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“Little Emperors Abroad”:
An Investigation of Chinese Only Children’s Integration Experience
in Foreign Environment

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Abstract

With the rising presence and importance of Chinese people in international institutions, the paper set out to investigate “Chinese struggle to mingle abroad” phenomenon. Considering Chinese “one-child-policy”, we seek to understand if being only children affects integration experience, and how Chinese only-borns interpret three influential factors: investment, brotherhood, and motivations. Results show that Chinese integration difficulties were not explained by single children, but other factors that prevent best integration were spotted. Additionally, a three-dimensional integration model was proposed specifically for Chinese population abroad, and suggestions were provided for foreign institutions in order to foster a smoother acculturation and integration.

Keywords: foreign integration, one-child policy, Chinese only children

Chapter 1. Introduction

China and Chinese people have become increasingly present in the international world since the country’s reform and opening in the late 1970s. The estimated 35 million overseas Chinese who live in more than 150 countries are important assets in connecting China and the world. (Shaio. 2008; CASS) Despite the high cost of living in a foreign country, the number of Chinese students studying abroad continues to surge, making China the largest source country for international students. (Waldmeir. 2013; Ministry of Education. 2018) However, not only the super rich go abroad, but a rising number of lower-middle-class families also send their children to catch this trend. (Waldmeir. 2013; National Bureau of Statistics)

Adaptation and integration in a foreign environment is no easy task, as it involves the change of social development environment, change of academic or professional situation, and change of lifestyle. (Yan. 2011; Han. 2013) Some individuals adapt very well while other may experience a great deal of psychological, cultural, and social difficulty. (Berry. 1992) Some researchers have introduced the discussion between the role of ethnicity and academic and social integration, but only a handful have concentrated on discussing the unique characteristics of Chinese people. (Rienties. 2012; Yan. 2011) With the reduction of external control, lack of social life, and failure in cross cultural interpersonal relations, many Chinese were found unsatisfied with their foreign adaptation experience or have struggled to integrate in a new society. (Han. 2013) As a result, stress and anxiety are likely to emerge. A study showed that Chinese students abroad reported high rate of symptoms of depression and anxiety on campus. (Center For China & Globalization. 2018) Besides physiological difficulties, some recent studies also identified sociable difficulties for Chinese people abroad. A national online survey with 2 million Chinese international students as participants showed that nearly half of the unsatisfied experience was due to difficulties in cultural and life integration. (JL Overseas Education. 2017) The integration difficulties include language deficiency, social exclusion, emotional issues and financial pressures. An extensive amount of current studies mainly focuses on discussing Chinese integration challenges abroad, but only a few explored the factors that caused such difficulties to encounter. Therefore, the reasons why Chinese struggle to fit in remained to be further studied.

We suppose Chinese integration difficulties could be explained by one-child-policy, as only children have their unique personality traits and behavior patterns, and only children are usually characterized in terms of selfishness, spoiled, loneliness, and unsociability. (Polit. 1980) It implies that growing up without siblings may hinder the ability to establish relationships and interact with others, which is not helpful in social adaptation. However, scholars also found some positive

personality associated with only children such as confidence and self-esteem, sense of privacy, higher academic achievement, higher level of organization and higher level of independence. (Polit. 1980) These unique traits might make an impact on only children's behaviors and adaptation skills, but yet lacks evidence from China's only children - a very unique demographic group. Under China's one-child-policy, nearly 150 million single children have been born. (Feng. 2012), which made up to the majority of the people who are living or studying abroad nowadays. Therefore, it seems interesting to study if being raised as single children in China influences the way they integrate in a foreign environment.

