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IDENTITY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS: A CASE OF CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE U.S.

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IDENTITY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS:
A CASE OF CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE U.S.

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Science
at the University of Kentucky

By
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Lexington, Kentucky

Chair: Dr. Keiko Tanaka, Associate Professor of Sociology

Lexington, Kentucky

2014

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

IDENTITY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS:
A CASE OF CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE U.S.

This dissertation research separates out the social relations implied in identity theory and empirically shows the interaction of identity and social relations. I conducted 60 interviews and one online survey with respondents at two public universities in two cities with distinctive sociocultural characteristics. The respondents were graduate students from mainland China pursuing their master's or doctoral degrees in the U.S. The students' lengths of stay in the U.S. varied, but all experienced a major life transition from China to the U.S.

The qualitative interview data show that the adoption of a religious identity in the two places, defined as different social environments, impact the interaction of identity and networks. Where the community is small and homogeneous, the Chinese graduate students are quickly thrown into strong religious dyadic relationships and primary groups, and soon thereafter acquire a religious identity. Where the community is large and sparsely connected, the identity pool is large and the adoption of the religious identity becomes less constrained by dyadic relationships and primary groups.

The interview data also show that within-person time spanning (the time span between prior to the respondents' arrival in the U.S. and after the respondents' coming to the U.S.), and between-person time spanning (the "newcomers" who have lived in the U.S. for less than one year versus the "old-timers" who have lived in the U.S. for over one year) are important in the identity network process. The transfer from China to the U.S. fosters the emergence of the Chinese ethnic identity. The Chinese network composition of the newcomers and the old-timers granted them a similar list of important identities.

The quantitative findings confirm that place, time, and personal network function together to impact identity importance. Also, the classification of ties into "important people" and "time bound people" are effective predictors of identity importance.

In conclusion, this dissertation research demonstrates empirically how social relations and identity impact each other. This research also provides a case study for the population – Chinese graduate students in the U.S.

KEYWORDS: Identity Theory, Social Relations, Salience Hierarchy, Social
Structure, Egocentric Network

Cynthia Baiqing Zhang
Student's Signature

October 4, 2014
Date

IDENTITY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS:
A CASE OF CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE U.S.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The dissertation writing process is a long and strenuous one that cannot succeed without the assistance of many people along the way. I would like to acknowledge those who have contributed to the completion of this important piece of work.

First of all, I would like to thank my committee members. I will do that alphabetically. Professor Christian Brown from Psychology Department graciously agreed to be on my committee as an outside member and was very understanding in the process of arranging a defense date in the summer of 2013. Professor James Hougland has been on my committee from the beginning of my doctoral career. His knowledge, assistance, and wisdom are what have propelled me to continue to advance throughout the years. Professor Edward Morris worked with me on the dissertation chapters (other than the quantitative chapter) and provided insightful feedback. Professor Brea Perry was very responsive and proactive with revising multiple drafts of all six chapters of the dissertation. She was also the one that helped me iron out the interview and survey questionnaires for the final data collection. Professor Keiko Tanaka served helpfully as Director of Graduate Studies during my years of study, and ultimately served as the chair of my dissertation committee. I would also like to thank the outside examiner Professor Jill Stowe who graciously agreed to sit in my oral examination and made every effort to accommodate a defense date in the summer of 2014.

I am deeply indebted to my family: my parents, my sister and her family. It is their financial and emotional sacrifice that sustained me. As the biggest promising burden for the family, I depended on my family for encouragement and money when my doctoral

years dragged on. They do this for the only hope that I can be living the life I want. I do not know if any language can fathom the depth of such selfless expectation.

Sheldon Stryker from Indiana University. Barbara has been my mentor for three years. She encouraged me to go to Northeast City to do my dissertation that compares Southeast City with Northeast City which should be sufficiently different. It was her generosity, her wise advice on questions and problems I had in the interview process, and her nurturing of younger student scholars that paved the way for a complete and successful dissertation. After I left Lexington for my visiting faculty job at Northern Arizona University, Barbara also commented on my qualitative chapters for further improvement although she was modest enough to say my dissertation was not in her area.

Shel has been in correspondence with me on my dissertation ever since my presentation of the work at ASA's social psychology section paper session in Denver in August, 2012. After I bid farewell to Lexington Kentucky in mid-August 2013, Shel gave me feedback as a friend and an expert in identity theory to help me revise the manuscript. Shel is a strict professor and a conscientious editor. He attends to the content as well as the language of the dissertation in his timely and straightforward feedback. Without his input, this dissertation might have many more flaws than it does now. I am greatly indebted to both Barbara and Shel for a complete and hopefully presentable dissertation – the greatest academic endeavor I have had so far.

My thanks, again, to everyone who has been a great support for this dissertation.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation is about the interaction between identity and social relations based on 60 interviews and a survey I conducted with graduate students from mainland China at Red College in Southeast City and Green College in Northeast City (college and city names are code names). It approaches this topic from the perspective of Chinese graduate students attending American universities. The dynamic interaction between identity and social relations requires explanation and testing, and an integration of concepts from a relational perspective (Brass, 2012) into the research of identity.

This research is in the tradition of identity theory researches. That is, human agency and social structure mutually shape each other. I parcel out the social relations implied in identity theory and demonstrate how social relations and identity interact. The mixed method approach used in this research project complement the identity theory researches which mostly employ quantitative methods. In addition, this project provides some insight for university policy makers to accommodate the needs of international students, particularly Chinese international students.

I do this by investigating a group of people who are uprooted from their regular life in their home culture in China and placed in a completely different social environment in the U.S. Such research subjects are unique because they provide an opportunity to observe how their networks of relations and identities subsequently co-vary. It is very close to a natural experiment that can help us understand the sequence of identity and network as well as the way identity and network interact. In other words, this research shows how people's networks of social relations change or are changed by their identities.

Thus, identity theory's definition of identity as internalized expectations of generalized others can be better understood by parceling out peoples' social relations. In other words, this research shows the interaction of identity and social networks empirically.

This dissertation explores the realities of living in a new environment. With identities taken from a prior social context, people adapt differently to new social orders, but with some patterns. Therefore, this dissertation is also about the experience of Chinese people in the U.S.: how they manage the multiple identities they have, how this multi-dimensional identity structure changes and evolves over the course of their stay in the host culture, and how their life is impacted by this identity transition. This particular group of people has their own culture which is uniquely Chinese and which is factored into their culturally defined identities. This group of international graduate students are not immigrants. The identity network processes are different for this population than for immigrants because of their temporary stay in the U.S. compared with immigrants. Due to the temporary nature of their stay in the U.S., these students might not have the motivation to establish extensive social networks which include many non-Chinese.

I specifically ask the following questions: What are the implications of the composition of Chinese international students' network of social relations for their identities? How do social relations and identities interact? What is the impact of sociocultural context on identity network process? How does time influence the interaction of identity and networks of social relations? What are the mechanisms that link social relations and identity? How do people negotiate their identities when they face identity options offered and constrained by their social relations?

Social relationships are social contexts that impact what identities are available in one city and the meanings of these identities. The social constitutes the self (of multiple identities) and human relationships are the building blocks of a society. Individuals perform their identity meanings, which alters other people's identities and which builds relationships with people of similar identities around themselves when these individuals seek to interact with like-minded others. The experience of these Chinese graduate students in a transition from China to the U.S. provides a window into which the interaction of identity and social relations can be seen.

Identity

This dissertation defines identity, components of "self-structure" (Owens, Robinson, & Smith-Lovin, 2010), as a set of acquired and/or imposed meanings that are applied to the self in relation to specific social roles (e.g., boss versus subordinate), and as a member of a group (e.g., member of an athletic club) and category (e.g., Americans). Identities constitute the self. The self reflects the social structure defined as social networks. Each person has multiple identities organized into a hierarchy of salience. Identities are related with people's network positions and are internalized expectations (Burke and Stets, 2009). This research is interested in social identities involving interactions occurring in face-to-face contact. That is, interaction occurs between the focal person and those with whom he/she has direct contact, or individual networks of social relations.

This definition of "identity" is a summary of identity theory (Stryker, 1968, 1980, 1987; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). The definition of identity also incorporates the insight of identity theory for its detailed illustration that personal identity, role identity, group

membership identity, and category identity all have the same internal verification process comparing and aligning identity meanings with identity behavior (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Following identity theory, I hold that every person maintains multiple identities which are organized in a hierarchy of importance as a result of the fact that each person occupies many different social relation positions. Identity theory traces its roots to George Herbert Mead and Charles Horton Cooley (Owens, Robinson, & Smith-Lovin, 2010). Mead (1934) and Cooley (1992) believe identities emerge from others' expectations which are internalized into people's self-structure.

Identity theory derives from symbolic interaction. However, identity theory stresses the stability of social structure compared to the situational construction of social structure emphasized by Blumer. For Blumer and his colleagues (e.g., Blumer 1986), social structure only exists in specific interactions in which all participants present themselves according to what is expected of them in the situation. Social structure is highly fluid and cannot be generalized (Burke and Stets, 2009).

There are several rationales for this definition of identity. First, the respondents were a population with the social and cognitive capability to have identities congruent to the social environment they were embedded in, prior to their departure to the U.S. There might be differences in age, gender, class, marital status, discipline, and health condition, among these students, however, the fact that they have been through a college education in their home country means that they are intensively socialized to form certain identities, such as an academic identity. The above mentioned differences in age, gender, and so on, also had the opportunity to enter into the self-structure of these respondents if an appropriate socialization process was present. Therefore, the students arrived in the U.S.

with a mature self-structure composed of multiple identities. I did not mention the students' ethnic identity (defined in this dissertation as an identification with Chinese people from the mainland) in China, as it was not a salient social factor in most of these students' lives in China. In addition, the major ethnic minorities in China (less than 7% of the total population) live predominantly in autonomous regions/provinces which produces a less than significant number of respondents for this study.

When these Chinese graduate students entered new sociocultural contexts in the U.S., they adapted to the cultural contexts by changing the meanings of certain previously-held identities. For example, they might adopt the identity of "being materially successful" as part of being "an intellectual" in the context of the U.S. in addition to the traditional version of "intellectual," which focuses on knowledge gained, service to society, and appropriate character traits, while demeaning success in material things. They also adapted to the new environment by acquiring new identities not available in their home country, such as religious identities.[1]

This identity definition emphasizes the social constraint exerted on the individuals. That is, people receive cues from social contexts to form and reform their identities and/or the meanings of these identities. This tradition in identity theory stresses the stability of the trans-situational self-concept. To grasp the uniqueness of the individuals, I also needed to recognize the differences among people in terms of stability of old identities, individuals' sensitivity to new/old identities, and their personalized definition of identities.

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[1] See Chapter Five: "Emergent Identities: The Role of Spatial Context."

Consequently, the incorporation of "situational identities" prone to individuality into identity theory is necessary (Stets & Burke, 2000). Situational identities "Emphasize how social contexts elicit certain identities and shape their meanings" (Owens, Robinson, & Smith-Lovin, 2010, p. 478). The focus of situational identities is the activation of identities in certain situations. Among the situation-oriented identity theories, Tajfel's (1982) social identity theory stresses the interaction between the "in groups" and "out groups" as conditioning to the identity of group members. Heise's (1977) affect control theory is focused on role identities such as "doctor" or "patient" people invoke when they are "defining their immediate situations" through "evoking sentiments (related with roles) that serve as guidelines for interpreting and creating events in the given situation" (p. 163).

From the perspective of sociological social psychology, this situational definition of identity concerns individuals purposefully choosing identities suitable to specific situations. The respondents of this study were learning what appropriate identities are offered by the new social environment. A transition process occurs before they fully understand the meaning of the new possible identities. In this transition process, individuals remain dependent on their old identities, through repeated interactions within their home country. Gradually, these students adapted their old identities to the new environment with subtle changes in meanings of these old identities in the new social environment. Sometimes, these students adopted new identities available in the host culture as a way to adapt.

Relationships

"The ordered arrangements of relations that are contingent upon exchange among members of social systems" (Wellman, 1988, p. 3) are social structures in which "social categories (e.g., classes, races) and bounded groups are best discovered and analyzed by examining relations between social actors" (Wellman, 1988, p. 3). As Wellman (1988) states, social relationship analysts:

> Begin with a set of relations, from which they derive maps and typologies of social structures. Thus they draw inferences from wholes to parts, from structures and relations to categories, and from behaviors to attitudes…social structure can be represented as networks…A better way of looking at things is to view relations as the basic structure and groupings of similarly situated actors as the result. (pp. 3-15).

The social relationships and related role identities correspond. To play a role of "son," another person has to have a counterpart role of "mother." Therefore, role relationships are mostly composed of dyadic relations. Group and category membership identity involves higher level, more abstract social relationships.

In this dissertation, I follow Howell (1986) to start with social structures that are inherently simple to comprehend (i.e., egocentric networks), then I derive their implications from the study of more complex relationships (i.e., groups and categories). That is, I will look at individuals' relationships and then imply these relationships' meanings from more abstract levels of relationships. The opposite, I believe, is also true: the subjective observation of the nodes (individuals) would provide invaluable insights into the workings of the abstract level social relationships.

Some relational perspective advocates highlight the relational feature of the approach at the expense of categories/attributes while others recognize the importance of attributes (Brass, 2004). That is, some relational perspective advocates reify the structural characteristics and treat traditional sociological categories such as gender, race/ethnicity, and class as insignificant. I maintain that categories are equally important, as they denote who the interactant is. I believe that the patterns of categories such as gender and class emerged in individuals' relationships are higher levels of social structure as interaction in specific relationships abides by some rules that are prevalent along some attribute lines such as gender and class. People interact with others with identities that are socially defined, especially for adults who have generated life experience. They have an ingrained idea of what they are in terms of gender roles, nationalities, and other important facets of life. They seek relations that affirm and reaffirm these beliefs (Lyman & Douglas, 1973).

I intend to understand the interaction between identity and social relations by studying a particular group of Chinese graduate students living in the U.S. The interaction between their identity and their social relationships is the process which integrates this group of adult students in the new social environment. Since the Chinese graduate students are in a host culture different from their home culture, their interaction with the host community was not only an interpersonal interaction but also an intercultural interaction. Smith (1999) proposes that a relational perspective is the appropriate paradigm for intercultural studies "due to its (a relational perspective) cross-system capabilities, holistic approach, inherent preservation of relational phenomena, and potential for corroborating and supplementing psychologistic findings" (p. 635).

Smith (1999) further points out that "the cross-paradigmatic utility of the network approach is in its ability to unite the study of social processes with the study of individual level psychological processes" (p. 634). For example, to explain why two people who both know the same focal person tend to become friends, the relational perspective incorporates the psychological balance theory. That is, people usually adopt or drop relations to achieve psychological balance. Smith (1999) believes intercultural research will benefit from employing the relational paradigm because "it focuses on what is between, or inter, cultures. It is truly a relational perspective, yet one that recognizes the importance of central individuals, or nodes, in the system" (p. 634).

The relational perspective has to be supplemented with a sociological approach focusing on attributes (Damaske, 2009; McDonald & Mair, 2010). In an ethnography, Damaske (2009) vividly shows how ethnic minority male students suffer in finding jobs due to their negative image among career development staff in higher education institutions whose responsibility is to help such students build social relationships/ties with potential employers. In contrast, ethnic minority female students typically enjoy much better treatment and therefore gain better access to social capital. As a consequence, female students are more likely to find employment.

Identity and Relationships

In this dissertation, I demonstrate that when linked to a relational perspective, insights from sociological social psychology can provide a better model of interaction and, therefore, identity process. That is, the study of the psychological processes that influence individuals in social relations must be incorporated with insights from a relational perspective. This combination tackles questions of how people form relations,

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organizations, and institutions that compose and change the larger society. This combination also addresses the questions individuals have about who they are by pointing to the intellectual tradition of the face-to-face interaction (including interaction assisted by technologies) – symbolic interactionism - among people.

Sociocultural contexts and time are important in the interaction of identity and networks of social relations as this dissertation is designed to test relational identity. Identity theory defines identity as internalized meanings existent in the culture in the larger society. That is, identity meanings are culturally determined. Consequently, it is important to explain the "cultural contingency" of a social environment (Pachucki & Breiger, 2010, p. 205). Social relations can be the precedence or the consequence of identities depending on the specific social environments. A social environment provides the cultural meanings that may be absorbed into the self-structure, and thus constrains the types of available identities. More complex social environments can potentially generate more identities because of the many subcultures existent in such environments. Social environments also offer different types of social relations at the dyadic and group levels which either enhance or constrain the formation of new identities.

Time is important because it takes time for identities to internalize. In this research, I am interested in short time spans: several months to approximately eight years. That is the time span that would have an impact on a stable, cross situational identity which is the focus of this project. I examine the impact of in-person and between-person time difference in the U.S. on network and identity formation and transformation.

In this dissertation, I take for granted the historical moment in which this research is conducted. Historical backdrop is major factor shaping the sociocultural context. For

example, in similar sized cities, why do some cities in one region favor religion, while others in a different region favor secularism? In this dissertation, I suggest that the historical context such as cultural diversity, ethnic composition of local populations, and other factors precondition the sociocultural content of regions.

Chapter Overview

This dissertation is composed of an introductory chapter, one chapter on theory and literature, a section on methods, an analysis of the interviews and of the survey data, and a conclusion. I use one chapter (Chapter Four) to explain the approaches employed in this research. The analysis of the 60 interviews is split into two chapters focusing on the impact of time and space on identity respectively. The survey data deserve a separate chapter (Chapter Seven) that examines the variables identified in the qualitative chapters as predictors of identity importance. The concluding chapter summarizes the content chapters and includes a discussion.

Chapter One: "Introduction" is the framework of the dissertation consisting of identity theory and relationships. The significance of the study is stated in the explanation of why I combine the study of identity theory with relational perspective throughout the chapter.

Chapter Two: "Theory and Literature" covers both the major theories on identity (particularly identity theory), concepts concerning social relations used to examine identities (egocentric network, foci, homophily, distinctiveness theory, and disruptive events) and the relevant literature (place and identity, time and identity, ethnic studies, ethnic enclaves, Chinese studies, and international students' identity). Major works in each theory are presented with critiques necessary for this dissertation.

Chapter Three: "Context" includes (a) a review of the recent history of the flows of

Chinese graduate students into graduate programs in the U.S.; (b) a discussion on

Northeast City and Southeast City as the sites for shaping the dynamics of ethnic

relations; and (c) a comparison of Red College and Green College as interviewee and

survey respondent sample frames.

Chapter Four: "Research Design, Methodological Approaches and the Participants"

addresses the rationale for a mixed methods and comparative approach, as well as

methodological issues ranging from data analysis to generalizability, reliability, and

validity. A justification of the various campuses of Green College as one entity is

provided.

Chapter Five: "Emergent Identities: The Role of Spatial Context" uses interview

data to investigate how regional differences in culture and demographics affect social

relations and, as a result, identity (particularly the religious identity).

Chapter Six: "Emergent and Rooted Identities: The Role of Time Spanning" also

uses interviews, but has a different focus. This chapter focuses on the impact of change

over time on identity through social relations.

Chapter Seven: "Quantitative Insights" is a follow-up study of the variables

identified in the two qualitative chapters. The findings confirm the impact of space, time,

and individual network of relations on identity importance.

Chapter Eight: "Conclusion" summarizes the major findings in the three analysis

chapters, points out the minor discrepancies between the qualitative and the quantitative

results, and discusses possible future research at the intersection of identity theory and a

relational perspective.

Chapter 2

Theory and Literature

The previous chapter is a brief explanation of the theoretical framework of this dissertation in light of the uniqueness of the research population: Chinese international graduate students at American universities. These students have a relatively mature self-structure as they are all adults who have at least obtained their bachelor's degree in China before their transition to the U.S. The changes these students experience as a result of the transition provides an opportunity to observe how this specific population's self-structure changes when their social networks of relations altered: old identities are adapted in meanings and new identities are acquired. A study of this particular group of adult students also offers an angle to investigate how self-structure evolves over time among the general population.

In this chapter, I elaborate on how identity theory and relational concepts (egocentric network, foci, homophily, distinctiveness theory, and disruptive events) are used to examine identities, and how related literature (place and identity, time and identity, ethnic identity, international student, and immigrants) shaped this dissertation.

Identity Theory

In this research, I attempt to understand the concept of identity defined by following identity theory with a relational perspective. The reason that identity theory can be enhanced by a relational perspective is the theory's social structural orientation. Identity theory has defined identity (role identity in particular) by positions the focal person occupies in networks of relationships. In this dissertation research, I use the term "identity" to refer to role identity (e.g., mother and physician), group membership (e.g.,

religious group), and attribute based identities (e.g., gender and race). Group membership and attribute identities are often called "social identity." Identity theory argues that because people occupy multiple positions within multiple networks of relations, people maintain multiple identities which are organized into a salience hierarchy. For example, a person can simultaneously be a mother, a physician, a woman, an American, and a religious group member. Salience is the likelihood of a person evoking a specific identity on a given occasion.

The focus of this dissertation is "identity importance" rather than "identity salience." "Important/major" identities analyzed in this dissertation are emotionally significant to the focal person. That is, "identity importance" refers to the ranking of identities in the identity hierarchy as well as the obvious affect/emotion attached to identities. Specifically, "identity importance" is the "hierarchy by the level of emotion attached to the identity" (Stryker, personal communication, November 24, 2013). To avoid confusion, I use "importance" rather than "salience" in the following text. Some researchers did and still do use "salience" and "importance" interchangeably (Callero, 1985; Charng, Piliavin, & Callero, 1988) as measurements of motivation and intentions.

Stryker and Burke (2000) state:

> Some use identity to refer essentially to the culture of a people; indeed they draw no distinction between identity and, for example, ethnicity…Others use identity to refer to common identification with a collectivity or social category as in social identity theory or in contemporary work on social movements…Finally, some use the term as we do in the work underlying this paper with reference to parts of a

self composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they

typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies. (p. 208)

Self-structure is composed of multiple identities (Owen, Robinson, & Smith-Lovin, 2010). Role identity is an important concept in the literature (McCall & Simmons, 1966; Stryker, 1968, 1980; Thoits, 1983; Burke, 1991). Stryker (personal communication, August 22, 2012) further clarifies role identity as "internalized expectations attached to one's position(s) in groups/networks of social relationships." He establishes "groups" as parallel to "networks" of relationship for the belief that early sociological tradition and social psychological convention should be both incorporated. For example, Cooley's conception of a primary group in which each member connects with every other is as important as an aggregate of dyadic relationships with one focal person (or one set of focal personals) whose behavior is the study subject. That is, direct and indirect relationships are equally important in the study of identity.

Stryker's definition of identity has several layers of meaning. First, it reiterates the Meadian tradition of "self," specifying that identities (especially role identities) occur in interactions. More importantly, identities reflected social meanings of a position shaped by the social expectations of others who compose the "role set" for the focal person. "Role set" (Greenwald, 2008) refers to the set of people for whom the focal person plays a specific role. For example, a 20-year-old man can have a role set including his parents, professors in college, friends, and so on. Second, social networks of relationship as seen by Stryker include both the conventional "primary groups" and social chains with the

focal person as the central point.[2] Such "primary groups" strive to achieve "some desired place in the thoughts of the others" and "feel allegiance to common standards of service and fair play" (Cooley, 1983, p. 24).

Role identity has the same internal control process as social identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Burke & Reitzes, 1991). As stated by Burke and Reitzes, this internal control process:

> allows a person to compare an input (the identity meanings implied in social interaction)… with its setting (the identity) and produces outputs (meaningful behavior) that change interaction until the meanings of the input match the meanings of the identity (setting). (p. 286)

In general, Burke and his colleagues (Burke, 2004; Burke & Stets, 2009) build the identity verification model based on the fundamental idea in identity theory that identities are "cognitive schemas" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286). In this dissertation I use a definition of identity that summarizes role identity, group, and category identities in the tradition of identity theory: identity is a set of acquired and/or imposed meanings that are applied to the self in relation to specific social roles, and as a member of a group and/or category.

In general, identity theory stresses the implied Meadian formula, that "Society shapes self shapes social behavior" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 285). The identity theory scholars also emphasize the importance of examining the "primary group" and the traditional study subject group for social psychologists (Brass, 2012) – dyadic

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[2] Cooley (1983) defines a "primary group" as a social group that has "intimate face-to-face association and cooperation" (p. 23).

relationships - for their significance in sociological tradition to understand multiple identities each individual has.

Relationship Concepts

Social relations are important to understand identity. Culturally defined social context enter social networks of relationship. In turn, a focal person situated in a social relationship internalizes the cultural meanings existent in the larger sociocultural environment as well as the specific social relationship into his/her self-structure composed of multiple identities. In this section, I concentrate on egocentric network of social relations and related concepts that explain how relationships (ties) form and dissolve.

Egocentric network. The egocentric network lists other people in the lives of an individual. An egocentric network usually includes a focal person (ego) and his/her acquaintances (alters) who may or may not know each other.

Marsden (1990) defines egocentric network as "the sets of ties surrounding sampled individuals" (p.435) and points out issues in the accuracy of network data are worth investigating. Marsden (1987, 1988) applies the concept of egocentric network in the discussion of "important matters."

Burt (1980) classifies 6 network models. The egocentric network can be approached from both relational and positional perspectives. In the elaboration of structural holes, Burt (1995) shows how an egocentric network in which alters are not connected serves as a social structure of competition.

The idea that individuals are proactive actors pursuing resources embedded in networks is another application of egocentric networks. Lin and his colleagues (Lin, 1999;

Lin, Cook, & Burt 2001) explain how people purposefully seek social capital by exploiting their relations with others around them.

Very few works approach the topic of identity from the perspective of egocentric network. In a seminal work, McFarland and Pals (2005) describe "how social contexts directly and indirectly affect identity transformation" (p. 299). For the first time, they "operationalize category and network contexts whose relation to identity change previously was discussed vaguely but left untested" (p. 308).

Egocentric network data can be obtained through a random sample and aggregated and analyzed in traditional statistical tools such as E-Net and Stata. Analysis of egocentric network data can help us understand patterns of social relations not only at the individual level but more abstract levels such as stratification of race, gender, and class.

To understand how people form ties and egocentric networks, I turn to the following relationship concepts.

Foci theory. Intended to be "a theory of the social organization of friendship," focus is defined by Feld (1981) as "a social, psychological, legal, or physical entity around which joint activities are organized… Foci may be different things, including persons, places, social positions, activities, and groups" (pp. 1015-1018). Feld (1981) proposed the "foci concept" in the early 1980s, which aims at addressing "the origins in the larger social context" that pattern social network of relationships. The foci theory is to understand how individuals get to know each other and form social circles. Social context, therefore, is redefined from the perspective of foci theory as "consisting of a number of different foci and individuals, where each individual is related to some foci and not to others" (Feld, 1981, p. 1016). Feld (1981) relates foci theory to Homans' "social

elements of activity, interaction, and sentiments," Davis's notion of "social organization of ties," and Heider's "original formulation of balance theory" (p. 1017). Later, Feld (1982) provides empirical evidence of foci theory in his article "Social Structural Determinants of Similarity among Associates."

In a recent study, Perry (2014) uses foci theory to explain network changes as a result of alteration in employment, marital status, and residence. In this dissertation I use foci theory throughout the two qualitative analysis chapters to explain why and how people become acquainted. The important focus for this population is people. Other foci (such as place) derive from people who can draw others together for activities. Through shared activities and interests, additional ties are formed and original relationships are sustained. Interestingly, place almost has no impact if there is no attachment to people related with the place. Proximity does not seem to work as an originator of relationships when the nationality line between the respondents and non-Chinese people is sharply drawn. This might provide some insight that the foci theory can take into account for future research.

Homophily. The homophily principle claims that people seek out similar others to socialize with and, as a result, they become even more similar. McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook (2001) review homophily in SNA using over 100 articles. In the review, the authors trace the origin of the homophily principle to Lazarsfeld and Merton in the tradition of the Chicago school, particularly the writings of Park and Burgess. They review the development of homophily studies from its early days with an emphasis on small social groups, to mid-century's researches on race desegregation and peer groups, to the large scale investigations with the convenience of computer programs available

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after the 1970s and 1980s. The articles reviewed by McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook (2000) cover a wide variety of relationships (or content of social networks of relations) from "the closest ties of marriage and the strong relationships of 'discussing important matters' and friendship to the more circumscribed relationships of career support at work to mere contact, 'knowing about' someone or appearing with them in a public place" (p. 418). Most importantly, McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook list evidence of homophily in social life: people tend to gather along lines of race/ethnicity, gender, age and so on, in that order. Foci provide opportunities in terms of common space and organized activities for ties to form and become similar.

The subject population of my dissertation research is unique in that "status homophily" overrides "value homophily" (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). The population is contained within the Chinese community in terms of the "strong ties" they have. When the pool of ties with Chinese is small, these students lower their standard to get along with what is offered: friendship, familial options, and so on. This compromise again reveals that in the context of the U.S., race/ethnicity is still the most powerful stratifying dimension. In this dissertation, I attempt to depict the gap between identity options (defined by the racial background in the U.S.) and identity meanings (defined by the Chinese community). Because of the social segregation experienced by many students in this study, they developed different self-presentations within non-Chinese communities or they became aware of their performance perceived by the non-Chinese communities. This theme is explored in the two qualitative chapters.

Distinctiveness theory. Distinctiveness theory is social psychological in origin. The central argument of distinctiveness theory states that an individual's distinctive traits

in relation to other people in the environment will be more salient to the individual than common traits (McGuire, 1984).

Distinctiveness theory is used to explain social exclusion and inclusion. It seems that people rally around the most distinctive trait in a given situation (Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 1998), which gives the homophily principle a practical order of similarity when there are many homophilious dimensions in one given situation. Similarly, in this dissertation I use distinctiveness theory to explain inclusion and exclusion. That is, when there are multiple dimensions of homophy, distinctiveness theory shows which dimension of similarity stands out to organize the patterning of relationships. For example, ethnic identity might be stronger when Chinese people are amongst heterogeneous others than when they are with co-nationals.

The commonality of the concepts and theories listed above is that they offer insight into the identity process as they give reasons for why people form ties. In other words, by including certain people but not others, people send signals of their expectations to their chosen ones who in turn internalize these expectations as identities. I now turn to the major social factors that would help dissolve relationships and thus impact identities.

Literature of Identity

The literature includes two parts: social context and Chinese international graduate student in the U.S. and immigrants. The first part of the literature consists of: place and identity, time and identity, and ethnic studies. This is the literature that reveals how people form new identities and change meanings of old identities when they experience major changes in life. Specifically, this literature of identity provides a background of

how people adapt to the social order in the U.S. where race/ethnic relations is the major social dimension. The revelation of the interaction of identity and social relationships through investigating a population that has been through dramatic sociocultural changes is an important objective of this research.

The second part of the literature of identity offers the "big picture" of the specific population of this study: Chinese international graduate students attending U.S. universities. The study of a particular population enhances our general understanding of identity relationship interaction. This component of the literature includes an elaborate review of international students and immigrants.

Place and identity. Previous studies on place and identity pursue various themes. The first theme is that place composes identity. Cuba and Hummon (1993) emphasize the mediating function of emotion/affect (or "affiliation," using Cuba and Hummon's word) in the place identity process. They distinguish various "affiliation" patterns among people at different life stages. Along the same line, Feldman (1990) extends place identity by analyzing how people adjust to new places by applying categories of place accumulated in their past life experience. That is, places are "salient sources of identity formation" (Schnell & Mishal, 2008, p. 242). In general, place identity scholars highlight meanings directly associated with places. Schnell and Mishal (2008) "suggest viewing different types of places on a continuum from mythical 'big places' to everyday-life places, to parochial 'little places'" (p. 242).

As insightful as this place identity concept is, it does not delineate why some meanings enter the self-structure and some do not. Place identity also neglects to explain why some places are mythical while others are "big" or "little." That is, there is no social

structure in this school of thinking. For example, the underlying forces which propel people into a certain mental state where the concrete place becomes a symbolic signifier, and how different people have come up with different understanding of places, is unknown. Place identity is more in line with situational identity, although some theorists (such as Feldman) stress the stability of mental image of place, which helps people adjust to the unfamiliar.

A second theme is urban sociologists' concern over social solidarity built on spatially defined relations. Urban sociology scholars (Ruddick, 1996) also believe that communities and places are sources of identity. However, their emphasis is that residential areas are associated with meanings used by individuals as their identities to distinguish themselves from others, and therefore is a concept with class connotation. Similarly stressing the internalized meaning of place, Lien (2008) suggests that sub-ethnic identities are a result of the different places of origin that have differential political ideologies and systems with which people are familiar. Some scholars (e.g., Mekenna & Barph, 2004) examine place identity process with a novel definition of space. For them, space can be a concrete place as well as a created one, such as "cyberspace." As such, "cyberspace" shapes people's sense of themselves. The common theme of this school of scholars is that place and space both serve as structures that shape people's understanding of the community and their place in the community, be it a physical neighborhood or a virtual one. The central message is that the physical cues transmit the stratification of the larger society.

The attachment of the social meanings, particularly those related to people's categories in terms of class or otherwise (such as gender) to place/space is a powerful

observation. However, one might want to ask: What are the factors that contribute to such spatial distribution of people's residence in the first place? That is, using space as a social structure is overly simplistic. As difficult as it is for some people to trespass certain spaces (e.g., middle class people might find it difficult to even go through poverty-stricken areas), they still span various physical boundaries. When the physical boundaries are not obvious, people must observe invisible boundaries (such as race and nationality). The same can be said of the virtual space. In short, there are many visible and invisible lines that cut across and partition the larger society. These lines are economic, social, and cultural. Space can barely function as the signifier of all those demarcations, though it can assist our understanding of social stratification to a certain degree. The social structure must come from people and their social relations.

A third theme on place and identity is that place is an explanation of other identities. An example is Espin's (1995) work on how women's sexuality transfers when they cross borders. The focus of this scholarship is the intersection of major social dimensions (such as race) and people's identities (such as sexual identities).

This research emphasizes that identities are region-specific. Place matters in the network identity process. The host country is not a single space, but composed of multiple places, all of which impact the identity process differently. Place is a uniquely structured space and therefore forms unique social environments that shape the identity process. Local demographics and other features (such as language) compose a part of the regional culture. The identity process is closely related with the network of relations of the focal person whose observations serve as a window to view the complex workings of larger society.

Fuchs (2001) approaches the topic of solidarity from a relational perspective: a smaller society is a simple and well-connected community with a highly homogeneous outlook, while a larger society is a complex and sparsely related community with diversity in various dimensions. That is, when connections are dense, trust and monitoring arise which homogenizes the community while the lack of trust and monitoring in large and loosely connected communities produces diversity although pockets of such large communities are similar to smaller communities. Smith-Lovin (2007) further elaborates on how pockets of culture are absorbed into the self-structure, since the self is composed of society (Mead, 1934). By combining these insights, it is clear that identities are locked with place. Given the unique composition of a community in terms of size and complexity, each community is different in culture. Culture constitutes identities. This dissertation clarifies the relationship between relations and identities and examines the functions of the networks of personal relations in the place identity relationship. In short, social relations at the societal level provide the needed social structure for the generation of culture used to construct identities. While human agency is always important in navigating the contour of the social, the societal characteristics have built to constrain the individuals.

The detailed analysis and results of place identity process through people's network of relations is presented in the qualitative Chapter Five. The quantitative analysis on place identity relationship in Chapter Seven hypothesizes a regional difference in major identity importance.

The following section focuses on how the logic of place identity process must be completed with a historical perspective, which also shapes the cultural context of a place.

Time and identity. In general, the modest literature on time identity process is focused on the function of time as a historical framework that defines the social structural context, which specifies culture. This tradition traces back to Benedict's (1938) "cultural conditioning" and shows in Gidden's (1991) explanation of modernity and identity. Other works in this tradition such as Cote's (1996) "culture-identity link" connects identity change with the cultural backdrop framed in time. A different version of time identity process treats life stages as cultural frames with definite meanings (Karp, Homstrom, & Gray, 1998; Erickson, 1980, 1997). This perspective shifts the focus from the macro level social context to the micro level personal life. However, a close examination of the two scholarships reveals that they both define time as the determinant of cultural content from which the identity draws building elements. This is consistent with the view on place.

