exchange involving a particular Chinese behaviour.

### **7.5 Translations of Chinese behaviours**

The first event happened during the fourth week upon arriving in the shop. I had developed familiarity with the shop and friendship with the staff. Working in the gift shop, the staff had to deal with boredom when it was not busy. We were free to move from one till to another and it allowed a relaxed atmosphere where people could get together, chat and even laugh together. Bob, a witty and funny colleague in his late teens, was always able to create amusing conversations. One day he was involved in an interesting visitor encounter in the gift shop. A group of around 25 Chinese visitors came into the shop. They were between their late 30s and 50s, and each visitor was wearing a rectangular lanyard. I was curious about this group because the lanyard meant that they were coming for a specific purpose. I intentionally came closer to some individuals, making them aware that I was ready to help. And one of them asked me a question in English, ‘Do you speak Chinese or English?’ I replied in Mandarin that I could speak Mandarin. Sometimes I pretended I could not speak Mandarin in order to observe some responses but this time I really wanted to help so I did not hide. I was told that they were English teachers coming to the UK for training. Some of them were lingering in the kid zone where customers could find rulers, chromolight keyrings, pens, pencils, and pencil sharpeners. I heard that they were looking for gifts for their children.

I was also in the kid zone as I wanted to observe. One woman turned to me, ‘handsome lad’. In mainland China, Taiwan or sometimes in Hong Kong, people like to address staff or strangers as ‘handsome’, no matter how you look. I would compare this situation in the English context when an mature lady in a shop calls a customer ‘sweetheart’, ‘darling’, ‘love’ or a man calls a stranger ‘buddy’ in a pub. ‘Can you tell me how much it is?’ She spoke in Mandarin, pointing me to a pencil sharpener. ‘I am sorry I am not very sure but let me check it for you’, I replied in Mandarin. Pencil sharpeners are one of the most unpopular items in the shop, so I did not remember. ‘It’s 80p.’ Joanne, an under 20s cheerful colleague told me. I returned and told the Chinese woman but she was shocked, ‘80 pound??’. ‘No no, it was about 8 RMB’, I calmed her down. After a while she turned to me again, ‘Can I test the pencil sharpener?’ I was a bit reluctant to say yes because I did not want to ask my colleague this question. I replied

apologetically and sympathetically that I did not know whether we could let a customer test the sharpener. She was not too unhappy at hearing this explanation.

I went away for a while to see what others in the group were doing. Perhaps five minutes later, I saw Bob taking a pencil from the front till and walking to the Chinese woman who had previously enquired about testing the pencil sharpener. Then I realised that she had asked Bob for a pencil. She started turning the pencil in the sharpener as Joanne, Bob and I were watching. 'It is not very sharp....' She kept sharpening the pencil and frequently examining the sharpness achieved. I was astute enough to find her a piece of paper and she started signing her signature. Finally she returned the sharpener with debris inside and the pencil to Bob, and said with a slightly embarrassed tone, 'it is not really sharp....' Bob was wondering when he was touching the tip of the pencil and asking 'It's not sharp enough?'. Joanne and I stared at each other and burst into helpless but hidden laughter. After the Chinese woman left, Bob used the pencil ironically, by signing the paper and repeating the phrase 'not sharp enough? What did she want?? It's sharp!'. Bob was performing again. From my understanding of the amusing ambience that evolved during the incident, it was a mixture of reactions: both the feeling that it was unusual to test a cheap sharpener, to leave debris without buying it, and Bob's playful performance.

Another example of incomprehensible Chinese behaviour was observed in the sixth week in the shop. It involved Bob's view about Chinese tourist photography. In my field notes I had made many descriptions that Chinese visitors were taking photos. Most Chinese visitors carried a camera. They ranged from a professional digital single-lens reflex camera to a pocket size smart phone. One of the important activities for Chinese visitors was to take photos of everything. They carefully held the camera and through the viewer, squinting single-eyed, and aiming at an item on the shelf they were attracted to. It does not mean that they ignored the souvenirs physically. Touching, seeing and feeling the materials were also part of the visit experience. Compared to other visitors, Chinese visitors liked to capture a visual record of the souvenirs on their devices, although they did not necessarily buy the souvenirs they photographed. They were taking their time and indeed nobody interfered with them, unless their tour guide urged them to go back to the coach. There was a time when I was chatting to colleagues, that we touched upon this photo shooting behaviour. They all agreed with my observations, but we never had the opportunity to discuss the rationale, motivating

factors or meanings associated with the behaviour. Another time when Bob saw a Chinese man taking photos of book covers. Bob frowned at the scene, 'I don't understand. I never do it. I don't know why they are doing that'. It is not to say that my colleagues accepted or disapproved of such shooting practices, they simply could not comprehend the motives. The next section is about how I tried to probe colleagues' responses to a particular behaviour I observed at the door of the shop.

### **7.6 The view on tour guiding practice**

It was still my fourth week in the shop. Sometimes I was wandering at the front door to observe and I found a group of around 30 Chinese visitors getting together. They were facing a man who then started to speak up, 'number 1'. Then one of the group members replied 'yes'. He moved on to 'number 2', 'number 3' and so on. Then I realised that he was taking attendance. This was my first time to see how a tour guide counted the number of participants. I was given tour-guiding training in Hong Kong in 2008, where the best practice was for the tour guide to count the number of participants without interrupting them. When I had to tour with primary school students, I would separate them into groups and assign a group leader to report attendance. But I managed to remember all the names of a group of 30 students within the first three days of the journey. I had a chance to share with Rita and Tom my findings of the day. Rita was astonished by it. Rita was an amiable, talkative and approachable middle-aged English woman. She felt that that the number was impersonal, similar to how I felt about it. Tom held a different view. He associated this behaviour with his previous stage experience, where each performer was given a number on the stage. There are two possibilities to read into Tom's reaction. First, the behaviour of the tour guide was perceived to be ordinary, as it was effective to get the job done. Second, it was perhaps that the way of telling the story contained disapproving attitudes that Tom felt that I had tried to pick up bad behaviours for my research.

I observed that the younger colleagues were behaving differently from the senior staff. Perhaps the young person is negotiated a different position to that of the older managers. For example, Tom might need to think of the reputation of the shop and 'Neverland'. Was it his intention that he sought to maintain a particular view of English civic values and welcome to strangers, i.e. Chinese visitors in my case. The younger people, such as Bob and Joanne, were less closely aligned with the shop and therefore, they would not consider themselves to be the spokespersons for the institutions. This

means that they could represent different subject positions, perhaps informed by other institutions, for example family and other behaviours, for example the enjoyment involved in impressing members of the opposite sex. There were different registers of responsibility at work here. However, while I acknowledge these to a greater extent, how do I know if these were the reasons behind their attitudes towards Chinese visitors? The following section is a methodological reflection on this specific question.

### **7.7 Methodological reflection – hermeneutics**

I felt that the English workers had difficulties comprehending some of the behaviours of Chinese visitors. Or it could be that they were struggling to give me an appropriate response? When I try to take one step further to explore these issues, I encounter methodological difficulties. The various reactions or responses during the course of events detailed so far, raised the question of interpretation (i.e. hermeneutics). Drawing from a critical management perspective, Alvesson's (2011) distinction between localism and romanticism will illustrate the difficulties. Localism holds that people's speech is detached from the authentic self. The product is a self-representation that involves the subject negotiating the situation to position themselves in a particular way, taking into account the political and social context. In other words, localism assumes that when people speak they are self-conscious of the way in which they are constructing meaning to achieve a specific identity. This perspective suggests that more research into the context is required to get closer to the self. Alternatively, romanticism is the belief that the authentic self is disclosed when the human subject is in a trusting relationship and feels secure. The closer the bond between the researched and the researcher, therefore, the more trustworthy the data becomes. This process requires all parties to be reflexive about their experience of the co-construction of knowledge.

Localism has shaped my interpretation of Judy's comments, whom I observed was very careful to ensure that her opinions were politically correct when commenting on other cultures to her own. Nevertheless, should I interpret Tom in the same way, for example, when he responded to my comments on numbering with his association of stage experience? Was this his authentic opinion, or was he constructing a discourse that enables the Chinese visitors to save face? If so, was this discourse designed to show respect for a cultural group that he perceived I was a part of, that is, was he trying to show respect to me? I am far from being able to answer the question. When I further reflect on how I read Judy, to what extent can I claim that it was Judy's authentic self?



Romanticism is criticised because reality is influenced by the subjective views and interests of the researcher, rather than what is being communicated (Silverman, 2006).

Therefore, to cope with this problem, an ethnography might require a researcher to invest significant prolonged periods of time, so as to immerse into the culture and develop an emic view, in order to account for the effects of their own subjectivity on the research observations and interpretations. Although I have undertaken considerable reflection during the six weeks of participant observation, I found myself in a weak position to re-present the English workers. Romanticism, to some extent operated in the space between me and the young colleagues in the gift shop. That I worked temporarily in the shop and was closer in age had created a strong bond, which emerged naturally rather than intentionally. It was mediated primarily by close work relations in a confined and perhaps mundane environment. The pencil-sharpening story exemplified how an everyday occurrence stimulated a sharing of “joy”, a topic of conversation and a showcase of personal characters.

The process of bond formation was gradual. When talking to the younger group we had a wider range of topics. Bob, for example, when we talked about Hong Kong, told me that his mother might think Hong Kong was the capital of China. I was not sure if it was a joke or the truth. When talking about some British sitcoms that were currently showing, he then gave me a review of past British sitcoms. He wrote on a blank receipt a list of must-watch classics, and asked other colleagues to compile the list (Dad’s Army, Fawlty Towers, Porridge, The Good Life, Only Fools and Horses, The Office, Black Adder, etc.). He said they were the key to understanding Englishness. When colleagues got together and chatted, I could sometimes understand just 70% of their conversations. My misunderstanding was partly due to their accents and partly knowledge of the content. They seemed not to adjust their pace and the content of their conversation to accommodate my presence, but it does not mean that they were not aware of the fact that I did not understand some knowledge, contexts, vocabulary, slangs, idioms and their accents. But I positioned myself as a learner so that I did not feel too embarrassed to ask ‘silly’ questions. Romanticism, in this respect, put me in a more legitimate position to engage in the young workers’ self. The following section details the last theme of Chinese behaviour, which was troublesome and eventually induced a meaningful observation.

## **7.8 The gatekeeper**

It was the sixth week as well as the last week of my volunteering in the shop. I had already developed dual identity. On the one hand I was a researcher; on the other hand I was an active member of staff helping with the operations of the shop. This theme of Chinese behaviours began when I found suspicious the movement of Chinese visitors entering the shop. The gift shop was where a ticket holder of the exhibition finished the visitation; at the same time it was also open to the public from the main street. A one-way turnstile was therefore installed between the garden and the back door of the gift shop to prevent non-ticket holders from entering into the exhibition. There is an area in between the turnstile and the back door where non-ticket holders could see the short play. It was a busy afternoon I saw a group of about 20 to 30 middle-aged Chinese visitors flocking to the shop from the main street. They went straight towards the back door and I was following them because it seemed to me that they were looking for something. It was the garden. Then I realised that from the main street they heard that something interesting was going on around the garden so they came in. Around the turnstile they gathered and started to take photographs. What then happened was some of them were sneaking into the garden through the one-way turnstile. Those who have already gone in asked some of the others to “enter”. I immediately stopped them using Mandarin, explaining that they needed to buy tickets. They were able to identify that I was staff as I was wearing a name badge, but they did not return and went away into the crowd in the garden. I did not follow them but stood at the turnstile as a gatekeeper. I was upset at that moment and clearly positioned myself as one of the staff in the gift shop rather than a researcher.

I had a chance to talk about this incident to Tom and Judy that day at the till. I shared with Tom what I have experienced. It was not a report to the assistant manager for the benefit of the shop, because no extra staffing capacity would be deployed to stand at the turnstile to stop that legitimate activity. I expressed to Tom that although what I saw were only Chinese visitors misbehaving, it was difficult to conclude that other nationalities did not have the same behaviour. I was honestly revealing my dilemma over how I should write the field notes. This question was asked without any careful planning, and it proved to be too difficult for Tom. He just agreed with me that it was hard to draw conclusions from what I observed. However Judy gave me a very detailed response to the incident. At first she commented that the Chinese visitors were wrong naughty, and then told me an experience she had about a potential unauthorised entry in

the past. Judy recalled that years ago when she was in the office on top of the gift shop. She heard that, in front of the gift shop's main door on the street, an English tour guide was telling a group of visitors that they could enter into the garden through the gift shop. She recalled that she then leaned over the window and yelled 'Sorry gentleman, you CAN'T do it'. Therefore, it was the English tour guide that was to blame. Again, Judy's response consistently matches with my impressions of her that she tried to balance my fault finding with Chinese shoppers.

Thanks to Bob I am able to give another narrative of how an English worker viewed Chinese visitors. It was a wet and quiet afternoon when Joanne and I were at the middle till. Joanne needed Bob to be present at the till to release her for a break. So I was looking for Bob but could not find him in the gift shop. Finally I saw him standing at the turnstile under the drizzle. I came to him 'Are you alright, Bob?' He turned his head facing the toilet in the garden and said 'I am waiting for the Chinese couple.....they were trying to sneak in.' Actually they were already in the garden, and Bob was there to make sure that they would not make their way into the exhibition, but return to the gift shop. 'No way to come in without a ticket! Do you see that girl with the phone? She came out from the toilet in 30 seconds but the man is still inside.....' I asked, 'Are you sure they haven't got tickets?' Bob replied that he did not ask. Bob was like a detective, picturing that the man was hiding in the toilet waiting for him to leave, while the girl was in connection with the man, passing hints via the phone. I really wanted to see what would happen next but we had to release Joanne for a break. So I seriously affirmed that, 'Bob, don't worry! I will make sure that they are not entering into the exhibition!' Bob trusted me and I replaced him as the detective under the drizzle.

Now the man came out from the toilet finally. I came forward and asked the couple in English. 'Excuse me. Are you going to see the exhibition?' They replied yes and I further questioned 'Have you got tickets?' The couple answered, 'We are having a premier tour.' I have never heard about what a premier tour was but after little hesitation I asked, 'So you are entitled to visit the exhibition?' They said yes again and I felt that I could not ask any more questions as that would be rude. Giving them the benefit of doubt I apologised and communicated that I hoped that they would enjoy the exhibition. Although I spoke with them in English I could see and hear that they were from mainland China. When I returned to the gift shop I saw Tom and asked him what a premier tour was. Tom said that when visitors bought a bottle of Champaign they were

given a free visit to the exhibition. Then I had to report to Bob. To my surprise Bob hadn't heard about the premium tour, but he was praising me cheekily, 'Good job Eddy, benefit of doubt, of course.....' Then it was my turn, 'Now I have a question. Why did you think they were Chinese?' I was just enjoying the pleasure after asking a difficult question and within two seconds Bob concluded, 'I made a racist assumption.' I was laughing because of Bob's quick and witty reaction. Bob at the moment knew that he was politically incorrect. Bob did say something else about some racial issues in England, such as in some regions, how ridiculous it was to use "Winterval" to replace "Merry Christmas" in the public domain, and he commented on how dull life would be if stereotyping was not allowed in daily conversation. I regret that I did not write down more exactly what he said in my field notes. The next day I had a chance to talk to another young colleague through the whole story about the Chinese couple and Bob. She told me that a week ago a Chinese tour leader at the entrance was telling the group that they could come through the gift shop to the garden without buying a ticket. Therefore, she said, Bob might make that assumption.

### **7.9 Methodological reflection – ethnomethodology**

In the previous section I reflected on the premise of interpretation and found myself unable to understand the inner conversation of the English workers. The more occurrences I observed in the shop, the more I think about Goffman's (1959) performance theory and Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology. It has become unproductive to keep digging in and deduce the structure "behind" Judy's words. In other words, I started to query my analytic approach, in a similar way to how ethnomethodology critiques constructive analysis.

'The commitment to conventional sociological explanation and description, EM [ethnomethodology] argues, either diverts attention from the lived order, formulates it as epiphenomena, and/or imposes concepts and mechanisms variously irrelevant or unintelligible to participants'.

(Pollner and Emerson, 2001:119)

The assumption of the critique is that people perform identities to accomplish multiple effects in everyday situations. This does not mean individuals can pick and choose what they want their identity/character-to-be, rather their performances are shaped by historical and social contingencies, traditions, habits (i.e. routine practices) and mores, about which they are more or less *reflexive*. This *reflexivity*, in Garfinkel's usage this

term, refers to how members idealise in their actions, act in accordance to such understandings (see p.140). Ethnomethodology views that the knowledge and skills for everyday accomplishments are the infrastructure of social life. Therefore, to “re-analyse” Judy from an ethnomethodological perspective, is to look at what she *did* in a particular time, place and situation, and how the social order reproduced through her actions. Judy had been taking a line in order to stay neutral and offered no judgmental comments upon another culture, i.e. Chinese visitors. What she did say reflects her concerns about the safety of Chinese children who carried many notes, everybody would ask for VAT refunds and bad behaviours are not limited to Chinese tour leaders. Nevertheless, I am unable to confirm that was the authentic thinking of Judy.

During the event when Bob and I were talking about the suspicious Chinese visitors, I had actually conducted a breaching experiment, though I was not aware of it at that moment. When Bob finally realised that he made racial assumptions and stereotypes, he felt a little bit embarrassed. Knowing that I picked up on his attitudes, he replied in a self-defeating way by saying he was a racist. It was my question that promoted reflexivity and Bob reflecting upon the situation replied in a manner that demonstrated that he acting in a way that contravened social norms when speaking about racial issues. The further discussion after his “confession” was drawn from examples from past experience, which were used to criticise the rules and norms on racial issues in the U.K. I put Bob in an embarrassing situation on purpose, which may have been construed as a form of harm and a breach of ethical research conduct. However, when I reflected, why did I feel comfortable to challenge Bob? It was because we had developed a certain extent of relationship (Alvesson, 2011). That is to say, I understood that I would not offend Bob by making this comment. The next section is my reflexivity in relation to the young English colleagues.

### **7.10 Summary – presentation of self in sevicescapes**

This chapter aimed to explore Chinese visitor behaviours through the eyes of English workers in a gift shop, in which it is possible to understand the Chinese public identity through typical interactions between the two peoples. The original methodology was to write an ethnography about these interactions. During the research process, however, it was found that there existed multiple interpretations of staff perspectives on particular Chinese behaviours. I cannot reach any definite conclusions that re-present the authentic meanings held by the staff, because of my social position as a cultural outsider to

English identity. Resorting to ethnomethodology, it is legitimate to explain Chinese public identity through exploring not what they *really* think, but what they have said and done, within my presence in a particular time and space in the shop.

Of the empirical data I have gathered, the elder English members of staff first of all clearly expressed that they thought Chinese visitors were wealthy and they were desperate to ask for tax refunds, which was not observed from international visitors in general. They acknowledged that sometimes Chinese visitors were wrong, such as the tour guide who gathered receipts to request a tax refund, and those tourists who tried to sneak into the exhibition, however these are seen as individual behaviours, which are not connected to race, ethnicity or nationality. These were unusual behaviours, given that I was there for six weeks and only observed the above events once. For the young English staff, there were occasions when they were not able to comprehend the behaviour of Chinese visitors. I have talked about two examples. The first one is a woman requesting to test a cheap pencil sharpener and the second visitors taking pictures of souvenirs and books. They did not comment on the behaviours, but expressed that they did not understand the motives behind them. This incomprehensibility became resources for these young people to poke fun at and this created a lively and amusing ambience in the shop.

I also brought in Alvesson's (2011) romantic perspective from my bonding with the young English colleagues, especially Bob, which is not to say that I had a greater insight into what he thought, but that our bonding had contributed to a deeper understanding of the researched issue. Bob connected suspected bad behaviours (Chinese visitors thought to be sneaking into the exhibition) to the Chinese race. Chinese tourists greatly outnumbered visitors from other Asian nations, whom English staff might not be able to distinguish from their particular phenotypes. Therefore, instead of saying that Bob made a racist comment, it was his conception based on continuing observations of Chinese visitors made in the shop. In other words, it was an objective reality that some Chinese visitors would be rule-breakers. In sum, the Chinese public identity discussed by this chapter is not representative, which is a limitation of this research. However, it offers implications for us to understand the relations between Chinese visitors and English staff in the servicescapes.

Methodologically, the difficulties I encountered in the shop to research the meanings constructed in servicescapes between Chinese visitors and English service workers,

have prompted me to shift to ethnomethodology. In the host-tourists relations in the tourism literature, this method is perhaps uncommon. Researchers who attempt to use themselves as an agent to elicit responses should have two qualities: the language competencies of the host and tourist, and the cultural understanding of both peoples. These qualities conflate each other, and ethnicity and race of researchers are critical. For example, if I were able to speak native English or a cultural-insider of the English nation, I might obtain more insider or authentic thoughts of the English colleagues. Also, if I were a native English who speak very good Mandarin Chinese, this chapter would be totally different. In sum, researchers who are part of both cultures have an advantage to conduct cross-cultural research.

## CHAPTER 8

### PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF ENGLISH PEDAGOGICAL SPACES

#### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of two main parts that address two research objectives of the thesis. Section 8.3, “Production of English pedagogical spaces” addresses the third objective, which investigates whether the Chinese state has extended cultural authority in overseas tourism spaces (after Nyíri (2006, 2010), see p.43), and sets up the background context, i.e. the production of educational tour for Chinese students. Section 8.4, “Consumption of English pedagogical spaces” discusses the fourth objective, which explores the experience of Chinese students by observing their practices and performance, and collecting narrations and reflections in the pedagogical spaces. The data involved in examining these two objectives are drawn from the participant observation in an educational tour partaken by Chinese students in their early teens, who visited London in July and August 2013, and an in-depth interview conducted with the educational tour operator in June 2014.

Section 8.3 explores overseas Chinese state hegemony, which draws primarily on the example of the educational tour I gained access to, and also the London based Chinese entrepreneur’s tourism industry experience from 2006 to 2014. By means of a diagram, it will explain the production of summer study tours, the problems involved in organising these tours as well as the institutional racism practised by the Chinese outbound tour operator and intermediaries. It also describes the Chinese owner’s ambitions of developing his pedagogical efforts in the tourism business and his perspectives on Chinese middle class behaviours.

The empirical work of Section 8.4 presents Chinese participants’ narratives and practices during their time in London, which are connected to racial, ethnic and national identities. The observations of these students have informed a re-construction of the theoretical framework of the thesis. In the previous virtual spaces and servicescapes we explored others’ perspectives of Chinese subjects; by contrast, in the pedagogical spaces I was immersed as a volunteer travelling with a student group for a pro-longed period (3 weeks), in an attempt to understand the subjectivity, i.e. self-identity of the Chinese



students. This section is an ethnography that documents activities in the classroom, during sight-seeing, relations with host families and self-reflections of Chinese students.

## **8.2 Gaining access**

For overseas travel businesses in general, the basic units in business relations are an outbound tour operator and an inbound tour operator. The former draws customers at home and the latter in the destination supplies transport, guiding services and accommodation. I aimed to research an overseas study tour because travelling abroad for educational purposes during summer holidays is a popular activity for Chinese students. It was my first priority to request support from an outbound tour operator, for it is assumed that it would have more power, compared to the inbound operator, to authorise my request to volunteer on the tour. A Beijing-based company kindly offered me a place but I declined it, because the tour would last for one week in London and the number of participants was fifty, which means that the time was too short, and the group too big for participant observation.

Fortunately, in June 2012 I received a favourable reply from Ed-tour (a pseudonym, also for the rest of the characters and organisations), a London-based inbound operator. It requested that I volunteer as a helper for a three-week tour attended by fifteen Chinese students aged between 12 to 16 years, plus two adults (teachers) who accompanied the group all the way from China. I had a meeting with the owner, David, a Chinese man in his late 30s in the office of Ed-tour. David was very helpful, for he addressed my request by offering me a position to travel with the smallest group among hundreds of Chinese students Ed-tour handled during the summer of 2013. I observed that he was open-minded, as he appeared agreeable to the way I proposed to carry out the research. I emphasised full anonymity and confidentiality for all participants, including the identity of his organisation. Also I reaffirmed that the research aimed to explore students' learning and travelling experiences, through observing and talking to them, at the same time ensuring that I would not ask sensitive questions and affect the activity schedules of students. With the evidence that I received the Disclosure and Barring Service clearance, conducted by the Home Office of the UK in May 2013, as part of my part-time employment as a Residential Mentor in Exeter, and the support from the Exeter Business School, David was pleased to assist with an academic research.

I gained valuable data and friendship when travelling with the student group. My assistance on the tour was appreciated by David. I was writing up the ethnography when I entered into the third year of the PhD programme. Reconstructing the theoretical framework and exploring further the literature, I was attracted to the theories exploring the cultural authority of the Chinese state in domestic tourism landscapes (Nyíri, 2006), and considered it an opportunity to examine if the state has extended hegemony to Ed-tour. Therefore I sent a request to David, to learn more about the background of the summer tour. In June 2014 I conducted an in-depth interview with him, which will be discussed in the following section

### **8.3 Production of English pedagogical spaces**

David first came from China to the UK in 2002 to study an English programme then proceeded to a master programme in 2004. Upon graduation he worked in by a UK company that provided services (communications, marketing and public relations) to transnational contacts and exchanges between businesses. David was working in the business travel department where he had developed his experience in the tour operation industry and built business relations. In 2012, Ed-tour was founded. David had already obtained permanent British residency. There were two main questions I asked David: first, whether the Chinese state had intervention in his business; and second, the mechanism involved in the production of the education tour. I begin to answer the first question below by presenting David's perspectives on Chinese mass tour / educational tour business in the UK and how he organises his business. The interview lasted for one and a half hours and the medium was in Mandarin Chinese. Voice recordings were approved by the respondent.

#### **8.3.1 Overseas Chinese travel businesses**

David was an informative respondent. For many times interesting data to the thesis was not directly asked by the present researcher but casually shared by him, following a natural flow of conversation. When I asked the role of the Chinese state in his businesses, David first replied that there was little effect on an individual level, but there were two policies affecting Chinese overseas travel businesses. First was the anti-corruption campaign launched by the new leader, Xi Jinping, since late 2012 (see its impact on tourist luxury consumption in the UK reported the *Guardian* in Chapter 6 p.160). In the past David's businesses involved organising services for Chinese business groups and government officials coming to Europe for meetings and conferences. He

observed that the campaign means less overseas trips were permitted. This implies that bureaucrats had been exploiting the public money to fulfil personal benefits in the name of participating in overseas exchange programmes. Second, the new Tourism Law of China that came into effect in October 2013 had changed the commission-oriented business model in outbound tourism. Before the new Tourism Law, customers coming to Europe were forced to shop as a matter of economic expediency, because commissions consisted of essential part of the income for the tour operators as well as tour guides. David told that there was a discount war between tour operators. A two-week Europe trip (including flights and accommodation) cost around RMB 10,000 (equivalent to £9,439 as of the date of interview 28 June 2014). This amount might not even cover the cost of the tour; therefore, forced shopping activities were critical to generate shopping commissions. Lack of regulations in the past had produced “zero-dollar-tours” (i.e. the selling price is equal or lower than the cost of the tour), which caused negative impacts for the travelling experience.

David, a transnational migrant, provided an opportunity to explore the theories developed by Nyíri who specialises in researching transnational Chinese relations with China. For example, (i) Chinese migrants’ economic ties with state enterprises is a way for migrants to obtain cheaper goods to trade in Europe while the Chinese officials have a channel to “repatriate” profits, storing wealth off-shore in Europe (Nyíri, 2003); (ii) the Chinese state negotiates with migrant representatives to assist its goals of socialist modernisation (Nyíri as a co-author in Pieke et al. (2004)); (iii) in the realm of tourism, Nyíri (2006) demonstrates that landscapes are constructed by official discourses and commentaries are standardised, which all together serves the goal of patriotic education. These three examples contain different implications of state intervention: the first is about corruption; the second, networking and state resources allocation; and the third, cultural authority. I had an open-ended perspective to interview David, for I did not know the extent of Chinese state intervention in his businesses.

The anti-corruption campaign and the new Tourism Law reflected that the Chinese state intervened in a legitimate and moral way, if we look at the face values of the curb of corruption. These measures were welcomed by David on moral grounds, although he admitted that these two policies had minimal impacts to his business that anyway targeted the educational sector. Moreover, he was not in affiliation with any associations or organisations that involved the Chinese state as far as he acknowledged. David

further described the current Chinese outbound tourism market in the UK as “chaotic”. Touring in the UK followed a standardised itinerary provided by inbound tour operators. The only difference between operators was the quality of accommodation or guiding services, which was reflected in the cost of the tours. In China, the business relationship between intermediary travel agencies and outbound tour operators; and transnationally, Chinese outbound tour operators and UK inbound tour operators, as David concluded, followed largely the principle of liberal market economy.

Another question I asked was the commentaries given by the tour guides of the study tour. I observed that the tour guides produced particular discourses when visiting some sites in England, which were connected to Chinese nationalism in British Museum and a great deal of Chinese triumphalism in Cambridge. I assumed that those were the tour guides’ personal selection of commentaries. When I asked David how Ed-tour produced the commentaries, he replied that they were inhouse production. Selected information was obtained from online resources such as Wikipedia or Baidu (a Chinese search engine). These commentaries about UK sites, apart from factual information, should possibly relate to Chinese context, in order to arouse the interests of participants. I was convinced that the Chinese state exerted no direct influence on the interpretations of UK landscapes. To reflect on this line of inquiry, this finding is reasonable because the Chinese state has no control over the production of tourism attractions and landscapes. Then, the incentive to exert cultural authority has become minimal.

### **8.3.2 The production of summer study tour**

This section describes the production of the tour, drawn by my observations and conversations with Ed-tour employees, tour guides and tour leaders, which was accurately affirmed by David. It is vital scene setting before we get into the empirical findings, in which readers will more readily make sense of my observations in the field. The diagram below shows the relationship of various parties involved in the production of the tour. The boxes are specific firms or personnel that function to produce the tour. The concrete boxes are firms based in China and the dotted boxes in the UK. The solid arrows indicate the flow of money, expressing the commercial relationships between firms. To start from student recruitments, the group of fifteen students I was travelling with was part of more than two hundred participants from China. Success Travel was the outbound tour operator based in Beijing that promoted a wide range of tours in terms of duration (from 1 week to 3 weeks), the itinerary (travelling in London and/or

across the UK) and period of the trip (between mid-July and late August). The majority of customers were drawn by intermediaries such as travel agencies and language schools across China. Three students in my group were from Winner, an English language school in Beijing. These intermediaries signed individual business contracts with Success Travel. The tour fee charged to the participants varied from individual intermediaries, which means that participants paid different tour fees. Success Travel sent a fleet of staff to London to administer the tours, co-organising with Ed-tour. Each of the staff member was responsible for particular suppliers for the tours as shown in the diagram. I will discuss the major problems observed during the three weeks.