Chinese "one-child policy" was initiated in late 1979 with the purpose to reduce China's enormous population growth and facilitate the country's economic development. The birth limit was mostly enforced in urban areas, but also allowed exceptions, and some couples simply ignored the law and paid a fine for having two or more children. (Callick, Rowan. 2007; Xinhua. 2015) Although it may receive some controversies outside of China, "one-child policy" is overwhelmingly supported in China. (Pew Reserch Center. 2008) Among eligible couples, only some considered to have more children due to the pressure of living cost for a second baby. (Dan. 2014). Chinese only children benefit from the country's drastic economic takeoff, the indulgent attention from their parents and relatives, and therefore, an urban phenomenon appeared - the "little emperor effect". Only children born between 1980-2015 in Chinese upper middle families are referred as the "little emperors", who are usually the center of the family's attention and financial support thanks to its unique "4-2-1" family structure, where 4 grandparents and 2 parents are raising single child (Marshall, Andrew. 1997; Wang. 2009) Many argued this phenomenon to be problematic, because Chinese households have showered their purchasing power, unconditional love and high expectations on the only hope of the family, making them feel "special but very stressed". (Fishwick. 2015) Some scholars found that China's singleton children shoulder the

burden of an aging society and suffer to meet their family's high expectations. (Fong. 2015) As early as in 1997, it was even argued that "little emperor effect" shapes the behaviors of modern Chinese people and may result in a "behavioral time-bomb" in different occasions, so that they might form unique behavior patterns in a foreign environment. (Marshall, Andrew. 1997). Therefore, this study aims to examine if growing up as an only child in China affects the ability to fit in in foreign groups/organizations, and to understand what factors could influence their integration abroad.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Brotherhood

Previous research showed that people growing up with one or more siblings have different traits on cognitive, emotional, and social development, compared with individuals who grow up as only children of the family. (Center For China & Globalization. 2018) A series of recent studies has indicated that siblings serve a good source for companionship and socialization. Siblings usually spend 10 hours on average to perform a variety of tasks or activities together. (Tucker, McHchale. 2006) Siblings serve as role models of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors at home, and they also provide social guidance outside the house. (Dunn, Brown, & Slomkowski. 1911) Compared with people who do not have siblings, those who grew up with brothers or sisters are more involved in sociability behaviors. A positive sibling relationship also helps individuals through crises by communicating and listening. (Bank. 1975) It's widely accepted that sibling relationships are a powerful engine for social-emotional development. (Stormsbak. 2016)

Throughout the past few decades, some authors have driven the further development of the relationship between the number of siblings and social results. (Yucel. 2011) Singleton child has the highest opportunity to enjoy the parental resources and are more likely to achieve education

success. (Yucel. 2011; Powell et al. 2004) On the other hand, researcher also discovered that having siblings may cause some antisocial outcomes on an expansive, social development path. Chronic conflicts and coercion between siblings may lead to poor peer relations, maintenance of aggressive behaviors, and persuasive feelings of inadequacy and incompetence, thus hard to fit in into a new environment or socialize with new people. (Dunn. 1988) In addition, growing up without siblings around the similar age, the role models that only children look up to and learn from are their adult parents. Some authors have suggested that having adults as behavior role models may lead to a more independent, organized, focused, self-awareness, self-possessed, high self-esteem, self-regulation and discipline, which are all cognitive fundamentals to build social skills. (Saner. 2008) However, under the adults ruling and control, only children are found less risk-taking, unconfident in creative-thinking, and high hierarchy, thus find it difficult to integrate. (Cai. 2006)

Under Chinese one-child policy, China's fertility rate has dropped drastically 1.7 per woman by 2013, which leads to over 150 million households in China today with single children. (Feng. 2013) However, the existing research on the brotherhood's influential role in social integration lacks investigation on Chinese data. Given the great difference in demographic and culture background, whether siblings have influence on Chinese children's social skill development remains to be discussed.

Therefore, we suppose that,

H1: Brotherhood influences positively the development of social competencies, thus Chinese only children do not have advantages in foreign integration.

2.2 Investment

Becker and Lewis's influential model suggests that the fewer children a family has, the more resources will be to be allocated to each child, so that in average the child quality will improve.

