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Exploring the Processes of Identity Construction among Chinese Immigrant Parents and Young Adults in Montreal

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Abstract

This qualitative inquiry describes and analyzes the contrasts and interrelationships among the pathways through which Chinese immigrant parents and immigrant young adults construct their identities in a context of Quebec's Interculturalism Policy. My theoretical foundation is shaped by the works of Hall (1990, 1996), Taylor (1994), and Bhabha (1996). In order to understand the lived experiences of the Chinese immigrants from their perspectives, I conducted 15 in-depth, face-to-face individual interviews with both the parents and young adults from five Chinese immigrant families living in Montreal. This inquiry aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics and complexity of identity construction. Results from the interviews reveal the multiple, fluid, and malleable nature of identity. Through their individualized definitions of the meanings of "being Chinese" and "being Canadian," participants indicate the coexistence of their Chinese and Canadian identities. They demonstrate that their identities are constructed and reconstructed through the dialectical interplay among self, others, and the socio-cultural contexts that they negotiate. The multiple social identifications that participants claim are closely intertwined with each other during the process of their identity constructions. This inquiry has implications for policymakers and educators who can take an active role in the fostering of hybrid identities, which serve to challenge and problematize the hegemonic definition of a "Chinese-Canadian" identity. Hybrid identities open up the possibility of dismantling old cultural boundaries, and reinventing new shared cultural spaces, which are of great significance in today's increasingly globalized world.

Résumé

Dans un contexte d'interculturalisme québécois, cette recherche qualitative décrit et analyse les moyens à travers lesquelles parents et jeunes adultes immigrants chinois développent leur identité. Les fondements théoriques de cet ouvrage reposent sur les travaux de Hall (1990, 1996), Taylor (1994) et Bhabha (1996). Quinze entretiens individuels en profondeur ont été conduits auprès de parents et jeunes adultes au sein de cinq familles d'immigrants chinois vivantes à Montréal. Cette méthode a été utilisée afin de comprendre le vécu des sujets à partir de leurs expériences. Cette recherche tente de contribuer à une compréhension plus nuancée de la dynamique et de la complexité de la construction identitaire. Les résultats obtenus grâce aux entretiens révèlent le caractère pluriel, fluide et malléable de l'identité. De plus, à travers leurs propres définitions de ce que signifie « être chinois » et « être canadien », les participants ont démontré la coexistence de leur identité chinoise et canadienne. Ainsi, ces derniers démontrent que l'identité est construite et reconstruite par le biais d'interactions entre le soi, l'autre, et le contexte socioculturel qu'ils frayent. De plus, durant le processus de construction identitaire, les différentes identités sociales des participants se trouvent à être étroitement liées l'une avec l'autre. Finalement, cette étude a un impact sur les législateurs et éducateurs pouvant promouvoir des identités hybrides, qui, contestent et problématisent la définition hégémonique d'une identité « chinoise-canadienne ». Ce concept d'identité hybride ouvre la voie à une réévaluation des anciennes théories concernant la limite des frontières culturelles ainsi qu'à une réinvention d'espaces culturelles partagées, ce qui est d'autant plus important en raison de la mondialisation croissante.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

In Canada, "Chinese-Canadian" has been a term commonly used to describe people of Chinese origin who hold Canadian nationality. The term also refers to the Chinese community across all of Canadian society. However, does this term necessarily entail a singular collective identity? I doubt it. First of all, the Chinese immigrants in Canada are not homogeneous. They consist of people who arrived during different time periods, from different regions and cultural backgrounds, with different motivations and individual repertoires. These differences existing among Chinese immigrants inevitably influence the paths through which they construct their identities. Hall (1990) characterizes identities as the unstable points of identification, which are "subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (p.225). In addition to race, ethnicity, and nationality, the construction process is also intertwined with other aspects of identification including class, gender, age, religion, as well as sexual orientation. The heterogeneity within the Chinese immigrant population, coupled with the fluid and dynamic nature of identity, consequently makes the identity construction process complex and problematic, which defies any sweeping generalizations. In this qualitative inquiry, I undertake a focused inquiry into the identity construction of the Chinese immigrants who came from mainland China and have settled in Montreal since the 1990s. By exploring their perceptions of their lived experiences through in-depth, face-to-face interviews, I aim to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics and complexity of the identity construction among the Chinese immigrants in Canada. In this chapter, I provide the background and the context of my inquiry, elaborate my rationale for my chosen focus, and introduce the research questions and themes I explore in this inquiry.

Chinese Immigration to Canada

The earliest evidence of Chinese in Canada is found in the memoirs of Captain John Meares, a British fur trader and retired naval officer who commenced his exploration in Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island in 1788 with 50 Chinese smiths, sailors and carpenters shipped from South China (Lai, 2003; Li & Lee, 2005).

However, immigration from China to Canada did not begin until almost a century later when gold fields were discovered in the Fraser Valley of British Colombia, drawing thousands of gold miners from China during the late 1850s to 1860s. Li and Lee (2005) explain that these initial Chinese migrants, consisting primarily of single young men from the province of Guangdong in southern China, "with few restrictions, were free to come and go" (p.646). The next influx of Chinese immigrants occurred two decades later as a response to the demand for cheap labour for the construction of Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in British Columbia. Upon completion of the CPR in 1885, the majority of Chinese labourers stayed on in the province, opening laundries, restaurants and grocery stores, while some others moved eastward to Ontario and Quebec in search of more job opportunities. However, concurrent with the decreased demand for Chinese labourers following the completion of the initial railway came the rapidly increased "anti-Orientalism" sentiment in mainstream Canadian society. The atmosphere of racism against Asian workers prevailed. The image of Chinese as racially inferior and unassimilable became widespread. Lai (2003) suggests that this public discrimination raised against Chinese partially resulted from the slow economic growth and high unemployment during the same period of time in British Colombia. Being considerably cheaper made Chinese labourers a definite threat to the local workforce.

In order to restrict Chinese immigration, the federal government passed a Chinese Immigration Act in 1885, which imposed a head tax of $50 on each Chinese immigrant entering

Canada. This amount was subsequently raised to $100 in 1900, and $500 in 1903. However, as many Chinese still managed to pay the heavy head tax, Chinese immigration to Canada was not halted until the most restrictive law—the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act—was put into practice, which essentially prohibited all Chinese from entry into Canada. A series of municipal and provincial legislations deliberately disfranchised all people of Chinese origin and hence put an end to their desire to reside in this country. The Chinese population in Canada thus sharply declined during the 1930s and 1940s (Li & Lee, 2005).

Eventually in 1947, the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed as a result of the post-World War II (WWII) pressures to denounce racist attitudes and actions, along with the increasing demands for equal treatment from minority groups. From that point on, Chinese residents were granted Canadian citizenship and allowed to sponsor their nuclear family members for immigration, even though the immigration policy at that time was still "based on the principle of preserving Caucasian predominance" (Lai, 2003, p.321). During the two decades after WWII, a higher proportion of Chinese women entered Canada, helping "correct the immense gender imbalance in the [Chinese] community" (Li & Lee, 2005, p.646).

The Immigration Act of 1967 represents a clear line of demarcation in the history of Canadian immigration policy since for the first time nationality and race were eliminated from the selection criteria for immigrants. The Liberal government introduced a universal points system. Under the new system, points were allocated to applicants based on their educational levels, occupational skills and language proficiency. Applicants were admitted if their total points reached a minimum threshold. With emphasis on immigrants' educational qualifications and specific skills instead of their skin colors, the points system brought about a dramatic shift in Canadian immigration patterns; more immigrants were being received from Asia relative to Europe than ever

before (Guo & DeVoretz, 2006). With this influx of immigrants from Asia, the largest group was of Chinese descents, coming from many different lands and cultures that included Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, and Southeast Asia. Scholars (Guo & DeVoretz, 2006; Lai, 2003; Li & Lee, 2005) also observe a major shift in the characteristics of Chinese immigrants arriving pre- and post-1967—as a direct result of the new selection criteria, those who entered Canada under the points system predominantly came from the urban areas of Hong Kong and were more educated and skilled than their predecessors.

In 1976, the points system was revised. Greater emphasis was placed on occupational experience and job creation for the Canadian economy. The change introduced a new "entrepreneur" category of immigration through the Business Immigration Program (Li & Lee, 2005). In order to attract more investment capital and experienced businessmen that had the potential to promote economic growth in Canada, the government expanded this program again in 1985 by including an "investor" category (Lai, 2003, p.325). Hence during the 1980s and 1990s, a large immigration wave took place, "bringing rich and middle-class Hong Kong and Taiwanese Chinese to Canada" (Li & Lee, 2005, p.647). However, direct immigration from mainland China to Canada before the late 1980s remained relatively small, with the vast majority being admitted through family sponsorship. These immigrants generally had "lower educational level[s] and less labour market experiences" (Li, 2005, p.15) than those arriving through the points system, known as "economic" immigrants. It should also be noted that as of the early 1970s, refugees have been a constant component of Canadian immigration program. It should also be noted that Chinese immigrants have been admitted into Canada through the "refugee" category of Canada's immigration program, established in the early 1970s. In the 1980s, a small group of Chinese descendants from Vietnam entered Canada under this category (Wang & Lo, 2005).

Researchers (Guo & DeVoretz, 2006; Li, 2005, 2010) indicate that the lack of formal diplomatic relations between Canada and People's Republic of China (PRC) was one major factor that hindered the direct immigration from mainland China. However, the establishment of Canada-China diplomatic relations in 1971 did not bring about an immediate migration boom. Especially in the aftermath of the 1989 pro-democracy student movement in China, the Chinese government tightened its political control and deterred its people's cross-border mobility. However, this 1989 incident, probably in conjunction with the imminent return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, triggered the political instability in Hong Kong, which served as the main cause of the mass Hong Kong immigration during the same period (Guo & DeVoretz, 2006; Li, 2005). Eventually in the 1990s, substantial and constant immigration to Canada from mainland China occurred because of China's economic upsurge following the "open door" policy and the consequently more relaxed passport regulations. Contrary to the immigration trend in mainland China, immigration from Hong Kong to Canada started to decline in the mid-1990s, largely due to the economic downturn in Hong Kong (Li, 2005). In 1998, mainland Chinese immigrants "outnumbered Hong Kong's and Taiwan's, as the PRC became the top source region for immigrants to Canada" (Guo & DeVoretz, 2006, p.281).

Li (2010) notes that corresponding to the increase in mainland Chinese immigrants during the 1990s was the growing percentage of those admitted under the skilled economic class. These economic class immigrants were "those selected based on a points system which emphasizes human capital, financial capital and work experience" (Li, 2010, p.3). This trend could be explained mainly by the emergence of a knowledge economy discourse throughout Canada in the 1990s. "Virtually all job creation occurred in knowledge-based occupations—professional, managerial, and technical" (Zhao, 2000, p.9) and hence there was a huge demand for skilled

workers. Canada's heavy loss of highly skilled workers to the United States, particularly in the high-technology industries during the same period, further facilitated the large influx of highly skilled immigrants from China and elsewhere in Asia. In the meantime, China's educational reform resulted in abundant annual supplies of fresh university graduates, as well as a larger student population studying abroad, which also contributed to the potential pool of immigrants for Canada seeking skilled workers (Li, 2010).

Predictably, this situation entailed an escalating complexity of social differentiation among the Chinese population in Canada. The Chinese immigrants arriving in the 1990s possessed much higher educational qualifications than those coming in previous decades, among whom immigrants from mainland China exhibited relatively higher level of educational attainment than those from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Vietnam (Wang & Lo, 2005). Being well-educated was particularly true of Chinese immigrants after the mid-1990s. Correspondingly, mainland Chinese immigrants were on average younger than other Chinese immigrant groups. They were mostly able force in the labour market and economically outperformed other immigrant groups arriving in the same era. Although, large income disparities continued to exist between Chinese immigrants and the general Canadian population. "In 2000, the average income from all sources for Canadians of Chinese origin aged 15 and over was about $25,000, compared to almost $30,000 for all Canadian adults" (Statistics Canada, 2006b). However, mainland Chinese came to Canada with the lowest level of English proficiency, with 35 percent being able to speak English at the time of their arrival, while 49 percent and 36 percent of immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan respectively met the English language requirement at the time of landing (Wang & Lo, 2005). The proportion of Chinese immigrants who had a knowledge of French, the other official language of Canada, was even smaller.

In 2002, with the implementation of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, new classes and procedures were introduced in order to further Canada's goal of building human capital (Li, 2010). The revised points system eliminated occupation-specific criteria and increased the weight on applicants' education, language skills and work experience. These changes, premised on the belief that "immigrants with substantial educational credentials and qualifications also possess generic skills suitable to Canada's knowledge economy" (Li, 2010, p.10), were partly a response to the old immigrant selection system that prioritized specific occupational demands. Since then, the annual number of Chinese immigrants has continued to rise, with the proportion of skilled immigrants on the rise.

The 2011 National Household Survey of Canada indicates that Chinese people have formed the second largest visible minority group in the country, South Asians being the largest (Statistics Canada, 2013a). Canada's immigration trend still continues, with Chinese and South Asians leading the annual immigrant arrivals into Canada. According to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada's 2013 statistics, China has been among the top three sending countries of permanent residents to Canada during the last decade. Mainland China continues to be the largest source region, admitting approximately 13 percent of the total number of permanent residents to Canada (Citizenship and Immigration, 2014). Statistics Canada (2010) also projects that the Chinese population will double by 2031, going from 1.3 million in 2006 to potentially up to 3.0 million in 2031, remaining one of the major ethnic groups in Canada.

Chinese in Montreal

While much research has focused on Chinese immigrants in Toronto and Vancouver (see Photo 1 below), studies of Montreal-based Chinese immigrants are relatively less frequent. The

Chinese immigrants in Montreal are smaller in number, compared to the large Chinese communities in these two metropolitan areas.

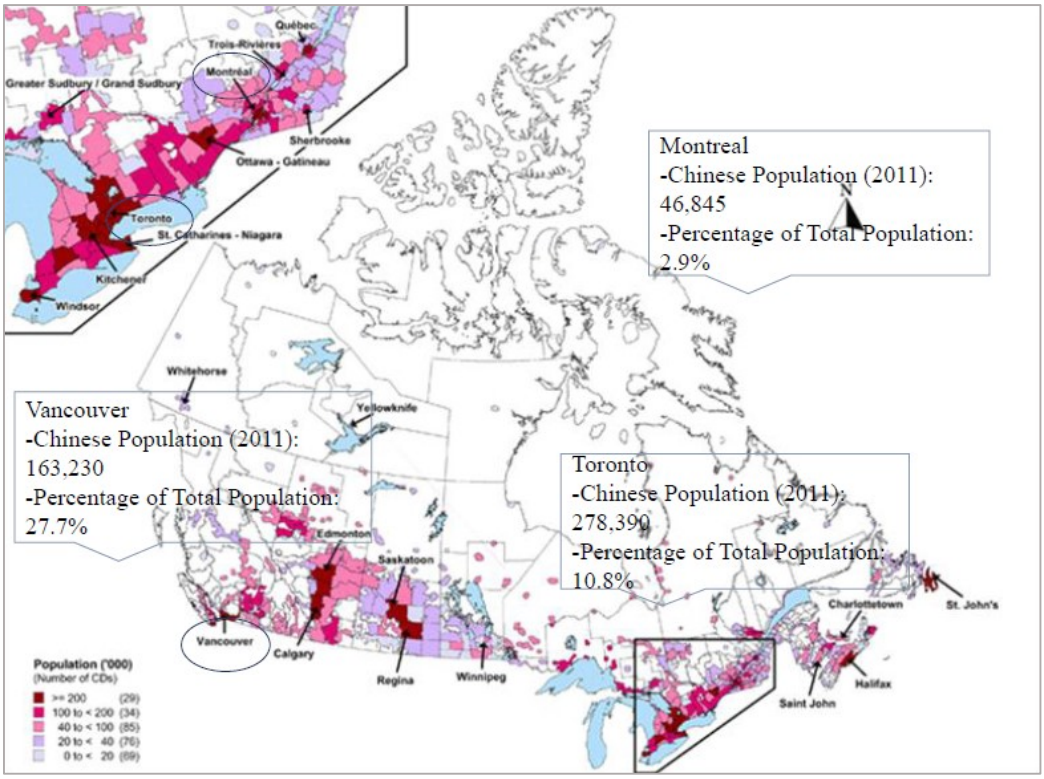

Photo 1: Map of Canada.
From Statistics Canada, 2013,
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-214-x/2012000/m005-eng.hym. Copyright 2013 by Statistics Canada.

It remains unclear when the first Chinese settled in Montreal. However, the 1825 Census of Canada indicates the presence of a Chinese man in the district of St. Joseph (Chan, 1991). The first Chinese laundry in recorded history was opened in 1877 by a Cantonese man, who started a wave of 2000 Chinese individuals travelling directly from the city of Guangzhou to Quebec. "Having heard of increasing racial hostility toward them upon the abrupt depletion of job opportunities in British Columbia, these Cantonese came directly to Quebec to join their predecessors" (Chan, 1991, p.29). As a result, the early Chinese community in Quebec was primarily constituted of these Cantonese men, along with those railroad labourers who escaped

from the intense "anti-Orientalism" in the west, and took their eastbound trip looking for jobs upon finishing the CPR.

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, Quebec's population was composed almost exclusively of French and British ethnics, while no more than two percent of the total population identified with other ethnic groups (Chan, 1991). However, a change in the demographics of Quebec started to take place in late nineteenth century. The rapid urbanization and industrial growth in the province towards the end of the century filled itself with strong magnetic power that attracted European migrants as well as the labourers from the western provinces, quickly turning Montreal into an evolving metropolis in Eastern Canada. By the time the 1901 Census of Canada was completed, Montreal was the most densely populated city in the country with more than two hundred thousand residents, of whom approximately seven hundred were Chinese (Chan, 1991; Statistics Canada, 2013b).

Most of the early Chinese immigrants coming to Montreal joined the laundry business, as it was at one time the most lucrative line of work for the Chinese. However, the "anti-Orientalism" sentiment from the west quickly ran high in the eastern provinces. Eventually in 1915, the Quebec government imposed a tax of $50 per year on all Chinese laundry owners. Extremely difficult as the situation was in the early 1920s, the Chinese managed to open more than a thousand hand laundries within a few blocks surrounded by the streets Bleury, Dorchester (René-Lévesque), Saint-Laurent and Craig (Saint-Antoine) (Chan, 1991). When the laundry market was saturated in the mid-1920s, Chinese launderers started to venture into the restaurant business. With some failed attempts to settle in other neighborhoods in Montreal, most initial Chinese restaurants were concentrated in the same blocks as the laundries (Robert, 2014). These commercial and residential blocks marked the beginning of Montreal's Chinatown.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the Chinese population in Montreal stayed stagnant due to the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act, which effectively prohibited the entry of almost all Chinese into Canada. The period coincided with the Great Depression in Montreal, which plunged the city into an economic crisis that affected the entire population in varying degrees. Half of the Chinese businesses were shut down, and "the total active Chinese work force was reduced by old age, illness, deaths, retirement and return to China" (Chan, 1991, p.166). The Chinese community in Montreal shrank.

Photo 2: Chinese Laundry during the 1960s.
From Archives de la Ville de Montréal,
http://archivesdemontreal.com/documents/2014/03/005_VM94-C196-0791.jpg.

Chan (1991) gives a vivid illustration of the racial discrimination against the Chinese community during this period:

> The press often went to great length in publicizing sensationalized accounts of illicit and "immoral" activities among the Chinese…the term Chinatown conjured up a maze of stereotypical, and largely derogatory, images underlined by a strange blending of reactions and emotions ranging from curiosity, fear, paranoia, to hatred, prejudice and outright racism. These images are similar to those typically associated with ghettos and urban slums: dark alleys, prostitutes, gambling rings, drugs, organized crime, over-crowding, high rates of physical and mental disorders and a wide diversity of "ethnic vices". (p.171)

For decades, the Chinese in Montreal found themselves overrepresented in laundry and restaurant businesses (see Photo 2), having hardly any access to job opportunities in the mainstream labour market. The job segregation resulting from the institutional and structural racism was even more intense in the eastern provinces such as Quebec than in Western Canada. While a considerable number of Chinese worked as mining and logging labourers in British Columbia, the Chinese in Montreal were confined almost exclusively to the personal service sector, "or more precisely, in the 'ethnic enclave sub-economy'"(Chan, 1991, p.172).

It was not until the latter half of 1980s that the Quebec government began to actively compete with other provinces for the entrepreneurs and investors from Hong Kong and mainland China. Thanks to the need for economic transformation, Montreal witnessed a dramatic influx a Chinese immigrants in the 1990s, most of whom belonged to a highly marketable economic class. These new immigrants, with better formal education and stronger linguistic skills, could work beyond ethnic trades into more knowledge-based professions—professional, managerial, and technical. Their upward mobility also enabled them to move out of the inner cities and settle in suburbs such as the West Island and South Shore. Chinatown (see Photo 3) was torn down in the

1980s following the city's redevelopment plan, before being gentrified in the late 1990s. Nowadays, with a reduced size covering mostly the area of De La Gauchetière Street (see Photo 4) and the newly-built aestheticizing images for tourism, Chinatown is viewed more as a tourist attraction than home to a small pocket of immigrants (Hsu, 2014).

Photo 3: The Gate of Montreal's Chinatown.
The Gate of Montreal's Chinatown. From Wikimedia, 2011, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AMontreal_China_Town_Gate.jpg.

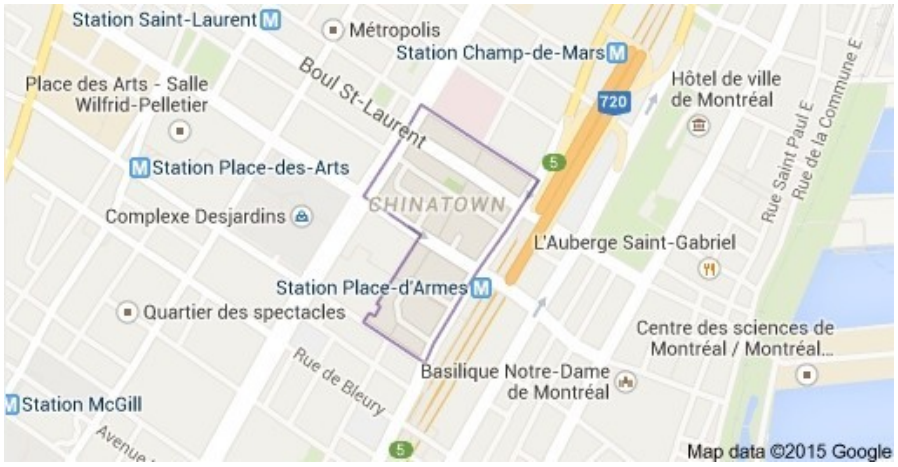

Photo 4: Map of Montreal's Chinatown.
From Google Maps, 2005, https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Chinatown,+Montreal,+QC/@45.5070687,-73.5604325,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x4cc91a51b33d5c8d:0xcea79c01dcba013b. Copyright 2015 by Google Maps.

The 2011 National Household Survey of Canada shows that Chinese has comprised the fourth largest visible minority group in Montreal, representing 2.9 percent of its total population (Statistics Canada, 2013a). In 2006, PRC for the first time topped the list of birthplaces of recent immigrants to Montreal. The proportion declined from 9.8 percent in 2006 to 5.5 percent in 2011 with a marked increase in immigration from French-speaking countries such as France, Haiti and Algeria (Statistics Canada, 2006a, 2011). Although Montreal continues to attract a significant number of immigrants from China and the Chinese population in Montreal may keep growing, statistics reveal that Montreal continues to be the least desirable destination for Chinese immigrants compared to Vancouver and Toronto, where the Chinese accounts for 27.7 percent and 10.8 percent of the total population respectively (Statistics Canada, 2013a).

The coexistence of francophone and anglophone cultures in Montreal provides a unique and fascinating flavor. However, Montreal's bilingual nature has simultaneously caused challenges for immigrants whose first language is neither French nor English. For example, increasing jobs in Montreal require bilingualism as a qualification, thus making it tough for Allophones in particular to find and maintain employment. Dating back to the 1960s, the province of Quebec was the center of a French-Canadian nationalist movement entitled the Quiet Revolution, whose supporters, known as Quebeckers (Québécois), sought full independence from Canada. With growing national self-determination after the movement, the Quebec government started to take a more active role in administrating its immigration policies. In 1968, the province established its own immigration department. Its autonomy in immigration matters was then secured again in the 1990s under the Canada-Quebec Accord, which gave Quebec the exclusive responsibility of choosing immigrants who settle in this province.

Immigration has long been perceived as a tool to strengthen the francophone nature of Quebec's society. Under Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language, there is an increasing emphasis on candidates' French language knowledge in Quebec's selection criteria for immigrants. The French language requirements inevitably limit the pool of newcomers and make Quebec less popular with non-French speakers than other provinces, such as British Colombia, Ontario and Alberta. Even though Montreal, the largest city in Quebec, is well known for being bilingual and multicultural, many potential Chinese immigrants are less likely to consider it as the destination of choice. The proportion of Chinese immigrants packing their bags for other provinces within a few years after settling down in Montreal is also reported to be high. However, the lack of employment opportunities, the political and economic instability, insufficient family networks for assistance, and the severe weather conditions can also be the factors that contribute to the comparatively smaller Chinese population in Montreal.

Multiculturalism & Interculturalism

Ghosh and Abdi (2013) identify five stages through which the ideology of multiculturalism in Canada has progressively evolved: the stage of assimilation, adaptation, accommodation, incorporation and integration. The last stage, integration, "marked by interdependence, reciprocity, and mutual enrichment" (Ghosh & Abdi, p. 105), is a stage that Canadian society has been striving for, guided by the federal policy of multiculturalism. The ideological shifts towards multiculturalism are relevant to the immigration movements in Canada. When the vestiges of racial preference were eliminated from the immigration selection system during the 1960s and 1970s, the perception of Canada as a multicultural nation developed due to the county's increasing pluralism. In 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau officially introduced a policy of "Bilingualism within a Multicultural Framework". As he put it:

> For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other…A policy of Multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. (Trudeau, 1971)

Grounded in the liberal ideas of individual freedom, the multiculturalism policy was seen as part of the general liberal revolution in Canada, starting in 1960 with the enactment of the Canadian Bill of Rights (Kymlicka, 2005). Efforts to confirm and reinforce the policy were made through the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedom and the 1988 Multiculturalism Act. Being the fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage and identity, multiculturalism has constantly been questioned and criticized for inadvertently contributing to the ghettoization and alienation of ethnic groups and further to the wider "disunity in terms of the fragmentation of 'national allegiance'"(Gagnon & Iacovino, 2005, p.36). Ghosh (2011) points out that a major problem with the current practices of multiculturalism in Canada lies in the misinterpretation of multiculturalism as "a policy that caters to 'ethnic groups' and this enables the majority groups (Anglophone and Francophone) to watch from the sidelines so that white privilege is kept intact" (p.5). If a policy fails to include these majority groups in public conversations about racial differences and power relations, it fails to address the imbalance of power between majority and minority groups and fails to challenge the established social order in which social inequalities are rooted.

However, the positive contributions of multiculturalism should also be recognized. Kymlicka (2005) notes that Canada's multiculturalism "has not only had an enormous symbolic effect, reshaping our very ideas of what it is to be Canadian, but has also had important substantive effects on the way that public institutions operate" (p.1). The multiculturalism policy has been playing a major role in assisting newcomers with their settlement and integration. Particularly, it

has helped to facilitate the participation of ethnic minorities in public institutions in Canada. Remarkable upward mobility has been observed among the children of immigrants; their educational achievement has proved to be better than their counterparts in other western democracy (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013). There is also evidence that Canada's multiculturalism has become an important reason that many new immigrants become citizens and take pride in being Canadian (Ho, 2013).

Most provinces in Canada adopted the policy of multiculturalism successively in late 1980s and early 1990s. However, the province of Quebec, where up to 70 percent of the population claims descent from original francophone settlers (Taylor, 2012), designated its own policy known as "interculturalism." The interculturalism policy was seen as primarily a response to the federal multiculturalism, deliberately created to avoid dealing with the English-French duality in Canada. The model of interculturalism, taking shape in 1981 with the publication of a plan of action entitled *Autant de façons d'être Québécois*, declared Quebec to be "pluralistic in outlook but francophone through the medium of the French language" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013, p.115). The French language constitutes the basis for Quebec in that it historically served as "the primary vehicle for the preservation and flourishing of Québécois identity" (Gagnon & Iacovino, 2005, p.29). More importantly, French language functions as the common official language for public life, "a minimal condition of the exercise of common citizenship—as an instrument of democracy" (Gagnon & Iacovino, 2005, p.31) in face of the increasing pluralism and social complexity. In other words, French language proficiency is the prerequisite of participating in and contributing to the economic, social and cultural fabric of the larger community.

As early as 1969, Quebec started to prompt legislation to safeguard its language. Bill 63 required children who received education in English to acquire a working knowledge of French,

and ensured that immigrants were offered French courses upon their arrival in Quebec. Bill 22, the Official Language Act implemented by the Quebec Liberal government in 1974, proclaimed French as the sole official language in Quebec. In 1977, with the introduction of Bill 101, the Parti Québécois government took a step further, requiring French to be the official language for public life at all levels (Publications du Québec, 2014). Additionally, it made it compulsory for all children of immigrants to attend French schools for primary and secondary education, unless one of the child's parents had received most of his/her education in English in Canada. By the time the 2011 Census was completed, French and bilingual speakers in Quebec accounted for 87 percent of its total population. In Montreal, with a greater proportion of the English-speaking population relative to the entire province, French and bilingual speakers accounted for 73 percent of the population (Statistics Canada, 2012).

There have been intense debates over the virtues and the vices of both the policies of multiculturalism and interculturalism, mostly through comparison between the two. Gagnon and Iacovino (2005) regard multiculturalism as a success in terms of integration, but "at the expense of the recognition and preservation of diverse minority cultures" (p.36). They propose that multiculturalism should eventually advance to interculturalism. As interculturalism places its emphasis on the construction of a common public culture through equal participation of all members, it can strike "a balance between the requirements of unity—an identity basis—and the recognition of minority cultures" (Gagnon & Iacovino, p.37). But defenders of multiculturalism like Meer and Modood (2012) maintain that interculturalism is a complement to rather an updated version of multiculturalism. In their opinion, the two policies share the same fundamental features: "encouraging communication, recognizing dynamic identities, promoting unity and challenging illiberality" (Meer & Modood, p.192). In his recent work "Interculturalism or Multiculturalism?",

Taylor (2012) draws a parallel between these two concepts, stating that "between Canadian multiculturalism and Quebec interculturalism the differences lie less in the concreate policies than in the stories" (p.416). The two narratives have developed from the history of English Canada and French Canada respectively. He elaborates:

> So the contrast is clear: the 'multi' story decentres the traditional ethno-historical identity and refuses to put any other in its place. All such identities coexist in the society, but none is officialized. The 'inter' story starts from the reigning historical identity but sees it evolving in a process in which all citizens, of whatever identity, have a voice, and no-one's input has a privileged status. (p.418)

The idea of decentering and destabilizing the traditional Quebec identity without a doubt is offensive to Quebeckers, as if it connotes the renunciation of their persistent struggle to preserve and strengthen their language and culture. However, Tylor (2012) also points out a risky tendency of interculturalism towards assimilation, as it overly imposes the sameness in language and basic ethics as the precondition for integration. Such a tendency is thought to originate from the long-standing fear and distrust of the incoming different "Others," whom Bill 101 labels as Allophones. Insofar as the negative sentiment towards the "Others" is deeply-rooted and widespread in Quebec society, the intercultural ideals remain empty talk because the fear and distrust will give rise to the creation and expansion of "a deep rift in society, which can compromise democratic life" (Taylor, 2012, p.420).

An ongoing multicultural/intercultural issue is secularism in Quebec. Recently, a debate over religious "accommodations" heated up because of Bill 60, where the Parti Québécois government proposed a Charter of Values that banned visible religious expressions from public service such as the hijab, kippa and turban. Although the bill died as of Quebec's 2014 election,

the public has called into question the very extent to which multiculturalism/interculturalism has been able and willing to accommodate cultural differences.

Focus of My Inquiry

A brief look back at Canadian and Quebec immigration history indicates the great discrepancies present among the Chinese immigrant population, in terms of their source regions, periods of arrival, admission categories, main driving forces for immigration, and their levels of human capital. All these discrepancies have inevitably resulted in the increasing complexity of social differentiations among the Chinese immigrants, and influenced the ways they lead their lives, and construct their identities. Consider, for example, the these two Chinese immigrants—a 60-year-old monolingual senior residing in Chinatown who immigrated to Montreal in late life for family reunification, and a young skilled worker with excellent proficiency in English who immigrated under economic category in his 20s, working and living in a multiethnic suburb of Montreal. I assume that their perceptions of their day-to-day interactions are influenced by their different experiences and backgrounds, which in turn can change the way they perceive themselves.

Even if a relatively cohesive identity may exist, the way in which it is constructed can never be as simple as using the term "Chinese-Canadian"—literally combining the two cultures that appears like doing addition. "Chinese-Canadian" is not the sum of Chinese culture plus Canadian culture. Certainly one cannot fully embrace and practically represent every single aspect of both cultures, leaving the two cultures unaffected by each other. Ideally, the collective identity should be a hybrid identity evolving out of a recognition of the ties to the ancestral homeland and cultural heritage, with a simultaneous emphasis on the community's shared experience in Canada and its unique sensibilities (Li & Lee, 2005). But the extent to which immigrants feel attached to a certain culture vary from person to person. While for some people China is the motherland that provides

them with a sense a belonging, it is no more than a birthplace for some others. Likewise, some may regard Canada as the "second home," but some may only find Canada a place to make a living like elsewhere. A unified "Chinese-Canadian" identity is consequently not even easy to define, before talking about building one.