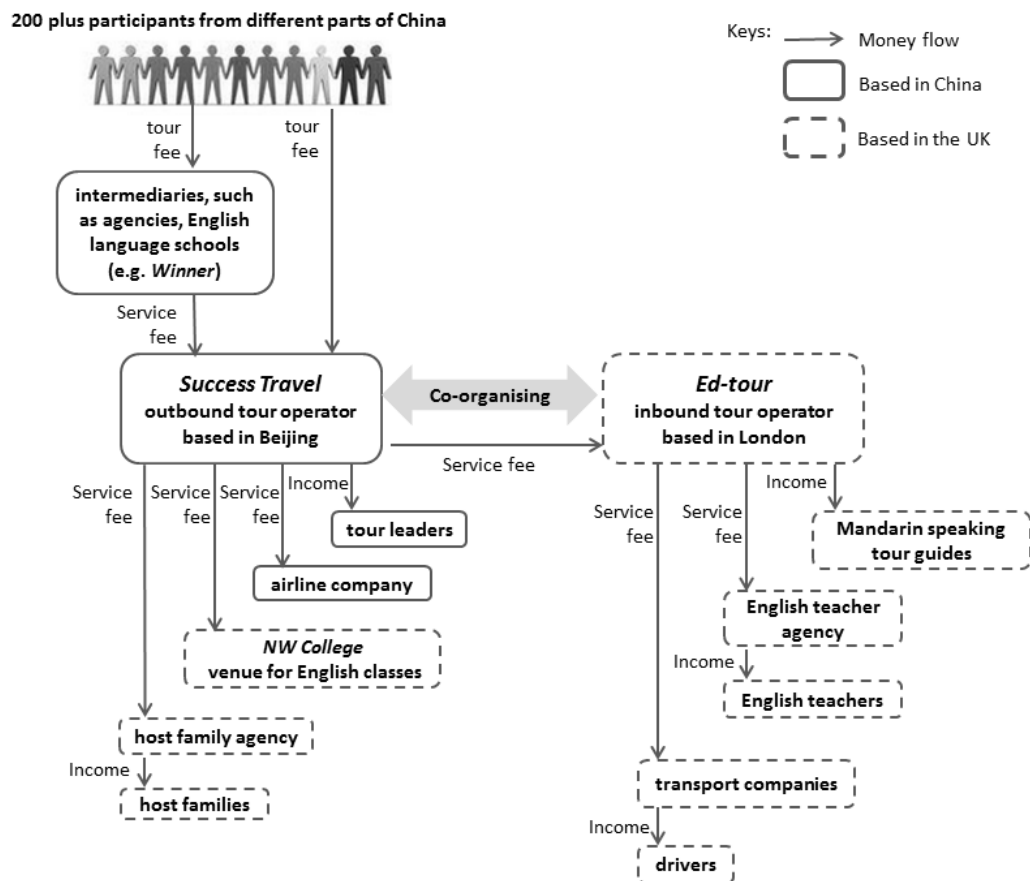


Figure 18 – Production of summer educational tours in 2013

Source: author

### **8.3.2.1 Diverse English language skills**

The educational tour had a routine: three hours of English class in the morning and site-seeing in the afternoon. In the first day in NW College, the venue for taking English lessons, hundreds of students ranging from 7 to 19 years took a test to classify them by their language abilities. For my group that comprised of students from 12 to 16 years, after they took the test, they were put in a discrete group just as I first met them in the previous day in the airport. Practically speaking the participants were grouped according to the duration and itinerary of the tour they signed up to. The test was made for the sake of promise and formality. The English language teachers found it difficult to decide the right materials to teach. The older students of my group moaned to me how boring they felt about the class. When I had a chance to talk to the only two 19 year-old university students in another group, they already made a complaint to Success Travel, thinking that the tour operator did not deliver the service promised in the advertisement.

### **8.3.2.2 Chaotic communications**

In a classic model of tour production, the inbound tour operator is responsible for supplying services involved in the destination, such as transport and tour guides. In the case of a study tour it should provide the whole teaching package and host family accommodation. The key advantage is that, when more suppliers are involved, more communications and practical arrangements are involved, therefore, a centralised organiser is vital. Figure 18 illustrates that Success Travel managed to source services directly from the U.K., namely NW College, the venue for teaching English classes and a host family agency. The reason is simple – Success Travel aimed to maximise the profit by reducing the number of intermediaries involved, i.e. avoiding commissions paid to Ed-tour.

If Success Travel had a good understanding of the suppliers market and business relationships developed with particular firms, it could be a strategic way to avoid using an inbound tour operator. However, it was less likely for the case of Success Travel. The most serious problem was the selection of host families. NW College was in North West London, whilst the host families of the 8 students of my group lived in South London. This took 11 students of my group more than an hour to travel one way from their host to the college. According to David, he did not know the location of the host families until he was told about this problem. It also reflects that Success Travel was

either ignorant of or ignoring this problem. David affirmed that the main reason for choosing the host family agency was the competitive price offered. According to an employee of Ed-tour, each host family received £20 per day per student for an overnight stay which included a breakfast, a packed lunch and a dinner. That is why 3 to 4 students were grouped to stay in one host family, who benefited from economies of scale. Nevertheless some students suffered from poor food quality and unbearable experiences (to be detailed in Section 8.9). Both Success Travel and Ed-tour assigned a chief operator and assistants to oversee the many tours “running” at the same time. They worked together to solve problems as they arose, made more difficult by the lack of central organiser and job descriptions.

### **8.3.2.3 Integration of Ed-tour and Success Travel**

The above problems became the topics we discussed in the interview. The first unexpected response from David was that Ed-tour and Success Travel have already become one company since early 2014. He reflected on the reasons behind the integration. First, they had been good business partners for five to six years. David expressed that both companies had very similar views towards “things” and “way of doing businesses”. He recalled that they never had arguments and Success Travel appreciated the fact that David was able to compromise and provide solutions to problems involved when customers complained. Complaints in the travel industry are numerous from my own experience working as a salesperson for an outbound study tour operator in Hong Kong. If an inbound operator was unable to deliver the service we promised to customers, it was my company that took complaints rather than the inbound operator. He further elaborated that it was not easy to do businesses with Chinese people, especially with mainland Chinese. In recent years the moral standards in China had been declining. Many people just keep an eye of profits and ignore “anything else”. The integration means that David was able to pass on his Chinese business contacts to Success Travel and let his Chinese partners deal with Chinese customers, as he said,

...it doesn't mean that I am not able to deal with them [Chinese customers], but it requires considerable time and mental strength. I do not mind making less money, but I intended to make things more regulated. Success Travel in China is comparably a regulated company.

What David meant is that Success Travel was an established company that complied with law and regulation. Customers would be less likely to negotiate any unlawful terms with Success Travel. David came back to the UK a month before the interview from a business trip to Beijing. The purpose was to familiarise the operation system of the in-house programme of Success Travel and to finalise the terms of integration. Success Travel now focused on the Chinese market and David the European market. David also shared that since the integration he had been more involved in planning and managing educational tours. From the examples he gave me, David had been engaging in knowledge transfer. He had initiated areas of improvements learnt from the summer tours organised in 2013. Although knowledge transfer is not the topic of this thesis, David reflected on an unacceptable policy of host family selection of Success Travel in 2013, which is crucial for this research.

### **8.3.3 Knowledge transfer**

David has initiated many changes after the intergration. First, in terms of logistics, the location of host families in 2014 was close to NW College. Second, there was one Mandarin-speaking tour guide for each group in 2013, but since then a native English-speaking tour guide was introduced. This aimed to offer more opportunities for participants to practise the language. Third, he proposed to do a teaching plan for English classes in which the teaching content had to be consistent with the sightseeing students performed. However, there were areas that David felt frustrated:

But there are some problems that cannot be solved in China. The problem of racism is extremely serious. Living in the UK we ourselves [Chinese] are sometimes being discriminated against, while they [Chinese participants and their families] look down on Black people, not wanting to live in Black host families. Also, last year [2013] one of the tours signed a contract which specifies that students only lived with White host families, but not Black families. In China you can sign a contract like that! Customers taking this contract can ask for compensation...that is to say, because we sent them [participants] to a non-White host family, they asked for compensation.

The contract David mentioned was originally signed between an intermediary and participants. Success Travel took these participants from this intermediary. In other



words, Success Travel signed the same contract with the intermediary. David's description of the racist contract explained my observation in the field. Participants arrived in the UK in the evening, so they already stayed with host families before starting the English lesson the next morning in the college. When students were taking the English test, there was an "emergency meeting" held by tour leaders (some represented Success Travel and some Winner) and the manager of Success Travel. Complains were made by students that they had to stay with Black host families. Many of them worried that it would be disastrous if complaints went to the ears of host families. The conclusion of that meeting was that tour leaders had to make sure students did not express their racial view to Black families.

David told that some Success Travel salespersons assumed that host families in Britain are mainly white, so they promised to provide white host families for participants. After the integration, David stated clearly to Success Travel that they should never sign that contract with customers. However, Success Travel proposed to David that he could examine the "colours" of families one by one. David rejected this idea, realistically for not only can he not afford the labour, but also Black families dominate the host family market. David's accounts reveal institutionalisation of Black racism in China. This example of overseas study tour business depicts that terms and conditions involving racial discrimination in a contract was valid. Racism was not perceived immoral. For the student group I observed, most of them stayed with Black families, I will discuss their experiences in Section 8.9. Finally I hope to include David's perspectives that offer insights to Chinese tourist shopping behaviours in Chapter 9.

#### **8.3.4 David on Chinese middle class's behaviours**

During the interview, I was asked about my research topic. I honestly told David about some focuses, in which I shared with him consumption patterns in relation to Confucian filial piety observed in the group, such as Chinese tour leaders bought expensive designer bags for parents and one student borrowed money from fellow participants to buy a watch (a few hundred pounds) for her father. David shared his view on the association of material and kinship love:

But personally I am also affected, in a way that I wanted to buy an iPhone for my mother [laughter], but I think iPhone is sort of practical, isn't it?.....but I feel that many teachers [tour leaders] in the

group wore luxurious brands, such as bags, Omega watches. There was no teacher who was really frugal.....

I think that not all teachers in the group were luxury goods shoppers. However, there was an impression that they always talked about where to buy luxury goods in London. And many of them, such as the two tour leaders in my group, went to Bicester Village, an outlet of luxurious brands that is very popular to Chinese visitors. David also shared his view on Chinese traditional culture:

In the past China indeed had lots of “good things”. In fact I do not understand much, because the education [he studied in China until finished the bachelor degree] destroyed people. I think I was clever.....I believe that my held values are correct.....I felt that what I learnt was wrong, but when you had examinations in schools.....such as Communist ideology, moral education, those are wrong. I thought they were unreasonable, but when you wanted to get higher marks, you had to answer in that way [the official answers], otherwise you were not able to go to the university.....

David continued to say that many Chinese people nowadays do not believe in the party-state indoctrinated belief, especially the higher ranking Chinese officials. They are really clever. Rather than believing in the state-authored system, they make use of the system to make more money or escape China. Then he reflected on his own position:

But in terms of personal benefits, it seems like a paradox.....because we need to rely on the Chinese market. That is to say, on the one hand I criticise the system; on the other hand..... if it [China] is not corrupted, we have no businesses, you know...[laughter], it is really a paradox. But I think what I am doing [educational tours] is alright, I do not regret, if the students could make use of the time during the study tour....

The interview was partly a moment of reflection for David, as a transnational Chinese who had settled in the UK but who also depended heavily on the Chinese market in his businesses. After the sharing, I came to understand more why he had been so open-minded to assist with my research project. He believed in education. That is why he

managed to improve the learning experiences (English-speaking tour guides and quality teaching materials) for Chinese students. Personally I had been sceptical of the claim that participants learn a lot in study tours, drawn from my past experience travelling with Hong Kong students to overseas places. After the fieldwork, I had a different perspective, because I witnessed that students had undergone a reflexive journey being in a culturally-different environment (see Section 8.10). The interview was valuable, not only for answering that the Chinese state had not extended intervention to overseas tourism businesses, and filling the unknowns of the tour, but for developing my greater understanding of the transnational identity of a migrant Chinese in Britain, who was a moral agent to induce changes in both business values in China and to offer quality overseas pedagogical spaces for Chinese students.

#### **8.4 Consumption of English pedagogical spaces**

This ethnography has been (re)written and revisited many times since after I finished the fieldwork in 2013 summer, until I finalised it in early 2015. It includes four main sections: (i) in the classroom and sight-seeing; (ii) relations with host families; and (iii) reflection of the journey. Within these themes the course of events are written in chronological order, with a few exceptions, which reflects my gradual immersion into the group and participants' development in the journey. I select events that were connected to particular identities felt about by the students. I will first reflect how I negotiated access to the field and developed a relationship with students in the next section.

##### **8.4.1 Into the field**

The first day I saw the students was in the London Gatwick airport. I met with six employees of Ed-tour and Success Travel in the waiting lounge, each of them responsible for a student group. They were all Mandarin-speaking Chinese in their mid to late 20s, Ed-tour staff was based in the UK and Success Travel's came from China to organise the tour. I was given two t-shirts as the uniform of Success Travel. I was asked to wear it to greet my student group. There were no interactions between me and the students when we were waiting for the coach, because everybody was engaging with their gadgets – most playing games and some watching videos. Getting on the coach, we went straight to a meeting point in North-West London where host families picked up the students. On the coach, the member of staff from Ed-tour who was responsible for sending the group to the host families, started to welcome the participants on board,

introduce the tour, and also explain my presence, speaking in Mandarin Chinese. I was introduced as “Eddy elder brother”. In the Chinese context it is quite common to address others in family relations terms. Considering that students were in their early teens, it appeared natural in this context. The Ed-tour employee told the participants that I was staying with them to collect data to do a research project. He suggested that they could assist me, although he did not know about the nature of my research. In the meantime I was talking to the two Chinese tour leaders: Nancy, in her early 30s, an English language teacher of Winner, who was commissioned by Winner to take care of the three students of the English Language School; and Miss White, in her 40s, an English language teacher employed by Success Travel to work as a part-time leader of the group. We talked in English and they requested me to speak in English to the students and I said ok.

I first spoke in English, but very soon the students requested me to use Mandarin, which was actually my original plan. I notified the teachers and switched to Mandarin. Apart from greeting the group, I explained that I was a volunteer representing Ed-tour, helping with the operation of the tour, and a student researcher who aimed to understand their travelling and learning experience. I felt that it was awkward to state officially that the participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time. The students would not understand what it means and I would have scared them. For the students, my position was a teacher/tour guide, and a student studying in the UK. They would not associate the implications of being research subjects. Therefore, I stated my role as a helper as the first priority to ensure their safety and wellbeing. I was vigilant for my interactions with students, in a way the conversations and interviews were voluntary, casual and natural, which did not interrupt their learning experience. In the beginning of the journey many kept addressing me as “teacher”, and I rejected and requested them to call me by my first name, which aimed to dissolve any conformity that they could perceive.

The summer tour emphasised three main activities. In mornings (9am-12pm) the participants learned English in the classroom. After finishing the packed lunches prepared by the host families in the classroom, we travelled in London during the afternoons (1pm-5pm). In the evenings, especially dinner time, it was about experiencing, and learning about, “real Britishness” in a host family’s home. This is weekday schedule (Monday to Friday). On three Saturdays there were full day

excursions organised to Oxford, Cambridge and Brighton. On Sundays it was written on the official timetable as “family day”, which means that students stayed with host families, but many of them chose to organise their own activities, partly due to the fact that the host families had no plan for them at all and partly they wished to make the most use of the opportunities to travel in London with their new friends made on the tour. Table 8 shows the tour schedule from Day 1 to Day 22. The next section I discuss the learning experience in the classroom and sightseeing in which I aim to introduce a number of students who were the main contributors of this fieldwork.

**Table 8 – Tour schedule**

Day	Activities							
<b>Mon</b>			D7	Borough Market + Westminster Abbey	D14	Science / Natural History Museum	D21	Notting Hill
<b>Tue</b>	D1	Arrival in the evening	D8	China Town	D15	Oxford Street shopping	D22	Departure
<b>Wed</b>	D2	Greenwich	D9	London Eye	D16	Sherlock Holmes		
<b>Thur</b>	D3	Buckingham Palace + Parliament	D10	National Gallery	D17	Hyde Park		
<b>Fri</b>	D4	British Museum	D11	St. Paul’s Cathedral	D18	Tower of London		
<b>Sat</b>	D5	Oxford	D12	Cambridge	D19	Brighton		
<b>Sun</b>	D6	Family day	D13	Family day	D20	Family day		

Remarks: D - Day

Source: author

#### **8.4.2 In the classroom and sightseeing**

It was my request to David that I hoped to stay in the classroom with the group, and it was accepted. There were about 10 English language teachers from a few different ethnic backgrounds. For my group, it was Kayla, a white Canadian in her mid-20s. I communicated with Kayla about my purpose, and naturally I was assisting her with checking on the classwork. I first sat with the students, but later I sat aside because it was more convenient for me to write field notes. In each lesson there was a topic such as transport, the royal family, British weather or cultures. Students had opportunities to write short paragraphs, make public speeches and work in small groups. In the afternoons, we used the London Underground to get to destinations. The sub-sections

below focus on the theoretical frames of globalisation (consumption practice) and nationalism.

#### **8.4.2.1 Fondness of Western cultures**

The first task of Kayla was to get to know the group. Students were asked to introduce themselves and shared with the group their hobbies. Among the 15 students, two girls first caught my attention. Polly was a 14-year-old who had long dyed brown hair. She appeared much more mature than her age suggested, for the fact that she was tall (second to a boy in the group) and her choice of outfits. It was Polly's turn, with a good command of English, to speak to the class – she liked music, and her favourite was an American band called 'Machine'. Kayla asked if she liked Justin Bieber. Polly said she used to like him. Sitting beside this chic girl was 16-year old Florence, who was casual and down to earth, and her spoken English was good but not as fluent as Polly. She told Kayla she liked the pop boyband One Direction, which evidently showed during the tour when she was hunting for One Direction souvenirs. Harry Potter was also her favourite fictional character. Lisa was a 15-year-old girl who was particularly interested in movies, TV dramas and Japanese manga. Her English was less fluent compared to Polly and Florence. It was a prominent observation that the older students of the group were fond of American and English popular cultures. They always talked about Western movies or TV episodes. On Day 11, Kayla asked the class to do a short paragraph with this title: *If I were Queen....* Please note that I show the original texts of the students:

If I were Queen in England, I'd like to enjoy the royal meal in the morning, and walk around the royal park after breakfast.

Then, I would take a helicopter and enjoy the scene of the whole London. During the time when I was outside, I'd give people permit to visit Buckingham Palace, but I would limit the amount of visitors.

After I have had lunch, I'd meet my dreamed idol who played a role of Sherlock Holmes on BBC's programme. And I'd watch how he act and perform.

In the evening, I'd ask people to leave London Eye because I want to have a good view just for myself. And at that moment, perhaps I'd think about the history, and plained the lost right and power of the royal family used to have.

Florence, 16

If I were Queen for a day I would meet Benedict Cumberbatch, Ben Wishaw, Robert Downey Jr, Hugh Dancy, Martin Freeman.....

Lisa, 15

If I were Queen, I would donate my money to Africa. I would sell the Buckingham Palace to China in a low price. I would go hunting somewhere, riding the horses with my attendants. I would buy plenty of stock and see if prizes jumping down.

Unknown

(unable to identify the writer)

I borrowed the own notebooks of some students and observed Western popular culture is part of their everyday (life) consumption. They did not think about the specific roles or responsibilities of the Queen, but focused on the power of the Queen in terms of her excessive rights and wealth. They listened to their favourite music, watched movies and episodes in China. They might perform to Kayla and the class their Western tastes, however they also wrote their opinions in their own notebooks which were not marked by anybody. They told me how sexy Benedict Cumberbatch was, who was cast as *Sherlock Holmes*; how cool Ben Wishaw was in *The Hour*; or how adorable One Direction were. These dramas and music are all dubbed in Chinese language and available for downloads from the Internet in China.

The young males did not have these opinions written in their notebooks, but a trip to 221B Baker Street, the fictional address of Sherlock Holmes, appeared to be a pilgrimage for them, so was an excursion to Oxford on Day 5, where they saw film locations of the Harry Potter films. They also bought souvenirs about Harry Potter. These consumption practices are symbolic as well as an expression of the material desires associated with Western popular culture. For Franklin (2003), these desires are generated from the curiosity that Chinese students had developed at home. In other words, their performance and imagination in the class, visitations of associated cultural sites and consumption of associated products in the geographical West, were all a continuation of what they had been consuming in China, shaped by visual and sensual

media products, i.e. films, dramas, music (Briton, 1991; Urry 1990). Travelling to England was then an actualisation of these desires and curiosities.

As I observed, an appreciation of these Western popular cultures became one of the factors that bonded these elder boys and girls together in the group. In this sense, some members were excluded. The possession of cultural appreciation by the “cultured” group was materialised in the consumption of merchandise (e.g. Harry Potter’s wizard wand, figures, books about the film, One Direction’s posters and t-shirts, et cetera. (See p.236 for consumption practices). The “uncultured” youngsters (from the perspective of the “cultured” group) bought “I love London” tourist souvenirs and expensive watches. On Day 15, Kayla asked the class to design their own Glastonbury festivals. Polly and Florence were putting all their favourite singers on the “stage” but the “uncultured” were playing with their phones all the time.

Very often I heard the “cultured” cohort referring to the “uncultured” cohort as the “local tyrant second generation”. There are three broad categories of the second generation of Chinese new middle classes. “Rich second generation” is a term that generally refers to those who come from a wealthy family. “Government official second generation” emphasises more the possession of power and social network in the bureaucracy than the wealth status. “Local tyrant second generation” refers to ‘ostentatious wealthy, typically nouveau riche types, with the connotation that they lack refined tastes, being showy, crass, even arrogant and domineering (China Smack, 2014:n.p.). The students were labelled “local tyrant second generation”, for the main reason that they lacked the appreciation of Western popular culture possessed by the “rich second generation” group. Nancy, the teacher, affirmed that the group of fifteen Chinese students perfectly represented these three categories of the wealthy generation. In the next section I introduce two main contributors for the research.

#### **8.4.2.2 Tofu was invented in China**

It was Day 4. The topic of the day was British food. It was expected that Kayla had to talk about some popular multicultural food in Britain for a three hour lesson. She mentioned for example curry, tofu, and sweet and sour chicken. There was an event that upset Patrick. Patrick was a 15-year-old boy who had a strong interest in history and was inquisitive about everything. He was a big fan of Harry Potter and Sherlock Holmes. His interests made him a companion of Stephen, a 16-year old talented young man and the most popular among the group. He wrote novels, poems, played piano,



and was an artist. I was impressed by his drawings and watched him playing piano in the host family. These two good friends had a thirst for knowledge. They requested me to go with them to the British Museum again as the first time they did not have enough time to visit. Patrick and Stephen had become indispensable in the study.

The cast of this event was Patrick. It was during the break I saw Patrick talking with Kayla. I was tempted to know what happened, so I came to Patrick. He was moaning in English, *'She told that tofu originated in Japan, it annoys me!'*. Sometimes Patrick talked with me in English. Only he and Stephen behaved in this way. I was not aware of the fact that Kayla mentioned that tofu was invented by Japanese. I was also taught that tofu originated in China, but I was not surprised that Kayla mistook it, because there are many Japanese tofu recipes. Patrick felt bad not only because of the mistaken origin of tofu, but that Japan was the beneficiary of the misplaced provenance. I could imagine that Patrick had corrected Kayla. The historical conflicts between China and Japan were felt by Patrick as an humiliation to China. Patrick had internalised this shame, thus developing a defensive mechanism to protect his nation. The origin of Tofu as a popular food being “stolen” by Japan through the account of Kayla, was a humiliation to his nation. This attitude was found stronger when we visited the British Museum on the same day.

#### **8.4.2.3 British Museum – place of humiliation**

I should introduce Tracy here, the tour guide of the group in her late 20s. She had moved to London from China for a year [from the time of the tour] with her husband, who had found a job on a construction site. Being a tour guide was her part-time job offered by Ed-tour. Like more than 10 other tour guides, Tracy needed very limited English speaking skills because the commentaries were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. She received no professional training, and had no specialist knowledge of London attractions or British history, because each commentary she gave was no longer than one minute. Tracy was popular among students as she was friendly and caring.

Today, the students were given approximately two and half hours to visit the British Museum. As usual, Tracy gave a brief introduction to the museum and specifically showed us how to go to Room 33 on the first level. Room 33 contained exhibits from China, South Asia and Southeast Asia, which Tracy called the “China Room”, where she said ‘you will find our things there!’ Tracy indicated that the Chinese items were stolen by the Imperialists. I had already made up my mind to visit the museum with

Patrick and Stephen because of their patriotism, intelligence and their high awareness of history. At first Patrick was reluctant to go to the China Room. He expressed this to me in English, “China things not in China, breaking my heart”. The responses of Tracy and Patrick demonstrated the discourse that the British Museum was a collection of stolen precious Chinese objects during the First and Second Opium War. Patrick and Stephen were overwhelmed by the rest of the museum, for they hoped to stay longer to see as much as they can. Nevertheless, they still took the last fifteen minutes to visit the China Room. When we went upstairs from Room 33 to Room 95 to see the China Ceramics, they were both surprised by the amount of “stolen” Chinese ceramics. According to the brief guide on the wall in Room 95, the Chinese ceramics were collected by Sir Percival David (1882-1964) when he travelled across East Asia, where he purchased many of his best ceramics. I did encourage the students to read this. I hoped that they could acknowledge that not every item coming from China was stolen.

Apart from buying souvenirs for themselves and friends, Patrick and Stephen each bought an identical book (in simplified Chinese) about the British Museum. It covered the main collections with both pictures and explanations. In the same day we visited the British Museum as a group, the next day they asked me to go with them to visit the museum again on Day 6 (Sunday) as they claimed that there was no plan prepared by the host family. The purposes of revisiting were to exchange a defected item bought by Stephen and to explore more of the Museum. This time we had a chance to see some Japanese objects and Stephen said many times “small Japan” rather than just saying Japan. I asked if it was popular to say “small Japan” (actually I knew that it was almost a “standard” expression of Japan in China). Stephen replied in English, “In China a lot of people say this because of history”. The meaning of this expression is carried by the word “small”, which means something that is not significant and that one should be ashamed of. In fact, the room we visited was about Asian technology and traditions, which had nothing to do with war conflicts.

On the lowest ground of the Museum there was a temporary exhibition entitled The Art of Influence – Asian propaganda, open to the public from May to September 2013. We had a lot to share when exploring posters and drawings in Maoist China. I was surprised that we agreed on the view that many stories were made up in order to indoctrinate and cultivate loyalty to the Communist Party in the Maoist era. Figure 19 shows a drawing that features a soldier called Lei Feng. He was portrayed as a perfect example of

someone who had fully devoted himself to the revolutionary cause, and displayed loyalty and love to Chairman Mao. The Party launched a ‘Learn from Lei Feng’ campaign to propagate ‘Lei Feng’s self-sacrificial spirit’ in 1963. The year 2003 celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this campaign. The Chinese media initiated a discussion: about how contemporary Chinese people could learn from Lei Feng, with the conclusion that we can learn from the self-sacrificial attitude to promote volunteer work (Chinese posters.net, 2014). There is a classic joke about Lei Feng. He was reading the Little Red Book (Mao’s quotations) in the night time using a torch because he wanted to save energy for the country. Patrick told me a scientific explanation that proves Lei Feng was a political icon. He claimed that in the 1960s batteries were more expensive than coal oil. How could it save energy by using a torch? I do not know if that is true, but the responses given by Patrick and Stephen reflected that patriotic education did not work well on them, which evidently showed by their critical thinking. Nevertheless I did not know the construction of the anti-Imperialist/Japan nationalist sentiments they expressed. The next two sections continue this exploration, with more narratives from students collected.



**Printing on the poster** (the bottom one): Chairman Mao’s good soldier – Lei Feng

**Caption Printed in Chinese:**  
毛主席的好战士 - 雷锋

**Date of publish:** 1963  
(Chinese posters.net, 2014)

**Author:** Unknown

**Source:** Taken by the author in the British Museum

**Figure 19 – Chairman Mao’s good soldier – Lei Feng**

On a special note, I was surprised in two respects about the supervision practices of the student group. First, that Patrick and Stephen decided to go to British Museum again, because their host family had planned no activities for them. This happened to most of the host families, which indicated that a family day could be about non-outing activities. However, the students did not want to stay at home and asked for Miss White and Nancy's permissions to go out. The teachers permitted them to do so, as long as they went in a group. Therefore, not only Patrick and Stephen visited the British Museum, other students went shopping on their own that day. Day 13 (Sat), the elder students were even allowed to go out for dinner on their own. In my opinion, there were potential risks for these teenagers to be in London without the company of adults, for their unfamiliarity of the place, language insufficiency and immaturity. Would there be accidents, these teachers who allowed them to move around in London alone, will have to bear responsibilities for which it appeared that they were much more optimistic than I was.

#### **8.4.2.4 Image of China**

It was Day 8 of the tour. The only sightseeing attraction that afternoon was China Town. I was waiting for Tracy who was buying a kind of delicious street food (a famous pastry that originates in Northern China) that she insisted to buy for me as a gift for my help during the journey. We were about to enjoy our street food near the little pagoda, a landmark in China Town, which was also the gathering point of the afternoon. Many students chose to self-explore China Town, but a half of the group chose to join us with street food and drinks. The “cultured” group, namely Polly, Florence, Lisa, Patrick and Stephen were all here, plus some younger participants. We had gradually developed friendship after a week of continuous contacts. Patrick and Stephen in particular liked to talk to me and questioned my Hong Kong identity. Apart from sharing our understandings of cultures and languages, these two young men were interested in initiating conversations about social and political issues in their society, which contrasted to my experience of conversations with my Chinese PhD cohort – in which politics had little place in conversations. My observation was that they had been very reflexive in situating themselves in a culturally-different environment. On the one hand, England was a place to actualise their curiosity of Western popular culture being consumed at home, and many adore the lifestyle and education in Britain; on the other hand, the national and historical humiliation was borne by them.

Tracy and I were sitting together with the students on the street besides the pagoda in China Town, with our food and drinks. The pigeons as always were wandering around where crumbs of food had landed on the street. I poked fun at the pigeons in which did not seem very healthy as observed by the condition of their plumage. I said it was because of the greasy food in China Town. Then we started to talk about food. We shared what our favourite foods were and I was asked about my travelling experience in China, where I had tasted some signature dishes, in which I talked about my embarrassed and painful experience when I was a tour leader travelling with a group of students to Beijing in 2009. I had diarrhoea soon after the meals and needed toilets all the time. Billy, a 13-year old boy but was among the tallest in the group, suspected that my stomach suffered because of illegal cooking oil, known as “sewer oil”, which is scavenged from the drains beneath restaurants. It was my knowledge that it was common in China to use sewer oil, but I did not think about it, because I was the only one in the group who suffered, and that my stomach has always been sensitive to dirt. However the students told me that they did not mind eating sewer oil, as they claimed that their body got used to it. Billy joked, ‘sewer oil is the “treasure” of China, which you cannot find in other places’; Patrick added, ‘there are four main oil corporations in China: China National Offshore Oil Corporation, China National Petroleum Corporation, China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation, and “China Sewer Oil”’. They kept talking about unethical productions (e.g. heavily bleached napkins from waste and toxic disposable food containers), and made fun of me that I had been using those without knowing it.<sup>47</sup> The students were demonstrating humour by telling these witty jokes. Patrick told Billy not to scare me, and he started to talk about the bad behaviours of those unethical manufacturers, which was a shame to the country. Then Stephen and Tracy joined in and they took over the discussion. They talked about their images about China and how the Western media had portrayed a bad image of China. I thought their conversations would be important for this thesis, therefore I could not resist making voice recordings. Below are my translations:

Patrick: ...that is to say, the Communist Party is not always good, but if it is not good it is we the people who change it.

Stephen: Objectively speaking it is the people themselves who have problems..... (interrupted by Patrick)

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<sup>47</sup> When I checked the news, it does show that the chemicals used to make disposable food containers ‘have a potential to damage livers, kidneys and reproductive organs’ (Fosters, 2011).

- Patrick: Yes, people are the ultimate creator of history.
- Stephen: The Communist party...even though the government is even worse, but...(interrupted by Tracy)
- Tracy: Even though the Communist Party has become worse, it is not the foreigners who say we are not good, we can change it on our own.
- Patrick: When we are away from home we have to say China is good, but...(interrupted by Tracy)
- Tracy: In fact we all know the problems of China
- Stephen: Yes, China is messy...(interrupted by Patrick)
- Patrick: We have to make foreigners know that China is very good, but we have to be vigilant to solve our problems.
- Stephen: China really has lots of problems. You see on the Internet there are fenqings.<sup>48</sup> Some of those and government officials even fight against each other...(interrupted by Larua)
- Lisa: Those fenqings raided our Anime and Manga festival!<sup>49</sup>
- Stephen and Patrick: What?
- Lisa: Our Anime and Manga festival
- Stephen and Patrick: Oh...the Japanese's...
- Lisa: But that was organised by ourselves!<sup>50</sup>
- Stephen: Those fenqings are really the problem of the country.
- Lisa: Those fenqing...we wore Han Chinese costume, but they thought it was kimono, they forced us to take them off.
- Tracy: Those fenqing are all without quality.
- Polly: A while ago Japanese vehicles, cameras were damaged by the fenqing.<sup>51</sup>

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48 Fengqing: literally translated as 'angry youth', who are nationalist young Chinese netizens and also street-protestors who fight against countries or comments that are perceived as an adversary to China (Tang and Darr, 2012).