(1974) Small family sizes have an advantage on concentration of investment on one child instead of spreading them among multiple children. Studies also found that investment in human capital is positively related to schooling outcomes and has an impact on the development of children's cognitive abilities and social skills as adults. (Rosenzweig, Zhang. 2009)

The financial investment on the child is usually distributed to education resources and material resources. A study showed that investment in education leads to better cognitive abilities in memory process, language skills and mathematics. (Jiao. 1996) Compared with western realities, Asian's household spent 7 times as much as Americans of their family income on extra-curricular tutoring. (Anderson. 2017) Data also shows that Chinese households' spending on children's education has totaled \$296 billion during 2016-2017 school year, accounting for almost 2.5 percent of the GDP in 2016. (Chinadaily. 2018) Many studies also linked academic stress as one of the main sources of integration difficulties, and investment on schooling could improve academic performance so that they feel less stressed in integration. (JJL Overseas Education. 2017)

After arriving in foreign country, many parents-funded Chinese students still receive monthly allowance from their parents to pay for living expenses. Over 85% Chinese parents were willing to provide funds, as it is believed that an overseas college degree equaled a shortcut to success and wealth. According to a Chinese education report, top three overseas expenses are on rents, social outings, and purchasing study materials. (JJL Overseas Education. 2017) In order to be able to participate in social activities in a foreign country, or simply gather a dinner with friends, the cost of investment keeps accumulating.

Some authors also pointed out under China's 4-2-1 structures, the grandparents also make efforts to provide financial support to the family's only hope in order to provide the best education and lifestyle for their grandchild. (Goh. 2010) Chinese families funnel investment to their only children to provide materials comfort and privileged education opportunities, which leads children

to better academic outcome and a better cultural and language preparation so they can adapt and integrate better in foreign countries.

Therefore, we suppose that,

H2: Chinese only children get more financial attention, which has positive impact on their oversea integration process.

2.3 Motivation

There exists a considerable amount of literature on the influential role of motivation on the social-psychological adaptation in a foreign environment. Studies also used motivation to understand social behaviors abroad and integration mindset. Lack of motivation may lead to difficulties in cultural adjustment and social adaptation for expatriates who work in multinational organizations, and international students who study in foreign countries. (Shamionov. 2003; Paik, Segaud, & Malinowski. 2002)

According to push and pull motivation model for international migration, people move to a new environment because of the conditions at home country force them to leave homes, and resources and opportunities attract them to relocate to a certain location. (Hagen-Zanker. 2008) Many mainland Chinese students abroad were found driven by cultural-related and academics-related factors. (Wu. 2014) A number of authors also recognized the evolution of Chinese students' motivations. (Bartel. 2015; Carol. 2006) Studies showed that in the early years since 1979, studying abroad opportunities were influenced by the of financial freedom and diplomatic relationships between China and destination countries, whereas recently people are more concerned about practical elements such as the living costs, visa and residency policies, and local Chinese society presence within the foreign country. (Bartel. 2015) Many Chinese youth are sent abroad because of parental expectations and beliefs of a better education and future. (Griner. 2014) However, the

lack of autonomy and planned lifestyle might hinder the development of those children's adaptation skills, which makes it hard to integrate in a foreign environment on their own. As has been proven, self-determined motivation and goals are positively related to the adaptation in international environment. (Chirkov. 2007) People seem to fit in better in a foreign environment when they are self-driven, instead of following others' goal and expectation. Given that only children are found associated with some very positive personality traits, such as independent, organized, focused, self-awareness, self-possessed, high self-esteem, self-regulation and discipline, which suggests that they tend to be more self-motivated and make their own decisions. (Saner. 2008) This way, with self-driven motivation, people would work hard to fulfill their own goals and eventually succeed in fitting in the new society of their choice.

Therefore, we suppose that,

H3: Chinese only children are more likely to have self-determined motivations abroad, which leads to better integration outcome.

Chapter 3. Research Method

3.1 Procedures and participants

The study followed a qualitative methodology and snowball sampling was used for data collection. (Creswell. 2007; Patton. 2002) The data collection process was performed in two stages: Firstly, semi-structured focus groups were conducted to identify core dimensions in order to build an interview guide, and then based on the interview guide, 18 individual interviews were completed.