The claim that the historical period is the contributing factor to specific social structural context that produces certain culture for unique identities to build is an important one. For the subject population of this study, the historical context they find in their home country (China) and the host country (the U.S.) composes their sense of self. The historical context in the two sites of this research provides region specific cultural content for the two regions. Therefore, it is always important to emphasize the particular historical moment of when the respondents' stories occurred. This social structural emphasis is the backdrop framework of this dissertation research.

To examine the effect of time on identity in this dissertation I had to add understandings contributed by the identity theory in the tradition of symbolic interactionism. The identity theory (Stryker, 1980) defines identity as internalized meanings through repeated interaction with the "generalized other." Time is an integral

part of identity development, or it takes the passage of time for identities to become an internal structure for individuals. The period of time covered in the interview and survey instruments is less than one decade. Although the historically defined cultural context is implied, the focus is on each individual's internalization process, a process that can only be accomplished through the passage of time. This angle on time in the identity process can also integrate the more immediate social environment (people's network of relations) which typically takes time to form, as trust can only be established over time.

Any specific social structural context is at the intersection of place and time. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the intersection of place and time which is exemplified in the major transition the respondents of this dissertation experienced. In the literature on the intersectionality of identities, intersectionality usually refers to the fact that one identity is impacted by one of the many sociologically important identities such as race, gender, age, disability, and so on (Howard, 2000). The addition of the intersection of time and space enriches the literature on identity.

The transfer of the focal population of the Chinese graduate students from China to the U.S. spans space and signifies a change over time. As a result, the social context for these students alters dramatically. How this change alters the focal person's network of relationship and, therefore, their identities is what I attempt to understand in this dissertation. Since time and place both denote contextual changes in culture, the two dimensions should leave marks upon specific identities. This is addressed in Chapter Six, which discusses the transition and Chinese ethnic identities. This is also addressed in the quantitative chapter which hypothesizes that identity importance varies by place and time.

Ethnic identity. The ethnic identity and the ethnic community of the population of this research are important components of this dissertation. There is a striking imbalance between those in power who impose racial categories on minorities, and the minorities that regard themselves as completely different ethnic groups.

By ethnicity, this dissertation follows Weber's (1978) definition with a focus on common ancestry, in blood, customs, or both. The Chinese graduate students interviewed for this dissertation saw both physical and cultural difference in the U.S. between themselves and the people around them.

This theme of power in the racial categorization by the mainstream society is consistent with many works on ethnic identity that seek to examine the origin of ethnic identity. Howard (2000) suggests that most of the 70 studies of ethnic identity reviewed by Phinney posit minority members' negative experience complicates their identity development. Phinney (Howard, 2000) summarizes works with various focuses ranging from ethnic identity formation to components of ethnic identity.

There is an important subtheme in the study of ethnic identity that is relevant to this dissertation research. Ethnic identity is fluid. As stated earlier, minority identity is a product of the power structure as well as minority members' self-identification. This interaction is described by Nagel (1994) as a situational process. Using data on Native Americans' minority identity claims, Nagel shows that politics play an important role in people's decision to claim or reclaim their ethnic identity. In an analysis of ethnic identities among people of European ancestry, Alba (1990) also stresses that ethnic identity is not stable across situations.

Another important relevant subtheme is the function of population composition change in the generation of ethnic identity. As explained by Howard (2000), "Population shifts, especially immigrations, are a major instigator of changes in ethnic identities" (p. 375). Using survey data of 119 Hawaiian students who first transferred to the mainland and then, as a result of this transfer, changed their status from a majority group to a minority one, Ichiyama et al. (1996) show that an internalization process of attitude occurs; in-group and out-group attitudes interact; perceived favorable attitude from out-group is reduced after one year of stay in a new environment; length of time in a new environment and an identification with the home culture have a negative relationship; and there is "no association between Hawaiian identification and affiliative behavior toward fellow Hawaiian students" (p. 458).

This dissertation contributes a relational perspective to the literature. In this dissertation, I look at the characteristics of a social environment which prompts development of the focal person's ethnic identity. The type of social environment that generated ethnic identity is composed of people of least significance to the focal person. Some of them fit nicely into the "weak tie" definition: 1) no emotional attachment; 2) no reciprocal services; 3) low time frequency in interaction; and 4) no confiding in relationships. Some of the "weak ties" remain strangers to the focal person, despite the fact that they spend most of their work time with the focal person. This does not mean that friendship only happens among those who spend prolonged amounts of time together, but the fact that the respondents' friendship is often along the nationality line reveals that something hinders the growth of cross-ethnic friendship and acquaintanceship. Cross-ethnic friendships are rare even if the respondent has spent much time with non-Chinese

acquaintances. In this dissertation, I study the types of ties the focal person generates; ties that are relevant to the development of the focal person's ethnic identity. In doing so, I attempt to reveal the social and private nature of discrimination which partly propels the genesis of ethnic identity.

The fact that the population is Chinese graduate students, not immigrants, might provide a different process in which ethnic identity generates and maintains meanings. Previous literature on ethnic boundaries and identities from the perspective of social networks mostly focuses on a long time span, generally several generations, and an insulated ethnic enclave which provides trust and economic security for immigrants (Sanders, 2002).

Chinese ethnic identity is presented in Chapter Six: "Emergent and Rooted Identities: The Role of Time Spanning." This chapter details how demographic change causes and strengthens the Chinese ethnic identity. The Chinese ethnic identity is also presented in Chapter Seven: "Quantitative Insights into Social Networks and the Space and Time Divides." In Chapter Seven, I hypothesize that the Chinese ethnic identity becomes stronger over the passage of time. Also, the Chinese ethnic identity becomes stronger as the Chinese composition in the egocentric network is greater. In addition, the Chinese ethnic identity varies with the location.

International students. There are studies on international students in the contexts of adaptation (e.g., Searle & Ward 1990). Researches focusing on adaptation explore the mechanisms of and test variables that impinge on international students' adjustment to the host culture.

Some works pursues the theme of adaptation to the host culture through the analysis of psychological factors and sociocultural learning. Scholars in this tradition (e.g., Yan & Berlinder 2009) attempt to establish models to explain psychological and sociocultural factors of cross-cultural adjustment and support or supplement the models with researches.

Tsang's (2001) model of international adaptation is supported by investigating the adjustment of academics and students from mainland China to the social environment in Singapore. Tsang includes psychological traits (self-efficacy and extroversion), personal characteristics (international experience, pre-departure knowledge, language competence), and social network connections (association with locals and social support) to understand adjustment to a new social context and how adjustment impacts people's performance.

Searle and Ward (1990) believe that in cross-cultural transitions, psychological and sociocultural adjustment mechanisms are fundamentally different. With data collected with 105 Malaysian and Singaporean students in New Zealand, Searle and Ward demonstrated that psychological and sociocultural adjustment factors are conceptually distinct. Factors including social difficulty, life changes, extraversion, and satisfaction with contact with hosts explain psychological adjustment while other elements including expected difficulty, cultural distance, and depression are potent predictors of sociocultural adjustment. The distinction between psychological and sociocultural predictors is an enhanced model combining clinical perspectives and social learning models. A third perspective – social cognition approach based on expectations – is not integrated.

Along this line of scholarship, some research focuses on the difficulties international students experience in adjusting to the host culture. Using interviews with 18 master's and doctoral students from mainland China enrolled in a Southwestern public university, Yan and Berlinder (2009) identify culture and education disparity between China and the U.S. and these students' language deficiency as the major academic stressors. The extremely high stress felt by these students is exacerbated by their strong motivation to achieve academic success. Li and Gasser (2005) examine the effect of ethnic identity, cross-cultural self-efficacy, and contact with the hosts on international students' adjustment to the host culture. The participant students come from 17 Asian countries and range from 17 to 46 in age. They find that the effect of cross-cultural self-efficacy (prior knowledge of the host culture) on adjustment varies with the extent of contact with the host nationals.

In a study that compares students with permanent U.S. residency and international students aging 17 to 51, Fritz, Chin, and DeMarinis (2008) find that the two groups do not distinguish from each other. But the subgrouping of international students into European students and Asian students shows differences among the students. All students, including American students, experience hardship caused by financial issues but European and Asian students perceive not being able to work and related problems more severely than their American counterparts. Asian students have more difficulties with language while European students stress more being apart from family.

There are studies that examine the broader sojourner population, mostly international students without the purpose of long term stay. This body of work

approaches international adjustment from the perspective of "stages, curves of adjustment, types, and culture learning" (Church, 1982, p. 540).

As insightful and comprehensive as this scholarship of cross-cultural adjustment is, to a certain extent this school of thought ignores the cognitive perspective. Such negligence can produce difficulties in furthering the adjustment research as this ignorance does not take into account the specific social environment of a locality and has a potential of producing inconsistent results of adjustment. Cognitive model from an interactionist angle can provide a social structure to correct this disorientation. Thus the cognitive perspective researching on expectations and identities should be incorporated. The focus on the connections between identity and relations can supplement the psychological and sociocultural studies of cross cultural adaptation.

Immigrants. The other related literature stresses immigrants' ethnic identity. This school of work focuses on the mobilizing power of cultural identity based on ethnicity against the backdrop of globalization (Brodkin, 2000). Cultural identity helps guide Chinese immigrants through the economic and political landscape in the host culture (Toyota, 2009). Studies oriented toward political struggles of immigrants tend to treat ethnic identity as cultural similarities among immigrants. This tradition highlights differences among generations and/or subgroups of Chinese immigrants (Toyota, 2009).

From the perspective of globalization, Ong (1999) depicts the "split between state-imposed identity and personal identity." When Hong Kong was returned to mainland China by the U.K., people from Hong Kong employed their own cultural meanings of identities to navigate the complex landscape of "migration, relocations, business networks, state-capital relations, and all transnational processes" (p. 2). While the logic of

globalization is economic, people's reaction to the process of globalization is cultural and political. One focal point in Ong's work (1999) is the "cultural representation of 'Chineseness' in relation to transnational Asian capitalism" (p. 7) when businesses in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and ethnic Chinese communities in Southeast Asia exploited their transnational business network built on Chinese ethnicity.

Also from a globalization perspective, Louie (2004) discusses how Chinese Americans and the government in mainland China craft Chinese identity. Through tours in China, Chinese Americans established (Louie, 2004) "genealogical and historical connections to ancestral village" (p. 7) which are the basis of their Chinese identity over time and across space. Louie (2004) conveys the message that "Chinese identities are produced simultaneously on local, state, and transnational levels" (p. 20).

What the literature on immigrant identities ignores is the fact that people have other identities such as group membership identities which are equally important for an individual's self and well-being. In addition, ethnic identity is not the only culturally shaped identity. The social identities based on group and category memberships are also culturally specific and significant. An identity theory based on social relations is needed for a comprehensive understanding of the multiple identities and interactional strategies of international graduate students as they navigate American higher education.

Chinese international graduate students differ from Chinese immigrants. Although many students entertain the idea of obtaining a job and staying in the U.S. after school, the major purpose of these students is to attain one or more post-graduate degrees. The temporary nature of their stay and the non-immigrant status of these students might affect the types of social ties they connect with which eventually shape their identities and

behaviors. Such a purpose situates them in social interaction with Chinese as well as non-Chinese in an educational setting as well as other social settings. Students in Northeast City had the opportunity to live in ethnic communities. However, different from ethnic enclaves that separate immigrants from the mainstream society, ethnic communities are residential areas of choice, not need (Logan 2002).

This chapter serves as a review of the major theories and literature relevant to this dissertation research. In short, identity and relations impact each other. Identities are stable as well as alterable. Social relations shape identities as well as are shaped by identities. The concepts and theories on identity reviewed in this chapter introduce the major arguments on identity that this dissertation inherits and expands on. In this chapter, I also illustrate why identity theory can be supported by a relational perspective. In addition, I list the concepts from a relational perspective that delineate mechanisms through which ties form and dissolve. The major point this dissertation tries to make is that changes in networks are correlated with identity formation and transformation.

In the literature part, I discuss the major scholarship on identity: place and identity, time and identity, and egocentric networks and identity. Place, time, and egocentric network are the three factors that impact identity processes. Although there is plenty of literature on the effect of place and time on identity, not many works touch on the relationship between egocentric networks and identity. The confounding effect of place and time on identity is also not yet in the literature. This dissertation thus fills the gap by addressing the identity process from a theoretical perspective of social relations and from the angle of the effect of the interaction of place, time, and egocentric network on identity.

Conclusion

This chapter is a detailed delineation of relevant literature: identity theory,
relational perspective, time and identity, place and identity, and international students.
Identity theory literature stresses the importance of an identity that is stable across
situations as well as the situational interpretation of identities. The relational perspective
provides concepts and theories that explain the formation and retention of relationships
that impact identities. The literature on time and identity focuses on the sociocultural
context that is shaped by historical background. Previous research on place and identity
also concentrates on the social context that is related with the characteristics of places.
The adjustment patterns of international students illustrate various models using
psychological traits, cultural characteristics, and social relations to predict these students'
integration into the local community.

Chapter 3

Context

This dissertation research took place in two vastly different cities – Northeast City and Southeast City. Place and space factor into social relations and as a result, identity. All actions might be impacted by place and space, and sociologists are interested in how place and space "translate into social relations" (Logan, 2012, p. 508). In more quantitative studies, it has become standard for large-scale survey data sets such as PSID to include geographical characteristics to predict individual outcomes since "the context, such as its racial composition or poverty level or density, has a direct impact on people within it" (Logan, 2012, p. 519).

In this chapter, I first review the recent history of the influx of Chinese graduate students in the U.S. with the backdrop of China's transformation after its open door policy was adopted in 1978. The graduate students share similar experience in China and enjoy a social status as a result of their college education. Then, I move to a discussion of the two cities – Northeast City and Southeast City - as the research sites to delineate how place is an important sociological factor for the subject population. Lastly, I compare Red College and Green College. The two universities are sampling frames for this work.

Influx of Chinese Graduate Students

Among the population of international students in American universities and colleges, Asian students comprised over half (57%) of all international enrollments. China was the highest sending country (18.5%) in the world (Institute of International Education, 2010) and predominantly sends graduate students to the U.S., rather than undergraduate students (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2011). In 2012, 47% of all

international applications for U.S. graduate programs were from China although only 27% of first-time graduate students in fall 2011 were Chinese citizens (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2012). In 2013, however, Chinese applications to U.S. graduate programs fell by 5%, after 7 years of double-digit increase (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2013). In comparison, the growth of Chinese undergraduate students is steeper. In 2010 the Chinese undergraduate student enrollment in the U.S. rose by 43% (Institute of International Education, 2010).

In 1978, China and the U.S. agreed to exchange students and scholars (Yan & Berlinder, 2009). Between 1949 and January 1979, the U.S. government and the government on mainland China did not have diplomatic relations and as a result there were no students from mainland China in the U.S. although there were Chinese students in the U.S. before 1949. The number of Chinese students in the U.S. increased dramatically since the beginning of 1979 as shown in Figure 2. The figure for Chinese students increased 10 folds from 1979 to 1984. Again, Chinese students rose by 3 times in number from 1984 to 1989. In 2013, Chinese students' number was 235,597, accounting for 28.7% of all international students (Institute of International Education, 2013). Among them, 103,505 were graduate students (Institute of International Education, 2013). The rapid increase in number of Chinese students in the U.S. is a result of the "open door" policy adopted by the Chinese government. The tenant of the "open door" policy is to learn from the west advanced technology and management skills.

When the students left China for the U.S. to pursue their graduate degrees, they all experienced college education while their experience in other aspects such as regions and subsequent regional cultures is diverse. However, the colleges the students obtained their

degrees from differ in resources at their disposal. Such a group with a mature self-structure provides a unique opportunity to observe the genesis of new identities and the transformation of meanings of old identities in a new social environment in the U.S. It is necessary to review the transformation of China that constitutes the social context of these students before they came to the United States.

Figure 1

Chinese Students in the U.S. 1978-2013
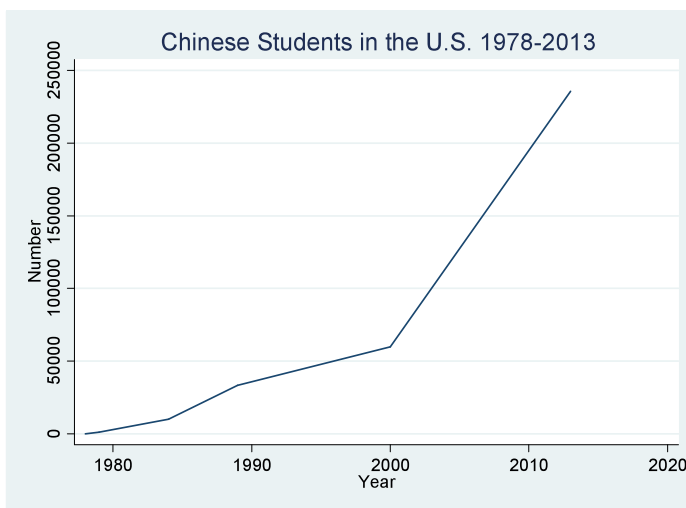
(Institute of International Education, 1949-2013)

Transformations in China since 1978. Studies on China since 1978 provide the social background of the respondents in this research when they first arrived in the U.S. All students had earned at least their bachelor's degree, if not their master's degree, from a Chinese university usually located in the urban area before they departed China. The social context in China imprints on these students' old identities they carried over to the U.S.

Social stratification in China - reflected in inequality research in occupational prestige, income distribution, gender disparity, class status, and culture - began to grow

after China's reform took effect in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping (Bian, 2002). In a comparative study on occupational prestige, Bian (1996) finds that education and income explain a large proportion of the variation in occupational prestige in the U.S., Taiwan and two major cities in China. The importance of education for occupational prestige reinforces the significance of education among Chinese.

Increased returns to education indicate a society rewards human resources. Zhao and Zhou (2002) delineate changes in returns to education in urban China "between 1978 and 1993 (15 years into the economic reform)" (p. 339). During the examined period, there is substantial increase in returns to education, congruent with market transition theory. The fact that there was no college entrance examination between 1966 and 1977 due to the Cultural Revolution in China might have also contributed to the increased returns to education. Zhao and Zhou also find that the state actively promotes education. Increased returns to education and the state's encouragement of education contribute to the prestigious status of education, including college education.

The economic inequality expanded dramatically after 1978 (Hauser & Xie, 2005). Khan and Riskin (1998) find that the Gini coefficient rose from 0.233 to 0.332 in urban areas and from 0.338 to 0.9416 in rural areas between 1988 and 1995. Khan and Riksin (1998) also report "per capita household income was both substantially higher and more unequally distributed than suggested by the State Statistical Bureau" (p. 221). Although returns to schooling are much lower in China than in other countries (Hauser & Xie, 2005), the focus on education by the state and the relatively high social status related with education provide college students with prestige, including those students coming from a rural background.

Since 1978, China also experienced the increase of gender inequality. Before 1978, men and women in their prime age almost universally participated in the workforce although women retired earlier than men (Hauser & Xie, 2005). Atinc (Hauser & Xie, 2005) finds that women earned between 80% and 90% as much as men in late 1980s in Chinese cities. However, the marketization process since the reforms' initiation introduced the financial drive that expanded the earnings gap between men and women (Tang & Parish, 2000). Gender inequality became more and more visible in labor market in China while "spousal bargaining and cultural frames compete in the scholarly literature on gender relations, including the sharing of chores and the assertiveness of wives relative to their husbands" (Tang & Parish, 2000, p. 234).

Politically, social classes have emerged in China as a result of the economic reforms since 1978. Before 1978, there existed a status hierarchy because of the dichotomies in rural-urban divide, state-collective economic structure, cadre-worker classification, and a "revolution-antirevolution" difference (Bian, 2002, p. 93). Since 1978, in the rural area in China, "a rich peasant class and a poor peasant class" have appeared (Bian, 2002). A new low income class has also emerged in urban China as a result of layoffs of state-sector workers and migrant workers' entry into cities (Bian, 2002).

Culturally, China has also been through great changes since 1978. As a peripheral country in the "world system" (Wallerstein & Smith, 1992), many people in China embraced the "cultural model of modernization, which motivates people to desire First World affluence and believe that participation in a modern economy will enable them to attain that affluence" (Fong, 2004, p. 14). The rosy imagination of the developed

countries and the encouragements of the Chinese government to learn from the west are important reasons many of the Chinese students decide to go overseas to pursue their graduate degrees.

The social context in China, particularly a series of important social changes brought by the economic reforms introduced by the Chinese government in 1978, is crucial to the Chinese population in this study who were mostly born in the 1980s and grew up in the 1990s and 2000s. Most of these students are the only child in their family as a result of the one-child policy adopted in China in 1979 (Fong, 2004). The intensified social stratification in occupational prestige, social class, gender, and culture, and the value put on education all have impacted how this group of people perceive themselves before they left China for the U.S. What this group of students have in common is the fact that they are uprooted from their home culture and transplanted in the host culture. This common experience makes them an ideal group of subjects for study.

Northeast City and Southeast City

Northeast City and Southeast City were chosen for this study because of the large variance between the two cities in terms of population, racial/ethnic composition, cultural diversity, and economic status of their residents. These differences highlight the differential mechanisms through which social relations and identity interact as a result of the impact of places. The different identity relationship interaction mechanisms also show that relations at different levels – interpersonal and abstract – are always important to understand identity. In the following section on the two cities, I compare characteristics of the two cities first, including population size, ethnic composition, cultural diversity (whether the respondent is foreign born, and the languages other than English spoken at

home), educational attainment, and per capita income. I then proceed to the analysis of the ethnic communities in Northeast City with the changes of ethnic residential areas from 1990 to 2010.

City characteristics. The two cities in which the two public universities are embedded are very different. Southeast City is very close to the national average in terms of per capita income. Its educational profile is elite, with a much higher (than national average) attainment percentage of students receiving a bachelor degree or higher. In per capita income and educational attainment the two cities are very similar. The two cities (as shown in tables below) are also more economically polarized than the national average. However, Southeast City is behind the national average by a small margin, and behind Northeast City by an enormous margin when it comes to ethnic and cultural diversity.[3] The only exception is African American composition which is close to the national average.

As shown in Table 1 Southeast City is not comparable to Northeast City in population demographically. Although Southeast City is the second largest city in its state, its population is only 4% of Northeast City's population. The percentage of white residents in Southeast City is close to the national average. However, its non-Hispanic white population is 10% higher than the national average. Northeast City, in contrast, has a much smaller percentage of white residents, and the non-Hispanic white resident proportion is even lower than the national average. The ethnic composition of African Americans in Southeast City is close to the national average.

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[3] Gauged by the percentage of each ethnic group and foreign born and foreign languages spoken at home in the two cities.

Table 1

Demographic and Cultural Diversity Comparison of the Southeast City and Northeast City against the United States as a Country

Demographics	Southeast City	Northeast City	United States
Population	5%	100%	
White	75.70% (Non-Hispanic 73.00%)	44.00% (Non-Hispanic 33.30%)	77.90% (Non-Hispanic 63.00%)
African American	14.50%	25.50%	13.10%
Native American	0.30%	0.70%	1.20%
Asian	3.20%	12.70%	5.10%
Hispanic or Latino	6.90%	28.60%	16.90%
Other Races	2.50%	4.00%	2.40%
Foreign Born	8.50%	36.80%	12.80%
Language other than English Spoken at Home	11.10%	48.50%	20.30%
Education (BA or higher)	39.30%	33.70%	28.20%
Per Capita Money Income	29,125	31,417	27,915
Income (% in Poverty)	17.90%	19.40%	14.30%

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

In short, Southeast City is higher in its ethnic composition compared with the national average (with African Americans as the only exception, i.e., the percentage of African Americans in Southeast City's population are close to the national average),

while Northeast City is lower than the national average. The two cities are thus sufficiently different for a comparative study.

To compare cultural diversity between the two cities, I use the statistics provided by the U.S. Census Bureau on "foreign born" and "language other than English spoken at home." I also list "education" and "per capita money income" for comparison, as I believe they also shed light on the local community and its characteristics.

It seems that Southeast City and Northeast City are at the opposite ends of the diversity spectrum. The exceptions are education, per capita money income, and poverty rate, which are at similar degrees between the two cities. Both cities exceed the national average in education, which is not surprising as both cities host the most universities in their respective states. Both cities also have a higher per capita income and higher poverty rates than the national average. This means that both cities have more severe economic polarization issues than the country as a whole. Compared with Northeast City, Southeast City has less of a problem of economic polarization among its residents.

University Settings

I use two public universities as population frame to recruit interviewees and survey respondents. The two universities provide immediate social context for the focal person. In the following section, I present figures of Chinese international students and racial/ethnic composition of the two universities.

Chinese students. At Red College the enrollment of Chinese international (graduate and undergraduate) students is steady from 2004 to 2010. Then, there is a noticeable increase from 2011 to 2013. Table 2 is the enrollment of Chinese international students, graduate and undergraduate students combined, from 2004 to 2013. The

international enrollment at Red College's graduate school is stable, varying from 17.96%

to 20.86% between 2004 and 2009 which is the latest available year. There is no

breakdown of Chinese international students by degree available.

Table 2

Red College Chinese International Student Enrollment

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number	413	423	397	446	402	417	471	589	632	718

(Red College Institutional Research and Advanced Analytics)

Green College has 9 schools, the graduate school, and 2 professional schools

recruiting graduate students. According to the Office of Institutional Research and

Assessment, the total graduate enrollment at Green College in 2011 was 30,545 among

which 9,617 were full-time and 20,928 were part-time. As large as the number of

graduate students at Green College is, the college is functionally unified as the vast

majority of graduate students in master's and doctoral programs all across the college

spend the first two years in the graduate school. Many of the Chinese graduate student

organizations from the 12 institutes of the college were related because they shared office

buildings and activities. In these 12 institutes, there are 6.5% of the students who are

international students, graduate and undergraduate combined. There is no breakdown of

country of origin available.

University characteristics. With regard to university characteristics, I include

demographic distributions (see Table 3), and the extent and range of formal and informal

campus groups and clubs. These characteristics influence memberships and expectations

of role/group/category identities and therefore the ongoing processes of identity network interaction.

Table 3

Demographic Comparison of Red College and Green College

Demographics	Red College (Granted Degree 08-09)	Green College (Granted Degree 08-09)
African American	4.56%	23.90%
American Indian	0.18%	0.20%
Asian	1.93%	16.50%
Hispanic	1.07%	19.80%
Nonresident Alien	4.99%	6.60%
White	83.85%	39.60%
Missing	3.42%	NA
Total	100% (5,803)	100% (37,385)

(Red College and Green College)

Both universities mostly recruit their students from the local area. Green College has regular colleges and community colleges that do not recruit graduate students. Excluding these community colleges, Green College has 79.10% in-state students. Red College's in-state students account for 75.63% of the university's entire enrollment.

The two universities have very different profiles with regard to ethnic and cultural diversity among graduate students. Red College is predominantly white (83.85%) with a very low percentage of students from minority groups such as African American, American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic. Green College, on the other hand, does not have a majority ethnic group (a group that is more than 50% of all enrolled graduate students). The white graduate students are the largest group, consisting 39.6% of the whole graduate population. African American, Asian, and Hispanic minority groups account for large percentages. Foreign students on both campuses are about the same percentage.

Since these foreign students bring their home cultures with them to the two campuses, the cultural diversity on both campuses is about the same.

There are 451 student organizations at Red College including both undergraduate and graduate student organizations. Most of these student organizations are discipline and Greek society based. There are less than 30 international student organizations. Some of these organizations are ethnic student organizations such as the African Student Association and the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association. Some of the organizations are nationality groups such as the Chinese Student and Scholar Fellowship, the German Club, the Indian Students Association, the Iranian Student Association, the Japanese Culture Society, and the Korean Student Association. Some hobby groups such as the Badminton Association and Bridges International are largely composed of Chinese graduate students. There are also some organizations aimed at helping international students such as Best Buddies International (Red College Website). In general, the student organizations that the Chinese graduate students are involved in are not many in number and low in active participation; not many activities are organized other than on major holidays such as the Chinese New Year.

Green College has roughly the same percentage of international students as Red College. However, due to the fact that the university is 7 to 8 times larger than Red College in student population, the absolute number of international students is much larger than at Red College. This fact is reflected in the larger amount of international student organizations which range from ethnicity clubs such as the Arab Student Organization, to nationality organizations such as the Bangladesh Student Association. There are also some regional organizations, such as the Caribbean Student Association.

Most of the major colleges have independent Chinese graduate student organizations. Some colleges even have more than one Chinese organization (Green College Website). These student organizations often organize activities to facilitate Chinese students' connectivity.

This chapter is a general overview of Northeast City and Southeast City as the research sites. The importance of the local is revealed in its impact on the social relations located in specific place and space. The immediate social context of the two universities functions in a similar way in the Chinese graduate students' life and study. When these students live in the U.S. and adapt to the new social environment by adopting new identities and changing meanings of old identities, the impact of their home country is seen in their old identities conditioned by China's transformation since 1978.

To summarize, Northeast City is a much larger and more diverse social environment in population, racial/ethnic composition, cultural diversity, and socioeconomic status in comparison with Southeast City. Northeast City has been the host of a large number of ethnic communities which are mostly receiving residents from Asian countries, including China. Southeast City is not comparable to Northeast City in ethnic community. The different sociocultural environments in Northeast City and Southeast City inevitably impact who the subject population interact with and as a result their identities.

Red College, in contrast to Green College, is much smaller and homogeneous. Most of the students at Red College are white and there are not many formal or informal organizations catering to the need of international students. Green College, on the other hand, hosts numerous race/ethnicity based organizations. The college's student

population is also very diverse without a single ethnic student group that can claim the majority of the enrolled students. Such different organizational environments provide distinct experience with formal and informal organizations within the two colleges. The distinct experience at the two colleges then channels into the self-structure of their students.

The formation and transformation of identities are impacted by layers of social environment: micro, mesa, and macro. Therefore, it is necessary and important to delineate these layers of sociocultural contexts in terms of formal and informal groups, organizations and institutions, and cities. These layers of social contexts enter the self structure through repeated interaction that help internalize the social meanings attached to identities. Such social meanings are stable across situations as related social environments are relatively stable.

Conclusion

This chapter is an illustration of how place as sociocultural context shapes the interaction of identity and social networks using interviews on a religious identity. In a small and homogeneous community, social networks precede the development of the religious identity. For the religious identity to form, strong dyadic ties, multiplexity of relationships between a focal person and his/her acquaintances, and religious primary groups are necessary. In a large and heterogeneous community, the development of the religious identity precedes social ties. However, the newly adopted religious identity has social network consequence as a focal person would expand his/her circle of friends who are religious.

Chapter 4

Research Design, Methodological Approaches and the Participants

Introduction

  This dissertation research uses a mixed methods approach aimed at addressing the following research questions on the interaction between networks of social relations and identity: What are the implications of the composition of Chinese international students' personal social networks for their identities? How do networks of social relations and identities interact? What is the impact of sociocultural context on identity network process? How does time influence the interaction of identity and networks of social relations? Further, what are the mechanisms that link networks of social relations and identity, and how do people negotiate their identities when they face identity options offered yet constrained by their networks of social relations? I examine the survey data to identify characteristics such as time, place, and personal networks that influence the relationship between social relations and identity, and then use the interviews to investigate the mechanisms of the network identity process, particularly the linkage between social relations and identity: whether networks of social relations precede identities or the other way around.

  This is a mixed methods analysis with multiple phases (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The first phase of the research is a pilot study using interviews to explore the topic on identity and social relations with a focus on ethnic identity. The second phase is the dissertation interview process which investigates identity network mechanisms shaped by the sociocultural contexts in the two locations. The third phase, which overlaps with the second phase, is the dissertation survey designed at the same time the interviews were

conducted. The survey also incorporated preliminary findings at the interview stage to demonstrate the relationship between identity importance and social relations.

The mixed methods approach is selected for several reasons. First, neither qualitative nor quantitative methods by themselves sufficiently address the research questions in this study. The research questions inquire mechanisms of identity network process and request generalizability. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative methods are necessary. Second, this dissertation attempts to examine identity process from the perspectives of identity theory and implied social relations. Therefore, it is important to explore the research questions, variables, and theories with qualitative methods, and follow up with quantitative methods to generalize and test the qualitative findings. Third, the relational perspective is quantitative as well as qualitative in empirical research. It is important to respect this scholarly tradition employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. The delineation of the overall mixed methods approach of this dissertation research is detailed in section "Mixed Methods Approach."

The comparative method employed is also implied by the research questions. The identity network processes are better understood through a comparative perspective for the approach's rich and descriptive orientation. More importantly, by definition, identity is internalized meanings that are culturally defined. Among many factors, sociocultural contexts help shape cultural meanings at a given historical moment. Within-person comparison and between-person comparison examine how identity and networks of social relations co-vary in time. A comparison between two social environments – Northeast City and Southeast City - is the focus of the section: "The Comparative Research Design." The selection of the two cities is because the two cities are vastly

different. A comparison of sufficiently different social environments can help reveal various identity network processes.

The sections "Interviews" and "Surveys" display the sampling methods, introduce the content of the interview and survey instruments and procedures followed to obtain data, delineate the data analysis procedures, and evaluate the validity, reliability and generalizability of the interview and survey data and analysis.

The following sections are organized in the order of: the mixed methods design, a comparative research approach, the methodology used to obtain and analyze interview and survey data, and limitations.

Mixed Methods Approach

Research questions and the mixed methods approach. The research questions are sufficiently answered through this multi-phase mixed methods approach. The first two research questions are: 1) what are the implications of Chinese international students' social networks for their identities, and 2) how do networks of social relations and identities interact? These two questions require the dimension of time passage in the interview and survey instruments, since they ask whether and how identities and networks of social relations co-vary over time. Thus, the question can be phrased as: How does time influence the interaction of identity and networks of social relations? It is necessary to use qualitative interviews with a design of two sections: identities and social relations. Interviews can reveal subjective perspectives on how social relations impact identity meanings and vice versa. That is, interviews are conducive to answering the "how" question. The lack of correspondence between identities and social relations can

falsify the precondition of the study that social structures defined as social relations and identities interact.

There are two ways to address the time dimension of identity: within person difference in time and inter-person difference. It is important for the interviews to cover at least two time points in the life of each of the interviewees so that the covariance or the lack of covariance of identity and social relations for the focal person can show in time. Another way to investigate the covariance of identities and social networks of relationship over time is to investigate interpersonal differences in the identity network process by including respondents who experience various lengths of stay (0-8 years) in the U.S., a new social cultural environment for the respondents at a roughly similar historical time period in the U.S. and China.

Interpersonal difference is also obtained in the quantitative survey that supplements interviews with cross sectional data. The reason to also include a quantitative survey is simple: eventually, insights gained in the qualitative interviews should be used to design a quantitative survey to test the hypotheses on identity and social relations. That is, significant findings in qualitative interviews need to be confirmed with quantitative survey (Small, 2011). Or, the use of quantitative data is a means of triangulation (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) in order to verify the validity of the qualitative data.

The other two research questions are: 1) what are the mechanisms that link networks of social relations and identity, and 2) how do people negotiate their identities when they face identity options offered and constrained by their networks of social relations? These two questions are best answered by a qualitative component of the research design, for clearly their focus is the mechanisms and people's subjective opinion

and human agency. These two questions also infer a comparative approach with two locations that have distinct cultural differences. Thus, the question can be phrased as: What is the impact of sociocultural context on identity network process? Interviews delineate the concrete mechanisms of the identity network processes constrained by the sociocultural environment. They can also provide an in-depth understanding of the subjective process of identity negotiation within the social context of the U.S. I will further explain the comparative design in the section: "The Comparative Research Design."