49 Anime and Manga festival: Anime (animated film) and manga (Japanese comics), a popular culture in Japan. It had decorations of the setting of anime and manga, participants dressed in particular characters ("cosplay" - costume play in full):, and selling and buying of accessories. Young people in China are attracted to this Japanese culture, as Kobayashi Sayuri, (2012) a writer and translator based in Beijing, says that Chinese "one-child generation" grows up with anime". I witnessed that many of them were reading or watching manga during the 3 weeks.

50 Here it is unsure the context of "ourselves". The only thing for sure is that it was organised in China and not by Japanese.

51 Polly talks about the nationwide anti-Japanese demonstrations in China in the dispute of an island that both countries claimed ownership of Diayu in China/ Senkaku in Japan in September 2012

- Tracy: Those are hooligan of society.
- Patrick: They are not necessarily coming out for protesting, they think, “Ah...there are lots of people – it should be fun!”
- Tracy: Isn't it that England and France also have ravaging and looting...  
(interrupted by Patrick)
- Patrick: It is.
- Lisa: There were some old women who saw what happened and called the police. When the police came they took off the costumes and decorations...

I did not interrupt their conversations nor ask questions about what they said. The first reason was that I aimed to keep it a sharing between Chinese people, who appeared to have a shared feeling towards their home nation. Second, their pace and use of words were slightly difficult to me, in which I was unsure if I grasped the most accurate meaning, so I kept quiet. Even for some parts of the recordings I needed my Chinese friend to transcribe them for me.

It is apparent that anti-West and Anti-Japan sentiments were observed, grounded in historical humiliation. These sentiment come with objects that embody that humiliation such as Chinese exhibits in the British Museum, or signs with Chinese cultural heritage being “taken over” by the opponent (the origin Tofu misunderstood by Kayla). The Western mass media was also perceived by the group as an enemy of China, who thought that the West had no rights to report negative events in China, although they did not deny those events. In other words, their anger reflects their status as bearing the honours and shames of the nation. That is why they felt frustrated about those grass-root nationalists, who caused damage in the name of patriotism. It appeared that they were patriotic to the all-embrasive Chinese nation, which encompasses the rule of the corrupted party-state. In their opinion, only Chinese people have the right to criticise China. Once the West criticises, it deprives them of the honour they feel for the nation. Nevertheless, we still do not understand the construction of this observed nationalistic spirit. What we can comment upon is that, their attitude is perhaps relevant to their “cultured” identity, which distinguishes them from “uncultured” and radical fengqing. I am convinced that their critical thinking and patriotism deviates from the template constructed and demanded by the Party-state; however their patriotism is sufficient for the state to maintain national cohesion. We now turn to the nationalistic narrative given by Miss White.

#### 8.4.2.5 Be Chinese ambassadors

It was Day 10 of the tour, Miss White and Nancy started to find the students' behaviours unbearable. Miss White gave warnings in response to their behaviours: playing games and watching videos on smart phones during lessons, leaving rubbish in the classroom; expressing racial comments about Black host families; and spending too lavishly. I found that she used a particular discourse to frame her warnings, as she spoke to the class:

...The other day I visited a Chinese friend who permanently lives in London [migrated to the UK from China]. She told me that the local people have had bad impressions on Chinese tourists because they are noisy and they litter...When you are not at home, when you visit another country, you are the ambassador of China. You represent your country. The most important thing is not to go shopping or sightseeing but to show foreign people our history and cultures. You can't let others "scold your mother [China]...

I felt that her comments were fair, but I was not convinced by her counsel that shopping and sightseeing is second to cultural exchanges with foreign people. Winner sent its teachers to take care of its own students. Nancy had to apply for this opportunity and competed with other teachers, in order to get free flight tickets and accommodations. Nancy's expenses were covered by the extra tour fees paid by the three Winner students in the group. Miss White was hired by Success Travel. She also did not receive a salary but her flight and accommodation (host family) was free. In other words, as they told me, the trip was partially a holiday for them. Their travel motive was revealed, when we were in attractions, these teachers constantly asked students to take pictures for them; and when they asked me on three occasions to look after the students who were studying in the morning, while they went shopping and sightseeing. However, I found their worries inconsistent, because they allowed the teenagers to go out in London on their own, but asked me to take care of the students who were in the classroom. They wanted to portray to me that they cared the students. This time when Miss White openly criticised the students, I perceived however that she genuinely thought that, as a teacher, she had the responsibility to teach them correct values and behaviours. Miss White used multicultural discourse and cultural relativism to teach students not to discriminate against Black host families, who were also *authentic* British people, which I thought was a proxy to learn that Miss White



observed racial prejudice and expression by some students. She was in a valid position to reject lavish consumption, more so than Nancy, who the students and myself witnessed buying branded clothing and bags.

Miss White asked students to be the ambassadors of the country, which is reasonable. To a certain extent we do represent the positive and negative aspects of the home nation. Recently Chelsea football fans in the Paris underground publicly insulted a Black man with racist chants. I accept that our national and racial identity is facing outward, which means that our positions are objectively located. We all contribute to the construction of public identities of a collective people. Nevertheless, using mother as a metaphor was an interesting phraseology. While the students had a role to improve Chinese public identities, how could this responsibility be compared to kinship love? Family love is personal, intimate, and most of the time unconditional. The phraseology is similar to the use of fatherland or motherland to foster patriotism. I felt that Miss White unconsciously used the discourse. It was natural and powerful that students would associate with appeals to national glory and shame. Although the teachers themselves did not exemplify a good model, the narrative itself is powerful enough to link students' negative behaviours to the hidden humiliation the nation suffered. This was not effective with every student, but was proved effective with Patrick.

#### **8.4.2.6 National dignity**

It was Day 12, Patrick and Stephen suddenly quarrelled on the street. "You bring shame on our country!" Patrick accused Stephen of taking pictures in St. Paul's Cathedral. It was the previous day when we visited the cathedral. The students had more than enough time to walk around the cathedral so later in the visit we gathered together in the chairs in the nave where we had a good view of the interior of the dome and the eastern side of the cathedral. Stephen was amazed by the view, so he took out his smart phone and was ready to take a picture, but he was stopped by me, because there was a warning that taking pictures was prohibited in the cathedral and I saw the staff warning visitors from time to time. After all, I wished to convey a message that they should show respect. Nevertheless, photography was a defining character of this group. Students could not resist capturing as many images as possible in attractions. Patrick saw that Stephen took pictures when he was not being monitored by me and subsequently found his behaviour disappointing. Patrick's anger towards Stephen stems not from his views about showing respect to religion, but because of the damage to the image of the nation. Who perceived

this damage? I believed that Patrick pointed not to foreign visitors, British staff in the Cathedral, or even me, because Stephen did it covertly. Patrick was frustrated that Stephen did not uphold the dignity in his status as the bearer of national pride. He conflated this personal dignity with national dignity. Patrick was the first Chinese individual who showed me this form of patriotism. I was sympathetic to Patrick, since he carried this “glory badge” for the country all the time. Patrick was acting as a true ambassador of China, in which his beliefs and practices were integrated, unlike Miss White’s ambassadorial role where beliefs and practices were compartmentalised. Within five minutes Patrick and Stephen reconciled. Finally I conclude with an example to show the prevalence of Chinese nationalism as observed in NW College.

#### **8.4.2.7 Chinese do not fight Chinese**

The three Winner students in our group were not the only customers of Success Travel. I saw some 7 to 8 year-old children wearing Winner t-shirts in NW College. It was Day 15, I found that two children (one of them in a Winner t-shirt) were fighting in the corridor. The Winner’s teacher took over, separating them and then talking to the students, “We are Chinese - Chinese do not fight Chinese”. She turned to her Winner student and said, “You are number one [a motto imprinted on their Winner t-shirt], you are a good child, if he [another child] does not behave then you can tell the teacher”. I assumed that another child was a notorious trouble maker, it was still improper to judge in front of them who was a “better”/ “worse” child. Witnessing this teacher “counselling” the children I was astonished. It demonstrated that the notion of national unity and cohesion has penetrated into day-to-day practice. I believe that it was an unconscious response to say Chinese do not fight Chinese, because I assume that the teacher would not accept that children from different nations or ethnicities are exempted to fight. She could have simply said that fighting is not acceptable. Instead the teacher used a narrative to emphasise a particular cohesiveness associated with Chinese identity, i.e. the inherited ethno-racial and national bonding that stems from historical humiliation. This perhaps reflects that this narrative had been internalised through the teachers’ participation in everyday interactions, just as the children were learning in this incident.

Another experience with similar ideologically-framed behaviour is that when I was walking downstairs in the college, there were a few 7 to 8-year old Chinese girls walking upstairs side-by-side. I apologised in my accustomed way, when I appeared to

have made them make way for me going downstairs. One of them responded in Mandarin Chinese, “Why does a Chinese speak what English”!? She assumed I was a racial Chinese, but objected to my using an English word “sorry” to talk to them. I did not even look back as if I did not hear them. I felt that I was not in a proper position to educate these children, for first I was a stranger to them, and second they were vulnerable in terms of age and gender. I wondered where they had developed this radical and confrontational attitude? Perhaps I was too sensitive in interpreting the situation, which means that they probably just did not understand why a Chinese person did not use the Chinese language to communicate with other Chinese? However, I associate this behaviour with Li Yang’s Crazy English (see p.112) that used anti-Western sentiments to promote the English language, as his motto reads ‘stimulating patriotism, advocating national spirits, conquering English, revitalizing China’ (Albey, 2005:91). English language carries a particular meaning and mission. For these children, English embodies more roles than a language for communication. A Chinese person using English to communicate with another Chinese person is unthinkable and inappropriate - they had a subconscious confrontational attitude to the English language in this situation. Upon reflection, my analysis towards the little girl came from my aggregated observations of the prevalence of Chinese nationalism during the past two weeks in the field.

To briefly sum up, the observations of the student group in the classroom and sightseeing, it first reveals how students perform a global identity that draws from appreciation of Western popular cultures, which distinguishes themselves from others in the group. The second theme of the section is nationalism, in which many incidents presented demonstrate a strong Chinese national identity, performed by participants from a variety of demographic backgrounds. A comparison with the literature will be drawn in the conclusion. The next section is about host-visitor relations in the ‘home stay’ context.

#### **8.4.3 Encountering host families**

According to the website of Success Travel, the outbound tour operator based in Beijing, ‘homestay’ allows students the opportunity to ‘experience exotic cultures and learn pure foreign spoken language in everyday setting’. ‘Homestay’ is a generic term referring to a range of accommodations that property owners offer to visitors, in order to make a direct or indirect profit (Tucker and Lynch, 2005). For Rotary International

(2014:n.p.), a renowned organisation that offers intercultural exchange programmes for young people to experience and learn a foreign culture, '[a] host family is a vital part of the cultural exchange, immersing the student in a variety of activities while in the host country.....' Success Travel used the former commercial conception of 'home stay' as a business model, and packaged the tour with educational elements so that participants could gain from their stay with host families. Participants had diverse experiences staying with host families from different ethno-racial backgrounds, ranging from excellent to unsatisfactory. I reject any attempts to correlate participants' home stay experiences with the ethno-racial backgrounds of the host. This section aims to describe what I heard, and knew from the students' accounts of their experiences living with those who are culturally and racially different. Given that there was institutionalised racism, which includes the "no Black host families" contract signed in China and students' complaints about being put into Black families observed in the college. Therefore, the approach of the next section is to describe students' relations with the host, drawn from their narratives, whereby it is possible to understand whether Chinese students held racial views in a particular time and space.

#### **8.4.3.1 Homestay business**

As explained by Figure 18 the homestay agency was directly sourced by Success Travel. According to David, the competitive price offered by the agency was the reason that it was chosen to supply host families for the participants of summer tours, which was perhaps evident in the more-than-an-hour journey from the location of some host families commuting to NW College. According to the staff of Ed-tour, each host family received £20 per day per student for an overnight stay, which included a breakfast, a packaged lunch and a dinner. To maximise the profit, the approach was to put more students under the same roof. The fifteen students and two adults were assigned to five host families, as showed in Table 9. The students were by and large grouped by their gender, age and body size. That is why the groups are named based on these criteria. The experiences of four groups are described, in which two groups were satisfied and had very good relationship with the families, while the other two groups claimed that they had either terrible or disappointing experiences. It begins with the worst experiences felt by the "Big Girl" group.

#### **8.4.3.2 Worst experience**

The four girls being categorised as "Big girl" were the elder students in the group. I

**Table 9 – Grouping of Participants in Host Families**

Group name	Big girl	Small girl	Big boy	Small boy	Teachers
<b>Race /Ethnicity</b>	Black / unknown	Black / unknown	Black /Jamaican	Indian	White / English
<b>Pseudonyms of participants</b>	Polly	Jenny	Patrick	John	Miss White
	Florence	Anna	Stephen	Nathan	Nancy
	Lisa	Cecilia	Billy	*Scott	*Scott
	Cindy		Benjamin	*Jason	*Jason

Remarks: \* the students moved from the Indian family to the English family on Day 3

Source: author

heard about their frustrations from time to time. I did not hear complaints about the fact that they had to spend more than two hours travelling in between the accommodation and the college. These girls were disappointed in the way they were treated by the host family; as Florence told me, four of them were put together in a bedroom. Although the host promised to provide one more room for them upon their arrival, at the end they were still squeezed into one bedroom. Unfortunately, the room was also shared by the host's daughter who stored her toys there, which made even less space available for them. The girls felt particularly irritated because of the low quality of food the host provided. Florence complained that they did not have enough food to eat for dinners. They had to share a pizza that cost £1, as they discovered the package in the bin. Sometimes it was a dinner of two packs of twin burgers that cost £1 each, shared by four of them.

It was the last day of the journey, host families were required to send students to the college, according to the staff of Ed-tour. I was in the staff room of the college chatting with employees of Success Travel and Ed-tour, Florence came in and I saw her asking for transport fees from the staff of Success Travel. Then I realised that the Big Girl group were travelling (using underground) with the Small Girl group, accompanied by the host of the latter, to the college that morning. It was because the host family of the Big Girl group was having a holiday and did not have time to go with the Big Girl, so the host of the Small Girl provided a favour, as they lived in the same area. Both the staff of Success Travel and Ed-tour was asking what had happened, but nobody apologised to Florence. Florence was neither angry with the staff of Success Travel nor that of Ed-tour. Back in the classroom she told me that the whole experience was upsetting and insisted that she would make a complaint when returning to China.

Florence asked me if I knew how much the host families of the summer tours had earned, because she thought that her host family were so mean to her and her friends. I did not reveal the income earned by the host families, which I heard about from others, and I felt sorry for her bad experience. Before that day, the girls did not associate what they had found unacceptable about the host family with their ethnicity or race, but finally Florence moaned, ‘I never discriminated against Black people, but this time I could not help thinking in this way.....’ I could not find in my field notebook if I replied to Florence about her expression. It appeared that we did not continue the conversation in relation to the ethnicity or race of the host family. The next section we will talk about the younger boys of the group.

#### **8.4.3.3 Bad Experience**

The four boys who were put together in a host family were between 12 to 13 years, who were apparently smaller physically compared to the older male fellows, so I call them the Small Boy group. These students were luckier than most of the others in the group, because it just took them half an hour to commute to the college. Here I introduce two students of the Small Boy. Both Scott and Jason were from Winner, who were being paid particular attention to by Nancy. Scott was quiet and tended to be alone during sight-seeing. In contrast, Jason always had vigour; his expressions were sometimes insensitive and wicked, which annoyed Miss White and Nancy, but his amusing character often brought us laughter. In the later time of the journey I spent more time travelling with these two students and the two teachers. Scott and Jason just stayed with the Indian host family for two days and they moved out, leaving the other two fellows. Jason on the second day already complained that it was not a “normal” family, because there was one old woman and her daughter in the family. Scott explained to me that it was a commercial guesthouse, with six rooms on the first floor and three rooms on the ground floor. They saw other Chinese students living temporarily in the same place. Food was again an issue, as the youngsters complained that they were given sandwiches for three meals. I heard about similar accounts from another student of the Small Boy group.

Scott and Jason were given a completely different picture of living with a British host family before they came to the UK. The expectation, from what I heard, was to live in a “normal” British family – with parents and children of similar ages. That is why they filled their suitcases with plenty of presents for the family members. According to these

two Winner students, the presents were also for English students they would have met in the college. I was shocked by what agreements Success Travel had signed with Winner. Was it ignorance or deceit, on the part of the sales team of Success Travel or of Winner? That is why the parents of Scott and Jason were furious and asked for an immediate change of host family on Day 3. The students did not say anything about the ethnic background of the Indian family, however; it is suspected that the non-white racial identity of the previous family (i.e. Indian) is the cause of the relocation. Given that the Big Girl group were not disappointed with the personality, but not racial identity of the host, and the Big Boy group who stayed with Black family had satisfied experiences, Miss White's open lecture that warned students not to racially discriminate non-white host families was for Scott and Jason. This speculation appears more reasonable when these students were relocated to a white family. Another evidence to support this speculation is that Success Travel had to bear the extra fee involved in moving the two students to another host family, because both the host family agency and the parents refused to accept any responsibilities of what happened, according to the Ed-tour staff. The other two students were less disappointed compared to Scott and Jason, which is partly due to different expectations, and partly due to different contracts their intermediaries signed with Success Travel. The two Winner students joined Miss White and Nancy, living with a white English host.

#### **8.4.3.4 Fantastic experience**

Miss White and Nancy often shared with me that their 'home stay' experience was pleasant, hosted by an English man called Marcus, who was married to a Thai woman, who had two children. That was perhaps a reason that the parents of Scott and Jason were happy for their children to move and stay with a British family that was being enjoyed by the teachers. The students this time had a chance to experience a "normal family", as they told that the two small children of the family always asked them questions. In the second week I heard from Nancy that they were thinking about a birthday gift for Marcus's birthday, and I saw that Jason bought a mug for Marcus in the National Gallery in Day 10. Unlike other host families, Marcus brought the teachers and students to Windsor castle on one of the Sundays. It was the last week of the journey, as I had developed friendships with the group, and given that these teachers and students had enjoyable experience with the host family, I was brave enough to ask if I could visit them. One major reason to visit them was to explore the students' gift buying patterns. Marcus kindly asked me if I liked to have dinner with

them, through the teachers. Then on Day 17, I had a chance to spend an evening with these four participants and Marcus.

Upon returning home, Jason immediately asked Marcus if he could go “swimming” in the garden. Then I realised that it had almost become a routine that Jason had been playing in a 6-8 foot wide paddling pool, which was still not spacious enough for this small 12-year-old boy. Although Marcus’s children were away and Scott was never interested, Jason appeared very happy playing alone. Mat showed me his garden and birds, and we had casual conversation. Talking to Marcus, I could understand why Miss White and Nancy paid this host compliments. The teachers, Marcus and I were chatting after dinner in the lounge, and soon were joined by Marcus’s wife, who returned home from work. I kept in touch with the teachers after the summer tour, so did Marcus and Miss White, when the latter told me that she received an email from the former. It appeared that their pleasant home stay experience was not constrained by the relatively big group number. The host’s personality was the defining factor. As before, the students did not mention the race or ethnicity of the host. Finally we look at the Big Boy group experience.

#### **8.4.3.5 Warm experience**

Four students who were older or bigger in size stayed with a Jamaican family. Patrick, Stephen, Billy and another student also had a good experience. The Jamaican family lived in South London, and like the Big Girl group, did not complain about the time wasted for travelling. I heard the compliments of the host family, such as how delicious the meal was, and how nice the host family were. The name of the host is called Louisa. ‘She always said “oh thank you darling, good boy”’, Billy was imitating Louisa’s tones and gestures. Patrick expressed that she left him with a very good impression of British people. These students even created a group entitled Louisa in their Chinese social networking site. Considering their good relationship with the host, and their gender and older age, again I proposed a visit to their family. In fact tour leaders were allowed to visit the host family. I talked to Miss White and Nancy about whether they were happy for me to do so. The big boys were also excited to have me visit them. Louisa kindly accepted the request of the students and on Day 17 I visited the family after the afternoon sight-seeing. It was already around 5pm at the town before a short bus journey took us to the home, the students said they needed to go to McDonald’s. Then I realised that they had this routine every day, because the food



provided by the host family was not enough. When we got there, the students were immediately engaged with their gadgets for games and comics, and I had a casual chat with Louisa and actualised my perception that she was a nice person. Louisa was in her 50s, working as an ambulance driver. It was a Christian family, as I observed that in the lounge was a specific place dedicating to worship.

I was chatting with Louisa while she was preparing for dinner. In the meantime, I heard that Stephen was playing piano and Louisa expressed to me he was very talented for a beginner. Before I went I already said that I was not having dinner, since I was not confident that the teenagers were able to inform Louisa about my visit in sufficient detail. Louisa tried to persuade me to eat something, while I stressed that I already had had an early dinner. She was heating up four packs of cottage pie which were in ready meal packages. I also observed that she was about to cook a bag of pasta, as she said that a big portion of dinner was needed since the youngsters had a very good appetite. I saw the students eating on their own, then I realised that the students and the family did not eat together, because other family members came home late, as they told me. Dinner was served in relatively big portions, but the quantities were not sufficient to the boys. Nevertheless they felt embarrassed to ask for more from Louisa, which explained why they filled themselves up in advance with fast food. After dinner I was in the two rooms shared by the students, asking about what souvenirs and gifts they had gathered during the journey. The students shared with me some more experiences of living with the host family, such as how strong was the son of Louisa was, Billy walked into an unlocked door of the bathroom twice while others (fortunately male family members) were taking showers, and how they spent time playing games with Louisa's nieces on one of the Sundays. The students made some racist jokes about the appearances of these young people, such as 'among Black people they are sort of pretty', in which they emphasised that this was not discrimination, but a "standard of appreciation". I felt that the teenagers genuinely enjoyed the kindness and interactions with the family, especially Louisa, irrespective of their ethnic/racial origins or portion size of food. Just that they were honest and insensitive about others, as observed from their racial comments.

To sum up, it was evident that explicit racism was practised in the home stay businesses, which also caused disorders when participants from other groups who found their agreed service (no Black host families) not delivered. In my group,

participants' home stay experiences were conditioned by personal factors that were based on the individual characters of the hosts, and their unwillingness to provide a comfortable living environment and enough food.

#### **8.4.4 Reflexivity of the journey**

Whatever the form or type of tourism indulged in, spending time away from one's day to day routines offers the individual the chance to reflect on and assess who they are in the world, and also to accumulate memories which are then accommodated into the narrative accounts of their lives.

(Meethan, 2006:8)

The last section of this chapter is to explore participants' reflections on the study tour. Encountering English pedagogical spaces involves contacting people, objects and landscapes that have objective differences in comparison to home, no matter if these are visible or invisible, material or cultural. It was my wish to follow a mature student group. Although participants in the group were young, on average, it was fortunate that there were a few mature students who were able to articulate their observations and feelings during the journey. After the first week, I invited Stephen and Patrick to write something about the journey. As I knew that they both enjoyed writing, it would not be a difficult task for them. I did not give particular topics or advise them to write on certain directions. I aimed to avoid any leading questions that would affect the originality in reflecting their journey. It was free-style writing. These two big boys kindly "submitted" a short essay to me in a couple of days. I also made this request to Florence, and to my surprise it was already on her diary. She kindly allowed me to take a picture of what she wrote. Their work was written in Chinese and translated by the present author as shown below. The original Chinese version is on Appendix 6, 7 and 8. (p.321-324) I attempt to retain the original wordings, styles and structures as they were printed, quite often they made assumptions and presented thoughts in a random way, I will try to give explanations using square brackets. We shall read the three short writings before a general discussion.

#### 8.4.4.1 Stephen's diary

##### A Brief Outlook of England

Coming to a foreign land the first time, it does not need words to explain my sentiments [most likely it is a positive feeling]. From my perspective, a person needs to experience what is happening, so that it can be called real. For example, in school, the textbook describes that British people hate being in a packed underground carriage. People keep a distance from each other at any times. This [content of the textbook] is nonsense. Like China, it has rush hour. London is a bustling city and has a fast pace of life, which was my first impression. British people are friendly. This is inarguable. Our host family comprise of an old couple and their muscular son. They love Chinese history, food, and we are getting along well with each other. Apart from that, when we were asking British citizens for directions, they rather missed the bus but not leaving our questions unanswered.

However their [the British citizens who helped with pointing directions] logical thinking is bad, no matter in the areas of mathematics or comprehension. It appears that they are innocent [in positive context]. In the underground, street artists rely on their abilities to make a living, unlike beggars in China who just pretend that they are poor and ask for money. That is why I appreciate artists in the underground. Their music turns bustling stations to relaxing and peaceful. This is a main feature of London.

London as a bustling city is different from China. Here it is crowded but it has orders. Using the right hand side when using escalators and allowing passengers to get out before entering the trains, are practised by everybody. In China, it [undergrounds] is crowded and chaotic.

What is more, pedestrians in London ignore traffic lights, but this might be the reason that drivers always give way to pedestrians. This is different from China, in terms of fundamental quality and social norms [he tries to say that people in China equally ignore traffic lights, but the difference is that British drivers are considerate while Chinese drivers are not].

I am attracted to the life in Britain. It is busy, but it has orders. Fundamentally, it is perhaps the difference between a developed country and superficially developed country.

I have a deep impression having stayed in Britain for just a week, that is why Chinese intellectuals and wealthy people are eager to go away [to leave China]. It [could be life of Britain or in the West] is in a stark contrast to China. However, China is not non-democratic, it is just the qualities of Chinese people [assumed it is moral degradation] and mismanaged development that brought about complicated social problems, which is impossible for anybody to solve within a short period of time.

#### 8.4.4.2 Patrick's diary

Only what you see is real. Experience shapes knowledge. Although this trip has enriched my understanding of Britain, my perspective about England has not changed compared to what I have learnt in the past.

Britain is a multi-cultural nation. This makes me difficult to believe that it mainly comprises of the white race in the country. There are many Black, Indian and Chinese people, and they are able to integrate into the society. Personally I feel that racial discrimination in Britain is not serious. Perhaps this problem just appears in football?

When I first arrived in the UK, my strong impression was that the labyrinth of streets in London. In contrast to China, streets in London are too narrow, however they are not as crowded as China's. Is it true that European people's seriousness and humbleness are well known in the world? Britain's drivers have to be famous. In China, as a pedestrian, I am used to give way to cars, which makes me difficult to take it for granted that drivers should give way to pedestrians. I fear that if now I am used this practice, when returning to China, there will be higher risks that I am knocked down by cars.

Jesus Christ has an important role in this origin of industrial revolution, which is difficult to understand. I thought they have long been adoring science. Is religion a superstition in feudal times? Or does it compensate people when they get lost in the contemporary materialistic world? I rather prefer faith in the Chinese context. You believe everything and you disbelieve everything.

I am still not used to everyday diets in Britain. From the perspective as a Chinese, the food is really too greasy. That there are many obese people in Britain proves my opinion. To produce fat through food consumption is not healthy for the society.

Finally, what has struck me is the stark contrast between clean toilets and dirty streets in Britain. The toilets represent the fruitful outcomes of education of a developed country. The streets make me think about my home nation.

#### 8.4.4.3 Florence's diary

##### **About London**

One of the main characters of London is that there are no skyscrapers, the sky is high [probably emphasising no skyscrapers], buildings are neat. They are similar in size but have different characters, which are classical, genteel and tranquil, so I can't resist the temptation of taking pictures all the time. To observe pedestrians, they are different in the morning and evening. When there are few people, you would see bikers of any ages, who wear helmets and are always rushing (by the

way, the men here love cycling as a sport. The combination of this kind of men and bikes are everywhere). And some young men and women are just off from work, wearing big headphones and waking in a swift but relaxed manner. Transports in the morning, such as undergrounds, train stations or on buses, Chinese people should feel difficult to adapt to it [behaviours of London commuters that create the scene]. They [London commuters] are rarely in a group or even in pairs, who look serious and hurry to the underground without hustling. They do not speak to others, everybody takes a free paper available in stations, or a novel, or an electronic book, just a minority of people watch the mobile phone or sit there idly. The majority of people are reading the same paper and being silent. I do not think this situation would exist at any time, any place, and in any occasions in China. Some people might think this is too suppressing, however I feel that this is a unique and admirable British character. Moreover, when you hear rhythmical ‘sorry’ and ‘excuse me’, you would feel how precious and warm it is. In China, passengers quarrelling with each other because of stepped feet always happen in public transports, which I think should not happen in Britain. There are two reasons behind it. Firstly, when being in a silent environment, in which you can hear a pin dropping on the floor, who would dare to speak up. Second, the gentleness of British people is well-known, ‘sorry’ and ‘excuse me’ can solve all the problems.

These three pieces of writings were written as if they were given a topic. There are two aspects in common. First, the students focus on everyday life of London, drawn from their observations of the scenes in the underground, on streets, in which the way people were practising quotidian routines. This is perhaps a reward for the youngsters who had to spend time everyday travelling with London commuters in the morning and evening. Second, they reflected on what they observed in comparison with their home nation. Florence is fascinated by the public scene in the London underground. Passengers are engaging in their own readings and quietness, which contrasts to loudness and bickering she recalled in China. Stephen thinks that, London and Chinese undergrounds are equally busy, however the former has orders and the latter is chaotic. Patrick draws an interesting comparison between the two countries in terms of the conditions of toilets and streets, which reflect the different stages of development of both countries. Both Stephen and Patrick are intrigued by their observations that drivers in the UK always give ways to pedestrians, unlike in China where the situation is the other way around.

We have discussed at length the various forms of Chinese desire for the West. From the writings, they do not talk about material consumption or their actualisation of visiting

sites associated with British popular cultures. The focus is on the way of life observed in everyday life and the cultural interactions observed in London. These youngsters used their body to experience and consume a space of cultural difference between home and a foreign land. Places in London, such as the underground, streets and roads that are populated by London commuters, pedestrians or cyclists, are consumed with prior expectations or knowledge, such as British 'gentleman-ness', compositions of race, a popular place in the West chosen by Chinese people to migrate to. These places are also contextualised by using China as a point of comparison. To encounter London spaces as a visitor is to undergo a reflexive process, in which the students are drawn into sharing these spaces with local people, and subsequently interpreting what they observe with their imaginations and perceptions. During this process, the common experience among these youngsters is that they all appreciate, if not envy, the cultural scenes in London. The process also invokes a feeling of cultural identity, which is about asking how they should react to these differences as a Chinese. They reflect their disapproval of certain cultural practices in China, and distance themselves with these despised practises. Florence does not, or has not yet, associated it to the wider structures of China, while Stephen and Patrick connect their observations to particular structures. Patrick talks about religion, in which he thinks that Christianity has an important role in the UK. In China, people have practical and agnostic religious views. He also mentions the good education available in the UK and the less satisfactory education in China. Stephen thinks highly of the UK, in which he recognises the function of democracy, however refuses to attribute social problems of China to the state, but to the qualities of the people and to "mismanaged development", in which he does not indicate the context.

Reading into the youngsters' writings, I feel that they release an anti-Western media nationalistic spirit. They do not hide their appreciation of many aspects of the UK, as these two boys sometimes expressed to me that they did not want to go back to China. In other words, they recognise the negative aspects of China; however, their attitude is rather defensive about their nation in general. They believed that social or political problems are 'structural', which means that they are unfathomable and unsolvable in a short period of time. Stephen does not explain why Chinese people have no good qualities, Patrick does not elaborate why education in China is not as good as the UK. The implication of reading into their writings to their cultural identity is that, first they have a strong national identity. They could not help but share negative aspects of

societies without “bad-mouthing” the name of China; second, they indirectly position themselves as good Chinese who appreciate and share an aspirational, global and civilised identity, as they distance themselves from bad behaviours commonly found in China.

### **8.5 Recap – empirical findings theorised**

The empirical findings of this fieldwork have shaped the theoretical framing of the thesis. From the accounts of the owner of Ed-tour, a Chinese migrant in the UK, there was no political involvement from the Chinese state in his travel businesses through overseas Chinese state associated organisations. Likewise, tour commentaries given to Chinese students in the UK were not based on any cultural authority, in contrast to domestic tourism in China. The integration of Ed-tour and Success Travel demonstrates that tourism businesses operate under the principle of liberal market economy. This addresses the third objective that the Chinese state cultural authority being evident in Chinese domestic tourism landscapes is not observed in the UK.