On the 1st stage, 2 focus groups were conducted where participants suggested core aspects and nuances of the research problem during a low moderation discussion. The focus groups were in Chinese and lasted around 60 minutes and 80 minutes. They were recorded with permission and transcribed for analysis. Several dimensions were later identified that have impacts on integration

experience: sibling composition, family background, motivations to go abroad, investment's influence, Chinese stereotypes, and social life. Given the data, we were able to structure an interview guide for further data collection of individual interviews. (Appendix 1)

The participants of focus groups were a mixture of only and non only children. I contacted two candidates that I personally know and asked them to find other participants. All participants are living abroad, with age ranging from 19 to 32 and time spent abroad ranging from 3 months to 16 years. The sample includes students and working professionals.

On the 2nd stage, 18 individual interviews were conducted, among which 9 interviewees were only children, while the other 9 were non-only children. Over half of the interviews were completed in person, in a private location that agreed upon which allows conversations undisturbed and reflects the natural social setting which is appropriate for qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln. 2011). For candidates who are located outside of Lisbon, the interviews were conducted by phone calls or video calls. The interview language was conducted in Mandarin Chinese, and the interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. In order to ensure the accuracy of interview transcripts, I asked permission to record the interview and took notes during the interviews. In order to achieve in-depth data analysis, all interviews were transcribed and edited for clarity. After about 6, 7 interviews, the data started to repeat and hardly no additional dimensions were mentioned in new interviews, so theoretical saturation was believed to be reached (O'Reilly et al. 2012) and ended up with 9 interviews for each group.

The participants for individual interviews were all born and raised in Chinese families and have had experience of living abroad. Their host countries include Germany, US, Portugal, Spain, Brazil and Angola. About 1/3 of the participants are working, and 2/3 are studying. They come from 12 different provinces of China. The average age of participants is 24.1 and the average time they spent abroad is 4 years.

3.2 Data Analysis

Based on previous theoretical reading, core categories were captured and abstracted from data collected in focus groups. (Gioia et al. 2012). Those categories were then transmitted into interview questions that seek explanation for the three hypotheses and other influential aspects.

As for the data collected from individual interviews, analysis was conducted for the only children group and non only children group respectively. Primarily data were firstly analyzed and assigned codes for similar different concepts, and then those codes were organized and grouped in 8 themes based on their similarities and relevance. (Strauss. 1967). After comparing the results from only-borns and non-singletons, we found very little divergence regarding the concepts and themes obtained from both groups, so we aggregated the themes for further comparison. As the analysis progressed, it became increasingly clear that two groups exhibited similar perceptions and behavioral patterns in integration abroad. Finally, I took a step forward and tried to find commonalities between the eight themes by summarizing and generalizing, (Strauss & Corbin. 1990) and therefore three much broader aggregated dimensions were structured eventually. (Appendix 2)

Chapter 4. Analysis and Findings

The primary finding is that Chinese oversea integration difficulties were not explained by only children. There aren't clear patterns showing how only children's integrating experience is better or worse than those that have siblings. Results show that most participants described their integration experience as "just so-so", while only very few believed that they have adapted very well or very badly. The results are consistent for both only children and the non-singletons.

As for the three hypotheses regarding only children and integration, our results indicate that Chinese only children do receive more allowance and less stressed about money, but investment does not show signs that lead to a better integration experience. Thus hypothesis 2 is not supported. The lack of brotherhood does not impede Chinese only children's development of social skills, as they benefit from adult as role modeling and Chinese non-only children abroad usually do not possess brotherhood advantages due to big age gap between siblings and non-presence of siblings while growing up. Thus hypothesis 1 is also not supported. As for hypothesis 3, Chinese only-borns do slightly outnumber non-only-borns for having self-driven motivations, but such motivations became secondary compared with other motivations originated from parents' goals and expectations. Additionally, the two groups' integration results did not yield significant divergence. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not supported.

It comes to the realization that integration involves many factors to function together. On the basis of Berry's international acculturation and adaptation model (1992), we structured our findings to explain Chinese integration abroad experience. Detailed findings and Chinese-specific themes are presented as follows:

Theme 1: Motivations are influenced by self-development and family.