However, within the multiple groups of Chinese immigrants in Canada, does there exist a general pattern of identity construction among people with similar backgrounds and experiences? What are those influential factors on the process of identity construction if a general pattern can be identified? Will it eventually lead to the development of a shared group identity? With these questions in mind, I decided to focus my attention on two specific categories of Chinese immigrants as participants: those who immigrated to Montreal from mainland China in the 1990s being one, and their children who were born in mainland China but moved to Montreal during early childhood being the other. As I previously stated, Chinese immigrants arriving in Canada in the 1990s were mostly admitted through the points system as economic class immigrants. With high educational qualifications and professional skills, they were selected by Canadian government as potential labour force for Canada's knowledge-based economy. At the time that they commenced their new settlements in Montreal, the policy of multiculturalism had been adopted by most provinces and many larger municipalities "in education, policing, social services, and the protection of human rights" (Ghosh, 2011, p.5). By that time, Quebec has also started to follow its model of interculturalism. Now, having been through two decades of post-immigrant life in Montreal, how differently do these Chinese immigrants perceive their identities compared with 20 years ago? How have the changes in their perceptions of their identities progressively taken place? And what has happened to their families who moved to Montreal in order to keep

them company, especially their children? All these thoughts and curiosities have paved the way for my research questions and themes.

Research Questions and Themes

I aim to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics and complexity of identity construction. I also wish to gain insights into the differences and interrelationships between the pathways through which Chinese immigrant parents and immigrant young adults construct their identities, with a special attention given to the context of Quebec's Interculturalism. My research questions are:

1. What labels do Chinese immigrant parents and young adults living in Montreal use to identify themselves and in what situations?
2. What meanings do they attach to those self-identified labels?
3. What are the major factors they perceive as influential to their identity construction?
4. Are there any noticeable differences between immigrant parents and young adults in their perceptions of their identification?

To understand the lived experiences of Chinese immigrant parents and young adults through their own voices, I invited five Chinese families to participate in a qualitative inquiry about the identity construction of the Chinese immigrants in Montreal. I conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews with the father, mother and the young adult in each family separately. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour, during which we explored themes including: (1) meanings attached to identity labels, (2) impacts of social recognition and nonrecognition, (3) intergenerational dynamics in identity construction (4) cultural diversity and language policy, and (5) the shaping of identity under globalization.

Summary

In this chapter, I briefly outlined the history of Chinese immigration to Canada, with a highlight on the Chinese immigrants living in Montreal, Quebec. I presented a discussion on the cultural context, specifically, Canada's multiculturalism and Quebec's interculturalism, in which Chinese immigration was, and is still being situated. I also explained my rationale for focusing my inquiry on a particular wave of Chinese immigrants, namely, those who arrived in Montreal in the 1990s. I introduced my research questions and themes I explored in this inquiry. In chapter 2, I provide a discussion of the theoretical framework, and a review of the literature that informs my inquiry.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

In this chapter, I present my theoretical framework and literature review. In understanding postmodern conceptualizations of culture and identity, I draw primarily on the theory of Stuart Hall (1990) who views cultural identity as "a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'" (p.225). Identity construction is a dialectical interplay between self-identification and the identification by others. I use Charles Taylor's (1994) politics of recognition to examine the influences that external identification exerts on the construction of Chinese immigrants' identities. I explore Homi Bhabha's (1996) concept of hybridity and Dorothy Holland's (1998) concept of agency, to understand Chinese immigrants' negotiation of new cultural spaces—spaces allowing for the emergence of new positionings that destabilize traditional racial/ethnic boundaries. I also draw upon the theories on language and identity (Cummins, 2001; Maguire, 2005; Noble, Poynting, & Tabar, 1999; Norton, 1997; Rampton 1990, 1995, 2005), which help me analyze the intricate relationships between multiple languages and immigrants' identity constructions in the multilingual and multicultural contexts of Montreal.

I start with a brief introduction of existing quantitative studies on ethnic identification among Chinese immigrant adolescents and young adults in Canada. I then shift my focus towards a wide range of qualitative research by international scholars concerning the (re)construction of "Chineseness" among Chinese populations overseas. I examine the debate about the concept of "Chineseness." I discuss the current Canadian literature pertaining to the identity construction and the lived experiences of the Chinese immigrant groups within Canada. I also provide an overview of Montreal-based research related to the local Chinese populations' perceptions of their identities, in which the profound impact of language on the construction of identity is highlighted.

Theoretical Framework

Culture and Identity

Culture is commonly understood as a distinct set of attributes shared by a group of people, usually including values, beliefs, traditions, history, and language (Yon, 2000). In our everyday lives, culture is frequently equated with clothing, cuisine, song, dance, artifacts and crafts—the comparatively more concrete and tangible embodiments of culture, if not evidently superficial. This popular understanding of culture leads to the belief that culture, as a fixed product, can be inherited and passed down while remaining intact. The culture of one group hence functions to guarantee the uniqueness of the group members, making them distinguishable from others.

However, in this increasingly globalized postmodern world, established cultural boundaries blur, overarching metanarratives collapse, traditional divisive categories break down, and emerging discourses compete and contradict one another. Thus, the sense of a unified, unchanging self comes into question, shall people still stick to the old ways of perceiving culture and identity? If not, then what should be their new definitions?

Yon (2000) argues that culture has a fluid and elusive nature, being not a static and rigid concept. In his book *Elusive Culture*, a yearlong critical ethnographical study of students in an inner-city high school in Toronto, Yon reveals the contradiction and ambivalence embedded in the concept of culture as the youth negotiate their identities. By using the metaphor of "elusive culture," Yon attempts to direct our attention towards an understanding of culture as "not only a product or a set of attributions that can be claimed and neatly recorded, but more significantly, a process that is ongoing" (p.5). It is a process led by tensions between multifarious cultural representations infused with power, and the different, but limited cultural categories, such as Asian, woman, gay, and Muslim, that are attributed to individuals. As individuals negotiate themselves towards a

position within these complex relations in their daily practices, the meanings of culture constantly change and evolve.

Culture today no longer exists as a bounded unity. We can no longer look towards the roots for our identities. Our identities thus become problematized. Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? Hall (1990) suggests an answer by drawing upon the experiences of Caribbean diasporic individuals. He argues that the Caribbean diasporic identity must be viewed as "framed" by "two axes or vectors, simultaneously operative: the vector of similarity and continuity; and the vector of difference and rupture" (p.226). In other words, the process of diasporic identification is constituted by both a shared historical narrative, and a refigured positioning through an individualized retelling of the history, which for the Caribbean, is a history of slavery and colonization. In Hall's conception,

> Cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture…It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence, but a positioning. (p.226)

Rather than confining identity to a singular profile that is always produced within "the dominant regimes of representation" (Hall, 1990, p.225), this anti-essentialist notion of cultural identity opens up possibilities for re-articulations of a shared past in differences, through which identity is constantly constructed and reconstructed.

Yon (2000) distinguishes the concepts of identity and identification, stating that the former "implies an essential and fixed individual", while the latter "recognizes that identity is a constructed and open-ended process" (p.13). Identity is "never completed—always 'in process'"

(Hall, 1996, p.2). Hall points out that identification is by nature a fluid, contingent matter. There is no complete fulfillment of its totality. Tensions always exist between what is gained and what is lost in each articulated positioning, in the ongoing process of coming to know who one really is and is not. The tension is negotiated in our everyday lives, difficult to either avoid or completely resolve.

Hall (1996) also highlights that identification, as a signifying practice, is subject to the systematic play of differences:

> It obeys the logic of morn-than-one. And since as a process it operates across difference, it entails discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of 'frontier-effects'. It requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process. (p.3)

What Hall calls the "constitutive outside" refers to the attributes that one lacks. The fundamental insight here is that what one constitutes as a whole within one's self is constituted by what one is not—what is considered as the Other. Hall (1990) makes this point clearer by further stating that "identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside', abjected" (p.5). The Western world's continuous "othering" of China is evident from the limited scope which the media chooses to cover Chinese events such as the "Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)," "1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre," and "2008 Tibetan Unrest." The reason for such "othering," as Ang (2001) points out, lies precisely in the fact that in the Western imagination, China has long been conceptualized as the civilization which the West is not. Through the continuous "othering" of what it is not, the West has established and reinforced its own identity.

We are all too familiar with the language dominated by binarism that prevails in society, such as white/black, male/female, and heterosexual/homosexual. In terms of the discourse on immigration, it seems that the common language cannot but base itself on the dichotomy between the national majority and ethnic minorities. The dominant majority group "struggles to assert and secure its boundaries" (Rutherford, 1990a, p.11) by excluding and marginalizing the ethnic minority groups. The binary system operating within the discourse becomes a tool for the dominant group to legitimize and reinforce the subordination of immigrants, by which the dominant group constantly consolidates its own power.

Mercer (1990) points out a hegemonic strategy of dominance that actually "constructs 'imaginary unities' out of the diverse and heterogeneous positions" (p.57) each individual occupies in everyday life. Rose (1990) describes the "self" as increasingly "governed" by a variety of institutional discourses and practices. The identities of immigrants, for example, are constituted also through the complex power dynamics derived from the relations of race, nationality, class, gender, language and age, besides their ethnic minority status in the host country. These discursively constructed identities are so inextricably intertwined with each other, that the established identity categories start to slip and shift (Yon, 2000). Thus, ethnicity becomes simultaneously racialized, classed and gendered. For example, research indicates that the racial traits of Chinese immigrants, such as their yellow skin and dark eyes, remain an important factor for them in defining and asserting their ethnic identity (Ngan & Chan, 2012). The interwovenness within these identities inevitably entails the risk that individuals may experience multiple combinations of inequality and inequity, especially those who are considered to be the most powerless—children, women, seniors, and the poor.

Contradictions and conflicts can also occur within oneself as one's multiple identities always compete against each other for allegiance (Mercer, 1990; Weeks, 1990; Yon, 2000). Even though this inner struggle does not happen exclusively to immigrants, it is particularly evident among them. Weeks (1990) points out that when immigrants "leave the familiar reference points of their homeland and find themselves in a place where the rules are different, and all the markers have been changed", they are very likely to experience a sense of "dislocation and disorientation" (p.94). Because of the two usually distinct value-systems of home and host countries, immigrants may easily find themselves bewildered when caught in dilemmas—to which country should I show my loyalty? Which identity should I focus on? Which set of norms, principles, or basic moral convictions should I prioritize? The fact that identity construction of immigrants is inseparable from other aspects of identification including ethnicity, race, class, gender, religion, language and age, makes the construction process more complex and problematic. Hence for immigrants, the struggle to decide, in each single circumstance, on the relative importance of each of the different and potentially contradictory identities that they live with, may become their major or perhaps an everyday cultural experience.

Weeks (1990) argues that identity is about belonging, which at its center is composed of the "values we share or wish to share with others" (Weeks, p.88). However, the feeling common among immigrants is a sense of not belonging, a state of standing on the border between different worlds, yet unable to fit in anywhere. As Rutherford (1990a) writes, "there are no ready-made identities or categories that we can unproblematically slip into" (p.25). Consider specifically the Chinese immigrants in Canada: they are exposed to a post-immigration life composed of a multitude of linguistically and culturally diverse groups, but run under a structure established by

Canadian society, the host country. Their previously constructed Chinese identities are bound to be reconstructed and transformed, either actively or passively.

Although Hall's (1990) discussion of Caribbean diasporic identity cannot be applied indiscriminately to understanding of the cultural identities of Chinese immigrants, it is useful in my examination of the notion of "Chineseness" overseas. Decades ago when the "anti- Orientalism" sentiment was spreading throughout Canada, Chinatowns were represented in public as the deviant ethnic ghetto inhabited by members of an immoral and inferior race (Chan, 1991; Hsu 2014; Li & Lee, 2005). Nowadays, Chinatowns have shifted from residential enclaves to commercial areas and tourist attractions where dragon-gates, stone loins, pagoda-shaped roofs and fringed red lanterns become the indispensable symbols that represent the exotic Chinese culture. However, even though Chinatowns no more necessarily evoke the past diasporic experience of rejection and isolation, they still give me a strangely unpleasant feeling of remoteness and detachment. The lingering doubt of Chinatowns' authenticity expressed by Wang, a Chinese doctoral student in Toronto, resonates with me—have I moved forward too much, or are the Chinese in Canada too anachronistic? (Ghosh & Wang, 2003). Neither, I think. For Chinese, being subject to Western representation is a fact that remains largely unchanged. An absence of blatant discrimination by no means equates with an authentic portrayal of Chinese culture. As argued by Hsu (2014), the authenticity of Chinatown is invented via the imagination of originality by the West. Chinatowns are still the products of the power imbalance between white dominance and Chinese ethnic subordination. They are the places where Chinese exoticism is converted into Otherness distinguished from the dominant white culture. They are also the places where the dominant group attempts to create an illusory oneness within the heterogeneous Chinese population through its

ideologically biased representation of China and Chinese people. Hall characterizes this oneness as "the old, the imperializing, the hegemonizing, form of 'ethnicity'" (p.235).

I use Hall's theory of cultural identity to understand: how a group of Chinese immigrants in Montreal uses the "resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being" (Hall, 1996, p.4); how they construct their cultural identities within the dominant regime of representation in mainstream Canadian society; and how they redefine the meaning of "Chineseness" through a retelling of the Chinese-Canadian history from their own perspectives in the present moment.

Recognition/Misrecognition/Nonrecognition

Recognition, an acknowledgement of one's existence by others, plays a vital role in the development of self-understanding since our identity is always shaped in dialogue and struggle with significant others (Taylor, 1994). Equal recognition is not only a basic human need, but an absolute necessity for a healthy democratic society. Nonrecognition and misrecognition, on the contrary, are not only acts of disrespect but also traumatic experiences that can lead to feelings of low self-esteem or self-hatred. As Taylor states:

> Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society about them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (p.25)

For this reason in a multicultural society the realization of equal participation, as well as fair representation of ethnic minorities in the public sphere, becomes increasingly important in achieving equal recognition of ethnic groups and ultimately a democratic society.

The historical nonrecognition of Chinese immigrants can be clearly seen from the historical heavy head tax on Chinese immigrants in 1885, and the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act. But unfortunately, disproportionate representation and nonrecognition of ethnic minorities still exists in Canada. The failure to recognize Chinese educational credentials and working experiences in the Canadian labour market is one such example. Nonrecognition continues to be one of the major issues facing Chinese immigrant professionals in Canada (Li, 2010). Another example of nonrecognition is found in the redraft of Canada's $100 bill, where the image of an "Asian-looking" woman looking into a microscope was removed. I believe that the redraft is a practice of prejudice and discrimination in the name of "the guarantee of equal representation," which reinforced Asian stereotypes and hindered the recognition of Asian communities.

Taylor (1994) also points out that compared to the need for recognition, the "conditions in which the attempt to be recognized can fail" (p.35) could be a tougher problem in the modern age. Public recognition of identities has effectively been based on social classifications constructed within power and exclusion, a structure of misrecognition in the first place. The people in power establish and maintain a rigid hierarchy within and between social groups, whereas the powerless people are always-already interpellated, summoned into place (Hall, 1996), as subordinate "others" through discursive formation. Taken for granted, "identity" and "recognition" hence become "too unproblematic to be thematized" (Taylor, p.35). Operating under a hierarchical identity system, "what is alien represents otherness" (Rutherford, 1990a, p.10), upon whom the dominant group projects its fears and anxieties. With stereotypes and stigmas prevailing, different cultural groups

are consequently isolated from each other, usually accompanied by distrust and prejudice. In order to break the hierarchies, dismantle the binary dichotomy of self and other and the institutionalized inequality and discrimination, the affirmation and valuation of difference should be the prerequisite. Only after this could an equal recognition of individual identity become achievable.

In addition to the recognition by a dominant cultural group and coexisting ethnic minority groups, the recognition by one's family members is also crucial to the construction of one's identity. Through my interaction with immigrant families, I observe that the immigrant parents with a strong ethnic affirmation and belonging tend to cultivate and reinforce the transmission of ethnic identity to their children who, therefore also feel like being a member of their ethnic group. However, there are parents who wish their children to quickly fit into the host country, and thus adopt a westernized way of parenting. Their children, accordingly, may not have a strong ethnic identity.

Drawing on Taylor's politics of recognition, I examine the importance of the identification by significant others and the broad structural forces in shaping the cultural identities of a group of Chinese immigrants in Montreal.

Hybridity and Hybrid Identities

Cultural theorist Homi Bhabha (1996) argues that hybridity can be understood as an antidote to the framework of western liberal multiculturalism which is predicated on universalism and individual equality. For Bhabha, the celebration and accommodation of cultural diversity effectively constrain the articulation of cultural difference. In his work entitled "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," Rutherford (1990b) presents Bhabha's argument that "the universalism that paradoxically permits diversity masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests" (p.208). The historical and cultural contexts unique to the ethnic minorities, which are expected to

be acknowledged by the host society or dominant culture, are eventually transcended, and rendered as transparent.

Bhabha proposes that in facing an ever-increasing heterogeneous national population, a new configuration of politics concerned with the "unequal, uneven, multiple and potentially antagonistic, political identities" (Rutherford, 1990b, p.208) is greatly needed. The new politics refers to a politics of hybridity. Bhabha (1996) describes hybridity as the uncertain state of "culture's 'in-betweenness'" (p.54), the "third space" which Rutherford argues, "displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (p.211). The "third space" is a place where difference is given full play, where narratives of national identity and cultural pride can be imagined and written anew, and where hybrid identities or new subject-positions emerge to challenge the validity of essentialist view on the fixity of species.

Drawing a parallel between culture and language translation, Rutherford (1990b) points out that akin to the translation of language, culture is also a process of translation, during which its originality can only be imitated, but "never finished or complete in itself" (p.210). It is the nature of culture as a symbol-forming activity, like language translation, that makes the articulation of hybrid identities possible. Bhabha (1996) contends that cultural translation is "a complex act that generates borderline affects and identifications" (p.54). The Whiteness as the normative cultural center is constituted in relation to the cultural margin, the Otherness. The margin is where the migrant communities and ethnic minorities are relegated, with their differences being extolled and ignored in the dominant discourse. The margin, however, is also "a place of resistance" (Rutherford, 1990a, p.22), the very site where new identities are produced as a refusal to the

"binary representation and social antagonism" (Bhabha, p.58). Bhabha further elaborates on the construction of hybrid identities:

> Hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialectic that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty. They deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and visions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy; the outside of the inside: the part in the whole. (p. 58)

When discussing the negotiation of Caribbean cultural identities, Hall (1990) writes that the diaspora experience should be defined "by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference, by hybridity" (p.235). Hall's vision resonates with Rutherford's conceptualization of "home." The pain of not belonging suffered by diasporic individuals can oftentimes trigger their intense nostalgia for "home." However, a place is always a place in time. The time having passed have changed both diasporic individuals and their homelands. "In this struggle for new ways of living more democratic relationships and new subjectivities," writes Rutherford, "there can be no homecoming" (p.25). Therefore, the meaning of "home" needs to be reshaped. As Rutherford proposes, "home" should function "not only as the making of a sense of self and identity, but as a motif for a culture that values difference and thrives on its own diversity" (p.25).

Drawing on Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity, I explore the process through which a group of Chinese immigrants in Montreal construct new identities, fashioning themselves in a complex interweaving of social relations related to the boundaries and hierarchies in their social lives. Since hybrid identities must be understood as occurring within power relations, I also pay attention to the heterogeneity within the Chinese immigrant population because different Chinese

groups envision different power relations with the dominant group. In this inquiry, I focus on a specific group of Chinese economic immigrants and their children, with their respective power relations with the Canadian mainstream society being considered in my analysis.

Language and Identity

The intricate relationships between language and identity has been widely investigated and discussed among scholars (Cummins, 2001; Maguire, 2005; Noble, Poynting, & Tabar, 1999; Norton, 1997; Rampton 1990, 1995, 2005).

Speaking from the perspective of language learners, Norton (1997) emphasizes the fact that every time people speak, "they are not only exchanging information with their interlocutors; they are also constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (p.410). Norton argues that language learners' various, usually ambivalent desires towards the target language are overlooked in language teaching and learning. What also remains unrecognized are their multiple, shifting, and often contradictory identities. The self-positionings of language learners, and their desires accordingly, however, are highly influential in their social "investment"—their engagement in and commitment to the practice of the target language (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 1997; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Kanno and Norton (2003) contend that the language learners' "investment" in the target language should be understood with regard to the "imagined communities" that the learners aspire to. The term "imagined community," coined by Anderson (2006), can refer to any community as far as the members in the community "never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p.6). Anderson maintains that we all interact with different communities in our daily lives, whose existence depends on our imagination, including the nation to which we claim our belonging. Kanno and

Norton (2003) apply the notion of the "imagined community" to the understanding of language learning and identity through an illustration of the English learning experience of a Polish immigrant in Canada. This learner's wish to take a computer course was discouraged by her English teacher, for the simple reason that her English was considered as not good enough for the computer course. This learner stopped attending the English class afterwards. The learner's suspended investment in English learning, as explained by Kanno and Norton (2003), was due to the discrepancy between the two communities imagined by the English learner, and the English teacher. The imagined community for the learner is a community of professionals. Correspondingly, she saw herself as a potential professional in the future—the imagined identity that she was simultaneously investing in while investing in English learning. However, it appeared that the English teacher identified this learner as merely a linguistic minority immigrant student who was trying to survive in a community operating under the hegemony of English—monolingualism and monoculturalism.

Cummins (2001) also observes the power imbalance between language learners and educators. He refers to "the exercise of power by a dominant group (or individual) to a subordinated group (or individual)" (p.259) as coercive relations of power. Under such a power structure, language learners' access to their imagined communities is greatly constrained, so dose their capacity to negotiate between their multiple identities. However, Cummins argues that rather than "subtractive," power can be "additive" through collaborative relationships established between learners and educators. The collaboration serves to enable both learners and educators to "develop a strong sense of personal and cultural identity, and the critical thinking abilities to analyze the experience and take action to transform patterns of social injustice" (p. 266). In other words, learners can empower themselves instead of being marginalized.

Rampton highlights the link between language and ethnicity. He studies the language crossing in culturally heterogeneous adolescent networks in England, a phenomenon he defines as "code-switching into varieties that are not generally thought to belong" (Rampton, 1995, p.485) to the speaker. Rampton (1995) notices that language crossing functions as the emblem of group identity that promotes the solidarity among members of multiracial and multiethnic communities on the one hand, while on the other hand, constantly sensitizes community members to the operation of racial-ethnic stratification within adolescent networks. But all in all, language crossing destabilizes the essentialist view of ethnicity as being inherited and immutable. The phenomenon is seen as a great contribution to the construction of what Hall (2006) calls the "new ethnicities" that are "predicated on difference and diversity" (p.448). Three concepts associated with language crossing are language expertise, language inheritance and language affiliation, which Rampton (1990) employs to challenge the conventional view that only native speakers determined by the accident of birth can be regarded as fully competent speakers of their languages, or rather, mother tongues. Noticing that languages change along with the changes of group membership, Rampton (1990) insists that "we do not assume that nationality and ethnicity are the same as language ability and language allegiance" (p.100).

In their essay on the strategic mobilization of identities among a group of male Arabic-speaking youth in Sydney, Noble, Poynting and Tabar (1999) makes an observation similar to Rampton's. They view code-switching and code-mixing as hybridizing strategies employed by non-English-speaking background youth in their everyday lives. The continual movement and mixture of languages among the youth sometimes are made purely for efficient communication, sometimes are manifestations of emotional states, and sometimes can be clear markers of difference, and temporary assertions of identities —which are highly context-specific.

Maguire et al. (2005) use "chameleon" as a metaphor to characterize the process of identity construction of multilingual children in diverse spaces. They argue that children's identity construction must be understood as recursive: "a recursive process necessitates a double perspective—looking at local literacy moments in their daily living and the more global, political discourses in which they may be located" (p.141). The diverse spaces lived by multilingual children, where past, present and future meet and mingle meaningfully, either real or imagined, provide the children with different, and sometimes conflicting resources. Appropriating the variety of literacies and literacy practices available to them, multilingual children tailor their expressions of self to the specific circumstances and requirements facing them in each situation. Their constructions of identity may hence be both enabled and constrained. To demonstrate this point, Maguire (2005) uses the literacy practices of a newly immigrated Chinese young child in Montreal as an example. This immigrant young child makes a great effort to use her broken French instead of her fluent Mandarin in her socialization with other children in a Chinese heritage language school they attend on Saturday. By using French—the only official language in Quebec, as the means of communication, this young child attempts to avoid being perceived as a newcomer, or more precisely, an outsider who is likely to be isolated and rejected by her classmates.

Maguire (2005) also points out the uniqueness of Montreal as a site for understanding the lived experience of multilingual learners as they weave multiple literacies in the construction of their identities in their everyday lives:

> Because many of these children have a foot in many cultural places and must locate themselves in multiple school spaces and social linguistic communities, they do not seem to straddle the stereotypic linguistic divide of the two solitudes anglophones and francophones mythologized by Canadian writer Hugh MacLennan. Many

> create a 'third space' for themselves that allows for strategic engagement in social interactions with others in real or imagined communities. (p.1431)

Living in Montreal, the Chinese immigrants fall into the category of "Allophone" since their mother tongue, or home language is Mandarin, Cantonese, or other varieties of Chinese, not English nor French. However, most of them have knowledge of one or both of the official languages in Canada. The multiple linguistic and cultural resources they can get access to enable them to resist, negotiate or modify their self positions. Lamarre and Dagenais (2004) have well demonstrated the strategic use of linguistic repertoires among the multilingual youth in Montreal, by which these youth seek to secure their group solidarity and affiliation according to their best interests. Drawing upon the theories on language and identity, I explore the role that multiple languages play in the process of identity construction among a group of Chinese immigrants in Montreal.

Agency

Agency is defined as a means to modify one's environment with the aim of gaining control over one's own behavior (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, & Cain, 1998). The notion of agency should not be forgotten in understanding the process of identity construction. Individuals do not simply internalize what is mirrored to them; they can resist those imposed positions by strategically negotiating and performing their multiple identities. Consider two examples of exercising agency in the expression of self.

One of my friends who was born in Vancouver and whose parents are first-generation immigrants from China, once told me that, every time she was asked "Where are you from?" she would answer that "I am Canadian, but my parents are from China." In doing so, she avoided encountering any awkward moments caused by the possible follow-up questions about her country

of origin, no matter whether the questions might carry any negative connotation. Also I noticed in a workshop I once attended at McGill University, that when introducing ourselves, an attendee indicated that he was from Mainland China, after another attendee before him said she was from Taiwan. Mainland China is not normally specified when Chinese people introduce themselves, but in that situation however, the indication of Mainland China automatically turned "Taiwan" from an ethnic or national concept to a geographical concept, neatly sidestepping a politically sensitive issue.

Maguire (2005) describes the agency of multilingual children as the "capacity for social reflexivity and the need for contextualized understandings of their positionings and representations of self through their talk and texts" (p.1427). From the two previous cases, it is reasonable to assume that such agency can often be found in people living in a multilingual and multicultural society. Multilingual individuals demonstrate their ability to mediate between self and environment through skillful modifications of the expression of their self-positionings.

Holland et al. (1998) use the word "improvisations" to refer to the impromptu actions that "occur when our past, brought to the present as habitus, meets with a particular combination of circumstances and conditions for which we have no set response" (p.17). As one continuously adjusts and reorganizes the improvisations according to each slightly different situation, improvisations, in becoming important tools of agency, offer the possibility of altered identities. Holland et al. argue that the tools of agency "are highly social," because they are "collectively produced, learned in practice, and remain distributed over others for a long period of time" (p.38). Although direct appropriation of the tools from one generation to another is not possible, tools from a previous generation are still valuable resources which the next generation can refer to and fashion upon, based on their own cultural, social and personal situations. For immigrants with little

power, it is particularly important for them to develop human agency, both individual and collective. The enhanced agency can enable them to move to the sites for articulation and action under the domination by social relations of power, and seek possibilities of liberating themselves from current forces.

This understanding of agency is also of great significance in exploring the notion of "third space." Bhabha (1996) contends that the deliberate construction of the "third space," where permits the emergence of new positionings, relies on one's ability to orient oneself at the present time through an understanding of the past, and a reinterpretation of the future. This ability is precisely a manifestation of agency. An understanding of agency is useful in my inquiry of the identity construction of Chinese immigrants. The theory of agency aids me in grasping the socially interactive and dialectical process through which Chinese immigrants create the "third space" where they find a sense of belonging, where they are offered "multiple possibilities for selfhood and dialogue with others" (Maguire, 2005, p.1427), and where they gain "cultural authority within conditions of political antagonism or inequity" (Bhabha, p.58) in Canadian society.

Literature Review

As one of the largest groups of immigrants and ethnic minorities in Canada, the Chinese immigrant population has attracted increasing scholarly attention. The development of ethnic identity among Chinese immigrants, especially immigrant adolescents and youth, has been a main focus of inquiries across Canada. Plentiful quantitative research on the patterns and significance of their ethnic identification has been conducted in major cities in Canada, such as Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary (Chia & Costigan, 2006; Chow, 2004; Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Costigan & Koryzma, 2010; Lay & Verkuyten, 1999). With large sample sizes, these studies usually cover Chinese populations emigrating from different regions, during different periods of immigration,

and with different intentions of immigrating. In other words, generalizations are made at the expense of the complexities within the heterogeneous Chinese populations and cultures in Canada. It is from these quantitative studies that I start to question the concept of ethnic identity, its relatedness to other aspects of social identification, and to an overall sense of self.

"Self-label" is a medium commonly used in quantitative research through which researchers assess the ethnic identification of participants (Costigan, Su & Hua, 2009). Participants are usually provided with predetermined identity categories to choose from, or to rate each of their relative levels of salience. The identity categories typically include "Chinese," "Canadian," "Canadian-Chinese," "Chinese-Canadian," and "Asian Canadian." Or, participants are offered open-ended questions on questionnaires that require their clear responses regarding their self-identifications. Research indicates that foreign-born Chinese adolescents are more likely to identify themselves as Chinese than their Canadian-born counterparts (Lay & Verkuyten, 1999). The large majority of Canadian-born adolescents tend to use the hyphenated label "Chinese-Canadian" or "Canadian-Chinese" to describe themselves (Chow, 2004; Lay & Verkuyten, 1999). Higher ethnic self-identification is associated with higher proficiency in the Chinese language, and more participation in Chinese cultural practices (Chow, 2004). What also accompanies a stronger sense of ethnic identity among Chinese immigrant children is a higher level of self-esteem, along with a more positive overall self-concept (Costigan & Koryzma, 2010). Looking into Chinese immigrant families in Canada, research demonstrates that the mothers and youth report stronger ethnic affirmation and belonging than do the fathers. In addition, the warmth in the parent-child relationship is found to facilitate the development of ethnic identity in immigrant youth (Costigan & Dokis, 2006). By drawing a parallel between Chinese and Canadian identities, research reveals that for Chinese immigrant youth, an endorsement of Canadian values may not be as important to

being Canadian as Chinese values are to being Chinese; strong feelings of Chinese and Canadian identities can coexist (Chia & Costigan, 2006).

Although quantitative research on the ethnic identity among Chinese immigrants in Canada serves as one initial reference point for my inquiry, I realize that quantitative research alone is inadequate for understanding the complexities and dynamics of the process of identity construction. It is not because the means of "self-label" is being problematic per se. The real problem lies in the fact that ethnic identity is not conceived as a construction, but a fixed entity that can be simply reflected from identity labels with either predetermined or unclarified meanings. Participants, in the so-called self-reports, are actually not given space to narrate their identities in ways that infuse their identities with their lived experiences.

Ethnicity, as Hall (2006) argues, "acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual" (p.447). Ethnicity is not inherent or biologically given. Even though ethnicity may suggest common origins and characteristics, the construction of its boundary depends on "the figuration of significant others" (Noble et al., 1999, p. 30) against or with whom one seeks to locate oneself. In other words, the boundary is always negotiated in the tension between sameness and difference (Noble et al.; Rampton 1995; Yon, 2000). As I discussed earlier in this chapter, ethnicity cannot be adequately understood without constant reference to other aspects of identification, such as race, class, gender, age and nationality. To explore the identity construction of Chinese immigrants, we should hence conceptualize identity as multiple, shifting, culturally and discursively created, and situationally sensitive in the first place. This conceptualization necessarily directs our attention to process of identification—a process that "brings identity into being as individuals name themselves, but at the same time

naming calls that very identity into question and makes it problematic" (Yon, 2000, p.71). Yon (2000) suggests that only until a self-label is articulated will one come to realize its limitation, and will it become clear how inadequate the available self-labels, or identity categories are, in relation to complex lived experiences.

The book *The living tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* is an influential collection of scholarly articles on the examination of the notion of "Chineseness." One central theme of the book is the construction of Chinese diasporic identities on the "periphery" as opposed to the conventionally and rigidly defined "Chineseness" at the "core." As I mentioned in the previous chapter, more than 90 percent of the inhabitants in mainland China are "Han People," a name originating from the Han Dynasty—one of the greatest periods in Chinese history. The right to claim "Chineseness," as the book editor Tu (1994b) elaborates, is predicated on "belonging to the Han race, being born in China proper, speaking Mandarin, and observing the 'patriotic' code of ethics" (p. vii). Clearly, the rigid definition of "Chineseness" represents ethnic, territorial, and linguistic boundaries. This definition is largely deemed unacceptable among Chinese overseas, who are born elsewhere, being physically removed from China, may speak languages other than Mandarin, or adopt different religious beliefs, but still retain a strong sense of being Chinese. Tu, a diasporic intellectual himself, proposes a newly constructed cultural space named "cultural China," where he articulates a diasporic identity on the "periphery" that, as he claims, serves to decenter the "core". Hall (2006) maintains that the identities on the "periphery" entail a recognition that "we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture" (p.448). Different or "non-mainstream" as they may seem, these identities should not be thereby considered as "deviant." It is from the marginal and peripheral space that diasporic Chinese, whatever names they have been given—"huaqiao," (Chinese sojourners)

"huayi," (Chinese decedents) or "haiwai huaren," (overseas Chinese) regain authority over their own voices through articulation of their respective diasporic experiences. However, the book seems to imply the fact that the dominant imagery of a Chinese nation, as well as the palpable sentiments of nostalgia and homesickness, are inevitable, finally constitutive elements in the identities that diasporic Chinese have been constructing.