The fourth objective explores the experiences of Chinese students in the tour, in which the observations are interpreted through three theoretical frames. The first one is global and modern identity (see p.103), which is theorised as a desire for the West, an aspiration to the Western way of life, which is particularly prominent seen in a global, modern and cultured way of consumption practice (Niederhauser, 2012; Wang, 2001). Accumulation of cultural capitals – Western lifestyles (Zhang, 2010) – to distinguish a superior identity is seen in domestic China, while in the UK pedagogical spaces, the “cultured” group use Western popular cultures to distinct themselves from the “uncultured” and “local tyrant second generation” group, accumulating cultural capital to construct an identity (Bourdieu, 1984). Their consumption of English or American produced cultures was not limited to the material consumption of related products, but also the ability to appreciate the content (Veblen, 2000), such as the plot of a popular English drama, the biographies and gossips of pop stars and boy bands, and so on. Nevertheless, the appreciation of Western tastes in Chinese context is not based on the traditional high-low culture demarcation. The *Western* and the *popular* have collectively become lifted up taste, which is a cultural marker of middle-class identity.

A desire for a modern and global identity is observed when reading into the writings of three elder students in the group, who reveal non-materialistic consumption in the West (i.e. London) through bodily experiences in places shared with local Londoners: seeing

the bustling yet orderly underground and peaceful passengers with papers and books; hearing the silence in the underground carriage; feeling warm and uplifted being in a polite environment; and feeling safe when crossing the road. London provided different cultural scenes for these Chinese students, which were spaces for reflection by comparing these scenes to those of their home country. They appreciate and adore Western cultural appearances, and are frustrated by negative cultural scenes in China. They express an aspiration of Western lifestyle, yet establish their identity as a civilised and cultured Chinese, rather than feeling ashamed of bearing the Chinese nation as the defining cultural identity.

The second theoretical frame is Chinese nationalism, which are multi-faceted as discussed in Chapter 4 (p.108). To compare to the literature of Chinese nationalism, anti-Western sentiments are evidently and abundantly observed (e.g. Patrick being annoyed with the teacher who thought that tofu was invented in Japan; when visiting the British Museum, the tour guide generating a national humiliation discourse via her guiding commentaries; in China Town students talking about how the Western media was thought to be stigmatising China). The participants obviously disapproved grass-root radical nationalism, a form of popular nationalism argued by Wu (2012). Students expressed that they were open-minded and educated, distancing themselves from “irate youth” (Nyíri et al., 2010). Cultural superiority embodied by ethno-racial nationalism (Duara, 1996; Townsend, 1996; Unger, 1996) is not prominently observed in the group. There are two aspects of nationalism that contribute to the literature.

First, it is observed that anti-West nationalistic discourses are unconsciously expressed in quotidian way of speaking or action, in Billig's (1995) term, ‘banal nationalism’. A Chinese tour leader proclaimed ‘Chinese do not fight Chinese’. She unconsciously connected the fight between children to the discourse of historical humiliation in China. Also, a child criticised me for speaking an English word, saying ‘Chinese speak what English!?’ English has not been used only in promoting patriotism (see Li Yang’s crazy English), but proves to be embodying an invasive quality, which is more than a language for communication. These two examples demonstrate the penetrating power of nationalism in everyday life, which is different from conscious and vigorous Chinese nationalism as discussed in the literature.

Second, the nationalistic sentiments performed by participants could be explained by the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1978; Rose, 1996). The theory argues that



through governmentality, individuals learn to govern themselves, which is a more efficient form of social organisation. The emphasis is about individual's self-fulfilment more than being obedient to external authorities. The Chinese tour leader/teacher used a patriotic discourse to modulate students' behaviours, with a purpose to improve the image of China. Students were encouraged to be ambassadors of the nation by regulating themselves. Upon reflection, I felt that the teacher's initiative was subconscious, which means that it was a popular discourse that national glory and shame is connected to individuals. Likewise, Patrick genuinely shouldered this burden, so he quarrelled with Stephen, who he felt ought to be ashamed as an undignified Chinese, when he ignored the no-photography rule in St. Paul's Cathedral. Miss White's speech and Patrick's behaviour were a form of self-governing. It is evidently observed that the image of China encompasses both the nation (ethno-cultural sense) and the party-state's sovereignty (political sense). In other words, it is argued that the Chinese state pedagogy involves intense patriotic content (Gries, 2004) and political socialisation (He, 2012), which has consciously framed the conflation of patriotism to both the cultural nation and political nation.

The third theoretical framework is post-colonial identity – Black is inferior and the prevalence of white privilege (see p.116). Racial hierarchy was objectively observed in the summer tour. Probing into its production, it was found that institutional racism existed in Chinese society, for the business contract that guaranteed only white families to be hosting participants, is valid in China. I established a speculation that there were students being compensated by Success Travel because the racial contract was violated. Besides, the racial hierarchy was evident when complaints about being allocated to Black host families were heard at the beginning of the tour. However, from observations and accounts of the four groups of students staying with four host families, it is found that their home stay experience is influenced by the personal characteristics of hosts and the profits they aimed to gain from the service offered to students. The discourses of racial prejudice are observed, but they are drawn from students' daily experiences, which are in no doubt insensitive, but the racial prejudice does not apply to their relationship with the families. Good and bad experiences were expressed regardless of the races and ethnicities of host families.

## CHAPTER 9

### GIFT SHOPPING PATTERNS AND CONFUCIAN FILIAL PIETY

#### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the fifth objective of the thesis, which is to examine Chinese visitors' gift shopping patterns in the UK with reference to the Chinese traditional culture. The findings are drawn primarily from observations in pedagogical spaces and in gift shop servicescapes. The chapter forms a critique of Confucian filial piety in which it explains gift consumption, because the most significant relationship to young people in the pedagogical spaces is to their parents, which was evidently observed from a few individuals. In this sense, the argument is not established with reference to the wider gift consumption literature. I am interested in how Confucian values, claimed by Chinese people, have shaped the relationship between parents and children (i.e. filial piety), in which hopping for gifts is an expression for the filial love. However, the students did not mention Confucianism, and sometimes their inability to explain their decision making became aporia. That is why theories are useful in making the connection between the behaviour and my reflection. The foundation of the theory to explore gift consumption is established in Chapter 3 where I introduced the theory of critical inheritance and corruption of the contemporary Confucian values. In terms of contribution to the literature; first, Confucian vales or filial piety is not used in the tourism souvenir literature to explain purchasing behaviour; second, I employ the findings to support the critique of the tourism literature (see p.39) that views Confucianism as an essentialist and fixed Chinese culture.

I first document my observations of the consumption patterns of Chinese visitors in the gift shop in 'Neverland', where I worked as a customer service volunteer. This field study revealed that Chinese visitors had distinct shopping patterns compared to other international visitors, which are typically associated with the Chinese gifting culture. These practices are represented in the mass media in the UK and the importance of gift consumption is well known as a prominent constituent of Chinese public identity. A limitation of this study is that I was unable to interview any of these tourists about the reasons why they bought certain items in the shop, although occasional small talk revealed some motives. In contrast, the final fieldwork contributes most of the findings presented in this chapter, in which I explored the consumption practices of participants

for a pro-longed period of time. During three weeks travelling with the student group, I observed what souvenirs they bought, and for whom, which enables me to connect the analysis to Confucian filial piety.

## **9.2 Gift Shop consumption patterns**

The findings of Chinese visitors' consumption patterns come from my own observations on the shop floor and information shared by colleagues. There were diverse consumption behaviours – from relatively lavish spenders, bargain seekers to non-consumption wanderers. It means that Chinese visitors were not homogenous in terms of wealth status, as portrayed by the two British papers we analysed. It is noted that the specific context of the gift consumption location of this fieldwork is that the books and souvenirs of the shop were of relatively low value compared to goods in high street stores. I will begin with the most popular item for Chinese shoppers visiting the shop.

### **9.2.1 Popular merchandise**

One day in the shop, I was labelling goods with price tags with a colleague, who was trying to assist me in exploring my research objective. She recalled that some Chinese visitors asked about the origin of a product, and stated that “if it is made in China they would not want to buy it...they also make a beeline for the gift-boxes”. I witnessed this behaviour for myself in the shop. Gift-boxes are a presentable gift worth £30 to £40 according to their sizes. The full description of which cannot be disclosed due to its direct connection to the identity of ‘Neverland’. Readers might imagine that it represents a historical and famous person whose name and work drew people to visit ‘Neverland’. It is visually impressive and symbolises heritage. These appealing features of the merchandise became the reason that some colleagues decided to position it at the forefront of the shop - when visitors were entering from the back door, having exited the exhibition, the first thing they saw was a stand-alone shelf containing the merchandise. When I first arrived in the shop the shelf was displaying toys, but very soon it was changed to display solely gift-boxes, which were presented in an attractive shelf arrangement.

A Gift box was a collection of items displayed in a display case; however, it was interesting that the items could also be bought separately as individual items. The price difference between the items without their display case was disproportionate to the value of the case. It was the presentation of the box that communicated to visitors how valuable the gift was. I barely saw other visitors, especially non-Asians, buying a gift-

box. Many times I saw Chinese visitors making a beeline<sup>52</sup> from the back door for the shelf where different sizes and colours of Gift boxes were displayed. I also found that Gift boxes were popular with Chinese visitors of all ages. For example, they caught the eyes of two junior high school students. “Wow...they are so nice...” one student exclaimed and they both moved quickly to pick up one of the Gift Boxes and examine it with admiration. There were no two identical Gift Boxes on display, as the patterns of particular items varied in each box. Some Chinese visitors, mainly junior high school students, found some “defects” in an individual item, and then requested that I look for the “finest” Gift Box for them. I was able to learn that some of the students bought the Gift Boxes for their parents.

Apart from Gift boxes, the staff and I observed that the golden key ring was a popular item among Chinese visitors. Again, the golden key ring, which cost £4.50, featured the identity of ‘Neverland’. There was no gold, the actual element in the key ring, but its gold coating imitates luxury and connotes ‘good luck’. That was why the Ferrero Rocher product fitted the Chinese culture well in terms of its gift-giving and packaging – gold wrapping symbolising good fortune, compared to other chocolate brands that were entering into the Chinese market (Allen, 2009). I observed that in a number of occasions that a Chinese shopper bought many golden key rings in one go.

### **9.2.2 Non-consumption**

This section reveals atypical behaviours that I observed in the gift shop. In Chapter 7 (p.179), we talked about how a Chinese woman was careful with the quality of a pencil sharpener, for she was asking the price and behaved carefully when checking the quality of the low-valued item. It was a fair assumption that some visitors had a careful attitude towards spending money. However, in some other occasions, the reasons of non-consumption were unknown. It could also be that visitors were not interested in the merchandise, or that they did not have time to stay in the shop. For example, there was a group of middle-aged Chinese visitors who were accountants and came to England for a training programme, as I observed from their lanyard and initiated a small talk with one of the participants. Just one of them bought a few post cards, but the rest left the shop empty-handed. There was also a particular case that exemplified how carefully some Chinese visitors spent their money.

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<sup>52</sup> The word ‘beeline’ refers to somebody who goes to something as quickly and directly as possible.

On this occasion, I found that four female Chinese visitors aged in their 30s to 40s were surrounding a circular shelf where some mugs and tins were displayed. They were part of a group tour. One of them was holding a notebook and flipping it. They seemed to be discussing something about the items on the shelf. I came closer in order to look clearly what the notebook was about and to my surprise - It was a book of collage. It had different tags with labelling attached to certain pages. She was checking the tags and finally it took her to a page where I saw a picture. It was exactly the British red tins with loose tea that we were selling in the gift shop. Then I understood that it was a British souvenir catalogue! It was hand-made with pictures of souvenirs that I believed to be cut out from magazines with the recommended selling price written below each item. A package of three tins of British loose tea was £4.99 in the gift shop, which was much cheaper than the recommended £8 in the catalogue. They bought it and I am tempted to assume that the lower selling price was the main factor in the transaction. I observed that there was a pattern determining the act of non-consumption. For the groups who were sent by the government or from other organisations on a training trip, they tended to be cautious about buying. Compared to student groups and family groups, they spent little time in the shop, and showed little interest in the items and spent less compared to other Chinese visitors in general.

### **9.2.3 Reflection on consumption patterns in the shop**

The understanding that Chinese visitors are wealthy has become an established fact, which is also represented by UK press. It was neither a subject of conversation nor a matter of debate during the non-busy time in the workplace. My colleagues were not amazed at the magnitude of a single transaction made by a Chinese tourist. I could not detect even a subtle change in the appearance of the staff, for instance, when they were serving a Chinese tourist who was buying four to five Gift boxes in total (£160 - £200) or a French child who was paying £2 for a mug with a British Union Jack pattern. The high value of their purchases was a feature that distinguished Chinese visitors. Nevertheless, the observation of careful Chinese customers in the gift shop and their non-consumption behaviours, suggest that the image of Chinese wealthy status portrayed by the UK press is only a partial representation.

The popularity of Gift boxes as a gift for friends back home, and especially for parents, had induced me to explore the junction between filial piety, guanxi, and the materiality of gifts. I heard from my Chinese friends and colleagues that they would connect their

love to their parents in some ways to monetary values of materials. This does not mean that they always buy expensive things for their parents, but there is a mentality that a more valuable item represents more respect and affection in the filial relations. The higher value of materials that children spend for their parents, do explain that the generosity of the former, but as we discussed in Chapter 3 (p.78), materiality is never the prime measurement of filial love in Confucian teaching. Unfortunately the fieldwork conducted in the gift shop did not enable me to probe into the motives of gift consumption, which became a research objective that I brought to the ethnographic research with Chinese teenage students.

### **9.3 Gift consumption practices by study tour participants**

During the three weeks journey in London, students and teachers had opportunities to shop on a daily basis in the souvenir shops accompanied by attractions. In popular tourist destinations such as Cambridge and Oxford where “free time” was given to the group, shopping became an important activity. There was one full afternoon that was dedicated to shopping in Oxford Street in London. To present the consumption practices of the group, I will first draw on general observations, and conversations with some members of the group. For the former, the emergence of two themes is that first, students disliked any souvenirs made in China and second, gifts were bought primarily for parents. For the latter, I will detail two students’ collections of gifts and the motives for the purchases. The findings were obtained from casual interviews with Patrick from the Big Boy Group, and Scott from the Small Boy Group when I visited them in their host accommodation.

#### **9.3.1 No made-in-China souvenirs**

In many occasions, many students expressed that they avoided any merchandise that was made in China. On the day we visited the British Museum, Patrick and Stephen bought a few pencil sharpeners with a medieval English soldier figure as decoration. Having examined the items carefully after the purchase, Patrick was shouting that they were made in China. Joined by Stephen, these two boys poked fun at themselves, for they so carelessly bought something undesirable. For Patrick, those items were bought for his friends, but he decided to keep them. The reason was that his friends would despise the gifts solely because they were made in China. In other words, if they were made in England, or in other places in Europe, it would make a good gift. They were not concerned about the quality of the pencil sharpeners, but the label attached to the

object. The dislike of Chinese produced goods was common found in both the “rich second generation” group who are fond of Western cultures as well as the “local tyrant second generation” group. Florence, represented as the former group, when looking everywhere for merchandise of her idol band *One Direction*, she was slightly shocked at the large amount of Chinese made products of the boy band group. Cindy, labelled as a member of the latter group, who was also one of the Big Girls, was looking for a backpack and asked for my opinion which one suited her. Whenever she picked up a potential backpack she checked the origin of production. She was disappointed that they were all made in her home country. It appeared that there are two interpretations to the observation. The first and the more important reason is that what made a product a souvenir lies on whether or not it was locally made. For the students, it is ironic that a tourist brings a souvenir from a foreign land to a friend back home. Second, ‘Made in China’ signifies poor quality. There were examples which show that it became a common knowledge for students. On the second day of the tour, Billy’s lanyard given by Success Travel (every student had one as identification) was broken. He complained to Miss White by mocking that it had to be made in China. When we talked about how many souvenirs were made in China, he joked that he wanted to scrape the “Made in China” label off from the surface of souvenirs, otherwise it could not be given to friends. In sum, the problem is not whether or not merchandise is actually made in China, but the symbolic capital (i.e. the label) attributed to the product.

### **9.3.2 Luxury gifts and filial love**

This section discusses two instances of luxury consumption, the first one by Nancy and the second by Cindy. On many occasions Nancy showcased her fondness of designer fashions. She was wearing a brand new Burberry trench coat bought in the Bicester Village on one of the Sundays. She asked Tracy, the tour guide, about the prices and styles of designer bags that were available in the UK. In Chapter 7, we talked about that the Value Added Tax (VAT) refund policy entitles international visitors to the UK to a VAT refund on goods they buy in the destination and subsequently take home. The refund is claimed in UK airports before departure. I was accompanying Nancy to the refund counter, and I observed that she presented two designer bags to the staff. She told me that one was for herself and the other was for her mother, and Nancy expressed that “this is what I should do as a good daughter”. It is difficult to comment on Nancy’s perspectives on the relations between filial love and materiality. It appeared that luxury consumption was her lifestyle and identity, which suggests that the valuable gift offered

to her mother, was an expression of Nancy's individuality, rather than simple connection between the value of the designer bag and her valuation of her mother. It was a shame that the group was about to enter the departure hall, I did not have a chance to inquire in more details.

On Day 18, four days before the end of the study tour, the afternoon sight-seeing was the Tower of London. The tour fee did not include a visit inside the tower, and students were not willing to pay the entrance fee on their own to make a visit. We saved much time on that afternoon so the group had two hours free time in a shopping mall in Canary Wharf, a major business district in London. I happened to find that a group of students gathering in Goldsmiths, a jewellery and watch store. I was inquisitive and stepped in to the store. In my opinion, the design of the shop was modest and was not tailored exclusively to affluent consumers. Then I realised that Cindy was buying a watch for her father. As heard from some students who gossiped about the "local tyrant second generation" behaviour, Cindy had already used up her £600 she brought to the UK. In order to buy the watch that cost around £300, she borrowed money from a few students in the group. The purchase of the watch was not the idea of her family, but a gift Cindy wanted to offer to her father. I was not surprised at the wealth of Chinese youngsters in everyday life, because I heard about numerous examples of their lavish consumption. Perhaps, for a 15-year-old girl, spending £300 was not a really excessive amount in comparison to excessive shopping patterns. What made me curious was why Cindy was desperate to borrow money from new friends and buy the watch. Does it mean that a cheaper gift was unable to satisfy her father, or to satisfy her desire to act as a good daughter? Did she have plenty of her "own money" to return to her friends upon returning to China? I did not challenge Cindy on her motives for buying the watch, because my awareness of her borrowing money was unknown to her. Therefore, I aimed to avoid a situation that she might perceive that I was being inquisitive, and critical of her behaviour. This coeval status between us was possibly preserved.

#### **9.4 Personal accounts on gift consumption**

These informal interviews were conducted in the host families. I obtained an approval from Patrick and Scott to use video recordings to store the images of souvenirs they bought and our conversations, and promised full anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. In fact, talking through the objects they bought was not perceived as serious or sensitive topic, it was more like a casual conversation we had in ordinary



moments. The students kindly opened their suitcases and showed me their collections. I will tabulate what souvenirs these two students bought for whom. Sometimes I was able to see the price of an item from the price tag, I would also ask the respondent if I could not see it. But there were times I missed the prices of some items, for the reasons that they appeared blurred in the video and sometimes I forgot to ask the students. In those cases I would put “data missed” in the price column. The images presented in the tables below were ‘print-screened’ from videos; therefore the framing of the images are limited to how they are best appeared in videos and the quality was not satisfactory. However they are still presented for a better conception of souvenirs. I will discuss firstly the consumption practice of Patrick.

#### **9.4.1 Patrick’s souvenir consumption**

Patrick spent most of his money on merchandise of his favourite, Harry Potter. It costed him more than a hundred pounds to buy two magic wands and a scarf that are featured in Harry Potter movies. Appendix 9 (p.325) shows the souvenirs collected by Patrick. Most of Patrick’s collection represents UK (e.g. post-box, Big Ben, or merchandise with the Union Jack pattern). Some of the expensive items are associated with popular culture in the UK (e.g. Harry Potter, Sherlock Holmes). The meaning of consumption of these merchandises is a reflection of the possession of cultural capitals as discussed in Chapter 8.

When matching gifts to his friends, Patrick could immediately tell me which item was for whom. Patrick showed me his collection of items one by one. Below are selected conversations about the gifts he shopped for, for his friends and family. The first item is a Star Wars t-shirt:

P: This is for my classmate, because he watched Star Wars...he is the cleverest guy in our circle. He reads lots of Western books.....that is why I also buy him a book about Sherlock Holmes.

E: Does he also like Sherlock Holmes?

P: I am not sure.

E: Then why did you buy him the book?

P: But the TV drama [Sherlock Holmes] is popular in China....we will exchange the books once we finished them

[Patrick was showing me two Sherlock Holmes books, one for himself and one for his friend]

We talked about the mini English medieval sword:

P: This is what I bought from Tower of London today. It is a birthday gift for my best friend.

E: Woah, it cost £17.99!

P: Yes it is very expensive, but I thought it has good quality, as it is quite heavy and the finishing is good, that is why I bought it.

E: Where was it produced?

P: It is not made in China anyway!

E: Did you ask the staff? How did you know it was not made in China?

P: If it was made in China, in general it would appear on the package (Patrick is examining again the package of the sword)

E: Why did you buy the sword for him? Does he like collecting weapons?

P: No, the only reason was that I thought a boy should like it.

E: I think the reason was that you liked it as well!

P: Absolutely, you are right. I compare my heart with his heart.  
[It is a Chinese idiom, which means that one thinks about others' well-being as if one thinks about her well-being].

There were three criteria governing Patrick's shopping decisions when buying for his friends. The first was his knowledge of their individual preferences. Second was what he himself preferred, bought in the hope that his friends might appreciate them also. Third, he avoided any items that were made in China, because they were considered undesirable. When he was unable to think of a gift that his friend wanted, the solution was to buy something that he also liked, such as spoons from the Household Cavalry, t-shirts with the Union Jack pattern, or books about Sherlock Holmes. Patrick thought clearly to buy particular gifts for particular friends, rather than randomly picking something for the sake of gifting. When Patrick talked about his friends who would be receiving the gifts, he described briefly who they were, their genders and his

relationships with them. The language Patrick used in explaining to me his gift consumption practices was friendship, but not guanxi. It would be a limitation that I did not know whether the gifting in reality involved political economy, for example, reciprocity or social investment, i.e. a general conception of guanxi. However, I felt that it is an expression of the value of friendship. Miller (1998:148) argues that shopping is a space of remembering family and an expression of love through material gifts:

The central purpose of shopping is not so much to buy the things people want, but to strive to be in a relationship with subjects that want these things.

It was not entirely the souvenirs per se that Patrick was sure his friends would love to receive. It was Patrick's expectation that they would appreciate the fact that, through the gifts, Patrick had remembered them and was willing to spend a certain amount of money to express the friendship. Three days before we did the interview, I asked Patrick if his friends asked him to bring them anything, he said they did not. And when I asked if he was the going to buy for them, he replied, "it depends, if I see something that would make me think about somebody, I would buy that item". Thus, Patrick's relationship with his friends, from his act of gift consumption, was not a manifestation of guanxi, but rather friendship stemming from the moral economy.

Patrick was the only child of the family. When I asked if he had got anything for his parents, he replied:

P: Yes...but my money is my parents' money. I wanted to buy them something but feel embarrassed. If I am working that would be much better..... I still haven't got a gift for my mum, I don't know what to buy for her. For my dad I bought him a tie.

E: Have they asked you to buy anything for relatives?

P: No, they didn't mention anything about gifts.

E: What about your grandparents, uncles or aunties? Are you going to buy them anything?

P: No, not many people knew that I was travelling, only some of my friends in school.

Patrick showed me a tie with a Sherlock Holmes pattern for his father:

P: This looks a bit silly; he might probably not wear it. If he does not wear it, I will wear it.

E: Oh! It is £14 [again I showed my authentic reaction...]

P: Is it very expensive?

E: Hmm... to me it is a bit expensive. I am sure your father will like it. By the way, does he like Sherlock Holmes?

P: No, he just knew that this guy is a detective.

E: Then why did you buy him the tie?

P: To be honest, I picked it up randomly. I don't want to make him feel that I don't care about him. When I was in Baker Street [the gift shop of Sherlock Holmes's museum], I realised that was a problem [if he buys nothing], so I picked the tie.

E: Why did you realise that it would be a problem?

E: I don't know, it just occurred to me.

From Patrick's account, we are able to observe that he was struggling to determine what to get for his parents, unlike his decisiveness in getting gifts for his friends, who by and large, shared his personal interests. Patrick was not able to articulate the feeling that there was something wrong with nothing to take back for his parents. At the same time he felt embarrassed to use his parents' money to buy gifts for them. Patrick's behaviour – buying a £14 tie for his father, is different from Nancy or Cindy who perhaps matched the magnitude of filial love to the material value of their gifts. However, Patrick's uneasiness echoes Nancy and Cindy's behaviours in terms of the importance of material goods, now in the form of a gift, to express filial affection to parents.

From observations of my Chinese friends and colleagues, and kinship gifting behaviours of Cindy, Nancy and Patrick, a central part of my argument is that materials, and also the values of materials, have become a crucial constituent in the understanding of filial piety among Chinese people, even though they are not aware of this shaping. Patrick exemplifies this unconscious shaping. He struggled to buy his mother a gift (later he brought a bracelet for her), and he bought a tie with a Sherlock Holmes design (the plan B is to wear it himself in case his father does not use it),

which means that Patrick was not confident in selecting gifts that matched with the individual preference or personality of family members, unlike when buying for his friends. Perhaps getting a tie for father is one of the stereotypical presents, such as watches (my personal general observations) or slippers (my English friend's observation in UK culture)? However, his insistence to shop for material gifts for his parents, in my opinion, could be an indication that the social norm of filial piety in China is highly connected to materialism. Patrick expressed his discomfort in using his parents' money to buy gifts for them, however unconsciously he felt even more uneasy when contemplating not performing the gifting role. However, according to the classic Confucian teaching, the authentic filial love is not measured by materials (a tie is not necessary provision for parents' well-being), why did Patrick have such feeling? Has the quality of contemporary Confucian filial piety changed? Conclusions will be drawn after the findings of Scott's gifting behaviour.

I was planning to do the same interview with other three students in the Big Boy Group. However, I had limited time to do so and the students were ready to join us to start other interesting topics by the time we finished the interview, so I just scanned thorough what they bought, without engaging them with the same intensity I did with Patrick. The next section covers Scott's souvenir consumption.

#### **9.4.2 Scott's souvenir consumption**

Scott was less articulate compared to Patrick, and as a twelve year old he behaved in a childish way, which was consistent with his age. Before discussing his collection of souvenirs, I had observed Scott's gifting behaviour through the distribution of gifts that he brought with him from China. On Day 4, I witnessed that Scott was offering a gift to Kayla during the break of the morning class in the college. Kayla asked if it was appropriate to open it and he replied it was no problem. It was a set of cutleries which looked presentable and nice. Both Scott and Jason from Winner were told that they were going to meet with English students in the class and children of the host family; therefore they brought many gifts from their home town for the new friends he expected to meet with. Unfortunately, to their disappointment, they had to take many of them back home. Appendix 10 (p.328) shows the gifts he bought in the UK. Most of the souvenirs are unexpectedly not relevant to the UK. Apart from a few items that are associated with the UK (i.e. Big Ben, purse and wallet with the Union Jack pattern, and postcard), the rest are all purchased out of personal interests. I was surprised that he

only bought three souvenirs for himself; which were a model siege gun that he claimed he would use to launch sweets; a pencil sharpener with a soldier figure as decoration; and unexpectedly, a book from the National Gallery. He told me that he would use it to refer to some paintings that he did not understand in the Gallery. The rest were all gifts mainly for his family.

I did not expect that Scott's collection of gifts would be more valuable compared to other students. The most expensive item was a £90 gold pocket watch he bought in the gift shop of the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. "It is possibly for my father". Scott was not able to tell me any more reasons apart from saying that it looked nice. I found a black flat box wrapped by Scotch tape, which was actually a £50 pearl necklace, however Scott had not decided whom he was giving it to.

Sam: At that time I did not know whom I should give to, but I thought it was nice, and relatively cheap, so I thought no matter whom I give to, it would make a good gift.

Likewise, when visiting the British Museum, he found a silver necklace and a bracelet attractive; therefore he got those for his mother. In total they cost £63. The gift for his maternal grandparents, which I forgot to ask the price, was a tea set miniature. Without knowing his motives for buying those gifts, I asked why he was offering gifts to some of his parents' kin but not others, because he only mentioned his maternal aunt only in addition to his grandparents. Rather than answering my question directly, he told stories of his kinship. He talked about his paternal aunt and her husband.

My name was given by him [her paternal aunt's husband]...at that time, including my maternal grandparents and their siblings, and my paternal grandparents and their siblings, I was the only child in both families. So I was spoiled. Later I got a sister [his paternal aunt's daughter]...if my aunt [maternal aunt] was not there I could not be born...

Scott tried to say that his maternal aunt was accompanying her mother during the delivery because his father was not around. And he talked about his cousin's sister [daughter of paternal aunt], who was active, playful and outgoing and was raised up by his mother in her early childhood. Scott was switching topics without a clear logic, and

he expressed that his wider family had very close kin relations. His stories actually provided an answer, in as much that his love towards his family and kin was not correlated with material gifts. He did not know their individual preferences. In fact, a few days ago Scott told me that his mother had asked him not to buy anything. He explained that, “I just did it casually...even though she asked me not to buy her anything I will get her something”. His accounts in the interview were consistent to what he had previously said. He did not dedicate particular gifts to his beloved aunts, uncles, or cousin’s sister. It means that he did not think material gifts are necessary to express love. How do we explain the fact that he bought a number of valuable gifts? A possible reading would be his attitude to money. I suspect that, as he admitted himself, being the only child of the wider family he was spoiled. The fact that he thought a £50 pearl necklace was relatively cheap, reveals that he was unconsciously lavish.

That is why Patrick commented that Scott was one of the “local tyrant second generation” members of the group. Scott told me that he wanted to be a full-time traveller in the future. But when I asked where the money would come from to subsidise the expenses of travelling, the reply was that he did not think about it. It appeared that Scott preferred material gifts that were of high value, but he also bought cheap souvenirs. For example, one pearl necklaces he bought cost £50 and the other £2. The purse and the wallet with the Union Jack were also low-price items. In other words, his spending decisions were less dictated by the value of souvenirs, than by his individual preferences for particular merchandise. In my opinion, the most interesting gift among his collection was the M&M chocolate in multi-compartments packaging. It cost £12.95, a low-valued souvenir compared to many other gifts. He would eat the chocolate and give the case for his grandfather to store pills. I am convinced that Scott’s filial and kinship love is not connected to the material values of the gifts he purchased for his beloved ones.

I attempted a short interview with Jason. As mentioned in Chapter 8, Jason was a mischievous and active child. When I requested him to do an interview, he was willing to do so but very soon he lost interest. As I perceived, he felt bored to talk through his gift consumption. It appeared that he just showed me his partial collection of gifts, and was not engaged into the conversation between us. Therefore, I stopped the interview.

### **9.5 Discussion – filial piety and gift consumption**

This chapter offers the findings of consumption behaviours observed in gift shop servicescapes and pedagogical spaces. It argues that filial piety is the main explanation of gift consumption, with reference to the theory of critical inheritance (Zhang and Schwartz, 1997). Subsequently it forms a critique that contemporary Confucian values are corrupted. Critical inheritance involves deliberate selection and emphasis of certain aspects and downplaying of others. The interpretations and evaluations of these aspects are not unchanging, but the content of such aspect is uncontested.

I observed that Chinese shoppers in the ‘Neverland’ gift shop bought presentable and appealing Gift boxes, and that Chinese students shopped for souvenirs for their parents. Material gifts being an expression of kinship love is itself reasonable. However, it appeared that participants were not at ease disconnecting the materiality of the gifts and filial love. If we exempt Nancy’s lavish gift consumption for her mother, owing to her own extravagant lifestyle, we might question the motive of Cindy who borrowed money to buy a watch for her father. Why did Patrick struggle to think of a suitable gift for his father and subsequently buy a random item for him? This suggests that a specific socialisation is taking place in China, in which filial piety and material consumption are interconnected.