Almost half of Chinese participants cited that they chose to go abroad is because they wanted to "experience a new life" and "find themselves". Due to push factors in China such as high living stress, complication of interpersonal relationships, over competitive workplace, some Chinese came abroad to find new potentials and experience different lifestyle. One participant stated that "I was bored and kind of lost in China after working the same job for years. I needed a break to see the world and find the real me." Those self-driven, curiosity-driven motivations are found very common for both Chinese only children and non only children where 4 only-born

participants and 3 non-onlies expressed their curiosity about new cultures, new experience, new environment, and to discover a new “self” as motivation factor.

As for the family-related motivations, all participants have mentioned the family’s influence. Only children mainly experienced “inspiration from the family”, while for non only children the “arrangement by the family” was cited more common. Five non only children participants came abroad due to parent’s planning, family’s immigration purpose, and the mission to help family business in the foreign country. On the other hand, only children experienced their family-inspired motivations such as an extended family member’s experience abroad, parent’s encouragement to experience what they were once denied at a young age, or family’s annual international trips.

Besides self-motivation and family’s expectation and goals, other frequently cited reasons to go abroad are related with future prospect, such as improving skills for job market, pursuing a better salary and career, living in a less stressful environment, and future immigration preparation. Another interesting finding is that modern day Chinese people studying abroad motivations have shifted from the “western creative education style”, to valuing more new skills and knowledges obtained in foreign country, such as a third language.

Navigating the differences between Chinese’s motivation to go abroad, findings show that in general both groups are driven by new skills and knowledge, future career opportunities and new lifestyles, and are very influenced by family-related motivations. However, those who were “self-motivated” do not necessarily integrate better according to our results. Therefore, we conclude that there is not clear relationship between self-driven motivations and better integration experience for Chinese people abroad. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not supported.

Theme 2: Social competencies vary greatly for individuals.

Findings show that most participants described their integrating results as “just so-so”, and when we asked them about their definition of a good integration, they self-evaluated their integration skills based mainly on emotional skills, social skills and cognitive skills. (Liew 2011)

In terms of interpersonal skills, some are doing well while others have been struggling building relationships with local people. The results are consistent for both groups. Many participants mentioned they have a Chinese friend circle but found it difficult to make foreign friends. One participant felt “closer and more relaxed when hanging out with my Chinese crew.” Brought up in different cultures and life experience, people developed different ways of thinking and behaving, which makes it harder to relate to each other’s lifestyle and find common interest. Some participant expressed their worries of “awkward conversations end very fast”, or complaint about the difficulties to engage through social activities, “I felt the only way to meet new friends is to go out and drink a beer”. On the other side, however, there are also Chinese who felt more comfortable being in a mixed friend circle with locals, international friends and people of their own nationalities. There are even a few participants who mainly hang out with foreigners when being abroad. Therefore, interpersonal skills really depend on individual differences.

As for cognitive skills in school/work performance, many participants have encountered difficulties mainly due to language barriers and lack of academic or professional skills. Challenges include difficulties to keep up in class, low participation in group discussions, difficulties to explain themselves when confronted with conflicts, which could cause stress and might be harmful to integration. However, there are also participants who were able to achieve academic excellence and awarded scholarships.

Personality differences were also mentioned frequently. Most participants believed that extraverts have advantages in integrating than those who are introvert. Two thirds of interviewers

never took initiatives to meet new people. Those who are more upfront and expressive with their needs and wants, actively ask for help from their peers and superiors, usually have more opportunities to integrate. In addition, participants were found very self-aware and often reflect on their own behaviors and usually have a role model that they look up to.

Theme 3: Brotherhood is absent for many Chinese family abroad.

According to the data, we found the influence of siblings on integration varies from family composition, age gap between siblings, and siblings' relationship.