The great emphasis on the general Chinese roots of Chinese diasporic identities is clearly hinted in the title of the book—"the living tree." The vigor of a tree depends on its roots, from which it gets its nourishment. Although roots are largely invisible, they are imperative for the sustainability of life. The roots are to the tree what the sense of Chineseness is to the overall identity of a Chinese. In Chinese language "roots" are translated as "gen." Chinese American scholar and educator Wang (1994) points out that the word "gen" takes on several meanings. It "symbolizes the genesis and maintenance of life," "designates one's birth place, ancestral village, or native place," and also conveys the meanings as "Chinese culture, and a geographic entity called China, one's zuguo (motherland)" (p. 186). The third meaning is thought to be particularly important among overseas Chinese, as it indicates a state of mind intimately tied to Chinese diasporic identities, without which diasporic Chinese can hardly survive the local hostilities in North America, Southeast Asia, or elsewhere.

Ien Ang (2001), an Indonesian-born Dutch citizen of Chinese descent living in Australia, criticizes Tu's (1994a) "cultural China" for being overly obsessed with "Chineseness." Ang comments that the "cultural China" "imparts the ultimate existential dependence of the periphery on the center, the diaspora on the homeland" (p.44). In attempting to redefine "the periphery as the center," "cultural China" inadvertently creates another center that subsumes the diverse phenomena of Chinese diaspora under an internally homogenized form of "diasporic Chineseness."

"Can one say no to Chineseness?" Ang (2001) raises the question in her book *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West*. The question is more like an adamant declaration that problematizes and challenges the concept of Chinese diaspora.

Ang (2001) makes clear her position by stating that "if I am inescapably Chinese by descent, I am only sometimes Chinese by consent. When and how is a matter of politics" (p.36). Though not without recognition of its historical context, Ang conceptualizes "Chineseness" as more instrumental than expressive, which offers a set of material and symbolic resources at her disposal to construct syncretic identities in relation to specific time-space contexts. In addition, she highlights an examination of identity within globalization. Situating herself as a citizen of the world, Ang writes:

> As we enter the twenty-first century, the world faces ever greater challenges in light of growing global economic disparity, continuing environment degradation, rapid technological change, increasingly massive transnational migrations and shifting geopolitical (im) balances of power. There is no necessary advantage in a 'Chinese' identification here; indeed, depending on context and necessity it may be politically mandatory to refuse the primordial interpellation of belonging to the largest 'race' of the world, the 'family' of 'the Chinese people'. (p.51)

In contrast to diaspora, Ang (2001) suggests that a conceptualization of "global city"–an unbounded and open community where "no one is a priori excluded from its space on the basis of predetermined kinship criteria such as race and ethnicity" (p.89) is more suitable for grounding the discussion on identity in global times.

The idea of not limiting identity to a unitary membership in a particular nation-state is also emphasized by anthropologist Aihwa Ong (1999), with special reference to the practices of

transnational Chinese business elite from Hong Kong. She coins the term "flexible citizenship" for them, which describes the "cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subject to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions" (p.6). "Flexible citizenship" represents an effort to deconstruct the totalitarian notion of "Chineseness" legitimized by the West through the use of propaganda and myths, as well as the practices of the one-sided Western normalization of the discourse on global transnational business. What Ong tries to indicate by the term is more than the fact of new Chinese immigrants' nonexclusive affiliations to multiple nation-states nowadays. She presents their enhanced individual agency in constructing and disseminating their identities in the world arena.

In her book *Chineseness across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States*, Andrea Louie (2004) conducts an investigation on the renegotiation of Chinese identities under the impact of global exchanges and transnational interactions. Her analysis rests upon her multi-sited participant observation, and ethnographic interviews with participants from "In Search of Roots," a program that bring a total of 56 Chinese-American young adults of Cantonese decent back to their ancestral villages in Guangdong province located in South China. The program was run by both local organizations in Guangdong and San Francisco in the early 1990s. Louie, a Chinese-American of Cantonese decent herself, took part in the program as an intern and researcher.

Louie (2004) reveals in the book the dynamic formation of Chinese identities at multiple levels, within the self, the local community, the state, as well as in relation to other states under the transnational flows of capital, labour, commodities, and culture. She remarks that "Chinese identities are crosscut by a range of practices and shifting, multilayered boundaries" (p.191). Diverse, and competing meanings have therefore been attached to the label "Chinese":

> Chineseness can be a national/racial discourse on a scale that is transnational in scope (such as orientalist views of China, of Chinese state discourses of overseas Chinese). It can be part of Western media constructions of capitalist networks or discourses on human rights. In a U.S. context, Chineseness can be framed both as a form of multiculturalism tied to definitions of U.S. cultural citizenship, and as a form of empowered identity within Chinese American activism. Chineseness can become a set of reified, essentialized values and traditions within a Chinese American folk culture concerned with the problem of "passing down" traditions and culture. It can also take on meanings as a sense of family and community in the construction of family histories and Chinese American networks, such as in the experiences of the In Search of Roots group. Finally, particular forms of Chineseness can be used to define Guangdong Chinese in relation to Chinese from other areas of China and abroad. (p.191)

Unlike what is presented in the popular portrayals of American-born Chinese, it appears that the participants in Louie's (2004) research do not necessarily hold negative attitudes against their "Chineseness," or encounter any insurmountable generational conflict with their Chinese elders. Although they are aware of their perceived physical differences in the largely white-dominated American society, "Chineseness" is "almost never an all-encompassing form of identity" (p.194) for them. In their journey of searching for "roots" in China, it shows that their constructions of "roots" have less attachment to the ancestral homeland, or the fixed origin, than to the immigrant experiences of their ancestors and their own in America.

It is clear that most recent literature on Chinese overseas, as previously reviewed, has veered towards an understanding of identity as increasingly fluid, multifaceted and context-

dependent under the influence of the rapidly emerging transnational forces. Ngan and Chan (2012), however, contest this postmodernist view on identity in their book *The Chinese face in Australia multi-generational ethnicity among Australian-born Chinese*, arguing that "socially embedded essentialism has been and still the fundamental organizing principle of human interactions" (p.191). From the interviews conducted with 43 third-, fourth-, or fifth-generation Australian-born Chinese in Sydney during 2005 and 2006, as well as the autobiographies by two of the participants, Ngan and Chan demonstrate that for long-settled Australian-born Chinese, the sense of being "Chinese"—no matter what meanings have been attached to it, is a historical constant that continues to shape their identities over the life course. Due to the long-term residence in Australia, they do not engage in translational practices as much as the Chinese newcomers to Australia, nor do they manifest the "ambivalence about physical return and attachment" (p.196) to their so-called "roots." Their experiences of "Chineseness" are "established through decentered linkages with an imaginary homeland" (p.196)—a concept again resonating with Anderson's (2006) "imagined community."

Ngan and Chan (2012) stress that the physicality and Chinese language fluency are factors still highly influential to the identity construction of the long-settled Australian-born Chinese. While their bodies' being read as "Chinese" hinders them from being accepted as "real Australians" in the broader Australian society, their variations in Chinese fluency leads to the hierarchies of "Chineseness" within and among the local Chinese communities in Australia. Ngan and Chan explain in detail:

> To a Westerner, those who can speak any form of Chinese are "true" Chinese; to a Cantonese-speaking Chinese, those who can speak Mandarin are more "authentic"; to a Mandarin-speaking Chinese, only those who speak Beijing Mandarin are "pure"

> Chinese. For multi-generational ABCs…A sense of "superiority" of "inferiority" to others varied, depending on the perceived "authenticity" of their Chineseness. (p.193)

The issue of authenticity is also addressed in Chen's (2006) book *Writing Chinese: Reshaping Chinese Cultural Identity*. Chen contributes a special perspective on the construct of "Chineseness" through a comparative analysis of contemporary literary texts from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Born and raised up in Taiwan, Chen is now a scholar working and living in the city of St. Louis, United States. She reveals in her biographical narrative that she has never seriously considered her Chinese and Taiwanese heritage until the authenticity of her Chinese identity is challenged by her classmates from mainland China. In other words, Chen's identification as "not authentic Chinese" by the significant others disrupts her Chinese identity that she has unequivocally believed in, leaving her unanchored in the constant struggle between being "Chinese" and being "Taiwanese."

Comparing the writings on Chinese cultural identity from the three distinct regions, Chen (2006) concludes that for Taiwan writers, the contemplation of their cultural identities must confront the challenge of authenticity, "precisely because of the island's postcolonial cultural condition (that is, post-Japanese colonization and Chinese nationalist rule) and its precarious political situation created by the powerful and persistent threat of Chinese takeover" (p.6). In her analysis, mainland Chinese writers inevitably need to start from a claim of an authentic Chinese cultural identity, since they are situated in the Chinese cultural center. Hong Kong writers, with less space to ruminate on their postcolonial identity than their Taiwan counterparts, have to strive towards an identity through maintaining the proliferation and hybridity of cultural forms nourished

over the years of British rule on the one hand, and preventing it from being increasingly assimilated into the hegemonic Chinese culture on the other hand.

As Chen's cultural identity is further compounded by her cultural experience as a member of an ethnic minority in the States, she decides to adopt a highly hybridized and individualized cultural identity which locates the self at the center. The self, therefore, instead of being defined by national or geographical boundaries, is the very agent that synthesizes the diverse cultural elements into a coherent whole. Chen (2006) elaborates:

> The aesthetics of hybridity thus allows one to be both selfish and selfless: selfish because the self is the absolute locus of this hybridity; selfless because the essence of hybridity is a harmonious amalgamation of all sorts and it embraces humanity. The aesthetics of hybridity also guides us to look closely at the richness of the assemblage of cultural imprints on the individual. (p.8)

The quantitative research on Chinese ethnic identity present in Canadian literature has already been briefly introduced earlier in the section. The recent qualitative studies concerning the identity construction among the Chinese populations in Canada are diverse in their target groups, ranging from immigrant and Canadian-born Chinese university students (Hiller & Chow, 2005), "satellite children" (Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau & Benjamin, 2003), Cantonese-speaking Chinese immigrant women (Poy, 2013), Chinese international doctoral student (Ghosh & Wang, 2003), to mainland Chinese skilled immigrants (Ho, 2013; Sakamoto & Zhou, 2005). Using qualitative methodologies and methods, scholars further reveal the dynamics and complexity of identity construction, which questionnaires and surveys fail to uncover. Scholars also shed light on the heterogeneity within the Chinese population in Canada.

With a series of open-ended questions on identity presented to 90 Chinese university students, both immigrant and Canadian-born, in Calgary, Hiller and Chow (2005) find that the majority of the students perceive themselves as a blend of Chinese and Canadian, "with enduring qualities understood in racial/ethnic categories" (p.84). "Chinese-Canadian" is the label most frequently used by their participants in describing their identities. However, while putting "Chinese" before "Canadian" indicates "a primary Chinese identity in the Canadian context" (p.83) for some, it conveys a "Canadian" identity as a core, with "Chinese" being a "heritage designator" (p.83) for others.

Hiller and Chow (2005) also observe a split between the ways that the self is perceived in private and public settings. The participants tend to identify themselves more strongly as "Chinese" in private family situations compared with public situations, largely due to the Chinese traditional cultural values, such as the importance of filial piety emphasized in the family, and the heritage language, either mandarin or other varieties of Chinese language, commonly used for socialization at home. Outside home, conversely, the participants tend to place greater emphasis on their Canadian identity than Chinese identity. Such self-identification could indicate a general desire among the participants for a sense of belonging to the Canadian society. However, they are not unaware of their perceived racial differences from the dominant Caucasian group. The label "Banana," a modified identity for example, connotes precisely "a keen awareness of feeling inwardly like others in the dominant society" (p.91) at the same time that their physical traits, such as the yellow skin, could be permanent markers of their identities that distinguish them from the dominant group.

Similar observations are made in the study of "satellite children" (Tsang et al., 2003), a term that refers to the "children of ethnically Chinese immigrants North America who have

returned to their country of origin after immigration" (p.359). Such a family structure is named as "astronaut family," because the family members, usually the major bread-earner, are "constantly 'in orbit', caught between the desires" (Ong, 1993, p. 761) to establish family residency abroad and to guarantee long-term financial security for the family. Having conducted in-depth interviews with 68 "satellite" adolescents and young adults from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan who are currently living in Canada, Tsang et al. (2003) demonstrate the coping strategies that participants have developed to deal with their simultaneous engagement with both host and home culture. For example, many participants differentiate between "Chinese" as ethnic identity, and "Canadian" as "administrative-political identity or citizenship" (p.370). However, feelings of confusion, ambivalence and alienation from the mainstream Canadian society are also evident among the participants—a phenomenon primarily caused by their experiences of "racist victimization, negative identification, and shame" (Tsang et al., p.375) being with their white peers.

The tendency, or the capacity for transnational movement is another factor deemed as inevitably influential to the identity construction of "satellite children" (Tsang et al. 2003). The uncertainty over the future—whether to stay permanently in Canada or eventually return to the country of origin, makes it "difficult for these young people to invest psychologically in the new country, to establish a life, and to be integrated into the host community" (Tsang et al., 2003, p.374). Without a clear sense of the "imagined community" that they should make social investment into, their perceptions of their identity become ambiguous.

Ghosh and Wang (2003), two female doctoral students in Toronto, from India and China respectively, reveal in their autobiographies similar ambivalent feelings—"'imaginations' of a new way of living in the immigrant country, 'nostalgia' for home and 'fantasies' of return" (p.279). They refer to such ambivalent feelings as the "psyche of departure"—a mental state also commonly

found among new skilled immigrants from mainland China to Canada (Sakamoto & Zhou, 2005). Ghosh and Wang admit that despite "an awareness of multilocality and a desire to maintain multiple identities" (p.277), their transnational identities are largely thrust upon and internalized. Canadian society, which continuously expects the immigrants "to act and behave in a way that is both 'normal' to its own and also 'typical' of the ethnic group to which they have been assigned" (Ghosh & Wang, p.280), is identified as the primary force in shaping transnational identity. The home society, which perceives the immigrants "as 'rich' and generally more knowledgeable of the outside world," and expects them to send "social and financial remittances" (Ghosh & Wang, p.281) is yet another powerful force. In like manner, Sakamoto and Zhou (2005) describe the external factors, including immigrants' invisibility to current social services, the employment-based discrimination against immigrant workers, and the emerging challenges to the traditional gender roles in marriage, as "uncontrollable reality" (p.223) facing Chinese skilled immigrants. The interplay of these external factors has "a significant impact on the construction and reconstruction of their memories of China as the 'homeland' vis-à-vis their experiences of Canada as 'the West'" (Sakamoto & Zhou, p.213), subsequently affecting the ways that Chinese skilled immigrants negotiate and renegotiate their associated identities. Although Ong (1999) recognizes the increasing autonomy of "traveling subjects"—"astronaut" businessmen, "satellite children," international students, or immigrant workers, in constructing and disseminating their identities in the Western world, she is also right in pointing out the undeniable fact that they are "never free of regulations set by state power, market operations, and kinship norms" (p.19-20).

Quite a few Canadian studies demonstrate the impact of Canada's multiculturalism on the identity construction of the Chinese immigrant populations in Canada. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the multiculturalism policy in Canada has been controversial since its inception

in 1971. The debate over its theories and practices has been given added dimensions and urgency in recent years. A review of the Canadian literature on Chinese immigrants' cultural identity shows inconsistency of findings across studies—positive and negative effects of multiculturalism are found to coexist. Interviewing 28 Cantonese-speaking Chinese women who immigrated to the province of Ontario and British Columbia during the second half of the twentieth century, Poy (2013) notes that "the pressure on immigrants to assimilate were greatly reduced" (p.125) after the establishment of multiculturalism; being encouraged to "invest positive meanings in their ethnic background" (p. 124), the latter immigrants are more likely to "make Canada their home" (p.137) than the early Chinese immigrants. In the study conducted among the immigrant and Canadian-born Chinese university students in Calgary, Hiller and Chow (2005) suggest that multiculturalism "legitimizes the ethnicization" of racial identity, and in a certain degree racial differences is "reinterpreted as ethnic differences" (p.91); many of these young adults express a keen interest in "either retaining or modifying their ethnic heritage—a practice supported by the ideology of a multicultural society (p.91). Some married Chinese immigrant women also attribute the space opened up for them for greater exercise of agency, hence a more salient gender identity to the multiculturalism policy (Sakamoto & Zhou, 2005), which promotes "an inclusive citizenship" (Government of Canada, 2012) assumed to guarantee individual rights and freedoms. However, in her interviews with 60 mainland Chinese immigrants, Ho (2013) reveals that even though these immigrants "invest considerable pride into what they consider the 'Canadian identity,' made possible by the 'Canadian value' of multiculturalism" (p.164), they have encountered "shared experiences of segregation, discrimination, and marginalization" (p.167). These negative experiences are absolutely the antithesis of the values and beliefs underlying multiculturalism. As Ho explains, "cultural difference manifests in social distance, but social distancing further

accentuates dissimilarity and confers a lack of acceptability that legitimizes the unequal treatment of immigrants" (p.164). These negative experiences make it difficult for the new immigrants to establish a sense of belonging and loyalty to the host country, and eventually contribute to their decisions towards the onward emigration to the home country. Furthermore, there is a tendency within multiculturalist discourses to equate culture with ethnicity (Yon, 2000). Culture, in this sense, is seen by the "normal Canadians" who "either 'lack culture' or keep it private" as "pathological and infectious" (Yon, 2000, p.77). Yon observes that this tendency may also give rise to a new form of "racism," characterized by maintaining non-prejudicial outwardly, but still having inwardly a prejudice against those easily discernable cultures, and attempting to racialize them when they are perceived as displeasing. Ethnic labels, consequently, could carry substantial racial connotations. Given the varied, sometimes contradictory findings across studies, whether Canada's multiculturalism is a "false advertisement" (Sakamoto & Zhou, 2005, p. 218), nothing more than "a normative language for individuals and groups to appreciate and celebrate diversity" (Ho, p.166), still requires further examination.

Research also highlights the dynamics between Chinese immigrant parents and their children in Canada. Both conflict and consensus are observed among members of immigrant families, along which their perceptions of their identities are under constant negotiation and balance. Contrary to the popular belief that Canadian-born Chinese youth, or the so-called second generation Chinese, frequently experience the feeling of being torn between two cultures, cultural conflicts, in fact, do not occur often in their daily interactions (Hiller & Chow, 2005; Lalonde & Giguère, 2008). However, they do report to experience conflicts at different levels when it comes to difficult decisions, such as life partner selection, education and career choices, and whether and when to move out of the familial home (Lalonde & Giguère, 2008). Lalonde and Giguère (2008)

explains that "Western cultures have strong norms of autonomy and independence" while "Eastern cultures have strong norms of family connectedness and interdependence" (p.61). Marriage, for example, may be deemed as a matter of personal choice in Canadian culture, but is believed as an alliance between two entire families in Chinese culture. Therefore, when these youth encounter situations where their Chinese and Canadian identities are simultaneously salient to them with two sets of mutually incompatible norms being evoked, like the potential areas previously discussed, both intergenerational and personal conflicts are likely to arise. This statement is consistent with Ngan and Chan's (2012) finding that for long-settled Chinese immigrants, "Chineseness" is generally brought into consciousness in their transitions to marriage, parenthood, and later life. During these pivotal life course transitions, "familial manifestations of Chinese cultural ideologies take over, defining for the subsequent generations the expectations and requirements that they must meet" (Ngan & Chan, p.194), and the traditional values and practices they should inherit. The ongoing interactions of the self with family members are consequently fundamental to the ways in which Chinese descendants negotiate their cultural identities and belongingness.

However, parental influence on the transmission of Chinese culture, hence subsequent establishment of Chinese identity among their offspring is never a unilateral and linear progression. As well, older generations of Chinese immigrants do not necessarily endorse absolute authority and control over their offspring. Research indicates that dogmatism, rigidity, and the intolerance of different cultures—the characteristics which may easily produce intergenerational conflicts, are not commonly found among Chinese immigrant parents (Hiller & Chow, 2005). While most parents do make efforts to instill a sense of appreciation of Chinese culture in their children, they consider not to place too much pressure on the children for their learning and achievement in Chinese cultural knowledge, including the language. Research also observes the increasing

flexibility and openness in immigrant parents' approaches to parenting and intergenerational relationships (Tyyskä, 2008). It is thus reasonable to assume that the attitudes of Chinese immigrant parents, or the first generation immigrants towards Chinese culture and their identities may also undergo some qualitative changes during their immigration and settlement period.

Compared with the considerable amount of research conducted in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary—some of the largest metropolitan areas in Canada, studies pertaining to the Chinese community in Montreal are relatively less frequent. Many existing studies in Montreal give special attention to the performance and positioning of cultural identities among the local trilingual/multilingual populations through their everyday multiliterate and multilingual practices. The prevailing emphasis on the linkages between language and identity in Montreal-based research is relevant to the city's complex cultural and linguistic dynamics. Montreal is being the one "still in the midst of the major transformations launched during Quebec's Quiet Revolution, but also increasingly caught up in the changes wrought by globalization, rapid communication technologies and the new economy" (Lamarre, 2013, p.41). Growing up in Montreal, the children of Bill 101, the generation whose parents immigrated to Quebec after the adoption of this strict legislation that defines French as the province's only official language, have hence acquired usually three—French, English and their heritage languages, or perhaps more languages along the way to adulthood. Accompanying the growing multilingual population in Montreal is a progressively formed concept of multilingual repertoire as valuable form of capital, as if it is a collection of "passports" (Lamarre et al. 2002) that enables the multilinguals to engage in social networks cross traditional cultural and linguistic boundaries. The multilinguals' identities, too, have taken increasingly mixed forms, "like their linguistic repertoires, which can be drawn upon differently accordingly to context" (Lamarre & Dagenais, 2004, p.69).

By examining multilingual young Montrealers' use of their multilingual repertoires in their everyday lives, Lamarre (2013) points out the deliberate inaccuracy of using linguistic categories, such as Francophone, Anglophone, and Allophone in defining the identities of the young multilinguals in Montreal. These identity markers, as revealed by Lamarre, are not pertinent, and not even desired by the young people who take pride in their capacity to "parler multilingue" in a flexible manner. For this reason, Lamarre also criticizes the overdependence on home language as an indicator of immigrants' levels of cultural integration. Interestingly, the same conclusion is made by Hsu (2014) from her interviews with an immigrant population in sharp contrast to the multilingual young people in Montreal—the female Chinese monolingual seniors living in Montreal's Chinatown. These monolingual earlier immigrants, though fail to speak the official languages, demonstrate nevertheless explicit Canadian patriotism, and a strong sense of belonging to Canada. This finding again, challenges the conventional idea that knowing the official language(s) is an absolute prerequisite for cultural ingeneration into Canadian society, as well as the development of a Canadian national identity.

While the English and French literacy proficiency are generally developed through the formal instructions in Quebec's schools, the heritage languages of children with an immigrant background are mostly taught and maintained through the combined efforts of immigrant parents in home contexts and heritage language schools. Acknowledging the benefits of multilingualism for their children in terms of in-group identity construction and the pathways towards upward mobility, the Chinese immigrant parents in Montreal are found to be actively involved in supporting their children's multilingual and multiliterate development (Riches & Curdt-Christiansen, 2010). Curdt-Christiansen (2004) also points out the importance of understanding Confucianism as a cultural ideology and a moral standard deeply embedded in Chinese parenting

beliefs that may permeate Chinese immigrant children's upbringing, and orient their cultural identity construction. By looking at multilingual immigrant children's school experiences at their everyday English/French schools vis-à-vis their Saturday heritage language schools, Maguire (2005) reveals that the racial and ethnic differences in school contexts, perceived or actual, of the multilingual Chinese immigrant children in Montreal, have a strong emotional resonance that impacts on their perceptions of their identities. Maguire hence maintains that identity construction should be understood as "a process of negotiation between sites of agency and locally and globally perceived, conceived, or lived spaces of possibilities for belonging and establishing cultural dialogues" (p.1426).

From the review of a wide variety of research regarding the identity construction among Chinese populations overseas, it is clear that no single one framework can encapsulate the totality of the lived experience of Chinese overseas as they construct and negotiate their identities in their daily social interactions. Identity, as conceptualized in the literature review, is constituted variously in different social configurations, cultural contexts and historical trajectories, intersecting ethnicity, race, class, gender and age. The patterns of identity construction of the Chinese overseas hence vary across geographical boundaries (counties such as the US, Australia and Canada; and regional locations such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal), across generations (Chinese immigrant parents, and their children born inside or outside Canada), across waves of immigration (long-established businessmen from Hong Kong, and the newly immigrated skilled workers from mainland China). The heterogeneity within the Chinese population overseas, coupled with the fluid, malleable, and multiple nature of identity, makes a comprehensive and all-encompassing analysis of Chinese immigrants' identities an inevitably difficult task. In this inquiry, I focus specifically on the immigrants from mainland China who have settled in Montreal since

the 1990s—a time characterized by a large influx of highly skilled mainland Chinese immigrant workers. By narrowing my research down to a particular Chinese immigrant population, I aim to work towards a nuanced and contextualized understanding of the identity construction among Chinese overseas from the narrative accounts of their own lived experiences.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the theoretical framework that helped guide and frame my inquiry of the identity construction of Chinese immigrants, in which the following five major aspects emerged: (1) culture and identity; (2) recognition/misrecognition/nonrecognition; (3) hybridity and hybrid identities; (4) language and identity; and (5) agency. I also reviewed relevant research pertaining to the identity construction among Chinese immigrant populations. In Chapter 3, I examine the methodology and methods used in this inquiry.

Chapter 3 Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I situate myself in the inquiry and reflect on my positioning as a researcher "in the middle," neither an insider nor an outsider, but someone standing on the borderline between the two. I introduce the key concepts central to phenomenology, which forms the basis of my research methodology and methods. I provide descriptions of my specific tools of inquiry, the data collection process, and the contextual information on each of the five Chinese immigrant families who participated in my interviews.

Background and Role of Researcher

Born and raised in Wuhan, mainland China, I am studying in Montreal as an international graduate student. When I landed in Montreal three years ago, I received a warm welcome at the airport from my aunt and her husband, who after immigrating from Wuhan, have been living in Montreal for 20 years. Upon arriving at their house, they both told me that "from now on, it is your new home."

This home provided me with unconditional care and support over the one year that I resided there. It is also the place that the idea of undertaking this inquiry started to brew through my day-to-day observations and interactions with my aunt's family. In this place, I made the acquaintance of other immigrant families with shared backgrounds and experiences, whose voluntary participation in my interviews made this research of identity possible.

As I remember, the conversations concerning identity occurred from time to time in our everyday life. Sometimes a question or a statement went straight to the heart of the matter, catching people unprepared. For example, facing the "who are you?" question from my aunt, my 8-year-old cousin answered in an unhesitating manner, "*Of course I'm a Canadian. I was born in Canada, wasn't I?*" This answer in turn stumped my aunt who initially expected a "half Chinese half

Canadian" answer at the very least, had it not been a definite "Chinese." Children's perceptions of their identity seem to be a common concern among immigrant parents. When holding or attending gatherings among friends, my uncle and aunt often joked along with other Chinese immigrant parents about their children being "Banana Men" with yellow skin but white heart. However, looks of frustration sometimes crossed their faces, making the jokes more serious. Their expressions might also imply a feeling of disempowerment, as if they were unable to change what they deemed as already a fact—the "Chinese" part manifested in their children is something superficial, existing only at the racial level in terms of their dark eyes, black hair, and yellow skin. Their children may disagree with this assumption about "Banana Men" though.

Although some issues around identity emerged subtly, the impacts could be powerful. I recall feeling embarrassed for myself when another cousin of mine, who immigrated to Montreal at the age of five, commented that "*I'm different from those who have grown up in China. Most of them are spoiled and indulged, overtly dependent on their parents even as adults.*" My identity as a Chinese from China, or rather, the stereotype imposed on me as a Chinese from China stood out at that moment. For the first time I realized that the way I perceived myself as a Chinese might not necessarily be consistent with the way that other people perceived me, even if we all shared a Chinese identity. Among the immigrant parents, their feelings of being Chinese are associated more with a belongingness to the Chinese immigrant group. For example, one immigrant parent shared during a gathering, "*It's way better to have a chat with you guys. We understand each other!*" He continued to explain, "*Each time when I'm surrounded by my white colleagues who laugh so hard at a joke, I have to pretend that I get the joke too by faking a laugh. But the fact is that I never understand their humour.*" This feeling of uneasiness caused by cultural differences resonated with many other people present, including me.

Geertz (1974) defines the descriptions of the "inside" and "outside" world, commonly referred to as "emic" and "etic" in anthropology, as the "felt realm of human experience" and the "observed realm of human behavior" (p.32) respectively. However neither concept fully applies to the way I perceive the immigrant group in my inquiry. I do not position myself as an insider to the group. It is true that like the Chinese immigrants, I have encountered a similar problem with my Chinese identity. Being Chinese was once a taken-for granted part of me from the moment I was born. In mainland China, more than 90 percent of the inhabitants are "Han People." It is a name originating from the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.)—one of the greatest periods in Chinese history. When the vast majority of people surrounding me were of Han descent who identified themselves as Chinese, my Chinese identity became too apparent for me to even notice. It was not until I came to Montreal that I became of aware of my Chinese identity, which I was required to examine and appreciate for the first time. However, this problem may not be the only one that the Chinese immigrants have had to deal with. They may need to go one step further, since they face the challenge of developing a sense of self as members of a Chinese ethnic group while simultaneously becoming members of the larger Canadian society. Holding a status as a Chinese international student, I do not share the same experiences lived by many Chinese immigrants. Therefore, I do not consider myself as an insider to the immigrant group.

But neither do I position myself as a complete outsider. Being Chinese is an undeniably important aspect of both my identity and the identity of the Chinese immigrant group under study. We are alike, not only because of the same pigments that color our eyes, hair and skin, but also in that we connect with the same cultural roots, and take roughly parallel routes as we both live in constant interpretation and negotiation between different cultures. Prior to assuming my role as a researcher, I was and am the niece of my uncle and aunt. During their gatherings among Chinese

immigrant friends, other immigrant parents often invited me into conversations with them as a way to show their care for the younger generation. The immigrant youth also shared thoughts and feelings with me because, as peers we had common interests and concerns. Our conversations mostly surrounded current events, social trends, professional careers, and romantic relationships. My previously established intimacy with this Chinese immigrant group laid the foundation of trust and openness between us that I was able to continue to develop throughout the research process. Unlike outsider-researchers who parachute into people's lives and then vanish (Gerrard, 1995), I rather conceptualize myself as a co-investigator and a co-learner in this inquiry.

My role as a researcher standing on the borderline between insider and outsider enables me to maintain a rapport with the participants with necessary "distance required to make sense of the data" (Breen, 2007, p.164). I can use my prior knowledge to interact authentically with participants in order to better understand their lived experiences from their perspectives. But my lack of familiarity with the meaning of being an immigrant may prevent me from imposing erroneous assumptions on the participants and their perceptions. As Geertz (1974) points out, the difference between the insider and outsider position perhaps is all about a question of degree—being near or distant to the experience seen from a first-person perspective. He suggests that instead of being limited to the insider/outsider dichotomy, researchers should simply aim to interpret and understand what an experience may mean to the person who is experiencing it in a particular context. I remained reflexive throughout my research process by constantly examining of my role as a researcher. Reflexivity is understood by Etherington (2004) as "the capacity of the researcher to acknowledge how their own experiences and contexts (which might be fluid and changing) inform the process and outcomes of inquiry" (p.31-32). Hertz (1996) notes that reflexivity involves the full consciousness of the researcher's self-location, for example, "within power hierarchies and

within a constellation of gender, race, class, and citizenship" (p.5). Reflexivity is an ongoing process of questioning and rethinking that permeates each aspect of the research. Engaged in reflexive analysis aids me in arriving at multifaceted and multi-layered accounts of the lived experiences of Chinese immigrants as they construct their identities.

Phenomenology

I adopt a phenomenological methodology to understand the lived experiences of Chinese immigrants from their perspectives. My understanding of phenomenology as a research methodology is formed primarily on the basis of the thoughts of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger.

Phenomenology emerged in the late nineteenth century as a reaction against the dominance of positivism in the human sciences (Laverty, 2003; Moran, 2000; Sadala & Adorno, 2002). Edmund Husserl, the founding father of phenomenology, criticized the methods of the natural science on human issues, mainly in psychology, for failing to recognize the variations among the living subjects in terms of their perceptions. In overcoming this problem created by the positivist idea of one single external reality, Husserl proposed a phenomenological solution that directed attention to the study of the life world, the world as lived by, not separate from the individual.

The life world, described by Husserl (1970), is "which is 'already there,' 'pregiven,' when theory begins its work" (p.xl). Laverty (2003) points out that the life world "quite often includes what is taken for granted or those things that are common sense" (p.22). As the study of the life world, phenomenology hence is essentially a critical self-reflexive methodology for describing and examining the world-as-experienced, through which new or forgotten meanings may eventually evolve.

Husserl (1970) purports that both subjects and objects occur within human experience. In doing so, he attempts to eliminate the Cartesian dualism of mind and body. However, he has been continually criticized for being unable to completely move away from the dualism. He advocates a transcendental-phenomenological method of "bracketing," described as a process of "suspending one's judgment or bracketing particular beliefs about the phenomena" (Laverty, 2003, p.23). For Husserl, only by eliminating the phenomenon of everything unessential or fortuitous can one eventually achieve a direct and primitive contact with the world, uncovering things as they really are. Heidegger's phenomenological ideas depart from Husserl's through a different attitude towards "bracketing." The disagreement with "bracketing" is also the reason that I embrace Heidegger's phenomenology instead of Husserl's. I will address this point later.