The participants unconsciously felt the pressure when contemplating not buying any gifts for their parents, even when their parents had asked them not to spend money on them. The root of this pressure is the fear of being a “bad child”. This construct stems from consanguineous affection between parents and children, which is what Chinese people identify as the trademark of their traditional identity. If we draw from the classic Confucian teaching (p.78), it is the authentic mind (righteousness) that is paramount, rather than materials (propriety). However, it does not mean that the latter itself is a bad behaviour. A Chinese person who bought luxurious material gifts for parents could simultaneously love his parents wholeheartedly. On the contrary, a Chinese person (i.e. Patrick) loves his parents wholeheartedly, while the social norms and environment causes him to undergo an internal conversation that he has to buy, more or less, something valuable to match the love. In other words, he is not free from disassociate filial love to money. He might feel uneasy to not to spend more. In a crude interpretation, the monetary values of material gifts correlate to the amount of the filial love.



Now we have two versions of Confucianism – the classic and the contemporary. In Chapter 3 (p.95), I critically analysed that *guanxi*, the epitome of filial piety, is not an ethical relationship, because it involves economic benefits. It sacrifices justice for economic benefits. *Guanxi* is then against the classic Confucian teaching, which idealises the particular political and economic system that is beneficial to the Chinese state and capitalist interests. *Guanxi* perhaps supports the argument that contemporary filial piety is another corrupted Confucian value. Upon reflection, it does not appear that the Chinese state directly indoctrinates this value; rather it is a product of consumer capitalism that is promoted by the state. That is to say, a contemporary corrupted version of Confucian filial piety is a product of historical development, which entails materialism. This perspective is also supported by David, the owner of Ed-tour, who expressed disillusion with contemporary material desire among Chinese people when he witnessed Chinese teachers chasing luxury goods in the UK (p.199). To connect this engagement of observations with further reflection, it has evoked me to evaluate my perception of inheritance of Confucian values in Hong Kong, which is the reason that traditionalism becomes a theoretical framework of the thesis.

In my opinion, the structure of feeling (William, 1961) owned by a Hong Kong national is different from that of Chinese people. We inherit and learn from the past through documents and objects, i.e. recorded culture. Filial piety is also a critical inheritance of Confucianism in Hong Kong. However, the interpretation of recorded Confucian values in Hong Kong has been free from the intervention of the Chinese state. Chinese people had experienced severe attacks on, and distortion of Confucianism in Maoist China (p.82) and later the state propaganda about capitalistic consumption (Wang, 2001). The consequences of the state hegemony, accompanied by the subjectivities required by consumer orientated globalised capital, are seen in the corrupted Confucian values of *guanxi* and filial piety. That is to say, traditional values are forged in contemporary China. Upon reflection, the grand narrative about critical inheritance and the party state (Macro) appears to be relevant to consumption practices observed in the field (Micro). Nevertheless, I was content to have observed signs of negotiation within this state-induced structure of feeling. Patrick was not free from an emphasis on external propriety (gifting culture) in expressing filial love to his parents, his uneasiness and internal struggle proves that he was questioning the meaning of this structure of feeling. What is the role of the researcher when observing these “findings”? Perhaps, for Ingold (2014), it is just the responsibility of anthropology – to engage with participants’

situations and share authentic views, thereby produce knowledge? In my case, sharing with Patrick how I felt about the corruption of contemporary Confucianism.

The findings presented in this chapter also reveal that there is a wide range of consumption behaviours. Guanxi as an integral part of Chinese identity is represented by British press. In Chapter 6, Hardman (2012:n.p.), a journalist of *The Daily Mail*, reports that:

An entrenched gifting culture means they will buy a dozen Hermes scarves at a time – not only for family members but for bosses, colleagues and for any officials whose palms need crossing.

For Monaghan and Kaiman (2014:n.p.), journalists of *The Guardian*, the state crackdown on corruption was an unexpected blow to UK retail businesses:

The highly visible government campaign encouraging frugality and focusing on corruption had a large impact on gifting, which had been one of the major growth engines of the sector.

The press assumes that Chinese tourists are all wealthy and shopping for gifts for friends and colleagues, thereby guanxi could be established to benefit to individuals. The findings in the servicescapes and the pedagogical spaces appear to break down media stereotypes. In ‘Neverland’, although wealth was an indicator of Chinese identity, there were careful shoppers and non-consumption was observed. Participants in the student group in general were not lavish spenders, who had various reasons to shop for family and friends. Then, we are able to conclude there are diverse consumption patterns.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

#### 10.1 Introduction

The thesis has adopted multiple methods to explore virtual media spaces, and tourism spaces where it is possible to observe the identities of Chinese visitors to the UK. These visitors constitute a small fraction of the 1.3 billion people in China (196,000 arrived at the UK in 2013), who are generally referred to as middle-class, for their relatively higher economic status that affords them the opportunity to travel overseas. The qualitative orientation of the research explored certain media representations and host nation perspectives about Chinese visitors, and Chinese visitors' consumption practices and narrations. It aims not to generalise these observations to the vast population of China, or to the diverse groups of middle-class Chinese. It views tourism as an approach to reflect on structures associated with China – how they are lived out, practised and negotiated by Chinese tourists in a culturally and materially different geographical context. These structures are both historical and contemporary, in which the Chinese state hegemony and globalised cultural power are influential in this shaping. Section 10.2 summarises the findings in accordance with the five objectives, in which many conclusions have been already made in the empirical chapters. Section 10.3 evaluates how the findings contribute to the literature, in which 10.3.5 is the highlight, since it concludes how the research develops our understanding of partial contemporary Chinese identity, with reference to how historical and contemporary structures have conditioned the explored aspects of identity. Section 10.4 explores the limitations of the research. Section 10.5 discusses the future applications of the research findings. Section 10.6 summarised the contributions of the thesis.

#### 10.2 Research findings

##### 10.2.1 First objective – host nation's perspective on Chinese visitors

The first objective of the thesis is to investigate the host nation's perspectives of Chinese tourists in virtual spaces. This perspective is theorised based on Weimann's (2000) 'Constructed Mediated Reality' (CMR) and 'Perceived Mediated Reality' (PMR), in combination with de Certeau's (1984) theories about the everyday strategies and tactics utilised as part of individuals' sense making, in which the two theories are provided by Bailey and Bryson (2006). The CMR of Chinese visitors is researched

through analysing two news articles reported by *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail*, in which the focus is not its production process, but what and how the content is framed (Nelson et al., 1997). The reason to explore the virtual blogosphere is that the development of social collaborative technologies gives rise to complex forms of CMR that are in the public domain and therefore visible to the researcher. The rhizomatic form of interaction is characterised by time-space compression, in which participants' perspectives are drawn together from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, and geo-political context.

Using discourse analysis to investigate the articles, it is found that *The Guardian* portrayed a trend that the Chinese middle-class has become more sophisticated, stylish and moral, shifting from older, tasteless and lavish consumption patterns. *The Daily Mail* stereotypes Chinese shoppers, who are immensely wealthy, seasoned with demeaning remarks on their behaviours. What *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail* have constructed is referred to CMR.

In the blog, *Guardian* readers generally believe that the Chinese middle-class becoming more sophisticated is evidence of a positive desire for Western culture. Some readers take the discussion in another direction, expressing the concern that Chinese individuals are shaped by state-authored nationalism. The outcome of the debate is that both anti-West national sentiment and West-admiring aspiration constitutes Chinese identity. For *Daily Mail* readers, they appropriated the news content, utilising anti-immigration and economic discourses to position Chinese tourists. In general, there is a collective representation of Chinese people (rather than visitors), who are being mocked because of their perceived lavish spending, unethical trading and national exploitation in Africa. PMR of Chinese people are generated. In sum, the identity of Chinese tourists perceived by bloggers (PMR) differs from reportage of mass media (CMR). The difficulty of course, is to distinguish between the CMR and PMR, when the PMR becomes blurred with the CMR for readers who do not distinguish between these two forms.

### **10.2.2 Second objective – English worker's perspectives on Chinese visitors in servicescapes**

The second objective explores the public identity of Chinese visitors. I spent six weeks working as a customer service volunteer in a gift shop, in order to observe the front stage and back stage performances of the English staff. The context of servicescapes (Bitner, 1990; 1992) that I focus on are the intangible and relational attributes of the

shop, which are the organisational cultures and English staff attitudes that condition the consumption experience of Chinese visitors. However, during the research process, I found that there were multiple interpretations of particular Chinese behaviours held by staff. I cannot reach any definite conclusions that re-represent the authentic thought of the staff, which is partially due to my position as a cultural outsider to English identity. Therefore, I resorted to ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1976), using myself to illicit comments from the staff in the course of accomplishing routine tasks. Therefore, the perspectives on Chinese shoppers attributed to English staff are based on what English workers have performed and said, rather than what they *really* thought.

With respect to the second objective, there are three main findings. First, Chinese visitors were perceived to be wealthy, which was observed and expressed by the staff. Second, rule-breaking behaviours were observed and witnessed by the English staff, such as gathering receipts to request a tax refund and sneaking into the exhibition. It is noted that, for some members of staff, these were individual behaviours, rather than being typical for their nationality or ethnicity. However, one young member of staff, whom I had formed a bond with, admitted that he ascribed the rule-breaking behaviours of individual Chinese visitors to their ethnicity/nationality. That is to say, these are repeated behaviours that formed his perception of Chinese shoppers. Third, Chinese visitors' behaviours were not comprehensible by the English staff (i.e. testing a pencil sharpener and taking pictures of souvenirs and books), which was a resource for young members of staff to create an amusing ambience in the communal space.

### **10.2.3 Third objective – inquiry of Chinese state's overseas cultural authority**

The third objective investigates whether the Chinese state has extended cultural authority in overseas tourism spaces. This inquiry helps us to understand whether Chinese tourist consumption experience is influenced by the Chinese state. I relied on observations in the summer study tour participated in by Chinese young people and in-depth interviews conducted with the tour firm owner. It was found that, first, the firm did not have affiliation to, or associations with unions, that are linked to the Chinese state. Second, inbound tourism businesses targeting Chinese customers travelling in the UK, operated under the principle of a liberal market economy. The integration of the firm with the outbound tour operator demonstrates their need to improve competitiveness. General tourism policies did influence industrial practice (i.e. a ban on “zero-dollar” tours), but particular political intervention was not observed by the

respondent. Third, the tour commentaries given to student groups were not based on any intervention from the Chinese state, unlike the case of domestic tourism in China (Nyíri, 2006). The commentaries were produced in-house. It is argued that, the Chinese state had no incentive to do so, because it had no control over the production of the cultural landscapes in the UK, which perhaps made re-interpretations of landscapes difficult. In sum, business intervention or cultural authorities by the Chinese state are not observed by the UK based tour firm owner.

#### **10.2.4 Fourth objective – Chinese participants’ experience in UK pedagogical spaces**

The fourth objective involves three frameworks, namely global identity, national identity and post-colonial identity. In the three-week summer tour I developed companionship, friendship and in some case mentorship with participants in their early teens. I observed their experiences in the classroom, during sight-seeing and relations with host families, in which their narrations and reflections were captured.

First, the global and modern identity is conceptualised through the Chinese desire for the West – through observing both material and symbolic consumption in the UK. It is observed that a group of students who were fond of British popular cultures (e.g. Harry potter and Sherlock Holmes) performed this identity in the classroom when they shared their personal interests; in attractions (e.g. Oxford and Baker Street) to actualise their fondness of the associated stories; and in souvenir consumption when they shopped for associated merchandise. The ability to appreciate popular Western cultures (Veblen, 2000) had become a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) for them to distinguish a more global identity compared to their cohorts who were in their eyes “local tyrant” and “uncultured”. The diaries contributed by three students, revealed that they admire the everyday routines practised by Londoners (e.g. silence in the underground carriage, feeling warm and uplifted in a polite environment). These students appreciate and adore these cultural practices and experiences, which nurtured an aspirational attitude towards a perceived Western lifestyle.

The second framework, nationalism, was most obviously and abundantly observed in the field. The observations were the most consistent with the insights in the published literature discussed about Chinese people. Anti-Western sentiments were exhibited by participants (e.g. historical humiliation evoked when visiting the British Museum, accusation of Western media that stigmatised China). Some students in the group

rejected grass-root radical nationalism in China (Wu, 2010), which would only be performed by uneducated “irate youth”. In other words, they positioned themselves as more open-minded and educated, embracing a civilised and modern, yet patriotic identity (Nyíri et al., 2010). Cultural superiority embodied by ethno-racial nationalism (Duara, 1996; Townsend, 1996; Unger, 1996) is not prominently observed in the student group. While the literature on Chinese nationalism is dominated by explicit, conscious and radical sentiments, in the pedagogical spaces, the nationalism observed was more typical of the banal nationalism described by Billig (1995). For example, I observed a Chinese tour leader stopping a fight between two children, and I was criticised for using English by a child. I employed the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1978; Rose, 1996) to explain how individuals learn to govern themselves (i.e. a Chinese tour teacher used a patriotic discourse to modulate students’ behaviours; and a student conflated individual shame and glory with that of the nation). Culture and politics are conflated in the construction of Chinese nationalism, which I argue is the outcome of intense patriotic content in education (Gries, 2004) and political socialisation (He, 2012).

The third theoretical framework is post-colonial identity, which is conceptualised as the prevalently held racial hierarchy in historical and contemporary China. The tour firm owner shared that a “racial contract” is valid in China, which guaranteed that only white families were hosting the student groups. It is affirmed that institutional racism exists in Chinese society. Two students in my group complained to the tour firm and were subsequently relocated to a white family, plus the teacher’s open lecture that warned students not to racially discriminate non-white host families was for these two students, proved that a “racial contract” was violated. The firm compensated them, so they were able to move from an Indian family to a white family. However, from observations and accounts of the four groups of student staying with four host families, it is found that their home stay experiences were influenced by the personal characteristics of hosts and the profits they aimed to gain from the service offered to students. The discourses of racial prejudice towards “non-white” host families were observed, which are in no doubt insensitive, but the racial prejudice did not apply to their relationship with the families. Good and bad experiences were expressed regardless of the races and ethnicities of host families.

### **10.2.5 Fifth objective – Chinese visitors’ gift shopping patterns in the UK with reference to the Confucian filial piety**

The fifth objective explores gift shopping patterns observed in servicespaces and pedagogical spaces, with reference to Confucian filial piety. This is a gateway to understand the Chinese traditional identity – the last theoretical framework of the thesis. In the gift shop, I observed a trend that Chinese visitors were buying an appealing item for parents. However, due to my identity as a worker at the shop I did not have a chance to interview Chinese shoppers about their gifting motives. This prompted me to investigate the souvenir purchasing patterns of participants in the study tour, in which I made two in-depth interviews with two students, who shared with me what and why they bought souvenirs and for whom. I employed the theory of critical inheritance (Zhang and Schwartz, 1997) to explain that filial piety is an uncontested responsibility held by individuals influenced by Confucian teaching. However, the interpretations of filial piety, i.e. the contextual understanding of filial love, are not unchanging. The thesis critiques that contemporary filial piety is corrupted, in which material has occupied an overriding position in kinship love, which is against the classic Confucian teaching.

I observed that material gifts are expressions of kinship love. However, it appeared that participants were not at ease disconnecting the materiality of the gifts and filial love (e.g. a Chinese teacher buying a designer bag for her mother is an expression of love; and a student borrowing money from fellows to buy an expensive watch for her father; another student struggled to think of a suitable gift for his father and bought a random item – a tie – for him). It does not mean that these participants necessarily performed inappropriate behaviours. A Chinese person who bought luxurious material gifts for parents could simultaneously love his parents wholeheartedly. On the contrary, a Chinese person (i.e. the tie buyer) loves his parents wholeheartedly, while the social norms and environment causes him to undergo an internal conversation (Archer, 2003) that he has to buy, more or less, something valuable to match the love. In other words, he is not free to disassociate filial love from material expression. He unconsciously felt the pressure when contemplating not buying any gifts for his parents. In a crude interpretation for the former cases (i.e. designer bag buyer and watch buyer), the monetary values of material gifts correlate to the amount of the filial love.

If we draw from the classic Confucian teaching, it is the authentic mind (righteousness) that is paramount, rather than materials (propriety). The above observations indicate that



there is a contemporary version of Confucianism, which is corrupted by the over emphasis on materiality. I had critically analysed that *guanxi*, the epitome of filial piety, is not an ethical relationship, because it exposes internal inconsistencies, in which it embodies injustice and deviates from Confucian teaching, whilst using a Confucian façade to mask its hidden economic motives that trade off public interest. Filial piety is another corrupted Confucian value. Upon reflection, it does not appear that the Chinese state directly indoctrinates this value, it is rather a product of consumer capitalism that is certainly promoted by the state. That is to say, the contemporary corrupted version of Confucian filial piety is a product of historical development, which entails materialism. To compare this finding with my own understanding of Confucianism I learnt and practised in Hong Kong, I have a different structure of feeling (William, 1961) towards Chinese traditional culture. The interpretation of recorded Confucian values in Hong Kong has been free from the intervention of the Chinese state. Chinese people have experienced severe attack and distortion of Confucianism in Maoist China and more recently through state propaganda about capitalistic consumption (Wang, 2001). The consequences of state hegemony, accompanied by the necessary subjectivities required by consumer orientated globalised capital, are seen in the corrupted Confucian values of *guanxi* and filial piety. Traditional values are forged in contemporary China. Nevertheless, Chinese individuals might not be aware of this shaping.

### **10.3 Contribution to tourism literature and knowledge**

#### **10.3.1 Focusing on socio-cultural implications**

Research into overseas Chinese tourists has increased rapidly since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Academic interests into the phenomenon are primarily in business marketing and management and service operations. The research direction of these studies predominantly deals with tourist motivation and satisfaction, by means of quantitative methodological investigation. Socio-cultural studies or qualitative oriented research is marginal in relation to these themes. This is supported by the review of 29 peer-reviewed international journals from January 2000 to September 2013; in the 98 papers that are categorised as overseas Chinese tourism, 80% focus on business marketing and operations and 78% employ quantitative analysis. The thesis contributes to the neglected area of research that looks into the socio-cultural implications involved in overseas travel. The socio-cultural dimension of the thesis means that it first, rejects the listing approach of behaviours that are universally applied to every tourist from every culture. The researched Chinese behaviours are connected to values, which are

shaped by historical and contemporary structures. Second, methodologically, it avoids the quantification of behaviours and values. Adopting discourse analysis, ethnomethodology and ethnography, the research explores particularities, deeper meanings and subtleties associated with the practices and narratives of Chinese tourists. Third, it does not view tourists as a discrete identity, but relational to the culture they are situated in, and shaped by social structures, which will be explained in Section 10.3.5.

### **10.3.2 Empirical evidence of non-essentialist Chinese culture**

In the tourism literature that explores Chinese visitors' behaviours or values from a cultural perspective, many studies take the classic Confucian teaching for granted, or use superficial features of the culture to explain tourist behaviours. Hofstede's (1991) cross-cultural dimensions are often employed as the theoretical framework to explain the significance of the Confucian values held by Chinese tourists, who are: submissive, conscious of "face", "guanxi-oriented", valuing trustworthiness and harmony (e.g. Hoare et al., 2010; Kwek and Lee, 2013). Li (2008) has paved an historical analysis of how contemporary Chinese tourism is governed by the cosmology of harmony, drawn from Confucianism and Daoism. The argument of this thesis is that these studies ignore the context of the model: as Hofstede (2002) explained, his model reflects organisational cultures rather than cultures of a host nation per se; wider structures and institutions supporting particular values should not be overlooked. The consequences of the uncritical application of his model to empirical studies are that: first, it ignores the way in which human agency is structured and historically conditioned; second, it problematically assumes that culture is static; third, it ignores other institutions and structures that play a role in shaping a particular culture; and fourth, it overlooks the presence of tourist agency in a culturally different environment.

A main contribution of this research is to introduce the theory of critical inheritance to explain consumption behaviours of participants, in which buying gifts for parents was frequently observed, which had prompted me to conceptualise the argument about filial piety being the main explanation of gift consumption. Using the classic Confucian model, we might easily reach a conclusion that filial piety is a particular attribute in the Confucian culture. It would appear to make perfect sense that gift consumption is an expression of Chinese students' love to parents. Critical inheritance provides us with an alternative lens to view contemporary Confucianism, which was corrupted by consumer

capitalism. The word ‘corruption’ being used is not to indicate the gifting behaviour, but a comment inferred from a comparison with classic Confucianism. I have provided a dialogue between Confucius and his disciple to present the master’s view on filial piety, in which Confucius emphasises the imperative of filial piety, but he never gives materiality an overriding status. However, it is observed that contemporary Chinese are socially-governed by consumer capitalism. To support the argument that contemporary filial piety being corrupted is not a particular and isolated case, I have critically analysed *guanxi*. The modern interpretation of *guanxi* is that it claims the legacy of Confucianism and has been hailed as a moral Chinese tradition. The similarity between filial piety and *guanxi* is that they both manifest the state hegemony in cultivating consumer capitalism. This thesis contributes to the tourism literature by demonstrating that we need to critically analyse the meanings of traditional culture in contemporary usage.

### **10.3.3 The unavoidable political context of Chinese tourism**

The political context of Chinese tourism is a neglected subject. Some studies claim that they explore how the political factors of China are shaping contemporary overseas tourism, but they are actually policy level analyses (i.e. Tse and Hobson, 2008; Mak, 2013). To date, in the tourism literature, there is only one scholar, Nyíri, who treats Chinese politics with sufficient sophistication in his research agenda (e.g. Nyíri, 2006; 2010) and in sufficient depth in three empirical studies (i.e. Chan, 2006; Rowen, 2014; Cheng and Wong, 2014) that explore Chinese nationalism in tourism spaces, associated with Vietnam, Taiwan and Japan respectively. Chinese nationalism was not originally a theoretical framework of the thesis, but my observations in the pedagogical spaces has prompted me to incorporate it into a main research theme. The research is particularly indebted to Nyíri who had inspired me to take on the research agenda of Chinese state cultural authority and overseas intervention in transnational migrants.

The inquiry into politics in this thesis is not only about discovering if there was official overseas intervention in UK tourism businesses and in the production of pedagogical spaces, it looks into the agency of historical structures that condition the nationalistic enthusiasms exhibited by Chinese participants. For example, anti-Western and anti-Japanese nationalism was performed in tourism spaces of the classroom and the British Museum. This behaviour was triggered by national humiliation, which is consistent to with the emergence of nationalism since the mid-nineteenth century in China. What is

more significant to the political context is that, Chinese nationalism would not be influential without pedagogical indoctrination and propaganda. In effect, Chinese nationalism has been given abundant scholarly attention by disciplines such as political science, history, geography, sociology, and communication study. This aggregated literature is beneficial to understand the political context of contemporary tourist behaviours, however it is not borrowed by the tourism literature to research Chinese tourism behaviour. This thesis addresses this gap.

#### **10.3.4 Multiple spaces to explore tourist-host relations**

Before shifting to explore Chinese identities through a number of theoretical frameworks, the initial aim of the research was to explore the relations between Chinese visitors and host citizens in the UK, in order to understand how external structures would condition the behaviour of Chinese visitors, through closely observing encounters between the two peoples. Having reviewed the recent tourism literature that focuses on tourist-host relations, there appears to be a lack of theoretical frameworks that can be used to explore Chinese tourist behaviours observed in these tourist-host encounters. The diversity of cultural exchanges between tourists and local people in the literature has generated meaningful findings that involve particularities, which are difficult to be explained by existing grand theories employed in the tourism literature.

If there is one established theory about relations between tourist and host in the tourism literature, it is the host-guest model, stemming from the anthropological perspective that presumes asymmetrical power relations between affluent visitors from the metropolis travelling in the periphery (Nuñez, 1978). However, the Chinese visitors observed in this thesis have demonstrated the insufficiency of this model, because demarcation between tourist and host is not always a simple line to draw. Certain categorical definitions (e.g. power, wealth, race, nationality) may not simply map onto the binary distinction between tourist and host. For example, the racial contract offered by tour operators guarantees students will live in a white host family, demonstrates that certain non-white hosts are regarded as peripheral, although the Chinese visitors are travelling in what is considered to be a more developed country. The racial hierarchy revealed by students and institutionalised through the tour operator policy, demonstrates that theories of asymmetry do not help empirical researchers to understand the heterogeneous relations between tourists and hosts. In the gift shop, the wealthy Chinese tourists are typically more powerful in terms of wealth status, but some

students showed a great deal of appreciation for the perceived superior cultural life of the host. Depending upon which aspects of identity we bring into focus, determines how appropriate the tourist-host distinction is. The implication of the tourist-host research is that we do not need grand theories to study the subject, because grand theories pre-judge the form that tourist-host identifications and relations take, rather than being open to the multiple identities and relations that are evident when conducting ethnographic research. This is not to say that discourse does not matter, especially with respect to stereotyping and the construction of national difference through grand narratives. I explored virtual spaces, for example, to explore discourses of Chinese visitors framed by the media, and negotiated and debated in blogosphere, in which we are able to understand how collective identity (Confucian cultures) or national policy (Chinese capitals exploiting Africa) could be factored into the perception of one people to another. These virtual spaces powered by the development of social collaborative technologies and Web 2.0, should be given more attention by researchers who study tourist-host relations.

### **10.3.5 Contemporary Chinese identity**

This section concludes how the thesis contributes to an understanding of the partial contemporary identity of the Chinese middle-class. The research positions itself within the tourism research, in which the identity of tourists is explored from both structure and agency. It is observed that, studies about tourist identity have been influenced by the “performative turn”, which takes a poststructuralist perspective (e.g. Thrift’s (2009) non-representational theory) and saturation theory that privilege human agency (e.g. Giddens’s (1976) reflexivity). For the former, structures are viewed as temporary constructs that are emergent from the practices of actions. For the latter, the focus is self, personhood and the ability of individuals to escape from structures. Having engaged in researching China during the doctoral study and drawing upon my own perspectives of the nation from my encounter with Chinese nationals and through my own encounter with the Chinese party state as a resident of Hong Kong, I consider that celebrating human agency as the main theoretical lens is not helpful to understand Chinese identity, which is conditioned by Chinese state hegemony and the desire of Western modernity, manifested by capitalist consumption. These structures are connected to historical contingencies and development. So what can we learn from the phenomenon of Chinese overseas tourism to comprehend these structures? To answer

this question I attempted to borrow the term modernity to connect various theoretical frameworks that explain tourist practices and narratives.

Modernity has been a buzzword that has a century-long legacy in a number of eras in China - since the defeat in wars fought with Western and Japanese Imperialists in the nineteenth century, Maoist China and Deng's economic policy reforms. Adopting the theory of critical inheritance, the content of Chinese modernity has been unchanged, authored in the main by the authorities. Rather than the Western conception of modernity rooted in the European Enlightenment and the belief in rationality and science, Chinese modernity centres on material wealth, prosperity, strong military power and technologies. The desire of the Western way of life nowadays is an epitome of Chinese modernity. Niederhauser (2012), for example, draws our attention to the visualisation of this modernist ideology, featuring a fantasy of consumer capitalism manifested by skyscrapers, home ownerships, cars and tourism. In the empirical work, the most consistent finding is that material consumption is a major motive for travelling to the UK, which is portrayed by the mass media, understood by the consumers of media, witnessed in servicescapes and evident from participants' souvenir purchases in pedagogical spaces. Leisure and consumption is a legitimate outlook for Chinese middle-class, which is successfully cultivated by the state with its 'culture as leisure as consumption' discourse, which 'submerge[s] capitalised consumption that is stimulated to sustain economic growth (Wang, 2001:41). This is the context of the overriding structure disciplined by the Chinese state.

Chinese tourist consumption patterns can be categorised as both acts of conspicuous consumption and also as orientated towards Western popular cultures. The former is welcomed by the state, but the latter is seen as threat, receiving warnings from the top Communist leaders. The former president Hu warns that 'international hostile forces are intensifying the strategic plot of Westernizing and dividing China' (Wong, 2012), the current president Xi reasserts the imperative of ideological control in higher institutions (Hunwick, 2014). Some young people in the study tour appeared to be rejecting this control, as they demonstrated an aspiration and appreciation of Western cultures and ways of life, which are connected to establish a distinguished identity. This structure of globalised Western culture has taken root in China, which is difficult for the Chinese state to censor as it allows its citizens to travel internationally and experience contact with the West. The working of these two structures – the state meta socio-economic

policy and cultural globalisation, has produced a particular *global identity* manifested in material-cultural consumption patterns.

I speak in this thesis as a native of Hong Kong who was raised in a culture that has retained the virtues of traditional Chinese ethics aligned with democratic institutions (partially functioning), giving rise to the historical contingency that turned Hong Kong as a creolised hub for exiled Chinese intellectuals and British colonialists and expatriates; a mix contributing to the development of modern institutions and Western cultures. I blatantly argue that the contemporary Confucianism perpetuated by the Chinese state is a corrupted version, drawn from my analysis of the participants' gifting practise and experience when they aimed to express filial love to their parents through material gifts.

The problematic notion is “Confucian Capitalism” or “Confucian modernity”. The former ascribes the economic success of the Chinese economy to critically inherited values (e.g. loyalty, obedience, stability, thrift) (Dirlik, 1997). The latter further attempts to create a discourse that China appears now a better, superior, modernity – or at least as a cure for some of the ills of Western modernity (Dirlik, 2002:27). Until today the thesis that Confucianism as an ideology could combat Western materialism, is advocated by traditionalists in Hong Kong, who argue that Confucianism as an ideology could be more productively combined with Western cultural traditions to form a more benign opportunity structure for identity formation. What is frustrating, is to see that the precious classic teaching has become corrupted to support the legitimization of extreme consumer capitalism. The participants in the fieldwork did not mention Confucianism, and I did not observe any self labelling of a traditional or Confucian identity. However, it is probably a public identity perceived by some British online bloggers, who posted the same concern as I do. Some of them invoke Confucius as a wise person who Chinese people claim to follow. However Confucian wisdom is not present in the people.

Reading into the practices and narratives of Chinese students, the traditional values are constructed in a negative way, constrained by the structural forces by the Chinese state and consumer capitalism. It is hoped that moral agency, as demonstrated by some individuals who questioned internally their consumption motives and emotions, would counter the existing structural conflation of confucianism and extreme consumer capitalism and thereby contribute to building a moral *traditional identity*.

Chinese modernity is also characterised by a vision of a “strong nation”. Nyíri (2006) reveals how tourism landscapes are constructed in accordance with the state ideology of modernisation and nationalism. The party-state leading China along the road of modernity is involved in the indoctrination of citizens through standardised commentaries and cultural references in domestic tourism (Nyíri, 2006). It is perhaps less controversial to state that Chinese nationalism is a state project. The empirical research reveals how the issue of Chinese nationalism is brought into discussion and debate by online readers; the strong *national identity* is performed by participants from diverse demographic backgrounds. It is observed that historical humiliation is the driving force of anti-Western nationalistic spirits, in which both conscious patriotic accounts are expressed, and banal nationalistic behaviours practised. The historical structures and its utilisation by the Chinese state, appear to be shaping the strong national identity of the Chinese participants. Individual agency was not entirely unnoticed, i.e. participants expressed that the Communist Party was corrupted, however, they rejected to disown their national identity. That is to say, political identity is an important constituent of the national Chinese identity.

Finally, by means of understanding the *post-colonial identity* of Chinese people, I have theorised that it is a view informed by racial hierarchy, which is connected to Chinese modernity in terms of the objective reality perceived by Chinese people that the “White race” has been historically projected as responsible for the development of modern life; on the contrary, the “Black race” is linked to “backwardness”. This historical structure has been prevalent as discussed in the literature, and evidently displayed by the racial contract informed by the tour firm owner and observed in the field. Nevertheless, it is difficult to comment if this is a general view held by other participants. I speculate that the students were fully aware of the prevalence of black racism in China, but they judged the people they encountered more by personalities than “colours”.

## **10.4 Reflections and limitations of the thesis**

### **10.4.1 Tourism as an approach to understand wider structures**

To reflect on the doctoral project, four main areas are identified. First, does using tourism as approach helps us to understand Chinese people and the wider structures of China? MacCannell’s (1976) method appears to be less appreciated in non-tourism disciplines, as Nyíri (2006:x) comments, ‘he has remained marginal to mainstream



social studies'. Chinese overseas tourism involves leisure, material consumption, symbolic actualisation of the West and cultural encounter with different ethno-racial peoples. These aspects could be independently identified and researched in the domestic geography or particular spaces such as sports, music, shopping, and cultural exchange programmes. It is tourism that brings these aspects in an admixture that we might observe interesting interacting effects. Chinese modernity is categorised by a desire for material wealth and prosperity. Travelling to a Western location offers Chinese people a taste of a more intense form of modernity. Some Chinese visitors in the UK, however, did reflect on the meaning of Chinese modernity. Franklin's (2004) offers a better perspective to explain the Chinese overseas tourism phenomenon. For Franklin, tourism is an extension or expansion of individuals' curiosity encountered in the home environment. The thesis has demonstrated that tourism as an approach is an appropriate research strategy to understand more about Chinese identity. However, the inherent limitation of tourism is that visitors are only available for research over a short period of time during their visit, which makes substantial in-depth observations of research participants prohibitively expensive and practically infeasible.