Chinese one-child policy only began to loosen up quite recently, and some Chinese one-child families only started considering having another child in the early 2010. Therefore, it is common to see Chinese multiple children family composed with one adult child, and a much younger sibling. Among all participants, 3 non-singleton participants have siblings that are over 10 years younger than them. According to them, they felt like an only child growing up because the sibling was not born until they left for high school or colleges, thus they didn't experience the peer interaction with siblings or any other benefits of having a sibling. The relationship between siblings also differs from family to family. Over half of the participants also mentioned being raised up separated from their siblings and felt a "loose brotherhood bond" with the sibling. Some were sent to boarding school abroad at a young age or went abroad to live with other extended family member for a better living condition or schooling purpose.

Therefore, we could not conclude the siblings' influence on integration skills for Chinese families, because of the complication and uniqueness of each Chinese family's reality. Those participants who have siblings usually didn't grow up with them, which leads to the absence of sibling interactions, establishment of brotherhood relationships and sharing of life experience. This way, the hypothesis of having a sibling can help develop social skills and cognitive abilities does not make sense in most Chinese oversea families.

Theme 4, 5, 6: Chinese parents are highly involved in investment, and other stages of foreign integration.

Another finding is the link of Chinese integration experience to their parents. For both only-children and non singleton children, there is a high involvement of the parents in decision-making, attitudes formation, and investment concerns.

In terms of investment, we found that although Chinese families are generally very supportive in financing their children abroad. Only children normally receive more financial attention, while non only children tend to be more conscious about the spending. Four out of nine non only children mentioned about their siblings during discussing over investment. One participant said, “I knew since a young age that I couldn’t spend too much money because I have another brother, and my parents will also need to support him.” Another finding reveals that both groups have high concerns and stress over the investment from the parents. Many participants felt guilty to still rely on their parents’ allowances to live abroad and some are seeking alternatives to pay their own bills abroad. Five participants mentioned that scholarship is important and many were looking for part-time jobs to ease the parents’ financial pressure. Both groups aligned on the relationship between investment and integration. Many believed that money does affect adaptation and integration experience, because investment is required to participate in all sorts of social activities, build connections and make new friends. Investment also allows better cultural and language preparation prior living in the new country, such as language course, international schools, private tutors. Therefore, we conclude that investment is related to integration experience abroad, but Chinese only children who received more investment do not necessarily integrate better thus hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Besides investment, parents’ personal goals and expectations have a direct impact on Chinese people’s attitudes and behaviors in adaptation. Some motivation of going abroad come

from the parent's unfinished dreams and goals. For example, one participant's father had an opportunity to study in the U.S. 30 years ago but was denied, so as stated by the participant, "my father encouraged me greatly on living abroad because it was his dream."

Chinese parents also serve as a role model for younger Chinese children's adaptation abroad. One participant said, "when I first moved to California at 8, I had a really hard time integrate because my parents didn't speak much English and almost never left Chinatown." If the parents show reluctance in integrating themselves into a new environment, the children would find it difficult too because Chinese culture asks for respect and learn from their parents.

Results showed that Chinese people usually take their parents into consideration when making life decision abroad and future plans. Filial piety is recognized as the only common element to almost all Chinese people. (Deutsch. 2006; Kwan. 2000) Both groups are very likely to help their parents economically and provide filial care, because Confucian philosophy views filial piety as a virtue, and Chinese family always remains the nexus of care networks and economic ties, even being away from parents in a foreign country (Lan. 2002) As for the long-term plans, there's a preference to reside in the same city as their parents, as our participants responded, "I feel guilty to be away from my parents and not being able to take care of them." Therefore, parents have fundamental influence on Chinese people integration attitudes and behaviors. They could be a source of stress or the fuel to boost adaptation.

Theme 7, 8, 9: Many Chinese fall into "marginal status" in the society of settlement.

Cultures vary greatly from country to country. Acculturation experience and foreign adaptation is very heavily influenced by the society of settlement. (Berry. 1992) Many participants experienced cultural shocks in food, different lifestyles, and different ways of thinking and doing things. They complained about "not understanding their jokes", feared "awkward conversations due to no common interests", and always confused about "different definition on punctuality" and

“the right procedures to do certain things”. They also found making local friends difficult, but they are willing to know more foreign friends. Most popular social activities for Chinese are eating out, inviting friends to dinners at home, sports, school activities and trips. Many complained that the western social activities are focused on drinking and night life, while only very few Chinese participants endorse and have active participation in such activities. They usually described the western cultures as “too open-minded”.