Heidegger refers to the human being as neither a self-enclosed pure consciousness nor a bounded material substance, but as "Dasein," which literally means "Being-there." Laverty (2004) translates "Dasein" as "the mode of being human" or "the situated meaning of human in the world" (p.24). Indeed, by using this expression, Heidegger calls attention to the fact that a human being cannot be appropriately considered except as a being situated within the world. The character of "Dasein," as claimed by Heidegger (1989), should be understood a priori as being grounded in a state of "Being" called "Being-in-the-world":

> World exists – that is, it is – only if Dasein exists, only if there is Dasein. Only if world is there, if Dasein exists as being-in-the-world, is there understanding of being…Self and world belong together in the single entity, the Dasein. Self and world are not two beings, like subject and object, or like I and thou, but self and world are the basic determination of the Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world. (as cited in Zahavi, 2008, p.674)

The world here should not be seen as simply the totality of positioned objects or casual relationships, but "a context, an environment, a set of references and assignments within which any meaning is located" (Moran, 2000, p.233). Therefore, to say that we are "in" the world does not mean that we are occupying some special locations in a three-dimensional coordinate system, but that we are embodied and embedded in a cultural, social and historical context. This sense of engagement is essentially "existential." For Heidegger (1996), the essence of Dasein lies precisely in its existence (p.40). Existential phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (1996) agrees with Heidegger that there is an interrelated and mutually inseparable relation between the self and the world. He sees the self as the body which is living and perceiving. He writes that "our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system" (p.203). Our bodily perception stretches beyond our physical body, so we are always already standing outside ourselves, being practically engaged in the world, in a concrete situation (Aho, 2005).

Heidegger rejects Husserl's idea of "bracketing," contending that human experience cannot and should not be investigated by a state of pure consciousness, from a detached, disengaged, observer's standpoint (Kafle 2013; Laverty, 2004; Zahavi, 2008). He emphasizes the importance of pre-understanding that we hold. He believes that "knowing itself is grounded before-hand in already-being-in-the-world which essentially constitutes the being of Dasein" (Heidegger, 1996, p.57). In other words, the possibility of Dasein's initial access to the world is realized via a history and a tradition. Pre-understanding, handed down from our inherited traditions and past experiences, is often referred to as the "average and vague understanding" (Heidegger, 1996, p.4). Although it can easily be a misunderstanding or a distortion, it provides the foundation for continuous interpretations, hence is indispensable for seeking genuine understanding (Moran, 2000). Moran

(2000) further stresses that the background of prejudices that we hold are "mostly non-theoretical and not explicitly articulated by us" (p.235). Therefore, it is not only inadvisable but effectively impossible to practice the method of "bracketing" suggested by Husserl.

The term "phenomenology," as explained by Heidegger (1996), is made up of two concepts—"phenomenon" and "logos." He defines "phenomenon" as "what shows itself in itself, what is manifest" (p.25), and "logos" as "letting something be seen" (p.29) as a unity or synthesis. Hence phenomenology means "to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself" (p.30). Due to the different modes through which we get access to things, they always present themselves differently. Sometimes things conceal parts of them. Sometimes things may show themselves as what they are not (Moran, 2000). To remove an entity from its hiddenness and to grasp its real being requires an act of uncovering, disclosing, and discovering. This act refers precisely to the mode of interpretation. For this reason, Heidegger's phenomenology is more than descriptive; it is interpretive or hermeneutic.

Moran (2000) notes that by "hermeneutics," Heidegger means "the whole manner in which human existence is interpretative" (p.235). Van Manen (1990) argues that "there are no such things as uninterrupted phenomena" (p.180) because we are always encountering and interpreting what has been interpreted by ourselves and by others. As we move back and forth between our current moment and earlier experiences with our constant questioning, we are engaged in a hermeneutic circle that leads to the possibility of new understandings. Phenomenology remains unfinished as interpretation remains unfinished. For this reason, a definite or complete interpretation does not exist. Hence the fundamental task of phenomenological research, as Van Manen (1990) indicates, is to construct possible meanings of being in the world in a certain way, which attempt to "capture

a certain phenomenon of life in a linguistic description that is both holistic and analytical, evocative and precise, unique and universal, powerful and sensitive" (p.41).

Methods of Inquiry

In order to understand the lived experiences of the Chinese immigrants from their perspectives, I conducted 15 in-depth, face-to-face individual interviews with both the parents and young adults from five Chinese immigrant families living in Montreal.

I draw on postmodern theory, which views the social world as a series of fragments in a state of constant flux, and the self as multiple and ever-shifting positionings in response to specific contexts. (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). Postmodernism is characterized by "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiv), the overarching accounts that attempt to shape history and determine the meaning of human lives. By directing our attention to the fragments and the details of everyday life, postmodern theory persuades us to understand a thing from multiple perspectives, instead of reducing the multiplicity to one single interpretation. I believe that the researcher and the participants work together during the meaning-making process. Versions of reality are collaboratively constructed in, and through the active interactions between the two parties (Gubrium & Holstein, 2012).

Adopting Heidegger's phenomenological methodology, I see my pre-understanding, embedded in my background and experiences, as inseparable from, and indeed essential to my interpretive research process. In order to understand the phenomenon of identity construction among Chinese immigrants, I engage myself in an ongoing reflexive process, a process based predominantly on language.

Phenomenologists (Heidegger, 1992, 1996; Merleau, 1996; Gadamer, 2004) have been highly concerned with the significant role which language is playing in phenomenological analysis.

For Heidegger (1992), our practical engagement with the world is epitomized in our use of language. As he states:

> It not so much that we see the objects and things but rather that we first talk about them. To put it more precisely, we do not say what we see, but rather the reverse, we see what one says about the matter. (p.56)

Language is viewed as "a manifestation, a revelation of intimate being" (Merleau, 1996, p. 196), which establishes a living relation between us and the world. Gadamer (2004) claims that language functions as "the universal medium in which understanding occurs" (p.390); it is where our mode of being-in-the-world become realized. Van Manen (1990) further points out that "the aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence" (p.36). Thanks to language, we are able to reflexively recall, recount, and re-live our experiences through which we further our understanding, and add meaning to our daily lives.

Throughout my research process, I have been using journals to engage in self-reflexivity of my identity, my attitude towards living in Montreal, and my understanding of the living status of local Chinese immigrants:

> Journal. Jun. 17th, 2014:
>
> I remember how frustrated I was when my classmates refused to call me by my English name "Elaine." They asked me why I should use a fake English name rather than my actual Chinese name "Lingwei" if I was a real Chinese. It was my first day at McGill. Being questioned like this made me so uneasy that I started to worry about whether I could fit in here any time soon. I never thought my English name as something inappropriate. It has been common in China for students to adopt English names in English classes at school. I offered my English name as an

> alternative only because "Elaine" might be easier than "Lingwei" to be remembered and pronounced by non-Chinese. I felt like being labeled as a "typical Chinese international student" with the Western stereotype of Chinese student imposed on me—the shy, reserved, passive, traditionally-minded, hard-working nerd. I guess the main reason for their rejection of my English name was the perceived inconsistency between the English name and my identification as a Chinese, a Chinese from China. If I had told them that I was born in Canada, would they have posed the same question to me? Or if my English had had no foreign accent, would they have mistaken me for a Chinese-Canadian, hence accepted my English name? Is one's name so important to one's identity that a difference name may change the way in which one is perceived by other people? But isn't it a fact that I will still be who I am no matter I am "Lingwei" or "Elaine"?

I have been constantly examining my personal biases and assumptions, and more importantly, the potential influences they may exert on the identity issues that I am researching. For example, I have come to realize that the research topic was initially, and primarily motivated by my obsession with my own identity as Chinese, which I almost forgot, but have reconstructed bit by bit since I came to Montreal from China. I used to believe that the identity issue should happen to whomever went through an experience similar to mine—being caught between two cultures, until I heard the responses from participants, which clearly indicated that this identity issue is not necessarily a concern for everyone.

My data were gathered from the interviews with participants. In order to understand the lived experiences of the Chinese immigrants in Montreal as they construct their identities, I invited five immigrant families to participate in my inquiry. I conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews

with the family members—the father, the mother, and their son or daughter from each of the five immigrant families. I audio-taped, and later transcribed each interview. For the interviews conducted in Chinese, I translated them into English:

> *刚来* [蒙特利尔]*那个时候工作特别难找，他* [我先生]*一开始信心十足，可后来发现这里要求法语，他那个时候连英语都不够，找工作根部不可能很轻松。我们有一个一起读法语的同学的先生，通过熟人的关系在这边一所中文学校教书，就周末在那里教中文，我们哎呀羡慕的不得了。那时候只要谁说有一份工作吗， 不管是干什么，我们就觉得太了不得了。*(杨女士，中文采访，01/08/2014)
>
> *At the time we came* [to Montreal]*, it's really difficult to find employment. He* [my husband] *was confident in the beginning. But soon he realized that it's by no means easy to get a joy since French is needed here, and he was not even sufficiently proficient in English. I had a classmate with whom we studied French together. Her husband managed to get a job in a Chinese heritage language school through his personal contact. He taught Chinese there during weekends. We all envied him a lot. At that time, as long as someone could find a job, no matter what the job was, we would find the him or her admirable.* (Mrs. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

Laverty points out that openness is critical, as it "encourages the interview process to stay as close to the lived experience as possible" (2004, p.29). To achieve openness, I interviewed the father, mother, and the young adult from each family separately. If I interview the three family members at the same time, these is the likelihood that the dominant family member tries to speak for the whole family, hence takes charge of the conversation throughout the entire interview process. For this reason, I conducted separate individual interviews.

I framed my interview questions thematically based on my knowledge about the lived experiences of Chinese immigrants. My knowledge was informed by my personal background, past experiences, and a review of the literature on the identity construction of Chinese immigrants. Before I conducted the actual interviews, I held several informal conversations with immigrants of Chinese background other than participants in this inquiry. We shared our perceptions of our lived experiences, discussed the appropriate ways of questioning, and refined the interview questions which would otherwise overlook the aspects important to my understanding of the meaning of being an immigrant. For example, one of them gave me this suggestion: I should not raise the questions in an overtly polite and careful manner while dealing with sensitive, and usually emotive issues with participants, such as the conflicts over identity. Behaving as such, I may make participants mistakenly think that I see them not only as different, but as defective. Consequently, they may start to reveal a defensive or resistant attitude towards my further questioning, which makes genuine meaning-seeking impossible.

I collected data from semi-structured interviews with a spontaneous conversational style of questioning. Van Manen (1990) suggests that the collaborative quality of a conversation makes it especially well-suited to the task of reflecting on the themes of the phenomenon under study. He explains that the conversation "has a hermeneutic thrust: it is oriented to sense-making and interpreting of the notion that drives or stimulates the conversation" (p.98). Conversational style and nondirective interviewing is also another method to ensure openness. Throughout the interviews, I kept alert to the emergence of new themes that I failed to cover initially. I made space for the newly emerged themes by adapting my interview questions accordingly. To minimize the factors that may hinder a free flow of ideas, I let participants choose whichever language—English or Mandarin—they felt most comfortable using during the interviews.

Participants

	Name	Sex	Age	Language	Interview
Yang's Family	Ziying Zhai (Mrs. Yang)	F	50	Mandarin	01/08/2014 7:40 pm-11:30 pm
	Tong Yang (Mr. Yang)	M	54	Mandarin	
	Yujia Yang	F	26	English	
Zhang's Family	Xialin Li (Mrs. Zhang)	F	55	Mandarin	02/08/2014 5:30 pm-7:20 pm 9:30 pm-11:00 pm
	Liang Zhang (Mr. Zhang)	M	55	Mandarin	
	Min Zhang	F	26	English	
Jia's Family	Tingting Jiang (Mrs. Jia)	F	46	Mandarin	08/08/2014 7:00 pm-10:30 pm
	Pan Jia (Mr. Jia)	M	52	Mandarin	
	Ze Jia	M	20	English	
Shen's Family	Duo Lian (Mrs. Shen)	F	51	Mandarin	10/08/2014 1:50 pm-4:40 pm
	Guanghua Shen (Mr. Shen)	M	50	Mandarin	
	Moran Shen	M	24	English	
Kong's Family	Xiya Ni (Mrs. Kong)	F	52	Mandarin	10/08/2014 6:30 pm-7:30 pm 8:10 pm-10:00 pm
	Hao Kong (Mr. Kong)	M	51	Mandarin	
	Yiqing Kong	M	22	English	

Participant Recruitment

Altogether I invited five Chinese immigrant families to participate in my inquiry. All these five families came from mainland China, and have settled in Montreal since the 1990s. The immigrant young adults from each family were born in mainland China, and immigrated to

Montreal with their parents during early childhood. I set these eligibility criteria for young adult participants because I make a distinction between Canadian-born young adults with a Chinese background and Chinese–born immigrant young adults in Canada. In my inquiry, I focus on the latter. People may be used to labelling them as "1.5 generation," considering that they neither belong to the first generation immigrants who immigrate as adults, nor the second generation who are native-born in the new country, but halfway in between. Along with "1.5 generation," sociologists even coin the terms "1.75 generation" and "1.25 generation" so as to further differentiate between the foreign-born youth who immigrate at a very young age, and at a relatively older age yet prior to adulthood (Rumbaut, 1997). However, since there is not a universal agreement on the usage of the terms mentioned above, in order to insure the precision of the information provided, I avoid using these terms in this inquiry, and have them replaced by detailed descriptions.

I started to recruit participants in early July 2014. I once planned to invite my aunt's family who also met the selection criteria to participate in my inquiry. But I did not eventually, considering the potential problem that their answers to my interview questions might be skewed towards my expectations since I kept them updated about my inquiry during the past two years. However, they offered me great help for participant recruitment, especially my aunt who suggested to me quite a few potential participating families from her circle of friends and acquaintances. There were her old friends who immigrated to Montreal at the same time with her family, her former classmates whom she met in the certificate program during the post-immigrant period, as well as some new friends that she got to know in the local Chinese community gatherings. I contacted these Chinese immigrant families via either phone or email, and sent invitation letters to those who showed interest in my inquiry. Once both the parents and young adult from the potential

participating families agreed to be interviewed, I sent them separate informed consent forms, and asked for their signatures. All interviews were conducted in early August 2014 at participants' homes as they preferred. I changed all of the participants' real names to a pseudonym so as to respect confidentiality, privacy and anonymity, except for three participants—Mrs. Yang (Ziying), Yujia, and Yiqing who gave me permission to use their real names.

Contextualizing Interviews

Yang's family

Mrs. Yang is a friend of my aunt whom she got to know in a certificate program. We sent emails back and forth several times to set up the interviews. I was grateful that she was always the one who gave me the quickest replies.

Yang's family immigrated to Montreal in the year of 1995. According to Mrs. Yang, Mr. Yang had been thinking about a life overseas for a long time:

> *He* (my husband) *always had that dream of going abroad in mind, especially after he had the chance to work at an international enterprise in the United States for some time. He really enjoyed the atmosphere in his workplace, which he found was so different from the one back in China.* (Mrs. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

For Mr. Yang, working abroad would be more beneficial to his career than staying in China. Shortly after coming back from the United States, Mr. Yang was introduced Canada's immigration program for skilled workers which he was eligible to apply. The whole family then made up their minds to start a new life in Canada.

Mr. Yang is currently a senior software engineer, and Mrs. Yang is running a small import business for wholesale. They used to study in the field of automatic instrumentation when they were in China. After immigration, Mr. Yang pursued a master's degree in electrical engineering

while Mrs. Yang started two certificate programs in succession, one in accounting, and the other in computer science. However, at the time that she graduated, the entire computer industry witnessed a big slump. Considering also the fact that it would be more secure, both financially and psychologically, if one of them could become self-employed instead of working for other people, Mrs. Yang started a business of her own.

Mr. Yang's previous work at international enterprises required him to travel frequently between China and foreign countries. In his view, national boundaries have been weakening and become blurred:

> *I think we're all human beings. Maybe we look differently, we have different cultures, and we live in difference places, but there aren't many fundamental differences between us. Surely I identify myself as a Chinese, but I don't find it necessary to keep emphasizing it, like I'm Chinese, you are White, so we're different…We should work on reducing the distance between people.* (Mr. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

Mrs. Yang described herself as the kind of person who takes things as they come. Even though she was not the person who decided to immigrate, Mrs. Yang never demonstrated her unwillingness to resettle into a new country. Mrs. Yang highlighted particularly the value of immigration for her daughter Yujia:

> *He* (my husband) *wanted to immigrate, so I kept him company. Although I felt all good living in China, I was also willing to experience a new country, and after we immigrated, I found Montreal a nice place to live too…Living in Canada is especially beneficial to my daughter. The Chinese education system puts too much pressure on students. The children there have been pushed too far, and many of*

> *them even have mental health problems caused by academic stress. Here, children can at least have a happy childhood. In this sense, I think immigration is worthwhile.* (Mrs. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

As a child of immigrants, Yujia were sent to a French public preschool after she moved to Montreal at the age of six. All her schooling was done in French language until the Cégep program which she did in a private English school. She achieved a Doctor of Medicine degree at a francophone university in Montreal before finally switching back to an anglophone university for residency training. Yujia is currently in her third year of residency.

Yujia enjoys the cultural richness in Montreal. In her opinion, "*everyone needs a culture of their own, and it can be a single culture or a mixed one.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)" For Yujia, her culture is a mixture of both Chinese and Canadian cultural elements. She claims Chinese identity, but she pointed out that she did not define herself by the culture that she was from, nor did she rely on Chinese cultures to direct her actions:

> *Definitely if you took away the fact that I'm Chinese, you would take a big part of me, like away from me, I'm sure of it. But on the daily basis, I don't necessarily define myself as ok, I'm acting this way because I have to be proud of my Chinese heritage, or because I'm a Chinese I'm expected to be…I mean, whether we're Chinese person or not, it's because we're born that way, you know. I like to identify myself as what I did in my life. My job is very important to me, and my education is important to me, because these are actual things that I've realized*. (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

Zhang's family

Zhang's family has been the neighbor of my aunt's for more than ten years. I loved to drop in their house for a chat and a tea during the year that I lived with my aunt's family. I already knew them well before I started this inquiry.

Mr. Zhang, a senior software engineer at present, came to Montreal alone as an international graduate student 24 years ago in 1990. Mrs. Zhang followed him to Montreal with their daughter Min a year and a half later as family visitors. The family then decided to immigrate and settle down in this city. Mrs. Zhang has been a housewife all these years, except for a short period of work at a luggage factory a few years after she moved to Montreal. She explained to me the employment barriers that she faced:

> *What I have learnt in China is not applicable here. It's not that I hadn't thought about continuing education. It was the conditions that were not ripe during the first couple of years, for example, my inappropriate status, my language problem, and so on.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)

In her fifth year of stay in Canada, Mrs. Zhang gave birth to a boy, their second child. Since then she has dedicated herself single-mindedly to the family.

Mrs. Zhang has a strong sense of being Chinese. But a tie has also been established between her and her host country after all these years of living in Canada. For Mrs. Zhang, both "being Chinese" and "being Canadian" are indispensable parts of her identity:

> *Between me and China, I think it's the blood ties that bind us. You know, I have my roots in China, I have relatives and friends in China, and I often travel back to China, so I have a strong identification with China. But my Canadian identity is important to me too. For example, when I was in China, I cared a lot about the news related to Canada, because my own family was there, and the news might*

> *have a direct influence on our family life.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)

Unlike Mrs. Zhang, Mr. Zhang is relatively insensitive to cultural and identity-related issues. His family roles as father and husband take priority over his other social roles. According to Mr. Zhang, his Chinese and/or Canadian identity has never been a question that bothers him:

> *I hardly, I think I've never really thought about whether I'm a Chinese or a Canadian…I don't like the idea of labeling people, and I don't label myself. If you ask me to choose among Chinese, Canadian, or Chinese-Canadian, I'll say none of them is me.* (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)

Holding an international status initially, Min, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Zhang, was permitted to pursue her preschool education in an English public school in Montreal at the age of four. All the education that she received afterwards was in English language, except for Grade 3 that she did in a French public primary school in order to meet the immigration requirement. Min is currently a second-year resident working at a Jewish community-based hospital.

Drawing a parallel between Chinese and Canadian cultures, Min observes that their differences lie mostly in eating habits, and tempos of life:

> *One of the things that I find most striking, because I was recently in China, is just from the culinary point of view. Being Chinese means you eat everything a hundred percent cooked. All of your vegetables are cooked. Your meat is never like, medium or rare. Being Canadian means you'll eat meat that is rare. You eat salad, like eat vegetables raw…Other differences, I feel like sometimes are just social manners are a little bit different. In China, everybody is a little bit more, "Go, go, go!" and*

it's a little bit more fast-paced. In Canada, I think everything is a little bit slower. It could just because we have less people here. (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

Since these cultural differences are not difficult to be reconciled, and can be felt only when she visits China, Min has hardly had the feeling of internal conflict due to these seemingly contradictory cultural customs. Min believes that she has in general "*a good mixture of both cultures*. (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)"

Jia's family

Mr. Jia and Mrs. Jia have been really good friends of my uncle and aunt since their early 20s. Mr. Jia and my uncle used to be colleagues teaching at the same university in China. It was about the same time that the two families made the decision on family immigration to Montreal. Thirty-year friendship built on shard lived experiences makes them mutually the best "comrades-in-arms."

Mr. Jia is the only parent participant who returned to China and worked as an overseas returnee after his immigration. His adventure in Canada started in early 1994. Mrs. Jia and Ze, their son, immigrated to Canada two years after in 1996 to be reunited with him. Mr. Jia spent the first one year and a half in Toronto doing research, and then came to Montreal for Ph.D. studies in the field of metallurgical engineering. However, in consideration of the needs of the local labor market, hence the levels of difficulty in terms of getting a job, Mr. Jia also registered in a graduate diploma program in computer science, and had completed all the required credits of this program by the time he was awarded his Ph.D. As he expected, he made a successful career transition into Information Technology (IT) industry upon his graduation. But things in life would not always run smoothly. A well-regarded company suddenly collapsed into bankruptcy, and Mr. Jia found himself unemployed overnight. He recalled:

> *It was unimaginable how stressed out I was as the head of a family. But fortunately the unemployment did not last long. I was soon offered a really good job in China, and I decided that I have to grasp the opportunity.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Summoning all his resolution, Mr. Jia moved back to China in 2008, so did Mrs. Jia and Ze. During the time that Mr. Jia was working in the city of Shanghai, Ze was sent to an international high school in the local area. Ze told me that having been educated in French public schools in Montreal for years, the experience in Shanghai was a cultural shock to him that made him realize that he did not belong there:

> *In China, well first of all, one thing is obvious, you know reading, because everything is in Chinese, right? The basic stuff, you know I understand and then I can kind of communicate with people, but in Shanghai they've their own dialogue that I don't understand… And also, there is a difference in behavior too. I'm not sure how to describe it but like, behavior-wise, like daily things that you do or the way you communicate with each other is different. I felt like I was, I kind of stood out.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)

The major concern for Mr. Jia and Mrs. Jia had been the education quality of the international high school. Roughly two years after they returned to China, Mrs. Jia and Ze decided to go back and restart their life in Montreal.

Mr. Jia stayed in China for another two years, and eventually went back to Montreal for his family. He told me that he actually really enjoyed his work in China. The idea of "going back" is still lingering in his mind:

> *People always go where they can have a better life… If I were in China, I would have a very stable and well-paid job. Everything would be easy for me… Sometimes the idea of going back* [to China] *still flashed across my mind. But even if I would probably not leave Canada, I've never thought about staying forever in Montreal…Because of the constant lack of meaningfulness and psychological safety, I can hardly have a home-feeling in Montreal.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Mrs. Jia is ambivalent about her possible future return to China, as she has to the weigh the value of working in China against its potential negative impact on her family:

> *For sure I'd like to go back to China if there's a good job opportunity. I'll be willing to go. But I'll find it hard to make the decision. You know, family is a unity, and I feel that family needs to stay together. But if we wish to stay together, we're not likely to move back to China, because my son would probably like to spend his life in Montreal.* (Mrs. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Mr. Jia is a software engineer at present while Mrs. Jia is working as an accountant. Ze is about to start his third year of undergraduate study in finance at an anglophone university in Montreal.

Shen's family

Shen's family and my aunt's became acquainted through mutual friends. Initially Mrs. Shen told me on the phone that Mr. Shen might not participate in my inquiry; he felt himself to be rather inarticulate in general, and hence might not be suitable as an interviewee. After I explained that the interviews can be conducted in either English or Mandarin, and participants have the right

to skip any questions that they do not feel comfortable answering, Mr. Shen eventually agreed to participate, for which I was grateful.

Shen's family immigrated through Canada's immigration program for skilled workers in 1998, and this year is their sixteenth year in Montreal. Mr. Shen used to be a communications engineer in China, but as he admitted, his lack of proficiency in either English or French posed limitations on his career options in Montreal. Currently, Mr. Shen is working as a delivery driver.

In Mr. Shen's opinion, his Canadian identity means his Canadian citizenship. "*It's a matter of expediency,*" Mr. Shen said, "*since I decided to stay in Canada for the rest of my life, it would be better for me to get Canadian citizenship.* (Mr. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" Mr. Shen highlighted the importance of hard work, which is usually regarded as one of the typical Chinese traditional values:

> *We Chinese are generally very hard-working. It's a cultural thing…Chinese people are seeking for each possible opportunity, and can always grasp these opportunities because of the hard work.* (Mr. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Mr. Shen believes that internal factors like hard work play a stronger role than external factors such as the socio-cultural environment in determining one's quality of life. In his view, as long as one is hard-working, one can manage to make a good living no matter where one settles in the world.

Mrs. Shen furthered her studies in accounting after their immigration became a Certified General Accountant (CGA). She is currently an employee at a local consulting firm.

Mrs. Shen described the relationship between her and China as being mutually belonging to each other. She stated, "*I'm Chinese wherever I go. China is part of me, and I'm part of China.*

(Mrs., Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" She also showed a preference for socialization within her ethnic group, even if she can get along with her colleagues from other cultures:

> *I don't enjoy hanging out with Westerners. Why do I have to waste time keeping alert to their English, trying to understand them, and then responding in English? I'd rather stay at home chatting with my Chinese friends. I feel happier and more relaxed this way. But besides the language, I think the biggest barrier to fit into the Western society is the difference between our values. I respect the values of other people, but I don't necessarily share their values.* (Mrs. Shen Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Shen, Moran, was an eight-year-old boy when he first came to Montreal. In order to qualify for the education in public schools in French-language system, Moran went to a transitional class primarily for French language study for one year and a half. Except for the Cégep program which he did in an English-language college, all the education he received afterwards was in French. Moran also has a passion for medical studies, and now he is in his second year of residency at a local hospital.

Being asked about how he defines his identity, Moran appeared to be confused as he was uncertain about whether we understood the term "identity" in the same way. He asked me back about my own definition of identity, and through the comparison, Moran showed his own positioning:

> *Moran: Uh, I think we need clarification here, like what do you mean by the Chinese identity? I think you have to, you just need to just define that, otherwise it's hard to continue.*

> *Lingwei: Well, I think being Chinese means different things to different people. For me, it's the Chinese culture that raised me up. I share Chinese values and beliefs, but it actually goes beyond individual level because I also feel sort of Chinese national identity. I feel that I'm being a member of the nation.*
>
> *Moran: Okay, yeah yeah, that's the difference. I wasn't raised in Chinese culture. I was raised more in Canadian culture. I do identify myself as Chinese, but I don't share like the Chinese nationalism aspect. Most of the Chinese people do. And I don't share most of its values.* (Moran, English interview, 10/08/2014)

Although Moran neither shares the Chinese national sentiment, nor embraces most of Chinese cultural values, he does acknowledge his Chinese roots. Moran hence considers "Chinese-Canadian" an appropriate label describing himself, as it indicates both the Chinese and Canadian parts of his identity.

Kong's family

Kong's family and my aunt's used to be neighbors. Although they both moved out of the original neighborhood years ago, they still stay in close touch. Mrs. Kong had been worried about her participation in this inquiry. She remained uncertain even a minute before the start of our interview about whether she was the right informant that I was seeking. "*Even my son is doubtful about our capability to correctly answer your questions*," Mrs. Kong told me, "*some concepts mentioned in your research questions seem too abstract to be comprehensible*." I tried to put her mind at ease by ensuring that there would not be any standard answers, and the interview questions would definitely be more down-to-earth than my research questions.

Unlike other participating families, Kong's family lived in Belgium for five years before immigrating to Canada. Mr. Kong started his Ph.D. studies in chemical engineering in Belgium in

1993. Over the five years when Mr. Kong dedicated himself to his studies, Mrs. Kong was working at the same university in Belgium as a research chemist. Yiqing, their son, was only two years old at the time that he moved to Belgium with his parents. All the preschool education that he received was in Belgium, and in French language. The whole family immigrated to Montreal through Canada's immigration program for skilled workers in 1998. In order to expand job opportunities, Mr. Kong also completed a graduate diploma program in computer science after immigration. Currently he is senior software engineer. For Mrs. Kong, she was "*lucky enough to find a job related to chemistry, and to be able to keep the job all these year*. (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 2014)" She did not depend on additional skill trainings for her livelihood—a path that many Chinese adult immigrants have had to choose. Coming to Montreal at the age of seven, Yiqing was smoothly enrolled into a local French public primary school without taking transitional classes as he had developed sufficient proficiency in French. He continued his education in French-language public schools until his Cégep study when he switched to an English-language private college. He obtained his bachelor's degree in accounting at a local anglophone university. In September 2014, Yiqing started his master's program in accounting. He is currently working towards the Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) designation.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Kong expressed the feeling of being "at the margin" of both Chinese and Canadian cultures. Mrs. Kong told me that she is "*always in-between* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" because Canadian people perceive her as Chinese while Chinese people think she is Canadian. Similarly, Mr. Kong stated, "*I'm not even like my son who is a Banana, I'm like "half cooked rice" who can't fit into either society*. (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" For Mr. Kong, the "in-betweenness" is a reality that he has to learn to live with:

> *Although you may feel a sense of distance from the larger society either here* [in Canada] *or in China, at least you have a circle of good friends, you have a life of your own. You keep on moving forward, and you get rewarded for your hard work…With a job, with a salary sufficient to sustain my family, and to support my son, that's enough. Your life won't be that much different in other places.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Yiqing however, rejects being labeled as "Banana Men" with yellow skin but white heart. He distinguishes himself from those whom he calls "real Banana" and who probably understand nothing about Chinese culture. Despite the fact that Yiqing strongly criticizes certain aspects of Chinese culture, especially the conservatism, he repeatedly emphasized the importance of staying open to both Chinese and Canadian cultural worlds:

> *I think the best is a balance of both because that way you open more options for yourself. If you're, let's say, if you reject one culture, you're just shooting yourself in the foot, like you're not giving yourself the best opportunities out there because if you are open to the Chinese culture there's a lot of opportunities in the Chinese community... if you only stick with the Chinese community you're also closing yourself off to a lot of the opportunities in the Canadian community.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

Summary

In this chapter, I reflected on my positioning as a researcher through an examination of my Chinese background and experiences as an international graduate student in Montreal. I discussed Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology which guided me throughout the process of data collection and interpretation. I also discussed my choice of semi-structured in-depth interviews as

my research method from a hermeneutic phenomenological standpoint. I provided descriptions of the participant recruitment process, as well as the background of each participating families. In Chapter 4, I provide my analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter 4 Data and Data Analysis

> *Mr. Jia: For now, I can only tell you how I feel. How do I feel of living here* [in Canada]*? Well, from the day that I decided to apply for Canadian Citizenship, I've thought that I am a Canadian already. However, I, myself, still feel close to China, and I keep close contact with my Chinese relatives and friends. There's always this yearning, this desire for Chinese culture. Right, that's how I feel. I think it's because I grew up there* [in China]. *In terms of other aspects, well, maybe you also have the same feeling, for example, if China and Canada are competing against each other in sports, which country are you gonna support? I feel ambivalent. But from what I can see, most Chinese immigrants may still wish that their home country could win.*
>
> *Lingwei: How about you?*
>
> *Mr. Jia: I think I feel the same way. Well, now I need to further ask myself why I may have this feeling. Maybe it's because here* [Canada] *is a place that all ethnicities gather together, then perhaps in my subconsciousness, I still belong to the minority group, or the group from China. For me, China is like "the parents' home of a married woman". Surely you want people from there to be good, to be successful, and to be a credit to your home country. You'll wish the Chinese team to back you up, to help you gain "face" here* [in Canada]. *I think there is such a mentality out there.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Identity questions are never easy to answer. When asked the question "Between 'being Chinese' and 'being Canadian,' which one do you think is more important to your identity?" most participants paused and pondered for a moment before responding. "Self-interrogation is a rare

thing" (Chee-kiong & Kwok-bun, 2001, p.365). One typically does not ask oneself "Who am I?" question, because identity is all too easy to be taken for granted, and thus considered unproblematic. One's identity is left behind or laid beneath consciousness, until one day it is evoked by some external stimuli, like the series of identity questions that I thrust upon participants. Mr. Jia did not offer an answer with certainty and conviction. Instead, he used the analogy of "the parents' home of a married woman" to describe his relationship to China. Traditionally, a Chinese woman is expected to leave her parents, and move out to her husband's household after her marriage. The parents' home of a married woman is hence often depicted as a place that always provides the married woman with unconditional love, support, and understanding, whose role gains its significance especially in the case of an unhappy and conflict-ridden marriage. Though without a definite answer, Mr. Jia's strong emotional dependence on and intimate attachment to China, his homeland, are both vividly and evidently manifested from this analogy.