#### **10.4.2 A risky project**

Second, the thesis has taken a significant risk by exploring many aspects of Chinese visitor identity. I encountered difficulties to connect observations in the empirical studies to the original literature I selected in the first 12 months of study. I was seeking to connect theories and observations (i.e. constant comparison method of analysis) and adapting research foci across field studies and within a field study (i.e. theoretical sampling). It is a risk to develop four major theoretical frameworks, but this enables the research to explore the experiences and social world of Chinese participants in greater depth and descriptive richness. The consequence is that at times I felt that the findings are constrained by the need to engage with various theories, rather than the thesis being an example of a grounded approach. For example, to discuss traditional identity, it would be necessary to conduct more research into participants' experience and provide deeper probes into beliefs about Confucianism or other traditional Chinese values. Therefore the thesis is limited by an inability to generalise.

#### **10.4.3 The limitation of macro theories**

Third, do macro theories explain micro experiences observed on the ground? Upon reflection, certain narratives, such as critical inheritance, anti-Western nationalism, or

racial hierarchy do offer valuable insights to explain observed Chinese individuals' practices and narratives. Adopting post-positivist realism, these macro-micro connections are objectively real. However, it is reiterated that these narratives explain not every individual's behaviour and values. As a matter of fact a variety of experiences within the structure of feeling is observed (e.g. subtleties of patriotism expressed by students, non-rationally mediated youngster-host family relations). The macro-micro relationship could be explained by Archer's conception of structure and agency. For Archer (1995), the relation between structure and agency is temporal and historically contingent. At times structure could exert an influence in which agency is hard to assert, but at a different times this relationship could be reversed. The macro theories that the thesis has drawn on enable us to understand the social structures that are *there*. Individuals perceive experience and react to everyday structures, who consciously perform different form of reflexives and decide course of actions.

#### **10.4.4 Strengths and weaknesses of a cross-cultural research**

Fourth, reflecting on my identity in the research, there are both opportunities and restrictions. My ethno-racial and national identity shaped the conditions where findings were obtained in both field studies. In the gift shop servicescape, where a cross-cultural setting was constituted by English workers and Chinese visitors, my attempt to understand the emic view of English colleagues was constrained by my lack of native cultural awareness and language, which was a disadvantage. My partial understanding of the cultures of both tourists and staff was perhaps an advantage, because it meant that I did not presume to understand their practices, which made me more sensitive to challenging different interpretations of behavioural patterns. For the ethnographic research I conducted with Chinese students, my ethno-racial identity enabled me to communicate with them easily and effectively. Being older/senior and more educated, I wished for there to be a coeval status between myself and the participants. This proved difficult to establish, because as a helper of the tour my first role was to ensure the safety and well-being of the students, in which some unavoidable exercise of authority was needed. I tended to conceal my political identity (i.e. my views on political issues in relation to China, such as national or traditional identity), which could perhaps upset some Chinese participants, given that they are patriotic, although I revealed my views on a few occasions (e.g. in the British Museum) to a couple of students. Ingold (2014) advocates the anthropological ethics, which academic researchers should engage in the social world and experiences of participants and have a public responsibility towards

them, thereby producing knowledge. I appreciate this commitment, and reflect that, it requires a longer period of engagement in the field and more natural coeval status between the researcher and research participants.

## **10.5 Implications for future research**

### **10.5.1 Chinese tourism studies**

This thesis addresses the tourism studies body of knowledge, in which Chinese social and cultural behaviours have hitherto been theorised in an unproblematic manner. Nevertheless, the issues surrounding China and Chinese people involved in this study have been productively debated in other disciplines such as Geography, Sociology, International Relations and History. For example, Nyiri's (2006; 2010) ground-breaking work and research agenda on the Chinese state and cultural authority has been picked up by only a handful of researchers found in tourism related publications. Therefore, there is an opportunity to draw scholarly efforts from other disciplines to enrich the knowledge with reference to Chinese tourism. These interdisciplinary knowledge exchanges have the potential to enrich tourism research. This thesis provides a model for future research, in that it demonstrates how research questions can arise from problematisation rather than gap spotting strategies that uncritically adopt assumptions from the theories they utilise. Following Sandberg and Alvesson (2011: 252) 'the aim of the problematization methodology proposed here is to come up with novel research questions through a dialectical interrogation of one's own familiar position, other stances, and the domain of literature targeted for assumption challenging.'

### **10.5.2 Developing ethical business strategies**

The exploratory research into Chinese overseas study tour businesses has revealed concern over the quality of tours and unethical mentalities/practices involved in sourcing host families. In the student group I observed, participants' well-being has become a secondary consideration to other business decisions. For example, students needed to spend hours travelling to the college everyday. Applied research could further examine the business environment (e.g. competition and profit margins) and operation strategies, rules and regulations, corporate values; all potential factors associated with learning experiences and outcomes. This research agenda ought to be applied to both outbound (in China) and inbound tour operators (in UK).

### **10.5.3 Transforming tourism policy**

This thesis identifies an urgent requirement to address the relationships between Chinese students and host families. Although racial discrimination in a Black host family was not observed, we should think about how to cultivate a perspective that we do not perceive our identity in relations of difference. Grossberg (1996:93), after Gilroy (1993), advocates that we should ‘begin to construct a theory of otherness which is not essentialist, a theory of positivity based on notions of effectivity’. It is perhaps a long-term project to remove racial prejudices against Black people in Chinese society, according to evidence presented in this thesis. However, overseas educational tours offer an opportunity to introduce an alternative worldview to Chinese youngsters. If we aim higher, can we even correct the unethical logics of tour firms and parents in China, which are conspiring to avoid Black host families in the UK (not to mention that is illegal in this country)? In policy terms, this thesis suggests that the government needs to, first, become aware that discrimination is occurring, and second, to devise regulatory frameworks to prevent discrimination?

### **10.5.4 Tourism marketing implications**

Working in a gift shop has enabled me to discover the marketing strategies adapted by marketing professionals. There were merchandise and souvenirs specifically sourced for the Chinese market. I am not sure if there was a marketing research team that analysed Chinese shopping patterns and subsequently concluded that these patterns are associated with *guanxi* and filial piety. Personally I am not interested in utilising filial love (a critical inherited “unescapable” Confucian value) to encourage materialistic consumption; however, we should not ignore the moral economy of gifts. Thus, there is an opportunity to explore the material culture of souvenirs with respect to Chinese consanguineous relations. This research agenda is not limited to the retail sector. When Chinese outbound tourism is growing, the hospitality sector and the destination marketing sector should be interested in knowing more about the nuances of their target customers.

### **10.5.5 Chinese international relations**

The study about Chinese international relations involves a variety of research agendas, which intersects many disciplines; for example, diaspora, politics and trade. The value of this thesis is to show how political agendas function on the street level. From the tourism spaces I have explored, the Chinese state had exerted no cultural authority over the study tour businesses and operations (e.g. tour commentaries). In another sense, the

authorities have perhaps been successful, because students were found embodying the ideologies favoured by the party-state. It would be an interesting study to observe how these students will change or retain their values in the long term. Therefore, a longitudinal study is suggested to investigate their life experiences, in order to track how their values, opinions, political beliefs and cultural identity shifts as a result of international travel. This research strategy is particularly significant for exploring young people who often visit Western countries. For example, I have subsequently been in touch with a couple of students from the study tour group. They often make use of their holidays to travel overseas for leisure and educational purposes.

### **10.5.6 Critical pedagogy**

The following research agenda with respect to pedagogy is a broad conception. At times during the research I felt obliged to educate research subjects, but at these times I had to remind myself not to be invasive and colonising. Gregory's (1994) call for a modest pedagogy is the stance I have adopted in this research. However, when I reflected that some of my Chinese friends or colleagues are not aware of the constructed form of social structures, I experienced moral dilemmas. Perhaps at times it is important to engage in critical pedagogy and to help learners to realise how power operates and their complicity in accepting certain understandings of their identity projected by powerful actors. This is Freire's (1970) notion of *conscientization*. I suggest that the research agenda involved in critical pedagogy is about how we can help learners without causing them distress or stigmatising them? A human's capacity for moral reason and judgement is not entirely resolved on the side of structure. In other words, the challenge is how we reach a consensus of normative moral positions. I have been learning to understand other people's lived situation and position through listening and being attentive to others, without losing my own moral position. For example, practices of care for the other and active listening are suggested in the Judeo-Christian tradition and found in the work of Buber (1925) and Volf (1996), to name two examples. This research has opened up for me an opportunity to further explore this life-long research agenda.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Buber's (1925) ideas are learnt from Gordon (2011), who critically discusses how we can understand Buber's principle.

## **10.6 Contributions summed up**

### **10.6.1 Studies of Chinese tourism**

This thesis has demonstrated that, in order to explore the deeper meanings and nuances of Chinese tourist values and associated behaviours, it is important to avoid theorisation that uncritically invokes the agency of traditional cultures, as salient essential forms, to explain behaviours.

### **10.6.2 Methods of research identity**

It has experimented with using multiple methods (documentary analysis, ethnography, discourse analysis of mass media and Web 2.0) to explore the tie between Chinese subjectivity and social structures. The different sets of data have contributed to understanding Chinese public identity and self-identity.

### **10.6.3 Methods of research identity**

There are multiple hosts in conditioning host-visitor relations. These *hosts* include retail workers in tourist attractions, host families and teachers, who had a wide range of contacts with the student groups observed. Some hosts did not necessarily have direct contacts with Chinese visitors; that is, journalists and bloggers. However they have contributed to structuring knowledge, perceptions and stereotypes (Weimann, 2000) of Chinese individuals that are adopted by hosts who do encounter Chinese visitors.

### **10.6.4 Research on China**

I have taken the research agenda of Nyiri's (2006) *ortholalia* to explore the Chinese state cultural authority in overseas tourism spaces. The evidence has suggested that Chinese young individuals embody ideologies that are observable when stimulated or confronted in a culturally different environment.

### **10.6.5 Research on Confucianism**

I have critically explored that *guanxi* and filial piety are part of a redacted version of Confucianism. The theory of critical inheritance (Zhang and Schwartz, 1997) is used to explain the quality of traditional values practised by Chinese individuals in the field. This finding has implications for tourist consumption patterns.

### **10.6.6 Research on Chinese nationalism**

Ethnographic investigation of a Chinese student groups has revealed that individuals unconsciously express anti-Western national sentiments in quotidian ways of speaking and action; that is, banal nationalism (Billig, 1995).

### **10.6.7 Research on post-colonial legacy**

There are two major findings. First, institutional racism was practised when Chinese tourism practitioners and parents intended to avoid having children staying with Black host families (Fanon, 1986), and they preferred White families. Second, the relationships between students and host families have suggested that individual morality appeared to confront racial stereotypes.

### **10.6.8 Research on Chinese global identity**

By observing students' behaviours and reading their diaries, I felt that some of them have exhibited an aspirational identity with reference to Western cultures and ways of life. They distinguished themselves from others through their appreciation of Western popular culture (Bourdieu, 1984).

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Ethical approval form

**University of Exeter Business School**  
**Ethical Approval Form: Research Students**

This form is to be completed by the research student. When completing the form be mindful that the purpose of the document is to clearly explain the **ethical considerations** of the research being undertaken.

Once completed, please submit the form **electronically and a signed hard copy** to Helen Bell at [H.E.Bell@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:H.E.Bell@exeter.ac.uk). A copy of your approved Research Ethics Application Form together with accompanying documentation **must be bound into your PhD thesis**.

**Part A: Background**

Student name	<b>Man Tat Cheng, Eddy</b>		
Supervisors names	<b>Prof. Gareth Shaw, Dr. Adrian Bailey</b>		
Title of thesis	<b>Tourist-host encounter: Chinese tourists and British (2012 – 2014)</b>		
Date of entry	<b>October 2010</b>	Status	<b>FT/PT/Continuation</b>
Start and estimated end date of the research	<b>October 2011 – August 2014</b>		
Aims and objectives of the research	<p><b>Aims:</b> To explore the relationships between the host and tourists from understanding the shaping of British nation perspectives about Chinese tourists, and vice versa.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore British host nation perspectives about Chinese tourists through mass media content and the interaction of Web 2.0</li> <li>2. Investigate British indigenous community perspectives about Chinese tourists</li> <li>3. Observe and study the physical embodied tourist-host encounter</li> <li>4. Investigate Chinese tourists perspectives about Britain and the people, as well as British's representations of themselves</li> <li>5. To construct a travel model of Chinese holiday makers</li> </ol>		
Please indicate any sources of funding for the research	<b>University of Exeter Business school Scholarship</b>		

**Part B: Ethical Considerations**

Describe the methodology that will be applied in the project (no more than 250 words)	<p>This research will use multiple methods to collect data. The sequence of the objectives corresponds to time schedule of the project.</p> <p><b>Objective 1:</b></p>
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	<p>It will collect news articles that cover Chinese tourists visiting the UK from 2005 to 2012 from four UK newspapers. Each of them represents specific combination of political alignment and formats. The popular British Broadcasting Company is also selected. Electronic news articles will be collected using an online archive called Nexis. The second phase is to collect publically-available news blogs contributed by online news readers. Content analysis and discourse analysis are used to examine British nation's perspective of Chinese tourists.</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> A large scale questionnaire survey will be conducted in Stratford-upon-Avon to capture indigenous British community's views on international tourists. The questionnaire involves three more nationalities in addition to Chinese tourists in order to mitigate potential bias. It aims at 15 samples per day and it takes approximately 24 days to obtain 350 samples. The number of semi-structured interviews depends of the willingness of respondents' participation. The design of the questionnaire incorporates media representation of Chinese tourists.</p> <p><b>Objective 3:</b> I will use ethnographic technique to observe the embodied physical encounter between the Chinese tourists and British staff in Stratford-upon-Avon. With the support of the Shakespeare's Birth Trust [Attachment A: Volunteer registration form], I will be working in a gift shop as Customer Service Volunteer in June and July 2012. I will work for 6 days a week, for 4 hours per day. The total number of hours committed is 144 hours. Only covert observation will be used in the field work.</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> I will investigate Chinese tourist perspectives about Britain and the people by unstructured interview and observation by participating in a group tour that involves tourists from mainland China travelling in the UK for leisure purpose.</p> <p><b>Objective 5:</b> This depends on the findings and analysis from objective 1 to 4.</p>
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<p>Describe the method by which you will recruit participants and gain their informed consent. If written consent will not be obtained, this must be justified.</p> <p><i>[Note: Please attach a copy of any Information Statements and Consent Forms used, including translation if research is to be conducted with non-English speakers]</i></p>	<p>Various data collection methods in this project involve voluntary or involuntary participation, which aims to achieve particular purpose of each objective.</p> <p><b>Objective 1:</b>  This objective explores British host nation perspectives about Chinese tourists through mass media content and the interaction of Web 2.0. There has been a long tradition to analyse news content of mass media in academia as it is very influential to the transmission of information and values in a society. The ethical issues of collecting and analysing news articles are not debatable; whereas it presents ethical issues to use the content of news blogs which are contributed by online readers. I studied the house rules of news blogs of popular BBC and The Daily Mail. The three identified ethical issues are confidentiality and privacy, copy right and age restriction.</p> <p>The registration process as a news bloggers requires individuals to supply an individual address, which is the information needed to validate access to the discussions and for other administration processes. News bloggers choose their own username that become their online identity. For some news sites such as The Daily Mail, news bloggers are asked to specify their place. Also individuals are not allowed to submit confidential or private information themselves such as telephone number, email address or any other contact details of any person. All information collected from a news blog for this project is anonymous and confidential and cannot be traced back to individuals.</p> <p>News bloggers retain the copyright of the content they submit to news sites, but also grant the sites, taking BBC as an example, "perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive, sublicenseable right and license to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, translate.....and exercise all copyright and publicity rights with respect to any such work worldwide.....". The extent to which the terms and conditions apply depends on the house rules of news sites. A common feature of news blogs is that comments are rated by other news bloggers. News sites request individuals to waive moral rights such as to object to derogatory treatment in the content. This indicates that news bloggers are aware of the fact that what they "say" will be read, discussed or commented by anybody.</p> <p>Some news sites, BBC for example allow only individuals aged 16 or above to register as a user in the interests of child protection. But they can still submit their comments by blogs moderator before being published on the site. This project in this part views news blog moderators as a gatekeeper in terms of child protection.</p>
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**Objective 2:**

A large scale questionnaire survey followed by interviews will be conducted to collect indigenous community's perspective about Chinese tourists in Stratford-upon-Avon using mixed method.

I will identify location where are not quiet and in day time, i.e.: 9-12am or 2-5pm. I will use convenient sampling method to approach people who appear 18 years or above in the street in Stratford. I will introduce myself, ask if they live in C37, explain briefly the aim of the survey and ensure anonymity and confidentiality. I will use primarily a tablet which allows the respondents to fill out an electronic questionnaire. A hard copy will also be provided if the respondent is not comfortable with using the tablet. An electronic informed consent form [attachment B] is needed to be read and agreed prior to proceeding to the questions. For hard copy, I will make sure they have read and tick the box before they answer the questions.

At the end of the survey respondents are invited to take part in a following-up interview. They will leave their name and contact details if they are willing to do so. I will contact the respondents to request an interview and choose a public place to conduct it. Before interviews are conducted, interviewees will be asked to read and sign an informed consent form [attachment C]. Each interviewee will be given a code. I will name the file with that code to protect the identity rather than the name of the interviewee. Also in case the interviewee wants to withdraw the data after the interview, they can contact me to withdraw the data file of that code. Anonymity and confidentiality is ensured. I will also request a recording of the interview, either in a digital device the first choice, or in the notes of the interview the second choice.

**Objective 3:**

I will work as a Customer Service Volunteer in a gift shop of Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust. Participation observation, an ethnographic technique will be used to understand the embodied physical encounter between the Chinese tourists and British staff. The only way to collect data is by covert observation. Neither British staff nor Chinese tourists know that their interactions are being observed, thus no verbal or written informed consent will be obtained.

Participant observation is a primary approach to observe the culture-sharing group and become a participant in the cultural setting (Jorgensen, 1989). I am interested in the verbal and non-verbal meaning and embodiment when two cultures clash in a real life situation, which is not

	<p>accessible through interviewing. The first difficulty of interviewing is the agent ability's to articulate the meaning of their actions. Participant observers are obliged to possess explicit awareness to decode tacit cultural rules performed by ordinary people (Spradley, 1980). The second difficulty is to talk about a sensitive or controversial topic. People might be reluctant to speak about other's behaviour (Hume and Mulcock, 2004).</p> <p>I will keep a detailed record of observations anonymously, including both objective observations and subjective feelings when I finish the work in the gift shop. I will manage to eliminate prejudice and bias when studying the cultural scene. Farvie (1969) recognises the internal conflict as a participant observer. He references cultural relativity, which views cultures develop particular solutions to adapt to a situation. I will try to uncover how cultures of the observed groups I understand throughout my life affect, instruct, and drive their actions.</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> I will use unstructured interview to understand Chinese tourist perspectives and experiences travelling in Britain. I will be participating in the group tour that come from mainland China. I view my involvement is partly participant observation as I am trying to develop a companion relationship with the participants. "Personal revealing is sometimes an essential step toward achieving a sense of "resonance", or "emphatic understanding in the field" (Hume and Mulcock, 2004: xxi). This is to encourage sharing of their stories. I will explain my intention to the participant and observe whether they are willing to share their thoughts with me. I will gain verbal informed consent and ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the sharing. I will not use a written consent, which signifies formality of the activity. I will also request a recording in a digital device.</p>
<p>Will there be any possible harm that your project may cause to participants (e.g. psychological distress or repercussions of a legal, political or economic nature)? What precautions will be taken to minimise the risk of harm to participants?</p>	<p>During conducting the questionnaire survey and especially the interviews throughout the project, it is expected that respondents would associate issues of racism as they are asked to reveal their thoughts about other nationalities. I will be careful to ask questions and emphasise that the research objectives begin with recognising the cultural differences between nationalities and trying to enhance mutual understanding. I will adopt a manner that communicates clearly to the participants that there is no pressure to respond in particular ways. If at any point any participant gives any tacit indication that they are uncomfortable with questions, the cue will be taken and that verbal or written consent for participation in the research has been withdrawn.</p>

	<p>Participants will also be reminded that they are free to withdraw at any point.</p> <p>At the end of the interview, there will be space for the participant to ask any questions.</p>
<p>How will you ensure the security of the data collected? What will happen to the data at the end of the project, (if retained, where and how long for)?</p> <p><i>[Note: If the project involves obtaining or processing personal data relating to living individuals, (e.g. by recording interviews with subjects even if the findings will subsequently be made anonymous), you will need to ensure that the provisions of the Data Protection Act are complied with. In particular you will need to seek advice to ensure that the subjects provide sufficient consent and that the personal data will be properly stored, for an appropriate period of time.]</i></p>	<p>All of the publically available secondary data will be stored on a password-protected laptop, although such information is not deemed to have confidentiality-related ethical issues,</p> <p>Recordings of interviews and interview transcriptions will be kept on a separate external hard drive in password-protected folders. When not being used by the researcher, the hard drive will be kept in a locked desk. Any hard copy interview transcriptions and all informed consent forms will also be kept in the locked desk when not being used by the researcher.</p> <p>Interview data (including informed consent forms, transcripts, and voice recordings) will be kept for no more than it is of use to the researcher for the purpose of academic research, at which point the electronic files will be deleted and the external hard drive will be reformatted, and hard copies of interview data will be destroyed.</p>

### Part C: Ethical Assessment

Please complete the following questions in relation to your research project.

	yes	no	n/a
Will participants' rights, safety, dignity and well-being be actively respected?	X		
Will you describe the main details of the research process to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	X	X	
Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	X	X	
Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	X		
Will confidentiality be appropriately maintained at all stages of the project, including data collection, storage, analysis and reporting?	X		
Will any highly personal, private or confidential information be sought from participants?	X		
Will participants be involved whose ability to give informed consent may be limited (e.g. children)?		X	
Will the project raise any issues concerning researcher safety?		X	
Are there conflicts of interest caused by the source of funding?		X	

Please provide any additional information which may be used to assess your application in the space below.

**Part D: Supervisor's Declaration**

As the supervisor for this research I can confirm that I believe that all research ethics issues have been considered in accordance with the University Ethics Policy and relevant research ethics guidelines.

Name: *Adrian Bailey* (Primary Supervisor)  
Signature: *A. R. Bailey*  
Date: *25/05/2012*

**Part E: Ethical Approval**

Comments of Research Ethics Officer and PGR Management Board.

[Note: Have potential risks have been adequately considered and minimised in the research? Does the significance of the study warrant these risks being taken? Are there any other precautions you would recommend?]

*The covert participant observation has been carefully considered. Anonymity and confidentiality has been respected. The observation work will comply with the terms of the volunteer role code of conduct as stipulated by the Shakespeare Birthplace trust.*

This project has been reviewed according to School procedures and has now been approved.

Name: *Adrian Bailey* (Research Ethics Officer)  
Signature: *A. R. Bailey*  
Date: *25/05/2012*

## **Appendix 2 – An article of *The Guardian* named ‘Why global recovery could depend on China’s taste for luxury’**

China's looming coronation as the world's largest economy, years ahead of schedule, is probably not particularly surprising in one sleepy corner of Oxfordshire. Around half of the international visitors who flock to Bicester retail village are Chinese nationals, making the one-hour train trip from London, or using the fleet of special coaches that head there each day – to stock up on luxury goods.

A World Bank-backed report has declared that the country's national currency, the yuan, will go further than previously thought in the hands of the Chinese consumer and that this supercharged purchasing power will push the world's second-largest economy ahead of the US this year.

This could be the century of the Chinese consumer, now a figure of central importance for luxury goods companies including some of the biggest retail names in Britain.

Gareth Leather, Asia economist at Capital Economics, says the UK stands to be benefit substantially from the spending power of the Chinese. "China is a huge market for luxury goods, and there are high taxes on luxury goods in China, so there is a tendency to travel abroad. The UK has missed out on this to an extent, because visa issues have meant it is as open to Chinese tourists as other countries, but the government is looking to change that."

Last October, George Osborne announced plans to simplify visa applications for Chinese tourists visiting the UK. According to a report by Barclays, the easing of restrictions will encourage shopaholic Chinese tourists to spend £1bn a year in the UK by 2017 – an 84% increase from 2013.

Chinese buyers are brand junkies, and the Bicester outlets of their favourite labels are heaving. A sprawling two-floor Burberry store is packed with Chinese visitors poring over the brand's trademark trench coats and accessories, while the Prada branch nearby is thronged too. And this is not just window shopping. To judge by the masses of shopping bags bearing luxury names such as Ralph Lauren and Gucci, as well as Burberry and Prada, some serious cash is being spent.

The popularity of this outlet village among Chinese visitors has spurred owner Value Retail to open an outlet centre in China itself. Suzhou Village, near Shanghai, is scheduled to open on 15 May, targeting China's swelling middle class. The centre's 100 shops, restaurants and cafes will be within an hour's drive of 40 million people.

And for the long-term health of the Chinese economy – and of the global financial system – it is a necessary development. If western economies such as the UK's are to tilt back towards export-driven growth, China's status as the world's factory floor has to change. The west needs China to open up as a market that consumes goods rather than just making them.

And China itself needs to lessen its dependence on an economic model that fuels manufacturing and infrastructure growth with artificially low interest rates, as this punishes savers and has seen households take on a teetering edifice of debt.

Rob Wood, economist at German bank Berenberg, says: "So far China's growth has been based on strong investment growth, and you would expect that with a developing country. But China has bought a lot of machines now, and it needs domestic demand for the goods it is producing. It is going to be hard because it has relied on investment

for so long, but that is the way countries move from being low-income to high-income, and it is potentially important for the UK."

The scale of the challenge is huge but, Wood says, the authorities have demonstrated a determination to change the growth model.

China's growing pains have had unintended consequences for a luxury goods sector that has benefited from the nation's rise so far, but finds itself exposed to the vagaries of the Chinese economy. A crackdown on corruption, announced by President Xi Jinping last year, has been an unexpected blow.

At Diageo, the British drinks group, sales in China of the traditional white spirit baijiu have been hit in the ensuing drive against gift-giving. The backlash has also been painful for Diageo's French rival, Rémy Cointreau, where sales of cognac fell 32% in the final quarter of the year to March, following a 30% drop in the third quarter.

The attempt to unravel a culture of lavish gifts and extravagant spending among officials has also hit the restaurant trade and sales of other luxury goods, such as watches. Growth in China's luxury market slowed to about 2% in 2013 from 7% in 2012, according to consultancy Bain. Sales of watches, which make up more than a fifth of the total domestic luxury goods market in China, fell by 11%.

"The highly visible government campaign encouraging frugality and focusing on corruption had a large impact on gifting, which had been one of the major growth engines of the sector," Bain said.

Brands with outlets at Bicester will be hoping that the corruption clampdown will not dampen Chinese appetites abroad. Bain estimates that around two-thirds of luxury shopping by Chinese consumers is done outside China.

But the ascendancy of the Chinese consumer is predicated on more than just British retail villages and largesse directed at party officials. There is also the impact of people in China who are earning money honestly and want to spend it – and this can be felt 5,000 miles from Bicester.

Beijing's upmarket Sanlitun shopping district consists of two outdoor malls joined by a 500m-long row of seedy bars and restaurants. South Sanlitun Village is stacked with mid-range chains such as Uniqlo, Nike and Starbucks. It is a thoroughfare of fashionable young Chinese and camera-wielding tourists.

But to cross into the North Sanlitun Village is to enter a more rarefied world. Its flashy European boutiques – Balmain, Marni, Givenchy – stand grandiose and empty around a vast paved square. Looking at the window display in Emporio Armani, Shi Wen, a design student at the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology, says luxury goods in China are caught in a bind. People have more money than ever, but ostentatious displays of wealth are increasingly taboo, considered the province of coal bosses and corrupt officials rather than a tasteful, cosmopolitan class.

"Chinese people only started making money in the 1980s," she says. "They wanted to show it, but didn't have any taste. Now, people will still spend a lot of money on luxury goods, but they want to look subtle and sophisticated." Shi is wearing tight black jeans and a black leather jacket. She says her favourite brand is US leathergoods maker Coach.

In a Sergio Rossi outlet across the square, £400 pairs of shoes sit in untouched rows in an empty, thickly carpeted atrium. "Business is all right," says one saleswoman, who declines to give her name. "I spend most of my time waiting around."

Bill Dodson is a US-born writer of books on Chinese society and economy who lives in Suzhou and works in Shanghai. He says the crackdown appears to be having little impact on normal life: "I don't see any effect on the daily purchasing habits of middle-income and rich Chinese as a direct result of the clampdown on government purchasing excesses. In the downtown Shanghai office in which I work, women coworkers are still turning over their wardrobes with abandon. They seem to have the same level of anxiety about falling behind the fashion times as ever."

He says the reason Chinese nationals prefer to buy luxury goods abroad is because of a lack of trust in branding – and genuine safety issues with domestic products, from foodstuffs to cars, clothing and electrical goods – not because of any clampdown or general economic slowdown.

The conversion of China to a consumption-driven model is taking place against a backdrop of slowing growth. China's economy grew by 7.4% in the first quarter of 2014 compared with the same period a year earlier, following 7.7% growth in the fourth quarter of 2013.

It was the lowest rate of growth in 18 months, but markets nevertheless reacted positively to the data, because it beat expectations of a GDP increase of just 7.2%. The slowdown does, however, raise the prospect of the Chinese government missing its target for 7.5% growth in 2014, unless further stimulus measures are announced.

Economists at Fathom Consulting believe the slowdown has much further to go. "Our benchmark assumption is that China will slow to a rate of just 5% this year. In our worst-case scenario, that figure plunges to 2%."

This has not dampened the attractiveness of Chinese consumers to western investors. The display of Chinese spending power in Bicester is merely an analogue indication of a 1.84 trillion-yuan online shopping market in China, one potential shareholders are keep to tap.

Last week China's biggest online retailer, Alibaba, announced plans for an initial public offering in New York that could value the business at \$200bn. Analysts believe this could be the biggest technology stock sale in history, dwarfing even that of Facebook, as investors bet on further stellar growth in what is already an enormous market.

According to Alibaba's filing with US stock market regulator, its three main marketplaces – Taobao, Tmall and Juhuasuan – last year notched up 231 million active buyers and 8 million active sellers, and generated transactions totalling \$248bn. It is numbers such as these that lie behind the appeal of the Chinese consumer market to investors.

And there has been one telling bright spark in recent Chinese economic figures. Investment was weak in the first quarter and industrial production disappointing, but retail sales have been better than expected, boosting Beijing's hopes that consumption will continue to hold up. And that is key, not just to Bicester but to Suzhou Village – and the entire global economy.