Because I define social structure as social relations at different levels[4] in this dissertation and that culture, the building block of identities, is produced (to a certain degree) by differently structured social environments, requires a variable to indicate the cultural difference. In this dissertation, I inquire the respondents' identities and networks 4-5 years prior to their departure to the U.S. without specifically asking for their regional cultures. Future studies can address regional cultures in China and their impact on respondents' identities. While the quantitative survey includes "place" as a variable to examine the relationship between social networks of relationship and identity, it is only a proxy of sociocultural environments. Where the quantitative survey is insufficient, the qualitative interviews can complement (Small, 2011) by providing insight into sociocultural environments through the lens of individuals' network of social relations. Cultural environments are revealed by individual observations and reflections.

I conducted 60 in-depth individual interviews and 9 follow-up interviews to understand the mechanisms underlying the network identity processes. I interviewed

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[4] Lower levels of social networks could be dyadic relationships that constitute ego-centric networks and primary groups.

Chinese graduate students in two public universities embedded in two very different community settings. I also conducted an online survey targeting entire populations of Chinese graduate students attending the two universities. In the interviews, I asked the interviewees to list the major identities in their current and past life as well as the meanings of these identities. I also asked the interviewees to tell me about those who are important in their current and past life. I encouraged the interviewees to tell stories of their identities by asking them about their expectations of those around them and vice versa, the reasons why these people are important in their lives, and the discussion topics and activities among the respondent and their partners. In addition, I systematically collected socio-demographic data on the "important people" mentioned by the interviewees, including their age, gender, marital status, work place, educational attainment, time in the U.S., and family background.

In his review of recent trends in mixed methods study, Small (2011) states that there are two approaches to mixed methods: "mixed data-collection studies, which combine two or more kinds of data; and mixed data-analysis studies, which combine two or more analytical strategies, examine qualitative data with quantitative methods, or explore quantitative data with qualitative techniques" (p. 57). This dissertation falls into the first category because it uses two kinds of data: qualitative interview data and quantitative survey data.[5] Although usable responses in the survey data are small in number (119), the survey data still qualify as quantitative analysis for its employment of formal statistical tools and mathematical models (Small, 2011). However, this does not imply that the survey results are reliably generalizable due to the fact that the Green

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[5] One point of note is that the survey data eventually kept 119 responses (around 50 were not usable due to missing data).

College sample is not a probability sample and there is a selection bias. I will analyze this limitation later in the chapter. In interviews, instead of imposing a researcher "me," I chose to let the situational identity players talk directly. This also helps to delineate the mechanisms in the identity network process.

Advantages of a mixed methods approach. In short, a mixed methods approach is necessary for this study for several reasons. First, the research questions can only be fully addressed when both qualitative and quantitative methods are used. The qualitative aspect of the research contributes greatly to the study for its "attention to complexity – the heterogeneity and particularity of individual cases" (Ragin, 1987, p. xii), and the number of cases is usually limited. The quantitative aspect attempts to understand the research questions in a more general way by "examining a large number of people and assessing responses to a few variables" (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 8). Both methods have limitations: the qualitative method cannot generalize, while the quantitative method loses details of individual cases. But the limitations of the two methods are offset through a mixed methods approach which is a "more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach by itself" (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 8).

A second reason this dissertation uses a mixed methods approach is that there are many unknowns. Therefore, "it is best to explore qualitatively to learn what questions, variables, theories, and so forth need to be studied and then follow up with a quantitative study to generalize and test what was learned from the exploration" (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 9). As stated earlier, the interviews and the survey design were conducted simultaneously. But the design of the survey also incorporated certain preliminary findings from the interviews, especially the "important people" and "time bound people"

that impacted identity and that were effective as predictors of identity importance. Also, the qualitative findings provided the independent variables of time and localities, which were significant predictors.

A third reason for the use of a mixed methods approach is that identity theory and relational concepts and theories entail such an approach (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The mixed methods approach fits the research tradition pursued in the two areas. Current identity theory employs mostly quantitative survey data to quantify and test the Meadian paradigm of the relationship among society, self, and behavior, particularly the "commitment structures identity structures role performance 'formula'" (Stryker, 1987, p. 89). That is, identities are shaped by commitment and role/identity behavior is shaped by identities. This effort is facilitated by "introducing … a viable conception of interactional structure…, by finding ways of conceptualizing the impact of large-scale societal structures on interactional structures" (p. 89). This dissertation focuses mainly on two parts: society (commitment) and self (identity structure). I also intend to investigate the reverse relationship between commitment and identity required by the research questions with interview data as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

The Interaction of Society and Self

As a theoretical framework, the relational perspective also strives to connect the micro with the macro (Granovetter, 1983). This is how the two theoretical components of this dissertation agree. The relational perspective emphasizes relationality. That is, social relations are more important than attributes (such as gender and race) in explaining social

behavior. For example, social relations are more important than being Chinese when it comes to understanding these students' behavior. Surveys and interviews (structured as well as unstructured) are often used in empirical research as are qualitative approaches. This research, therefore, uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the interaction of identity and networks of social relations.

The Comparative Research Design

The research questions infer a comparative approach. In the tradition of symbolic interactionism, identity theory defines identity as internalized meanings related to social network positions. Identity theory also suggests that networks of social relations are multi levels (Stryker, 1987). To capture the partially social structure defined culture which in turn defines role/group/category identities, it is necessary to compare two locations with drastically different sociocultural characteristics. Such a comparison can help us grasp potentially different identity network processes shaped by various social contexts. One location is a large and complex sociocultural environment and the other is a much smaller and simpler cultural environment. Northeast City is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the country and the world. The differential cultures in the two locations are channeled into the self-structure, which is different as a result. Therefore, a contrast in sociocultural contexts provides opportunities to examine the complex identity network process.

To select the two locations to compare, I chose two sufficiently different locations in terms of population, population ethnic composition, and cultural diversity. The first location is a city in the northeast of the U.S. – Northeast City – which is above the national average in ethnic and cultural diversity while the other location is a city in southern U.S. – Southeast City – which is below the national average. An extreme

difference in location is important because investigating extreme cases is "necessary to extend theory about a general problem. Cases can uncover social practices that are taken for granted" (Riessman, 2008, p. 194). A comparative approach is also suitable because it is case oriented and "case-oriented studies, by their nature, are sensitive to complexity and historical specificity" (Ragin, 1987, p. ix). The selection of two drastically different cases for a comparison enhances a study of identity that calls for an understanding of the cultural meanings associated with identity.

Specifically, this project uses two public universities – Red College and Green College - embedded in Northeast City and Southeast City respectively as the subject frames to reveal the identity network process through a comparative lens. The subject's personal network usually reaches far beyond the boundaries of the two colleges, extending to the local communities and to the home country of China, assisted by physical and electronic interaction. The patterning of these personal networks (e.g., constrained within the Chinese community in the two cities) provides a revelation of the local social environment, such as cultural compatibility. This patterning is important for the construction of the identity as people tend to develop distinct identities agreeable to others around them through the "looking glass self" process (Cooley, 1992). The city and university characteristics are delineated in Chapter 3 – Context.

Interviews

Interview sample. To delineate the development of identities in a new social environment, I recruited participants through snow-ball sampling (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2008). I started with a small group of interviewees introduced to me by my friends, and then expanded the number by asking the interviewees to introduce me to

their Chinese graduate friends. I also attended social events and asked people to use listserv to recruit interviewees. When the populations of the Chinese graduate students in the two universities were unknown, I made an effort to ensure that the recruited students had various lengths of stay at their host institutes. I did not distinguish the length of their stay in the U.S. from their stay in U.S. higher education institutes because only a very small number of students had experience in the U.S. prior to beginning their graduate programs. For the interview sample, I had 60 students in total: 30 from Red College in Southeast City and 30 from Green College in Northeast City.

One goal of conducting interviews is to understand the meanings of individuals' identities and how identity and networks of social relations co-vary over time. Identity, by definition, is how individuals view themselves, although their opinions about themselves might be influenced by others around them. The questions to be answered by the interviews, therefore, are: when being transplanted from an old social environment to a new one, how do individuals develop new social ties and new identities, and do they maintain pre-existing relationships and identities? To answer these questions, I can either follow a longitudinal strategy by interviewing the same people over a span of time, or else interview different people with various length of stay in the U.S. at one time point. This dissertation employs the latter strategy. In this sense, this sample is purposive and theoretical as I used length of stay as a selection criterion to ensure certain subpopulations of the general Chinese graduate population were represented in the sample (Glesne, 2011).

Such an approach might lose some details of each individual's identity change over time, when compared with a longitudinal approach. I did ask interviewees to provide

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information on identity change by comparing a time period of 4-5 years before they began their current graduate programs versus the time that they have been in the programs. An advantage of this strategy of cross sectional data collection is that the richer variety of individuals interviewed provided a better understanding of the Chinese graduate students as a group. Throughout the interview process, I kept a log of the basic information of the interviewees: gender, age, length in the current graduate program, and program. I made sure the interviewees varied in their length of stay in the current program. That is, these students remained in their current U.S. graduate programs from a period of between several months to 8 years. I also tried to maintain a balanced recruitment of both genders. Despite these efforts, more men than women were recruited. The following is a general overview of the interviewees' demographics from Green College and Red College.

Table 4

Survey Sample Demographics

Demographics	Location		Gender		Age	U.S. Time
	NE	SE	M	F		
Number	30	30	36	24	23 - 34	2M - 8Yrs

In the interviews, I asked respondents some questions about where they were from in China, and the colleges and universities they attended in China and their current graduate programs.

At Red College, I asked the International Affairs Office to disseminate the recruitment ads to Chinese graduate students. I received 13 volunteers this way. I also

asked focal respondents to introduce me to their fellow Chinese students from Red

College. These new recruits had to be strangers to me. That is, I either had never met

them before or had only met them once or twice. The reason for this recruitment strategy

is that I wanted to avoid "backyard" research despite its advantages (Coffey & Atkinson,

1996). I recruited 5 interviewees this way. I also went to Chinese hobby groups and

student groups such as Bible study groups to ask students to sign up. I obtained 9

volunteers this way. The rest (3) were recruited when I went to seminars and recruited

students through this activity. All interviews were conducted in person. These

recruitment strategies resulted in a diverse sample.

At Green College, there was no central office for international students. However, I

approached the student affairs office (which is the closest version of a centralized office

for international students) and several on-campus international studies centers. They sent

out my recruitment ad but I received no responses through these organizations. All of my

interviewees were recruited through Chinese graduate student organizations on various

campuses. I started with one student organization and made multiple additional contacts

for the purpose of establishing connections. By the time I began conducting interviews at

Green College, I had several Chinese graduate student organizations' chairs who agreed

to help me by providing names of students or introducing me to potential interviewees at

their get-togethers. I socialized intensively for the first several days in my field work by

going to events organized by these student organizations and private parties to which I

was invited by my primary contacts. I recruited interviewees at these events, and then

requested that they introduce me to other potential interviewees. Recruitment took place

at 5 of the college's 12 campuses. I conducted 28 interviews in person while I was in

Northeast City and two more through Skype after I left. My interviewees from both

colleges varied in terms of their length of stay in their programs and other relevant

characteristics such as program, marital status, religious profile although all these

characteristics proved not to be relevant to the composition of their networks of social

relations (mostly Chinese) in the pilot study.

      Individual interviews. In-depth interviews provide rich descriptions of Chinese

graduate students' experiences in identity development, and for exploring the meanings

that Chinese graduate students attach to these experiences (Patton, 2002). A one-year

pilot study was conducted with 15 interviewees at Red College in Southeast City to

explore the possibility of approaching identity from the relational perspective. When the

dissertation research began, I again piloted the new interview questionnaire with two

interviewees to further refine the interview schedule. After these two interviews, some

questions were re-ordered, some were dropped or added, and some were reworded for

clarity. Twenty interviews were conducted at Red College using the revised

questionnaire. Then, 5 questions were added to investigate the relationship between

major identities and social networks of relationship. This finalized questionnaire was

used for the remaining 40 interviews: 30 at Green College and 10 at Red College. I

decided to drop an additional interview because the person was from Hong Kong, not

mainland China. Then, follow-up interviews with the first group of Red College

interviewees were conducted to gather data from this original sample on the additional 5

questions. Due to non-response for various reasons, 9 follow-ups were conducted.

     I started the interviews with some general information questions about the

respondents, including their length of stay in their current programs, what they did in

China or the U.S. before they came to the U.S. for their degree, where was their hometown, who were their family and their supervisors. Starting the interview with these more general questions allowed researchers to develop rapport and comfort with respondents (Hatch, 2002). This information also provided a baseline comparison for students' later discussions of their identity experiences. That is, it provides the time framework and social background for identity process.

The purpose of the interview questions was to investigate whether there is a relationship between identity and networks of social relations. More importantly, if there is a correspondence between identities and networks of social relations, what is the mechanism that links the two? That is, how does the importance of the respondents' identities connect with their commitment to these identities through important (or non-important) social ties?

To generate the major identities the respondents had, I asked them first to tell me about the major identities in their current life by giving them the definitions of three social identities: role identities, category or attribute (such as gender and race) based identities, and group membership based identities. This explanation was to avoid assuming that the interviewees have certain important identities. I then supplemented the list of their major identities by eliciting the students' roles in the major social settings most graduate students experienced: family, work, school, religion, friendship, and extracurricular organizations on and off campus (if they had not mentioned these). This follow up is to make identities comparable across individual students and to obtain an exhaustive list of identities. For each identity the respondents mentioned, I asked about the respondents' current understanding of the identity, what they want the counter role

player(s) to do for them, and what they are expected to do for the counter role player(s). I then asked the respondents if the identity of interest was different with regard to the above questions on their major identities when they were in China, approximately 4-5 years prior to their departure to the U.S.

To assess the social relations of the respondents, I asked them to provide five names of the most "important people" in their current lives. I did not define the meaning of "important people," as I wanted the interviewees to tell me whom they considered important in their lives. When asked by the respondents the meaning of "important people," I reworded the question which was equally vague: those who have the greatest impact on you. These people might be important to the respondents emotionally, professionally, financially, and in other aspects. For each "important person" mentioned by the respondent, I then asked about their relationship: what they discuss, what they do together, what is the expectation they have for each other in their respective roles. I also asked them to provide examples to illustrate their answers. Then, I repeated the same questions for the 5 most "important people" in the respondents' lives 4-5 years before they began their current graduate programs. To make sure no "important people" were left out, I then asked the respondents to give me the 5 most important contexts (places) in their current and past lives. For each context provided by the respondent, I then asked for the name of the person that stands out in that context. Information about the "important people" and the people stands in different contexts offers a basis to grasp the connection of identity and networks of social relations. This design avoids artificially constraining the number of people mentioned by the respondent, an important concern for relational analysis (Marsden, 1990).

Lastly I asked about the ethnic identity of the Chinese graduate students. For a group of people originally from a country where the race/ethnicity terrain is very different from that in the U.S., the consciousness and the development of Chinese ethnicity is likely to be an important part of the participants' experiences. The central role of ethnic identity in the literature on Asian immigrants is evident (e.g., Espiritu, 1992). Yet, these respondents are different since they are temporary residents in the host country. What I wanted to understand is the ways in which this group of overseas Chinese students coped with the unfamiliar race/ethnicity territory in the U.S. I asked the respondents to compare and contrast their interaction experiences with Chinese versus non-Chinese in the U.S. as well as in China. I also asked the respondents to tell me the social groups they had observed in the U.S., and to describe a surprising experience (as well as an awkward and pleasantly surprising experience) they have encountered upon beginning their graduate programs.

At the end of the interview, I pulled out all the cards with the names of people the respondents had provided throughout the interview, and asked them to group the names in whatever way and into however many groups they preferred. I then asked them why they had grouped the names in the way they did. After that, I put all the names together and asked the respondents to rank them in importance. The activity was designed to examine the reasons why particular individuals were important, how these "important people" were tied to one another, and what characteristics of the relationships provided the basis for their rankings.

The participants seemed to enjoy the interviews. Their reactions to the interview questions were positive. A common comment made was: "this is really interesting. I have

never had an opportunity to talk about these. But I have kept thinking about these issues and people in my life." Another woman said, "thank you for doing this research. There has not been much studies on us Asian students. It's good you fight for us."

Interviews were conducted in settings chosen by the respondents and lasted from one hour to two hours and ten minutes. At Red College, most of the interviews were conducted in either the campus library, or the respondents' dorm rooms or apartments. A few interviews were conducted at the location of respondents' on-campus jobs such as their office as Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants. For participating in the interview, students received an invitation for dinner with other interviewees. At Green College, many interviews were conducted in off-campus coffee shops and restaurants. For those students who were on campuses farther away from the city proper, interviews were done mainly in their offices as Research Assistants or Teaching Assistants. As in Red College, I invited the Green College respondents for dinner at the same location as the interviews. If the interview happened not at dinner time or not in a restaurant, I would offer the respondent $20 cash for dinner and/or a souvenir. I offered all respondents at both universities a copy of the recording of our interview and a published paper from the research. Most said they would be interested in having a copy of the paper and one requested a copy of our interview recording.

Positionality. It is important to "reflect upon the interplay between researcher and researched… for understanding how research relationships influence fieldwork and interpretation" (Glesne, 2011, p. 158). As a researcher, my nationality, gender, age, and openness in the research are all factors that impact the data I collected and the analysis I conducted compared with a different researcher. "Reflective thought" (Glesne, 2011, p.

159) is a safeguard for quality data while acknowledging the subjective nature of qualitative data and analysis.

My interviewees are all Chinese graduate students at the master's and doctoral levels in the U.S. The fact that I am also Chinese provided me unique advantages and disadvantages in our interactions. First, as a Chinese person from mainland China, the very presence of my ethnic identity could have influenced the answers of the respondents. The mention of family members as the most "important people" and the family member identity as a top identity might be impacted by my ethnic background as a fellow Chinese person. In addition, as fellow co-nationals, the respondents felt at ease when it came to expressing their opinions on other ethnic groups in their lives. They also felt obliged to explain to me why they had certain non-Chinese close friends, which provided detailed context of the non-Chinese composition of their networks of social relations, and the meanings they attached to these associates and relationships.

The downside is that some respondents assumed that I knew what they meant and shorthanded some information. For example, when asked about his relationship with his supervisor in China, instead of answering, ZSB hurled the question back at me, and asked "Don't you know?" I explained that each individual supervisor was different and therefore he needed to provide further details. There might be other occasions when the respondents satisficed as a result of their assumption that I knew what they meant and I did not detect their satisficing.

My gender and age are two elements that worked together to impact my relationships with my interviewees and thus the data I collected. My female identity did not help build more rapport with women respondents than men students. I believe my

gender is compounded by the obvious age gap between me and my informants: in most cases I was more than 10 years their senior. I experienced the transformation in China beginning in 1978. In Chinese culture, age is an important indicator of social distance. Younger people are supposed to respect older people by keeping their distance. Therefore, my gender is neutralized by my age in our interactions. The positive aspect is that such a positionality provides both the female and the male respondents the freedom to talk with me frankly about their gendered opinions on important relationships and identities. As a result, I obtained truthful data.

The negative aspect of the age gap between me as the interviewer and the students as interviewees was that certain respondents at Red College concealed important relationships in their lives, fearing that I might impose on them moral judgments openly or covertly. In two instances, the respondent did not reveal the intimate relationships they had with two "important people" in their lives. This concealment might also be a disadvantage related to the highly personal nature of relational research and the backyard research sampling methods used in this interview process. Since I recruited my interviews at Red College through referrals, respondents may not have wanted to disclose personal relationships to me to protect their privacy within their small circle of Chinese friends. The respondents from Green College, on the other hand, were predominantly in a relationship or voluntarily disclosed their willingness to be in a relationship. I therefore in later interviews added lines in my script that as a researcher, I did not judge their relationships.

I made efforts to maintain an open attitude so that I could resist the inclination to find the expected. I had certain intuitive expectations when I first began the study. For

example, disciplines might impact the interactions between Chinese people and non-Chinese people. The pilot study showed that discipline is actually a negligible element.

General interview collection procedures. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, using pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. I did transcription for 52 (one was eventually dropped) interviews and the 9 follow-up interviews. I transcribed all the interviews in English, although 70% of the interviews were conducted in Chinese. A colleague assisted with the transcription of 9 English interviews. I proof-read the transcriptions done by my colleague by listening to all the audio recordings while reading the transcriptions, to ensure that the transcriptions were accurate and literal. Transcriptions thus obtained were comparable and easy to use for analysis. In transcribing English as well as Chinese interviews, I used complete sentences as much as possible. The focus of the transcription is to focus on the meaning of the respondents' remarks, not a literal text analysis (Glesne, 2011).

Analysis of interviews. After the interviews, I noted the central points of each respondent's comments, the theoretical ideas emerging in the interviews, the reflections and conversations with friends on interviews, the interview process, and themes cutting across cases. I maintained a logistic log of interview schedules and possible changes to the schedule based on the interviewees' responses, particularly during the intensive interview period in Northeast City. Recognizing that research is far from value-free (Patton, 2002), I monitored my positionality in the research. In the process of transcribing, I kept a log of interesting quotes for further exploration. I also marked interesting quotes in the transcription texts.

After I finished individual interviews, the analysis process began: reading the

created text (field notes, transcriptions and memos), coding (open coding and then

focused coding), and writing coherently with insights from the text and theories. This

process is an adapted version of the grounded theory data analysis (Emerson, Fretz, &

Shaw, 2011). Concurring with the grounded theory's emphasis on the importance of

"categories directly from data," Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) also acknowledge that

researchers have concepts and theories they use with or without their awareness

throughout the research design and analysis process (p. 172). I used both inductive and

deductive reasoning as an analytic approach. Initial data analysis was conducted to

identify patterns from transcripts and field notes, creating theory from the data. Guided

by the theories and approaches discussed in the theory and literature chapter, I also

employed deductive reasoning to examine the data. I used three cycles of coding to

catalog and analyze transcription. The first cycle is detailed coding of each line and

sentence group which is called "open coding" by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011). The

second and third are more general coding, "focused coding" according to Emerson, Fretz

and Shaw (2011), based on the first cycle coding. I will provide an example to illustrate

the data analysis process as follows.

The first step of analysis after the interview was reading. I read through the

interview transcripts, field notes and memos, and summarized themes in the data. This

process allowed me to reflect on my relationship with the interviewees and understand

the text as a whole with new perspectives (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). The themes

derived from reading the text as much as possible (to the point no new themes or ideas

emerge) are many and sometimes repetitive. The major purpose is to allow the text do the discussion while engaging in the second step of open coding.

The second step of the open coding process involved "sift(ing) through and categoriz(ing) small segments of the field note record by writing words and phrases that identify and name specific analytic dimensions and categories… (it is) a way to name, distinguish, and identify the conceptual import and significance of particular observations" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 175). The following is a segment of the open coding of one transcript from Red College. The opening coding in the paragraph generates many categories such as people: a "sister" (the interviewee calls females acquaintances from church "sister") who is regarded as a friend by the respondent. Open coding identifies the activities this sister had with other people perceived as important by the interviewee and the interviewee's own attitude, for that matter. It also provides an insight that there is a link between what the "sister" did and the interviewees' change of identity: converting to Christianity. These codes link to some "more general analytic issues" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 177) such as the newcomers' (new Chinese graduate students) need for help, help from "important people" (important for the help the focal person obtains) and the related change of identity on the part of the focal person. In general, the coding suggests an answer to the "how" question: what is the identity network process? The coding also attempts to understand the interviewee's meanings in her words. I then compared similar processes in different interviews. The close comparison of such processes "attending to both similarities and variations, can often suggest key features or dimensions in detailed, specific ways" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 178).

Important: sister	*I: A sister in the fellowship, I want to mention her. Do you need her name?*
Sister affiliation: church	*C: The fellowship is the church group, right?*
	I: Yeah.
	C: If you want to, or you can give her a fake name.
Sis importance: Helpful, kind Church leader	*I: Her name is (?). I want to mention her 'cause I did receive a lot of help from her when I first came here. She's very friendly, very kind and nice. She also is my group leader in our student fellowship.*
Sis important to: new arrivals	*C: So she's very important because she was very helpful at the beginning stage of your stay here.*
	I: Yes.
	C: What do you usually do together?
Activity together: Religious Food for activity	*I: We have prayer meeting once a week, fellowship together, prayer meeting actually at her house. Her family is here. She always provides something to eat for us.*
	C: What is the most recent activity you did together?
Most recent activity	*I: Last Friday fellowship.*
	C: Could you describe?
Fellowship last Fri. Sis: prepare soup Lead songs	*I: Last Friday we had fellowship together and she cooked soup, bone soup. She also is the song leader for the fellowship.*
	C: So she leads the singing?
Sis: piano & sing	*I: Yeah. She's good at piano. She can sing very well.*
Sis' impact	*C: What's her impact on you, what is she to you?*
Sis helps the reserved Gratitude to sis	*I: When I came here I was not always asking people for help, but she always provided for me. That really made me feel warm, even if I didn't speak out or ask, she will be there for me.*
	C: So you think she's a friend?

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Sis: a friend
Reason to convert   I: *Yeah, she's a friend. I kind of feel that's one of the reasons I*
                          converted to Christianity.

With the resultant patterns and themes generated in the open coding, the third step of focused coding had a sound basis from which to proceed. Focused coding is a "fine-grained, line-by-line analysis of selected notes. This involves building up, and in some cases, further elaborating analytically interesting themes, both by connecting data… and by further delineating subthemes and subtopics that distinguish difference and variations within the broader topic" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 191). Since the dimensions of time and space are built into the design of the questionnaire, the selected themes are the ones that can be fleshed out with comparative cases along these two dimensions. The number of such cases is large as a result of the interview instrument design. For example, one of the themes identified in the above example of open coding is the precedence of ties/networks of relationships and the construction of identity. To further explore this theme, I compiled cases from different interviews that contain this information to compare and contrast (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011).

By comparing cases from the two regions, I found that "strong ties" can precede or lag behind identity adoption, depending on the specific social environment. Although we can follow the traditional dichotomy of social structure and human agency to explain this regional difference, it is important to note how sociocultural environment impacts the network identity process. Therefore, by pursuing the theme generated at the open coding stage that there is link between networks of social relations and identity with analyzing

comparable cases, subthemes[6] emerge and eventually showcase the importance of cultural environments in impacting people's networks of social relations and identities.

Memoing is an integral part of the data collection and analysis process (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). At the interview stage, I used memos to record major points made in the interviews and ordinary or theoretical thoughts of my own which emerged in my exchange of ideas with colleagues. I used a log to drop down interview schedule and interviewee characteristics. At the open coding stage, I continued to use memo for theme and theoretical note taking. The entries were open ended to allow a wide range of possible directions. Once the open coding generated important themes and theoretical insights, I concentrated on these and coded the rest of the text using these narrowed down themes and theories. Memoing functions to clarify and further develop the concepts and theories by close comparisons.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 are the results of an analysis of the interview data. Chapter 5 focuses on the impact of space on the emerging identities. Chapter 6 concentrates on the dimension of time and its impact on the identity network process. The interview data are used to address specific research questions: How do networks of social relations and identities interact? Further, how do people negotiate their identities when they face identity options offered and constrained by sociocultural environments?

Reliability and validity. In qualitative research, there are "two levels of validity… the story told by a research participant and the validity of the analysis, or the story told by the researcher" (Riessman, 2008, p. 184). I have stated earlier that certain respondents offered false information. I made amends in later interviews by reiterating

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[6] "Weak ties" and "strong ties" precede identity in different regions; identity might precede "strong ties" in egocentric network.

the neutral stand of myself as a researcher. Also the fact that many interviewees were referred by other interviewees served as a correction. By comparing interviews, I verified some of the information provided by different respondents. Another piece that might add to the validity issue is that certain information such as networks of social relations and identities in China is retrospective, which might harm the accuracy of the provided information. The fact that this time span only extended to less than 5 years prior in general means that this is only minor divergence.

Qualitative researchers are the tools of their researches (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Therefore, the experience of the researcher is an important part of the validity of the data collected and the analysis conducted. For a year I trained for qualitative methods as well as pilot study to prepare me for the dissertation's qualitative aspect of the research. I also had the privilege of working with several very experienced qualitative researchers that answered my questions and guided me through the process. In addition, the quantitative sector of this dissertation research shows that most of the information provided in the interviews is true, except for the importance of the Chinese ethnic identity. The quantitative survey serves as a triangulation that reveals that the qualitative data and analysis are mostly reliable and valid. In addition, the study gives voice to the students about their lives. This empowering effect (Riessman, 2008) is part of the validity of this dissertation research.

The truth is, however, that "there is no canon, that is formal rules or standardized technical procedure for validation. Narrative truths are always partial – committed and incomplete" (Riessman, 2008, p. 186). This dissertation research can only try to be as valid and reliable as possible at the design, data collection and data analysis stages.

Survey

     The survey sample. To identify patterns of linkages between social

environments, time in the U.S., and networks of social relations and identity, I conducted

online surveys targeting the entire population of Chinese graduate students at the two

universities. The purpose is to produce an exhaustive dataset of the Chinese graduate

students at the two universities, so that the findings can be generalizable. However, the

data ended up being an incomplete probability sample due to certain factors listed below.

     The two universities differed in the administration of international students. At Red

College, the International Affairs Office is the centralized office with a complete listserv

of all international students, including Chinese graduate students. The office is prohibited

by the federal law to give out the contact information for these students. However, they

agreed to and did disseminate the survey using the listserv for my research. This strategy

supposedly reached all Chinese graduate students at Red College.

     Green College does not have one office in charge of all international students. They

have a close version, which is the student affairs office at the graduate center. This office

covers most of the lower level graduate students (1st and 2nd-year master's and doctoral

students) from most of the colleges that offer graduate programs. For this reason, Green

College is regarded as one entity instead of separate campuses although the college is

more decentralized than Red College. I asked the office to disseminate the online survey

link to its listserv and was later informed that they did. I supplemented their listserv by

contacting all the Chinese graduate students I had interviewed, asking them to finish the

online survey. I also asked these students to provide the survey link to their friends who

were Chinese graduate students. To enhance the response rate, I printed out the online

survey and distributed the surveys through the Chinese graduate contacts. For the first 40 print surveys, I asked one contact in Northeast City to distribute which he did. For the second 40 print surveys, two contacts in Northeast City split the distribution. These contacts handed out these surveys to their Chinese graduate friends on social as well as private occasions as they were the chairperson of the Chinese graduate student organizations at Green College. Through these combined recruitment efforts, it can reasonably be argued that the sampling frame includes the majority of the population of Chinese graduate students at Green College. Student Affairs Office has lower level graduate students from most campuses and the Chinese student organizations usually claim membership of most of the Chinese graduate students on respective campuses. There is a selection bias, though, considering that those who finished the survey are not random. However, some information is better than none (Sue & Ritter, 2007), particularly for a research that is as novel as this one.

Surveys. Surveys are conducive to generating patterns (Weisberg, 2005). For identity studies, surveys are a common research tool. They are mostly used to obtain the self-structure (Owens, Robinson, & Smith-Lovin, 2010). The survey for this research, however, pursues a different goal. It is implemented to gain insight into the relationship between networks of social relations and identity.

The survey asks for the respondents' general socio-demographic information, "important people" as well as "time bound people" (people the focal person spends the most time with) in respondents' lives, and the importance of six identities. The number of "important people" and "time bound people" and Chinese composition of "important people" and "time bound people" are significant predictors of identity importance.

Usually demographic information questions are at the end of a questionnaire, when the respondents feel more comfortable answering personal questions (Dillman, 2007). However, considering the importance of the demographics and the possibility that the respondents might stop before they get to the end of the survey due to its length, demographics were placed at the beginning of the survey.

It seems that "important people"[7] and "time bound people" are different people with limited overlap. The interviewees tended not to nominate people they spend the most awake time with as the most "important people" in their lives. Newly arrived students as well as students who have been in the U.S. for a substantial period of time neglected to mention those they see every day: the non-Chinese cohorts, lab mates, technicians, and other professionals with one exception – their supervisors. It seems that the most "important people" and the "time bound people" are different groups of individuals.

I define "important people" using part of Granovetter's (1973) concept of the strength of tie. "Important people" refers to: 1) the ones that you have intense positive emotions for; 2) the ones you would confide in; and 3) the ones you would reciprocate services with. I leave out one piece of Granovetter's perception of "strong ties": time frequency. Drawing from recent literature (e.g., Bearmen & Parigi, 2004), I add one dimension to the definition: the people that you are most likely to talk about important matters in your life, whether they live near you or far away. Time frequency is parceled out to stand alone to generate a second group of people: "time bound people."

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[7] Defined in the survey as people the respondent 1. Has an emotional attachment to; 2. Reciprocates services with; 3. Confides in; and 4. Talks about important matters with.

For each person thus named ("important people" as well as "time-bound people"), I ask about his/her demographics and relationships with the focal person. I also ask for an aggregate number of "importance people" and "time bound people." This is used to obtain proxy information on respondents' number of ties and ethnic composition of the networks of social relations. I calculate homophily and homogeneity measures for the networks thus obtained in the survey. Descriptive analysis and hypotheses testing are based on these data using Stata.

The identity importance section asks the respondent to rate the importance of identities: ethnic identity (Chinese from mainland China), family member identity, friend identity, and professional identity. The question reads: *"We now ask the importance of the major identities you might have. Please drag the importance indicator along the scale 0-100, "1" being least important and "100" the most important."*

General research collection procedures. For the online survey, I separated the two universities by having two different Qualtrics survey links, for the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate differences between two sociocultural environments. Two links ensured that the datasets were not confused. I have previously explained the dissemination processes at the two universities. There were 95 total responses to the online survey at Red College. At Green College, there were 21 responses to the online survey and 56 responses to the print version of the online survey. In total, Green College provided 77 responses to the survey. Usable responses are 119 from the two colleges. As low as the usable responses are, the number of usable responses is sufficient for a multivariate analysis (Allison, 1999).

Survey data analysis. The survey took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete on average, although some respondents took longer (20-25 minutes). Students read a verbal script highlighting the voluntary nature of the questionnaire and my intent of protecting their anonymity. The following is the demographic profile of the sample when the population of Chinese graduate students at Green College is unknown.

Table 5

Survey Sample Demographics 2 (N=119)

	Mean	SD	Range
Gender (male =1)	0.50		
Age (years)	27.05	3.56	20.00-38.00
Location (NE=1)	0.54		
Time in US (years)	3.20	2.04	0.00-9.00
Marital Status (married=1)	0.28		
Program (doctoral=1)	0.76		
Income (scholarship=1)	0.68		

Of the 119 respondents included in the final dataset (around 50 responses were deleted due to the missing data), about 50% of respondents are male. In general, this is a group of students who are young, mostly unmarried, middle class (as least most students self-identify as middle class due to the fact they have stable scholarships), and highly educated. The sample is evenly split between the two locations. The students had been in the U.S. for an average of 3.2 years. The network characteristics of these respondents are detailed in the substantive chapter: Chapter 7: "Quantitative Insights."

Theoretical expectations and hypotheses are included in the substantive chapter. The coding and data analysis procedure are delineated in the substantive chapter. The survey data address the following research questions: What are the implications of the composition of Chinese international students' networks of social relations for their

identities? The data are also used to examine the impact of place and time on the respondents' identity.

Validity, reliability, and generalizability. The online survey's validity includes the validity of measures and respondents' answers. The validity "of a measure can be evaluated only by examining the connection between the question and the attitude, behavior, or fact that it purports to measure" (Sue & Ritter, 2007, p. 39). This research focuses on three identities: role, group, and category identities. Certain proxy questions for group identities are included. The other focus of the research, social relations, is also included. Therefore, the instrument is generally valid. However, the measure of identity has a component of affect and does not completely fit the "identity salience" concept that is more behavior based. A better measure might be used in future design to capture the behavioral aspect of the concept.