Findings show that main sources of social support for Chinese people abroad come from friends, family, and institutions. Most Chinese abroad usually hang out with co-nationals, and only a few participants have established deep relationships with foreign friends. One participant said, “with other Chinese people I feel closer and relaxed, because they understand you and don’t easily judge.” The foreign friends are usually classmates, coworkers, and roommates. As for family’s support, Chinese people tend to share happy moments but hide away the negative experience they had abroad. Support from institutions were also mentioned, but the participants were hoping more activities could be implemented and clarity of information could be improved. In addition, we found that Chinese people are very likely to look for support from people that have experience or who they look up to as a role model. One participant stated, “I was first struggling to fit in but then I started to hang out with my neighbor, she’s also Chinese but lived in the US much longer than me. I spoke English more often with her and her family then I felt more comfortable in my school and the society.”

Findings also show that social attitudes on multicultural ideology and ethnics influence Chinese people’s integration experience. Participants have confronted with Chinese stereotypes and other discriminative acts in schools, at work, and even in public service institutions. Sources of ignorance even could come from foreign friends and professors. One participant said, “in the beginning I tried to explain and defend myself, but then nothing changed, so I just gave up but felt

very upset.” The negative feelings such as anger, disappointment and even fears associated with unfriendly social attitudes prohibit Chinese from the best integration practice.

In summary, results show that Chinese people abroad often found themselves on “marginal status” in foreign society, which is an obstacle in their integration process. Factors they mentioned that have an impact include: difficulties in social acculturation, lack of social support, and being victims in certain societal attitudes.

Chapter 5. Discussion

This work has contributed to the study of foreign integration by adding evidence from Chinese context. Through the research, we conclude that no clear difference was held between Chinese only and non only children, and that Chinese only children’s integration abroad is not sufficiently explained by the lack of brotherhood, investment or self-driven motivations. However, based on the data, other influential factors with Chinese features were spotted and structured in the 3-dimensional integration model.

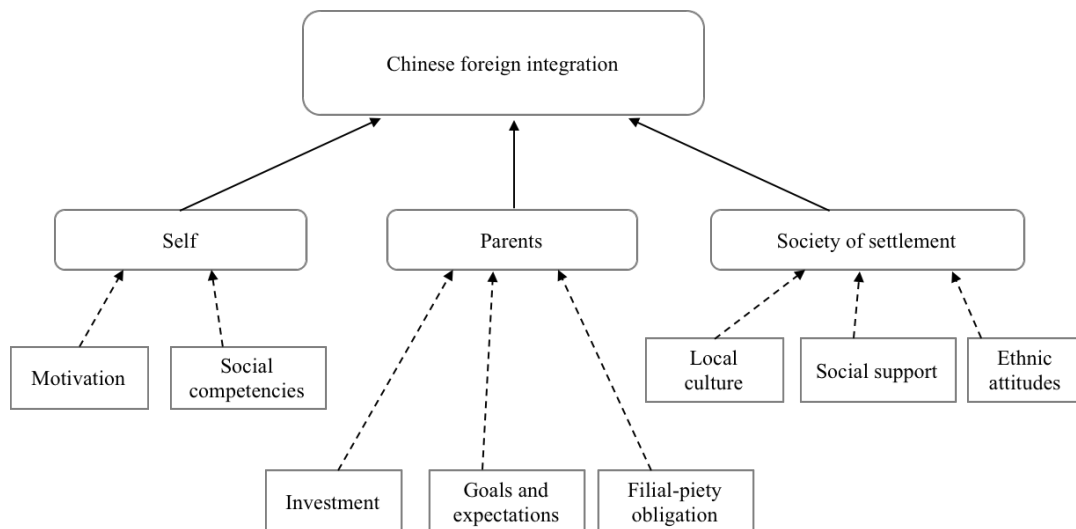


Figure 1. Chinese foreign integration model

In this model, three main dimensions that have impact on foreign integration in for modern Chinese people were identified. On one hand, from the individual self, his or her motivation to be