In this chapter, I present the data that I collected through the interviews with 15 participants from five Chinese immigrant families in Montreal based on their answers to the five major questions:

(1) How do you define the meanings of "being Chinese" and "being Canadian," and how much do they matter respectively to your overall identity?

(2) How do the recognition and nonrecognition from others and the society influence the way that you perceive yourself?

(3) What role does your family play in the construction of your identity?

(4) With respect to language, how does multilingual competence/incompetence affect your identifications with specific cultural groups?

(5) What impact do you think the fast-paced globalization will have on the shaping of people's identity?

In answering these questions, the participants were exposed to various meanings associated with the identity labels either that they declare or are thrust upon them by others. At the same time, they were being actively engaged in a contextual and dynamic meaning-making process, through which they might confirm, dismiss, reinterpret and modify, or at least make clear the prior beliefs that they had been holding towards their cultural identities.

Recognizing the fluidity and multiplicity of identity, it may also be necessary to pay attention to the "performative element" (Riessman, 2012) of interviews. Riessman (2012) maintains that participants "do not 'reveal' an essential self as much as they perform a preferred self" (p.373) over the course of interviews. The identities that participants expressed are hence better understood as something socially and locally accomplished through the interactions with me, the researcher. This understanding can help avoid my potential obsessive preoccupations with truth and authenticity. This idea is supported by Holstein and Gubrium (2000) who state that "authenticities are situated and plural—locally articulated, locally recognized, and locally accountable" (p.70). In this sense, the word "self" is no longer the representation of a static and constant entity, but rather, one manifestation of possible selves at a particular time and place.

Riessman (2012) further points out that in narrating their stories and lived experiences, participants are effectively interpreting the past instead of reproducing the past. "Stories often reflect more desire for what might have happened than commitment to an accurate description of what did happen" (Frank, 2010, p.90). However, the reconstructions of the past, as Frank (2010) contends, are "not necessarily failures, but rather the useful reshaping of memory as the present situation requires" (p. 90). Moreover, participants' understandings of the same life events may

change over time. Retelling the past is as if an older self is seeking to understand what was not comprehended by the younger self, but what may be interpreted anew, again, later in life. As the researcher, I therefore do not attempt a "correct" or "authoritative" interpretation of any of the lived experiences that participants shared. The single one interpretation is also not something a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology would suggest. Instead, I try to comprehend, using self-reflexivity, the lived experiences of participants from their own perspectives as much as possible. Thus, my data analysis presents only a possible interpretation of the ways of life of a group of Chinese immigrants in Montreal, based on the realities that they perceived, understood, organized, and reflected through their recounting of their lived experiences.

Meanings of "being Chinese" and "being Canadian"

The great research interest in Chinese immigrants' ethnic identification can be easily seen from the literature review that I presented in chapter 2. It seems that when identity issues are central, the pivotal group is the ethno-cultural group, at least in the case of Chinese immigrants. Overlaps of importance may occur due to the simultaneous membership in other social categories—gender, socioeconomic, occupational, religious, and linguistic, but what is located at the core is an ethnic identity. Is it? It also seems inevitable that a contrast is drawn between the identifications with the "home country" and the "host country," as if they are antonyms of each other. Are they?

With these doubts, I started my inquiry with participants' personal understandings of "being Chinese" and "being Canadian" based on their self-identifications. Specifically, I asked participants if they identified themselves as Chinese and/or Canadian, and their reasons for such identifications. I also asked them the comparative relevance of each of the two aspects to their identities. I wondered if one aspect would be necessarily more important than the other one, or, if the two would matter at all to participants in their everyday lives.

While the essentialist view of identity as biologically determined and persistent over time has continuously been the target of criticism, and much of Western and Eastern scholarship has been making great efforts to destabilize and deconstruct the fixed notion of "Chineseness," it is evident that many participants in this inquiry still consider certain discernable cultural characteristics as the defining markers of their Chinese identity. Min explained the set of characteristics that she associated with in defining the meanings of "being Chinese":

> *Well, I mean, at home, we're still very Chinese. We speak Chinese at home. We eat Chinese food at home. We still…my parents watch Chinese television. So I think being Chinese is still a big part of my identity.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

Min is sometimes asked by locals if she is half-Chinese and half-Caucasian. She gives her answer with absolute certainty:

> *You know, I have black hair and light skin but I'm actually one hundred percent Chinese and I was born in China. I was like, "No! I'm one hundred percent Chinese! Both my parents are Chinese!" you know, and things like that.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

As our interview proceeded, Min started to veer towards emphasizing the influence of Chinese cultural values on her perceptions of her Chinese identity. Thus, it is obvious that these mostly ascriptive elements—the language, cultural practices, physical features, the place of birth, and the origin of her parents, are not sufficient to fully account for Min's Chinese identity. However, these are the immediate things that came to Min's mind when confronted with the request to articulate what it is that makes her Chinese. Regardless of her personal understanding and attitude towards the identity elements that she named explicitly, it seems that Min has not encountered any difficulties in defining her Chineseness. A state of "the combination of deep

confusion, painful self-examination, and rationalization" (Chee-kiong and Kwok-bun, 2001, p. 364) commonly discovered among the younger generations of Chinese immigrants, fails to apply to Min. Another immigrant young adult Ze also feels untroubled by the fact of his "being Chinese":

> *To me the main thing would be like the ethnic background. Because I was born in China, I was, part of my life was spent in China and my parents are Chinese, that's basically the meaning that I attach to it* [being Chinese]. (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)

Like Min, Ze shared the idea that once he was born Chinese, into a Chinese family, he naturally classified himself, and was classified as Chinese. Reflecting on his experiences, Ze told me that people hardly doubted about his ethnic origin. He said, "*That's is pretty obvious, I'm Chinese. So, they don't really ask. You know they just assume when they see me*. (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)" What Ze implies here is the fact that the visual or visible attributes in him, more precisely, his Chinese appearance serves as the immediate source of his identification as a Chinese. Such an observation was not made exclusively by the young adults. Consider Mr. Kong and Mr. Yang's statements about the physical attributes as a definite marker of Chinese identity:

> *You have your Chinese markers. You can't avoid them. You have yellow skin, black eyes and black hair. These are something you can't escape from.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)
>
> *When you are here* [in Canada]*, even though you know yourself, whether you're Canadian, Chinese, or Chinese-Canadian, you can't expect other people to know. With this appearance, you are obviously a Chinese, so people will still associate you with China and Chinese people.* (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)

In this way, the typical Chinese appearance of participants, for both the young adults and

their parents, is a base on which they are ethnically or racially categorized. However, does the fixed perception of Chinese based on essentialist characteristics necessarily entail Chinese immigrants' permanent membership in a racial or ethnic minority group inferior to white people? Do participants' adoption of the physical attributes as part of the defining markers in their self-identifications have to be a manifestation of their internalization of the dominant stereotypical perceptions of Chinese? Are there any differences between the young adults and their parents in their attitudes towards their Chinese appearance, and their perceptions of its relatedness to the stereotyping, prejudice and/or discrimination that they have experienced in Canada? I discuss these points more fully later in this chapter.

The surname was also reported as a related identity marker. Some participants claimed that a Chinese surname clearly indicated a person's identity:

> *About changing the name, well, people may have no idea where I'm from if I use an English first name, but come on, my family name is still there, and it will never change.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)
>
> *You know that you can't change your surname. When people see your surname, they immediately know that you're an Asian, maybe not Chinese, but least an Asian. So it* [adopting an English name] *makes little sense. At best people may care if you're the second or third generation immigrant. But you're still an immigrant.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)
>
> *When I see a clearly Chinese person with a, say an English first name, no middle name and a Chinese last name, I just assume the person is a Canadian born Chinese, because that's generally the explanation* . (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

While a Chinese surname is still considered relevant to the identification as a Chinese, most

participants tend not to associate their official given names, or unofficial everyday names directly with their identities. Their names can be their original Chinese given names (in fact most of them continue to use their Chinese names in their everyday lives), or the new English names that they adopted after immigration, or both. The choice of the name depends primarily on how convenient it is—whether it can be easily spelled and pronounced by people with whom they are socializing on a daily basis. Mr. Jia explained, "*People won't call your name when they are not sure about its pronunciation, so definitely you will have less chance to communicate with people*. (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)" Mr. Jia's explanation effectively indicates the underlying reason for his adoption of an English name: better intergration into the society. This is consistent with Wang's (2009) finding that Chinese people's practice of adopting and using English name is closely associated with their actualities, such as their life goals. Ze is currently undergoing a lengthy process to have his name legally changed to Zac. He told me that he was not even certain about the way that I may pronounce his Chinese name Ze in English. The difficulty in pronunciation due to the differences between Chinese and English phonetics is the main reason for his decision on his name change. However, Ze clearly pointed out, "*The only part I would lose would be the* [Chinese] *name. That's it. I mean, it doesn't change who I am.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)" This idea may not be shared by Yiqing, who stated, "*I keep my Chinese name because it would be an insult to my grandparents who chose the name for me if I take it off.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)" Having discussed with participants about our names, especially after some of them explained to me, patiently and delightedly, the special connotations embedded in their original Chinese names, I find myself no more being haunted by the "name issue" mentioned in my journal in the previous chapter. The discussions reminded me of my own name "Lingwei (令玮)," given by my grandfather, literally meaning "a piece of exquisite jade" in

Chinese language. With a name that can be pronounced easily and accurately by most people without much difficulty, it seems right to me to just stick with it, "Lingwei," appreciating how beautiful it is.

While it is necessary to acknowledge that some essentialist notions of Chinese, such as a typical Chinese look and a Chinese surname, still function as defining markers and constitutive parts of a Chinese identity for some participants, it is important to point out that for many of them, it is not an acceptance of these readily seen or perceived "facts," but the long-established emotional linkages and kinship bonds with China that contributes to a strong sense of "being Chinese." Self-identification based on such invisible and ongoing ties is particularly evident among the Chinese immigrant parents. China is where they have established their roots. Although most of them have no intention of a permanent physical return, many maintain a psychological or emotional commitment to their roots. Mr. Yang described himself as "*a Chinese residing in Canada* (Mr. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)". Similarly, Mrs. Jia admitted, "*No matter in which country I live, and how long I have lived, my Chinese identity is always there, deeply embedded in my mind.* (Mrs. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)" The sense of belonging to China was conveyed even more intensely by Mrs. Shen, who stated, "*China is part of me, and I'm part of China.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)"

One's homeland is also referred to as one's motherland, in that it provides visions of security, warmth, comfort, of especial and particular ties, precisely like a mother's home. Talking about China, Mrs. Yang immediately plunged into a state of nostalgia for the good old days in her "mother's home":

> *When I was still in China, I often heard some overseas Chinese saying "coming back to mother's arms" when they returned to China. I thought it's nothing but a*

> *rhetorical cliché at that moment. However, I find it so true after I myself moved to Canada. Once you go back to China, you'll feel exactly as if you're coming back to your mother's home, where you can eat your favorite food, and speak your own language. You'll feel truly relaxed. You'll also be able to learn, to appreciate your traditional culture, and to enjoy the history of Chinese civilization. In a word, like a fish in water, you'll feel completely at ease.* (Mrs. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

For Mrs. Kong, the sense of "being Chinese" is a powerful and emotive force that tightly binds her to the destiny of China and the life of Chinese people. Such a feeling goes beyond the geographical boundary:

> *My Feeling of being Chinese is strongest when disasters strike, like the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008. When there is a disaster happening, such a feeling is automatically evoked—why my motherland has to suffer so much?! When I was in Belgium, I saw people have favorable weather conditions almost every year during the harvest season. But looking at China, there are heavy rains and floods every August. It seems that the natural calamities and man-made disasters never end in China. I indeed feel sad for the misfortunes of my motherland.* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Mrs. Kong's statement, again, echoes Anderson's (2006) theory of the "imagined community." Over the 20 years of living in Canada, Mrs. Kong did not travel back to China on a regular basis. Therefore, China and the majority of Chinese people are not immediately accessible for her. Her intimate and intricate connection with China is based primarily on the power of imagination, made much easier these days with the pervasiveness of the advanced communication

technologies and media forms. As Anderson contends, it is upon the "imagined community" that nationalism, as well as a common national identity is forged and maintained. The element of Chinese national sentiment was highlighted by Mr. Shen in his definition of his Chinese identity:

> *My Chinese identity, first, has to be influenced by my cultural background. We can never escape from our Chinese cultural background. From one generation to the next, our parents consciously or unconsciously impart their culture, and stamp of identity on us. Another aspect of my Chinese identity, then, is the collective or national pride. Like me, I'm still very much concerned about the things related to China, the news and the information.* (Mr. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

The emotional attachment and the national sentiment commonly found among the Chinese immigrant parents, however, are hardly demonstrated by the young adults, or even clearly denied by them. For example, Moran stated, "*I do identify myself as Chinese, but I don't share like the Chinese nationalism aspect most of the Chinese people do.* (Moran, English interview, 10/08/2014)" The young adults tend to associate the Chinese aspect of their identities directly with their parents. For Yiqing, to identify himself as Chinese is mainly because he has a "*very traditional Chinese upbringing* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)". The Chinese parenting style was highlighted by Ze, too, who observed that "*Chinese people have a different way of educating their children.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)" Although Ze could not explicate the exact differences, he was sure that he was "*not raised in the same way* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)" as a lot of his friends. Parental influence also manifests itself in the shaping of children's belief systems. Min said, unhesitatingly, "*I share values with my parents like, you know, we believe in hard work. We're kind of very Asian.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)"

As Mr. Shen described, the integration of cultural inheritance into everyday life is an

ongoing process that can occur consciously or unconsciously. Sticking with Chinese cooking styles, watching Chinese television shows, and celebrating Chinese festivals are some of the typical daily cultural practices through which the Chinese immigrant parents may wish to engender a sense of "being Chinese" within family. Using Chinese language, here more precisely, Mandarin, in communication with their children is yet another common practice demonstrated by the immigrant parents. I address the influences of Chinese language on Chinese identity later in this chapter. Some of the parents also try to keep their children updated with the news from China, or teach them some basic knowledge about Chinese culture and history when there is a chance for a conversation, such as the dinner time. But compared with all these ways of cultural transmission, an endorsement of important Chinese cultural values is reported, by both the parents and young adults, as relatively more essential to the development and maintenance of a Chinese identity.

One thing needs to be clarified here. The seemingly all-encompassing concept "Chinese cultural values" has the complexity and ambiguity inherited within the concept. The understandings of the value systems of Chinese culture vary from place to place, generation to generation, even person to person. If we recognize the fluidity and elusiveness of culture (Yon, 2000), then, to seek for some official and orthodox sources as standard to validate the legitimacy of the Chinese values embraced by participants, is surely something not to be encouraged, and is indeed impossible. Undeniably, certain values may find their origin in Confucianism which, considered as the greatest mainstream of traditional Chinese thoughts, is still alive in modern Chinese society in many ways. However, the key question here is not whether some values are really "Chinese" or not. The more important question is how these Chinese parents and young adults interpret and negotiate with each other the Chinese cultural values that they do or do not believe in. Moreover, how does the process of negotiation and modification influence their

perceptions of their Chinese identity?

"Hard work," a Chinese cultural value previously mentioned by Min, is emphasized by most participants, and regarded as a prerequisite for academic achievement and career success. Consider the following statements:

> *Some of the fine traditions of our Chinese nation, especially hard work, and diligence, have be retained and carried forward. If you work hard, you will do well in school, and then you can find a good job, and have a bright future. I still have this mentality, this expectation for my kid's future success.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)
>
> *We Chinese are generally very hard-working. It's a cultural thing. I think China's being strong and powerful is the result of the efforts of all its people, in China or abroad. Chinese people are seeking for each possible opportunity, and can always grasp these opportunities because of the hard work.* (Mr. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Chinese people have been popularly portrayed as industrious and hard-working for long. "Hard work," a value of Chinese culture, almost becomes a "symbol" of Chinese people. Evidently, most Chinese immigrant parents recognize the importance and desirability of "hard work," and have emphasized it throughout their children's upbringing. Like their parents, the immigrant young adults also have showed their embrace of the "hard work" value. For example, Yujia told me that school was never an issue for her. She recalled, "[My parents] *they never had to bring to me like that 'you have to study hard', because I just studied hard on my own. This is fun, I love my school, I love my science.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)"

The sustained mutual bond between two generations is another cultural value commonly

stressed by both the Chinese parents and young adults. For Mr. Yang and Mr. Zhang, the difference in family values and intergenerational relationships between Chinese and Western families is a major differentiating factor that has created a feeling of still being a Chinese deep down:

> *In terms of Canadian culture, there're something I don't agree with. For example, Canadian parents usually don't involve themselves as much as Chinese parents in taking care of their children. Similarly, when they are getting old, their kid won't show filial piety to them as much as Chinese kids will do to their parents. It's not something necessarily good or bad. It's just the culture, the custom that is passed from one generation to another. Many Canadian seniors are sent to the nursing homes, and are not visited often by their children. I have a white colleague whose father is diagnosed with cancer. While we're all worried about him, he seems to be happy as usual, laughing and joking, and even goes travelling now. His father is still in hospital! I don't, I can't understand. I think I prefer a Chinese way on this point.* (Mr. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)
>
> *I think one important aspect of Chinese culture lies in the relationship between two generations. It's not only about filial piety. Actually the emphasis on the respect for one's parents and elderly family members can be found in each culture. The issue I wish to raise is about whether to let young adults live independently. Here* [in Canada] *people say that young adults should move out and live by themselves…Personally I don't think moving out definitely means that my child is independent; conversely, not moving out doesn't mean that she can't thus be independent. A child's independence is shaped by the family. If my child can be independent at home, she can be independent anywhere else. So moving out is not*

an absolutely thing. (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)

The ideal intergenerational relationship is characterized by Mr. Yang and Mr. Zhang as a mutual investment. Their children depend on them for love, security, guidance, and other mental or material support. They depend on their children to meet their needs for emotional intimacy, understanding, companionship, and meanings in their lives. They both observe that in Canadian society, the physical and emotional distance between parents and children is generally increased as children reach adulthood. As a means to prevent this distance, the Chinese value on family relationship becomes fundamental in the upbringing of their children. Interestingly, Min, Mr. Zhang's daughter, has also expressed her appreciation for this specific Chinese value, as if it is an acknowledgment of her father's effort in cultural transmission:

> *I think, it's one of the things I actually like about, I feel like it's more prominent in Chinese culture that the parents don't kick you out at eighteen. It's not like, oh you're eighteen goodbye. Take care of yourself. Go pay for everything. Go rent an apartment. No, I think in Chinese culture, you take care of your, you take care of your children and you take care of your parents and there's a lot of that so, I think that's, that's a very, very positive thing. Umm, so, my parents take care of me like I'm twenty seven. I'm still like I come back and get food all the time, you know, and my parents pay for a lot of my stuff despite the fact that I've started working this year, because I think it's part of the culture.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

By consciously emphasizing Chinese cultural values in children's upbringing, the Chinese immigrant parents are at the same time engaged in a process of rearticulating their Chinese identity. However, it is important to notice that the immigrant young adults are never passive receivers of these cultural values. Admittedly, their Chinese identity is more or less shaped around the Chinese

cultural values passed down from their parents, but most of the time, they tend to give their own evaluations of these values, deciding which should be accepted or discarded. The selective adoption of Chinese cultural values is exemplified by Yiqing:

> *Yiqing: The ways of thinking. Like, Chinese people in general are very conservative and they're very like, they don't like to take risks. They like to think inside the box, they want to do the things in a specific way.*
>
> *Lingwei: But since you said you are half Chinese, are there certain values that you have adopted still come from Chinese culture?*
>
> *Yiqing: Some forms of conservatism, some like practicality. Like, here people are very very liberal, they would just say, "do, whatever you want" like blah-blah. Like, I still think that like you should focus on certain things in life, like your career and stuff like that. So that's more like Chinese. Whereas in Western culture, it's like, they also say this but it's more like, it's more lenient.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

Yiqing criticizes the Chinese thinking pattern for being conservative in general. He stresses that this Chinese part of him is different from his parents, whom he deems as "*very very Chinese* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)" with a clearly conservative mind. However, Yiqing admits that certain aspects of the conservatism in Chinese culture, like practicality, are still influential in shaping his personal belief system. Agreeing with some values but not all, choosing some while rejecting the rest—Yiqing's ambivalence towards Chinese cultural values persists throughout the process of his identity construction. By constructing his identity, Yiqing is also engaged in an ongoing forming of his dialectical understanding of Chinese culture.

In the same manner, Yujia has expressed an ambivalent feeling towards Chinese cultural

values. Yujia appreciates the strong parent-child bond emphasized in Chinese culture, while setting herself against the traditional, and still prevailing idea of the "absolute authority of teachers" in Chinese society. For Yujia, this negative attitude towards teachers' authority and power has largely originated from her "*extremely traumatizing* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)" kindergarten experience in China. She recalled, "*The teachers were so mean, doing like dictators, like when you were a four-year-old kid you have to sit with your legs together, you have to put your hand on there.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)" But Chinese cultural values, being regarded as positive or negative, seem to exert no direct influence over Yujia's perception of her Chinese identity. Yujia clearly articulated this point:

> *Definitely if you took away the fact that I'm Chinese, you would take a big part of me, like away from me, I'm sure of it. But on the daily basis, I don't necessarily define myself as ok, I'm acting this way because I have to be proud of my Chinese heritage, or because I'm a Chinese I'm expected to be...for sure that everybody needs a culture of their own, but I don't necessarily define my actions by which culture that I'm from.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

An attempt to disassociate Chinese values and norms from her self-identification as a Chinese is evident in Yujia's statement. The values and standards believed by Yujia are developed from the different cultures that she has been living with, or more precisely, the assemblage of cultural imprints on her. Undoubtedly, Chinese culture is one of the many cultures that constitutes her distinctive perceptions of culture and cultural identity. What Yujia tries to avoid is restricting herself to a Chinese identity solely defined by the Chinese cultural values routinely assigned to it.

The same attitude is revealed by many participants. Though identifying themselves as Chinese, they stress that they do not necessarily use Chinese cultural values and social norms as

the reference points to orient their daily actions. Some participants actually show preference to certain Western ways of doing things. For example, Mrs. Shen likes the idea of "going Dutch" when eating with friends. She commented, "*When you meet your old friends, you chat, you have dinner together, and then you spit the bill. Everyone is happy and relaxed.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" The unwritten rule of Chinese social etiquette—"I treat you to dinner today, and you treat me back tomorrow," in contrast, is too "*complicated and burdensome* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)". Similarly, Mrs. Kong also criticized the interpersonal relationships in Chinese culture for being sometimes "*too deep, and too complex to handle* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)". Mrs. Kong prefers the Western perspectives on socialization—the simplicity and straightforwardness. This preference, as Mrs. Kong insisted, does not lead to a rejection of her Chinese identity.

Immigrating from mainland China to Canada in the mid-1990s, participants have been living in Montreal for approximately 20 years, and have officially been Canadian citizens for more than 10 years. When mentioning Canada, most participants associate it with the traditional concept of "home," the concrete, physical spaces of everyday life, as contrasted with the images of "homeland" that rest largely upon their memories of China being kept alive, and their transnational linkages being maintained and recreated. Many participants resonate with Mrs. Yang, who stated, "*Where I've remained settled for long becomes my home.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)" For the immigrant young adults who have by far spent most of their lives in Montreal, this place provides them with psychological comfort and security needed for a sense of "home" due to their familiarity with the surroundings. Some immigrant parents have also mentioned that family, or more precisely, the nuclear family consisting of themselves and their children, is the major factor that determines the sense of "home." Clearly, the word "home," though initially

referred to as the local residence, is given extended definitions by participants. "Home" encompasses not only an actual geographical location, but a place where family members live together as a cohesive unit, and where one develops a sense of connectedness, security, and belonging. Mr. Yang explained his feeling towards Canada:

> *It's as if you were going to a new city after having lived in your hometown for two decades. You may still have a strong emotional attachment to your hometown, but you also like the new city, and as you start your own life there, you find that you just like it more and more.* (Mr. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

Having established a new home in Canada, and indeed experienced a feeling of "home," many participants find "my second hometown" an appropriate description to illustrate their relationship to Canada, their settlement country.

Unlike the commonly portrayed "either-or" situation, or the experience of feeling torn between two cultures, none of the participants find "being Chinese" and "being Canadian" mutually exclusive. They do not appear to struggle in claiming a Canadian identity while simultaneously identifying themselves as Chinese, although the meanings that they have attached to "being Canadian" differ.

For some participants, the sense of "being Canadian" is related to the overall image of Canada and Canadians in the world. A positive feeling of being "Canadian," and being perceived as "Canadian" was suggested by Mr. Jia:

> *I feel good being a Canadian. Why? Because Canada, this country enjoys a good international reputation. It remains relatively neutral and democratic. It's different from the United States who has made itself so many enemies. During your travels, when people know that you're from Canada, people will think that you must be*

> *good and kind. Besides, Canada is vast in territory and rich in resources. This is another good association that people may generally make. In a word, Canada has a good, positive image, so I feel, ok, it's nice to be a Canadian.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Similarly for Min, Canada's being recognized as one of the most welcoming countries in the world serves as an important motivating factor in claiming a Canadian identity. Interesting, Min also used the United States as a foil to highlight the friendliness of Canada:

> *I think being Canadian is important. I like, I think Canada is a good place to live. Being associated with Canada helps you in an international level because Canada's known to be a peaceful country. You go travel anywhere in the world and you have Canada—a little sticker on your backpack, nobody's going to do anything to you. Nobody's going to hate you for it. Well, you know, maybe there... like you on the other hand, if you had say, an American flag on your backpack then it might not be the same thing.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

Having long been viewed as friendly and peaceful makes Canada a country worthy of being identified with. The self-identification as a Canadian may be a manifestation of participants' personal values as being in line with the values held in Canadian society; it is undeniably an effect of the recognition and acknowledgement received by Canada from other countries and their people in the world. The positive image and reputation that Canada enjoys worldwide are not irrelevant to the multicultural reality of Canada and the Canadian policy of multiculturalism. Commonly found among the immigrant young adults is their pride in being a member of a multicultural society, as well as of a society that respects cultural differences and promotes cultural diversity. The feeling of being proud of a Canadian identity is best exemplified by Yiqing:

> *I would say, I do, I do have my Chinese culture. I understand where it's coming from but at the same time like, I mean, I lived here my entire life so I associate myself more with Canadian culture and I'm very proud to be Canadian. I don't reject my Chinese culture, and I understand it's part of me but I'm very proud to be Canadian, yeah.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

Comparing further the cultural policies of Canada and United States, Yiqing concluded that "*the U.S is more of a melting pot* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)" where everyone tends to be Americanized, and everyone is proud to be an American. The pride in being a Canadian, in contrast, lies precisely in the flexibility that one enjoys in giving the definition—"*Here* [in Canada]*, people are more proud to be like hyphenated, like 'oh, I'm Indian-Canadian' or 'I'm Chinese-Canadian'.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014) The fact that people with an immigrant background are given space to cultivate a hyphenated identity was also pointed out by Min:

> *I think Canada is very multicultural. I think for every immigrant that comes to Canada, there is a flavor of Canadianness to everybody. But they also have a lot of their, the culture that we're bringing with us... so like everybody here is like, we're all hockey and beer and cold weather kind of people, and everybody kind of accepts that. Everybody has that in them once you're in Canada for long enough but they still keep like, I still keep my Chinese values. I know my Indian friends, they keep their Indian values. My Arabic friends, still, just did Ramadan even though it isn't something traditional, you know, in Canada.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

For Yiqing and Min, the essence of Canadian identity is the hyphen, as in Chinese-Canadian. Thanks to the inclusive cultural context within Canada, they are able to incorporate both Chinese and Canadian cultures in forming a hyphenated identity of their own. There can be more than one

hyphen in their identity labels, but there cannot be without one, since to be Canadian, as they consider, is always to carry something more than the "Canadianness," depending on the individual.

Yujia also observes the hybrid and fluid nature of Canadian identity, but she maintains that the very thing needed to be Canadian is to hold her personal attitudes and behaviors consistent with the multicultural reality of Canadian society:

> *Yujia: Canadians, like, you can be Canadian from like, you can be Chinese-Canadian, you can be Spanish-Canadian, you can be whatever, so each ethnic groups also have their own culture, their own pride. We love Canada, but it's not like we have to represent Canada. I feel like my responsibility as a Canadian is really to keep this open-mindedness about…*
>
> *Lingwei: Different cultures?*
>
> *Yujia: Yes, but not necessarily only cultures, just differences you know. Because we see so many different people, I feel like it's very important that we remain this very neutral, like I don't like take very strong stances for whichever country. Canada is a very neutral country, you know.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

As Yujia later explained to me, to be neutral is to not make groundless judgments about other countries and cultures. She insisted that "*one can't really make any real opinions about how life should be lead there* [in other countries] *unless one has lived in the shoes of the person who lived there* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014). Generosity, tolerance and mutual respect are the qualities regarded by Yujia as necessary for people living in a multicultural environment. These qualities are essential in Yujia's definition of "being Canadian."

Yujia also pointed out the lack of a unified and internally coherent national identity in Canada. "*Canada itself is a newer country compared to European and Asian countries,*" Yujia

said, "*its cultures are mostly brought from Europe, and from later immigrants, so there's no sense that Canadians have to be like a certain type.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)" The fact that Canadians love Canada, in her view, does not necessarily entail a strong sense of "being Canadian". This view is shared by Min who stated that "*if a sense of national identity is just to hold a patriotic feeling, it's important to countries who are in war-like situations* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014), but not to Canada, a generally peaceful country. Mr. Shen further indicated, "*The national identity can only be established in the face of external pressure. China's national identity, for example, is constructed through a series of national calamities, like the World War II.* (Mr. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014) Without a real threat to Canada's survival as a nation, it is difficult, and may not be necessary to create a cohesive national identity.

Ze offered yet another explanation for the lack of Canada's national identity from his comment on the multicultural reality of Canada:

> *Canada is so multicultural. I mean, I feel like there are a lot of immigrants and they all like associate themselves with their home countries instead of Canada. They socialize more with people within their ethnic communities on a daily basis. But I don't feel like it's a bad thing.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)

Ze has observed the phenomenon that the immigrants in Canada are still inclined towards sticking with their ethnic groups instead of blending with the broader Canadian society. He regards this phenomenon as a main factor contributing to the absence of a settled, and strong national identity in Canada, even though he never considers the national identity a necessity.

Ze's observation, in fact, reflects one of the major concerns over the actual practice of multiculturalism in Canada. As Ghosh (2011) has criticized, the policy of multiculturalism ends up separating and dividing people by "creating ethnic ghettos rather than instilling in them a

national Canadian identity" (p.6). From the everyday experiences shared by the Chinese immigrant parents, it seems that their lives, being consistent with Ze's observation, prove again the validity of Ghosh's criticism. Consider the following statements:

> *It's apparent that having a conservation with a Chinese is a lot easier since we have the same cultural background. I can communicate with the locals, but in terms of the topics, they're nothing more than the weather and the sports. We don't really share the same interests.* (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)
>
> *There're many locals in our company. I don't feel the differences when we work together. However, when it's time for lunch, people start to form into difference clusters. Here sit the Chinese, there are the Francophones, next to them are the Anglophones. The Canadian-born Chinese also have their own group, neither with us nor the others. I find it weird. I think the main reason for this clustering is the cultural differences between us. I'm not saying that I dislike them. I'm just tired of only talking about the weather with them. With Chinese people, you see, we can talk about the domestic news in China, we can talk about the Chinese television shows, we can talk a lot more.* (Mr. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)
>
> *I don't enjoy hanging out with Westerners. Why do I have to waste time keeping alert to their English, trying to understand them, and then responding in English? I'd rather stay at home chatting with my Chinese friends. I feel happier and more relaxed this way. But besides the language, I think the biggest barrier to fit into the Western society is the difference between our values. I respect the values of other people, but I don't necessarily share their values.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Unlike their sons and daughters whose social circles consist of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Chinese immigrant parents tend to socialize primarily with their Chinese friends who share similar immigrant experiences, and face situations in life that parallel theirs. Most of these immigrant parents have admitted the efforts that they have made to broaden their circles of socialization, to establish and maintain the friendships with non-Chinese people, but certain obstacles, indeed, are not easily surmountable. For some, staying mostly at home as a housewife limits the opportunities to form new social relationships. For some others, the lack of proficiency in either English or French language inevitably hinders their overall communication with people outside their ethnic community. Quite a few immigrant parents are comfortable with their existing network ties, given that they only have a finite amount of time and energy to engage in social activities. But common to participants are the deeply embedded cultural differences that they have come to realize in their interactions with people from other cultures. The excerpts previously discussed reveal the shared attitudes among the group of immigrant parents: they respect cultural differences, they appreciate, and sometimes adopt the valuable elements of other cultures. However, in terms of making friends, they have an explicit preference for people with whom they share the same cultural background, common interests, and can achieve a tacit, mutual understanding without too much difficulty. “Cherishing the same ideals and following the same path”—the ancient Chinese proverb indicates the foundations of good friendship. Evidently, this idea is still embodied by participants in their choices of companions.