**Appendix 3 – An online blog under the article of *The Guardian* named ‘Why global recovery could depend on China’s taste for luxury’**

N	Comments	Interpretations
1	<p>Absolutely ridiculous - it's just pin the tail on the donkey time. Banking on China when rural banks are close to the precipice....</p> <p>The spare capacity in it's own industrial base ( due to the overall downturn ) will be used to compete against imported goods. Bought some Italian shoes here, they lasted me 4 months. The Chinese brand going strong after 8 months, as they know the pollutants in the rain and the uneven urban landscape. Like everywhere its all brainwashing, luxury Western goods means corruption, more like buy Chinese to keep the mob in jobs. Buy an inflated-priced apartment because you can't get married without one, but the people who built the apartments know they are constructed on the cheap. And why would you invest in something that could get knocked down on a whim by the local government? Far from certain how it will turn out here, but the currency is getting a battering right now so imported goods sold in over-priced retail property might squeeze the life out of this dream at least in China. The PBOC are turning down the taps for a softer landing so that will hit the mobile Chinese yonder. [313 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Spanker999</b> 11 May 2014 0:47</p>	<p><b>Spanker999</b> clearly rejects the article. There are three reasons involved:</p> <p>(i) from monetary perspective, China has been printing money. The inflation meaning economic bubble might finally collapse like Japan and the financial crisis of hedge funding in 2009.</p> <p>(ii) unsustainable demand for UK goods, because the <b>Chinese will step away from corrupt brands, and also because corruption in China will reduce the amount of disposable income available to Chinese consumers.</b></p> <p>(iii) The author thinks that the state has realised the problem and will slow down the economic growth. Chinese demand for Western goods will be extinguished, therefore, UK business should not seek to meet the projected demand the article predicts.</p> <p>As suggested by the name Spanker999, the author is spanking capitalistic materialism. He has commented 3 times in this trail.</p>
2	<p>.....Like everywhere its all brainwashing.....</p> <p>and it will carry on till China implodes capitalism, as Russia imploded socialism.</p> <p>Wealth is like manure-----it only does good and not harm if distributed thinly and evenly. <a href="#">Distributism</a> will put an end to the era of the unhappy rich by bringing on the era of the happy poor</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>GreatGrandDad</b> 11 May 2014 3:05</p>	<p><b>GreatGrandDad</b> supports distributivism, which departs from capitalism, and socialism by supporting strong labour movements.</p> <p>He is <b>not optimistic that Chinese people can resist capitalism.</b></p>
3	<p>More doom and gloom from Great Grandad.</p> <p>I would be disappointed if you didn't warn of the impending thermodynamic death of the Universe every time growth is mentioned.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>kvlx387</b> → 2 11 May 2014 11:53</p>	<p>Teasing GreatGrandDad who appears a frequent commentator, and is upset with about the discourse of economic growth. But we do not know the author’s view.</p>
4	<p>Not a libertarian I take it? As Zerohedge puts it succinct enough: On a long enough timeline the survival rate for everyone drops to zero. And as for the thermodynamic death of the Universe by definition is</p>	<p><b>Spanker999</b> defends “his” anti-</p>



	<p>growth. Although also by definition that doesn't have any function for friction: So we need to create friction: And we do: Syria, Ukraine for starters.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>spanker999 → 3</b> 11 May 2014 12:45</p>	capitalism stance.
5	<p><i>More doom and gloom from Great Grandad.....every time growth is mentioned.</i></p> <p>Actually I am all for good growth-----i.e. emotional and spiritual growth.</p> <p>And I am for moderate material growth in those areas of the world that have been impoverished by the pursuit of material over-growth by the nations of 'the West'.</p> <p>I agree that I point again and again to the Western collective madness which is simple denial of the simple point that infinite material growth is impossible on a finite planet.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>GreatGrandDad → 3</b> 11 May 2014 14:21</p>	<b>GreatGrandDad</b> defends himself that he is not a blind leftist. Growth is good, provided that it embodies sympathy to the poor and the nature.
6	<p>Excellent analogy. The world doesn't need growth, but massive austerity for the rich, with very high taxes on wealth and unearned income.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Zelazny → 5</b> 11 May 2014 18:03</p>	A companion of GreatGrandDad.
7	<p>...On February 19, 2014 the People's Bank of China... [475 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>etatsunique</b> 11 May 2014 3:16</p>	<b>Etasunique</b> is a main contributor for this analysis. The author posted 6 times. This comment is not relevant to the topic.
8	<p>Damn, somebody added dialogue to a Chinese Menu and called it an economic projection. Hold the MSG please.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Djinn666</b> 11 May 2014 6:02</p>	Another rejection of the article.
9	<p>Why should the Chinese have to come all the way to London to shop for merchandise manufactured in China and to eat in Chinese restaurants?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Sonjusen</b> 11 May 2014 9:07</p>	The author thinks that <b>Chinese tourists come to the UK to buy Chinese made products and eat Chinese food. Either the comment is ironic or is a genuine question.</b>
10	<p>Because the tax on big foreign brands can be near 90%.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Quarrytone → 8</b> 11 May 2014 9:13</p>	<b>Quarrytone</b> is another main contributor who has commented 8 times. The author replies to previous blogger that <b>Chinese tourists come for cheaper luxurious brands.</b>
11	<p>Because they want to and can afford it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Kvlx387 → 8</b> 11 May 2014 11:55</p>	Another reply: <b>Chinese are wealthy enough to buy luxury goods.</b>

12	<p>Also the point is they are very shrewd. If instead of shopping in China on foreign brands with a hefty 90% tax, they do a lot of shopping in the UK the savings they make can pay for the flight, so they can get a holiday into the bargain. They also love to travel especially to Europe and Japan which for them holds a profound fascination - in fact they now comprise the single biggest ethnic tour group on the planet. Just as China could well overtake France as the most visited tour nation by 2020, truly the world is getting smaller.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Quarrytone → 8</b> 11 May 2014 12:17</p>	<p><b>Quarrytone</b> further explains that Chinese tourists are clever, because they save much by shopping in the West than in home.</p> <p><b>For Chinese people, Europe and Japan is profound fascination.</b></p>
13	<p>Well are they as mortgaged to the hilt as us Europeans? I spend so much on the rent, and will do on the mortgage that I am left with little else to spend on what I want.</p> <p>So that's my spending power nullified by city institutions and baby boomers.</p> <p>How are the chinese looking on that score?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Theendisnigh2</b> 11 May 2014 9:11</p>	<p>The blogger blames the high rent he is paying for his lack of consumption and wonders if Chinese people face the same problem.</p>
14	<p>They tend to save up and pay for their apartments / cars / products outright, or with big deposits and smaller home loans.</p> <p>The personal debt culture is immature and undeveloped, and the saving culture very traditional.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Quarrytone → 12</b> 11 May 2014 9:29</p>	<p><b>Quarrytone</b> replies that <b>Chinese people have a strong saving tradition.</b></p>
15	<p>That's changing quickly immature as you say, private debt is misunderstood as it doesn't have to be paid back at all. It's underwritten by inflation and take it for someone on the ground the published figures of 2.5% are utter BS. The PBOC are trying to turn the taps to low we'll see how it pans out.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Spanker999 → 13</b> 11 May 2014 12:58</p>	<p>Spanker999's final appearance, arguing that Chinese people do not really have debt, because it is offset by inflation. The 2.5% inflation rate published by the state is fake.</p>
16	<p>You and most people spend... [108 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Zelazny replying → 12</b> 11 May 2014 18:11</p>	<p>Expressing views on anti-Capitalism.</p>
17	<p>What you mean buy our shoddy goods with a label at vastly inflated prices</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Dougie Hopping</b> 11 May 2014 9:27</p>	<p>Looking for affirmation that luxury goods in China are expensive because of uncontrolled inflation.</p>
18	<p>For them in the UK its half price. In China there's almost a 100% tax on big foreign brands. Good to see the trend away from the swollen brands however, towards more subtle, reasonably priced labels.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Quarrytone → 17</b> 11 May 2014 9:30</p>	<p><b>Quarrytone</b> explains why Chinese buy luxury in the West.</p>
19	<p>What gets me is that these European companies don't seem to be able to make money without selling into china....sad and very bad news for some brands</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Dormillion</b> 11 May 2014 9:53</p>	<p>In response to the article, the blogger feels pathetic that <b>European companies depend heavily on Chinese customers.</b></p>

20	By "recovery" do you mean [57 words]  <b>Rmstallman</b> 11 May 12:05	The point is that if that real growth is not on GDP, but a more equal distribution of wealth. Spanker999 and GreatGrandDad would be happy to see this comment.
21	Good point. By way of comparison, the Chinese would see the status of the poor in the UK as very good through universal free healthcare and pensions. In China the state only pays for 80% of health costs, the remaining 20% so inflated in price by big pharmaceuticals as to be a threat to family incomes except for the rich. This also explains the high saving ratio of Chinese consumers.  Recovery is only genuine when real average income once again outstrips inflation. The big toll of recent years has been the doubling of energy and local tax costs in just 10 years. If the government could crack that equation to a better outcome we might see some progress.  <b>Quarrytone → 19</b> 11 May 2014 12:25	<b>Quarrytone</b> complements the above comment. The author <b>reaffirms the severe inequality in China.</b>
22	Have heard and read about the growth of the middle class in China recently. On the other hand, the middle class in the US is shrinking. How and why is this happening?  <b>AZrebel</b> 11 May 2014 14:09	Asking about the growth of Chinese middle class.
23	The Chinese are consuming more protein than before.  <b>Kimdriver → 22</b> 11 May 2014 19:50	Kimdriver replied yes to the comment, using rocketing demand of meat in China. Kimdriver has contributed 6 comments.
24	Global recovery cannot depend upon the production of luxury goods.  By definition, these rely upon scarcity, and once they become significant manufactures, lose their "brand appeal". Catch 22.  You can't increase the supply while, at the same time, also maintaining the desire.  <b>Kimdriver</b> 11 May 2014 20:21	<b>Kimdriver</b> now starts to tackle the question of global recovery out of consumption model.  Relying on consumption of luxury goods is not the solution, because more supply means wiping out the desire that fuelled that growth.
25	New brands and overlooked old brands are created/discovered all the time. There is no shortage of human ingenuity.  <b>Angryboy → 23</b> 11 May 2014 20:41	It appears that this blogger has hopes on the consumption growth model because of human ingenuity.
26	To some extent I agree.  But "brand awareness" is difficult to establish on a wish. The uniqueness of the brands that Chinese (previously Japanese) consumers desire is often justified by the history, and the legacy, and not by the value of the current product...[162 words]  <b>Kimdriver → 24</b> 11 May 2014 21:18	<b>Kimdriver</b> partially agrees on the comment, saying that <b>Chinese people's brand awareness is also due to the historical values of a particular brand rather than just the price.</b>
27	It's laughable that leaders in the UK now think the way to pull the UK out of economic decline is to simply pander to affluent Chinese nationals. The Chinese won't be purchasing UK products, they'll be buying merchandise manufactured elsewhere which does little to improve the economic position of most UK residents. Sure, retail jobs may be created but those aren't actually good jobs..... [549 words]	<b>Tonybillbob</b> has made 4 comments in the blog – all in essay style with political economic analysis. This one argues that <b>Chinese tourists will keep shopping for luxury goods elsewhere but not in the UK.</b>

		<b>Tonybillbob</b> 11 May 2014 20:34
28	<p>The Chinese think highly of the UK, an ancient and civilized country in their way of thinking, and would love to buy British products if the UK made anything worth buying, which unfortunately it pretty much no longer does.</p> <p>The UK keeps shooting itself in the foot where Chinese consumers are concerned. The visa application to visit the entire Schengen zone (almost all of Europe) is much easier than the crazy system for the UK alone. And The Chinese used send their sons and daughters to the UK's much-respected universities in ever-greater numbers before ever-changing visa rules made them feel unwelcome (the students coming were no deadbeats but actually more prosperous on average than UK students, and typically paid more than twice as much for their education)</p> <p>Other countries have a 'thing' at which they have a deserved reputation for excellence, and if you have a 'thing', the Chinese will pay almost any price for it - for France it's food and drink, for Italy it's fashion, for Germany it's precision engineering (especially cars), etc. UK 'things' could be history, culture, music, and education, but the UK stubbornly refuses to do anything creative and lucrative with them.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>MartinMellish → 27</b> 12 May 2014 3:26</p>	<p><b>MartinMellish</b> just made 2 comments, however brings this blog to a new direction that is meaningful for this research.</p> <p>MartinMellish believes that <b>Chinese people are not cultural dupes. They consume with values and tastes, so they go to wherever it delivers these attributes. The UK highly appeals to Chinese middle class in terms of history, culture, music and education.</b></p> <p>The blogger thinks the UK is not making use of the opportunity to attract Chinese, who have already found alternatives in Europe.</p>
29	<p><b>The Chinese think highly of the UK, an ancient and civilized country</b></p> <p>Disagree. I think the two Opium Wars and the Boxer Rebellion are still on their minds. There are articles by Chinese writers about "The Hundred Years of Humiliation" from the English invasion in 1839 to the outbreak of WWII.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Etatsunique → 28</b> 12 May 2014 5:56</p>	<p><b>Eatsunique</b> reappears. The blogger brings Chinese anti-West nationalism into discussion.</p> <p><b>Eatsunique disagrees that Chinese people think highly of the UK's culture and civilisation, because they have been humiliated in the two Opium Wars and in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is an anti-West sentiment.</b></p>
30	<p>The thing is - I live in China (have for the last 4 years). So I have more of an idea of what/how Chinese people think.</p> <p>I wouldn't say they've completely forgotten the Opium Wars or the Boxer Rebellion. However, I would say that in their view, most emphatically, <b>'The best revenge is doing well'</b>, as the saying goes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>MartinMellish → 29</b> 12 May 2014 6:10</p>	<p><b>MartinMellish</b> replies with his own observation, having lived in China for four years. He agrees that <b>Chinese nationalism exists. However, their response is to be successful and striving to be brilliant enough to compete with the old Western rivalries, as the blogger says, "The best revenge is doing well"</b>.</p>

<p>31</p>	<p><b>have more of an idea of what/how Chinese people think.</b></p> <p>I'm sure you also have an idea how propaganda works. And when the authorities think too many yuan are being spent on Jaguars and English imports how easy it will be for them to reprise the English caused humiliation.</p> <p>Are you American? Do you remember 'freedom fries.' One of America's finest recent moments.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Etatsunique → 30</b> 12 May 2014 7:07</p>	<p>Responding MartinMellish, <b>Etatsunique</b> thinks that <b>the Chinese state easily controls the anti-West sentiment by propaganda. Once the state decided to halt the trade deficit, Chinese nationalism would appear.</b> The blogger uses “freedom fries” as an analogy. The term replaced “French fries” as a protest against French opposition to the United States that declared war on Al-Qaeda after the September 11 attacks.</p>
<p>32</p>	<p>From my experience in China this propaganda meme has been exaggerated out of all proportion. People (excluding perhaps some rural poor) simply aren't taken in by message manipulation. This has long been the case since before 89.</p> <p>People are wry, sophisticated and cynical about the government. The irony is the disconnect between what people say online and what the media states has had to be closed to prevent the press becoming almost entirely comic. The educated are big admirers of the UK, witnessed by their equal admiration for Hong Kong and its part British heritage. But despite admiration for foreign developed countries, they are also nationalistic - a tradition probably almost as old as the idea of China post Qin (he was too barbaric, with the Han Dynasty the idea of China became Heaven's will - the people love it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Quarrytone →31</b> 12 May 7:30</p>	<p><b>Quarrytone</b> interrupts. Earlier the blogger said that Chinese people are attracted to Western and Japanese cultures and there is severe inequality in China.</p> <p>Quarrytone thinks that Etatsunique has exaggerated Chinese propaganda. <b>Since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, Chinese people have become 'wry, sophisticated and cynical', who are outspoken in the cyberspace, in which the perspectives are in contrast to those of the state media, thus threatening the Chinese state. Therefore the virtual space is closely monitored by the state</b></p> <p>Quarrytone reaffirms that <b>'the educated are big admirers of the UK',</b> but at the same time nationalistic.</p>
<p>33</p>	<p>The destruction of Yuanmingyuan was to be a “solemn act of retribution,”....</p> <p>.....“The great vulnerable point in a Mandarin's character lies in his pride,” [Lieutenant Colonel G.J. Wolsely, part of the British expeditionary force] observed. “The destruction of the Yuanmingyuan was the most crushing of all blows which could be leveled at his Majesty's inflated notions of universal supremacy.” Reducing the gardens to ruins was “the strongest proof of our superior strength” and “served to undeceive all Chinamen in their absurd conviction of their monarch's universal sovereignty.”</p> <p><b>Today, a century and a half later, the Communist Party continues to preserve the ruined state of the Summer Palace as a reminder of the British plunder.</b></p> <p><b>I don't have a dog in this fight, but I know the saying "As you sow, so shall you reap."</b></p> <p><b>You can decide if does or will apply to the hundred years of</b></p>	<p>Responding to Quarrytone's argument that Chinese nationalism is exaggerated, <b>Etatsunique</b> uses an historian's account to prove how the Chinese state manipulates nationalism through cultural authority over landscapes.</p> <p><b>The ruins of destruction of Yuanmingyuan in 1840 is well preserved to remind citizens of the hundred years of humiliation. This approach echoes Nyíri's (2006) thesis that tourist sites are spaces for patriotic education. Etatsunique provides a reference that shows state nationalistic sentiment. It is grounded in cultural pride. The argument is that the reason for the</b></p>

	<p>humiliation.</p> <p><a href="http://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/10/how-humiliation-drove-modern-chinese-history/280878/">http://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/10/how-humiliation-drove-modern-chinese-history/280878/</a></p> <p>[313 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Etatsunique → 32 12 May 2014 8:37</p>	<p><b>British army to destroy Yuanmingyuan is to crush the cultural pride of the Manchurian 'Majesty's inflated notions of universal supremacy'. The Chinese state nowadays is still using this narrative to build nationalism.</b></p>
34	<p>Thanks for the quote, and the link.</p> <p>At a deep level I agree this narrative is strong, in the people and the CCP. How could it not be? But its a combination of two things. An implicit "look at us now" crowing from the CCP every time they launch into space, or present the latest statistics on the world's biggest super fast railway, or economic data showing the world's No 2 is actually No 1. (fuel use, electricity generations, production, materials consumption, whatever it is), and a feeling of pride in the people themselves, a "yes, look at us now, we're catching up with America and Britain and France are dwindling in our economic wake". But I wouldn't say its nasty on the part of the people or even the state. I don't detect any ill will at all towards the British. Just a sense of justifiable pride in its rising power that the CCP definitely exploits as much as it can.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Quarrytone → 33 12 May 2014 9:25</p>	<p><b>Quarrytone agrees with Etatsunique about the strong Chinese nationalistic narrative that is both implicit and explicit. The former is from the state, seen in remarkable GDP or space project. The latter is from individuals who feel the pleasure of strong China vis-à-vis weak economic status in Britain and Europe.</b></p> <p>Quarrytone feels that this nationalistic narrative is moral.</p>
35	<p>Hi quarrytone, this isn't directly related to this topic, but I know you were interested in finding out more about the situation in Xinjiang, and <a href="#">this</a> article that's just been published on the New York Times website is very interesting and somewhat depressing.</p> <p>Best wishes, XXY52891</p> <p style="text-align: right;">XXY52891 → 34 12 May 2014 11:23</p>	<p>Polite <b>XXY52891</b> commented twice. I suspect that the blogger feels that Quarrytone's view on China is perhaps still one-sided and Chinese nationalism should not be moralised. The blogger has embedded an article that reports the disappearance of an American-educated Uyghur linguist from Xianjian region, who was arrested for the charge of "illegal fundraising" in China in August 2013. The linguist hoped to open an Uighur-language school but this was perceived by the state as an aim to strengthen Uighur identity. The article links the arrest to the state oppression to Xingjian Uygurs by uprooting their traditions. The linguist was subsequently released on 27 November 2014 (Radio Free Asia, 2014)</p> <p>The blogger implies that the <b>Chinese state is in a controlling position towards Uighurs</b></p>
36	<p>Will take a look, thanks.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Quarrytone → 35 12 May 2014 11:33</p>	
37	<p>It is indeed very depressing, but it does seem a bit partisan. It seems to give the impression the Uighur language is being lost.</p>	<p><b>Quarrytone</b> is sympathetic to the arrest but tries to offer alternative interpretation to the situation of the</p>

	<p>I've spoken to a Han from Xinjiang who tells me the authorities have tried teaching in the Uighur language with lessons in Mandarin as a 2nd language, but this failed as the graduates were not proficient enough in Mandarin so couldn't take any of the new opportunities for employment, then the Uighurs complained they were excluded from the development. So they tried teaching in Mandarin, but the pupils didn't do so well (could this be reluctance and family pressure?).</p> <p>The story in the article does indeed sound severe and harsh to say the least, but overall it does come across as very one sided. Like listening to either a prosecutor or a defence council without the other side of the story. We have to be careful. Also it would be hard to imagine such a sympathetic treatment of the Palestinian cause in the same newspaper. Is there bias?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Quarrytone → 36</b> 12 May 2014 11:49</p>	<p>Uighurs, in which he attributes it to their inability to speak proficient Mandarin Chinese that causes a conflict with Han Chinese.</p> <p>Also, Quarrytone feels that one should not take the neutrality of an article for granted. In other words, the <b>Chinese state is not evil, in line with previous comments about the moral nationalist spirit cultivated by the state.</b></p>
38	<p>But don't get me wrong. This sounds like a definite case of an innocent victim of the crackdown. A paranoid, draconian and counter productive form of collective punishment - which I sincerely hope for the Uighur's sake its not.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Quarrytone → 37</b> 12 May 2014 11:53</p>	<p><b>Quarrytone</b> feels that the comment posted might overlook the unfortunate Uighur linguist, now emphasising the sympathy.</p>
39	<p>Yes, you're right that we can't judge too much from this one case. Let's hope that in other cases a more tolerant approach is taken.</p> <p>Best wishes, XXY52891</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>XXY52891 → 38</b> 12 May 2014 12:01</p>	<p><b>XXY52891</b> agrees that he should be careful to judge and hopes for better Han-Uyghur relations.</p>
40	<p>Your point about the national pride felt by the Chinese and how it relates to England is correct. But only in a vacuum of foreign policy confrontations.</p> <p>If the English support their chief ally, the US, in the back and forth about drilling in South China Sea, human rights in Tibet, or the unnaturally low value of the yuan, I don't think Beijing will hesitate to throw England and the English people's good will under their newest high speed train.</p> <p>England should not expect to possess excellent feelings from the Chinese while supporting America, as it runs the world, and dictates to China how it wants China to behave.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Etatsunique → 39</b> 12 May 2014 16:53</p>	<p>The return of Etatsunique who believes in the prevalence of Chinese state hegemony.</p> <p>The blogger agrees with Quarrytone's earlier analysis (32 and 34) of Chinese people who are big admirers of the UK and at the same time expresses pleasure in a strong China vis-à-vis weak economic status of Britain. Etatsunique restates the point that the Chinese desire for the West could be held back by the state if British foreign policy is against China.</p>
41	<p>Fair point.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Quarrytone → 40</b> 13 May 2014 10:50</p>	
42	<p>That's my point, MartinMellish....[369 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Tonybillbob → 41</b> 12 May 2014 20:31</p>	<p>Essay writer and economic analyst <b>Tonybillbob</b> agrees to earlier comment of MartinMellish (see 28 and 30). The main point is that <b>Chinese people are not cultural dupes.</b></p>
43	<p>It's an economic imperative..... [85 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Kimdriver</b> 11 May 2014 21:36</p>	
44	<p>Who said needed foods?.....[128 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Tonybillbob → 43</b></p>	

		12 May 2014 20:44	
45	Tariffs are generally imposed.....[42 words]	<b>Kimdriver → 44</b> 12 May 2014 22:52	
46	I don't see the picture..... [205 words]	<b>Tonybillbob → 45</b> 13 May 2014 2:30	
47	It was OK when we were doing the consuming. But billions of Chinese consuming like us is going to destroy the environment. What to do? Create a new ethic that values protection over consumption. The focus on branding is just the Chinese trying to get a real product.	<b>JoeyCatt</b> 11 May 2014 21:47	The blogger thinks it would be disastrous to the environment when billions of Chinese people consume like Western peoples.  The blogger rejects resolving it to branding as it would not help the environment.
48	Sad for both sides, really.	<b>R2d2c3po</b> 11 May 22:10	Over consumption is actually bad for both the Western world and Chinese.
49	Is a common myth I feel ,predicated upon love and marriage ,reproduction and retirement planning .Ithink that all those are vital ingredients,but still is war and crime which are the two top dollar earning industries on Earth.So yes drug consumption and trade wars ,certainly need to grow.And China could be key.	<b>Ursultana</b> 11 May 2014 23:30	The blogger thinks that China plays a key role in the prospect of global morality.
50	Why oh why does the "success"..... [57 words]	<b>Snick</b> 12 May 2014 0:26	
51	I have been advocating..... [71 words]	<b>Jetassistedostrich → 50</b> 12 May 2014 1:16	
52	We don't need a global recovery..... [106 words]	<b>Jetassistedostrich</b> 12 May 2014 0:51	
53	Next time the banks fail..... [29 words]	<b>Infinityinfocus→ 52</b> 12 May 2014 04:40	
54	I was hoping for a more comprehensive.....[32 owrds]	<b>Jetassistedostrich → 53</b> 12 May 2014 5:24	
55	<b>Growth on last years growth</b> ..... [52 words]	<b>Etatsunique → 54</b> 12 May 2014 5:45	
56	You can't have a private profit..... [81 words]	<b>Infinityinfocus → 55</b> 12 May 2014 7:50	



#### **Appendix 4 – An article of *The Daily Mail* named ‘Forget the Russians and Arabs. The Chinese are at the front of the queue for luxury goods in Britain’**

Their grasp of English may, in some cases, be non-existent. But it doesn't really matter here amid the £4,000 handbags at Harrods or the trays of watches costing five figures in London's Bond Street. Because these visitors are fluent in another dialect — the language of the logo.

And that is the only one which really counts in this bubble of excess.

Recent days have seen a fresh surge in a phenomenon which is restoring a cautious smile to smarter sections of both the retail world and the fashion industry: the Chinese are in town, and spending as never before.

The future is certainly grim on British High Streets, where a number of household names have just joined the corporate critical list. But it is very different at the top end of the capital's luxury goods market.

Just look at some of the extraordinary images from last week's Boxing Day sales in London. Were it not for the occasional red double-decker in the background, this might have been Shanghai or Kowloon.

Selfridges, the retail giant of Oxford Street, reports that Chinese customers have increased their year-on-year spending by 65 per cent — and there are still more than two months to go in this financial year.

When Selfridges opened on Boxing Day, it promptly clocked up the most lucrative hour in the store's entire history (£1.3 million in 60 minutes).

Thousands of Asian shoppers were to be found elbowing their way through the throng as keenly as the most bargain-savvy Brits.

Not long ago, the number one Asian clientele would have been Japanese. But that is so 20th century. The Pacific's financial tectonic plates have well and truly shifted. In the past 12 months, visitors from China have comfortably surpassed all the oil-rich Arab nations, Japan, Russia and the U.S. to become Selfridges' number one overseas nation in terms of spending power.

The store's Boxing Day customers apparently included Chinese actress Li Bingbing, who departed with various Mulberry, Reiss, Nicole Farhi and Paul Smith products.

At the weekend, there was keen Chinese interest in the first-floor display of £20,000 diamond-encrusted Chanel watches. The Gucci counter was down to its last £4,500 Sunset bag, while the most popular item for Chinese buyers is the £560 Sukey tote bag. As a staff member pointed out: 'It's not even in the sale.'

And these Chinese tourists are lured to Britain not by the Tower of London or cream tea in the Cotswolds. They come in search of just one thing: luxury brands.

The world's most populated country is fast becoming a nation of WAGS. Just imagine a billion Coleen Rooneys on the prowl. No wonder the upper end of the retail world is looking perky — even if some of these customers can display a haughtiness towards the staff which would make a Downton dowager blush.

The New West End Company, the trade association for Britain's three most famous shopping streets —Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street — says an average

Chinese shopper in London's West End currently splashes out £1,300 on a normal day. The typical British customer parts with just £130.

In other words, the average Chinese shopper outspends locals by an astonishing ten to one.

Little wonder the Department for International Development just axed Britain's £40 million aid budget for China.

The same pattern is reflected across a wider spectrum. Global Blue organises tax-free shopping all over the world and has observed a 63 per cent rise in Chinese spending in the last year alone. Even more striking is the typical spend of a Chinese visitor to London. In November, it was up to £727 per single transaction. When the figures for December come through, it should be higher still.

Over at Harrods, the average spend is even greater. Earlier this year, using data from VAT reclaims, the store revealed that its average Chinese customer spends an astonishing £3,500 per visit. And many shoppers will make many visits.

With that sort of spending power, who cares if one or two are brisk with the staff — or occasionally rip open the packaging to rummage around inside?

A key factor has been a small but seismic technical innovation. Until recently, Chinese credit cards were not valid in London shops, which meant Chinese shoppers had to come armed with wads of cash.

Now, special China Union pay terminals have been introduced which allow customers to pay directly from their bank accounts back home without incurring extra charges.

Selfridges has already installed 60 of them, and Harrods has a similar number. Both stores have also recruited teams of Mandarin-speaking floor-walkers to guide Chinese customers to the nearest racks of Dior or Mulberry.

Staff have even been instructed in the fine art of handling a Chinese credit card: always hold the hallowed plastic with two hands outstretched and treat it with reverence, like some votive offering.

If it fails to connect first time, under no circumstances should you follow the usual British shop assistant's habit of rubbing it on your sleeve a few times, trying it the other way round and then saying: 'Nah. Ain't you got somefink else?'

What is as remarkable as all this splashing out is the fact that this is just the start.

Ten years ago, China barely featured on the retail radar. Even now, they come in relatively small numbers. But this is a country with 960,000 people already worth more than £1 million, and they love to travel. What's more, according to Global Blue, more than half of those who come to Britain are young, fashion-conscious and aged from 25 to 44.

International management consultants McKinsey & Co have produced a detailed report on the insatiable Chinese appetite for luxury goods. The authors predict that just three years from now, China will be spending a whopping £18 billion a year on luxury brands such as Gucci, Burberry and Louis Vuitton, accounting for a fifth of the entire world market.

And that's just at home. More and more will go abroad to buy. And London is ready to welcome them with open arms.

Last year, China dispatched 110,000 visitors to Britain, where they spent an estimated £350 million between them. On current form, we could see multiples of those figures in a year or two.

Another report, by the investment group CLSA Asia-Pacific, calculates that by 2020, the Chinese hold over the world's premier fashion brands will be unassailable. Its analysts say China will consume 44 per cent of all the world's luxury goods. And they are considerably cheaper in London than at home.

'I'm on the lookout for a Burberry raincoat and scarf,' says Selfridges customer Chen Lin, 28, a Chinese businesswoman. 'It's so much cheaper here and there's more choice. I wouldn't even look for Burberry in China. It's overpriced.'

Tourist Mali Ding, 40, said she has come to London purely for the sales. 'I don't know what I want to buy yet, but it is so much better here than at home. It's cheaper, and the stuff here is newer.'

'A Chinese customer can save up to 30 per cent buying tax-free in London rather than paying sales tax at home,' says a spokeswoman for Global Blue.

With that sort of saving, you could buy one £4,000 bag and cover the cost of the trip.

There is a certain irony that a country famous for rigorous protectionist tariffs on imported goods —not to mention a thriving black market in counterfeit goods — should be quite so relaxed about its citizens coming home with armfuls of tax-free Western trophy purchases.

But Chinese attitudes are changing. Fake watches and handbags, once commonplace, are now social death in polite Chinese society.

And while customers from the Gulf and Russia are long-established consumers of top-end bling in Britain — flash jewellery, fast cars, fur coats and so on — the Chinese are different. They are more understated and they buy in bulk.

An entrenched gifting culture means they will buy a dozen Hermes scarves at a time — not only for family members but for bosses, colleagues and for any officials whose palms need crossing.

As traditional forms of bribery are weeded out, a Louis Vuitton bag for a commissar's wife can go a very long way.

And not all these customers are especially wealthy. The McKinsey report reveals the rather depressing fact that an ordinary office worker in China will spend up to three months' salary on a handbag — providing it has the right logo.

Certainly, the Western shopping calendar suits the Chinese buying cycle perfectly. Just as London prices are being slashed after Christmas, the Chinese are working themselves into a shopping frenzy ahead of the 'Golden Week' surrounding the Chinese New Year — which, this year, falls at the end of this month.

Let's be clear. Free-spending Chinese holidaymakers are not the remedy for our dismal economy. Selfridges points out that 70 per cent of its customers are domestic and, of the 30 per cent of international trade, only a part of that — albeit a large part — is Chinese.

Yet, we are starting to see a broader cultural and economic impact which will soon spread beyond the sparkling shopping halls of London W1.

Just last week, we learned fresh details of a scheme to build a luxury holiday village in Carmarthenshire for wealthy Chinese families.

Back in Oxford Street, more Selfridges bags full of the latest Louis Vuitton and Versace are beginning the long journey back to Beijing. This time next year, these shoppers will be back in even greater numbers — and with even greater spending power.

How much longer before a new phrase enters the Chinese language — a British takeaway?