The validity of the data collected with the instrument is decided by three factors: "1) if respondents feel pressure to respond in socially desirable ways, 2) if respondents do not have or cannot accurately estimate the information being requested, and 3) if respondents do not have opinions on topics they are being asked about" (Sue & Ritter, 2007, p. 42). There is no social pressure for the respondents to provide socially desirable answers. As a matter of fact, one of the frustrations this research has is that many people chose not to give answers with comments such as "why do you want to know this?" This is due to the private nature of many of the relational questions. To have a reliable dataset, 53 survey responses were deleted at the data analysis stage for lack of information. As for accurate estimates, there are several network size questions that a small number of respondents provided vague answers to, such as 10+. Since such answers are important

and small in number, I recoded these answers as definite numbers which does not harm the validity of the data. The third criterion of validity listed above is not really relevant.

The reliability and generalizability of the survey data is closely related to its validity. The minor issues stated in the above paragraph were treated to minimize reliability and generalizability problems. Another issue arises from the fact that the survey is long. To make sure the survey responses are consistent, I moved the demographics to the beginning of the survey. In general, the dataset is reliable.

A glaring shortcoming of using online survey for relational research is the extremely low response rate. Although I do not know the exact number of the Chinese graduate students at Green College, I estimate the combined responses from the two universities probably only accounted for around 3% of the population. The print version fares much better. The two batches of mail survey using exactly the same online format witnesses 70% response rate. Some responses in the second batch were not included because they arrived later than the deadline. In future studies, I might try to use a mixed-mode survey to enhance response rate.

Limitations

There are several limitations related with the data. The first one is that the survey data are not completely random. Efforts were made to cover the entire populations of the Chinese graduate students at both Red College and Green College. However, the Green College sample is not representative due to the fact that there is not a complete name list, and certain campuses might have been over represented because Chinese organizations were my primary contacts. Consequently, the findings of the survey cannot be generalized to the population of the Chinese graduate students at the two colleges, even if

the Red College sample is probably more random. That is, since I cannot compare the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample to the populations of Chinese graduate students at the two colleges which are unknown and find no statistically significant differences, I cannot say the sample is representative. Therefore, the results cannot claim generalizability. Furthermore, although most responses are from online survey version, some responses are collected using the print outs of the online survey which might make the comparison between the two colleges not as accurate as it should be.

Another limitation has to do with the type of data this research collected. Data from the interviews and the survey are cross sectional, not longitudinal. Such an approach might lose some details of each individual's identity change over time compared with a longitudinal approach. Also, I cannot claim causality using cross sectional data while causality might be of great significance for a study such as this. I did ask interviewees to provide information on identity change by comparing a time period of 4-5 years before they began their current graduate programs versus the time they have been in their current program. However, the data on their previous identities and networks of social relations are not data collected at that time point of research but reflective data with possible biases derived from memory mistakes and other issues. Future studies can pursue the topic of identity change with systematic longitudinal data.

As stated earlier, the truthfulness of interview information is an issue. For various reasons, the informants may provide false information. One way of dealing with such issues is to reiterate to the respondents that the researcher does not impose moral judgments on their answers. Another remedy lies in the mixed methods used for this

study. The quantitative survey data can serve as a triangulation to correct errors in the qualitative part.

In addition, the measure of identity salience is not ideal, as it is not behavior oriented. In network of relations and identity questions, the words "important" and "major" are used, which indicate an emotional component. The interview data show that most respondents understand "important people" as people they are emotionally attached to. However, the salience of identity is a behavior based concept. In the absence of a good identity salience measure, those questions are necessary substitutes. But in future studies, new measures and questions are needed to address the precise behavioral dimension of the problematic on the link between commitment, identity and behavior.

Ethical considerations are important in protecting the informants' confidentiality. In the interview process, I followed the instructions specified on the IRB form. I asked the respondents for their written consent to participate in the study and informed them of their rights. For the online survey, the introduction page contained information on the nature of the study and the confidentiality of the participants. The respondents consented by pressing the "continue" button. In the data analysis process, I used pseudonyms for the informants, the universities, and cities they were from. For the survey data, respondents did not have to identify themselves, and the analysis results are aggregated. I coded and kept the data in separate places that only I could access.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of the major methods this dissertation research used to best answer the research questions. A mixed methods approach is suitable as this is a research that makes one of the first attempts to understand

identity processes from the identity theory perspectives with implied social relations. Such an approach is also required by the fact that the research questions are concerning mechanisms as well as generalizability. The definition of identity in the tradition of symbolic interactionism with the cultural meaning at the center necessitates a comparative angle. Cultural meanings are socially and historically defined. Therefore, a comparison along the two dimensions of time and sociocultural environment provides us the opportunity to look into the network identity process. In this chapter, I also addressed various methodological issues including sampling, instrumental design, data collection, analysis, generalizability, validity and reliability.

Chapter 5

Emergent Identities: The Role of Spatial Context

Introduction

This chapter examines the ways cultural differences between places affect

networks of social relations and therefore identity. I used the interview data to explain the

city difference in the identity process: the ways in which a group of Chinese graduate

students develop new identities differently due to their specific localities in the U.S. Place

difference reveals that different social contexts provide different opportunities and

constraints for new identities to develop. However, the historical background of the two

places is equally important because cities of the same size and complexity have different

cultural content as a result of differential historical developments.

Social relations provide the possibility for new identities to develop and take root.

For meanings associated with a network position to be internalized as identity, people

need to remain in one network of social relations long enough for the expectations of an

identity to be absorbed by the carrier of the identity. Given the "looking glass" (Cooley,

1992) process of identity formation (the reiterative subject object interaction), the

definition of identity provided by identity theory asks what the mechanism between

identity and social relations is. That is, under what network condition of social relations

do identities form and transform?

The addition and multiplexity of long standing ties or relationships in networks is

imperative to the rise of new identities. "Multiplexity is the overlap of roles, exchanges,

or affiliations in a social relationship" (Verbrugge, 1979, p. 1286). That is, one person

can be connected to an individual through multiple relationships. For example, two

people might simultaneously be friends and colleagues. Social contexts in different geographical areas have specific features that influence potential ties formed within a person's network of social relations. As a result, the sociocultural contexts in the two regions provide different identity possibilities for their residents.

Feld's theory of shared foci of activity provides pertinent insight. Feld (1981) states:

> The relevant aspects of the social environment can be seen as foci around which individuals organize their social relations. A focus is defined as a social, psychological, legal, or physical entity around which joint activities are organized" (e.g., workplaces, voluntary organizations, hangouts, families, etc.). As a consequence of these interactions associated with joint activities, individuals whose activities are organized around the same focus will tend to become interpersonally tied and form a cluster. (p. 1016)

Localities are highly important for the social activities and social opportunities for residents. These localities provide the basis for shared foci of activity, such as shared religion and church membership, shared laboratory or department, and shared living spaces.

The two localities of this research, Northeast City and Southeast City, are drastically different sociocultural contexts. The two social environments provide identity pools of various size, mandate the relationship among available identities, and demand opposite sequences of identity acquisition and social relations at the dyadic (Rivera, Soderstrom, & Uzzi, 2010) and group levels. The social structure defined as social

relations at different levels and the self consisting of a hierarchy of identities reflect each other.

Individuals are proactive actors enacting their identity meanings, often resulting in changing the identities of others around them and the formation of homogenous networks of social relations as these individuals seek out and interact with similarly-minded people. Collectively, these students' experiences transferring from a cultural environment in their home country to a new one in the U.S. tells a vivid story of how identity and social relations impact one another.

New Religious Identity and Social Relations

New identities are adopted for various reasons. However, new identities are inevitably related with social relations of the focal person who acquires this new identity. The social relations of the focal person might be the precedence and reason for the occurrence of a new identity. Usually this happens when the dyadic relationship is a strong one and embedded in a densely connected primary group (Cooley, 1992) in a smaller community.

The order of identity and networks of social relations might be reversed. That is, a new identity can develop for other reasons than connections in a larger community although in such cases connections often play some role such as introducing the focal person to an opportunity for new identities to develop. Yet once the identity is rooted or, in other words, the identity has high importance, the focal person seek similar "others" (people who have the same identities) to interact with.

An illustration of the interaction between identity and social relations at various levels is the new religious identity. China's official religious policy is that religion must

be monitored by the government. Although Christian membership has grown exponentially in China in recent years and especially in rural China, the official stand in most of the school textbooks on religion is negative. One way to investigate the interaction is to delineate how Chinese graduate students who experienced a transition develop new identities differently in two regions, each having unique social cultural features. When certain sociocultural characteristics are strong in one region, the relationship between networks of social relations and the development of new identities related with the regional cultural characteristics is easy to find. Whether social relations precede networks or vice versa has to do with specific sociocultural characteristics.

Religious respondents from the two universities tell different conversion stories. The permeation of regional culture into strong dyadic relationships as well as primary groups and eventually into the self-structure (or, conversely, from self-structure to strong dyadic relations and groups spanning organizations and geological regions) can be best captured by comparing the conversion stories of respondents in the two cities.

Religious identity in a smaller closely connected community. Students from Red College in Southeast City tend to tell social narratives: stories of how religion changed their life for the better because of loved ones' changed behavior and how loved ones' realigned behavior (with their religious identities) compelled them to convert. In other words, they encountered and developed religious identity through strong social relations. The fact that there is official control over religious belief in China and the number of Chinese Christians rise dramatically in recent years makes these conversion stories even more interesting as some students went all the way from despising religions to becoming

highly religious. The conversion is a result of the new social environment in Southeast City as well as the effort of Christians within the Chinese community.

HYJ told his story of conversion this way, "*It has to do with my wife. When we came to the U.S., our relationship in the marriage was not that good. It was mainly because of financial issues. Plus I didn't have a job. I went to church mainly because my wife likes singing. There is a teacher in the church… Then she got familiar with this teacher. After that she went to church a lot. In fact, she had been receptive to religion. She just didn't have guidance... After she came here, she also went to church. After we knew the teacher, we began to go to that Chinese church. After that, she became a Christian very soon. She realized she had a lot of shortcomings to overcome, especially in our relationship. She gradually changed for better. I was like a witness of this change due to her faith.*"

HYJ suggested that he converted to Christianity because the meaning of being a Christian shares a close link with another important identity of his: the role of a husband. After HYJ's wife became a Christian, her faith led her to examine her own behavior and life choice. She examined her attitude and her behavior toward her husband, ultimately resulting in a more satisfying relationship for both. Consequently, HYJ felt an obligation to explore religion to respond to his wife's change, stating: "*I felt I should also try.*" In other words, his wife's new Christian identity improved her behavior towards her husband. To respond to this behavior change due to her new religious identity, the husband felt obliged to embrace his wife's new identity. Becoming a Christian was a gesture of improving himself as a husband for his wife.

One strong tie leads to multiple "strong ties," until the focal person is embedded in a closely knit religious group. HYJ's wife was introduced to the religious community through a close relationship with a church member – her singing teacher. HYJ converted because of his wife. Subsequently, HYJ and his wife built a densely-knit church community where they felt at home. As HYJ remarked, "*In terms of our relationship with other church members, most of the time we are communicating about our lives. Our relationship is very equal. We care for each other. We try to help each other. In the group, we are closer because we often meet and the number of people is small.*" Strong dyadic relations introduce individuals to activities or social contexts, resulting in additional ties built through this shared focus of activity and solidarity with others.

Primary groups in a smaller sociocultural context in Southeast City played an important role in HJY's conversion. For religion to become one of the major identities, human connections are a crucial element. People draw other people together and give religion relevance. Eventually, trust that arises in a closely knit community – primary group - where people meet regularly fosters a cohesive social safety net in which equality and reciprocity prosper (Coleman, 1988). The permeation of religion is the process of the gradual permeation of intimacy among people in one's networks of social relations. HYJ's depiction revealed that, "*They don't force you. But in the process of interaction, you feel this group is worth joining. It's the right direction. You will identify with it.*"

The importance of the institution of the church, therefore, relies on the significance of the people in one's networks of social relations: dyadic relationships and primary groups. Friendship and partnership precede the adoption of religious identity. Without people, religion would not take root. When asked if he would convert to Christianity in

China, HYJ replied, "*Not sure. I felt I probably would not go the direction I have in the U.S. I might still be outside of religion. There are family and environmental factors in my conversion here. In China, people don't really accept Christianity. At least, I didn't have that immediate environment.*" HYJ's story reflects a critical mechanism through which new identities develop: the impact of the "strong ties" in one's network of social relations.

The power of the church at Red College and the larger community in which Red College is embedded encouraged newcomers to the community to have significant people in their networks of social relations who are also religious. According to Pew Research's data (2013) on religion in the U.S., 87% of the residents in the state where Red College is located believe in God (absolutely certain) while only 64% of those in the state Green College is located hold that belief (absolutely certain). The national average is 71%. On the importance of religion in one's life, 67% of the population in the state of Red College regards religion as very important while only 46% of the population in the state of Green College thinks religion is very important in their lives. The national average is 56%. With regard to church service attendance, 47% of the residents in the state of Red College go to church at least once a week. That figure for the state of Green College is only 32%. The national average is 39%.

GJ from Red College told a similar story of immersing herself in the small Chinese community that helped her to adopt her new Christian identity. Like HYJ, her story started with an important friend at Red College: a "sister" (religious female friend) from a religious group called Fellowship. GJ thus recalled their acquaintance, "*I want to mention her 'cause I did receive a lot of help from her when I first came here. She's very friendly,*

very kind and nice. She also is my group leader in our student fellowship." GJ's gratitude for her friendship was obvious, "*When I came here I was not always asking people for help, but she always provided for me. That really made me feel warm, even if I didn't speak out or ask, she will be there for me.*" The new friendship and GJ's admiration of her "sister" had another result, "*She's a friend. I kind of feel that's one of the reasons I converted to Christianity.*" As a newly converted Christian, GJ found her role model in this "sister," "*She has kind of set an example for us. I felt like she always did better than many others. She is very friendly and she can do something that others can't. She became a Christian when she was like 15 years old in China.*"

What is unique about this case is that GJ's mother was also Christian. But her mother, who was also on GJ's top 5 "important people" list, was not the one that converted GJ to Christianity. What was the difference? "*My mom is a Christian in China, but I don't have many people around me being Christian. Actually I didn't understand much about it,*" GJ explained. In contrast, the current religious group in which she was embedded was a densely connected one. GJ and this sister met quite regularly in religious settings, "*We have prayer meeting once a week, fellowship together, prayer meeting actually at her house. Her family is here. She always provides something to eat for us.*"

After merging herself into a well-integrated religious group led by her church "sister," GJ felt the need to convert to this common identity. And she did, very quickly, "*I became a Christian not long after I came here.*" Besides that sister, a pastor was also important in her current social relation network, "*His teaching is really good, beyond my expectation before. He's also really nice, although there are many people in the church, he can name many names. He devotes a lot of time.*"

GJ's story reaffirms the theme of HYJ's story: the acquisition of a new identity tends to happen when the meaning of the new identity which is adopted by "important people" in the focal person's life is pertinent to the relationship between the two. GJ's mother was a Christian just like her "sister" friend. But GJ's mother differed from this "sister" friend in two aspects. The first aspect is stated above in terms of a community or a primary group sharing a common identity. The second aspect is that the Christian identity of GJ's mother is superseded by the identities of the mother/daughter relationship. GJ did not have to adopt a new identity to maintain a strong bond to her mother because they were already connected by kinship. HYJ, on the other hand, felt compelled to adopt the Christian identity because his wife's new Christian identity includes a meaningful change in her thought of the husband/wife relationship, which changed her behavior (Burke & Stets, 2009). Similarly, GJ's "sister" friend treated her as friend defined by this sister's Christian identity, ultimately reciprocated by GJ's conversion to Christianity.

As a counter example, GJ's story reaffirmed the identity adoption mechanism in a smaller and closely connected community at Red College and the larger society of Southeast City: strong dyadic ties, redefinition of the existent dyadic relationships with the religious identity meaning, and primary groups of the same religious belief.

In this social environment of Southeast City, there was pressure to convert to religion, as PJ from Red College observed: "*One thing surprises (me is) how much Christianity really affects your life. I thought really it's a personal thing, it's private. But it seems really not, at least in the department, in the lab, it's like if you are a Christian immediately you are a friend.*" That does not mean, however, that she had more

non-Chinese friends. The overwhelming majority of "important people" and "weak ties" (who could potentially become "strong ties") selected by the respondents were Chinese people. However, not every respondent embedded in this religion friendly social environment cultivated a religious identity. Many interviewees did not eventually embrace religion although the general attitude towards religion was benign.

Closely knit community versus fragmented big city life. Religiosity is high in the state where Red College is located, and the social environment in Southeast City is highly conducive to religious identity taking root among newcomers in the community through the new comers' dyadic relationships and primary groups which are likely composed of religious people. On the other hand, it is less likely for such an identity to develop in an environment (the state in which Green College is located) where the church is merely one of the numerous institutions and less of an integral part of the community, at least through the mechanism of dyadic relationships and primary groups.

Northeast City is arguably the most secular city in the U.S. with many competing lifestyles available. As Bender (1987) commented:

> Northeast City constitutes one of the most complicated and contentious of human environments. In politics, in the economy, and in its intellectual life, the appearance of disorder and confusion has prompted attempts to rationalize and control experience. There have been …repeated attempts to reform the city's culture, to tighten intellectual life and its sustaining institutions. Again and again, reformers try to establish authoritative institutions…Again and again, the city proved to be the solvent of their dreams. (pp. iv-v)

In such a culturally diverse environment, religion's influence cannot make a permanent impact on its residents.

At Red College, the Chinese community was small and tightly connected. This homogeneous community quickly absorbed newcomers into its densely connected networks of social relations where religion is a salient, shared identity. The small size of the Chinese community and the high density not only constrained the students but also provided trust and familiarity, successfully socially integrating newcomers into life at Red College and into the religious circle. In contrast, Green College Chinese students lived in a diverse Chinese community. The pool of Chinese people with religious affiliation and other characteristics is large for the newcomers to draw ties from. In contrast to Red College students, the adoption of religious identity for Green College respondents was less constrained and not driven by social relations. However, these students sought out people of similar identity or even attempt to expand the circle of religious friends by actively converting them once their religious identity is established.

The Chinese students' highly intimate stories of becoming a Christian at Red College are, therefore, also stories of living in a smaller well connected community. Those who advocate religion at Red College are these Chinese students' friends, classmates and professors within the closely knit Chinese community and a few American friends. The dramatic conversion stories told by Green College students have little to do with the people around them. These stories are instead driven by individual needs for fulfillment or redemption. They imply a certain degree of freedom as well as a sense of loneliness in the life offered by a large and fragmented community. Individual choice of identities is not as much constrained in Northeast City by social relations as it is

in Southeast City. Or human agency shows when it comes to which identity to adopt by individuals in Northeast City.

In general, the different sizes of the Chinese community in the two cities have different impacts on the self-structure of their members which is composed of multiple identities since size and differentiation correlate. There is a clear dependence of self-complexity on relations (Smith-Lovin, 2007). The major principle upon which we can draw is the relationship between community size and differentiation. In virtually any organized life—from the abstract level social system such as society and international community to the low level social system such as groups —larger size leads to increased internal differentiation (Mayhew, Levinger, McPherson, & James, 1972). Increased structural differentiation inevitably leads to role differentiation (Durkheim, 1997).

Tonnies (2005) and Wirth (1938) tend to stress the communal basis of a simple society and the lack of bonding in a large modern society. Wirth (1938) thus contrasts a closely knit community with a large urban community:

> Large numbers account for individual variability, the relative absence of intimate personal acquaintanceship, the segmentalization of human relations which are largely anonymous, superficial, and transitory, and associated characteristics. Density involves diversification and specialization, the coincidence of close physical contact and distant social relations, glaring contrasts, a complex pattern of segregation, the predominance of formal social control, and accentuated friction, among other phenomena. Heterogeneity tends to break down rigid social structures and to produce increased mobility, instability, and insecurity, and the

affiliation of the individuals with a variety of intersecting and tangential social

groups with a high rate of membership turnover. (p. 1)

The systemic model (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974), however, defines geographical

community as:

A complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal

associational ties rooted in family life and on-going socialization processes. At the

same time it is fashioned by the large scale institutions of mass society. Indeed, it

is a generic structure of mass society, whose form, content, and effectiveness vary

widely and whose defects and disarticulations reflect the social problems of the

contemporary period. (p. 329)

Solidarity can be found in the strong dyadic relations and primary groups in the

adoption of religious identity in Southeast city. On the other hand, the stories of

conversion told by respondents from Green College have a different texture, reflecting

the social cultural environment in Northeast City and human agency in the identity

adoption process.

Religious identity in a larger loosely connected community. In Northeast City,

religion is highly visible in terms of its diversity. However, religious institutions are only

one of many options for activities, social connections, and civic participation. Therefore,

religion is a less prominent institution in this environment. As CJQ from Green College

pointed out, "*I don't go to church because in Northeast City you have so much to do, you

don't have to go to church to socialize.*" For her, church is only an alternative to the

numerous outlets available for socialization easily accessible in Northeast City.

It is not that CJQ was not approached by people advocating religion to her. On the contrary, she encountered people advocating religion "*quite often*." CJQ continued, "*I was surprised that not only American but some Asian people are very into religion. I think I have been asked by Chinese, Koreans, and some American people.*" However, none of these religious enthusiasts were close or active ties in her life, "*they're just students at school inviting people to Bible study. Some people organize some activities or events like going to field trip together or something like that.*" These people made no impact on her attitude towards religion, "*I just don't believe what the Bible says, so there is no meaning to go there to study.*" In other words, these "weak ties" (people of minimal importance to the focal person) barely sway non-believers' stand on religion, not to mention their adoption of religious identity as a major one.

In a sociocultural environment where religion is not a prominent factor, conversion stories have a different outlook. LSJ from Green College had a conversion experience which turned out to be an unexpected and isolated incident not driven by "strong ties." The story started with a socializing purpose of many Chinese students when attending a church event, "*A church contacted ZYY Shijie as they had a concert. I didn't know it was a church concert. I had been to church before with friends. I went to the concert because I wanted to know more people to expand my life circle. Some other schoolmates also said they would go. But it turned out I was the only student going there. It was a big church gospel concert in New Jersey. There were people there communicating with me.*"

Then came an emotional moment as LSJ remembered, "*When the formal gospel began, I cried a lot. I was moved.*" She cried over the Gospel testimony story – a very

relatable story similar to her own, "*That Gospel testimony story talked about a Chinese student coming to the U.S. to get his/her master's or PhD. Then he was looking for a job. In the process, he ran into a lot of difficulties because of friends or his own doing. He lost his purpose. I felt the same thing. My previous goal was to come to the U.S. to further my education. That had been my dream since I was 9. Now I have realized my dream and I don't know what to do next.*"

LSJ's conversion to Christianity seemed devoid of a social basis. None of her friends were in the church when the incident happened. None of them were active church goers, and LSJ had limited knowledge of the Christian teachings. Attending the church event was unintentional as she was unaware it was a church concert. She attended the concert because she was looking for socialization opportunities. LSJ was lonely. She was also looking for meaning in life when she found herself in the church setting. That is, she was looking for a new identity that could give her some new meaning in life. The Gospel testimony story touched her deeply because it met her emotional needs.

LSJ's story is one of searching for any meaningful identity to guide her and fulfill her need for community. That is, there are many other identities that might fulfill her need for a new identity and are ready candidates. It so happened that her loneliness was echoed best in the vast chapel full of strangers, and so she converted to Christianity. If her need for a community and a meaning attached to it was met in a different setting, say a nationality group get-together, she might very well have developed a nationality-based identity. "Weak ties" do provide opportunities for the adoption of new identities as LSJ learned about the event from an acquaintance, but which new identity to be adopted is less constrained by dyadic "strong ties" and primary groups as in the case of Red College.

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Fragmented life patterns in a large community seem to provide more freedom for people to choose the religious identity over other possible identities. In the case of the small Chinese community at Red College, a closely knit collective is conducive to the command of norms and reciprocal behavior that helped elevate the religious identity in the community. A loosely connected association in the case of Northeast City is prone to opportunistic exploitation (Burt, 1995) as illustrated in the gospel testimony story told by LSJ as well as less restrained adoption of the religious identity because a differentiated social environment with sparse and long-range connections produces a culture that is abstract and relativistic (Fuchs, 2001).

Identity theory traditionally defines identity as a set of acquired and/or imposed meanings that are applied to the self in relation to specific social roles (e.g., boss versus subordinate), and as a member of a group (e.g., member of an athletic club) and/or category (e.g., Americans). Therefore, different types of culture and pockets within these cultures provide different meaning systems to be absorbed into the self-structure (Smith-Lovin, 2007). A larger community has more possible identities to be adopted because of the large number of subcultures.

The sense of isolation in Northeast City, parallel to the more freedom in the process of identity adoption, is tangible, though, as LSJ commented, "*In the U.S. (I would think she was talking about her locality – Northeast City), if you don't initiate an interaction, no one will. Never. That's why we say Americans are in lack of human bonds.*"

Though her accidental conversion was sudden, LSJ's belief was deep and her newly adopted identity was rapidly ingrained. She was frank about religion's importance,

"*it is the most important part of my life.*" She also went to church regularly - "*After that, I went to church every week.*" Religion provided her needed emotional support, "*So now God is the most important for me in my heart. It doesn't mean parents, etc. are not important. But God is the most important as he's always with you. Others such as your parents, your kids cannot be always with you. If you have some emotional support like that, you can rely on him whatever you do. You don't have to rely on a human being.*"

Contrary to the adoption process of religious identity in Southeast City, in which social relations leads to identity, LSJ's identity process followed the opposite direction: identity to social relations. Her relationship with her boyfriend in a different city started with Bible studies after LSJ acquired her religious identity. LSJ believed it was their common belief that eventually drew them into a relationship. She also reached out to fellow Chinese friends to spread the Gospel, "*I have some Chinese friends in Northeast City University and other colleges. I usually call them every week. One reason I contact them is to spread the Gospel so that they can become Christians. I feel this is a task endowed on me by God. If it is not for God's work, I might not be able to call them every week to care for their life. It's also a kind of communication. Because of God's work, I'm not shy to initiate interaction and made a lot of friends: friends and friends' friends.*"

With her strong and sudden turn in identity, LSJ proactively expanded her circle of religious friends. An eloquent speaker, LSJ put her new identity in a very lofty way, "*Now I have the religious belief, I know I have a lot to do for my belief: to love people or to have other higher spiritual pursuits. These pursuits cannot be easily realized or cannot ever be realized in your life time. So you have a long term space spanning goal. You will*

never feel disappointed as you will inch forward forever. Material pursuits are easily

satisfied."

In the social environment of Northeast City (much larger than Southeast City)
where there is the general indifference and even hostility toward religion according to the
interviews, the reversed order of identity to social relations – dyadic relationships and
groups spanning organizations and geographical regions - is even more obvious with
students who came to the U.S. with a Christian identity. LSQ's narrative from Green
College is a compelling illustration of this hostility experienced from those around the
students, particularly other Chinese students as a result of social environment in China,
towards those who choose a religion, resulting in the difficulty to maintain her religious
identity.

LSQ was a Christian in China, and was still very active as a church member in this
very large city in the Northeast of the U.S. She had a clear vision of being a Christian, "*In
terms of Christian responsibility, I mostly think about my own responsibility. The major
part is our relationship with God. When it comes to our relations with human, we can do
some community service. But I don't do much now. I live with two church friends, one
aunt and a man on the same floor. We get along well. If you talk about being a Christian,
our relation with human is secondary. The major relationship is our connection with
God."* Although LSQ could not be involved in services in the community to fulfill her
responsibility as a Christian, she still maintained a core belief of her identity as a
Christian: putting her relationship with God ahead of human relationships. She created a
safety net around her by sharing residence with fellow Christians separate from the
common hostile attitude expressed by those around her.

This safety net, however, could not protect her from others' indifference to or prejudice against her religion. She had to defend her religious identity to people around her who were against religion. When asked if she felt that there was prejudice against Christians in her community, LSQ said, "*I know some people around me. They see Christians as monsters. It might be Chinese education as in the Chinese textbooks the missionaries are depicted as evil spirits. Just like when I was reading history books when I was young, I felt all the missionaries are bad. They want to invade our country, blahblahblah… I think most Chinese students come with some pre-imposed prejudice.*" LSQ's friends were mostly Chinese immigrants with anti-religious sentiments.

LSQ pointed out that these people were not against LSQ as a person; they simply could not accept her religious affiliation and argued strongly against it, "*Because most of my classmates are in science, to be objective would be at odds with religion.*" LSQ had to defend herself, "*No, they're not against me. We get along well. But when we talk about Christianity, they might have some rigid pre-imposed impressions of Christianity. I cannot make sense with them no matter how I try to explain to them.*" Her friends were not patient with her defense, "*Sometimes they will cut me short by concluding in their own way what Christianity is.*" Although some people were more tolerant than others, generally, "*They don't want to talk about religion.*" LSQ was not overly optimistic for a fair treatment of her Christian identity but hoped that, "*At least they can be not so prejudiced against Christians.*"

LSQ's case is interesting because she touched on two social environments where religious institution is a weaker presence than other locations. LSQ actually carried two spaces (communities she has the most contact with in her daily life) with her when she

battled for her religious identity: her home country where she was raised, and the current city she resided in. Both spaces were not particularly friendly to religion.

LSQ resided in an immediate social environment where she interacted mostly with other Chinese citizens. LSQ chose friends who were accepting of her faith and her identity: her husband and her church friends were the most "important people" in her life. However, the people she spent the most time with were less understanding of her religious identity as she described above. Most of these friends were from China. Therefore, she lived in a Chinese space defined by the negative attitude towards organized religion carried over by her Chinese friends.

LSQ from Green College is a unique case as religiosity is less common in the Green College sample. However, by examining the experience of this unique case we actually learn more about the general pattern of context influencing religious identity.

A comparison of the two universities reveals drastically different experiences concerning faith. At Red College, the newcomers (Chinese graduate students living in the U.S. for less than one year) were approached by the old-timers (Chinese graduate students living in the U.S. for more than one year) who helped them. The personal connection encouraged the newcomers to adopt religion. At Green College, the Chinese students' adoption of religious identity was unpredictable, often controlled by life's whims. Those who already had religious identity found themselves constantly in a need to defend their belief or expand their circle of friends by converting non-believers.

In general, when it comes to the religious identity, the experience of Red College and Green College students seems to suggest opposite directions of development. While social relations precede identity in the small and densely connected Chinese community

at Red College in Southeast City, identity precedes networks of social relations in the large and sparsely connected Chinese community at Green College in Northeast City. Social networks and identity interact in a complex way that is influenced by the strength of particular cultures and institutions as well as the size of the communities in the two sociocultural environments of Northeast City and Southeast City.

Discussion

In this chapter, I analyzed a new identity that distinguishes the two regions: the religious identity. The fact that Red College and the larger community which Red College is embedded in are smaller social environment with much redundancy compared with Green College and its larger community provides the opportunity for the religious identity to prosper. Newcomers are received by people who are more likely to be religious compared with residents of Northeast City. Spouses redefine their relationship with their partners based on their religious identity. Due to the relationship defined by these strong religious dyadic ties and the closely knit religious primary groups, the newcomers adopt religion as their new identity, and grant this new identity great importance. The large and sparse communities at Green College and its larger community of Northeast City, on the other hand, provide more identity possibilities which the Chinese students adopted with less constraint. The acquisition of religious identity is usually sudden and difficult to predict, although a weak tie (acquaintance) is usually involved in the introduction of the new possible identity to the students. The fragmented large city life is emancipating as well as alienating. It supports people's individualistic choices of identity and propels people to cling to their accidental identities and expand networks of social relations with the like-minded.

The respondents are mostly living within the Chinese communities in the two regions. This ethnic partitioning is both voluntary and forced. The insulated ethnic communities in the two regions are, however, very different. The Chinese community at Red College and Southeast City is small. The Chinese community at Green College and Northeast City is much larger, and the social order is much more complex in this mega city. In a sense, the size of the Chinese communities coincides with that of the two cities for the respondents.

This chapter contributes to the literature of place and identity by providing a social cultural perspective of place and substantiating the social structure basis of identity in identity theory by parceling out networks of social relations: dyadic relations, primary groups, and groups spanning organizations and geographical locations. The interaction of identity and networks of social relations constrained in a specific social cultural environment can thus be observed and analyzed as shown in the analysis.

The literature that links space with identity is twofold. First, space is the content of identity. That is, place represents meaningful attachments or symbols that are absorbed into the self-structure. Space refers to the distribution of physical constructions while place is a more vague term to indicate a geographical area (Logan, 2012). Places are "salient sources of identity formation" (Schnell & Mishal, 2008, p. 242). People form a sense of identity based on their "interpretation of place, their experience with place and the demographic characteristics they bring to place" (Cuba & Hummon, 1993, p. 126). They also state that the attachment to the community has to do with the structure of the community. The attachment to place is vital in this place identity interaction (Feldman, 1990).

The second part of the literature stresses that place is the carrier of identities. Place provides the space for identity to be displayed. Place could be concrete space or cyberspace. Lien (2008) provides an "empirical assessment of the relationship between places of socialization and ethnic self-identity preferences among Asian immigrants in the U.S. from separate parts of a politically divided homeland" (p. 151). MeKenna and Barph (2004) "place the Internet in its historical context and then examine the effects of Internet use on the user's psychological well-being, the formation and maintenance of personal relationships, group memberships and social identity the workplace, and community involvement" (p. 573). Their findings suggest that users' goals, as well as the interaction between users' goals and the Internet, are functioning together to impact users.

This chapter adds more dimensions to identity studies by looking at space/place as social cultural environment that define identity network process and applying a relational perspective to activate the structural component of the definition of identity. The above mentioned literature on place as content and carrier of place identity did not investigate specifically how place plays into the formation of specific identities through social relations. That is, the macro and micro remain separate just as place and identity are barely connected through the vague glue of culture and attachment.

In the literature of social identity, sociologists have borrowed elaborately from classic works: Durkheim's (1997) collective consciousness, Marx's (1978) class consciousness, Weber's (1978) Verstehen, and Tonnies's (2005) Gemeinscaft. Social identity theory focuses on the extent to which individuals identify themselves in terms of group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Fuchs (2001) creatively distinguishes

cohesive social context from segmented sociocultural context from the perspective of social relations and the resulting cultures. Smith-Lovin (2007) examines the relationship between culture and identities: cultural meanings are building blocks to be absorbed into the self-structure composed of multiple identities. The cultural meanings of identities are important as they control identity behavior as reference (Burke, 1991; Burke & Reitzes, 1991). Stryker's role identity definition emphasizes the characters a person develops as an occupant of particular social positions, explicitly linking social structures to persons.

This chapter delineates the identity network process by combining the wisdom of the above social identity literature, and adding to this literature the interactional dynamics of the identity formation and transformation provided by the relationship data in the interviews. Specifically, this chapter shows that the identity network process is different in two different sociocultural environments: small and densely connected community versus large and sparsely connected community. In a small and densely related community such as Red College and its larger community, the culturally important identity (in this case religious identity) is acquired by a focal person due to the fact that his/her "strong ties" have this identity already. Also, for a new identity to develop in such a social environment, a circle of well-connected acquaintances who share this common identity is necessary. A third factor in the adoption process of an identity in this type of community is that the new identity should redefine the already existent dyadic relationship between the focal person and the "strong tie."

This finding is interesting because it suggests the strength of tie, the multiplexity of the relationship between the focal person and the alter, and the primary group are all important factors in the adoption of an identity that could quickly become important for

the focal person. However, the findings do not suggest that "strong ties" in a dyadic relationship could be translated directly into the acquisition of a new identity. On the contrary, the respondents made it very clear they would not have taken the new religious identity had they not been embedded in the closely knit religious groups and experienced changed behavior of the "strong ties" towards them as a result of their religious identity. This shows that the network identity process is a complex one. This finding is fundamental when constructing a model of identity network process using the above mechanisms.