Regardless of participants’ personal preferences on whether or not to blend into the white mainstream society, their dependence on the coziness of their own ethnic group is visible; the social distance existing between the Chinese group and other ethnic groups in Canada is also undeniable. Ho (2013) argues that “the multicultural approach encouraging plural identities and

the preservation of cultural communities results inadvertently in segregation and social distance" (p.165). She concludes that it is the segregation and marginalization caused by the downside of multiculturalism that contributes to the onward emigration of recent mainland Chinese immigrants from Canada to China. Although the issue of social distancing is also reflected by participants, the comparatively "older" Chinese immigrants who have remained settled in Canada for two decades, it is hard to say if the social distancing inevitably leads to the strong negative feelings of isolation, despair, and failure. Many immigrant parents share Mr. Kong's opinion:

> *Although you may feel a sense of distance from the larger society either here* [in Canada] *or in China, at least you have a circle of good friends, you have a life of your own. You keep on moving forward, and you get rewarded for your hard work…With a job, with a salary sufficient to sustain my family, and to support my son, that's enough. Your life won't be that much different in other places.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

However, the feeling that they are not fully integrated into Canadian society appears to be a factor that impacts the ways that the Chinese immigrant parents define their Canadian identity. The pride and joy of being Canadian that are more or less articulated by the immigrant young adults, are not directly observable in the immigrant parents. For them, their Canadian identity is almost equated with their Canadian citizenship, whose utility and practicality become the main emphasis here:

> *My Chinese identity is something deeply rooted. I don't think it will change. It's true that I immigrated to Canada, and became a Canadian citizen, but it's solely a matter of convenience. That's it.* (Mrs. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)
>
> *I have some sense of being Canadian since I'm a Canadian citizen. But choosing*

> *Canadian citizenship is not because that I want to discard my Chinese citizenship. I have to. You know, China doesn't allow dual citizenship. Actually I feel connected with both countries. It's not like when I'm here in Canada, I don't care about China anymore.* (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)
>
> *Identifying myself as Chinese and as Canadian are not the same thing. Being Chinese is an intuitive belief, while being Canadian is an indisputable fact…I like Canada. I decided to become a Canadian citizen because I have at least some affection for this country. But it doesn't contradict my Chinese identity. I can be a Canadian on the one hand, and love China on the other hand. Of course I'd prefer dual citizenship if it's possible.* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

For many of the Chinese immigrant parents, the decision to immigrate signifies a permanent settlement in Canada. Two decades ago, periodic visits to the home country were not affordable to most Chinese newcomers. Advanced communication devices such as smartphones were not generally accessible or available. To wave farewell to the home country was hence to leave without foreseeable physical returns, even the means needed to sustain transnational ties. Plus the fact that in China, returning to hometown without accomplishments in life undoubtedly entails a loss of "face"—a loss of one's own and the entire family's reputation, prestige and social recognition, the plan to reside permanently in Canada was actually determined at the moment of departure. Most participants took the first return journey back to China five to eight years after their immigration. Mr. Jia jokingly described this post-immigration period as another "*Eight Years' War of Resistance*" (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014). The beginning is always the hardest. All participants became naturalized Canadian citizens during this eight-year period, being clear that they would most likely spend the rest of their lives in Canada, and to obtain their full membership rights would

hence be absolutely necessary and correct. Some participants have admitted that they prefer a Canadian passport than a Chinese one for its convenience in travel, but they have also stressed that such a preference affects neither their sense of "being Chinese" nor their emotional attachment to China.

Nevertheless, the nature and meaning of Canadian citizenship cannot be reduced to a Canadian passport. Most participants have emphasized the importance of the practice of citizenship, for example, their voting rights. While the participation in elections through voting is regarded by the immigrant young adults as the necessary duty and responsibility of every Canadian citizen in order to maintain a system of democracy, voting appears to bear some special significance for the immigrant parents:

> *It* [voting] *is a right. It's a right of Canadian citizens. I think I have the right, also the duty to vote. People know when I vote. They know that, oh, this time, this person voted. Especially in Canada, people calculate the number of voters each time. We're the ethnic minority here, so I must go. I must let people know that a member of the ethnic minority does exercise her voting rights, and does participate in the elections.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)

The statement by Mrs. Zhang is echoing Mr. Jia's words that I discussed at the beginning of the chapter. They both recognize that "being Canadian" is an important element of their overall identities, but the sense of "being Canadian" has a touch of being "at the margin" in it. It is a feeling like an outsider striving for the attention and acknowledgement from the insiders. Perhaps, the label that can more accurately reflect their perceptions of their Canadian identity, is not "Canadian," but "ethnic minority Canadian." Mrs. Jia and Mrs. Kong further pointed out that this feeling of "at the margin" has resulted from their lack of voices:

> *Voting is my right. My voice cannot be heard in my ordinary everyday life. Only during the elections, and only when I vote, I can have my opinions expressed. I can also feel a sense of Canadian identity during the voting process.* (Mrs. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2104)
>
> *I'm a Canadian citizen. Becoming a Canadian citizen means that I should take up the duties accordingly, right? So I must participate* [in the voting]. *I think as long as I participate, I'm working towards a future that I'm expecting. I know that how insignificant my personal influence is, but at least, I show my own voice.* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

The meaning of "margin" is expressed by Mrs. Jia and Mrs. Kong here—having little effect or importance. What is revealed from their statements is their experience of invisibility, silencing, and social devaluation. They both convey a general feeling that their voices are muted, their needs and concerns are oftentimes ignored or dismissed. Voting is hence deemed as the only available channel for their voices to be heard. If it is the case, then, whose voices are "privileged, recognized and valued" (Maguire, 2010, p. 26)? The answer seems clear. It is the opposite of the minorities, the majority, the dominant group, the white Canadians who are still favored by the systems of power and privilege in Canadian society. The boundary demarcating "us" and "them" still exists. The supremacy of the White, and subordination of the ethnic minorities may continue to be legitimized and reinforced in the current context of structural inequity and inequality. Evidently, the disadvantaged minority status of participants have caused their experiences of oppression and marginalization. However, it is truly delightful to see that their disadvantages also empower them to use their status and power effectively, to continuously support and work for social inclusion and structural transformation that they have been desiring.

Being asked about the typical issue of "identity crisis," none of the participants appears to have experienced any irresolvable tensions between their Chinese and Canadian identities, or have perceived them as inevitably contradictory of each other. Like what Yujia said, "*I never felt like if I'm a Canadian Chinese, China is gonna reject me; if I return to China, Canada is gonna reject me.* [Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014]" A few participants reported to have been confronted with some confusing and disturbing thoughts about their identities at certain points in their lives. Moran, for example, told me that he "*tried to identify more with the Chinese culture"* when he *"started to listen to Chinese music* (Moran, English interview, 10/08/2014)". He felt like he could have known more about his roots. But these internal confusions and disturbances did not last long. He said, "*Out of curiosity, I will still like look for new stuff* [in Chinese culture], *but I'm pretty sitting in good, comfortable identity-wise position I guess.* (Moran, English interview, 10/08/2014)" This "good, comfortable identity-wise position" should be in part attributed to multiculturalism in Canada, which, as many participants have pointed out previously, demonstrates encouragement of cultural retention, and openness to cultural diversity. There are also other contributing factors. For Mr. Zhang, it can be explained by the peaceful relations between China and Canada:

> *Between these two countries, there weren't big conflicts in history, so I never felt like I was forced into a corner, and had to choose to be either Chinese or Canadian. I hope there won't be any conflict between the two countries. I'll have no idea what to do then.* (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)

While Mr. Zhang emphasized the external factor, Mrs. Shen highlighted an internal factor, which is individual competence to reconcile cultural differences:

> *Actually, I think culture is something lying on the surface. Personal competence is more important. If a person can properly handle different relationships in Chinese*

> *culture, he or she can do it too in Canada. Conversely, if a person has a hard time, or encounter some personal conflicts in Canada, he or she must have also experienced these in China.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Overall, for participants, "being Chinese" and "being Canadian" coexist, intersect, and sometimes counterbalance, rather than preclude one another. They all identify themselves as both Chinese and Canadian, without challenging the validity of "Chinese" and "Canadian" as categories of identification, or attempting to reject either of them—which may disappoint Ang (2001) who proposes such a radically different way of thinking about identity.

When facing the questions that how important "being Chinese" and "being Canadian" are to their overall identities, and which could be more important, participants appeared to be perplexed, as if identity is not something that can be quantified and measured. However, from their general responses to my interview questions, certain differences are noticeable. Some immigrant young adults show a slight leaning towards their Canadian identity since most values that they adopt are Canadian values which, as they have described, are more liberal than Chinese values. For some immigrant parents, a strong Chinese identity has remained unchanged over the years because of their profound, unbreakable ties to China, their home country. There are also participants, like Ze, who reveal a feeling that neither of the two identities is particularly salient. For Ze, having been "*moving around a lot* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)" between China and Canada could be the main reason for such a feeling.

However, albeit with some different personal inclinations, most participants consider both "being Chinese" and "being Canadian" as necessary and valuable elements of their overall identities. The plurality of their identities places them in a unique spatial condition of "in-betweenness" (Bhabha, 1996), engaging them in a dialectical construction of their distinct, hybrid

cultural identities that combines elements of both (maybe more) cultures without fitting specifically into any. The importance of embracing both his Chinese and Canadian identities was clearly articulated by Yiqing:

> *I think the best is a balance of both because that way you open more options for yourself. If you're, let's say, if you reject one culture, you're just shooting yourself in the foot, like you're not giving yourself the best opportunities out there because if you are open to the Chinese culture there's a lot of opportunities in the Chinese community... if you only stick with the Chinese community you're also closing yourself off to a lot of the opportunities in the Canadian community.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

Similarly, Moran conveyed a positive image of hybridity, stating, "*Two things being mixed together, sometimes you get the best of both, sometimes you get the worst of both. But when you have the best of both, it's just better than anything.* (Moran, English interview, 10/08/2014)" Ngan and Chan (2012) argues that "pluralization or fragmentation of identities is not necessarily a 'wounded attachment' but can provide positive and enriching structures of belonging and identification" (p.187). Indeed, for participants, "Chinese" is not a haunting label chaining them up in a position inescapable from social exclusion and marginalization; "Canadian" is not a pure mask enabling them to switch strategically between identities, like actors who impress their audiences for self-gains (Ngan & Chan, 2012). Once they are reaching a state of hybridity, they are reaching "a productive, creative syncretism" (Ang, 2001, p.35) suitable to their respective situations in life. The cultural elements that they have synthesized are no more superficial or external, but rather become the constituting parts of a unified, coherent sense of self.

"Cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture"

(Hall, 1990, p.226). The fluid, malleable nature of identity is again exemplified by participants in their individualized definitions of their Chinese and Canadian identities. Although the reconstruction and rearticulation of cultural identities still include some "seeming natural and certain racial essence" (Ang, 2001, p.50), like their skin color, language and birthplace, the "essence" only functions as the base, or the point of departure for the ongoing formation of their hybrid cultural identities. As Hall (1990) says, "cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories" (p.225). Starting from a position with its particular history and culture, participants continue to enrich, renew, and transform the meanings of their cultural identities, which eventually demonstrates an attempt to reduce the dependence on the stable, unitary, and essentialized concepts of identity that serve to demarcate group boundaries, and further reinforce ethnic and cultural divisions in Canadian society.

Interplay between Self and Other in Identification Processes

The construction of cultural identity is a "dialectical interplay between self-identification and the identification by others, and of perceptions and structural forces" (Noble et al., 1999, p. 30-31). I wondered if participants' perceptions of their identities might in part result from the ways that they were perceived by people surrounding them. I also wished to know whether the overall image of China and Chinese people portrayed in Canadian society could exert any influence on their sense of identity, and how it might influence.

Contrary to the earlier findings that Chinese immigrant youth in Canada often experience a sense of alienation from their peer groups due to their apparent physical differences (Hiller & Chow 2005; Tsang et al., 2003), my immigrant young adult participants did not report to have encountered any differential treatment because of their Chinese appearance. Yujia even expressed her confusion over the way that physical differences operate in the process of identification:

> *When I was a kid, I didn't understand at all how people could just tell that you're Chinese. They just looked at you. I didn't understand like the physical features. I don't know why, maybe I was just slow at certain things. But I was just like how can you tell I'm Chinese. I speak the language the same as you do. I understood later that you had patterns, like Asian-looking people. I didn't understand it in the beginning, and I never felt like I looked that different. Obviously I have black hair, but you know, like, here we have so many different culture, there are people, European people who have black hair, you know. I didn't feel like I stood out necessarily.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

Yujia further told me that there was actually hardly any people who instantly identified her as Chinese when meeting for the first time, either in Canada or in China:

> *A lot people mistake me for like Spanish, or like, Aboriginal. You know, people from Canada. Somebody mistook me for Italian. I was like, "wow, dude, you know, you have to go out more, to see people more"…And in China, a lot people think that I'm either mixed, or I'm like one from other Asian countries.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

Yujia's statements entail the negation of not only the fixed perceptions of Chinese based on essentialist characteristics, but also the practice of solely relying on physical attributes to determine one's permanent and unproblematic membership in a particular racial or ethnic group.

I had been preoccupied with the thought that Chinese appearance as definite marker of identity inevitably distinguishes Chinese immigrant populations from the mainstream white society, further hindering the possibilities of them becoming "real" Canadians. If Yujia's words rang alarm bells over my own "fascination" and actually biased preoccupation, the exchange with

Ze then completely woke me up. When I asked Ze if the physical features that made him Chinese were something deemed by him as unavoidable, his response was unhesitating: "*You're making it sound like it's a bad thing.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)" This half-serious, half-joking comment struck me dumb for a moment. I felt as if I was "victimizing" him by trying to conjure up some traumatizing experiences out of thin air, or by only seeking clues that could bear out my earlier suspicion. Indeed, for Ze and most other immigrant young adults, they consider their Chinese appearance as constituting part of their Chinese identity only on the basis of the fact that certain physical attributes—almond-shaped eyes, straight black hair, yellow skin pigmentation and a relatively flat face are shared by most people claiming Chinese descent. These physical attributes are natural, inherited, and not easily alterable. But such differences only exist on a physical or biological level, nothing less and nothing more. According to Ze, although he is recognized by his peers as a Chinese, or an Asian friend, he has never been stereotyped negatively and seriously:

> *Generally in studies, people would expect you to be, really good in your studies. It's nothing serious, like I haven't had any trouble with it. It's just small comments that they throw at you. For example, if I don't do well in the exam, they will be like, "What's wrong with you? You know, you're a Chinese. I thought you knew these all already." So they're just small things like they're not really disturbing, they're just small comments. Other than that, there is nothing really, like there is nothing of the stereotypes that really affects me. My friends joke around a lot but it hasn't really affected me. They're just jokes.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)

Stereotypes are understood by my young adult participants as the most commonly held beliefs or assumptions about certain social groups, being not necessarily negative or harmful.

Sometime stereotypes can even be the "spice," making life more entertaining. Min, for example, often jokes around the stereotypes associated with her identities:

> *Sometimes, you know, jokingly you'll say something like, "Oh, I want to eat salad with chopsticks because I'm Chinese!" but then on the other side it's like, "Oh, you know, it's only negative ten outside. That's not cold because I'm Canadian!" So it's usually one of the silly things that you say about yourself.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

However, ethnic stereotypes, even if seemingly neutral, can still be annoying when repeated a lot. One cannot also expect intentional personal attacks, name-calling or insults to be completely eradicated in Canadian society. But as Yujia said, "*There're always gonna be one or two annoying people in your life like the strangers who call your names on the street, but that could happen anywhere. I don't pay attention to those.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)" Similarly, Ze emphasized the importance of agency, one's capacity for personal action control (Holland et al., 1998) in coping with stereotypes. He stated, "*Chinese stereotypes are always gonna be there, and there is nothing you can do about it. The only control you have on is how you react to it.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)" From the perspectives of these immigrant young adults, they are perceived by people as independent individuals rather than specific ethnic group members "through a prism of otherness" (Ngan & Chan, 2012, p.172). They are treated with respect and kindness. Neither their Chinese appearance nor the Chinese stereotypes thus exerts any significant influence over their sense of who they are.

Noble et al. (1999) argues that one's drawing of a boundary depends on "the figuration of significant others" (p. 30) against or with whom one seeks to locate oneself. Boundaries are constructed between different ethnic groups as markers of in-group solidarity and valued

distinctiveness. But within the same ethnic group, there also exist invisible dividing lines among its members. As demonstrated previously, some immigrant young adults have stressed that their sense of Chinese identity should be distinguished from their parents', for the reason that they do not share the same national sentiment and Chinese values as their parents do. The observed phenomenon that the Chinese adult immigrants and Canadian-born Chinese in the same company never lunch together is yet another example. The same theme recurred as these immigrant young adults talked about other people's perceptions of their identities:

> *Everyone knows what a Chinese-Canadian is. There's a lot of Chinese people here* [in Canada]. *So people just assume that I'm a Chinese-Canadian and they can tell usually because when I talk to them and from the way I act, they can tell I've been here for a long time.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

In his statement, Yiqing implicitly conveyed his interpretation of the term "Chinese-Canadian." To be considered as Chinese-Canadian, one needs to adopt certain shared Canadian values and demonstrate the expected behaviors in one's daily social interactions, while still retaining some Chinese ways of thinking, doing and living. For Yiqing, the term "Chinese-Canadian" only applies to a particular group of people, like him, and a specific state of life. This state is related to one's length of stay in Canada. As Yiqing stated, "*If you are a recent immigrant, I would just classify you as Chinese; if you are born here like for multiple generations then you'd probably just be Canadian.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)" By claiming a "Chinese-Canadian" identity, Yiqing deliberately separates himself from both recent and long-established immigrants within the Chinese immigrant population in Canada.

The tensions and differences between the different categories of Chinese in Canada is further illustrated by Moran:

> *Most of my friends are like me. We're Canadians, first generation immigrants. We don't share the traditional Chinese values and we share more the liberal ones. So yeah, they don't impose me anything. But I used to have friends who came here later, who are like international students, or people who came in their teens, so they have strong traditional Chinese ethnic values encrypted in them. When I'm with them, sometimes I feel like they would expect me to act in a certain way. I respect that. But when I don't feel like it, I just get away from them.* (Moran, English interview, 10/08/2014)

While the sameness in values and immigrant background makes Moran associate himself with a particular Chinese immigrant group, the differences segregate him from other Chinese groups. Moran's sense of being Chinese is also constantly negotiated through his construction of sameness and difference. Evidently, although a "Chinese" identity is shared among members of all these groups, it is the "me-others" as well as "us-them" tensions and comparisons that determines how one positions oneself.

Ngan and Chan (2012) argues that "cultural identity attains its significance by relational positioning such that a person's identity will vary depending on the context and the questions posed to his/her identity" (p. 122). This argument is evidenced by all my immigrant young adult participants when recalling their experiences of travelling back to China, their home country. A feeling common to them can be best summarized by Yiqing, who stated, "*I feel like a bit more Chinese here* [in Canada] *but if I go back to China I would feel very Canadian.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)"

Both Yujia and Min expressed their confusion over the fact even though they can speak Mandarin as fluently as a native, they were never recognized as an authentic Chinese when were

in China. A typical guess from the random people that they met, like shopkeepers and restaurant waiters, about their identities, was "a person of Chinese national minorities." Clearly, their Chinese identity was confronted with the process of authentication. In China where more than 90 percent of the inhabitants are "Han People," people of Han descent may hence consider themselves as more authentic Chinese than people of ethnic minorities. The differences that Yujia and Min carried with them might not necessarily match the characteristics of "a person from Chinese national minorities." The differences, be it dress style or social manner, are only what Hall (1996) refers to as the "constitutive outside," which makes Yujia and Min whom the "Han People" are not. The message from such an identification is clear: "You do not belong to us. You are not really Chinese."

Sometimes, this message is explicitly expressed rather than implicitly connoted. Yiqing, for example, encountered nonrecognition from his relatives in China:

> *Lingwei: How do people identify you when you are in China?*
>
> *Yiqing: They think like I'm all white. Especially like when I went to visit my uncle in China and his daughter, she said like, "Oh, he's not even Chinese."*
>
> *Lingwei: How did you feel when you heard this kind of comment?*
>
> *Yiqing: I mean it's understandable, like I can't, I cannot read Chinese, I cannot speak Chinese. Well, I can speak some Chinese, but I cannot read it, I cannot write it so it's understandable that she would think that way.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

"White" is the widely believed stereotypical image of Canada. For Yiqing, this image is "*not true, because Canada is so multicultural* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)". But he accepts to be described as "all white" for he understands that the main emphasis here is the fact that he is

westernized, being different from the authentic Chinese in China. As he told me, being prepared for this encounter prior to his departure for China, he did not find his sense of identity affected by the nonrecognition from his relatives. Their being different is, after all, a truth.

However, unlike Yiqing, Ze's experience in China has engendered an overwhelming sense of not belonging that he did not expect before the journey:

> *Lingwei: So what makes you feel that you don't belong there?*
>
> *Ze: In China, well first of all, one thing is obvious, you know reading, because everything is in Chinese, right? The basic stuff, you know I understand and then I can kind of communicate with people, but in Shanghai they've their own dialogue that I don't understand.*
>
> *Lingwei: Right.*
>
> *Ze: Yeah. And also, there is a difference in behavior too. I'm not sure how to describe it but like, behavior-wise, like daily things that you do or the way you communicate with each other is different. I felt like I was, I kind of stood out.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)

While Ze's feeling of not fitting in Chinese society is primarily caused by the language barrier and the perceived differences in social behaviors, it is a persistent sense of insecurity that haunts Yujia, keeping her distance from the local people and communities in her ancestral hometown in China:

> *When I was in China, there was always the, not fear, but these worries about the right things that I could miss, or you know, like if I go somewhere, there are like hidden rules that I'm not aware of. I was just generally more cautious I think. Also because when I was in China, my parents were always like "you have to be careful,*

> *people there..."you know you hear more, like the bad stories from Asian countries. I've never actually experienced a situation that was bad. But we were often, as a kid in China, you know people always told me like "be very careful about this or that, you know, never follow strangers". Here* [in Canada] *I just feel in general more secure. I don't feel that people are gonna go after me to, like, screw me up.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

Yujia's insecurity is both psychological and physical: "psychological" in the sense of her unfamiliarity with the unwritten rules by which social systems operate in China; "physical" in a way that there is always the possibility of unforeseen dangers wherever she goes. The possibility just seems to be raised in China due to the frequently reported appalling stories in Chinese media, like robbery and kidnapping, as well as the non-stop warnings from her parents. Compared with the "unknown" China, Canada is the "known" world that provides security and certainty, hence a sense of belonging important in the construction of identity.

Chen (2006) states that "the question of our cultural identity is more likely to fall upon us as we change location; also as the composition of a society changes due to population flow through national borders" (p.6). Indeed, identity construction is relational and contextual. For my immigrant young adult participants, the cross-border travel involves a process of constantly interpreting, constructing and reconstructing themselves through interactions with people living in the cultures of which they are also a part, through the experiences of recognition and nonrecognition, the feelings of belonging and not belonging. Burdensome and tortuous as is may be, the process is central to the establishment of their highly subjective definitions of "being Chinese" and "being Canadian," on the basis of which they construct their own unique hybrid cultural identities.

In contrast, the Chinese identity of the immigrant parents has hardly been questioned or challenged. They did not report to have being treated much differently by family members, friends or any other people when they visited China. Two decades ago when "overseas Chinese" was a term unfamiliar to most people in China, their "Chinese-Canadian" status might still be pride and joy worth showing off by their relatives and friends. But with the rapid growth in the overseas Chinese population worldwide, and with the increased exposure to varieties of overseas Chinese nowadays among people in China, this category of Chinese in general, is not considered as mysterious and unapproachable as before. Mr. Kong articulated this point:

> *Maybe the first time when I went back, I could indeed feel the expectations from my family, from my relatives and friends in China. They wished that I could take care of them, support them, give them a bit of help. But as I went back more and more often, they've started to realize that I'm actually not that special, and my personal capability is limited. They still acknowledge me as an overseas Chinese, but they don't treat me differently.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

For some Chinese immigrant parents, having lived too long in another country, they have experienced some difficulty readapting themselves to the environments in China. Mr. Jia expressed the feeling of being sometimes "a square peg in a round hole" when he was working in China as an overseas returnee:

> *I felt some differences during the years that I worked in China. For example, I always had trouble when I went to bank. I worked in a small city. Every time I went to bank for cash withdrawal, I waited in front of the machine. There was a marker in the ground saying "Please keep one meter a way." I always stood right behind the marker. However, people just kept jumping in front of me. I told them not to*

> *jump the queue. They stared at me as if I was a weirdo. I was so angry. But later I've realized, that's how it is in China. It's me that has changed. I have a different way of thinking, of doing things now.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Mr. Jia admitted that he felt closer to Canadians than Chinese on values and social manners. For him, his "*moving closer to Canadians is a real thing, rather than some everyday performances* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)". Returning to China then, a sense of distance can hardly be avoided. Sharing a similar feeling, Mr. Kong described himself as "*half cooked rice* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)", being unable to fully fit into either Chinese or Canadian society. "*Awkward as it is, it's a reality that I have to learn to live with.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" he said. But for most other immigrant parents, although they have also observed some "uncivilized phenomena" in China, like littering, spitting, and queue-jumping, they try to show more tolerance and understanding. They maintain that some negative social phenomena should be allowed at certain developmental stages, considering that revolutionary change within society is inevitably a long process. Some have highlighted the progress that China has made over the years. Mrs. Zhang, for example, stated, "*There's at least one big change— more and more people start to follow the rules. I remember that nobody watched the traffic lights before, but now it's better, much better.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)" Holding an optimistic view, Mrs. Zhang finds it easier to readapt herself to the life in China.

When asked how they are perceived and treated by people in Canada in their everyday lives, the Chinese immigrant parents demonstrated opinions and attitudes differing greatly from the immigrant young adults. A clear divergence exits between the two generations: while the young adults did not reveal a hint of being treated less fairly and equally than their white peers, most of

their parents reported to have experienced race/ethnicity-based prejudice or discrimination. Such experience may not frequently occur, but the memory lasts long:

> *I remember that in 2001, there was a collision between a U.S. surveillance aircraft and a Chinese fighter aircraft. One Chinese pilot was killed in the collision. At that time, China was demanding a full apology from the U.S. but was refused. They only said "very sorry." During that period, everybody here* [in Canada] *was talking about the accident. One day when I went out, there was a white guy passing by. I didn't do anything to him, but somehow, he started to say "I apologize! I apologize!" He kept saying that to me in a very exaggerated and offensive manner. I think he did it on purpose.* (Mrs. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

Mrs. Yang considers herself as generally not sensitive to other people's opinions and behaviors. But regarding that incident, she is certain that she was not being too sensitive. If offensive and insulting language is viewed as act of discrimination, Mrs. Yang was evidently discriminated against. For Mrs. Yang, some people in Canada are still preoccupied with the image of China as a weak nation, and of its people as being too "quite" to fight back against unfair treatment and harassment. The stereotypical images that Canadian society holds of China and Chinese people were further illustrated by Mrs. Zhang:

> *Mrs. Zhang: In my job interview, the first question that people asked me was if my husband was working. I said yes. Then the second question was if he worked in a restaurant. I said no, he was a software engineer. You could tell, people's face instantly changed.*
>
> *Lingwei: Who were those people?*

> *Mrs. Zhang: The general manager of that company, a white guy. His attitude towards me completely changed knowing that my husband was not a restaurant worker. He was much more respectful. The same thing happened when I was learning French. I remember that there was one Chinese woman in the class whose husband was an illegal immigrant. The ways that the French teacher treated her and me were entirely different. I received more recognition and respect.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)

This excerpt reveals the fact that the social recognition of Chinese immigrant populations is closely tied to their social class. Higher social standing leads to greater respect and social acceptance. However, another fact can also be seen from the excerpt: the negative stereotypes of Chinese immigrants are deeply ingrained in Canadian society. It seems that at the mention Chinese immigrants, "unskilled," "uneducated," "English illiteracy," "cheap labor," and "low social status" are still some of the immediate associations made by people in Canada, despite the observable overall upward trends in education attainment and social status of recent waves of Chinese immigrants. These negative stereotypes have the potential to hinder Chinese immigrants' upward social mobility by limiting their choices and opportunities, and further subject them to nonrecognition and disrespect. Mr. Jia pointed out the disadvantaged status that a Chinese identity, or rather, the identification as a Chinese may bring in the job search process:

> *Well, I didn't experience any obvious discrimination personally, but I do believe that the discrimination against Chinese more or less exists. You see, the whole world has been advocated for gender equality. Why do people advocate? Because it's unequal! It's the same thing between races. The Black complain about racism all the time and in public, because they are treated unfairly. The White may be more*

> *educated nowadays. They know what mutual respect is. They don't show discrimination in an obvious manner. But deep inside their minds, what do they really think? A best example, when an HR recruiter is meeting with two interviewees, a White and a Chinese, will there be no difference in the ways that the recruiter perceive the two? I don't think so. I absolutely believe that the prejudice against Chinese still exist in people's minds.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Mr. Jia's opinion is shared by most of the Chinese immigrant parents. For them, the discrimination and prejudice against Chinese do not take blatant forms in Canadian society today, but subtle manifestations still widely exist. For example, Mr. Shen has noticed that Chinese students are more likely to be rejected by Canadian medical schools even when their qualifications are as strong as their white counterparts. The ambiguous, and sometime covert selection criteria of medical schools, as Mr. Shen has argued, provide a best situation that allows racial and ethnic prejudice to be covered up or plausibly denied. Similarly, Mrs. Kong insisted, "*In the eyes of the Westerners, no matter how long you have lived here* [in Canada]*, you'll never be the same as the locals. Your face tells people that you're Chinese, always forever Chinese.* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" The physical attributes of Chinese, for the immigrant parents, are not entirely neutral and free from prejudicial connotations, as perceived by the immigrant young adults. On the contrary, this marker of identity entails the permanent membership in a racial or ethnic group in a subordinate position to that of the White. It is a hard reality which may not be fundamentally changed any time soon. Mrs. Kong expressed the difficulty in altering Westerner's overall negative orientation towards Chinese:

> *Maybe we can eventually break through cultural boundaries, but it's too hard to break through racial boundaries. So many things, including my appearance have already determined that I'm a Chinese. I can't change this fact. I can only work hard, harder than anybody else. I can only use my accomplishments, like the number of published papers I've written, to convince people that I can actually be better than others. However, even if I've received recognition from my colleagues, I can't change their opinions about Chinese people. The last words that my former boss said to me was, "If all Chinese people were as perfect as you, there would be hope for China." He made this conclusion because he knew about me through our daily contact. I changed his view towards me, but you see, the change is so insignificant. He still held the same general view towards Chinese people.* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

The Chinese identity of the group of immigrant parents thus is often reinforced, as the Chinese-Canadian border, be it racial or ethnic, cannot be easily transgressed because of the underlying process of "Othering" through the dominant group's artificial construction of sameness and difference. However, facing explicit or implicit prejudice, the Chinese immigrant parents have developed various coping strategies. Mr. Kong highlighted the importance of human agency, by which he believed that he could triumph over the prejudice against Chinese:

> *Sometimes we have chemical materials from China, and once there was a quality problem. My boss said, "They're made in China, of course they have problems." I was so angry on hearing that comment. I said to him, "How much did you pay for the products made in China? You can buy those which are made in Canada, in American, but the price will be totally different. You only paid 10 dollars while*

> *expecting a quality to be as good as the one worth 70 dollars. It's impossible!" Then my boss told me, "Yeah, that's true. You're right."* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

According to Mr. Kong, if a country is jointly "owned" by its citizens, then it is a sense of "ownership" that motivates him to defend himself in Canada, his country of citizenship. But equally important is his belief that one can modify unfavorable conditions, and produce desired effects by taking actions. This belief is central to the exercise of human agency. As Mr. Kong has demonstrated, human agency could facilitate stigmatized immigrants' resilience against, and their attempts to actively cope with the predicaments their feelings of stigmas may create. Agency is hence of particular significance to immigrants who have little power, and are situated "within conditions of political antagonism or inequity" (Bhabha, 1996, p.58) in Canadian society.

Some Chinese immigrant parents have tried to desensitize themselves to race/ethnicity-based prejudice and discrimination. They share the same opinion that one should not always justify one's career adversity in the name of external factors, like the potential prejudice and discrimination against Chinese. Sometimes, the adversity may have more to do with one's lack of competence. Consider Mrs. Yang's statement:

> *I think it's not good to be too sensitive to discrimination. If you're truly harmed by people physically or mentally, it's not tolerable. But sometimes, the problem is actually related to yourself. For example, if you're not promoted in the company, it may be due to your lack of language proficiency. You may be a technical expert, but you may not be suitable for a manager position. As a manager, good communicative skills are necessary. It's not discrimination. It's your lack of skill or ability.* (Mrs. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

Some other Chinese immigrant parents choose to rationalize their experiences of prejudice or discrimination by convincing themselves that anyone could hold certain biased beliefs. Mrs. Shen, for example, has admitted that she still maintains some general hatred towards Japan because of the unforgettable history of Japan's War of Aggression against China (1937-1945). But Mrs. Shen further clarified, "*Although the concept of Japan as enemy is ingrained in my mind, it doesn't mean that I'll be unfriendly to any specific Japanese individual.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" Mrs. Shen's own persistent negative point of view about Japan, however, has made the prejudicial opinions and the discriminatory practices against Chinese more tolerable to her.