**Appendix 5 – An online blog under the article of *The Daily Mail* named ‘Forget the Russians and Arabs. The Chinese are at the front of the queue for luxury goods in Britain’**

N	Comments	Interpretations
1	No shortage of fools.  <b>Alfred Wyrd</b> England, 3/1/2012 1:04	Obviously disapproving of shoppers in general.
2	Any chance of a decent investigative reporter finding out and telling us what other countries we're ... no ... our government or some chinless civil servant department is giving OUR money to, and how much?  <b>PC</b> Liverpool, 3/1/2012 1:31	Disapproving three things: (i) the Daily Mail, (ii) the government, (iii) foreign aid.
3	So they're buying their own goods and moving in.  <b>Lex</b> london, 3/1/2012 5:28	<b>Chinese tourists buy made-in-China products and will hide in the U.K.</b>
4	I posted on this after the boxing day sales i said it was brilliant for our gdp all the asians coming here shopping and i was red arrowed perhaps people will get the message now , people the Uk needs all the money we can get it could be your job on the line this year  <b>RonDisbury</b> Thailand, 3/1/2012 5:40	<b>Chinese tourists actually benefit the UK economy.</b> The blogger’s opinion was not supported by DM readers. “He” hopes that this article can prove “he” is right.
5	I GOT THREATENING E-MAIL SAYING MY COMMENTS WERE NOT APPROPRIATE WHEN MENTIONING THIS FACT A FEW DAYS AGO AND WERE IMMEDIATELY DELETED. MIND YOU I SAID JAPANESE NOT CHINESE. THIS PAPER HAS MORE FACES THAN A TOWN HALL CLOCK.  <b>Firthy</b> holyhead, 3/1/2012 8:09	A comment deleted by DM is probably a racist one. The blogger accuses DM of having double standard without explanations.
6	If a picture paints a thousand words these pictures says it ALL, former Communists raid British Sales Stores presumably with our one Billion Foreign Aid handout ? meanwhile the poorer Chinese die picking cockles in Morecambe Bay Estuary.....says it all really !.  <b>George</b> Netherlands, 3/1/2012 8:31	<b>Reflecting on the wealth inequality in China. While some Chinese people are able to spend a fortune in England, their countrymen survive on Foreign Aid.</b> The blogger is sympathetic to the tragedy in the UK – 23 Chinese illegal immigrants died in 2004 when they collected cockles against a rising tide in Morecambe Bay.
7	I also posted [31 words]  <b>Mr Brown → 5</b> Northants, 3/1/2012 9:10	Criticising DM.
8	When watching the sale doors open on BBC I honestly thought it was in China as did many of our friends, NO way are they tourists they LIVE here.....WHY?  <b>Topsy</b> topsyturveyland, 3/1/2012 9:20	<b>Believing that the Chinese shoppers are living in England but not tourists. And clearly not happy with this fact.</b>
9	Chinese credit cards [21 words]  <b>Colin</b> Nottingham, 3/1/2012 9:32	
10	Thank God I wasn't alone! [67 words]  <b>MB →5</b> Manchester, 3/1/2012 9:33	Criticising DM.

11	<p>What is Selfridges?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Great Big Terry</b> Basildon, 3/1/2012 9:34</p>	<p>A tongue in cheek comment where the blogger claims to know nothing about a shop, because it is too exclusive for a typical British person to shop in on a lower income.</p>
12	<p>I know its [98 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>topsy, topsyturveyland</b> 3/1/2012 9:42</p>	<p>Criticising DM.</p>
13	<p>What is Selfridges? - Great Big Terry, Basildon, 03/1/2012 09:34 Something Comet does lol</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Dan, London → 11</b> 3/1/2012 9:54</p>	<p>Poking fun with the blogger who does not know Selfridges.</p>
14	<p>I have seen this most extraordinary sight when I lived in London. The queue outside luxury department stores Selfridges and Harrods extending around the length of the building. It happens every year. The extraordinary thing is why? It would be a fair comment to say that most of the people queuing are not British in the traditional sense, but again why? The discounts aren't that fantastic, you are still paying at least £800 and up minimum for designer handbags, but again why? I would imagine that if the people queuing are as rich as newspapers write, they shouldn't need to queue in the freezing cold, eyed by security guards for fear they will steal some old bit of leather. I suspect more that they are the wannabes back in their country, broke, just like the rest of us and mired in debt using credit cards as life lines. Or maybe, these bags will be used to create the knock-offs coming to a car boot sale near you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Nicole</b> Canterbury 3/1/2012 10:06</p>	<p>Looking behind the news story to see if she can find an interpretation that seems to fit the behaviour of Chinese shoppers.</p> <p>Viewing that the Chinese tourists are not as rich as the newspaper portrays. <b>If they are that rich they can shop anytime but not wait for a bargain. She suspects that Chinese people are borrowing money to buy luxuries.</b></p>
15	<p>I posted on this ... [97 words]</p> <p>- The point is they're not going back home again. Do you seriously think we can fit in millions upon millions of Chinese into this already overcrowded country, because believe me, they are coming in droves and that is a fact.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>John → 4</b> Basingstoke, 3/1/2012 10:16</p>	<p>Responding to comment 4 he argues that Chinese tourists actually benefit the UK economy.</p> <p>He disagrees with an anti-immigrant discourse. He strongly believes that <b>Chinese tourists are not returning home but staying in the UK, which exceeds the carrying capacity of the country.</b></p>
16	<p>Buy Blitish!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Bambazonke</b> WORCESTER, 3/1/2012 10:21</p>	<p>Possibly poking fun at Chinese people by saying they do not have proper pronunciation of English (speaking 'r').</p>
17	<p>also at the front of the queue for rhino horns and elephant tusks</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>richard jan</b> london, 3/1/2012 10:22</p>	<p>An ethical statement about forms of traditional Chinese cultural consumption e.g. medicines derived from endangered species. This is stereotyping again, because the blogger does not recognise that the shoppers will not be able to buy these products in UK department stores. However, <b>the impression created is that Chinese shoppers are not ethical shoppers.</b></p>
18	<p>I live in China and buy goods here, so what's the big deal about Chinese buying in London? Accept the business gratefully especially as most of the goods were made in China anyway!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Thomas</b></p>	<p><b>Welcoming Chinese tourists as they are boosting the economy. At the same time this improves the balance of payment between UK and China</b></p>

	Dalian, China, 3/1/2012 10:30	
19	<p>So the Chinese are just giving back some of the money from all the stuff we've bought from them, and all the jobs and wages we've exported to China? Nice of them.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Cynic</b> Dyed in the wool, 3/1/2012 10:38</p>	<p>A rare argument. The blogger thinks that the British have helped a lot of Chinese people through importing goods, thus British keep the factories running. Now <b>Chinese tourists come to repay the help of the British by purchasing.</b></p>
20	<p>My supplier from china was here for Xmas and bought loads of high end stuff to take home. He laughed his head off when explaining to me how the Chinese do not buy their own products as (in his words) they are all cheap rubbish. They do not buy the low end stuff he explained – they simply export it to the west.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>david west</b> london, 3/1/2012 11:11</p>	<p>A complicated comment. On the one hand this portrays the Chinese as smart, intelligent and possibly exploiting the British who are ignorant because they import cheap goods.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Chinese make poor quality goods (negative), but the Chinese are savy enough to export it (positive). However, the meaning of the intelligent Chinese deconstructs itself if we consider that the Chinese are still reliant upon buying from European manufacturers, because their goods are superior. This is what Derrida (1994) calls a doubling working in this comment.</p> <p>The main implication is that <b>it is difficult to define the characteristics of Chinese people</b></p>
21	<p>...reduce the ridiculous levels of "luxury tax" ...[777 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Chris Devonshire-Ellis</b> Beijing, 3/1/2012 11:15</p>	<p>Arguing that the Chinese government should reduce the tax on imported goods, as this would improve the balance of trade for the UK.</p>
22	<p>there is huge maket for uk made goods in China. there are a few million chinese who still like to have made in england on stuff, but our stupid governments are obsessed with EU i had a chinese maneger ask me where he can get BRITISH MADE HIGH CARBON STEEL i did know 30 year ago where to send him but now? , we could export to china as much as we import if our govemant and companys and unions had the brains to work together instead of fighting each other.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Stephen</b> swansea, 3/1/2012 11:16</p>	<p>The main point that is relevant to this thesis is that <b>UK goods highly appeal to Chinese people.</b></p>
23	<p>Starting to look like Blade Runner her in London</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Bacon</b> London, 3/1/2012 11:18</p>	<p>Probably referring to a film that features an urban dystopia, in which the immigrant Chinese population was growing very quickly. In this sense, it is a disapproving comment</p>
24	<p>Who cares how much they spend as long as they go home at the end of their shopping spree.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Jenny ROBERTS</b> Oxford, 3/1/2012 11:38</p>	<p><b>Disapproving of Chinese shopping behaviour and worrying that Chinese tourists might stay in the UK.</b></p>
25	<p>Chinese people have much money that is why they go England, English have no money so poor</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Mae Win</b> Beijing, China, 3/1/2012 11:51</p>	<p>This appears to be a Chinese contributor. The blogger is <b>fighting back against perceived unfriendly Western bloggers.</b></p>

26	<p>Who cares? It's pumping more money into our economy by them buying expensive items, staying in hotels, probably eating out whilst they're here etc.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Ela → 24</b> Manchester, 3/1/2012 12:04</p>	<p>Replying and rejecting comment 24.</p> <p>This blogger thinks that <b>Chinese tourist expenditure is important to the UK economy.</b></p>
27	<p>And.....oddly enough.....China is NOT a member of the EU.....</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Old) Robert</b> Worcester UK, 3/1/2012 12:16</p>	<p>Probably mocking that <b>there are too many Chinese in Britain</b>, as if they are part of the EU membership coming whenever they like.</p>
28	<p>A bit surprising seeing that they allegedly produce most them as copies.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Carl Barron</b> Christchurch, Dorset, 3/1/2012 12:32</p>	<p>Uncertain how to interpret this comment.</p>
29	<p>This happens across the country, I've seen similar scenes in Cheshire Oaks, Westfield and Bicester Village. Just be thankful that they are keeping many of us in work.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Alan Jones</b> London, 3/1/2012 12:42</p>	<p>Another blogger in the economic liberalism camp. <b>The popularity of Chinese luxury consumption is good for employment.</b></p>
30	<p>Chinese people have much money that is why they go England, English have no money so poor - Mae Win, Beijing, China, 03/1/2012 11:51 That is so funny</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Pride → 25</b> london, 3/1/2012 12:56</p>	<p>Replying to the Chinese blogger but not sure of the real intent.</p>
31	<p>That is a new twist. However, I am not surprised that they are rich. Africa is being colonised by Chinese eg the diamond mines in Zimbabwe now belong to China, the oil factories in Angola belong to China etc. Having said that, I am glad they are bringing the money back to England and funny enough, half of Africa now lives in England. So we all benefit....</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Pride</b> london, 3/1/2012 13:02</p>	<p>Using a pejorative term "colonised" to explain China's investment in Africa – a hint of <b>Chinese being the exploiters of other cultures</b>. There is a sense that China is acting unethically, but the English have benefitted from this inequality in the past, so they suspend their ethical judgement.</p>
32	<p>Chinese people have much money that is why they go England, English have no money so poor - Mae Win, Beijing, China, 03/1/2012 11:51 Will you say that when you have to stump up the cash before seeing a doctor - even in an emergency - or before sending your kid to school? Sounds to me like you are the new rich so hated by the 700 million Chinese who are still surviving on two dollars a day.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Unbeliever → 25</b> P.R.China., 3/1/2012 13:08</p>	<p>Another comment responding to the Chinese blogger. It rejects the Chinese blogger who say that Chinese are rich now, as <b>there are many Chinese living in poverty. The problem of inequality is raised.</b></p>
33	<p>... david west, london, 03/1/2012 11:11 ----- Your supplier said this? so the quality of your goods? [79 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Truth → 20</b> Hurts, 3/1/2012 13:10</p>	<p>A reply to earlier comment that talks about the intelligent Chinese suppliers. There are two readings: (i) to ask if the retailer was cheated by intelligent Chinese supplier; (ii) to reaffirm that British retailers knowingly import cheap Chinese goods for the public.</p>
34	<p>What a sad bunch of consumerist sheep!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Paul</b> Shropshire' England, 3/1/2012 13:27</p>	<p><b>Disapproving of the materialistic lifestyle of Chinese shoppers, who are viewed by the author as the slave of consumerism</b>, who are sheep that move in flocks.</p>
35	<p>Most of the stuff they are buying was made in China for peanuts anyway.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Howard the 1<sup>st</sup></b> London, UK., 3/1/2012 13:38</p>	<p><b>Criticising the intelligence of Chinese people as they are spending a lot to buy low quality goods.</b></p>



36	<p>@unbeliever, P.R.China. Confusious say if Chinese have much money why shop in Sales?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Kinster → 32</b> London, 3/1/2012 13:43</p>	<p>Replying on the earlier comment that raises the problem of poverty and inequality of China.</p> <p>It invokes Confucius as a wise person who Chinese people claim to follow. However Confucian wisdom is not present in the people. <b>It is gently mocking Chinese common sense knowledge.</b></p>
37	<p>and the chinese are winning both ways as the poor westerner cant afford the real thing they have to buy the fakes, and guess where there from,</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>gary</b> manchester, 3/1/2012 14:14</p>	<p>Mocking Westerners who have to buy fake Chinese goods. In other words, he is not happy with his opinion that <b>China has been exporting fake products.</b></p>
38	<p>China has clearly given up their communist ideals, Marx would be quite upset to see the biggest communist country in the world now obsessed with capitalism.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Evan Cusick</b> Ballyclare, 3/1/2012 14:43</p>	<p><b>Mocking Chinese materialistic consumption.</b></p>
39	<p>-All those years of paying foreign aid to China paid off then - for businesses anyway</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Sandy</b> outer space - thank God!, 3/1/2012 15:02</p>	<p>Feeling that Britain is legitimate to take money back from China – more a protest against the government than supporting the Chinese economic contribution.</p>
40	<p>Hey Mae Win of Beijing. It might be an idea to utilize some of that new found wealth on English lessons dear.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Miss Manners → 25</b> London, 3/1/2012 16:00</p>	<p>Responding to the Chinese blogger with a patronising and demeaning attitude.</p>
41	<p>Hey Mae Win of Beijing. It might be an idea to utilize some of that new found wealth on English lessons dear. - Miss Manners, London, 3/1/2012 16:00 ----- Hows your Mandarin? oh you're English, 4GET I SAID SUMFINK</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Truth → 40</b> Hurts, 3/1/2012 16:52</p>	<p>Defending the Chinese right to speak on this forum.</p>
42	<p>All those years of paying foreign aid to China paid off then - for businesses anyway - sandy, outer space - thank God!, 03/1/2012 15:02=====That's a bit of an ignorant statement. Have you forgotten all the employment this creates. Think of all our shopworkers with money in their pockets to spend, plus the government tax take. The money goes round and round and benefits EVERYONE in this country.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Joy → 39</b> London, England., 3/1/2012 17:25</p>	<p>Responding to comment 39. This blogger thinks that the association of foreign aid is mean. She believes that <b>Chinese consumption benefits the whole country.</b></p>
43	<p>Im a British born and bred and i can only afford to shop in Next, topman etc and only when there is a Sales.....poor man</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>John</b> london, UK, 3/1/2012 17:54</p>	<p>Self mocking.</p>
44	<p>money can't buy you class dear.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Ms L</b> liverpool, 3/1/2012 18:32</p>	<p>Probably comforting the above.</p>
45	<p>""t does-n't matter what colour the cat is, as long as it catches mice""Den Xiao Ping</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Daniel</b> Manchester, 3/1/2012 20:45</p>	<p>Responding to the above two comments. Borrowing a famous quote from ex-leader of China to express that taste or virtue is not important as long as they have money. The hidden meaning is <b>to reaffirm that Chinese people do not</b></p>

		<b>have tastes.</b>
46	<p>They don't live here?!? I know for a fact, a Asian Travel company across China, Japan and Malaysia do a really cheap travel tour across the UK. Thousands go and it's on Boxing Day till New Years Eve. I know this because I worked on those tours and still do. DM get your facts right.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Lucj Jablonska</b> Derbyshire, 3/1/2012 21:03</p>	Criticising DM for indicating that Chinese shoppers are tourists. Actually many are living in the UK.
47	<p>So the Chinese manufacturer everything - Send it to UK - then come here to buy it back,, I wonder what Confucius would say about this??</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Jeff Richardson</b> Expat and UK taxpayer - France, 3/1/2012 22:23</p>	Again invoking Confucian as the wisdom to mock Chinese people, but it is difficult to read the content.
48	<p>Ha-Ha-Ha!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>King Henry</b> UK, 3/1/2012 23:04</p>	
49	<p>Read about the Chinese "tourists" in Russia's Eastern Amur region.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Ted</b> London, 3/1/2012 23:31</p>	
50	<p>I had to smile at the hordes of Chinese shoppers jostling and shoving to get to the counters first. How ironic that they should be hell bent on buying what will predominantly be made in their own country. I'm glad though; they'll get first hand experience of the shoddy crap the rest of us have been putting up with.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Malis</b> Planet Earth, 3/1/2012 23:41</p>	<b>Critiquing Chinese intelligence as the big spenders buy low quality products from the UK that are made in China.</b>
51	<p>The only reason China is making so much money now, is because we all want something cheap, and where is the cheapest place to manufacture anything these days ?. The problem in this situation is ourselves.... and that will never change..</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Johnco</b> Newcastle, 3/1/2012 23:43</p>	<p>Feeling that there is some antagonism towards China in this forum.</p> <p>Pointing the finger to British or wider Western people, for their materialistic desire is the root of the problem.</p>
52	<p>Chinese people have much money that is why they go England, English have no money so poor - Mae Win, Beijing, China, 3/1/2012 9:51 Do wealth and arrogance walk hand in hand?Food for thought.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>jose Eduardo → 25</b> here and there too., 3/1/2012 23:48</p>	The Chinese blogger are being criticised again.
53	<p>Your comments:Chinese at front of the queue! What queue? Looked more like a stampede.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>tom Bowden</b> perth australia, 4/1/2012 8:13</p>	<b>Demaneing Chinese behaviours who do not queue up.</b> This is unfair comment as he does not know the real situation at the door.
54	<p>at least they are spending their money here you people are so negative its sad!!!!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>proud to be british</b> wet mids, 4/1/2012 13:44</p>	Responding to the bloggers who appear unwelcoming to Chinese tourists. This post <b>defends Chinese visitors.</b>
55	<p>re you all bloody blind [95 words]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Ray</b> london, 4/1/2012 14:09</p>	Criticising some of the above comments that indicate Chinese shoppers are tourists. He believes that they are living in the UK.

## Appendix 6 – Students' writing in Chinese language – Stephen

### 小论英格兰

第一次踏入异国乡土，心情如何自是不言而喻的。在我看来，什么事都得亲身经历才真实。比如教科书上说英国人讨厌挤在一起上地铁，无论如何都保持距离这事就纯属扯淡。与中国一样，都有rushhour。忙碌、迅速是我对London的第一印象。英国人是友好的，这点毋庸置疑，我们的host family就住着两个和蔼可亲的老人和一个健壮的肌肉男。他们喜欢中国历史，食物，亦与其相处得好。另外，当我们在公车站问路时，他们宁可错过自己的公车也要帮人到底。(PS:这里的"他们"指别的英国市民)然而他们的逻辑思维差，不单是算术方面还是推偶方面，但因此他们也显得单纯。在地铁里卖艺的也都是自力更生，不像中国乞丐只知道伸手要钱装可怜。所以我敬佩地铁站，里的艺人，是他们的音乐使原本拥挤不堪的地铁站变得轻松安逸，这也算是伦敦一大特色吧！然而这儿的拥挤亦不像中国，这儿拥挤却有序，靠右边上下电梯，先下后上的观念深入人心，中国只知道挤，却乱七八糟。再有一点，伦敦人爱闯红灯（行人），但这大概是因为司机永远懂得让行人的缘故吧，这与中国不同，是本质的不同，是社会风气的不同！

我向往英国的生活，虽然忙碌，但井然有序，从根本上来说，这也许就是发达国家和表面发达国家的差别吧。仅此一周对英国人就有这样深的印象，难怪国人（知识份子、富豪）都爱往外跑了，确实与中国大相径庭。然而中国也非不民主，只是素质低下的国人和扭曲的发展带来的复杂的社会问题。没有一个人能在短时间内应对吧。

### A Brief Outlook of England

Coming to a foreign land the first time, it does not need words to explain my sentiments [most likely it is a positive feeling]. From my perspective, a person needs to experience what is happening, so that it can be called real. For example, in school, the textbook describes that British people hate being in a packed underground carriage. People keep a distance from each other at any times. This [content of the textbook] is nonsense. Like China, it has rush hour. London is a bustling city and has a fast pace of life, which was my first impression.

British people are friendly. This is inarguable. Our host family comprise of an old couple and their muscular son. They love Chinese history, food, and we are getting along well with each other. Apart from that, when we were asking British citizens for directions, they rather missed the bus but not leaving our questions unanswered. However their [the British citizens who helped with pointing directions] logical thinking is bad, no matter in the areas of mathematics or comprehension. It appears that they are innocent [in positive context]. In the underground, street artists rely on their abilities to make a living, unlike baggers in China who just pretend that they are poor and ask for money. That is why I appreciate artists in the underground. Their music turns bustling stations to relaxing and peaceful. This is a main feature of London. London as a bustling city is different from China. Here it is crowded but it has orders. Using the right hand

side when using escalators and allowing passengers to get out before entering the trains, are practised by everybody. In China, it [undergrounds] is crowded and chaotic. What is more, pedestrians in London ignore traffic lights, but this might be the reason that drivers always give way to pedestrians. This is different from China, in terms of fundamental quality and social norms [he tries to say that people in China equally ignore traffic lights, but the difference is that British drivers are considerate while Chinese drivers are not].

I am attracted to the life in Britain. It is busy, but it has orders. Fundamentally, it is perhaps the difference between a developed country and superficially developed country. I have a deep impression having stayed in Britain for just a week, that is why Chinese intellectuals and wealthy people are eager to go away [to leave China]. It [could be life of Britain or in the West] is in a stark contrast to China. However, China is not non-democratic, it is just the qualities of Chinese people [assumed it is moral degradation] and mismanaged development that brought about complicated social problems, which is impossible for anybody to solve within a short period of time.

## Appendix 7 – Students’ writing in Chinese language – Patrick

眼见方为实，见识影响认知，此行虽对我在认识英国的进程上增益不少，但与我之前所闻相差不大。英国的社会，民族组成确实是极其多元化，以至我难以相信这是一个由白人组成的国度。这里充斥了大量的黑人、印度人以及华人，而他们都很好地融入了当地社会。个人以为在英国的人种歧视并不是太严重，难道这个问题只存在于足球比赛中？抵达英国的当晚令我印象无比深刻的是伦敦无比错综复杂的街道。相比较而说，伦敦的街道实在是太过狭窄，然而却不像国内大城市一样拥挤。欧洲人的严谨谦逊是否于世界上有名？英国的司机必需是于世界有名的。习惯于在国内以行人的身份谦让车辆的我很难将英国司机对于行人以谦让看作理所当然。只是怕现在心安理得的接受了，来日回国被撞死的机率就要大幅增加了。耶苏在这个工业革命起源之地仍然占有重要地位，难以理解。我还以为他们早就崇信科学了呢！信教是否算是一种封建迷信？亦或是为了填补在现今物质横流的世界里空虚的心灵？我还是喜欢中国人的所谓信仰，什么都信又什么都不信。我还是不太习惯英国人的饮食。以一个中国人的角度来说这些食物实在是太过油腻。英国如此多的肥胖人群也从侧面印证了我的观点。这让我腹诽不已。消耗生产的粮食去制造肥肉？我以为这对社会是毫无益处。最后令我影响深刻的，是英国干净的厕所和肮脏的街道二者形成了鲜明的对比。厕所代表的是发达国家多年教育私觉所遗下的优良成果，街道则让我想起了我的家乡。

Only what you see is real. Experience shapes knowledge. Although this trip has enriched my understanding of Britain, my perspective about England has not changed compared to what I have learnt in the past. Britain is a multi-cultural nation. This makes me difficult to believe that it mainly comprises of the white race in the country. There are many Black, Indian and Chinese people, and they are able to integrate into the society. Personally I feel that racial discrimination in Britain is not serious. Perhaps this problem just appears in football? When I first arrived in the UK, my strong impression was that the labyrinth of streets in London. In contrast to China, streets in London are too narrow, however they are not as crowded as China's. Is it true that European people's seriousness and humbleness are well known in the world? Britain's drivers have to be famous. In China, as a pedestrian, I am used to give way to cars, which makes me difficult to take it for granted that drivers should give way to pedestrians. I fear that if now I am used this practice, when returning to China, there will be higher risks that I am knocked down by cars. Jesus Christ has an important role in this origin of industrial revolution, which is difficult to understand. I thought they have long been adoring science. Is religion a superstition in feudal times? Or does it compensate people when they get lost in the contemporary materialistic world? I rather prefer faith in the Chinese context. You believe everything and you disbelieve everything. I am still not used to everyday diets in Britain. From the perspective as a Chinese, the food is really too greasy. That there are many obese people in Britain proves my opinion. To produce fat through food consumption is not healthy for the society. Finally, what has struck me is the stark contrast between clean toilets and dirty streets in Britain. The toilets represent the fruitful outcomes of education of a developed country. The streets make me think about my home nation.

## Appendix 8 – Students’ writing in Chinese language - Florence




### 倫敦事



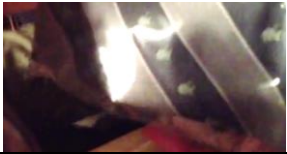

London的一大特点就是无高楼，天很高，房子很整齐，虽大小相似但各有特色，古黄优雅怡静的味道十足，所以总是让人想照相。至于路上的行人，你得分时间看，晚上或清晨，人还少时，你会见头戴头盔飞蹬自行车的老少男，人们飞驰而且（顺便提一句，这里的男人们真是酷爱自行这项运动这类男人与自行车的搭配随处可见。）还有些刚下班的少男少女们头戴巨大的扣耳机，迈着轻快却不紧促的步伐在路上漫步。至于上班时，在地铁和火车站门口或车上，中国人应该会很不适应，他们鲜少有成群结伙甚至两人搭伴，一个人一个人地步履急促，面容谨慎严肃地边跑到地铁。他们不爱与人说话，每个人都拿着车站免费的报纸，或一本小说，或一本电纸书，只有极少数的人看手机或呆坐着。这种场面，多半的人手捧相同的报纸，一言不发，我想在中国的任何时间任何场合都是实在不会存在的。有些人会觉得这样太过压抑，我倒觉得这是英国人独特的，令人佩服的一种品质，而且当你听见一声又一声此起彼伏的 *sorry, Excuse me*, 会觉得那多可贵而且令人温暖。中国公交车上时常发的那种因踩脚而吵架的事也该是不会出现在英国的，我认为原因有二，一是在那种当掉根针都能听见的地铁环境下，少有人敢大声说话，再有，英国人的 *gentle* 是远近闻名，*sorry* 和 *excuse me* 能解决一切问题。

### About London

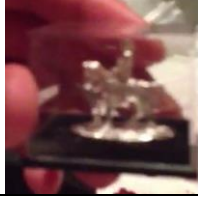


One of the main characters of London is that there are no skyscrapers, the sky is high [probably emphasising no skyscrapers], buildings are neat. They are similar in size but have different characters, which are classical, genteel and tranquil, so I can't resist the temptation of taking pictures all the time. To observe pedestrians, they are different in the morning and evening. When there are few people, you would see bikers of any ages, who wear helmets and are always rushing (by the way, the men here love cycling as a sport. The combination of this kind of men and bikes are everywhere). And some young men and women are just off from work, wearing big headphones and waking in a swift but relaxed manner. Transports in the morning, such as undergrounds, train stations or on buses, Chinese people should feel difficult to adapt to it [behaviours of London commuters that create the scene]. They [London commuters] are rarely in a group or even in pairs, who look serious and hurry to the underground without hustling. They do not speak to others, everybody takes a free paper available in stations, or a novel, or an electronic book, just a minority of people watch the mobile phone or sit there idly. The majority of people are reading the same paper and being silent. I do not think this situation would exist at any time, any place, and in any occasions in China. Some people might think this is too suppressing, however I feel that this is a unique and admirable British character. Moreover, when you hear rhythmical 'sorry' and 'excuse me', you would feel how precious and warm it is. In China, passengers quarrelling with each other because of stepped feet always happen in public transports, which I think should not happen in Britain. There are two reasons behind it. Firstly, when being in a silent environment, in which you can hear a pin dropping on the floor, who would dare to speak up. Second, the gentleness of British people is well-known, 'sorry' and 'excuse me' can solve all the problems.

## Appendix 9 – Particulars of Patrick’s souvenirs




Souvenirs	For Whom	Prices	Characteristics
5 London landmark ornaments	self	£1.30 each	UK symbol
3 postboxes with the Union Jack pattern 		Data missed – approximately less than £2 each	UK symbol
2 pencil sharpeners (British from the British Museum)		Data missed - approximately less than £3 in total	Nil
Spoon from Household Cavalry 		£4.20	Place-based
Book about St. Paul’s Cathedral		£4.50	Place-based
Bell with the Big Ben model		£5.00	UK symbol
Book about the British Museum		£6.00	Place-based
Photo of platform 9 ¾ in King’s Cross Station 		£8.00	UK popular culture
Big Ben crystal ornament		£15	UK symbol
3 shirts from Primark		Data missed – guess they are fairly	Nil


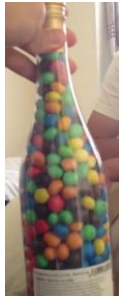



		cheap	
Shoulder strap bag with the Union Jack pattern		£19.00	UK symbol
Harry potter's wand from Oxford		above £30.00	UK popular culture
Gryffindor's wand from Oxford		above £30.00	UK popular culture
Gryffindor's scarf from Oxford 		£32.99	UK popular culture
2 books: <i>The Best of Sherlock Holmes</i> , and <i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>	one for self, another for a friend	Data missed	UK popular culture
2 t-shirts with the Union Jack pattern (made in England)		£10.00 each	UK popular culture
Glass paperweight with London skyline pattern 	self or friend, not yet decided	£4.00	UK symbol
Tie with Sherlock Holmes figure pattern 	father	£14.00	UK popular culture
12 postcards with the Union Jack pattern	Friends	Data missed	UK symbol
Spoon from the Household Cavalry 		£ 2.45	Place-based
Ornament from the Household Cavalry		£ 3.60	



			
T-shirt with a Star Wars figure		£8.00	US culture
Clock with the Big Ben model		£10.00	UK symbol
Hipflask with the Union Jack pattern 		£16.99	UK symbol
English medieval sword 		£17.99	UK symbol

## Appendix 10 – Particulars of Scott’s souvenirs

Souvenirs	For Whom	Prices	Characteristics
<p>Model seige gun from the British Museum</p> 	Self	Data missed	Self-interest
<p>2 pencil sharpeners with a soldier figure</p> 		Data missed	Self-interest
<p>Book about the National Gallery</p> 		£5.00	Place-based
<p>Pearl-liked necklace from Primark</p> 	Not yet decided	£2.00	Self-interest
<p>Big Ben crystal model</p> 		£6.99	UK symbols

<p>Pearl necklace</p> 		£50.00	Self-interest
<p>Postcards</p>	A teacher living in the United States	Data missed	UK symbols
<p>M&amp;M chocolate bottle</p> 	the daughter (5-6 years old) of his father's colleague	£16.95	Self-interest
<p>Purse with the Union Jack pattern</p>  <p>Wallet with the Union pack pattern</p> 	Mother or aunt	£7.99  About £5.00	UK symbols
<p>M&amp;M chocolate in multi-compartments package</p> 	The chocolate for himself, and the case for his grandfather to store pills	£12.95	Self-interest

<p>Silver necklace from the British Museum</p> 	Mother	£28.00	Self-interest
<p>Bracelet from the British Museum</p> 	Mother	£35.00	Self-interest
<p>Tea set miniature</p> 	Grandparents	Data missed	UK culture / self interest
<p>Pocket watch from the Royal Observatory Greenwich</p> 	Father	£90.00	Place-based

Source: author