On the other hand, in a large and sparsely connected sociocultural environment, the adoption of new identities often lacks social basis: the focal person is not surrounded by people with the new identity and might even have other purposes in mind when they bump into situations that prompt their acquisition of the new identity. However, once a new identity becomes important, the focal person tries to seek out similar others of the same identity to socialize with. They might even try to persuade others to adopt the same identity to expand his/her networks of social relations spanning organizations and localities with a common identity. A community such as Green College and its larger community of Northeast City provide an array of possible identities, and endow the adoption process with a certain degree of freedom.

The findings of the identity network process in a large and sparse regional network are important because they reveal that the identity network process does not always follow the network and then identity order. The network identity order is reversed when the cultural environment is diverse and fragmented. Such a culture provides many more identities to be adopted as its size and complexity (many small pockets of closely knit

networks in the larger society) could afford subcultures that could be incorporated into the self-structure. Such possible identities are adopted with less restraint, as the opportunity for the focal person to be embedded in a tightly connected group with a common identity is rare in such a large social environment as Northeast City. That is, the peer pressure for conforming to a common identity is very small, and therefore the adoption of identities is not oriented towards certain identities. People enjoy great freedom in their choice of identity. However, that does not imply the unimportance of the need for identity confirmation (Burke & Stets, 2009). Once a new identity becomes important for the focal person, he/she will seek out similar others to confirm their choice of the identity. Network of social relations becomes the consequence of the adoption of an important identity. Human agency guides the construction of networks of social relations.

Conclusion

The findings in this chapter show that the identity network process is highly complex. The larger sociocultural environment in which the social relations are embedded in is an inalienable part of studying the identity network process. Mead's work demonstrates that people internalize the roles played by others into the self-structure. This tradition is meant to show that society and self are mirrors of each other. This chapter is in the same spirit. But the relational perspective expands the group level analysis used by Mead to much more complicated social environments (Borgatii, 2009) – dyadic relationship, primary groups, and groups spanning organizations and localities.

Chapter 6

Emergent and Rooted Identities: The Role of Time Spanning

Introduction

This chapter discusses the impact of change over time on identity and networks of social relations based on the interview data. Time in these data refers to the evolution of individual networks after a major transition (Perry & Pescosolido, 2012) and the influence of this change on their identities. Change is a relevant construct in these data in two ways. First, all individuals in the data experienced a major transitional life event: the transfer from their home country, China, to begin a graduate program in the U.S. Consequently, all interviewees experienced *within*-person change in networks of social relations and identities before and after this transition.

The Chinese students' transfer from China to the U.S. causes changes in these students' social relations. Membership turnover was mainly found in friendship ties and work related ties. The contact frequency between the respondent and these ties was also lowered in certain cases. However, family ties remained stable. New "strong ties," such as those with the supervisors, formed as a result of the immigration. These changes in the respondents' network of social relations bring about new meanings to the old identities. This specific transition event also places these students among "weak ties" of drastically different demographic backgrounds who in turn become the reason for the Chinese ethnic identity to form.

The second operationalization of time reflects differences *between* individuals. I sampled interviewees who had been in their current programs (and typically in the U.S.) for various lengths of time. This variation in time helps us understand how students'

networks of social relations are different one year after coming to the U.S. relative to more years after coming and how identity evolves in conjunction with social relations.

This chapter is organized in the following order: I will list findings on the identity change that varies with the move from China to the U.S. and beyond. Then, I will illustrate how networks evolve over time spent in the U.S., and the impact of this network evolution on identities. The principle of foci is still relevant in this chapter. Also pertinent are principle of homophily,[8] the distinctiveness theory,[9] and identity/affect control identity theory.[10]

Time and the New Chinese Ethnic Identity

The time dimension added a new identity the Chinese graduate students had not developed in their home country of China. Moving from China to the U.S. and living in the host country granted these students the sense of "being Chinese." I use Chinese ethnic identity to refer to the self-identification of being a Chinese from mainland China.

For those who listed Chinese ethnic identity as an important identity, I asked if they experienced that identity in China. This question seemed naïve to them. CTT from Green College smiled when she heard the question and answered it with a rhetorical question, "*How can you feel you're Chinese when everyone around you is Chinese?*" This was a common response to the question for those who had a Chinese ethnic identity. This ethnic identity addition was the result of immigration which involved geographic

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[8] Homophily, sometimes referred as the inbreeding principle, is the phenomenon that people seek out similar other to socialized, and as result, they become more similar (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001).

[9] The distinctiveness theory states that difference showcases difference based identities (McQuire, 1984).

[10] The identity control theory (Burke & Stets, 2009) and affect control theory (Heise, 1979) depicts the human processing of identity stimuli from the social environment as a process regulated by a (affect) feedback loop.

change that altered the demographic, especially the racial/ethnic composition of the population around these respondents. China might be regarded as one of the most nationalist countries in the world (Befu, 1993), but having the Chinese ethnic identity relates to being surrounded by people other than Chinese people in the U.S. Chinese identity is not as important as the identity of a family member for many respondents. But the Chinese ethnic identity is worth investigating as it is a newly developed identity illustrating ethnic network and ethnic identity interaction in the U.S.

 As short as the time of social contact between these Chinese students and those around them is compared with immigrants, these students nonetheless developed an ethnic identity. The genesis of the students' ethnic identity is more of a product of their social relations with Chinese as well as non-Chinese than physical separation from the mainstream society for generations in the case of immigrants.

Experience with non-Chinese people, particularly "weak ties," is often the trigger of feeling one's identity as Chinese. CQ from Green College felt a strong Chinese ethnic identity when one professor criticized Chinese students' lack of English language skills. She recalled, "*I think in the classroom setting, Chinese have a disadvantage in language. Sometimes professors would target the whole Chinese student population when one student has language problem by saying, 'I know it's not you but the general Chinese student body which has this shortcoming in language (of English).' Then you would feel you as an individual represents all Chinese.*"

In another instance, Zan told a story of how she felt discussing interracial marriage in a family studies seminar. An American student gave an example of her friend (also American) whose girlfriend was Chinese. This American student elaborated on how this

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Chinese woman was not popular among her friend's family members and generalized that it must be because Chinese women are physically small, and American men deem this a physical deficiency (i.e., American men like bigger women who are usually not Chinese).

Zan was also in this classroom. With a confused look on her face, Zan commented: "*She mentioned this two or three times in class. Perhaps she did not mean to direct at me. Perhaps others present did not even notice that. But I was quite sensitive to what she said. I guess it was because I'm Chinese. I felt awkward… I couldn't understand her perception behind her statements. I didn't know how to understand her remarks. And I didn't know whether she noticed I was also present in the seminar.*"

The social distance between Chinese and non-Chinese in the two cases and instances in the following section suggests that the Chinese community and non-Chinese community do not communicate in an effective way. Most of the Chinese interviewees are embedded in their Chinese networks of social relations.

Network composition: Chinese context. One common feature of the Chinese graduate students' networks of social relations at both universities is that they are predominantly Chinese, although the two localities are drastically different in terms of racial composition. In Southeast City, more than 80% of the people are non-Hispanic white. The Asian population is around 1-2%. In Northeast City, there is no majority ethnic group. The non-Hispanic white population is around 40%. Hispanic and African populations are around 30% each. The Asian population is around 15% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). But when it comes to the racial/ethnic composition of the two groups of Chinese student respondents' networks of relations in the two cities, there was not much

difference: at both universities, around 90% of the people in the networks of the interviewees are of Asian descent. Moreover, most of these Asian ties are Chinese.

The highly homogeneous networks of these respondents show that Chinese graduate students depend heavily on their co-nationals in their adaptation to the host culture. The well-being of these students is largely a result of their interaction within the insulated Chinese community while researches show that the communication with locals is beneficial (Tsang 2001). Such interaction pattern provides benefits as well as deficiencies for the respondents. While they can take advantage of the social capital such as social support within the Chinese community, the respondents lack the necessary resources to improve their language and other skills needed for success.

Considering the sizes of the populations of the two universities and the two communities where they are located, the size difference of the Chinese communities in the two universities is drastic. Despite the size difference between the two Chinese communities, the students managed to maintain a largely Chinese network. The only exception was their supervisors. Most students mentioned their supervisors as "important people." Many of the supervisors were Americans or other nationalities.

The fact that the Chinese students' networks of relations are predominantly Chinese reveals the importance of ethnicity as the number one homophilious force in network patterning in the U.S. (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). However, in the literature, foci as well as proximity are also compelling drawing power.[11] This is not the case with the Chinese students and their non-Chinese, mostly American cohorts. The Chinese respondents' networks of relations do not have many non-Chinese, even though

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[11] Physical proximity pulls people together into closely knit communities.

they spent a lot of time in close proximity and/or engaged in organized academic activities with non-Chinese people. This suggests that social and cultural distance stemming from having two very different countries of origin is more important than proximity and organized activities in tie formation. Forced proximity and organized non-social activities (in this case academic work) cannot replace the importance of common values and attitudes underlying many voluntary social activities.

One factor shaping racial and ethnic homophily in networks of social relations is diversity of activities. In general, it was difficult for these students to name five important contexts/places in their lives. The most often mentioned places were classrooms, labs and offices, very limited places to go. There are several reasons for these limitations as mentioned by the interviewees: (1) lack of time; (2) lack of money; (3) lack of knowledge of potential entertaining places; (4) lack of local ties who can introduce to them places outside of the university.

The last two reasons indicated a lack of non-Chinese peers, especially American peers, in the social tie pool for the Chinese graduate students. Students from both Red College and Green College spent significant amounts of time with their American peers in the classroom, labs or offices. But the American peers were not included on the "important people" list of the Chinese students. Being a peer to American cohorts is not on the major identity list either. The reason for this missed connection is not that the interviewed students were unsocial. As a matter of fact, many of them mentioned they had an active social life. What are the possible answers?

The first reason is that the Chinese students were often looking for a "meaningful" friendship. Many students mentioned talking with one another about their career and

personal life to develop intimate connections. They often expect a friend to be "*loyal and persistent*" as commented by CBY at Red College. These Chinese students sought friends with these qualities, but with whom they could also have fun. However, *only* having fun did not seem to be the kind of friendship they looked for. YYC was not used to the format of the parties he attended at Red College, "*Sometimes in the party, there are a lot of strangers. We don't even know how to talk to people we know, not mention those we don't know.*" In Chinese culture, parties are usually small and intimate, where most of the guests know each other or are introduced by the host. Although Chinese people may do these same things at a party, YYC still felt that the American peers' activities were not meaningful, "*They just sit there, drink beers, eat pizza, watch games, and gossip.*" YYC was not interested in these get-togethers, "*I cannot understand their jokes. I cannot respond to their jokes. Also I feel their games are so naïve and I cannot show my feeling. I can only cooperate to play.*"

YYC attributed part of the problem to his language skills and his short stay in the U.S. But he was very clear about the difference between him and his American cohorts, "*Even if you share hobbies, you still cannot connect. I don't know why.*" LZS, a veteran Chinese graduate student from Green College, had a similar perspective, "*I have quite a few American buddies. We often hang out and we are very familiar with each other. But I don't know why. There is always that wall between us. It is just different from being with Chinese friends.*" Association with American peers did not meet certain expectations that these Chinese students had for close friends. Sharing hobbies and having fun are insufficient criteria for friendship to these students. An acquaintance developed around experiencing entertainment together is not a meaningful, intimate relationship that can

develop into a friendship cultivated with other Chinese students and friends. Therefore American peers seldom make the "important people" list.

Another reason seems more instrumental. Due to various barriers, there is no social capital[12] flow between these Chinese graduate students and their non-Chinese cohorts. Social capital flows in networks of people who intend to take advantage of their connectedness. In the study of social capital, individuals are depicted as agents actively entering relationships and thus networks to seek benefits. Proximity and foci provide the opportunity for social networks to form. Social capital holds the social network together, and needs to be in place long enough for identity expectations to build, exchange, and internalize.

In a certain sense, the definition of identity implies the precondition of social capital. By definition, identities are internalized expectations of others. Expectations are usually expectations for benefits. For social capital to flow there must be communication or conduit (Burt, 2000) within social networks. Without communication, there is no carrier for the social capital such as information, emotional support, money, and trust in the networks. As a result, strong dyadic ties cannot form, prohibiting the formation of stable roles.

Foci do not seem to matter if the social distance between the parties is too large to transfer social capital, even if people spend a lot of time together in forced proximity (in an educational setting such as office and labs) and organized activities. Other than a meaningful friendship many Chinese students seek, there are several other reasons for the limited, blocked, or even absence of communication between the Chinese graduate

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[12] Social capital is embedded resources such as information, trust and material resources in social networks (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 1999).

students and their peers. These non-Chinese peers remain "weak ties" for these Chinese students.

Language. Language acts as a barrier. Lou from Red College described her urge to talk about her favorite movie *Harry Potter*; "*I really like the movie. I'm a big fan. If it is with a Chinese, I can talk for half an hour: the actors, the acting skills, the setting, the plot, blahblahblah. With an American, I probably can only talk for 5 minutes. Oh my Gosh, where is my word for this and that? So vocabulary is a big issue.*"

Lou's frustration was obvious. Without proficient language skills in English, her supposedly "pleasure" moment might turn into a very awkward situation for her and her communication partner. She wanted to freely express her thoughts and satisfy her wish to bond with others. Such free expression of her thoughts on the movie would also convey to others that she was a fun friend to be with, but the language barrier prevented a connection with non-Chinese students.

Cultural taste includes as well as excludes along the class line (Bourdieu, 1984). In the U.S., specifically, the "consumption of cultural goods and performances (particularly popular culture)… can serve as a bridge not only to sustain current network connections but also to gain and cement new ones" (Lizardo, 2006, p. 781). That is, shared cultural tastes and events integrate people into the social fabric. In this case, the Chinese student Lou consumed the same cultural products, but she could not adequately communicate her feelings regarding the cultural products. There was no pleasure associated with communicating. Therefore, it was difficult for Lou to connect with her American peers. This barrier prevented these Chinese students from developing a sense of solidarity with their peers, and hence an identity related to their peers. The connection between social

capital based on cultural medium, network of social relations, and identity is highly salient in this case.

While engaging in social interaction is often beneficial and identity-affirming, this is not necessarily the case when a language barrier is present. Talking to American peers might hurt the student's self-esteem and their self-image. For example, ZSB from Green College was keenly aware of his image in his peers' eyes due to the deficiency of his language skills, "*I know very well I might look very dull to them. You know, I cannot speak English well. I might even look stupid because of my (English) language skills. You know, I think I have very different personality when I speak Chinese versus English.*"

Cooley (1902) states that a person's self forms in the process of social interaction and the perception of others as a "looking-glass" self (p. 184). That is, people shape their understanding of themselves based on their knowledge of how others perceive them. Interestingly, this student developed two parallel identities because of his reflections on others' opinion of him as a result of his language related self-presentation in the two communities he lived. The Chinese community perceived him to be competent and fun as his native language skills did not block his usual self from expressing these qualities, while the English speaking community considered him as having a subpar personality, due to his limited English language skills. Eventually, as the student was very aware, he cultivated two presentations of self (which he referred to as – in his "personalities") in dealing with people from these two communities. The fact that he said he had two "personalities" means that he had internalized others' opinions of him as he learned to see himself as others do through repeated interaction with others.

It might be difficult to tell whether this student's original "personality" or actual identity cultivated in the Chinese community is a new one, or an old one he carried over from his interaction with people in China. However, it is evident that his "dull, stupid" identity in the English speaking community is a new identity. Since this student was not comfortable even mingling with the English speaking community, he has difficulty regarding anyone in the community as an "important" person. However, his long term interaction with the English speaking community as a faceless, generalized other endowed him with this new identity. "Weak ties" that exist in forced proximity are vital for the development of new identities. However, this is not a pleasant identity, and an unimportant identity to him. This identity is counterproductive to his efforts in developing an identity based on solidarity with the English speaking community. This negative reflection of himself in the English speaking community might push him toward closer and more comfortable relationships within the Chinese-speaking community.

Interactional norms. Interactional norms are another barrier. One example of this barrier is norms surrounding conversational topics. Chinese students sometimes felt unsure as to which topics they could pursue in order to "break the ice" with people from both the host culture and other cultures. Zan, a master's student from Family Studies at Red College, said, "*We don't talk about politics and religion. We don't want to make others feel uncomfortable. If there are students from the Middle East, we avoid talking about wars in general.*"

Socially constructed cultural differences are also normative barriers. For those who mentioned cultural difference as a barrier, culture seemed to refer to the folkways. In Zan's words, culture is a small ritual such as eating habits. JY from Green College

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commented on a cultural difference exhibited by American public transportation, "*Americans would get into line to get on bus. It's very orderly. That surprised me. People would get on one by one. Everyone is very order conscious. Yes, the major surprise is people get in line when in public transportation and when shopping. This is very different from China.*"

Likewise, graduate student ZSB from Green College had an interesting description of his American cohorts and acquaintances, "*One program depicts Americans as thick but soft skinned people. They're civil and would like to help people. But it's difficult to be close friends with them. That's what it means.*" What he meant is Americans are helpful but socially closed to "other people." As he continued to explain, "*Americans are civil, most of them. You wouldn't feel much obstacle in interaction as they might help you. But if you want to hang out with them… The Northeast City people have a tight schedule and have many thoughts. Their life is very rich. They often go out for fun. So they don't have time for other people. That's why we don't spend time hanging out.*" He believed that other international students shared this opinion.

In general, the strength of the ties that these students generated seemed to vary along the nationality line. "Strong ties" are usually found within the Chinese communities while "weak ties" are found within the non-Chinese communities. This tendency for Chinese to bond differently with the Chinese community compared with the non-Chinese community has implications for the importance of identities and the development of new identities, especially the Chinese ethnic identity. "Strong ties" generally leads to high importance of identities related with these "strong ties" while interactions with "weak ties" often lead to new but low importance identities. Since the

Chinese students can hardly share foci with American acquaintances, they remain in the Chinese community, form "strong ties" with Chinese people, and absorb the expectations of the Chinese people around them to form related identities.

Chinese ethnic identity: Comparatively low importance. As illustrated, most students are embedded in largely Chinese communities, but Chinese ethnic identity is not a prioritized identity among the students. Not many students listed a Chinese ethnic identity as a major one, even when prompted further. For those who did, the Chinese ethnic identity was never the most important identity. As counterintuitive as it sounds, this is results from the fact that the students' network composition is ethnicity based.

Given the largely Chinese composition of their networks, one might expect that a Chinese ethnic identity is considered very important to those who have this identity just like religious identity is important for those embedded in a closely knit religious community in Southeast City. However, Chinese ethnic identity and religious identity are different. For some students at Red College, when they acquired a Christian identity: the focal person – a newcomer - was befriended by a Christian Chinese friend who cared for the new arrival's life in the U.S. and eventually the new comer converted to Christianity, believing Christian was an identity that could better their spiritual, personal, and community life. Living within the Chinese community does not have this quality of bettering the students' life, but rather provides a sense of familiarity and security in contrast to the non-Chinese community.

The distinctiveness theory and identity/affect control theory provide some insight into this phenomenon. The central argument of distinctiveness theory in social psychology states that an individual's distinctive traits in relation to other people in the

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environment will be more salient to the individual than common traits (McGuire, 1984). Distinctiveness theory implies that the lower the proportion of minority group members in the overall population, the more salient the ethnic identity will be. This is a situational identity theory where an identity becomes the most obvious when the smallest proportion of those present have the identity. Distinctiveness theory also applies to cross situational ethnic identity, where repeated encounters with non-Chinese people eventually allows the Chinese students a stable ethnic identity, as shown in the adoption of the Chinese ethnic identity. Living within the Chinese community, however, does not enhance one's ethnic identity.

The people that raise the awareness of their Chinese ethnic identity are the non-Chinese "weak ties." In the relationship the Chinese students cultivated with the non-Chinese students, there is no strong emotional attachment present, except for a few cases. Service reciprocity and confiding are not commonly practiced, either. The only thing shared by the Chinese students and the non-Chinese students is work space, and they share this forced proximity for the longest amount of time in certain cases. However, even with regard to "weak ties", many of these students were embedded in a Chinese environment, especially in science and engineering departments where many of the faculty members and students were from China.

For a new identity to rise to a high importance, more factors are necessary than time spent together. From the composition of the "important people" network the respondents generated, "important people" correspond to the most important (major) identities such as family member and friend. When prompted to list "important people," most respondents mentioned people who were emotionally important to them. The major

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(most important) identities listed by respondents are linked to people who are emotionally important for the respondents.

The identity control theory (Burke & Stets, 2009) and the affect control theory (Heise, 1979) state that much of human processing of stimuli (of identity) from the environment is described by a control system rather than a direct translation of inputs into outputs. That is, the meaning (or affect as stated in affect control model) of an identity serves as a standard of behavior that leads to corrective actions in order to align the meaning of an identity and actual behavior of identity. When these students dwell largely in a Chinese community since most "important people" in their lives are Chinese people, they are highly receptive to the cultural definition of identities and the importance of individual identities the Chinese community provides. The Chinese culture holds the family member identity and friend identity very highly. Not surprisingly, the importance of the family member identity and friend identity is very high among these students.

In general, the time dimension plays out in the same manner at the two universities when it comes to the Chinese ethnic identity. Once the students were placed in an environment where the ethnic composition is less homogeneous than China, they developed the Chinese ethnic identity in their interaction with non-Chinese people. However, it is difficult for the Chinese ethnic identity to become very important when the Chinese students live largely in a Chinese community of similarity. The Chinese community elevates Chinese culture without resorting to ethnic experiences that usually involve the non-Chinese community. Ethnic identity and major identities, such as the family member identity and the friend identity, work quite differently. Ethnic identity prospers where ethnic distinctiveness is salient, while the family member identity and the

friend identity grow when homogeneity/homophily encourage positive emotions generated by identity confirmation (Stryker, 2004).

There are, however, some differences among the students at the two universities when adopting the Chinese ethnic identity. The first difference is that Red College students have a dichotomous understanding of their Chinese ethnic identity; while students from Green College have a more sophisticated and nuanced approach to the Chinese ethnic identity. For ZL from Red College, people were "*Chinese*" and "*foreigners.*" This opinion is quite typical among the Chinese students at Red College. Since the group of Chinese students at Red College was insulated from the mainstream and tightly knit, they maintained a certain degree of ethnocentrism among themselves. They lived contentedly within the Chinese community without paying too much attention to their American peers. Lumping non-Chinese people into the "foreigner" category is a natural reaction. Students at Red College might see the intersection of classes and ethnicity, but they did not witness residential areas divided by an ethnic line as Green College students did.

The ethnic worldviews of the students from Green College are more nuanced than the dichotomy of Chinese people versus foreigners. Ethnic groups were very much present in the life of the Green College students. When listing social groups in the U.S., Green College students tended to list ethnic groups: Chinese, Mexicans, African Americans, etc., as they were large ethnic groups in the city. Some students had a very clear idea of the intersection of class and ethnicity/nationality. For instance, LSJ said "*I did an after-school tutoring with them (Americans). I only work with them once a week. That school belongs to the church and is on the Island. There is a black community there.*

Early residents there are comparatively good: they work, not idle by. The church invites us to tutor the kids who go to the church. I feel my horizon expands after I came into contact with kids of different racial background, not constrained by my own racial group. I learned whether you're happy or not has nothing to do with your income or other material things no matter what your racial identity is. I feel those kids are very happy as they don't have to worry about housing or cars."

Students at Green College are also highly aware of the differences among Chinese people in terms of the extent of Americanization which is not found at Red College. For example, when interacting with Chinese people in the U.S., LY adopted the policy of treating them in an "American way." Only when he had perceived whether the person was westernized or not did he decide which way was a better policy: the Chinese way or the American way. He explained that Americans were individualistic and paid much attention to their personal life privacy, which was his definition of the "American way." Another example is WYY. She seemed to be different from other interviewees, as she had stayed in Hong Kong for 2 years before arriving at Green College. She had very different ideas about "being Chinese": to be modern outside but keep your Chinese heart culturally. Another respondent, ZP, mentioned that some ABCs (American-born Chinese people) hated Chinese people more than American people. The ABCs seemed to rebel against anything Chinese or "Asian." Still another student, CTT, mentioned that Chinese people in the U.S. were less community oriented than in China. CWK also depicted Chinese people in the U.S. as more isolated from each other. ZXD said that Chinese people in the U.S. were not as honest with each other as they were in China. In general, there are three types of Chinese in the U.S.: 1) transient Chinese such as students and

business people; 2) Chinese immigrants, and 3) American-born Chinese. The transient nature of international students affects their commitment to building strong social networks within their new "host" community.

Another difference between the two universities is the openness towards ethnicity and ethnic issues. Students at Green College are more willing to discuss confrontations and prejudice against Chinese people. LSJ commented on how religion helped her maintain a balanced mentality when dealing with unfairness in life, "*I think the biggest change is my mentality because of my religion. I might suspect whether I did something right when I was in China without my religious belief. But I wouldn't here in the U.S. even if we're not treated fairly. We can keep a balanced mind because we feel it's God's work we're doing.*"

On the other hand, Red College students adopted the prevalent color blindness (Roberts, Bell & Murphy, 2008) attitude towards racial/ethnic prejudice in the South. For these students, discussing racial/ethnic prejudice was inappropriate, especially when discussing prejudice against the students themselves. Rui seemed to partition two worlds when she talked about racial prejudice in her and others' lives, *"In my life I haven't detected any discrimination. Everyone tries to treat others equally. But I do find that most of the cleaners in our research building are blacks. I mean those with low income."*

Time and place are two dimensions whose interactions impact the development of the Chinese ethnic identity. Although the students in the two regions developed the Chinese ethnic identity within a time dimension (moving from China to the U.S.), they differed on their definitions of the Chinese ethnic identity and their understanding of the

contour of the ethnicity in the U.S. This divergence is the result of regional demographic and cultural difference.

Approaches to Old Identities Carried over from China

Time spent in the U.S. did not change important identities these students developed in China and brought to the U.S.: family member, friend, student, and researcher. However, newcomers to the U.S. (those who had been in the U.S. less than one year) and the old-timers (those who had been in the U.S. at least one year) approach these identities differently. The one-year cut-off point is necessary as the subject population includes two-year master's students. In addition, there seems to be genuine difference between students who have been in the U.S. for less than one year and those who have stayed in the host country for more than one year. The old-timers are more confident to have a successful identity when they see a lot of similarities between Chinese and Americans and are ready to exploit their knowledge of these similarities as a result of the length of their stay in the U.S. In contrast, newcomers tend to notice many cultural differences between Chinese and non-Chinese people, due to their unfamiliarity with the host culture.

When asked whether he was gravitating towards Chinese people or non-Chinese people, WB from Red College who lived in the U.S. for 4 years said, "*It depends on your interaction purpose. We all need communication. If it is communication for entertainment, I wouldn't want to interact with non-Chinese for this. If it is communication for information, I don't see difference between Chinese and non-Chinese. From non-Chinese, I can get different information. You want to get information from all of them so that the information is not biased. (As for) information on my studies, I purposefully interact with non-Chinese to get such information. Some Chinese don't care*

about the information they can get from non-Chinese." He clearly understood that

information from his non-Chinese interactants could help him succeed academically, and

he did not hesitate to communicate in order to obtain necessary resources from the

mainstream society. Considering the types of information "strong ties" and "weak ties"

provide (Granovetter, 1983), WB's strategy makes sense. "Strong ties" (WB's Chinese

friends) were important in his personal life, but they could not provide necessary fresh

information usually found among un-redundant networks of social relations, i.e., "weak

ties."

Similarly, the old-timers understood the importance of connections in earning a

successful career or landing a job by navigating the referral system in the U.S., and the

old-timers tended to believe that the American referral system is similar in nature to the

Chinese concept of "guanxi."[13] SZ talked about his supervisor this way, "*He's very*

important as I plan to do research in the future. It's your supervisor who introduces you

to the field. Of course, my hope is that I can get a strong reference letter from him. More

importantly, I hope he could introduce me to his colleagues in the field as he's been in

the area for a long time." This difference enables the old-timers to approach the various

important identities in a different way than the newcomers.

On the other hand, the newcomers were often amazed by the cultural or ritual

differences between the "Chinese way" and the "American way," due to their short stay

in the country and, as a result, they approached the same identities differently. ZSB from

Green College recalled, "*The most surprising thing to me is the teacher student*

relationship. I just call my professor by first names: Mark. In China, it might be a serious

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[13] The Chinese "guanxi" usually has the connotation of seeking benefits from
connections, sometime by using illegitimate means.

problem if you do that. You have to say, 'professor X.'" ZSB found the informality

present on American campuses, such as addressing professors by their first name, a

striking observation.

Speaking on the dating culture in the U.S., YYC from Red College expressed

disbelief that in the U.S. people would date several people simultaneously; "*you wouldn't*

agree that you can date many people at the same time, right?" He retorted when I

commented that Chinese people also dated to introduce themselves to each other by

dining and therefore it should not be surprising Americans use date to get to know several

people to choose their partner. He was surprised by the different stages involved in the

American dating culture; "*They have many different stages: dating, then sex, then in a*

relationship, etc. They explained to me. When they date, they just date. Their dating is

different from ours." Besides differences in dating culture, YYC also observed

differences in perceptions and personalities between Chinese people and American

people, "*Besides, there are many perceptual differences. They are more free. Another*

thing, Chinese are mostly introverted, don't know how to show themselves off compared

with Americans."

YYC began with the observation that Chinese people and American people

disagree about dating policies, and went on to refer to "Chinese personality" and

"American personality" to highlight that Chinese culture and American culture were

fundamentally different. In a certain sense, YYC essentialized Chinese people and

American people without realizing it. By contrasting the introverted "personality" of

Chinese people with the extroverted "personality" of American people, he was making an

"either or" classification, and declaring a Chinese ethnic identity that could not be

assumed by people of different origins. Place of origin became the demarcating line between identities. YCC wanted to send the message that the gap between Chinese ethnic identity and American ethnic identity was ingrained, and could not be overcome.

Even students who stayed in the host culture for almost two full years still felt a degree of social isolation from American professors and peers, but they settled into the social segregation system in the U.S. with reservation. WW from Red College described his feeling of being alienated; "*For example, if they have an activity, they would not invite you. Even when they see you in the hall way, they wouldn't greet you. Of course, you can break into their circle if you have great enthusiasm. But I don't have that enthusiasm.*" This was in extreme contrast to his socialization pattern in China, "*There is great change. It's very easy to make friends in China. People get along well in China. But in the US, there is a lot of cultural difference…I cannot tell what difference there is but I can tell you don't belong to the same group. Most of them would not think of you voluntarily. And naturally you would not think of them.*"

Social isolation did not exclude professionalism, which these respondents appreciated. They noticed that American professors and professionals were very polite and helpful without the hierarchical constraints often found in the Chinese educational system. WW from Red College remarked, *"One difference is that I feel I'm an equal when I interact with non-Chinese. They also treat you as an equal. They would not ignore you because they're professors. They might not be extremely friendly, but they at least would not ignore you. The most important point is that Americans respect you and your opinion."*

The comparison of newcomers and students who had stayed in the U.S. for over a year showed that although old-timers are more open-minded about utilitarian purposes such as obtaining information, they reserved their social life to the Chinese community, as did the newcomers, as a result of voluntary or forced social isolation from the mainstream society. The impact of Chinese values and culture, therefore, is fundamental for the students, as shown in the importance of the major identities: family, friend, student and researcher. This difference among new comers and old timers is a consequence of the interaction of their network change and their identities due to the various time lengths they stay in the U.S.

Transitions, newcomers' evolving network composition, and identities. For these Chinese students, moving from China to the U.S. for their degree might force the respondents to drop a large number of ties rapidly, therefore potentially impacting their identities. However, this process of dropping ties and establishing new relationships proved to be a relatively gradual process. Network composition change takes time, even for students who moved half a globe away from their home country. For students who stayed in the new host country for one year or less when the interview occurred, the questions on the difference between the networks they currently held and the networks they held in China seemed to be unnecessary or even silly. The simple answer to this question was that these ties were the same.

At the end of his first year in the U.S., ZSB from Green College still listed his college friends from China as the most "important people" in his life, other than his parents and girlfriend in his current life. The contact between him and some of these friends might not be as often as he liked but these interactions were nonetheless

emotionally important, "*Most of the people, I don't contact a lot. But I feel they are more important than friends here. I always think about getting together when I go back to China.*" He got along well with those around him at Green College, however he knew it took time to knit another safety net; "*I believe I will become good friends with people in my lab. But I just came and haven't been in the lab for long. It takes time to become good friends.*"

ZZD moved to Red College from his home institute in China 4 months before the interview. The network change question was naïve in his case. All his important ties consisted of his family: his wife, son and parents. Whether they were in China or in the U.S. with him currently was irrelevant. He was courteous to me, though, when asked the question of network change by reiterating, "*my life is simple: work and life. All the important people are my family. So the list does not change. People from work have a different nature of relationship that involves interest.*" The implication is that people who have potential conflict of interest are not considered to be "important people" in his life.

Both ZSB and ZZD implied that trust can only be fostered over the passage of substantial time. ZSB did not rule out people from his lab as potential "important people," but he had to get to know these people first. ZZD had a long term work experience as a faculty member at a Chinese university. He simply kept his "important people" list to include only family members, as he felt safer with them than with those who were not family. Even at Red College, where the need for a friend could only be met in a constrained, small Chinese community, the forced acquaintance still could not substitute for true friendship. YYC brushed aside American people as candidates for friendships very quickly, and had similar reservations for his Chinese peers at Equestrian,

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"Here, friends are just friends you make here who you've known for just one year. It's a circle of friends that has nothing to do with your friends in China for 20 years."

The case of supervisors is an exception to the rule of trust and also provides a counter example to the non-communication between Chinese community and non-Chinese community (mostly American peers). No matter how short or how long the students stayed in the U.S., the supervisor was usually included on the current "important people" list. There are various reasons mentioned by the respondents for the importance of the supervisors: 1) the supervisors are professionally important to the students' growth in research and future job search with substantial or anticipated help; 2) the supervisors provide a role model for the students in doing research in terms of methods and being a scholar; 3) the supervisors are important providers of emotional as well as material support for the students. In short, the supervisors are vital connections to the Chinese students.

Although there is limited time for the new Chinese students to develop trust for their supervisors, supervisors have certain qualities that could substitute for time to serve as the basis of trust. Chinese culture emphasizes the function of the "teacher" as someone who nurtures students in both knowledge and character. The prevalent Confucius teaching in China believes that teachers are also role models for their students because of their integrity and deserve students' respect. Coming from this culture that holds teacher in high esteem in China, many students assumed that their professors were worthy of their respect and trust.

These Chinese students seem to always have this important identity of student built on cultural meaning of teacher/student interaction and trust. The counter role of their

student identity – professors – is predefined by the Chinese culture in which these students are embedded in China as well as the U.S. No matter who assume the professor role, Chinese or non-Chinese, these students are ready to transfer this cultural meaning of and trust in professors into their relationship with a real life professor, particularly when they find their American professors are democratic and academic oriented. That is, similar to the development of religious identity in Northeast City that eventually expands a focal person's religious circle of friends, the important student identity these respondents carried over from China is seeking a compatible counter role of a professor and endows this professor with all the trust and qualities of an ideal typical professor nurtured in the Chinese culture. This is an example of identity to social relations development in the spanning of time.

The students maintained their old networks from China in two ways: they moved with people important in their lives together to the U.S., and they maintained these ties through various technologies. Technology made frequent contact for these students with these "strong ties" back in China a possibility. This group of students was technology savvy in general. CQ from Green College had daily contact with her parents, "*I'm away from them now. Internet is very developed. I usually would contact them once a day through Skype. If I'm not home, I would call them to tell them I'm safe and sound. We often talk about this: it's not like I'm away. It seems that I'm still with them. So I don't feel strongly about visiting them.*" CQ lived her life as if she had been still living with her parents in the same household through the convenience provided by the technology when, realistically, they were half a globe away. CQ and her parents were living in the same virtual space made possible by the technical connectivity. This is also the case with

most of the students at both universities. However, the availability of cyber space might have hindered the development of new ties in the host culture when these students' emotional needs can be easily met by strong ties back in China.