People's biased opinions about China, as many participants have pointed out, is mainly caused by their insufficient knowledge of China and Chinese culture. People also demonstrate a general lack of access to this knowledge. Mrs. Kong is surprised at the fact that "*some people still think that Chinese should be those who wear long gowns and mandarin jackets, and who braid their hair into a waist-long pigtail* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)"—the fashion in the Qing dynasty. Some participants have attributed the distorted images of China held in Canadian society to the media bias in Canada. For Mr. Jia, "*Western societies have been regarding themselves as the best countries in the world, so inevitably they fix their eyes on the negative news about China. They need to show contrasts.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)" However, it is undeniable that China is indeed facing a multitude of issues and challenges, like the food safety failures, environmental problems, and the pervasive corruption nowadays. Most participants acknowledge these facts, but they still tend to get annoyed and even upset on hearing arbitrary judgments concerning China and Chinese people. This is particularly true of the Chinese immigrant parents. Mr. Yang, for example, said, "*I was very angry. A patriotic sentiment, and a strong sense of being Chinese were immediately evoked when I heard bad comments about China.*

(Mr. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)" Mr. Yang's statement is a proof of Taylor (1994)'s argument that our identity is often shaped by the misrecognition of others, "so a person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society about them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (p.25). Conversely, if people express a positive view of China, if Chinese people receive recognition from Canadian society, then the Chinese immigrant parents can feel the pride of China, and of being Chinese instantly welling up their hearts. Mr. Kong has come to the conclusion: "*The stronger China is getting, the better the lives of overseas Chinese will be.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)"

I also looked into family dynamics in my inquiry, since family members, as the significant others, play a crucial role in the construction of one's identity. As I have demonstrated previously, the Chinese immigrant parents sometimes have made deliberate efforts to create a sense of "being Chinese" within family, for example, by using Mandarin as the home language, teaching their children about Chinese culture, and passing down certain Chinese values to them. Sometimes, their influences over their children are exerted through the spontaneous manifestations of their own Chinese identity. Both Yujia and Yiqing recalled the reactions of their parents when they were arguing over the issues related to China:

> *A Chinese person can be angry at the Chinese government…You know sometimes there's no way for me to know what's the truth because each of reports is biased. So the best way for me is to see both sides and I would make my own opinion. I would never say like because they're Canadian media centers or because they're China media centers that it must be true. But my parents would tend to side more with China. They would like me to say even if I don't know the facts because I'm a Chinese I should side with China.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

> *I think China is extremely corrupted. And I think they pollute a lot. I think they did a lot of things which are, maybe literally not good but they* [my parents] *would defend China and that's where we would disagree. If I say something bad about China or Chinese, then they would say like, "oh, you know that's who you are" blah-blah-blah.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

Parental influences on the immigrant young adults' constructions of their Chinese identity is evident. Their self-identifications as Chinese are all associated with their parents in one way or another. On the one hand, they acknowledge that their sense of being Chinese is mainly established through their Chinese upbringing, especially the Chinese cultural values having being instilled in them by their parents. On the other hand, they constantly negotiate and renegotiate their Chinese identity by comparing and contrasting theirs with their parents', thereby constructing their own interpretations that differ from the ones of their parents.

When I asked the immigrant parents if they considered the development of a strong Chinese identity as indispensable to their children, their responses were remarkably consistent: no, it is not necessary, and may indeed be impossible. For some parents, like Mrs. Kong, their children are the "Banana Men" who have yellow skin but white heart. It is hence too difficult to alter their already westernized mindset:

> *I have to admit the differences between me and my son. I have to. He has grown up here* [in Canada]. *His education is given by his school, by the society. We'd like to provide him with some family guidance, but our strength is limited. He has spent most of the time at school, with his schoolmates, so our influence over him is too small. I have to admit that I don't have certain things that exist in his mind. He also*

lacks the things that I have. It's the fact. There's no apparent solution other than compromise. (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Interestingly and quite surprisingly, Yiqing, Mrs. Kong's son, rejected the label "Banana Men" imposed on him. "*That's not true. It's just not true,"* he said firmly, "*if you're completely white inside then you wouldn't understand anything about Chinese culture. I have friends who are, like real bananas. They're not even close my identity. They're completely white.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)" However, Yiqing, too, has observed the cultural and generational gaps between him and his parents. He told me that he disagreed with his parents almost every day. When he realizes that their differences are not easily reconcilable, he just stops arguing, and persists in going his own way.

Knowing that they can hardly expect their children to demonstrate loyalty and affection towards China, many immigrant parents reported to have only set some "basic requirements" for their children. Mrs. Zhang said, "*I should at least let them* (my children) *know that their roots are in China, and they have certain linkages with China.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)" For Mr. Jia, it is the "*blood ties linking him* (my son) *and his parents* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014) that his son should always bear in mind. Mrs. Shen only wishes that her son "*would not be ashamed of being a Chinese* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014) since the most news reports about China are negative and extraordinarily frustrating. For the same reason, Mr. Yang always encourages her daughter to work towards a more comprehensive view of China. He stated, "*I'm not trying to strengthen her sense of Chinese identity. I only want her to know more about the actual situations in China, so that she won't be easily influenced by those arbitrary and fragmentary comments* (about China). (Mr. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)"

Since their children have grown up in Canada, and will most likely spend their future lives here, some immigrant parents share the opinion that the Chinese social norms that the youth in China may need to comply with are not suitable for their children in Canada. Now that they are in Canada, to fit into the local society is relatively more important. Mr. Kong articulated this point:

> *His* [my son's] *life will be here* [in Canada]. *The chance for him to return to China, to work there is very very small. So on the one hand, it's unrealistic to force him to follow Chinese cultural traditions, and we've never forced him. On the other hand, he needs to socialize more with the English and French communities here in order to fit into the local society. It's therefore better for him to adapt to the local culture instead of Chinese culture.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

In general, although the Chinese immigrant parents recognize the importance of supporting their children to cultivate a positive sense of Chinese identity, they try to avoid direct parental intervention and control in their children's identity construction processes. They agree with the idea that children should be given enough autonomy to be able to make reasonable life choices including the kind of selves their children want to be, and they have been making efforts to keep their parenting behaviors consistent with this idea. The efforts of these immigrant parents do not go unnoticed. Their children expressed their gratitude:

> *My parents are really not directive parents. And I really like that because I don't think I would like to be in a place where there are a lot of rules…I have a lot of flaws, and my parents both get into arguments with me because they're afraid that those flaws could cause me hardship in life. But it's not because they think I am a Chinese person and therefore I should be like this. Like, if I didn't know how to cook, they're gonna be like "how are you gonna survive on your own one day?"*

> *It's not like "how can you not know how to cook when you're a Chinese person?" It's not that kind of argument, so, I think they are more worried about my well-being than like my pride in Chinese culture.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)
>
> *I think what my parents want for me is to take the best of my environment and the cultures that I've been exposed to. I don't think they want me to be like, "Chinese," like completely in every single aspect. I think my parents also see the value in certain Canadian norms…they encourage a good balance as long as I choose the kind of the better things to follow as opposed to the bad behaviors. I know that the Asian parents seriously are very controlling. I think I'm very lucky of having not very controlling parents.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

Some other immigrant young adults have also highlighted the progress that their parents have made in dealing with parent-child relationships. Ze mentioned, "*I still listen to them* [my parents] *a lot, but I think they have learnt to give me more space than they used to.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)"

Participants' responses support the previous research finding that the characteristics which may easily produce intergenerational conflicts, like dogmatism, rigidity, and the intolerance of different cultures, are not commonly found among Chinese immigrant parents (Hiller & Chow, 2005). Their responses are also consistent with the observation that immigrant parents have demonstrated increased flexibility and openness in their approach to parenting over the years following their immigration to Canada (Tyyskä, 2008). Since the immigrant young adults have not revealed a hint of an identity crisis, neither have they struggled too much in entering into a state of hybridity; it is reasonable to assume that a supportive, non-directive, and non-controlling parenting style plays a significant role in fostering immigrant children's positive ethnic identities,

facilitating their synthesis of various other social identities, and helping them to smooth their transition into adolescence, and into early adulthood—a crucial stage of identity development.

Emerging Theme: Living with Multiple Identities

In addition to Canadian citizenship, and the membership in a Chinese ethnic group, each Chinese immigrant in Canada also simultaneously belongs to many other social categories—gender, socioeconomic, occupational, educational, linguistic, to name a few. Due to their different social roles and lived experiences, the Chinese immigrants' identities are constituted complexly and variedly. One recurring theme emerging from, and common to each interview is, the multiplicity of identity. Participants are living with multiple identities.

The multiple identities of participants are not equally salient in their everyday lives. They are not consciously aware of certain identities, including their Chinese and Canadian identities until these identities are contextually evoked. As noted previously, the Chinese identity of some participants is felt most strongly when it is threatened or challenged. Since their Chinese and Canadian identities are not actually functioning on a daily basis, most participants do not view them as important as other identities, like father, woman, doctor or student.

In our interview, Mr. Zhang repeatedly stressed, "*I hardly, I think I've never really thought about whether I'm a Chinese or a Canadian. I'm a father first, and my children need me.* (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)" Indeed, for most Chinese immigrant parents, their family roles as parent and spouse are given top priority. The identities tied to their family roles are therefore most salient to them. The central role that family plays in daily life was illustrated by Mr. Kong:

> *I think family in the most important thing. My family is central to my life in Canada. No matter whether I'm Chinese, Canadian, or Montrealer, I eventually need to*

> *return to my home, to my family. Family is a unit. Especially when we're in a foreign country without a broad social contact, I sometimes feel that my wife and I can only rely on each other for survival. So of course, my family role is essential to my identity.* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Many immigrant parents could resonate with Mr. Kong's comments. Here, "family" is conceptualized as the interior world of self, which is distinguished from the exterior world of society (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). As Mr. Kong commented, family is a unit. It is a unit of shared experiences of all its members who depend on one another for material, emotional and social support. It provides a sense of belonging, togetherness, and common purpose. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) argues that family should "be recognized as an entity in its own right" (p.75). It is of particular significance for people who are "suffering from impersonal artifices and insults in the public sphere" (Holstein & Gubrium, p.75), like immigrants. Family, the private sphere, can offer them the repose of the body, as well as the soul. Thus, it is understandable why the Chinese immigrant parents consider their families as the kernel of life.

While some of the multiple identities may co-exist peacefully, some may compete against each other for allegiance. Tensions can appear as an inevitability at the already established boundaries of different cultural spaces (Mercer, 1990; Weeks, 1990; Yon, 2000). Quite a few immigrant young adult have indicated that the values and beliefs associated with their different identities can very often contradict one another in their daily practice. Min pointed out the conflicts that exist between her Chinese identity and her identity as a medical student:

> *I would say my cultural identity and my professional identity sometimes clash. As you know, Chinese people like to treat everything with antibiotics. Like, the slightest cough, they'll like, "Ah! Amoxicillin, you need that!" I know there's that and*

> *there's also the whole traditional medicines like, "Oh, you ate that food. That makes your system cold so we need to do something." On the flipside, you know, my very scientific, health science background is like, "No, that's stupid. That is not scientifically proven." So I think when it comes to things like that, I side more with my medical kind of identity and that often clashes with what my parents think.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

Min views her profession as an integral part of her identity. She said, "*My profession plays a very, very, very big role to my identity because I spend most of my waking hours being that identity…I have no time to do anything else.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)" Therefore, when there is a conflict, Min almost unhesitatingly prioritizes her professional identity. But Min acknowledges that the conflicts mostly lie in the differences between Chinese and western medical practices, involving not a choice between the fundamental values of the two cultures. Being easily solvable, the conflicts hardly affect the way that Min perceives her two identities.

However, some conflicts have their roots in social-structurally determined differences. These conflicts entail a decision on the core values and beliefs that dictate how life is to be lived, hence need to be given more careful thought. Consider the example of Yujia, who disagrees strongly with the traditional gender attitudes that still prevail in contemporary Chinese society. Yujia deems these attitudes as entirely antithetical to her view of her identity as a woman:

> *For example, you know, this mentality that women are expected to be more home-oriented in China, is still like stronger than I thought it would be. Because I think after the communist revolution, women are really expected to work as men. So I was quite surprised at that. I didn't think it would be like that, but it's like that, it's very accepted. You know if you are a strong woman, it has directly negative*

> *connotation; if you are a feminist, it's like a big insult to you; if they tell you like you're a feminist in China, they are telling you that you are lunatic. I'm like just, well, you don't have to be a lunatic to be a feminist, men can be feminist. There are just values that I've discovered, like wow, it's actually quite different.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

Yujia told me that she observed this phenomenon through a popular Chinese match-making reality show that her parents loved to watch. She said, "*It's hard for me to know the actual situations in China, I don't. That's the only mean for me to see some opinions of the real population in China.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)" From her observation, the conservative attitude towards family roles that men should be bread-earners while women are only mothers and wives, is still endorsed by the general public in China. But what frustrates her most is the fact that many women in China seem to have no problem accepting the traditional gender stereotype—men are more authoritative and powerful than women. Growing up a society operating under a more egalitarian gender system, she has the concept of women as being equal to men ingrained in her mind. "*Especially in Quebec,*" Yujia explained, "*you have this super strong women image* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014) typically portrayed in different media such as television, magazines and popular culture. The essential value of gender equality continues to be transmitted and reinforced through the media.

Because of the conflict in gender-role beliefs, when Yujia defined the meaning of Chinese identity, she insisted that her identification as a Chinese should be disassociated from her (dis)approval of Chinese values and norms. This again, reflects the fluid and contestable nature of cultural spaces. Cultural boundaries do not remain enduring and stable; changes are constantly taking place. Facing the juxtaposition of various types of sameness and difference that their

multiple identifications entail, individuals become active participants engaged in reworking and redefining their cultures, as they are seeking to anchor a sense of themselves. Evidently, to deliberately relax and reset cultural boundaries is also an effective means for individuals to manage the multiple and conflicting identities within themselves.

There are also times when no clear lines can be drawn between different cultural spaces. Multiple identities can intersect and overlap. Sometimes they serve to constrain one another. The story of Mr. Jia provides a good example. Mr. Jia is the only participant who returned to China, and worked for a few years as an overseas returnee. The "tinder" for his return is his being unemployment overnight—the company that he worked at in Canada suddenly collapsed into bankruptcy. At that point, a good job opportunity in China was available to him, which eventually determined his return. But as Mr. Jia revealed, the idea of "going back" had been lingering in his mind for long:

> *This industry* [IT] *is not my strength. I felt totally different during the years that I worked in China. I had a big group working for me. I told them my ideas and they worker for me. I was at the forefront. In Canada however, I'm only a technical worker, a very insignificant individual in the company. Of course I lack a sense of achievement. Perhaps, there's also a lack of security. You see, I'm getting old. The IT industry is challenging and very dynamic. My adaptability is not as good as young people. What if the company closes down one day? What should I do then?...But if I were in China, I would have a very stable and well-paid job. Everything would be easy for me.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Mr. Jia's original specialization was in metallurgical engineering. He obtained a Ph.D. degree in this field at an anglophone university in Montreal. However, the availability of employment in

metallurgical engineering was limited. To make a living, Mr. Jia managed to complete a graduate diploma in computer science, and eventually find a technical job in the IT industry. Mr. Jia attaches great importance to his career. As he told me, he has never felt fulfilled, because computer science, being only a means of living for him, is not where his strength and enthusiasm reside. But besides the specific category of work, Mr. Jia has also pointed out other factors that can hinder his ability to reach his potential:

> *Some differences certainly exist between white people and people of color. You know, there're trends in society. If tall people are favored, then short people are surely discriminated against. But people from certain regions are short in general. What can they do? Nothing! So when we are compared with white people, we're inevitably put at a disadvantage because of our yellow skin…Language is important too. In Montreal, I can't really show my personal charisma due to the language barriers. It affects my confidence. Look at those people who are good at language. They're eloquent, so they love to talk, and people love to listen to them. A lot of things then become easy for them. But us? We tend to talk less. We don't really talk. The difference between them and us is obvious.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

As a Chinese immigrant in Canada, Mr. Jia is facing three possible types of disadvantages. Racially, he belongs to people of color, perceived as subordinate to the White; ethnically, he originates from a nation commonly portrayed as being and uncivilized and barbaric; linguistically, he is an English-as-a-second-language speaker and a non-French speaker. The multiple disadvantages that his Chinese identity entails have intensified Mr. Jia's experience of nonrecognition and marginalization, making his career fulfillment seemingly beyond his reach.

Without satisfaction and pride in his professional identity, Mr. Jia hardly feels a sense of belonging to Canada, thus any strong identification with the country. He constantly constructs and reconstructs his memories of China as the "homeland" vis-à-vis his experiences of Canada as "the West" (Sakamoto & Zhou, 2005). China is idealized as a place with secure and well-paid job, respectable social standing, and strong social power to regulate his life; while Canada, without all these elements of a quality life, also produces feelings of disappointment and frustration due to the discrepancy between his high pre-immigration expectations and the hard reality of a life abroad. "*People always go where they can have a better life,* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)" Mr. Jia said. Although he has chosen to stay on in Canada for the time being, the potential of returning to China remains at the back of his mind:

> *Sometimes the idea of going back* [to China] *still flashed across my mind. But even if I would probably not leave Canada, I've never thought about staying forever in Montreal. I've never thought about working at the same company from a senior developer to a manager or other positions, never. To live in Montreal until I retire, until I die? No, I would not. I've never felt like settling down here.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Evidently, Mr. Jia's professional identity is closely intertwined with his Chinese and Canadian identities. The way that his Chinese identity is perceived and treated in Canada has a great impact on the shaping of his professional identity, which, directly associated with a sense of belonging that in turn influence his relative construction of his Chinese and Canadian identities.

However, the multiple identities, rather than constrain one another, can also function in a complementary, and mutually reinforcing fashion. Mr. Jia's great satisfaction with his job in China, hence an enhanced sense of professional identity, should be partially attributed to his identification

as an overseas returnee from Canada. More and more Chinese employers tend to recognize the value of international experience and foreign language skills that are usually implied by such an identity. Mrs. Kong revealed a similar relationship between her Canadian and maternal identities as she commented on her role as a mother:

> *I was a mother in China, and I'm still a mother in Canada. But I think I'm a better mother here* [in Canada] *because I can provide my son with the opportunity for better education. He can grow up happier and healthier. He can develop a positive mindset. He doesn't need to worry about losing at the starting point. I wish to keep my son away from the force-fed education in China. In terms of Education, I identify more with Canada. So as a mother, since I'm able to provide a good environment for my son through my own effort, I feel proud of myself.* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Ho (2013) points out that for the Mainland Chinese immigrant who remain in Canada, their decision to stay is "the outcome of weighing competing priories of personal career progress and better earnings with other important family goals" (p.166) among which children's educational opportunities is the top one. Indeed, most of the Chinese immigrant parents prioritize their children's well-being above their own. The hyper-competitive and highly pressurized environment that their children may face in China is viewed by them as the primary factor that determines their initial immigration, as well as their permanent settlement in Canada. As Mrs. Yang said, "*I have the responsibility to give my daughter a happy and carefree childhood.* (Mrs. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014). For these immigrant parents, their ability to provide their children with a comparatively better living, learning, and working environment in Canada is undoubtedly a great accomplishment that they make as parents. It is clear that this sense of accomplishment, enabled

by their status as Canadian citizen, also contributes to their elevated overall life satisfaction in Canada, their increased identification with Canadian culture, and consequently, an enhanced sense of their Canadian identity.

Benefits and Challenges of a Trilingual Life

As highlighted previously, Montreal is the only major metropolitan center in Canada where the predominant language for functioning is French rather than English, and where French-English bilingualism is most valued and alive (Lamarre, 2013). The unique linguistic dynamics in Montreal has also given rise to the phenomenon of trilingualism among Allophones whose first language is neither English nor French (Curdt-Christiansen, 2004, Lamarre, 2013, Maguire, 2005).

I wondered what the benefits and challenges could be for participants to live a trilingual life. How do they perceive each of the three languages—English, French and Chinese, and whether have these languages had any influence over the identity construction of participants?

Having received their formal education in both English and French, all my immigrant young adult participants are fluent speakers of the two languages. They demonstrate varying levels of proficiency in their heritage language—Chinese, or to be more precise, Mandarin. But in general, they are much more capable in communicating orally than in reading and writing. Min briefly depicted her daily language practice:

> *Generally, when I go to work, I speak English. I speak French if the person doesn't speak English. That's generally how it works. Then at home, I speak predominantly Mandarin with my parents. With my brother, we speak mostly English together. Sometimes I speak to him in Mandarin and he'll just speak back in English to me.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

Using "Bonjour-Hi" as start of a conversation to size each other up linguistically and determine the language of the following interaction is quite characteristic of the life in Montreal (Lamarre, 2013). In the everyday lives of this group of trilingual young adults, the use of language is oftentimes decided by the person with whom they are communicating. Equipped with trilingual repertoires, they make efforts to adjust to those who lack fluency in a particular language. But Min's portrait also gives an impression that the use of certain languages in certain domains can more relative stable. For example, Mandarin is the language used at home, with parents.

Unlike their children, when most Chinese immigrant parents started to learn English at junior high school, there was a great shortage of qualified English teachers in China, and English learning has not received sufficient attention. They described their current level of English competence as limited or professional working proficiency. For them, "*it's still difficult to take conversations to a deeper, and more meaningful level using English* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" even with their children. They share the same feeling that Mr. Zhang expressed: "*I would never speak English when the situation allows me to speak Chinese.* (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)". As to the other official language, very few of them can speak rudimentary French, while the others know only some basic French words and phrases. The immigrant parents reported to have started their exposure to French from their early 30s, only after their immigration to Montreal. "*If I were 10 years younger, I would perhaps be able to grasp the language,*" Mrs. Shen said, "*but for the moment, I really don't have extra time and energy to handle French.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)"

Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language passed in 1977, stipulated that all children of immigrants must attend French schools for primary and secondary education, unless one of the child's parents has received most of his/her education in English in Canada (Publications du

Québec, 2014). In this sense, these Chinese immigrant young adults are French speakers by force, not by choice. However, most of them expressed great gratitude for the fact that they can speak French as their first language. Consider Yujia's statement:

> *I love being Montrealer. I love Quebec, even the French Canadian. I love French language. I'm so happy that I learnt when I was a kid, and it's such a beautiful language. I love interacting with Quebeckers. A lot of my patients are Quebeckers. But I don't feel like they have to be so offensive about their culture…I would have loved to have a choice. But I'm happy about the result because I speak very good French now, and I love the fact that I speak very good French.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

Yujia has been ambivalent towards Bill 101. She knows that if going to French school had not been compulsory, her parents would have probably chosen the English one for her, and she hence might not be able to achieve full proficiency in French. The perceived overt hostility between English and French Canadians is also revealed in Yujia's statement. It is a phenomenon that she dislikes very much. She remarked, "*People shouldn't get angry at each other. They should keep their own stances, but they just should get along, even though it takes time.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)" Yujia's own stance is clear: she does not equate speaking French with a Quebecker identity. Instead of fighting for either one, Yujia simply enjoys the wealth of cultural heritage from both the francophone and anglophone communities in Montreal.

Similarly, Yiqing shows appreciation for being enabled to acquire French language as a child. He pointed out a gap in difficulty between learning English and learning French:

> *I appreciate it because it's not everywhere in the world where you can grow up and become bilingual. I'm very grateful for the fact that I know how to speak French*

> *because not most people…because English is a very easy language to learn, so anyone can just pick it up but French is very hard so if you don't learn it an early age, you'll never learn it. Well, you'll learn it but it will never be as fluent...* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

The relative difficulty of reaching a high level of proficiency in French is one reason that Yiqing considers his knowledge in French a great asset to him. For Yiqing, the value of French also lies in the "balance" the language contributes to Montreal's cultural environment. In his view, the French language and culture have made Montreal less Asian as many other Canadian cities. "*Vancouver is practically like Chinatown right now*, (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)" he commented. Yiqing's viewpoint is in line with his mother, Mrs. Kong. Holding the opinion that "*if one lives in a foreign place full of Chinese, then it's pointless going abroad,* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" Mrs. Kong is grateful for the opportunity that Montreal offers her to learn a new language which have made her more open to diverse cultures. French is viewed as a valuable skill to have rather than a major problem of everyday life:

> *If I hadn't come to Montreal, I wouldn't have learnt French. Now at least I can read company's documents. I can't speak French very well, but I can understand those simple conversations between my colleagues. I think knowing French is an enhancement of my personal skill. I didn't pay any, but I developed a new skill. If you can learn a new language, why not? So I've never thought that my life becomes difficult because of the language.* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

In addition to her personal benefit, Mrs. Kong has also highlighted the advantages that her son has gained as he grows up in a bilingual environment. She stated, "*During the past two decades, my son's French has become the number one, and his English is also the number one. I really*

appreciate the bilingual environment in Montreal. (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" Mrs. Kong's comment is shared by this group of Chinese immigrant parents. They all perceive language as a powerful tool for personal and professional advancement. They consider the possession of an additional language an invaluable asset that can enable better access to resources. Their responses support Riches and Curdt-Christiansen's (2010) finding that Chinese parents in Quebec show recognition of the fact that "French language proficiency can facilitate access to better career opportunities and educational advantages, and lack of such proficiency can be an obstacle to further advancement" (p.514). Some of the immigrants admit the difficulties that their lack of French proficiency has caused in their lives and careers, but they tend to emphasize more the benefits for their children, even if it is at the expense of own convenience of life. Mr. Zhang, for example, pointed out that "*One cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs. The first generation make sacrifices, so the second generation can benefit.* (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)" Some parents have thought about moving out of Montreal, but they hesitate, considering that for their children, "*it would be a great pity to leave the bilingual environment*. (Mrs. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)"

The challenges of living in Montreal where French language is protected and promoted is nevertheless visible. For some, French is a language difficult to learn, and even more difficult to retain. One may lose the language if one does not practice it. Even for the young adult who has been educated in French school from the start, the language proficiency could still be a concern. Ze expressed his frustration towards his French language loss after not using it for two years:

> *I told you I studied in China for two years and during those two years I kind of just forgot all of my French and when I came back here I had to go to the French high school and it was hard. I felt like I had to relearn all of it so if you don't use it for*

> *a while, it gets hard and then it gets annoying because I feel like I'm still not able to speak French…How would I say this, my French isn't as good as it used to be and after I came back I did Cégep and university in English so I barely use French. The only time I use it is really when I'm working and even then it's not that much. So I feel like I can communicate a lot better in English than in French. But Quebec is mostly French. I feel it a little disturbing.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)

For the immigrant parents who were hardly exposed to French prior to their immigration, the challenges are even bigger. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the French-English bilingualism requirement listed in most job descriptions has made it tough for Chinese immigrants to find employment. Quite a few Chinese immigrant parents have transitioned from their original occupations to new ones such as software engineer and accountant. Apart from the fact that the labour demand for these two occupations remains quite strong and stable in Montreal, the relatively less strict requirement on bilingual proficiency is another reason for their choosing the two occupations rather than those that may involve constant human-to-human interaction, and thus require good communication skills in both languages. However, as participants have demonstrated, even if they have managed to find employment, their lack of French proficiency still enlarges the social distance between them and their French-speaking colleagues. The social distance may also lead to their experiences of devaluation and nonrecognition within company, which have the potential to inhibit, or even block their career advancement. Mr. Jia described French as the biggest pain in his life in Montreal. He expressed a feeling of being alienated from the society because of the language:

> *Montreal is a good city in general. But for me, the most uncomfortable thing, or my pain in this city, is the language. You know, I initially studied in an anglophone*

> *university here. At that moment I thought, maybe I wouldn't stay here for long. The whole idea of learning French was hence shut off in my mind. Many people can't believe it, but it's true that once you completely shut off an idea, you'll never turn it on. I've lived here for more than a decade, but my French is almost zero. I can't speak it. It's zero. I've always thought that if I can manage to speak English better, it would be enough for me to stay on in Montreal, but…French is the only thing that makes me feel disconnected. I like the people, the culture, and the life style in Montreal, but not the language. French is the source, the only source of alienation.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Mr. Jia's account has revealed an important reason for his little investment in French learning—the uncertainty over his future life. Kanno and Norton (2003) argue that language learners' investment in the target language is closely tied to the imagined communities that the learners aspire to. Evidently, Mr. Jia has always perceived himself as a sojourner in Montreal, who will eventually make a settlement elsewhere. Without a clear sense of belonging and community engagement, it is hence difficult for Mr. Jia to commit himself to the learning of a language functioning specifically within a community that he does not envision his membership in. Mr. Jia said, "*Maybe I'll reconsider to learn French once I've decided to stay in Montreal forever. But for the moment, I still can't make up my mind.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

Many immigrant parents distinguish French language from the language policy in Quebec. They acknowledge the value of learning French, but they have openly expressed their dislike of the strict enforcement of the language policy. Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language proclaims in its preamble that French is "the language of Government and the Law, as well as the normal and everyday language of work, instruction, communication, commerce and business"

(Publications du Québec, 2014). The influences of the law virtually permeate every aspect of life in Montreal. For people with only very limited knowledge of French, the law has undoubtedly caused severe inconveniences in their everyday lives. Consider the following two statements:

> *For example, at the metro. When there're malfunctions or delays, all the messages broadcast are in French. "Attention! Attention!" that's the only thing I understand. I never know what happens. If I'm only a tourist, I find it tolerable. But I have to experience it in my daily life! Each time it just reminds me again, well, life is still not so easy.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

> *I think many things could be done in a more reasonable manner. Montreal is a metropolitan city right? Isn't it right to provide an English version of those road signs so that the tourists won't get lost on the highway…they won't put their culture at risk by putting an English translation on the stop sign. They won't. I think they aim at punishing those non-French speakers instead of protecting their language and culture.* (Mr. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

While some immigrant parents criticize Quebec's language policy for imposing unnecessary burdens on its residents, some parents have pointed out that such a narrow-minded language policy would also serve as impediment to the development of the entire province. English is, after all, the global language associated with power and opportunity in this modern world. Consider the following statements:

> *We're all talking about globalization nowadays. If Quebec still restricts itself to an extremely small sphere, its own social and economic development will surely be impacted upon and obstructed…They should encourage people to learn French, rather than force and threaten people. They should know how to use the reverse*

> *psychology, like the way we're dealing with kids.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)
>
> *Countries and places in this world should stay open to each other, so that we can go out and other people can come in. Quebec's language policy not only limits itself, also limits its next generation. When the whole world is speaking English, they ask their kids to only speak French. It'll be a huge disadvantage to them. I think the result will be: anglophone kids all become bilingual, while their kids still can only speak French.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Mrs. Shen further drew a parallel between the maintenance of heritage language and the protection of French language. For Mrs. Shen, if the members of a culture feel the need to keep their heritage language usage alive, they will do it in a spontaneous manner, with or without external forces such the threat of legislation. "*I myself am an example,*" she said, "*the Chinese government never pushes us to keep our traditions here* [in Canada]*, but we still speak Chinese at home, and we still celebrate the Chinese New Year, because we want to.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" Mrs. Shen cannot agree with the increasingly stringent language laws in Quebec.

A few immigrant parents however showed their understanding of Quebec's difficult situations—"*If the Québécois don't take action in the protection of their language, they can't avoid the encroachment of English, which will be a definite loss for them,* (Mr. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" Mr. Kong remarked. Also in defense of Quebec, Mrs. Kong pointed out that immigrants should show respect to the culture of the place of their new settlements. Immigration is, after all, a personal choice. In her opinion, "*People can, and should go to other places if they dislike the French language and culture in Quebec*. (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)"

Overall, the French language does not appear to exert direct influences on participants' constructions of their cultural identities. As Min said, "*I would identify myself more as Chinese-Canadian than Quebecker despite the fact that my French is better than my Chinese.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)" But their proficiency or lack of proficiency in French language partially determines the composition of their social networks, can affect their interpersonal communication with the dominant French-speaking populations, and further contributes to their sense of belonging or not belonging within the space of Montreal. Therefore, implicit and indirect as these influences are, they still have substantial impacts on the development of a sense of being Canadian, as well as the negotiation and construction of their individual cultural identities.

With regard to the transmission and maintenance of Chinese language in these immigrant families, some parents like Mr. and Mrs. Zhang have made it a family rule that Mandarin should be spoken at home, in order to guarantee the Chinese language practices of their children. In other families, Mandarin is the primary home language, while English is frequently mixed in daily family conversations, especially between the parents and their children.

These immigrant parents' intention to keep the Chinese language alive among their children is based on a variety of reasons. For some parents, Chinese language is intimately associated with Chinese identity. It is seen as a key to the membership of Chinese ethnic group. These parents insist that their children should at least know how to speak Chinese for the simple reason that they have Chinese blood in them. But some parents consider Chinese language more a communicative tool than an identity marker. Mrs. Jia, for example, said, "*If he* [my son] *learns Chinese, we can talk to each other in Chinese, and then we're able to understand each other better.* (Mrs. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)" Additionally, the knowledge of Chinese language is perceived as resource that allow the children of immigrants to gain insight into Chinese cultural

heritage. This point has been highlighted by Mrs. Yang, who stated, "*I have a very profound love for classical Chinese poetry. It's so beautiful! It would be a great pity if my daughter weren't able to experience and appreciate the beauty of Chinese characters.* (Mrs. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)" There are also parents emphasizing the increased utility of the Chinese language worldwide due to China's rapid economic growth and rising international status. "*No doubt that speaking Mandarin is an asset,*" Mrs. Zhang said, "*my children may return to China one day, and with that asset, they'll return as multi-skilled professionals, and will surely be welcomed in China.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)"

The Chinese immigrant parents all sent their children to Chinese heritage language schools on weekends. Some borrowed Chinese children's books, TV shows and movies for their children to read and watch. Some pushed their children to write Chinese letters to their families in China on a regular basis. However, as Mrs. Shen noted, "*The development of children's heritage language is indeed a test of parents' perseverance and determination.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" As their children moved from the basic to intermediate, and to more advanced levels in Chinese learning, their difficulty in making progress became more and more obvious. Plus the fact that both the parents and their children started to be occupied with their own work and study, their time and energy invested in Chinese learning were progressively reduced. According to many immigrant parents, those methods facilitating their children's Chinese literacy development stopped being practiced a few years after their immigration. Since then, the daily Chinese communication between family members has been the major, if not the only practice of the heritage language for their children.