abroad and social competencies play an important role in fitting in a foreign environment. On the other hand, integration is affected by external influences: the embedded family and cultural values from their parents, and the realities in the society of settlement. Parents serve as an inspiration, a role model and a motivator throughout Chinese integration process. Rooted from the filial piety culture, many Chinese value their parents' opinions and consider their well-being when making life decisions abroad. The society of settlement is also crucial for Chinese overseas integration experience. Chinese integrate better when the local culture would be easily adjusted and relate to, when they are provided support from the society, and when the society has a multi-cultural ideology and friendly ethnic attitudes towards Chinese people.

According to the findings, we proposed several suggestions for foreign institutions that host Chinese students or employ Chinese workers to better understand their struggles and help them adapt better and integrate into the new environment abroad. Firstly, foreign host institutions should introduce a "mentor figure" to guide through difficulties, give advices on academic and professional path, and provide social support when needed; Secondly, information sharing mechanisms should be improved to facilitate a better integration by building online information sharing platforms; Thirdly, social activity diversity should be increased; Last but not least, the society of settlement should raise awareness for multi-cultural ideology and ethnic attitudes. We suggest the society of settlement promote a supportive culture, actively penalize incivility, and work on building integration and decreasing prejudice.

This study concluded that Chinese struggle to mingle could not be explained by single children, and one of the limitations could come from the sample issues. Since more than half of the participants live in Portugal, cultural factors may somehow influence the results. Compared with the multi-cultural countries such as United States, some other countries may have different ethnic attitudes and social perspectives on immigrants. Future research could control the geographic

variable and study the of Chinese integration in different societies of settlement. Other variables such as the time participants have been abroad, and the age they first moved abroad should be considered as controlled. Another limitation is that by explicitly mentioning “only child”, interviewees may be influenced by their presumption about only children.

Future studies may also explore further on external factors identified that influence Chinese people’s integration abroad, namely the parents and society of settlement. It is worthy to study the comparison of parental involvement and influence of from China and other countries, and to explore the social support from the ethnic society in the foreign country as many Chinese show tendencies to interact in their own ethnic groups and form a close circle. The evolvement in social attitudes towards Chinese integration abroad could also be further addressed on organizational level, because there are more and more Chinese corporations expand their physical presence in foreign countries, and foreign companies hiring Chinese employees.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

When integrating in a foreign environment, Chinese only children are less stressed about money, but share the similar motivations and show no significant difference in social competencies as their peers who have siblings. Chinese integration problems are not explained by single children, but we were able to spot two sources of external factors that prevent Chinese from best foreign integration: parental and societal. For Chinese people abroad, parents are a role model when integrating, provider of investment, influencer of decision-making, and a source of stress due to filial-piety value. As for the society of settlement, Chinese integrate better when the local culture is easy to adjust and relate to, when they are provided support from the society, and when the society has a multi-cultural ideology and friendly ethnic attitudes.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Q1: Introduction of the interviewee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal information (name/gender/age/siblings/residence country/profession• Information about living abroad (how long have you been abroad/when did you come abroad/did you come alone or with family)
Q2: Evaluation of integration experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social life and activities• Friends circle• Difficulties encountered• Happy moments• Evaluate your integration results
Q3: Sources of motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For what reason you came abroad?• Follow-up probes
Q4: Investment situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is sponsoring you financially?• Attitudes on investment affecting integration• Follow-up probes
Q5: Self-reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the traits that you have that help you to integrate?• If you could start over, what would you do differently?• Follow-up probes
Q6: Family's attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do they think about you being abroad?• What's the relationship between you and your parents?• Follow-up probes
Q7: Social aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are other struggles, or cultural shocks you experienced?• What type of support you have received abroad?• Hypothetical, if your child is going abroad in the future, how would you expect the destination country to be like? The society, the people...everything.• Anything else you'd like to share about your foreign living/working/studying experience?

Appendix 2: Data Structure