With the exception of the ethnic Chinese identity, most of the newcomers did not have different identities from those they had developed in China. When I asked if they had different identities now in the U.S. than when they had been in China, they expressed surprise that I asked the question at all, as they had just arrived at the host country. This reaction also has to do with the fact that the questionnaire targeted the "strong ties" and major identities instead of the "weak ties" and minor identities, which could easily be adopted in a short period of time. This unchanged identity set converges with their reports that their networks of social relations had not changed either.

Newcomers versus old-timers: Network evolution and identities. My data suggest that the types of important ties to the focal person do not change: familial, friend, and supervisor. The findings also show that the identities of family member, friend, and student (researcher/professional) are the major identities for both newcomers and old-timers. However, the people who assumed the roles of friends, schoolmates, and supervisors are different people in China than in the U.S. in the social networks among the old-timers. The old-timers were keener to fulfill their identities using resources in the Chinese community and the mainstream society as stated previously. In addition, the difference between the newcomers and the old-timers is complicated by the different life stages they occupied.

As time in the U.S. passes, the position of family members in the respondents' lives remains as strong as it was in China, or even grows more important after the

students move to the U.S. The importance of their family can be shown in the respondents' growing interdependence with and commitment to fulfilling future responsibilities for their family members. This insight from the interview data is in accord to the empirical findings in the literature that kins are one of the most stable and enduring type of ties that are closely knit (Wellman, 1979; Wellman & Wortley, 1990) which provide substantial social support. The time dimension in terms of enduring a geographical/time transfer to the host country and the increase of the length of stay in the host culture witness the importance of these respondents' family members when the time factor overlaps with the richer life course experience of these students: getting married and having children. The interdependence with their family members and the growing sense of responsibility for their family members provides the opportunity for the familiar identity to grow. Family member identity remains a highly important identity in these students' lives.

The same can be said of the friend and student (researcher/professional) identities and the network of social relations that supports these identities. Like kinship/family ties, friends are also the type of ties that offer a large portion of social support that a focal person receives (Wellman & Wortly, 1990). However, there is one important difference when it comes to the comparison of family members versus friends and school acquaintances. That is, the family members remain the same. On the other hand, while the respondents always have friends, supervisors, and schoolmates in their lives, the people who assume these roles are different as these students moved from China to the U.S. which provides opportunities for new social ties.

Network Change and Implications for Identity

The universal network core: Family and the family member identity. The move from China to the U.S. led to changes in these graduate students' social networks. Although it might take time for the respondents' networks to evolve, as the length of stay in the U.S. increases, old friends in China are replaced by new friends in the U.S. and new mentors take the place of previous ones. But there is a stable core that remains unchanged: their family. If there is any change in family, it is when new family members are added due to marriage and births, and older family members are deleted through death. Several respondents still listed their deceased parents as "important people" in their lives. The family members listed are usually parents, spouses, children, and the extended family. The passage of time in the U.S. might alter the order of importance of these family members, but they tended to remain in the core network of "important people."

The respondents provided two broad explanations for the importance of family members in their lives. Family members are network resources and provide a sense of responsibility. They maintain highly important child and spouse identities due to the interdependence within the family, or a strong sense of responsibility for their family members.

Parents are important because of a shared history together, provision of support, and strong emotional attachments. For example, ZYG from Red College thus ranked his connections; "*This is the order: my mother because she's the most important in the past and in the future. She's important in emotion and other aspects. Then it's my father. Although he's a past tense, he lives in my heart forever. His spirit and persistence are*

with me. I'm proud of my father." Similarly, many students were attached to their parents because they obtained advice from them. As LY from Green College put it, "*He gives me good advice on my study and work. Some big direction advice. Whenever I have problems, the first person I ask is my father.*" Students also sought direction from family members on everyday matters. LY asked his mother for advice on issues "*mainly in daily life. I would ask her for advice on everyday life issues.*" When asked for an example, he said, "*Cooking. If I don't know how to cook a dish, I would ask her. Besides, she might come to take care of the child for us. She helps with house chores.*" The intimacy and substantial assistance among the family members bond the family together and enhance the importance of the family member identity.

There were also students who were not emotionally attached to their parents, but were culturally constrained by a sense of responsibility to their parents. With the passage of time, this sense of responsibility turned into speculations of specific actions they would take to care for their parents when needed. QSJ from Green College provides a perfect illustration of this theme. He laughed as he recalled his father, a down-to-earth farmer who changed his businesses constantly to make a meager living: photography, blacksmith, bakery, driving taxis, and distributing vegetables for local restaurants. Instead of the usual "looking up to" attitude some students had towards their parents, QSJ depicted his father with childish qualities. When asked how often he would contact his parents, QSJ answered, "*Probably 4 or 5 times a year.*" As a matter of fact, unless his sister reminded him, he did not call his parents except on major holidays such as spring festival (an equivalent of Christmas in China).

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QSJ cared for his parents, "*As long as they're healthy, having a good life, that's good enough. Then I wouldn't have to worry.*" But he was unsure about his parents' importance to him other than that; "*Their importance to me now, I don't know.*" QSJ was frank about the fact that there was only a slim emotional attachment between him and his parents. He revealed the typical conversation he would have with his father, "*I might ask my father how he's doing. He might answer, 'oh, I'm jobless and staying at home. Now I'd like to play drum or flute a little bit.*'" QSJ drew the conclusion, "*You know we don't live in the same life circles. So we don't have a lot of common topics. It's been like this for a few decades.*"

Despite the lack of a strong bond, QSJ felt obliged to provide for his parents if needed. "*What can you do?*" He asked rhetorically when I inquired about his sense of responsibility to his parents. The reason for such obligation was straightforward, "*Their money was used up for my education. They don't have money now. Of course I will support them in their old age.*" QSJ accepted his responsibility for his parents based on the principle of reciprocity and justice (Blau, 1964). The relationship between his parents and himself is similar to that between the debtor and the creditor; his parents paid his tuition and he owed his parents a debt. He would provide for his parents in the future because his parents have provided for him in the past. This sense of responsibility for his parents is also culturally defined within the Chinese tradition, and is even mandated by law that parental care is provided by adult children in their old age (Bedford & Hwang, 2003). For many students, it was difficult to come up with a reason why their parents should be mentioned on the "important people" list. They would resort to "blood relations" for a reason, which is more of a cultural explanation.

Whether compelled by emotional reasons or a sense of responsibility, the time dimension did not impact the importance of the child identity on the part of the respondents. The same is true for the spouse relationship and spouse identity. The longer the marriage, the more stable the family. In many cases, marriage was based on mutual need and affection. In other cases, marriage was more of a traditional arrangement. Either way, though, the time dimension added commitment to the relationship.

ZL from Red College was all smiles when she talked about her husband. They were the first love for each other in college and got married after they came to the U.S. ZL had stayed in the U.S. for 2.5 years when the interview occurred, and their marriage was a little over a year old. "*He's also like my elder brother. Sometimes he's like my supervisor. He's a happiness trigger. He's the one that helps me to release pressure.*" She benefited a lot from their relationship, "*For example, he's more stable. Or if I cannot make up my mind on something, I'll ask him feeling he's more experienced. But as a matter of fact, we're of the same age. But every time I tell him, I feel very much grounded. Besides, I feel he can guide me. Or I can say I feel he's right so I would do in that direction although he didn't ask me to.*"

The relationship is a satisfying and equal one. As ZL put it, "*The sense of being a wife is not strong now. When we shop, I don't feel my role as a wife. I don't feel I have to do something as a wife. I don't remind myself I'm a wife. I don't feel like that. At home, in terms of house chores, I do more. But it's not because I feel it's my job as a wife. It might be funny. I cook and clean dishes more. But I cook because I want to transfer my attention to cooking, something irrelevant to experiments. I like cleaning dishes because I feel good when I make dirty things clean. When I see him mess around the dishes with*

bubbles and stains, I feel really uncomfortable. So I have to do it myself." Mutual

respect, affection and assistance all foster a strong relationship between ZL and her

husband. The more they stayed together, the more they found about each other that they

had not previously known. For example, ZL loved to hear her husband's jokes because "*I*

haven't heard them before." For ZL, her husband is the most "important person" in her

life, and being a wife is one of the most important identities she was glad to assume.

These sentiments were echoed by a number of other respondents.

　　Time has the same enhancing effect on a marriage tied together by a sense of

responsibility. As such, time also sees the spouse identity either grow in importance, or

remain at the same level of importance. QSJ's case serves as a good example in this

aspect.

　　When we had the interview, QSJ from Green College had been in the U.S. for 3

years and his marriage was over 2 years old. He met his wife through a common friend,

and flew back to China to marry her after 6 months of online chatting. His wife was in

Hong Kong doing post-doctoral work. QSJ did not think his marriage was of high quality,

"*You know, we're legally married with the marriage license, but I don't know what she*

thinks. Maybe give her the money I earned." But he would not, "*We don't have joint*

account as we're just a family in name." Neither had they spent much time together, "*I*

went back to China to marry her. After that, I came back to the U.S. and she went back to

Hong Kong. In total, we spent less than a month together." The connection between the

two was shallow and QSJ had no plan to change that. He was very frank, "*I like the*

single life, better than a life of two. I lived here for 3 weeks during spring break. I liked it

and felt one person's life is better than two."

As superficial as this marriage was, QSJ had no intention to end it. On the contrary, he had plans for the future and was worried that financial issues might sink the marriage. That is, he cared for the longevity of his marriage, just as he was sincere when he listed his husband identity as a major one. At the same time, though, he was very passive when it came to improving his marriage. When asked if he had thought about ending this lifestyle of the two living in separate places, QSJ said, "*I haven't thought about it. I can only wait for her to graduate to get a job. I cannot afford the expense of two people. Finance problems might sink the marriage.*" QSJ's wife was looking for a job in the U.S. since before they met. QSJ himself might also consider looking for a job in Hong Kong if he failed here in the U.S. That did not change, however, the shallow attachment between the couple. As QSJ put it, "*I don't have any requirements emotionally or financially… I don't want to vent to her.*"

In the parent-child relationship and the partner relationship (since these typically constitute stable ties to the same individuals) the dynamics between the nodes/people do not change over time as long as the cultural environment of the ties does not change. In the case of the students in this research, their physical and demographic environment had changed: they moved from China to the U.S. Logically, their cultural environment should also change accordingly. However, as shown previously, these students managed to surround themselves in a largely Chinese environment. That is, they chose to or were forced to live in a largely Chinese culture. Given this precondition, it is easy to understand the same importance or even higher importance of the child and spouse identities among the respondents. By creating a Chinese community in which they live, they carried with them the Chinese culture that encourages family identities such as the

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child identity and the partner identity, no matter how imperfect the specific relationships that support such identities could be. Time in the U.S. is not a confounding factor due to the fact that the geological and cultural space is cut short by the ethnic partitioning in the U.S.

The family member identity is the most important identity among all the major identities mentioned by the respondents. Earlier I analyzed the reasons why family members are important to the focal person, and how the importance of family relates to the high importance of the identity of being a family member. The correspondence between the importance of family members and the family member identity does not imply that these reasons for family members could be directly translated into the identities, but it does provide an indicator of the importance of the identity. The passage of time adds more weight to this already very important identity. Another point of note is that the subject population of this research, ranging from 20 to 38, is also an age range at a stage of getting married and having children. Experiencing these major life events might also help these students understand their parents and commit to a long term relationship which would in turn lead to more commitment to their family member identities. Newcomers and old-timers have an equally strong sense of the family member identity for reasons I have analyzed above.

Friends and their implication to friend identity. Compared with family members that remain constant in the respondents' lives, friends come and go. The geological distance between the U.S. and China did have an impact on who remains in the "most important person" network of the respondents, even with the convenience of modern technology. However, the very fact that these students lived mainly within the

Chinese community makes it possible for the importance and the meaning of the friend identity to stay stable.

Although the old-timers had new friends in the U.S. while the newcomers had yet to develop deep friendships in the new environment, they did not differ in their definition of what a friend is: a friend is someone who cares for you, who spends time with you for fun, and who reciprocates service with you. This is not surprising, since old-timers would not be culturally swayed from their view of a true friendship because they were located in a cultural enclave that did not differ markedly from their experience in China.

Supervisors and their implication on student identity. As I have discussed previously, supervisors were often on the "important people" list, whether they were Chinese supervisors from the respondents' experience in China, or new supervisors in the U.S. due to the transferred cultural cues about teacher in China into trust in their current supervisors. There is no difference between newcomers and old-timers on the importance of their supervisors. However, when it comes to the related student identity, there is difference between newcomers and old-timers.

The newcomers tended to talk about the difference between being a student in the U.S. and China. Research was a part of their student routine in the U.S. as compared with their experience in China. They attributed this difference to the varied academic traditions in China and the U.S., as well as the level of education: undergraduate versus graduate. LH from Red College who had stayed in the U.S. for only three months when the interview was conducted detected differences between being a student in China versus in the U.S. In China, he was a good student because he could "*meet the*

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requirements of his (supervisor's) class." While in the U.S., being a student (PhD student) felt more "*like work.*"

Old-timers tended to take for granted the research component in their student identity. For example, WJ from Green College who was finishing up his PhD program and obtained a post-doctoral position with his supervisor thus commented on being a graduate student, "*To do research and write papers are the duty of a PhD student.*" Although he had been a master's student in China before he came to the U.S., research was not nurtured by the social environment there. When asked if he was doing research in China, WJ said, "*No, not at all. Then it was not serious. There was not a program which was consistent for a period of time. We just bumped into different programs and then began to do them.*" After remaining in his current graduate program for almost 8 years, he was very clear about the problem in the Chinese institute when he looked back, "*In a group, you should feel the continuity of the program. After you finish one project, you should feel the next has certain connectivity with the previous although they're not the same. I feel the environment in china is not for research. My boss then was the dean of our college. He was very busy. We just pieced together a thesis to graduate.*"

Discussion

The Chinese ethnic identity is a new identity for the graduate students studying in the U.S. As important as it is theoretically, for most students the Chinese ethnic identity is still a comparatively minor identity. The family member, student, and friend identities are far more important. They live within a community that provides strong Chinese ties, which in turn supports the high importance to the related identities that were present in their lives in China: family member, friend, and student. The importance of the top three

identities did not change as a result of the move to the U.S. or the passage of time in the U.S.

The general public, however, might not perceive these students first and foremost as family members and friends, as they might not have "strong ties" with these Chinese students as they do with non-Chinese people. That is, when a mainstream member has a strong tie with a Chinese student, it is easier for the mainstream member to see this Chinese student first and foremost as a friend or other types of strong tie. As a matter of fact, this dissonance between self-identities fostered in a contained minority community and the general public's opinion of these students as "Chinese" or even "Asian" might be the very source of identity conflicts. For example, as a result of the discrepancy in the competence judgments of these minority members by the mainstream society and the ethnic community, some of the Chinese students developed multiple identities (or presentations of self) to cope with the complex racial/ethnic social order in the U.S. For many of these students, this is the first time in their lives they possess conflicting identities such as the dichotomy of competent/inept identities as a result of their English language skills. This conflict of identities comes from the fact that the respondents are perceived differently in the two communities that speak English and Chinese respectively. Since the presentation of the self varies in the two communities as a result of these students' language abilities, their identities are different once they understand how they are perceived by the two communities. The possession of conflicting identities might push the students toward co-nationals and hurt their self-esteem as stated previously.

There are three contributions made in this chapter. First, the findings in this chapter show that modern technology makes it possible to have a virtual community with people who remain in the home country, and ease the focal person's entry into a new geographical community by allowing them to maintain contact with "strong ties" while experiencing a huge transition. There are pros and cons to the convenience provided by technology. The advantage is that the respondents have easy access to the social support they need. The disadvantage is that the maintaining of strong ties in China through technology might have deprived the respondents of the motivation and time to develop new ties in the host culture and thus slowed down their adaptation to the host culture. With the help of information technology, the students could live a synchronized life with people instrumental in their lives back in China without having to delete "strong ties." However, although it is not common, some respondents gradually reduced contact with some "strong ties." "Weak ties" were dropped quickly due to the lack of motivation.

Second, a transition that also involves geographical and consequently demographic change provides an opportunity for new identities related with the demographic contrast to develop; in this case, the Chinese ethnic identity. Although it is understood that collective experience of prejudice leads to identification with co-nationals, this research expands on this literature by describing how nuanced differences in understanding ethnic identity among the Chinese students is a result of regionally different cultures and demographic characteristics. The respondents had different understandings of the ethnic social realities in their specific region, and they acquired politically correct attitudes when admitting and discussing such social realities.

The significance of this finding is that "weak ties" are also important for the adoption of identities. Different from the network identity mechanism in the religious identity adoption, which generally involves "strong ties" of the focal person, the ties that precipitated the ethnic identity are usually "weak ties" in the focal person's life. "Weak ties" do not occupy important positions in the focal person's life, but they do impact how the focal person sees himself/herself by their presence. These "weak ties" are difficult to capture with the traditional network tools, as these tools are usually designed to obtain "strong ties." This is one reason why the two types of networks (the "important people" network and the "time bound people" network) are crucial for the analysis of identities. I will illustrate this further in discussion of Chapter 7.

Third, I discuss the impact of the ethnic composition in the respondents' network of social relations on their identities. The ethnic segregation is fairly obvious when it comes to the composition of the respondents' social relations. Separation from the mainstream society deprives the respondents of opportunities to identify with different kinds of people in the mainstream society except for their supervisors. The ethnic partitioning demonstrates their in-group attitude towards Chinese people who dominate their personal and social life, and an out-group utilitarian attitude (e.g., for the purpose of using information available in the mainstream society) towards the mainstream society, which is vital for their professional life. As such, the ethnic context in the respondents' social relations mandates the same identities important to the respondents despite their length of stay in the host culture. However, the longer the respondents stay in the U.S., the more confident they are to assume their ethnically and culturally defined identities, as

their knowledge of the host culture increases and they become more open-minded to the usage of such knowledge to facilitate their identities.

The importance of the ethnic identity is not only in its revelation of the emergence of a new identity taking root in a demographically different social environment, but also in its implication of the types of identities that are important to ethnic minorities in the racial order in the U.S. Contrary to the public opinion that ethnic minorities are first and foremost "racial others," members of ethnic minorities perceive themselves as family members and friends more than their ethnic/racial category. Their definition of family members and friends, however, is culturally orientated due to the fact that they are segregated socially and sometimes residentially by the mainstream society which policed these minorities into people of difference. This reveals the importance of the identity hierarchy presented by identity theory. What matters is not only what identities people have that are different from identities the mainstream society perceives them to have, but also the different ranking of these same identities perceived by the focal person and the mainstream society.

Identity theory (Stryker, 1980) employs networks to define identity and posits that each person has multiple identities derived from the multiple network positions he/she occupies. But identity theory implies a partitioned impact of these positions on the focal person's identities. This chapter suggests that these multiple networks of social relations operate as an organic whole to impact the focal person's identities. For example, the ethnic context of the focal person's social relations not only denotes a low importance of the ethnic identity, but also sustains the high importance of other identities: family member, friend, and student. The dominant ethnic culture flowing in the focal person's

network of social relations is absorbed by the focal person into his/her self-structure. Meanwhile, the highly important identities are under the influence of the major category identities such as gender. This conceptualization of multiple identities is more of a view of an ecosystem (Smith-Lovin, 2007).

Conclusion

This chapter also contributes to the literature of ethnic identity of overseas Chinese that stresses political mobilizing power of ethnic identity (Toyota, 2009) by focusing on a specific type of relations - "weak ties" the focal person spends substantial time with – which is vital in the genesis of ethnic identity. Ethnicity is employed to call for solidarity among people. The "strong ties" in a dyadic relationship and primary groups in a smaller community from Chapter 7 and the "weak ties" with long lasting presence in a focal person's life help explain the formation of two new identities: religious identity and ethnic identity. "Strong ties" often generate major identities such as the religious identity when the focal person makes the effort to be the same as his/her close ties. "Weak ties" often leads to less important identities (i.e., Chinese ethnic identity). That is, "weak ties" usually function as a contrast to the focal person and highlight the difference between the two parties which is internalized by the focal person as identity.

In addition, this research provides insight into network change when there are major transitions that occur in people's lives. Thanks to the development of technology, even when facing major life events that require geographic mobility people can still cling to their old networks of social relations for emotional, non-material, and material support from close, longstanding ties (Reinie & Wellman, 2012). This finding contributes to the

tie alteration literature which mostly investigates neighborhood networks and leaves out the community network that can span space with the assistance of modern technology. Neighborhood network literature concentrates on the connections within a geographical boundary. Community network is about connectivity not necessarily bounded by geography or organizations. As limited as it may be, the virtual community that includes "strong ties" back in their home country enables the respondents to continue their life in the host culture without much disruption. Although this chapter does not limit itself to online network, its findings do suggest the importance of the inclusion of virtual community in the study of transformational events.

Chapter 7

Quantitative Insights

Introduction

The previous two chapters showed the importance of space and time in the social network dynamics and the resultant identities derived from those networks of social relations. This chapter follows up on these mechanisms in the identity network interaction process by examining patterns of relationships between key variables identified in the qualitative component of this study. The variables operationalized include: identity importance, space, time, and egocentric network variables. Quantitative analysis permits prediction and direct estimation of effects, allowing comparisons of the impact of important influences and relationships between these.

This chapter provides a precise correlation between identity and two different types of ties: "important people" and "time-bound people." This finding demonstrates that the study of identity can be furthered by integrating relational perspective theoretically, however, certain modifications are needed so that the relational perspective can be pertinent to the specific area of identity theory.

Traditionally, ties (or relationships) are categorized as "strong ties" and "weak ties" which are associated with different types of network structures.[14] In the process of interviews, however, it became obvious that many people the respondents spent the most time with were not nominated as the "important people" the interview instrument was designed to obtain. The most "important people" were often defined by the respondents as someone who had most of the characteristics of "strong ties" (someone they have

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[14] Network closure in which people are densely connected versus structural holes where people are sparsely related.

emotional attachment, confide in, and reciprocate services with), but someone who may or may not spend much time with the respondent. On the other hand, the people the respondents spent the most time with were not necessarily "important." That is, these people are physically present in the focal person's life, but nonetheless remain socially distant. Their interaction with the focal person or proximity to the focal person did not morph into intimate personal relationships to which people generate emotional attachment to, and from which trust and reciprocity derive. These people are somehow still "weak ties," despite the fact that they occupy most of the focal person's time.

The categorization of "important people" and "time-bound people" is conceptually promising. Identity internalization takes time, and the generalized other who are interacting with the focal person are "strong ties" as well as "weak ties." "Weak ties" are difficult to capture with conventional instruments. Nonetheless, "weak ties" impact people's adoption of new identities and modification of old identities in various ways. For example, "weak ties" might serve as a social contrast for the focal person which highlights certain focal person's identities such as ethnic identity, due to the fleeting but repeated or enduring presence of weak ties in the focal person's life. Relationships previously classified as "strong ties" and "weak ties" must fit into new categories that have distinct impacts on identity. "Important people" and "time-bound people" include people who are emotionally and instrumentally important as well as unimportant to the focal person and seem to be central to identity processes.

Methodologically, the instrument of "important people" and "time bound people" could be used for investigating other identities other than the ones researched in this study. For the current study, due to the data collected with the instrument, I only included

proxies of network size and homophily into the analysis. The instrument could also be employed to examine the function of emotions in the identity process. The integration of emotion into the study of identity theory has been called forth (Stryker, 2004; Stets & Turner, 2005) and recently has been answered by some pioneering work (e.g., Leveto, 2012). Emotion is built into the definition of "important people" which includes "emotional attachments" and a confiding relationship. This affect component is not as obvious as in "people you spend the most time with," but, by default, people spend a large amount of time with family and friends who are emotionally important.

In this chapter, I will examine factors associated with identity importance. Identity theory in the tradition of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Styker, 1980) suggests the significance of time in the development of identity, as it defines identity as stable across situations. Identity theory also suggests the importance of the generalized other in the focal person's immediate social environment – personal network – as well as the sociocultural environment. In summary, I examine the function of time, space (regional networks), and egocentric network characteristics in the identity process.

The specific research questions are: 1) How does time in the U.S. affect the importance of relevant identities? 2) How does place affect the importance of relevant identities? 3) Does time in the U.S. affect identities of those located in Northeast City and Southeast City differently? 4) Do degree and ethnic homophily (% Chinese) of the network of "important people" affect identities? 5) Do degree and ethnic homophily (% Chinese) of the network of "time bound people" affect identities? 6) Do network characteristics explain the effects of place and time on identity? 7) Do the effects of ethnic homophily on Chinese identity vary by place and time in the U.S.?

Hypothesis

I hypothesize that the importance of identity is a function of time, space, and the personal network. For example, the more time one is immersed in an environment where professionalism is encouraged and the percentage of professionals in one's personal network is higher, the more important the professional identity will be to the focal person. I also argue that the three factors of time, space, and personal network characteristics all moderate one another. That is, the function of time on identity might be different due to the different spaces in which the process takes place. Similarly, the homophily of personal networks may have a different impact on identity with the passage of time or the different places in which the identity process happens.

Time in the U.S. and identity. Identity theory suggests that identities should become stronger over time through continuing interactions with individuals who reinforce or support that identity (Mead 1934; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Once social relations/ties are formed and stabilized, expectations of identities will be sent by the generalized other and received by the focal person to internalize into the self-structure as various identities. Time is a built-in dimension of identity definition in that the longer the interaction among people, the more likely the expectations are understood and the identity is internalized.

Burke and Reitzes (1981) hold that "the meanings of an identity are, in part, the products of the particular opportunities and demand characteristics of the social situation, and are based on the similarities and differences of a role with related, complementary, or counter-roles" (p. 84).

That is, there are several scenarios in which identities are enhanced by the generalized other. First, the generalized other could play the same role or identity as the focal person. In this case, the generalized others' expectation is for the focal person to internalize their own standard of an identity. In other words, the interactants (alter) attempt to homogenize the focal person (ego). The homophily principle states that people seek out similar others to interact with and as a result, they become more similar. Therefore, the longer and stronger the tie between the ego and the alter (identity holder), the more likely the ego would adopt a strong similar identity. That is, "important people" have more and more impact on the focal person's adoption of an identity that becomes more and more important as time passes.

The religious and professional identities are in this category of identity. All of the Chinese respondents were embedded in an academic setting, pursuing a professional degree. "Being professional" is a message they receive from their professors who are "officially" professionals as well as from their peers who regard themselves as professionals. These respondents self-selected into the circle of true and potential professionals, and as they become more and more immersed into this professional environment, their professional identity should become stronger.

Religious identity is similar to as well as different from professional identity. The U.S. is a "religious" country, with a high proportion of the population claiming to be religious. Not all respondents self-selected to be in a religious setting, and when the social environment permits, they might opt for a more secular social environment. But in general, the Chinese graduate students are more likely to be embedded in a religious community than when they were located in China. Because of the homogenizing

orientation of the generalized other, the longer they stay in the U.S., the more likely they are to adopt a religious identity.

Second, the generalized other are the role set of the focal person when the generalized other plays a certain role to make the focal person's identity possible. Family member identities are in this category. For example, there has to be a person who plays the mother role to make the focal person's child role a reality. The students play various family member roles: child, parent, spouse, and relative because of the counterpart roles assumed by their respective family members. Family members or kin are very stable ties (Wellman, 1979).

With respect to the function of emotions in the interaction between identity and social networks, Stryker (2004) believes that confirmation of identity by others often generates positive emotions which encourage people to remain in a social network. That is, when the alters who are role set or counter roles for the ego confirm the identity the ego performs, the ego will feel positive emotions and continue a relationship with the alter. Consequently, the alter has more opportunities to convey personalized meaning of the specific identity he/she expects the ego to have. Therefore, the stronger and longer the ties are, the more likely the focal person will conform to the explicit and implicit identity expectations of the generalized other. Since the "important people" are mostly emotionally important for the focal person, I would expect that the longer the ongoing relationship between the alter and the ego exists, the stronger the related family member identity becomes.

Third, the generalized other expects the focal person to remain different from them. The generalized other may use identity boundaries (physical as well as cultural) to

highlight the differences between themselves and the focal person. The longer the interaction between the alter and the ego, the more obvious the difference is, which in effect would push the ego to adopt a different identity which becomes stronger over time. Ethnic identity is one such identity derived from difference. Ethnic and racial identity holders demarcate their identity boundary by utilizing social distance demonstrated by either sanction (e.g., social ostracism) or encouragements (e.g., multiculturalism) to reinforce their ethnic identity.

It is often the "time bound people" that reinforce the focal person's ethnic identity, since they remain socially distant (complementary) or "weak ties" despite the fact that they are physically present in the focal person's life for a significant amount of time.

The mechanism delineated above suggests that time will enhance all 4 included identities: ethnic, professional, family member, and religious identities. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

1.1. The longer the respondents remain in the U.S., the stronger their ethnic identity becomes.

1.2. The longer the respondents remain in the U.S., the stronger their professional identity becomes.

1.3. The longer the respondents remain in the U.S., the stronger their family member identity becomes.

1.4. The longer the respondents remain in the U.S., the stronger their religious identity becomes.

Place/space and identity. In delineating and operationalizing the relationship between society, individual and behavior in the tradition of symbolic interactionism,

Stryker and Serpe (1982) point out that the defining problem of social psychology is "the explanation of social behavior insofar as that behavior is the consequence of characteristics of the society in which it takes place and of the persons who are involved... identity theory proceeds by doing with respect to the structure of role relationships and to self" (p. 200). Stryker and Serpe (1982) use "commitment" to refer to role relationships and society, and "identity salience" to refer to the self and the social person. Sociocultural environment or place is the source of identity (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Feldman, 1990). Place matters.

In short, identity theory holds that society is correlated with identity salience, and the two as a whole explain social behavior. What is of interest to this research is the correlation between society and identity salience. That is, identity salience, defined in this research as identity importance, is correlated with sociocultural environments in different places. The next question is how does sociocultural environment explain identity importance? Or, what is the direction of this correlation?

In general, sociocultural environments can be classified into two types: smaller and closely knit community and large and loosely society. The distinction between the two types of sociocultural environments is mandated by the structural features: network closure, and large and sparse network (Borgatti, 1998). To reiterate Fuches' (2001) exposition, small and densely connected social environment generates a culture conducive to norms due to the trust and monitoring found in such communities, while large and sparsely connected societies are relativistic in culture.

In a smaller and simpler society, the well-being of the society rises above the diverging orientation of its members (Durkheim, 2001). In the language of identity theory,

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the identity pool is small and a small number of identities are particularly important. In a larger and more complex society, the identity pool is large because of the existence of many subcultures that can be absorbed into the self-structure (Smith-Lovin, 2007), and various and often unrelated identities compete against each other. Also, people in large and sparse networks easily trespass the boundaries of subcultures.

In this comparative study, Southeast City is a much smaller and simpler sociocultural environment than Northeast City. Among the four identities examined, the heavily religious local culture in Southeast (Pew Research) particularly encourages the religious identity, given the fact that Southeast City is on the Bible belt. In Northeast City, however, religious identity is just one of the many identities vying for the new comers' attention. Thus, I expect to find religious identity a more important identity among respondents from Red College than respondents from Green College, due to the differential weight the religious identity carries for their residents in the two cities.

The change of sociocultural environment coincides with the change of the same identity (Espin, 1995). At Red College, with the exception of the family member identity, the professional identity and the Chinese identity mean first and foremost to be a member of their respective local communities. That is, being a member of the local professional community and the local Chinese community is very important, if not the most important, for these students to define their professional and Chinese ethnic identities. There is no stand-alone professional identity and Chinese ethnic identity, while stand-alone professional identity and Chinese identity are more often found among the respondents from Green College. This is consistent with the norm dominant culture at Red College. For those from Green College, the norms of professionalism and the fact that the city

presents visible ethnic enclaves and populations make it possible for Chinese students to define their professional identity and ethnic identity in a more permanent, albeit weaker manner, than at Red College. Thus, I expect to find professional and Chinese ethnic identities to be stronger among Red College respondents than Green College respondents.

The family member identity is an exception to the constraint of the local culture for several reasons. First, many of the respondents' family members do not live in the same geological community/region with the focal person. However, these family members maintain a high contact frequency with the students through technology, and remain the most important and influential people for the focal person. They form a virtual community spanning physical space. Second, the fact that students in both areas are separated from the mainstream society voluntarily or un-voluntarily in terms of their social network composition means that they stay within the Chinese community for developing intimate relationships. Their stay in the Chinese community allows the norms from the Chinese culture to regulate familial relationships. As different as the Chinese community at Red College is from Green College, the Chinese community at Red College nonetheless respects the same family norms esteemed by the Chinese people at Green College. Therefore, I do not expect to find any difference when it comes to family member identity between the two communities.

In terms of the identity importance and place relationship, I hereby hypothesize that:

2.1.1. Ethnic identity is stronger in a small and closely knit community. That is, the respondents at Red College have a stronger Chinese ethnic identity than the respondents from Green College.

2.1.2. Professional identity is stronger in a small and closely knit community (Southeast City) than in a large and sparsely connected community (Northeast City).

2.1.3. Family member identity should exhibit no difference between the two cities.

2.1.4. Religious identity is stronger or more likely in a small and densely connected community (Southeast City) than at a large and sparsely connected community (Northeast City).

People of similar ancestry do not necessarily share identical experiences. History plays out in space, and space plays out in identities. The importance of the intersection of historical and social contexts is well recognized in the ethnic identity literature. Nagel (1994) argues that both historical and social contexts are important in the construction of the ethnic identity. Waters (1990) holds a similar opinion in her delineation of ethnic options. The mediating function of place against the backdrop of history endows the ethnic identity fluidity (Alba, 1990). I argue that not only is ethnic identity fluid, but other identities are also fluid when social context intervenes in the function of time in shaping identities.

Identity theory provides direction to understand the mediating function of place in the interaction of identity importance and time. As stated earlier, at Red College the religious identity is the overarching identity for both professional and Chinese ethnic identities. As an overarching identity, the religious identity should become stronger over time as it is supported by the local culture that deifies this identity. The professional identity at Red College should start strong. However, the strength of the professional

identity does not have much room to grow over time, given the fact that it is a secondary identity in Southeast City. In Northeast City, since the professional identity is more defined by professionalism widely accepted in the locality, the strength of this identity can increase over time, as it takes time for this identity to be internalized through the socialization process. The Chinese ethnic identity has a similar development curve. For the same reasons stated in the previous section, the family member identity should not be affected by social contexts over time.

So, does time in the U.S. affect identities of those located at Green College in Northeast City and Red College in Southeast City differently? I hereby hypothesize that:

2.2.1. Over time, the ethnic identity becomes stronger for Green College respondents than for Red College respondents.

2.2.2. Over time, the professional identity becomes stronger for Green College respondents than for Red College respondents.

2.2.3. Over time, there is no difference between Green College respondents and Red College respondents in terms of family member identity.

2.2.4. Over time, the religious identity is stronger (or more likely) for respondents at Red College than those at Green College.

Personal social networks and identity. In a rare article linking egocentric networks to identity, McFarland and Pals (2005) describe "how social contexts (networks) directly and indirectly affect identity transformation" (p. 299). Following this seminal work, I included two variables for each of the two types of network: the "important people" and the "time bound people": network size (degrees) and homogeneity (% Chinese).

I expect that larger personal network size correlates with higher identity importance, because a larger network means more opportunities for the focal person to be exposed to certain identities. Or conversely, a focal person who has a strong identity would try to confirm his/her identity by expanding networks of the same identity. I also expect higher homogeneity leads to higher importance of shared identity due to the homophily factor. However, the ethnic (Chinese) homogeneity variables are the only homophily variables included.

Here, I determine whether network size (degree) and ethnic homophily (% Chinese) of "important people" network and "time-bound people" network affect identities. I hypothesize that:

3.1.1. Larger degree and higher homophily (% Chinese) in both networks are associated with respondents developing a more important ethnic identity.

3.1.2. Larger degree and higher homophily (% Chinese) in both networks are associated with respondents developing a more important professional identity.