The great difficulty in retaining the Chinese language was also articulated by the immigrant young adults. Yujia expressed the idea that given the limited time available, she should prioritize the things more important than Chinese learning, such as her medical studies:

> *I am a very practical person…I think my parents put a lot of emotional value to the Chinese language that I don't have…for sure like I said knowing another language will always bring you more advantage no matter where you are, but the advantage is going to bring compared to the time I'm going to lose to do that. I don't have that kind of time. If I didn't have better things to do, like reading my medical books, I would love to learn Chinese, I'd love to learn other languages…At some point, I did try to learn it* [the Chinese characters]*, but because there's so little opportunity to use it here. There was nothing that was strictly in Chinese that I couldn't access if I didn't know Chinese. So, even if I learned it quite a bit initially, I forgot it soon.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

In a similar manner, Yiqing said, "*I wish I could learn more Chinese but it's not realistic for me. I would have to dedicate a lot of my life to do it and it's just not possible.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)" He continued to explain:

> *I think in terms of usefulness, I might be wrong in this, but I think it's slightly overestimated in terms of its use. A lot of people, they say like, "Oh, because China is going much stronger, so then we have to learn Chinese", but, to be honest, English is the path of language of business and actually, as China is becoming stronger, it's more and more Chinese people who are trying to learn English, but not vice versa.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

From these statements, it is clear that the immigrant young adults' investment in Chinese learning is largely determined by the perceived necessity and functionality of the use of the Chinese language. Parental influence might play a more important role when these young adults were still small children, who were at the initial stage of Chinese learning. As they grow up, the decision of whether or not to continue their investment in Chinese learning, starts to rest in their own hands. Most of the young adults have expressed their willingness to learn Chinese, but considering the relatively less importance of Chinese in their everyday lives, they have all chosen to sacrifice their linguistic heritage for their academic and career goals.

Being asked the perceived relationship between their Chinese proficiency and their Chinese identity, the immigrant young adults all disagreed with the idea that being Chinese, they must be competent in the Chinese language. "*I've never felt pressured that because I'm Chinese, I should speak Chinese,* (Moran, English interview, 10/08/2014)" said Moran. But does a better knowledge of Chinese language contribute to a stronger Chinese identity? These young adults were uncertain about how to answer. Their responses were mostly their assumptions about language's potential impact on identity:

> *Probably, yeah. I would use Chinese more often, I would have more Chinese friends and Chinese connections. Maybe I would identify myself more as Chinese because I would be more of that culture. But I wouldn't have the chance to know.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)

Globalization and the Shaping of Cultural Identity

> *Globalization has brought a number of impacts on our lives. International migration is one of them. Think about it, when people of so many different cultural backgrounds all live in the same neighborhood, national boundaries are surely*

> *weakening. Five or six years ago, when we were having a camping trip to Quebec East, people there all looked at us weird. I thought maybe Chinese people, or Asian people rarely visited there, so people perceived us as strangers. But now, the feeling of strangeness is no longer pervasive. My 80-year-old mother told that "China is a good place now, so many foreigners have come to China and made money" so the boundaries will continue to weaken. We're all realistic. Today we work in this country, maybe tomorrow we'll move to another one. We'll go to the place where we feel most comfortable.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

The phenomena of massive international migration and increased labour mobility having been greatly facilitated by globalization were highlighted in Mr. Jia's statement, and commonly observed by participants. Direct consequences of the phenomena are the loosened national boundaries and the heightened interconnectivity between people around world. Money, goods, people, as well as distinctive beliefs, cultural practices and traditional lifestyles that are "formerly held apart are now brought into contact and juxtaposition" (Featherstone, 1995, p.6). Facing the opening up of the world's cultures and ideologies, hence the challenge of dealing with the world's differences, how should people react? How do people change the ways that they perceive themselves and others accordingly? Will the role of established cultural boundaries diminish its importance as well, and eventually disappear?

Many participants hold the belief that the misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility between cultural entities of various sorts are attributed to the pervasive strangeness and unfamiliarity with the "differences." Admittedly, cultural distinctiveness may immediately emerge as people from different cultures come into contact with each other. However, their increasingly frequent social interactions also allow the common cultural elements to be more and more visible. "*The*

Thanksgiving celebrated in the North America is exactly the Mid-autumn festival in China, right?" Mr. Shen pointed out, "*we celebrate harvest around the same time because we live on the same earth with the same natural cycles.* (Mr. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" People may continue to realize that human beings are all alike as corporeal, infinite, and intelligent beings. Ghosh and Abdi (2013) remind us that "regardless of differences in features and skin colour, Homo sapiens are a homogeneous entity from an objective and scientific point view" (p.53). Both race and ethnicity are socially constructed. No single racial and ethnic group is inherently superior or inferior to others. This idea is commonly recognized by participants. Mr. Yang, for example, have repeatedly emphasized the fundamental similarities among human beings:

> *We're all human beings. Maybe we look differently, and we speak different languages, we're, after all, all human beings. We're different from animals…after spending some time with those Western people, I find that there aren't many differences between us. We have a common human nature. We have similar human strengths and weaknesses. Before, because of the underdevelopment of information communication technologies, we were isolated from each other, and we were unable access the knowledge of each other's cultures. Some misunderstandings were therefore generated. But now, after I've known about other people's cultures, I do start to understand, and to accept those differences that I wasn't used to before…I wish, and I believe that cultural integration can be achieved one day.* (Mr. Yang, Chinese interview, 01/08/2014)

While Mr. Yang revealed the fact that social interactions across cultures can help increase people's openness towards cultural diversity, and their willingness to suspend judgment, Min and Mrs. Zhang pointed out that intercultural socialization can also facilitate the development of

intercultural competence—the ability to communicate with people of other cultures in an appropriate and effective manner. They consider intercultural competence a necessity for living with diverse populations:

> *I think globalization means that you get to learn about other cultures. Before it was like everybody's very closed off, and everybody seems like, "oh no, an Arabic person seems so scary", but now you're like, you know these people. You know their cultures and you get to participate in their cultures…I keep reminding myself that I should be sensitive about other people. So, like if a girl's clearly wearing a hijab and it's during Ramadan, I'm not gonna go offer her chocolate chip cookies. If I see this person has a keffiyeh on, I'm not gonna go give him bacon, you know, because they don't eat pork or things like that.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)
>
> *Labels are necessary sometimes, because from labels I know that people are from different cultures and have their different traditions. I need to respect those differences. For example, I told you that I took French courses here* [in Montreal]*, sometime we have class reunions, and we need to prepare food ourselves for the gatherings. I know that some people from Bangladesh don't eat beef, and some people are Muslims and don't eat pork, so I cook chicken every time. That's why I think to be sensitive about others' cultures is important. It's basic human respect.* (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)

The statements from participants have all demonstrated an attitude of openness and respect for cultural differences. As Ghosh and Abdi (2013) points out, in this widely expanding but perceptibly shrinking world, "dealing with difference is no longer an option", but "central to all the possibilities" (p. 155) that a multicultural society must address. They argue that difference

should not be perceived as deficiency or deviance; rather, "individuals have the right to be different" (Ghosh & Abdi, p.34). This point was also clearly articulated by Yujia:

> *Globalization is gonna open, not only Chinese people, but all cultures to differences and I think, overall, in the beginning, people might have the sense like, "Oh no, they're really weird. They have those different cultures." But in the long term I think, it's gonna make people realize that people can be different, but still be good people… You might think it's terrible or you're like, "Oh my God, how can people be gay?" It's like that, "It's a disease, and they spread it." If you hear more about it here, regular people who can be gay, or like authority figures who can be gay, you know, celebrities who can be guy, and you'll just kind of be like, "Oh, you know, if I like that person, and that person is gay, maybe gays aren't always bad persons."*
>
> (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

The heterosexual/homosexual dichotomy observed by Yujia exemplifies the binarism operating within the dominant discourses in many societies. When normal sexuality is represented by heterosexuality, homosexuality is defined oppositionally as deviant and abnormal, as "disease" that needs to be cured. I have discussed already that each individual has multiple identities, and is subject to multiple social discourses. Thus, each individual is put at risk of being stigmatized, marginalized and disenfranchised in one way or another, as long as difference continues to be translated into Otherness. Globalization forces the juxtaposition and intersection of differences of all forms, but as Yujia has highlighted, it also offers a valuable platform for direct and open exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences, which allows the broadening of people's horizons, and makes possible the gradual transformation of their attitudes towards differences. In the face of the coexistence of challenge and opportunity, it is never too soon to establish a politics that not

only tolerate, but recognize and welcome difference by deconstructing and reforming traditional social structures, processes, concepts and classifications that sustain the dominant hegemonic reading of difference as a normal/deviant binary.

With regard to the potential impact of globalization on identity construction, many participants believe that race/ethnicity based identities become less important and less necessary in this increasingly globalized world, because, as Min pointed out, "*you're no longer identified based on what your skin color is and where you were born and, but identified on what you do and what you contribute to the global society.* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)" Min's statement reflects the concept of cosmopolitan citizens "whose international understanding and sensitivities are globally located and oriented" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013, p.163). With a stress on the personal responsibility for promoting human rights, social justice and democracy at a local, as well as a global level, cosmopolitanism is viewed as the next goal that Canada's multiculturalism should strive for (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013).

If it is the encouraged trend, then, will the whole idea of roots, the whole idea of belonging to a group still matter? Most participants gave me an affirmative answer. Mrs. Zhang described one's roots as a kite string. Kite can soar, dip and turn, but if it were not for the string, the kite would be blown away in any random directions. Similarly, one may easily lose oneself without a clear sense of where one's roots are. "*You're always gonna want to associate yourself with something,*" Ze stated, "*because it makes you feel better when you belong to something and it's something to cheer for and something you pay attention to.* (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)" For Mrs. Shen, it is a non-negotiable, no-matter-what rule that "*you should always know, and keep remind yourself of who you really are, no matter where you go.* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)"

Some participants believe that to remain connected to one's roots is to keep open the gateway to the exploration of the richness and complexity of a culture. People's detachment from their roots, then, may lead to the disappearance of their cultural distinctiveness, which can be a great cultural loss on both the individual and collective levels. Yujia stated:

> *It would be nice if people keep some knowledge of their cultures because if we blend very interesting and just very enriching to history itself. The reason why we like history is because it's interesting…It's the differences in people that makes us interesting. I think different ethnicities should keep the knowledge of, and still try to just transmit the knowledge of what it used to be, like the history of China. China is so rich that I would have liked it if I had the time. I would actually be very interested in knowing about it.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

Some even insisted that the different cultural heritage and identities should not just be retained, but be strongly promoted in Canadian society. Min conveyed this message in expressing her disapproval of the earlier ban in Quebec that bars Muslim women wearing the niqab from accessing public services, and Sikh men wearing the ceremonial kirpan from entering legislative building. She considers such legislation as absolutely the antithesis of the essence of multiculturalism:

> *I don't agree, especially with the previous government* [the Parti Québécois government] *and the idea of the whole secular bill that people can't wear their religious and cultural symbols. You know, these religious identities are their cultural identities. I don't agree with that. I think it's really, really good to promote other countries' identities. I think you should preserve, to keep your own identity and to add it to society as a general because you can only add and you can't really*

> *take away. I understand for certain security purposes like if you're trying to go through the airplane security, you have to be able to let yourself be identified physically. But when it comes to, you know, who works at the post office, who really cares if you wear a cross or a keffiyeh or a turban or things like that?* (Min, English interview, 02/08/2014)

While some participants regard cultural boundaries as both markers and guardians of cultural distinctiveness, which need to be maintained for the uniqueness and plurality of cultures and expressions of identity; some contend that even if cultural boundaries may weaken, and get blurred under globalization, they still cannot be easily transgressed, and will hardly be broken down. As the old saying goes, "Birds of a feather flock together." In Mr. Jia's opinion, human beings, too, always look for common traits in each other. It is the commonality that brings individuals together, and it makes no difference whether the point of interest is skin color, ethnic origin or linguistic affiliation, and whether it is biologically determined or socially constructed:

> *I don't know if you have observed that people of similar heights tend to form friendships. People are so different genetically, let alone other differences. So I don't believe that the boundaries will disappear. Maybe it's probable from an evolutionary point of view that when interracial marriages become widely accepted and practiced, and when there're no more clear racial differences, the boundaries may eventually disappear. But it's a bit too far-fetched, and it must take a very, very long time.* (Mr. Jia, Chinese interview, 08/08/2014)

It is also wrong to assume that a multitude of cultural tributaries can flow naturally and peacefully into a grand national stream. People raised in different cultures have their unique perspectives from which they understand and interpret the world. The differences in the

construction of cultures "very often set up among and between themselves an incommensurability" (Rutherford, 1990b, p.209). Therefore, as Mrs. Kong remarked, it is difficult to change one's cultural beliefs and practices in order to accommodate other coexisting cultures:

> *It's too difficult to break down cultural boundaries, and I don't think people will become alike one day. It's a good wish, but it's something nearly impossible to achieve. We were in our 30s when we immigrated to Canada. Over the three decades in China, we were already unconsciously brainwashed. My son, too, has been brainwashed by Western culture, even if he'd not like to admit it. I think unless everyone is growing up in the same environment, and unless we're all homogenous in the beginning, we'll never be the same kind of person…Each of us has a unique identity, whose construction is influenced by the environment we're living in. Many things can hardly be changed once they have taken roots in our minds. I can only say that I'm making efforts to understand new things, but I'm sure it's gonna be a long process.* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)

Indeed, "the belief that we are all components of globalization doesn't alter the fundamental incompatibilities of people's different life systems" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013, p. 142). Taylor (1994) proposes that what has to happen is a "fusion of horizons," a concept he borrowed from Gadamer, which enables us to develop "new vocabularies of comparison, by means of which we can articulate these contrasts" (p.67) between cultures partly through transforming our own standards. "A fusion of horizons," as Ghosh and Abdi (2013) argues, allows us to negotiate Homi Bhabha's notion of the "third space" in a broader sense. It means an inclusive space "evolving out of the common experiences of dominant and minority cultures" (Ghosh & Abdi, p. 108), the emphasis being placed on the word "and."

Although the responses of participants suggest a lack of a unified national identity in Canada, and many participants do consider such a national identity unnecessary, they have all demonstrated their appreciation of differences and their openness to change. These qualities are essential for the construction of the "third space" within Canadian society, as well as a "syncretic national identity" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013) that would enable the expression of multiple identities. If Canada's multiculturalism is making attempts at syncretism rather than a narrowly defined Canadian national identity premised on the conformity to the dominant cultural norms in Canada, then, participants' answers would be an encouraging sign of the progress that has been made.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed five themes that I identified within the interview data. Participants shared with me their individual interpretations of the meanings of "being Chinese" and "being Canadian." Through their lived experiences, they demonstrated the dynamic interplay among self, others, and socio-cultural contexts in their identity construction processes. By talking about their multiple identities tied to different roles that they play in their everyday lives, participants revealed the underlying interconnectedness of the multiple identities that they possess. They discussed the benefits and challenges of living in Montreal, an increasingly multilingual and multicultural city. They also reflected on the impacts of the two official languages of Canada—English and French, as well as Chinese, their heritage language, on their lives and identity constrictions. Lastly, they provided their understandings of globalization, especially its influences on the shaping of people's cultural identities. In Chapter 5, I summarize the major findings of my inquiry. I discuss the implications for policymakers and educators, and suggest possible future research in the area of identity construction of Chinese immigrants.

Chapter 5 Reflective Understandings

In this chapter, I reflect on what this inquiry suggests about the construction of identities among Chinese immigrant populations in Canada through revisiting my major research questions: (1) What labels do Chinese immigrant parents and young adults living in Montreal use to identify themselves and in what situations? (2) What meanings do they attach to those self-identified labels? (3)What are the major factors they perceive as influential to their identity construction? (4) Are there any noticeable differences between immigrants and young adults in their perceptions of their identities? I discuss the implications of this inquiry for policymakers and educators and conclude with suggestions for possible future research.

Revisiting Research Questions

"Self-label," as I have demonstrated in the literature review, is a term commonly used by researchers to examine people's perceptions of their cultural identities. Applying this label to my own inquiry, I asked participants to name out one label that they considered to be most suitable to describe themselves. However, problems occurred. I anticipated the scenario that participants might need a moment to ponder the various potential options before figuring out an answer, but I never expected that the very validity of the use of labels would be challenged in the first place. "*Why do I have to choose one?*" Mr. Zhang asked me back, and continued, "*Chinese, Canadian, or Chinese-Canadian, I'll say none of them is me.* (Mr. Zhang, Chinese interview, 02/08/2014)" Yiqing gave me an explicit explanation, "*I need multiple identities. One wouldn't be sufficient.* (Yiqing, English interview, 10/08/2014)" Quite a few participants share Mr. Zhang and Yiqing's opinion that the richness of human experience is not reducible to a single label. Some picked the label "Chinese-Canadian," but stressed that they made the choice only because the label is a more accurate description of their situation. Moran, for example, stated, "*I think it* [the label "Chinese-

Canadian"] *is appropriate, because I grew up in Canada, share Canadian values, but I have my Chinese roots, and it combines both sides.* (Moran, English interview, 10/08/2014)" But for Mrs. Kong, the same label connotes a very different meaning: "*Maybe 'Chinese-Canadian' is more suitable, since I have both Chinese and Canadian parts within myself. Canadian people think I'm Chinese, while Chinese people perceive me as Canadian. I'm always in-between.* (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" The dialogues with participants reveal the fact that people who share the same cultural background, face the same life situations, and even live under the same roof can interpret the same thing differently. Labels are static, while identification is a highly individualized, dynamic and ongoing process of meaning-making. Labels can be captured and measured, but a nuanced understanding of identity construction requires the intersubjective exchange between researcher and participants. Participants have made me realize that rather than remaining bogged down in the question of labels, I should place more emphasis on the specific ways that participants perceive, interpret, and manifest their identities.

Reflecting on their lived experiences, participants reveal a common sentiment that both "being Chinese" and "being Canadian" are important elements constituting their overall identities. None of them has encountered a severe identity crisis, which is usually characterized by a loss of anchoring points that results from some irreconcilable conflicts between one's Chinese and Canadian identities. For participants, these two elements coexist, intersect, and sometimes counterbalance, rather than preclude one another.

However, a similar sentiment does not entail the same interpretation of their identities. Both similarities and variations are observable in their individual definitions of "being Chinese" and "being Canadian." Most participants consider certain racial and seemingly natural characteristics, such as their physical appearance, surnames, language and birthplace, as the

defining markers of their Chinese identity. But what contributes to the development and maintenance of a Chinese identity is an endorsement of Chinese cultural values, the most common being hard work and family bonds. However, participants also emphasize the importance of not completely conforming to Chinese cultural norms. On the one hand, they reject the anachronistic elements of traditional Chinese culture, like the absolute parental authority; on the other hand, they embrace the desirable aspects of Canadian culture, like gender equality. A profound emotional attachment to China is the major point differentiating the Chinese immigrant parents from their children. For the immigrant parents, an invisible thread transcends the geographical boundary, binds them closely to their homeland, and serves to maintain their strong sense of being Chinese. But such an emotional attachment to China is not evident among the immigrant young adults. The young adults tend to associate their Chinese identity more with their parents and their Chinese-style upbringing.

Common to participants is a positive feeling of being Canadian. The positive feeling is related to the good global reputation that Canada enjoys. The immigrant young adults demonstrate their pride and appreciation for being members of a country that respects cultural differences and promotes cultural diversity. Not being involved with their host country as much as their children, the immigrant parents equate their Canadian identity with Canadian citizenship whose utility and practicality is emphasized. In their conceptualization, Canada is the concrete "home" where their everyday family life takes place, as contrasted with China, their "homeland," which lives mostly in memory and imagination. Both the immigrant parents and young adults observe the lack of a unified national identity in Canada, but the explanations offered by them differ. Hyphenation, as in Chinese-Canadian, is considered by the young adults as the key characteristic of Canadian identity. When the diversity of cultural expressions is valued and promoted, a national identity

then seems inessential. For the parents, the fact that they are socializing primarily within the ethnic group and that they are not fully integrated into Canadian society makes it difficult for them to develop a Canadian national sentiment.

The perceptions of identity that participants have shared in the interviews are the results of a long process of constructing, negotiating and transforming themselves through their lived experiences. The process is still ongoing. Participants show that identity is relational and contextual. It is through the tensions and comparisons between different Chinese groups—the Chinese in China, the Chinese adult immigrants in Canada, and the Canadian-born Chinese, that participants determine how to position themselves. Such negotiations of sameness and difference can occur frequently within the immigrant families and between the two generations. During the dynamic process of identity construction, the identifications by other people prove to be a significant factor that influences participants' self-identifications. For example, many immigrant young adults express the feeling that they are more Canadian than Chinese when they are in China. Without sufficient language competence in Chinese, their Chinese identity is not recognized by people in China who claim to be authentic Chinese. Consequently, when defining their Chinese identity, these young adults purposefully distinguish themselves from the population in China. The immigrant parents face a situation different from their children. The racial, ethnicity-based stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination that they have experienced in Canada continue to evoke and reinforce their identity as Chinese. One thing worth noting is that while the immigrant parents consider their Chinese appearance as the identity maker that inevitably entails their permanent membership in a racial and ethnic category inferior to white people, the immigrant young adults perceive the physical features of Chinese as natural and neutral. These young adults have not revealed a hint of being treated less fairly and equally than their white peers.

Participants shed light on the multiplicity of identity issues. They demonstrate the multiple identities that they are living with in their everyday lives. Most participants prioritize the identities tied to family roles and occupations rather than their Chinese and Canadian identities. These multiple identities are closely and intricately intertwined with each other. When the values and beliefs associated with their multiple identities contradict, participants choose to relax and reset the boundaries of the relevant cultural spaces so as to reach a cohesive sense of self. The multiple identities that they possess can also constrain or reinforce one another. From participants' lived experiences, it is clear that the professional and parental identities that many consider as most salient to them can have an indirect but significant impact on the construction and reconstruction of their sense of being Chinese as well as Canadian.

The influences of language on identity construction is also revealed by participants through discussions of their trilingual lives. These influences have three aspects. First, language is perceived as a marker of identity that in part determines participants' identifications by others. For example, the Chinese identity is often authenticated by Chinese language competence under the dominant discourse in both China and Canada. The process of authentication may result in participants' experiences of recognition and nonrecognition, which greatly affects the ways that they perceive themselves. Second, especially for Chinese immigrant parents, is the lack of proficiency in English and French—the official languages of Canada—which to a great extent hinders their career advancement and development. Career fulfillment is among the top factors in a person's overall satisfaction with life, without which participants can hardly develop a strong sense of belonging to Canada. However, it needs to be pointed out that many participants attribute their career-related obstacles to the strict language policy in Quebec, rather than French language per se. Third, participants' language skills substantially influence the composition of their social

networks. Having insufficient fluency in the language(s) predominantly spoken in a society, participants can feel disconnected from mainstream society. The immigrant young adults' feeling of not belonging in China and the immigrant parents' perceived marginalization in Canada are all partially caused by their language barriers. In addition, many participants regard language as more of a resource than an identity marker. For this reason, the young adults' decision of whether or not to learn Chinese, their heritage language, is made based on the necessity and functionality of its usage, instead of its role in ethnic identification.

Overall, participants' constructions of the sense of who they are illustrate the multiple, fluid, and malleable nature of identity. Participants perform their distinct and hybrid cultural identities, which incorporate elements of the different cultures that they have lived with, without fitting specifically into any one. Such hybrid identities show resistance to the homogenization of the Chinese immigrant populations in Canada. In an increasingly globalized world where we live our lives with intense juxtaposition of differences, the establishment of hybrid identities and the "third space" that allows the dominant and minority cultures to coexist in an inclusive space becomes urgent. Participants indicate the necessity of a politics that not only tolerate, but recognize and welcome difference. To cultivate new forms of identity and cultural space, equally important is an open, supportive, non-directive, and non-controlling family environment constructed through the joint efforts of the immigrant parents and the young adults.

Implications for Policymakers

The impact of Quebec's language policy on the construction of Chinese immigrants' identities should not be underestimated. Evidently, the strict and rigorous enforcement of the language laws which serves to ensure the status of French as the dominant language in society has shown its potential to give rise to the ethno-linguistic fragmentation within the city of Montreal.

Participants observe that "*Montreal is little bit divided, because there's a French population and there's an English population*"; and even if many people are bilingual, "*they still belong exclusively to one of the two communities*. (Ze, English interview, 08/08/2014)" This phenomenon is explained by Giroux (1997) who argues that language is "connected to an intense struggle among different groups over what will count as meaningful and whose cultural capital will prevail in legitimating particular ways of life" (p.121). The persistent tensions between Anglophones and Francophones has resulted in the social separation of these two entities between which a substantial number of Allophone immigrants are located. Many immigrants with no intention to take a side have been forced to speak and act either English or French. This, as noted by Ghosh and Abdi (2013) is "pointedly antithetical to the spirit of Canada's multiculturalism and Quebec's intercultural education" (p.118), as it can easily engender feelings of cultural alienation and social marginalization among Allophone immigrants.

There has been a high demand for skilled immigrants in Quebec due to its shrinking and aging demographic, accompanied by its nearly stagnant economy (Ghosh & Galczynski, 2014). However, Quebec's ongoing protection and promotion of the French language has continued to push Anglophone and Allophone immigrants away from the province. The tensions have considerably mounted in recent years since the Parti Québécois government attempted to further tighten the restrictions around the use of English within Quebec, while at the same time extending the rules for French to small businesses, municipalities, and post-secondary education through Bill 14—a massive and controversial revision of Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language. The great disappointment and frustration at such a move has been expressed by many participants.

Surely, ethnic ghettoization without shared experiences among different ethnic communities runs counter to both multiculturalism and interculturalism. In order to create

inclusive cultural spaces where both dominant and minority cultures can coexist and flourish, each member of society needs to work together in a truly cooperative manner. Participants have demonstrated an interest in learning French, recognizing the value of multilingual skills and understanding the Quebec government's responsibility for the preservation and development of their language and culture. Accordingly, I suggest that policymakers start to reconsider the orientation of Quebec's language policy. A new policy should be put forward that is supportive rather than coercive towards non-francophone immigrants. It should motivate and facilitate French learning and usage among non-Francophones, without interfering in their everyday lives, jeopardizing the distinctiveness of their respective cultures, or inhibiting the social, cultural, linguistic and economic development of the entire province.

Policymakers should make bilingual signage, as well as instructions and manuals available in public spaces such as the metro stations, shopping malls and office towers in areas with large non-francophone populations like Montreal. Providing English translations would demonstrate linguistic courtesy to the anglophone population in Quebec. It would also serve a practical purpose for people who have insufficient proficiency in French by reducing the inconveniences that they may encounter in their everyday lives.

The federal government should continue to invest into to the French language courses offered to non-francophone immigrants. The courses should also be diversified in order to meet immigrants' specific needs. Policymakers can create new incentives to increase immigrants' social investment into French learning and using. The incentives can be monetary or non-monetary, for example, to offer French language learners free or discounted literacy materials such as French novels, movies and video games. Policymakers can also invite the francophone population to participate in the French language programs through volunteering. By doing this, policymakers

would not only allow French language learners to use French with proficient French speakers, but could also effectively promote more social contact between the non-francophone immigrants and the local francophone populations—an important step towards their mutual understanding and respect.

Pertaining to the language requirements for many jobs in Montreal, I suggest that the term "bilingual (French/English)" should be replaced by more detailed descriptions like "comprehension of computer science terms in English and French" or "the ability to conduct technical discussions and to write reports in English." The concept of bilingualism creates ambiguities. Oftentimes, French- English bilingualism is not equated with equal fluency in the two languages. One may be considered as bilingual if one can speak French as a first language with only limited proficiency in English. Therefore, the use of "bilingual (French/English)" in job requirements can be misleading. In addition, the specific language needs can vary between different positions. Some may require strong verbal and written bilingual communication skills, but for others, a working knowledge of English and French would be sufficient. More detailed language requirements in job descriptions can increase the efficiency of matching jobs to qualified employees. Employment barriers and low job satisfaction are issues commonly reported by participants. As demonstrated previously, participants' professional identity can impact their sense of belonging to Canada, as well as their overall self-images. If the language requirements for jobs are to be generally defined in a more clear and accurate manner, allophone immigrants might be able to find more employment opportunities. They might also be more motivated, involved, and socially invested in target language learning if it is clearly aiming for professional purposes.

Implications for Educators

The important role that teachers play in students' identity constructions is highlighted by participants. Many immigrant young adults point out that their personal belief systems have been shaped, to a great extent, by the values embodied rather than taught and instilled by their teachers. For example, Yujia commented on teachers' influence over her understanding of gender equality:

> *They don't necessarily teach us, like, you have to believe that women have the same rights, but the way they speak, it's just expected that you know this already…It's like when I have rights and I believe I have those rights, I act in a way that it's given to me. Like if I want the job, I should have the same opportunity as a man. I don't feel like I should fight very, very, very hard. Once you act like those rights are intrinsic to yourself, people around you also start to accept it as well.* (Yujia, English interview, 01/08/2014)

Teachers function as role models whose beliefs and behaviors are appropriated by their students. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to keep their personal values consistent with the core values of multiculturalism. Teachers should not practice "color blind" teaching, which treat all students the same way by intentionally ignoring differences in skin color—an important identity marker. As Ghosh (2011) argues, being "color blind" effectively "condones and continues white privilege and the status quo of power relations" (p.6). To implement multicultural education, teachers should celebrate the pluralistic nature of classrooms and appreciate multiple perspectives from students of diverse cultures. Teachers' recognition of differences can facilitate positive identity exploration and construction among students. By promoting intercultural exchanges and establishing the appropriate way of dealing with differences, teachers can also help deconstruct

the notion of "Otherness" and counter the phenomena of cultural alienation and social exclusion that still prevail in Canadian society today.

For Chinese immigrant parents, school is particularly influential in their children's identity construction processes. In their opinion, it is primarily the differences in the education they and their children received that causes the gap between the two generations. Quite a few parents reveal the lack of parent-child communication within their families, which, as they point out, has engendered a certain degree of emotional distance in parent-child relationships, and if continued, may lead to increasing intergenerational conflicts. For example, Mrs. Shen recalled that she used to ask her son "*How is school? Have you ever been bullied? Do your teachers treat you well?* (Mrs. Shen, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" But since each time the response from her son was nothing more than the two simple words "all good", Mrs. Shen stopped asking. Consider also Mrs. Kong's statement: "*As he* (my son) *has grown up, and leant more and more, he starts to feel that we are stubborn and narrow minded,*" Mrs. Kong said, "*and when there's disagreement, he simply told us to go searching the internet*. (Mrs. Kong, Chinese interview, 10/08/2014)" Both Mrs. Shen and Mrs. Kong are concerned about their children's education. However, they have no way to know about it without regular communication with either their children or schools. The generation gap, consequently, becomes more and more obvious and difficult to overcome.

I propose that schools should take the lead in bridging the gaps between students, parents and teachers by involving parents, especially immigrant parents, in their children's education and activities around schooling. Parental involvement can take various forms. Schools can build online communities and organize special events for parents such as information evenings for regular and effective home-school communication. Schools should invite parents to bring their knowledge into the classroom, by which schools can empower parents and incorporate their multiple perspectives

and diverse knowledge into the school curriculum and teaching practices (Riches & Curdt-Christiansen, 2010). Special attention should be given to immigrant parents who may face difficulty adjusting themselves to new living environments and who need more recognition and resources from schools. For Chinese immigrant parents who do not speak the school language, schools should provide support programs in order to help them with their children's integration into the school system, as well as their own involvement in their children's education.

The significance of parental involvement in school lies in the fact that it not only fosters dialogue and mutual understanding among parents, students and teachers, but can also lead to the increase of social connectedness between the local and immigrant families, which may contribute to immigrants' greater sense of belonging to the society. In addition, "including parents in school activities requires accepting the linguistic and cultural identities of students" (Riches & Curdt-Christiansen, 2010, p.550), thus creating safe and supportive environments which would enable students to develop a positive sense of self. Furthermore, as demonstrated previously, the linguistic repertoires and cultural capital of immigrant parents can be particularly valuable for their children to develop multilingual and multiliteracy skills both inside and outside school. Participants show that learning Chinese in heritage language schools alone is not enough to support the heritage language maintenance among the children of immigrants. I believe that through cooperation between schools and parents, and with the establishment of well-designed heritage language programs or a formal trilingual school system, schools can turn into sites where the long-term survival of heritage languages could occur.

Implications for Future Research

My purpose is to contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the dynamics and complexity of identity construction among the Chinese immigrants in Canada.

Participants in the inquiry are the parents and young adults from five immigrant families. They were born in mainland China and immigrated to Montreal in the mid-1990s. Most of them came under the skilled worker category. Clearly, participants were selected from only a small and highly specific group of immigrants within the Chinese immigrant population in Canada. Plus the fact that many participants share the same occupation (four adult participants are software engineers while three young adult participants are medical students), and may perceive things from similar perspectives, the lived experiences described here cannot be seen as representing the broader Chinese immigrant population in Montreal. Although, the same occupational choice may not be an accident. Quite a few Chinese immigrants have made a career transition to software engineering for better employment opportunities. It is also true that the children of Chinese immigrants tend to choose majors that lead to high-paying professional jobs. Still, participants' responses might reveal more variations in the patterns of their identity constructions if immigrants with more diverse occupations have been invited to participate in this inquiry. Therefore, transferability of the findings needs to be approached with caution.

I believe that future research into the identity construction of Chinese immigrants could benefit from a greater emphasis on inductive qualitative research, which gives voice to participants whose voices are oftentimes absent, hidden or even silenced. Future research is encouraged to look into the same group of Chinese immigrants in other major cities in Canada, such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary. A comparison across cities may shed light on the impact of Montreal's unique social, cultural, linguistic and political landscape in shaping Chinese immigrants' identities. It would also be beneficial if future research focuses on other groups of Chinese immigrants in Montreal, for example, the Chinese immigrant seniors, the Canadian-born Chinese, and the Chinese populations from Hong Kong and Taiwan. The commonalities and differences between

the lived experiences, as well as the processes of identity construction of the various groups of Chinese immigrants in Montreal, can be illuminated through such comparative research.

As I have repeatedly emphasized throughout this inquiry, the Chinese immigrants in Canada are diverse and cannot be lumped together under this one label: "Chinese-Canadian." There is no single frame that can successfully organize the dynamics and complexity in the identity construction of the entire Chinese population in Canada. Future researchers need to continue to challenge and problematize existing identity theories, while developing innovative and interdisciplinary methodological frameworks and analytical tools that can provide new insights into how identities are constantly constructed and negotiated among the Chinese immigrant populations in Canada.

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