3.1.3. Larger degree and higher homophily (% Chinese) in both networks are associated with respondents developing a more important family member identity.

3.1.4. Larger degree and higher homophily (% Chinese) in both networks are associated with respondents developing a higher likelihood to develop religious identity.

A secondary question is: do network characteristics explain the effects of place and time on identity? As explained earlier, sociocultural context and time constrain social networks which impacts identity. Time, space and network factors should work together to explain identity importance. I hereby hypothesize that:

3.2.1. Network characteristics explain time or place in ethnic identity importance.

3.2.2. Network characteristics explain time or place in professional identity importance.

3.2.3. Network characteristics explain time or place in family member identity importance.

3.2.4. Network characteristics explain time or place in the likelihood of developing religious identity.

A tertiary research question is: Do the effects of ethnic homophily on Chinese identity vary by place and time in the U.S.? As stated in the secondary hypotheses, since the data have the ethnic homophily statistics, the cultural context and the historical context are embedded in the egocentric networks. Therefore, the effects of ethnic homophily on Chinese identity will vary by place and time. I hereby hypothesize that:

3.3.1. The effects of ethnic homophily on the Chinese identity vary by place.

3.3.2. The effects of ethnic homophily on the Chinese identity vary by time.

Data and Analysis Procedures

An online survey was conducted to collect quantitative data on patterns of relationships between space, time, personal social networks, and identity importance. A total of 172 individuals participated in the online survey using the online questionnaire (116) and the paper print-outs of the online questionnaire (56). A total of 53 cases were dropped due to missing data in the analysis process. The number of useful responses (119) is sufficient for a multivariate analysis (Allison, 1999).

Variables. *Dependent variables: Importance of 4 identities.* Identity importance is measured with a scale of 1-100, where higher values are equal to higher importance.

Using importance of identity to measure identity salience is a matter of expediency in the absence of a good behavioral measure of salience.

There are 4 identity variables used as dependent variables: ethnic, professional, family member, and religious. The Ethnic, professional, and family member identity importance variables are continuous variables using the scale. The religious identity is a binary variable based on a single item measuring religious group membership. In the absence of a true measure of religious identity, religious membership serves as a proxy. Presence of a religious identity is coded 1 if a respondent reports being a member of a religious group and 0 if not.

Independent variables: Space/time and 4 network variables. Space/Time: Both variables are binary variables. The online survey was launched as two separate surveys to collect responses from the students at the two universities. When the data came in as 2 datasets, the data from Green College was coded as "1" and the data from Red College was coded as "0." The variable "time in the U.S." is a continuous variable coded in years. It is based on the question: how long have you been in the U.S.? For the variable "time in the U.S.," there are two outliers (16, 22) that were recoded to "8". I tested for multicollinearity, but did not identify VIFs larger than 2, suggesting no problems.

Network Variables: The network variables are based on two types of tie: the most "important people" and the "time bound people." For the variable "percent Chinese in 'time bound people' network," there is an outlier of 1000 which was dropped from the dataset. VIFs did not suggest any multicollinearity problems.

Two network variables are created for the most "important people" and the "time bound people" networks. These are network size (i.e., degree) and the percentage of

Chinese people in this network (i.e., ethnic homophily). The network size variables are continuous and based on items asking "How many people are important in your life?" and "How many people in your life do you spend the most awake time with?" Follow up questions to each of these ask "How many of them are Chinese?" The percent of Chinese people in the two networks are based on dividing the number of the Chinese people by the total number of "important people" (or "time bound people") and then multiplying by 100.

Control variables. The one control variable included is gender. Gender is a binary variable with male coded "1" and female "0".[15]

I checked normalcy for the included 6 independent variables: space, time, network size of "important people," percent Chinese of "important people," network size of "time bound people," and percentage of Chinese of "time bound people" as well as one control variable: male. Kernel density plot shows departure from normality. The plot is slightly right skewed. Qnorm shows that the data are not on the line especially at the two ends. This indicates that there is normality violation. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test show that the distribution as a whole is not normal as p-value is significant rejecting the null hypothesis of normality, but z-value is 4.25 indicating a minor departure from normality. Therefore, other than recoding or dropping the extreme outliers as previously stated, no further corrections were conducted.

Analysis procedures. The analysis takes the form of a stepwise analysis. There are seven steps in total. The first step is to delineate the impact of space and time on

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[15] Other socio-economic variables – mother's education, father's education, mother's occupation status, father's occupation status, marital status, and having a scholarship –-are not included in the final models, as they do not add explanatory power, nor do they alter the effects of key independent variables.

identity importance by running 3 regression models. I use the identity importance scale for ethnic, professional, and family member identities as the dependent variables. There are two major predictor variables: location in U.S. (Northeast City), and time in the U.S. In this model and all models described hereafter, I control for gender.

The second step is to find out whether time and space co-vary. That is, to find out if time in the U.S. affects the importance of identities for those located in Northeast City and Southeast City differently. To achieve this purpose, I ran 3 regression models with the 3 identity importance dependent variables. Other than the space/time independent variables, I also included the interaction term of the two in the 3 models.

The third step is to understand the impact of social networks on the identity importance. This step tests whether degree and ethnic homophily (% Chinese) of the "important people" network affects identity importance, and whether degree and ethnic homophily (% Chinese) of the "time bound people" network affects identities. The 4 network variables from the "important people" network and "time bound people" network, are the major independent variables to predict the identity importance using 3 regression models. The 4 included variables are: the network size of the "important people" network, the percentage of Chinese people in the "important person" network, the size of the "time bound people" network, and the percentage of Chinese people in the "time bound people" network.

The fourth step is to have a combined comprehensive model that examines the effects of space/time and network factors at the same time on the 3 identity dependent variables. This step tests if network characteristics explain the effects of place and time on identity by assessing changes in coefficients when all variables are included in the

models. The independent variables of interest are: the location in the U.S. (Northeast City), time in the U.S., the network size of the "important people," the percentage of Chinese people in the "important person" network, the size of the "time bound people" network, and the percent of Chinese people in the "time bound people" network.

The fifth step uses 2 regression models to investigate the Chinese ethnic identity. This step tests if the effects of ethnic homophily on Chinese identity vary by place and time in the U.S. Two network variables: the network size of "important people" and the network size of "time bound people," are included. Two network composition variables - the percentage of Chinese people in the "important people" network and the percentage of Chinese people in the "time bound people" network - are also used as predictor variables. To examine whether network composition variables vary with space, I added two interaction terms: "percent Chinese in the 'important people' network," "location in the U.S. (Northeast City)," "percent Chinese in 'time bound person' network," and "location in the U.S. (Northeast City)," to the first regression model. To check whether network composition variables vary with time, I added 2 interaction terms: "percent Chinese in 'important people' network," "time in the U.S.," "percent Chinese in 'time bound person' network," and "time in the U.S." to the second regression model.

The sixth step is a bivariate analysis of the binary church membership identity. I tested church membership identity on each of the 7 variables: location in the U.S., time in the U.S., gender, network size of "important people," percent Chinese in "important people" network, network size of "time bound people" network, and percent Chinese in "time bound people" network.

The last step is a bivariate analysis of the missing data (53) and analysis data. I tested the differences of the missing and analysis data on all variables included in the descriptive, multivariate, and bivariate analysis and discuss the implications of significant differences for findings.

Results

For the 3 identities included in the final analysis, the average importance of family member identity (89.21) is much higher than that of the other two identities. The Chinese ethnic identity is a distant number two: the mean of its importance score is 73.45. The identity of the professional identity is 61.27.

Figure 3

Mean of the Importance of Identities: Family Member, Professional, and Chinese
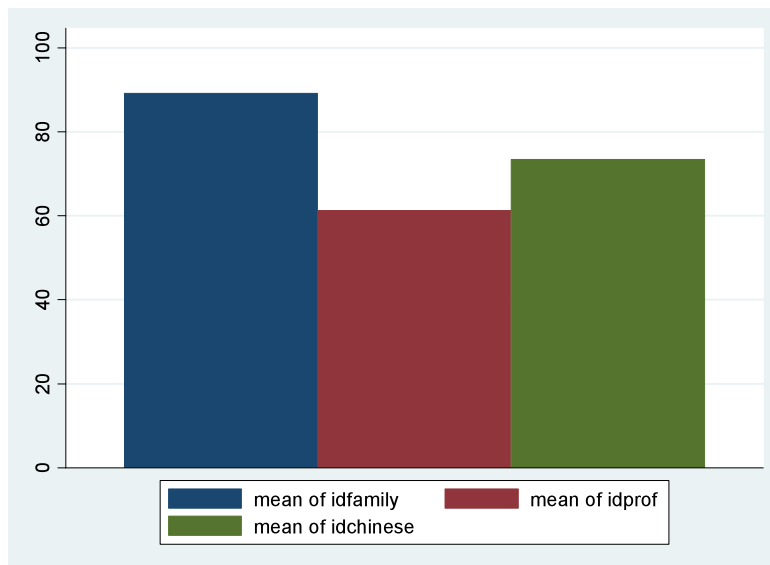
These mean differences are significant. The t-test results all reject the null hypotheses that there is no difference. Specifically, P-value for the comparison of the Chinese ethnic identity mean and professional is 0.0016 (P<0.005). P-value for the comparison between the Chinese ethnic identity and the family member identity is 0.0000

(p<0.0005). P-value for the comparison between the professional identity and the family member identity is 0.0000 (p<0.0005)**.**

Descriptive statistics. The demographic characteristics of the survey respondents are presented in Table 6. Around half of the sample is male (50%). Respondents range in age from 20 to 38, with a mean age of 27 years. Over half of the sample is from Green College (54%). The length of stay in the U.S. ranges from 0 to 9 years, with a mean of 3.2 years.

There are 4 network variables included in the descriptive statistics. The average network size of "important people" is 8.42 with a SD of 10.43. The number of ties the respondent has ranges from 1 to 100. The percentage of Chinese people in the "important people" network is very high: 83.09% with a SD of 21.04%.

Table 6

Sample Descriptive Statistics (N=119)

	Mean	SD	Range
Gender (male =1)	0.50		
Age (years)	27.05	3.56	20.00-38.00
Location (NE=1)	0.54		
Time in US (years)	3.20	2.04	0.00-9.00
Important People Network Size	8.42	10.43	1-100
% Chinese in Important People Network	83.09	21.04	0-100
Time Bound Network Size	3.90	3.24	0-20
% Chinese in Time Bound Network	83.06	28.45	0-100

Compared with the "important people" network size, the "time bound" network size is much smaller on average: 3.90 with a SD of 3.24. The number of ties ranges from 0 to 20. The percentage of Chinese people in this network is high: 83.06% with a SD of 28.45%.

Effect of space/time on identity importance. Table 7 presents the effects of space/time on professional identity importance. The professional identity strengthens as time in the U.S. and in graduate programs, increases. Also, the family identity becomes marginally stronger as time in the U.S. increases. Specifically, results suggest that with each one year increase of time spent living in the U.S., the importance of professional identity increases by 3.52 units ($p<0.05$), all else equal.

Table 7

Linear Regression of Effect of Space/Time on the Importance of Chinese Identity (N=101), Professional Identity (N=94),and Family Member Identity (N=102)

	Chinese ID	Professional ID	Family ID
Time In US	-0.45	3.52*	2.12
	(1.50)	(1.63)	(1.10) (p-value 0.56)
NE City	-4.29	-9.81	-6.54
	(6.14)	(6.92)	(4.51)
Male	3.66	-0.39	0.83
	(5.85)	(6.53)	(4.29)
R²	0.01	0.06	0.05
F	0.34	1.97	1.60
LR Chi-Square			

1. Table presents simple linear regression results for Chinese, professional and family member identities. Standard errors are in parenthesis.
2. Models include the following control variables: male.
3. Reference category is the Red College sample.

*=$p<0.05$.

The findings support hypothesis 1.2 on the effect of time on professional identity importance.

Effect of space/time and their interaction on identity importance. Table 8 presents the effect of space/time and their interaction on the importance of the professional identity. In general, the professional identity becomes stronger over time for those at Red College, but increases only slightly for those at Green College.

Table 8

Linear Regression of Effect of Space/Time and Their Interaction on the Importance of Chinese Identity (N=101), Professional Identity (N=94), and Family Member Identity (N=102)

	Professional Identity
Time In US	7.37*
	(2.51)
NE City	10.69
	(12.35)
Male	0.99
	(6.47)
Time*NE	-6.48*
	(3.26)
R²	0.10
F	2.51
LR Chi-Square	

1. Table presents simple linear regression results for Chinese, professional and family member identities. Standard errors are in parenthesis.
2. Models include the interaction term of time in the US and Northeast City.
3. Models include the following control variables: male.
4. Reference category is the Red College sample. *=p<0.05.

The space/time interaction term is significant. Specifically, the effect of length of time spent in the U.S. on the importance of the professional identity varies by location. For Red College respondents, for each one year increase in stay in the U.S., the importance of the professional identity increases by 7.37 units. For Green College respondents, for each one year increase in stay in the U.S., the importance of the professional identity increases by only 0.89 (7.37-6.48).

The findings prove the opposite of hypothesis 2.2.2 on the effect of the interaction between time and space on professional identity. This might be due to the fact that Red College respondents see more importance in belonging to an academic community through communication with their supervisors and joining professional organizations, while respondents from Green College take much pride in being an independent scholar

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with critical thinking skills. That is, the room for professionalism to increase is more limited for Green College students than Red College students.

Effect of network factors on identity importance. Table 9 presents the effect of network factors on the importance of the Chinese ethnic identity. The more ethnic homophily among the "time bound people," the stronger the ego's Chinese identity becomes. The larger the network of "important people" is, the stronger the ego's professional identity becomes.

Specifically, holding covariates constant, for each one percent increase in Chinese composition in the "time bound people" network, the importance of the Chinese ethnic identity increases by 0.26 units ($p<0.05$). The R square is 0.11 showing this model has modest but significant explanatory power. Holding covariates constant, for each one tie increase in the "important people" network, the professional identity importance increases by 0.59 ($p=0.05$).

Table 9

Linear Regression of Network Factors on the Importance of Chinese Identity (N=97), Professional Identity (N=90), and Family Member Identity (N=96)

	Chinese Identity	Professional Identity	Family Member Identity
Important People Network Size	0.40 (0.27)	0.59* (0.30)	0.27 (0.21)
Time Bound People Network Size	1.03 (0.93)	-0.73 (1.05)	0.08 (0.72)
% Chinese in Important People Network	0.09 (0.15)	-0.14 (0.17)	0.01 (0.11)
% Chinese in Time Bound People Network	0.26* (0.11)	-0.07 (0.12)	0.16 (0.08)
Male	5.69 (5.83)	-1.67 (6.83)	0.58 (4.57)
R²	0.11	0.07	0.06
F	2.16	1.24	1.16
LR Chi-Square			

1. Table presents simple linear regression results for Chinese, professional and family member identities. Standard errors are in parenthesis.
2. Models include the following control variables: male.
3. Reference category is the Red College sample.

*=p<0.05.

The findings support hypothesis 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 on the effect of network

characteristics on the Chinese ethnic identity and the professional identity.

Effect of space/time and network factors on identity importance. Table 10

presents the effect of space/time and network factors on the Chinese ethnic identity

importance. The results on place and space hold even after controlling for these network

characteristics. This could be because these are not the best network variables for the identities measured (i.e., do not have percent in same profession).

Specifically, holding covariates constant, for each one percent increase in Chinese composition in the "time bound people" network, the importance of the Chinese ethnic identity increases by 0.26 ($p<0.05$). The model has a modest explanatory power with an R square of 0.11. Holding covariates constant, for each one percent increase in Chinese composition in the "time bound people" network, the importance of the family member identity increases by 0.18 ($p<0.05$). For each one year increase in time spent in the U.S., the importance of the family member identity increases by 2.78 ($p<0.05$). The model has a modest explanatory power with an R square of 0.11.

Table 10

Linear Regression of Network Factors on the Importance of Chinese Identity (N=97), Professional Identity (N=90), and Family Member Identity (N=96))

	Chinese Identity	Professional Identity	Family Member Identity
Important People Network Size	0.40 (0.28)	0.48 (0.30)	0.19 (0.21)
Time Bound People Network Size	1.04 (0.94)	-0.84 (1.04)	0.02 (0.71)
% Chinese in Important People Network	0.09 (0.26)	-0.13 (0.17)	0.04 (0.12)
% Chinese in Time Bound People Network	0.26* (0.11)	-0.07 (0.12)	0.18* (0.08)
NY City	1.20 (6.36)	-9.29 (7.35)	-4.07 (4.89)
Time in US	0.18 (1.63)	2.54 (1.84)	2.78* (1.25)
Male	5.62 (6.00)	0.81 (6.95)	2.59 (4.62)
R²	0.11	0.10	0.11
F	1.52	1.33	1.59
LR Chi-Square			

1. Table presents simple linear regression results for Chinese, professional and family member identities. Standard errors are in parenthesis.
2. Models include the following control variables: male.
3. Reference category is the Red College sample.

*=p<0.05.

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The findings do not support the time effect dependent on network characteristics but do support the confounding effect of place that is dependent of network characteristics as stated in hypotheses 3.2.1 - 3.2.4. The reason might be that the data does not have precise measurements of egocentric network composition for each included identity.

The interaction of space/time and network factors on the Chinese ethnic identity importance. Table 11 presents the effect of space, time, network factors, and the interactions between space/time and network factors on the importance of the Chinese ethnic identity. For respondents at Red College, higher ethnic homophily in the "time bound people" network is associated with a weaker Chinese ethnic identity. However, at Green College, more time spent with Chinese people is associated with a stronger Chinese ethnic identity. Higher ethnic homophily in the "time bound people" network is associated with a weaker Chinese ethnic identity among those who had arrived to the U.S more recently. However, this relationship becomes increasingly positive the longer the students remain in the U.S., such that those in the U.S. for a long period of time have a stronger Chinese ethnic identity if they spend time with many Chinese people. Specifically, in model 1, holding covariates constant, compared with Red College, Green College respondents' Chinese ethnic identity importance decreases by 61.22. The interaction term between the percentage of Chinese people in the "time bound people" network and location in the U.S. is significant ($p<0.05$). For Red College respondents, for each one percent increase in the Chinese composition in the "time bound people" network, the family member identity importance decreases by 0.18. At Green College, for each one percent increase in the Chinese composition in the "time bound people"

network, the Chinese ethnic identity importance increases by 0.38 (0.56-0.18). The model has moderate predictive power with an R square of 0.17.

In model 2, the interaction term between the percentage of Chinese people in the "time bound" network and the time spent in the U.S. is significant ($p<0.01$). The effect of time spent in the U.S. varies with the percentage of Chinese people in the "time bound" network. For those who just arrived in the U.S. (< one year), each additional percentage of Chinese people in the "time bound" network is associated with a .25 decrease in ethnic identity importance. After a one year stay in the U.S., each additional percentage of Chinese people in the "time bound people" network decreases the importance of the Chinese ethnic identity by 0.12 (0.13-0.25). At two years there is no effect of ethnic homophily, but the pattern begins to reverse. For example, at five years spent in the U.S., each percentage of Chinese people in the network is associated with a .40 *increase* in ethnic identity. The model predicts 18% of the variance in ethnic identity.

Table 11

Linear Regression of the Effect of Space, Time, Network Factors, and the Interaction of Space/Time and Network Factors on the Importance of the Chinese Identity (N=97)

	Chinese Identity Model 1	Chinese Identity Model 2
Time In US	-	-1.94
	-	(8.17)
NE City	-61.22*	-
	(30.69)	-
Importance Network Size	0.45	0.46
	(0.27)	(0.26)
% Chinese in Importance Network	0.02	-0.02
	(0.34)	(0.38)
% Chinese Importance Network * NE	0.15	-
	(0.38)	-
Time Network Size	1.03	1.10
	(0.92)	(0.95)
% Chinese Importance Network * Time in US	-	0.03
	-	(0.09)
% Chinese in Time Network	-0.18	-0.25
	(0.25)	(0.22)
% Chinese Time Network * NE	0.56*	-
	(0.27)	-
% Chinese Time Network * Time in US	-	0.13*
	-	(0.05)
Male	5.86	5.48
	(5.80)	(5.71)
R²	0.17	0.18
F	2.22	2.45

1. Table presents simple linear regression results for Chines ethnic identity. Standard errors are in parenthesis.
2. Models include the interaction term of time in the US and Northeast City.
3. Models include the following control variables: male.
4. Reference category is the Red College sample.

*=p<0.05.

The findings support hypotheses 3.3.1-3.3.2 stating that homophily co-varies with place and time to predict the importance of the ethnic identity.

Church membership identity. Table 12 presents bivariate analysis of church membership identity on all 7 variables: locations, gender, time in the U.S., "important people" network size, percent Chinese in "important people" network, "time bound people" network size, and percent Chinese in "time bound people" network.[16]

Church members and non-church members do not differentiate on time in the U.S., network size of "important people," percentage Chinese in "time bound people" networks, and network size of "time bound people." However, there is a significant difference between Northeast City and Southeast City with respect to percent of respondents that are church members. About 32% of the Southeast City sample belongs to a church, compared to only 10% of the Northeast City sample (p<.001). The Southeast City sample is close to a random sample given that the online survey was distributed by the International Office to all Chinese graduate students at Red College. There are also marginally significant mean differences between church members and non-members with respect to percentage Chinese in "important people" networks. Among church members, the percent of important people that are Chinese is 74%, on average, compared to 84% among non-members (p=0.08).

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[16] Bivariate analysis of these 7 variables on the 3 continuous identity importance variables – professional, Chinese, and family member – are consistent with the multivariate analysis as presented above.

Table 12

Bivariate Analysis of Church Membership Identity

Variable	Church Member Mean/Percent	Non-Member Mean/Percent	t/ X^2
Location			
Northeast City	10%	90%	7.78[**]
Southeast City	32%	68%	
Gender			
Male	17%	83%	0.35
Female	22%	78%	
Time in US (years)	3.38	3.18	0.42
Important People Network Size	7.05	8.52	0.54
% Chinese in Important People Network	74.16	83.86	-1.79[+]
Time Bound Network Size	3.31	4.26	-1.00
% Chinese in Time Bound Network	86.30	82.57	0.47

1. Table presents bivariate analysis results for Church Membership Identity.
2. [+] = $p<.10$; [**] = $p<.001$

The findings support hypothesis 2.1.4 on the location effect and hypothesis 3.1.4 on the network effect on church membership identity.

Missing data compared with analysis data. Table 13 is a comparison of missing data and analysis data. A significantly larger percent of Southeast City cases (75%) were dropped from the sample due to missing data compared to Northeast City (25%; $p<.01$). This suggests that the findings may not accurately represent the experiences of Chinese students in smaller, more homogeneous communities. These findings might also underestimate the explanatory power of mechanisms like church membership, which are present mostly in the Southeast City sample. Also, respondents who had been in the U.S. for a shorter period of time were more likely to be dropped from the analysis due to missing data. The average length of time in the U.S. for cases retained is 3.15 years,

compared to 2.29 years in the missing data group (p<.05). These results may better

represent the experiences of students who have been in the U.S. for a longer period of

time, and therefore may have more established identities and social relationships.

Table 13

Comparison of Missing Data and Analysis Data

Variables	Analysis Sample N=119	Missing Data N=53	t / X^2
Gender			
Male	50%	66%	2.25
Female	50%	34%	
Age (years)	26.99	26.00	-1.29
Location			
Northeast City	54%	25%	13.04**
Southeast City	46%	75%	
Time in U.S. (years)	3.15	2.29	-2.06*

1. Table presents bivariate analysis results for missing data.
2. $^* = p<.05$; $^{**} = p<.001$

Discussion

Space, time, and networks all matter in identity importance. The space variable is

important because it is the social environment in specific localities. Social context

provides various culture media to support a certain number of identities. The

sociocultural context permeates people's immediate social environment, or their personal

network, and coordinates with the personal network dynamic to provide new identities

for the focal person. Time is the built in factor in the identity process. It allows fleeting

meanings attached to certain identities to deepen and become internalized. Therefore,

time supports and complicates the function of space and egocentric network in identity

processes.

There are some surprising findings. The first is the impact of time space interaction on the professional identity. The professional identity becomes stronger over time for those at Red College, but increases only slightly for those at Green College. The number of master's and doctoral programs offered by Green College is limited compared with Red College. This might be a reason for the lower professionalism at Green College. For respondents at both universities, the professional identity importance increase, but the extent of the increase differs. This might look counterintuitive as one would expect a very strong professional identity at Green College, as professionalism is the norm. However, this finding does not suggest that Green College respondents' professionalism starts low. It only shows that the two colleges have a different growth curve.

Another surprising finding is that homophily (% Chinese) in the "time bound" network has a positive effect on the Chinese ethnic identity while homophily in the "important people" network does not have the same effect. As discussed previously, these two networks somehow overlap. The network size of the "important people" network is much larger than that of the "time bound people" network. In addition, the "time bound people" network has more work-related ties than the "important people" network, since these students spend most of their awake time working. These work-related relationships are new ties with the potential to initiate new identities, more so than long standing ties (which would have already produced any related identities). This suggests the importance of the foci theory for the study of identity. That is, the kind of network that is important for the ethnic identity is composed of ties the focal person spends the most time with or people the focal person shares the most foci with.

Along the same line, the network size of the "important people" network has a positive effect on the importance of professional identity. As the qualitative findings suggest, current and previosu supervisors in the U.S. and China are often listed as the most "important people." This might be specific to this population, since the Chinese culture encourages education and respect for teachers. The lack of time to foster trust between the newcomers and their supervisors is overcome by the belief that teachers are respectful figures in the Chinese culture, as modeled on Confucious philosophy. This trust cannot extend to other identities, though. As long as this cultural trait might be true for certain other cultures, the findings might provide a direction to understand the connection between the "important people" network and the professional identity.

Conclusion

This research provides some insight into the identity network interaction with a measure of identity importance that focuses on emotion attached to identities. Future research, however, need to orient towards behavior measures of identity: a measure of identity salience in line of identity theory that can better catch the enactment of identities. Also, the survey data are not completely random. Efforts were made to cover the entire populations of the Chinese graduate students at both Red College and Green College. However, the Green College sample is not representative due to the fact that there is not a complete name list, and certain colleges might have been over represented because Chinese organizations were my primary contacts although this is a relatively inclusive sample. Consequently, the findings of the survey cannot be generalized to the population of the Chinese graduate students at the two universities, even if the Southeast City sample is more random. Last but not least, data are cross sectional, not longitudinal or

experimental. Such an approach might lose some details of each individual's identity

change over time compared with a longitudinal approach and I cannot claim causality

using cross sectional data while causality might be of great significance.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The exploration of identity network processes in this research has yielded several insights by drawing on works in identity theory, relational perspective (egocentric network, homophily, foci, and distinctive theory), literature on identity (place and identity, time and identity, ethnic identity), and international students. These insights are: 1) in a small and homogeneous community, strong relationships in dyadic ties and primary groups precede the adoption of a major identity (i.e., religious identity) while in a large and sparse sociocultural context, identity adoption (i.e., religious identity) precedes networks that span organizational and geographical boundaries; 2) the emergence of the ethnic identity is a function of time as well as demographic changes; 3) the subject population live within Chinese communities in both cities despite the fact that Northeast City is much larger and diverse; 4) the Chinese composition of respondents' personal network provide common meanings for the major identities these respondents share: family member identity and professional identity; 5) place, time, and network factors are effective predictors for identity importance.

These findings provide answers to the research questions of this dissertation: What are the implications of the composition of Chinese international students' network of social relations for their identities? How do social relations and identities interact? What is the impact of sociocultural context on identity network process? How does time influence the interaction of identity and networks of social relations? What are the mechanisms that link social relations and identity? How do people negotiate their

identities when they face identity options offered and constrained by their social relations?

This research, by design, separates out the social relations implied in identity theory and empirically reveals how identity and social relations interact in a specific sociocultural context and over a period of time. This research adds to the literature of place and identity by providing a perspective of the interplay of identity and personal relationships constrained in a place. This study takes for granted the historical background of the two places and employs a dimension of short spans of time in the tradition of identity theory researches. Short spans of time allow identity to develop and transform. The cultural background of the research populations – Chinese graduate students – and the two cities into which they enter, provides unique definitions of the identities these respondents adopt. Identities adopted by these respondents in turn influence their adaptation to and success (or failure) in the host culture. The experience of these respondents adds to the literature of international students studying overseas by taking identity processes into account.

It is imperative to compare two drastically different cities to understand the impact of the larger social structure on the identity. Northeast City is highly diverse in terms of ethnic composition. It is also a city where various and even competing lifestyles prosper without a ruling convention. Independence is the flag of the city. Southeast City is much smaller in area and population when compared to Northeast City. The state Southeast City is located is one of the most politically conservative states in the United States (U.S.), and is located in the "Bible Belt." I argue that by comparing two culturally and structurally different cities, we can understand how identity and personal networks

interact and answer this question: Do social networks precede identities and even serve as the reason for the formation of new identities, or do identities precede and impact people's social networks? The comparison also reveals the different identity pools defined by the sizes and cultures of the two cities. In short, through the answers of the interviewees who reside in two drastically different cities, we can peek into the respondents' complex social world, a world composed of layers of networks of social relations that define the respondents who simultaneously define these networks.

I also argue that the time dimension[17] is another factor. The internalization of identities in a self-structure (Mead, 1934) requires repeated interaction. That is, internalization necessitates a period of time that could sustain repeated and stable interaction between nodes/actors in a social structure/network. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how identities evolve over time. In addition, transitions can cause reduced contact and "weak ties" to resolve (Perry & Pescosolido, 2012). This provides an opportunity to understand how identities alter due to the changes in network structures.

Egocentric networks are also crucial to the identity process. The alters in a focal person's egocentric network are usually "strong ties" and have a substantial impact on the focal person. The alters constantly send out signals of their expectations of the focal person. In many cases, one alter has multiple relationships (multiplexity) with the ego. The rare studies that try to understand the relationship between identity and network have shown that the characteristics of the egocentric network influence group identity. I argue that egocentric network characteristics impact both role identities as well as group and

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[17] In terms of experiencing a disruptive life event and staying in the same place for a period of time.

attribute based identities. That is, egocentric network features are an integral part of identity processes.

In addition, this study can provide some insights regarding international students who experienced tremendous transitions as a result of their further education in the U.S. They left a familiar environment in their home country where they were embedded in social relations that are very different from the social order they find in the host culture. The way these students interact with people around them in the host culture shows that these students are in need of assistance from the host culture. As many as these students' needs are, some needs can be met with organized efforts from hosting universities. For example, language deficiency and socialization norms many of these students have can be accommodated with specialized assistance. Such help will ease these students' transition and entry into the academia and life they face immediately after they enter the host country.

Network Identity Process in Different Cities

The two qualitative chapters on the impact of place and time on identity reveal the mechanisms through which identity and social networks interact. Chapter Five: "Emergent Identities: The Role of Spatial Context" focuses on how cultural and structural differences between places affect social networks and, therefore, identity. I used interview data to explain the regional difference in the identity process. Place difference reveals how different social environments provide different opportunities and constraints for new identities to develop through people's immediate social networks and larger social structure.

The major contribution of this chapter is that it delineates the identity network processes in two different types of sociocultural contexts: a small and densely connected community versus a large and sparsely connected community. In a small and densely related community such as Red College, culturally important identities (in this case religious identity) are acquired by a focal person for several factors. The first one is that his/her "strong ties" share this identity. Also, for a new identity to develop in such a community, a circle of well-connected acquaintances with this identity is necessary. A third factor in the adoption process in this type of community is that the new identity redefines the already existent relationship between the focal person and the strong tie.

This finding is interesting because it suggests that the strength of tie, the multiplexity of the relationship between the focal person and the alter, and density (degree of connectedness) of the group level community are all important factors in the adoption of an identity that could quickly become important for the focal person. The new identity acquired in those conditions is usually high in the identity importance hierarchy of the focal person. However, the findings do not suggest that "strong ties" in the personal network of social relations translate directly into the acquisition of a new identity. As a matter of fact, the respondents made it very clear they would not have taken the new religious identity had they not been embedded in the closely knit religious group community and experienced changed behavior of the "strong ties" towards them as a result of their religious identity. This shows the complexity of the network identity processes. The mechanisms are fundamental when constructing a model of identity network processes. The mechanisms are also crucial because they show the importance of the social structure in shaping people's identity.

On the other hand, in a large and sparsely connected community, the adoption of new identities often lacks a social basis: the focal person is not surrounded by people with the new identity, and may even have other purposes in mind when they enter into situations that prompt their acquisition of a new identity. That is, the adoption of new identities is more of an individual choice than the impact of social relations. However, once a new identity becomes important, the focal person tries to seek similar others with the same identity to socialize with. They may even try to persuade others to adopt the same identity to expand their networks of social relations with a common identity. A community such as Northeast City provides many more possible identities and endows the adoption process with less constraint. This is true for this specific population whose social relations span ethnic communities/enclaves while some old-generation immigrants are actually constrained by their life within the ethnic communities/enclaves.

These findings of identity network processes in a large and sparse regional network are important because they reveal that an identity network process does not always follow the network and then identity order. It reverses when the culture is diverse and life in the city is fragmented. Such a culture provides many more identities to be adopted as its size and complexity (many small pockets of closely knit networks in the larger network system) can generate subcultures that can then be taken into the self-structure. Such possible identities are adopted with less constraint, as the opportunity for the focal person to be embedded in a tightly connected group with a common identity is rare in such a large social environment as Northeast City. That is, peer pressure for conforming to a common identity is very small, and therefore the adoption of identities is not oriented towards certain ones. People enjoy much freedom in their choice of identity. However,

that does not imply the unimportance of the need for identity confirmation (Burke & Stets, 2009). Once a new identity becomes important for the focal person, he/she will seek out similar others to confirm his/her choice of identity. Networks of social relations become the consequence of the adoption of a new identity. Human agency guides the construction of personal networks of social relations.

In sum, the findings in this chapter show that identity network processes are highly complex. The larger social environment in which the egocentric network is embedded is an inalienable part of studying the identity network process.

Network Identity Process in Time

Chapter Six: "Emergent and Rooted Identities: The Role of Time Spanning" discusses the impact of change over time on identity and social networks of relationship. Change is a relevant construct in these data in two ways. First, all individuals in the data experienced a disruptive life event: immigration from their home country, China, to begin a graduate program in the US. Therefore, all interviewees experienced *within*-person change. The narratives of interview respondents reflect changes in social networks and identities before and after the transition.

The second operationalization of time reflects differences *between* individuals. I sampled interviewees who had been in their current programs (and typically in the U.S.) for various lengths of time. This variation in time since the transfer from China to the U.S. among the Chinese graduate students helps us understand how students' social networks of relations are different one year after living in the U.S., relative to more years after living in the U.S. Time spanning, therefore, helps us to trace egocentric network change in the U.S., and how identity evolves in conjunction with networks.

There are three contributions made in this chapter. First, the findings in this chapter show that modern technology allows a virtual community with people back at their home country, easing the focal person's entry into a new geographical community by maintaining contact with "strong ties" while they experience a transition. With the help of information technology, students can live a synchronized life with people instrumental in their lives back in China without having to delete "strong ties." However, although it is not common, some respondents gradually reduced contact with some "strong ties." "Weak ties" were dropped quickly due to a lack of motivation.

Second, a transition that also involves geographical and consequently demographic change provides an opportunity for new identities related with the demographic contrast to develop, in this case, the Chinese ethnic identity. This research expands on the literature of ethnic identity by describing how time functions in cities with different cultures and demographic characteristics when it comes to the ethnic identity. The respondents have different understandings of the ethnic social realities in their specific city, and they have acquired a politically correct attitude when admitting and discussing such social realities.

The significance of this finding is that "weak ties" are also important for the adoption of identities. Differences in the social structure in the two cities lead to an identity mechanism in the religious identity adoption that involves "strong ties" in the egocentric network while the ties that precipitated the ethnic identity are usually "weak ties" in the focal person's life. "Weak ties" do not occupy important positions in the focal person's life, but they do impact how the focal person sees himself/herself by their presence. These "weak ties" are difficult to capture with the traditional instruments, as

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these analysis tools usually aim at obtaining "strong ties." This is one reason why the two types of networks, the "important people" network and the "time bound people" network are crucial for analyzing identities.

Third, I discuss the impact of the ethnic composition in the respondents' personal network on their identities. Ethnic segregation is fairly obvious when examining the composition of the respondents' personal network. Separation from the mainstream society robs them of the opportunity to identify with different kinds of people in mainstream society, except for their supervisors. Ethnic partitioning is demonstrated in their in-group attitude towards other Chinese people who dominate their personal life, and an out-group utilitarian attitude towards the mainstream society which is vital for their professional life. As such, the ethnic context in the respondents' personal network mandates that the same identities remain important to the respondents, despite their length of stay in the host culture. However, the longer the respondents stay in the U.S., the more confident they are to assume their ethnically defined identities, as their knowledge of the host culture increases and they become more open-minded to the use of such knowledge to facilitate their identities.

The importance of ethnic identity is not only its revelation of the emergence of a new identity taking root in a demographically different social environment, but also in its implications for the types of identities that are important to ethnic minorities in the racial order within the U.S.

Causal Factors: Space, Time, and Network Characteristics

Chapter Seven: "Quantitative Insight," examines the factors that impact identity importance. The theory of symbolic interactionism suggests the importance of time in the

development of identity, since the theory defines an identity as stable across situations. Identity theory provides insight into the function of the social environment – space – in the identity process. The importance of space derives from the culture defined by the social connectivity in the community. Identity theory also suggests that more immediate networks such as school and community are more influential in the identity processes than more distant networks. Attributes such as gender become important by working through the more intermediate structures such as schools, associations, and so on, down through the more proximate structures to impact the focal person through their social relations.

I hypothesize that the importance of identity is a function of time, space, and the immediate social environment of the personal network. That is, the passage of time, the differently structured social environment, and the characteristics of the personal networks are all important predictors of identity importance. The addition of personal network characteristics provides important insights into the identity process. For example, the more time one is immersed in an environment where professionalism is encouraged and the percentage of professionals in one's personal network is high, the more important the professional identity becomes. I also argue that the three factors of time, space, and egocentric network characteristics co-vary. That is, the function of time on identity may be different due to the different spaces in which the process takes place. Similarly, the homophily of egocentric networks may have a different impact on identity with the passage of time or the different places the identity process occurs.

The theoretical contribution of this chapter is the inclusion of proxies of network characteristics in predicting identity importance and the usage of an "important people"

network and a "time bound" network. That is, networks matter but the types of ties pertinent to identity importance have to be categorized according to identity processes. The very fact that these two types of networks are distinctive in predicting various identities shows that the traditional classification between "strong ties" and "weak ties" needs modification when studying identities, so that the specific types of network are more pertinent to the importance of identities. As discussed previously, "strong ties" are defined as people the focal person has the greatest contact with, has emotional attachment to, confides in, and reciprocates services with (Granovetter, 1983). The two types of network in this research, the "important people" network[18] versus the "time bound people" network[19] splits up the definition of "strong ties" and "weak ties," causing the two types of networks to overlap, adding "weak ties" to the "time bound people" network. "Important people" do not necessarily spend the most time with the focal person, and "time bound people" are not necessarily important to the focal person. This creation of two types of networks that blend "strong ties" and "weak ties" has yielded statistically significant findings in the prediction of identity importance.

There are some surprising findings. The first one is the impact of time space interaction on professional identity. Another surprising but informative finding is that homophily (% Chinese) in the "time bound" network has a positive effect on Chinese ethnic identity. What is surprising is that homophily in the "important people" network does not have the same effect.

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[18] Those who the focal person discusses important issues with, has emotional attachments to, confides in, and recipricates services with.
[19] Those who the focal person spends the most "awake time" with.

Discussion

This research is a mixed methods study. The qualitative interviews informed me of the nuanced identity network process, cut across by time and spatial context. The quantitative aspect reaffirms the major findings in the qualitative section, and builds on the findings of the interviews. However, there is minor discrepancy in findings between the qualitative and the quantitative parts of the inquiry into the Chinese ethnic identity. In the interviews, a small number of respondents listed the Chinese ethnic identity as a major identity. But the Chinese ethnic identity was never the top identity. Many respondents did not regard their Chinese ethnic identity as important, even after being prodded. However, from the results of the identity importance scale answers of the survey, the importance of the Chinese ethnic identity is relatively high, falling after the family member and friend identities, but before professional identity.

Such a difference might be due to the two samples for the qualitative and the quantitative sections. The sample for the interviews is a convenient sample, while the sample of the survey is more random that tried to reach the whole Chinese graduate populations at the two universities.

There are other limitations. First, the cross-sectional data collected for this research cannot establish causality. Future studies can use longitudinal data. Second, the mesa level analysis is lacking in this research when the major advantage of social network analysis is its cross system (macro, mesa, and micro) capabilities. Future research can continue to build the mesa level of the social networks. Questions can be added to ask about personal history with groups, organizations, and institutions. Third, regional

differences in China are not specifically inquired in the questionnaires. This can be improved by adding a section on regional differences.

As a result of this research, some answers emerge to answer the research questions. The first question is: What are the implications of the composition of Chinese international students' network of social relations for their identities? The answer seems to be that the largely Chinese composition of the networks defines the major identities these students have: family, friend, and student. The second question is: How do social relations and identities interact? The data suggest that social relations and identities interact according to the specific sociocultural contexts. The third question is: What is the impact of sociocultural context on identity network process? The answer from the research is that social relations precede identities in smaller and densely connected networks while identities precede social relations in large and sparsely connected networks. The fourth question is: How does time influence the interaction of identity and networks of social relations? What is found is that identity and networks of social relations vary with time. The fifth question is: What are the mechanisms that link social relations and identity? It seems that in small and dense networks, strong ties, multiplexitiy of relationships, and primary groups are necessary for new identities to develop. In large and sparse networks, people who assume certain identities often expand their circles of friends with the same identities. The sixth question is: How do people negotiate their identities when they face identity options offered and constrained by their social relations? In small and dense networks, people are more constrained by their social relations when it comes to adopting new identities. In large and sparse networks, people demonstrate more human agency to adopt certain identities.

Conclusion

The significance of this research is that it takes the relational perspective into account when investigating identity which is implied in identity theory. The research also recognizes that identity is socially constructed and takes local cultures into account. This study operationalizes the time dimension in the definition of identity in the tradition of structural symbolic interactionism. The dissertation shows that a relational perspective has much to contribute to our understanding of the initiation and sustaining of identity. This dissertation research also demonstrates the importance of incorporating sociocultural environment and time. That is, other than a time dimension, a relational perspective is crucial to the study of identities.

Future research can enhance our understanding of identity network processes by designing specific identity salience scales and adding more network characteristics. For different identities, different homophily questions should be asked. For example, if a research is to study ethnic identity, then ethnic homophily questions are pertinent. If a research is to study professional identity, then professional homophily questions might be more appropriate. In addition, McFarland and Pals' (2005) study has shown that prominence (in-degree) and bridging (between-ness) are important to predict identity change. The structure of personal networks matters.

Where such researches involve qualitative approach, the researcher's positionality is relevant. As far as I am concerned as a researcher, I will need to examine my positionality constantly relative to the specific populations of researches in terms of ethnicity/race, class, gender and other aspects. Identity network processes can be studied and applied in problems related with people in transition as well as people who live a life

in a natural way. That is, people who do not necessarily move in time and space but experience changes nonetheless as a result of social changes.

APPENDIX A

Kernel Density Plot of Residuals

kernel = epanechnikov, bandwidth = 9.8247

Quantile Normal Plot of Residuals
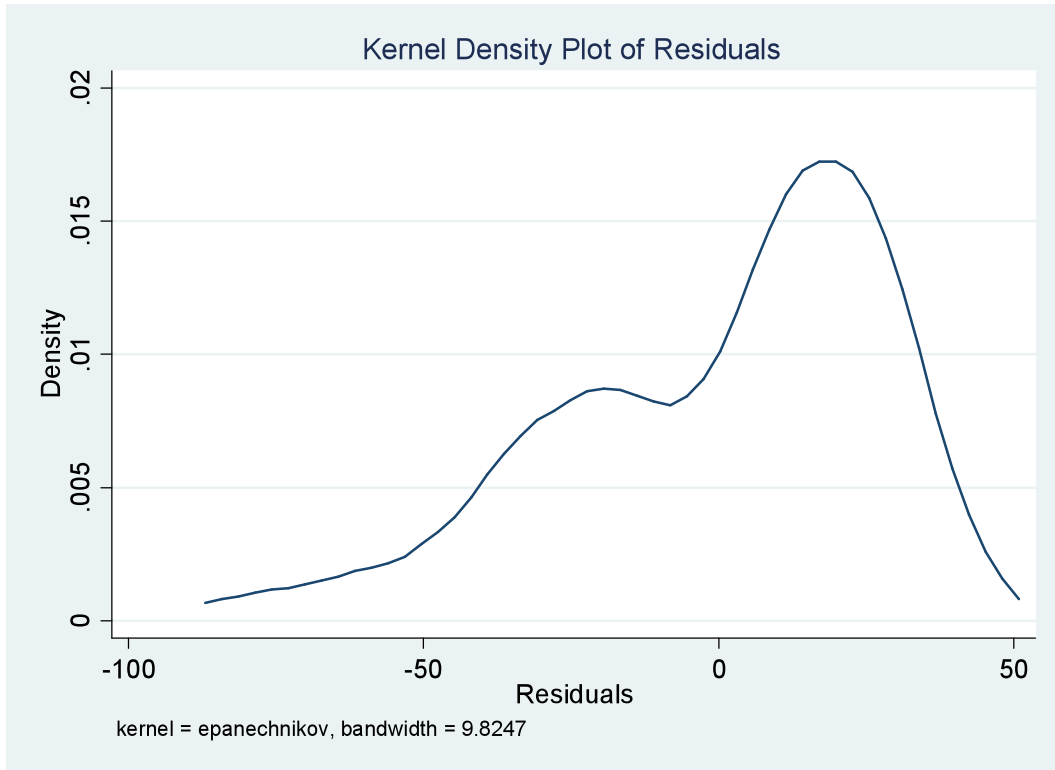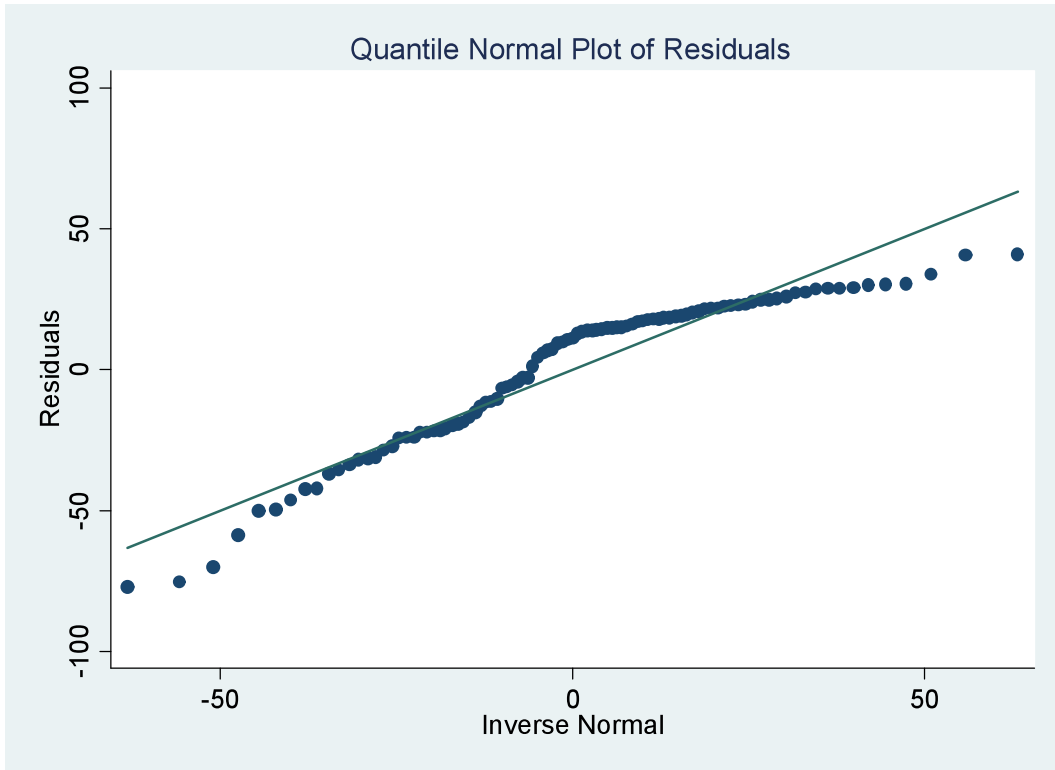
APPENDIX C

Shapiro-Wilk Test

. swilk r

Shapiro-Wilk W test for normal data

Variable	Obs	W	V	z	Prob>z
r	97	0.91181	7.099	4.341	0.00001

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions
Introduction
Thank you for volunteering to participate in my study of Chinese international graduate students in the United States. I am examining how you think about yourself in your social relationships and how this may have changed for you over time. So, my questions will ask for some background information and then will turn to your social contacts.

1. First, can you tell me a little about yourself? How long you have been in the U.S.? What did you do (education and work experience since high school) in the U.S. or China before you became a graduate student? Where did you grow up? Who are the people in your family and what do they do?
2. Do you have something to add?
3. Tell me about your experience in your graduate program. Whom do you work with? What are the requirements for the degree? How are you supporting yourself during your stay? (Probe question: What are you doing for your degree this semester?)

Current Identities and Identities before the Current Program
1. Identities are the roles you play in your interaction with other people: your responsibilities and obligations to them and your expectations of them. What are the identities do you think you have in your life?
2. Now please think about the important aspects of your current life**: family, school, work, religion, friendship, extra curricula organizations on and off campus**. What do you think your role is in each of these? Let's talk about these roles one by one. Let's start with family.
Has this been influenced by other people around you? Can you give an example?
(PROBE: What words would you use to describe yourself to show who you are in each of these?)
(You have talked about family, what about your role in school, etc.?)
3. Think about your life before you came to the U.S., how has your role as a (son, and other roles the respondent mentioned in questions 2) changed? (Go through roles mentioned one by one.)

Social Network and Identity
[This is about how social networks and identity interact.]

A. Current 5 Most Important People (Write down the names on cards)
1. Think about the people important in your current life. Can you name the 5 most important? In what ways are they important? What do these people do for you?

What do they ask you to do for them? What is their relationship to you? (Probe: Other than being your (mother), what else is he/she to you?)

2. In your relationship to this person, what is his/her expectations (hopes) of you as (son...)? Can you give an example of how he/she expresses their expectations? How did you react to their expectations? What are your expectations of them? Can you give an example?

4. How did you get to know each other?

5. What do you usually do/discuss together?

6. For each of these people, I would like to learn about your most recent discussion/ activity together.

Can you describe it?

Please describe the facilities you use when you cannot interact with each other face-to-face.

   Do you have something to add?

7. Can you tell me about their backgrounds?

Age	Ethnicity	Sex
Marital Status	Education	Time in U.S.
Work/School	Organizations Where You Met	Country of Origin
Family Background		

B. **Past 5 Most Important People**

Think about the 5 most important people in your life before you came to the U.S. Are they the same people? Who are the same and who are different ? Why are they different? (For each different person mentioned, repeat section A)

C. *Current 5 Most Important Contexts and People*

1. Name the 5 most important contexts for you in your current life such as the classroom or home.
2. Can you name one person who stands out in each of the 5 contexts?
3. In what aspect are they important? What is their relationship to you? (Probe: Other than being your (mother), what else is he/she to you? Can you give an example of each of the roles they play?)
4. In your relationship to this person, what is his/her expectations (hopes) of you as (son...)? Can you give an example of how he/she expresses their expectations?
5. How did you react to their expectations? What are your expectations of them? Can you give an example?
6. How did you get to know each other?
7.   What do you usually do/discuss together?
8. For each of the 5 people mentioned above, I would like to learn about your most recent activity/discussion together.

9. Can you describe it?
10. Do you have something to add?
11. Can you tell me about their backgrounds?

Age	Ethnicity	Sex
Marital Status	Education	Time in U.S.
Work/School	Organizations Where You Met	Country of Origin
Family Background		

D. *Past 5 Most Important Contexts and People*
Think about the 5 most important contexts and people in your life before you came to this program. (For each different context (person) mentioned, repeat section A)

Ethnic Identity Formation/Change

1. Since you are now living in the host country – the United States, you would inevitably interact with Americans and non-Chinese. In your interaction with people around you here and now, who do you gravitate towards: Chinese, Americans, or other non-Chinese?
2. Can you describe the ways you interact with these people: Americans and other non-Chinese? How does this compare with your interactions with Chinese people here? How does this compare with your interactions with Chinese people when you were in China?
3. People usually belong to different social groups (such as class and ethnic groups) and that makes a difference in how they interact with other people.
   What social groups have you noticed in the US?
   Can you give some examples of these groups?
   Which of these groups do you consider yourself to be part of?
4. How do you understand "**guanxi**"? How is it important in your social interactions?
5. Describe a time here after you came to the U.S. when you were surprised by what happened in a social interaction.
6. Describe a time here after you came to the U.S. when you felt awkward or uncertain by what happened in a social interaction.
7. Describe a time here after you came to the U.S. when you felt pleasant but not anticipated by what happened in a social interaction.
8. In what ways have you noticed change in terms of how you associate with people around you compared with your interactions with people when you were in China?

Activity: sorting cards of names mentioned in A, B, C and D.
Procedure:
A. Write names of the people mentioned in the three questions on their social network.

B. Cross out the repetitive names solicited from the questions in A, B, C, and D.
C. Ask the respondent to sort the names into piles (as many as they would like) the way they want.
D. Ask them why they sorted the name cards in such a way.
E. Probe for in-depth answers to get at why they sorted the cards the way they did (so that eventually I can get the native categories of the interviewees).
F. Ask respondents to sort all the cards as one group according to importance.

Online Survey

Questionnaire for Chinese International Graduate Students

Your Name _____

You are being invited to take part in a research study about the Chinese students in higher education in the United States. You are being invited because you are currently enrolled in college graduate programs in the U.S. The purpose of the research is to study the social networks and identity of Chinese international graduate students.

Although you will not get personal benefit from taking part in this research study, your responses may help us understand more about the interaction between identity and social networks.

We hope to receive completed questionnaires from about 400 people, so your answers are important to us. Of course, you have a choice about whether or not to complete the survey/questionnaire, but if you do participate, you are free to skip any questions or discontinue at any time.

The survey will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. It has 3 parts: demographics, name generator and identity scale.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Your response to the survey will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. When we write about the study you will not be identified.

Please be aware, there might be certain confidentiality concerns given the nature of online surveys, as with anything involving the internet. However, the survey tool for this survey – Qualtrics company has a strict privacy policy for its customers. Qualtrics company states in their privacy policy, and I quote, "We do not sell or make available specific information about our clients, their clients, or either of their data, except in cooperation with law enforcement bodies in regards to content violations or violations of applicable laws. We maintain a database of user information which is used only for internal purposes such as technical support, notifying members changes or enhancement to the service."

If you have questions about the study, please feel free to ask; my contact information is given below. If you have complaints, suggestions, or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the University of Kentucky Office of Research Integrity at 859-257-9428 or toll-free at 1-866-400-9428.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this important project.
Sincerely,
Baiqing (Cynthia) Zhang
Sociology Department, University of Kentucky
PHONE: 859-539-6825

E-MAIL: baiqing.zhang@uky.edu

If you choose to continue to finish the survey, please click "continue." Otherwise, press the "exit" button to opt out the survey.

1. Continue.
2. Exit.

I. Demographics

Please circle the appropriate response or write your response in the space provided.

1. Gender: A. Male   B. Female   C. Other, please specify _____

2. Age: _____

3. Relationship/Marital Status:

   A. Single   B. Dating   C. In a committed relationship   D. Cohabiting   E. Engaged   F. Married

   G. Other, please specify _____

4. Enrolled Program: A. Master's   B. Doctoral

5. How many years have you been enrolled at your current university? _____

6. How many years have you been enrolled at another university or college? _____

   Which one(s)?_____

7. How many years in total have you stayed in the United States in all capacities? _____

9. Academic Major _____   Minor(s)_____

10. Income source (check all that apply):

   A. Fellowship   B. Assistantship   C. Campus Work   E. Personal or Family savings   F. None.

   G. Other, please specify _____

11. What occupation does your mother (or stepmother or guardian) currently hold?

   _____

12. What occupation does your father (or stepfather or guardian) currently hold?

   _____

13. What is the highest level of education that your parents have completed?

Mother (Stepmother or Guardian)
- A. Less than high school
- B. High school diploma
- C. Some college
- D. Vocational or technical degree
- E. College graduate
- F. Graduate degree

Father (Stepfather or Guardian)
- A. Less than high school
- B. High school diploma
- C. Some college
- D. Vocational or technical degree
- E. College graduate
- F. Graduate degree

14. Do you belong to any groups or organizations? Here is a list of different kinds of groups. I would like you to tell me if you belong to any and how involved you are in the group.

	Name	Member		How Active		
		Y	N	Very	Sort of	Not Very
a.	Service Clubs			1	2	3
b.	Veteran Organizations			1	2	3
c.	Political Clubs or Organizations			1	2	3
d.	Sports Groups			1	2	3
e.	Youth Groups			1	2	3
f.	Hobby or Garden Clubs			1	2	3
g.	Nationality/Ethnicity Groups			1	2	3
h.	Literary or Art Discussion Groups			1	2	3
i.	Professional or Academic Groups			1	2	3
j.	Church Affiliated Groups			1	2	3
k.	Neighborhood or Block Associations			1	2	3
l.	Any Others I Might Have Missed			1	2	3
m.	(Specify:_____)			1	2	3
n.	(Specify:_____)			1	2	3

15. Of the organizations, clubs, and activities you have attended (a-m in the previous questions), please indicate up to **three** that you consider particularly important.

_____
_____
_____

16. Of the organizations, clubs and activities you have attended (a-m in the previous questions), please indicate the ones (if any) that you have become involved with only **after** you had begun your graduate program.

_____
_____
_____
_____

17. Have you **dropped** your involvement in any organizations, clubs, or activities after you began your graduate program? (yes/no)

        IF YES: Please
        (a) list each organization, club, or activity you have dropped and, for each one

        _____
        _____
        _____
        _____
        (b) provide a brief explanation of why you dropped it.
          1) Not enough time.
          2) Not as a high priority as it used to be.
          3) Not feeling at home with the people within the organization as it used to be.
          4) Moved to a different place.
          5) Other, please
        specify_____.

II. Name Generator A

        Next, I'd like to know who you consider to be the MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE to you.
        The range of relations varies across work, family, friends, and advisors. Please give me an estimated number of people that are important to you. Then I would like you to give the names of the 5 most important people in your life.
        By IMPORTANT PEOPLE, what I mean is…
        • The ones that you are most likely to talk to about **important matters** in your life, whether they live near you or far away.
        • The ones you have intense positive emotions for.
        • The ones you would confide in.
        • The ones you would reciprocate services with.

A-1.1 How many people in your life would you consider to be important to you?
_____.
A-2.1 How many of these important people in your life are Chinese from mainland China?
_____ .
A-3.2 How many of these important people in your life are Asians?
_____.
A-4.1 Now I would like you to give me the names and some information of the 5 most important people in your life. What is the name of the 1ST MOST IMPORTANT person in your life?
_____.
A-5.1 Now, please give me some information about the 1st MOST IMPORTANT PERSON in your life. What is his/her relationship to you? *[Choose all relationships that apply.]*
(1) Current or previous family members (parents, parents-in-law, children, children-in-law, siblings, and other relatives)
(2) Neighbor (current and previous)
(3) School/class mate (Current and previous)
(4) Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)

(5) Teacher (current or previous)
(6) Student (current or previous)
(7) Co-worker (current or previous)
(8) Boss/superior (current or previous)
(9) Subordinate (current or previous)
(10) Client (current or previous)
(11) Person working for another firm, but known through work relations
(12) Someone from the same religious group
(13) Someone from the same association, club or group
(14) Close friend
(15) Ordinary friend
(16) Someone known because he/she provides a service to me or my family
(17) Someone known from the Internet
(18) An acquaintance
(19) Indirect relationship (known via someone else)
(20) Mentor
(21) Researcher
(22) Someone of the same gender
(23) Someone of the same ethnicity (Asian but not Chinese from mainland China)
(24) Someone of the same age cohort (young, middle-aged, old)
(25) Else_____**C2_1a**

Rank the selected relationships with the most important relationship as 1, the second most important as 2 and so on.

_____
_____
_____

A-6.1 Is the person male or female?
(1) Male (0) Female

A-7.1 How long have you known each other? _____ Years

A-8.1 How close are you to him/her?
(1) Very close
(2) Close
(3) So, so
(4) Not close
(5) Not close at all

A-9.1 What is the racial/ethnic background of this person?
(1) White (non-Latino)
(2) African American
(3) Chinese from mainland China
(4)Latino
(5) Asian
(6) Other (specify_____C7_11a)

A-10.1 Can you name a 2ND MOST IMPORTANT person in your life? (yes, no)

If yes, repeat questions A-4.1 to A-10.1.

The cycles of question continue till the 5TH MOST IMPORTANT PERSON is asked.

Name Generator B

Now, I'd like to know who you spend the most time with. What I mean is… We live with limited available time. Our lives might be divided into work and non-work time. With some people we spend a lot of time due to necessity or emotional attachment. What we are interested in are the ones you spend the most awake time with be they family or colleagues or anyone other ones. Please give me an estimated number of people that you spend the most time with. Then I would like you to give the names of the 5 people you spend the most awake time with in your life.

B-1.1 How many people in your life do you spend the most awake time with?
_____.
B-2.1 How many of these people you spend the most awake time with are Chinese from mainland China?
_____.
B-3.1 How many of these people you spend the most awake time with are Asians?
_____.
B-4.1 Now I would like you to give me the names and some information about the 5 people you spend the most time with. What is the name of the 1ST PERSON you spend the most time with?
_____.
B-5.1 Have you mentioned this name before? (yes, no)

B-6.1 Now, please give me some information about the 1st PERSON you spend the most awake time with. What is his/her relationship to you? *[Choose all relationships that apply.]*
(1) Current or previous family members (parents, parents-in-law, children, children-in-law, siblings, and other relatives)
(2) Neighbor (current and previous)
(3) School/class mate (Current and previous)
(4) Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)
(5) Teacher (current or previous)
(6) Student (current or previous)
(7) Co-worker (current or previous)
(8) Boss/superior (current or previous)
(9) Subordinate (current or previous)
(10) Client (current or previous)
(11) Person working for another firm, but known through work relations
(12) Someone from the same religious group
(13) Someone from the same association, club or group
(14) Close friend
(15) Ordinary friend
(16) Someone known because he/she provides a service to me or my family
(17) Someone known from the Internet
(18) An acquaintance
(19) Indirect relationship (known via someone else)
(20) Mentor
(21) Researcher
(22) Someone of the same gender
(23) Someone of the same ethnicity (Asian but not Chinese from mainland China)
(24) Someone of the same age cohort (young, middle-aged, old)
(25) Else_____**C2_1a**

Rank the selected relationships with the most important relationship as 1, the second most important as 2 and so on.

_____
_____

_____

B-7.1 Is the person male or female?
(1) Male (0) Female

B-8.1 How long have you known each other? _____ Years

B-9.1 How close are you to him/her?
(1) Very close
(2) Close
(3) So, so
(4) Not close
(5) Not close at all

B-10.1 What is the racial/ethnic background of this person?
(1) White (non-Latino)
(2) African American
(3) Chinese from mainland China
(4)Latino
(5) Asian
(6) Other (specify_____C7_11a)

B-11.1 Can you name a 2ND PERSON you spend the most awake time with? (yes, no)

If yes, repeat questions B-4.1 to B-11.1 for the 2ND PERSON the respondent spends the most time with. The cycle of questions repeats till the information about the 5TH PERSON the respondent spends the most awake time with.

III. Identity Comparator

1. Major Identities
   We now ask the importance of the major identities you might have. Please drag the importance indicator along the scale of 0-100, "1" being least important and "100" the most important.

   How important to you is…?

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Being Chinese from Mainland China										
Being a Student										
Being a Researcher										
Being a Professional										
Being a Family Member										
Being a Friend										

2. We now ask what identities **you** have assumed. Please compare each pair of the identities that you have ever had in your life. **Choose the one that is more important to you in each pair**. If you have not had one of the two choices or both of the positions in the pair, please select "NA" (not applicable).

Positions:

No.	Respondent's Identities
1.	Writer
2.	Teacher
3.	Mentor

4.	Researcher
5.	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)
6.	Neighbor (old and current)
7.	School/Class Mate
8.	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)
9.	Student
10.	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)
11.	Client
12.	Being a member in a Religious Group
13.	Being a member in an Association, Club or Group
14.	Service Provider
15.	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)
16.	Being a member of a group with similar family background.
17.	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)
18.	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian)
19.	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)

Comparisons:

No.	Role 1	Role 2	NA
1	Writer	Teacher	NA
2	Writer	Mentor	NA
3	Writer	Researcher	NA
4	Writer	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	NA
5	Writer	Neighbor (old and current)	NA
6	Writer	School/Class Mate	NA
7	Writer	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	NA
8	Writer	Student	NA
9	Writer	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	NA
10	Writer	Client	NA
11	Writer	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
12	Writer	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
13	Writer	Service Provider	NA
14	Writer	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
15	Writer	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
16	Writer	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
17	Writer	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA

18	Writer	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
19	Teacher	Mentor	NA
20	Teacher	Researcher	NA
21	Teacher	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	NA
22	Teacher	Neighbor (old and current)	NA
23	Teacher	School/Class Mate	NA
24	Teacher	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	NA
25	Teacher	Student	NA
26	Teacher	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	NA
27	Teacher	Client	NA
28	Teacher	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
29	Teacher	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
30	Teacher	Service Provider	NA
31	Teacher	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
32	Teacher	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
33	Teacher	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
34	Teacher	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
35	Teacher	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
36	Mentor	Researcher	NA
37	Mentor	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	NA
38	Mentor	Neighbor (old and current)	NA
39	Mentor	School/Class Mate	NA
40	Mentor	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	NA
41	Mentor	Student	NA
42	Mentor	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	NA
43	Mentor	Client	NA
44	Mentor	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
45	Mentor	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA

46	Mentor	Service Provider	NA
47	Mentor	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
48	Mentor	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
49	Mentor	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
50	Mentor	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
51	Mentor	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
52	Researcher	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	NA
53	Researcher	Neighbor (old and current)	NA
54	Researcher	School/Class Mate	NA
55	Researcher	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	NA
56	Researcher	Student	NA
57	Researcher	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	NA
58	Researcher	Client	NA
59	Researcher	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
60	Researcher	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
61	Researcher	Service Provider	NA
62	Researcher	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
63	Researcher	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
64	Researcher	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
65	Researcher	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
66	Researcher	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
67	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Neighbor (old and current)	NA
68	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	School/Class Mate	NA
69	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	NA

70	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Student	NA
71	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	NA
72	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Client	NA
73	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
74	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
75	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Service Provider	NA
76	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
77	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
78	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
79	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
80	Familial Role (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, sibling, and other relatives)	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
81	Neighbor (old and current)	School/Class Mate	NA
82	Neighbor (old and current)	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	NA
83	Neighbor (old and current)	Student	NA
84	Neighbor (old and current)	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	NA
85	Neighbor (old and current)	Client	NA
86	Neighbor (old and current)	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
87	Neighbor (old and current)	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
88	Neighbor (old and current)	Service Provider	NA
89	Neighbor (old and current)	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
90	Neighbor (old and current)	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
91	Neighbor (old and current)	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA

92	Neighbor (old and current)	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
93	Neighbor (old and current)	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
94	School/Class Mate	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	NA
95	School/Class Mate	Student	NA
96	School/Class Mate	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	NA
97	School/Class Mate	Client	NA
98	School/Class Mate	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
99	School/Class Mate	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
100	School/Class Mate	Service Provider	NA
101	School/Class Mate	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
102	School/Class Mate	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
103	School/Class Mate	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
104	School/Class Mate	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
105	School/Class Mate	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
106	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Student	NA
107	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	NA
108	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Client	NA
109	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
110	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
111	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Service Provider	NA
112	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
113	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
114	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
115	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland China)	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
116	Compatriot (Chinese from mainland	Being a member of the Same Age	NA

	China)	Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	
117	Student	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	NA
118	Student	Client	NA
119	Student	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
120	Student	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
121	Student	Service Provider	NA
122	Student	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
123	Student	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
124	Student	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
125	Student	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
126	Student	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
127	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	Client	NA
128	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
129	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
130	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	Service Provider	NA
131	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
132	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
133	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
134	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
135	Colleague (Current/Previous from Inside/Outside Your Organization)	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
136	Client	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	NA
137	Client	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
138	Client	Service Provider	NA
139	Client	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
140	Client	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA

141	Client	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
142	Client	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
143	Client	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
144	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	NA
145	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	Service Provider	NA
146	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
147	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
148	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
149	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
150	Being a member in the Same Religious Group	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
151	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	Service Provider	NA
152	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
153	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
154	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
155	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
156	Being a member in the Same Association, Club or Group	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
157	Service Provider	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	NA
158	Service Provider	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	NA
159	Service Provider	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
160	Service Provider	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
161	Service Provider	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
162	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-	Being a member of a group with	NA

	internet)	similar family background.	
163	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
164	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
165	Friend/Acquaintance (Internet/Non-internet)	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
166	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	NA
167	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
168	Being a member of a group with similar family background.	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
169	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	NA
170	Being a member of the Same Gender (male, female, and other genders)	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA
171	Being a member of the Same Ethnicity (Asian, but NOT Chinese from mainland China)	Being a member of the Same Age Cohort (young, middle aged, and senior)	NA

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Zhao, W. and X. Zhou (2002). Institutional Transformation and Returns to Education in Urban China: An Empirical Assessment. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 19, 337-373

VITA

Curriculum Vitae

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Visiting Faculty Member
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Northern Arizona University
539, Social and Behavioral Science Building
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Education:

MA	American Studies, September 1995 – March 1998
	Beijing Foreign Studies University
	Obtained in March 1998.
BA	Yantai Teacher's College (Now Ludong University)
	September 1989 – July 1993
	Obtained in July 1993.

Teaching Experience:

Visiting Faculty Member, Northern Arizona University. August 2013 – present.

Sociology Department, University of Kentucky. 2007-2012.
Instructor (Teaching Assistant Scholarship)

Foreign Studies School, Shandong University of Technology. 2004-2007.
Faculty Member.

Sino-German Institute. 2003.
Director of English Department and Faculty Member.

School of English and International Studies, Beijing Foreign Studies University. 1998-2002.
Faculty Member.

Research Grants:

University of Kentucky, Dissertation Enhancement Award. "The Chinese International Students' Social Network and Networking." 2011. PI: Cynthia Baiqing Zhang ($3,000).

Sociology Department, University of Kentucky, Beers Summer Grant, "The Myths and Realities in the Decline and Fall of the American Auto Industry." 05/11/2009-01/31/2010. PI: Cynthia Baiqing Zhang ($2,500)

Shandong University of Technology, China, Key Social Science Program, "A Comparative Study of Sino-American Cultural Melioration Trend." 12/1/2006 to 7/1/2007. PI: Cynthia Baiqing Zhang (RMB￥10,000).

Honors and Awards:

Presidential Fellowship Nomination (not attainment), Sociology Department, University of Kentucky, 2010.
Wilkinson Paper Award, University of Kentucky, 2009.
Grant Initiative Award, Sociology Department, University of Kentucky, 2009.
Presidential Fellowship Nomination (not attainment), Sociology Department, University of Kentucky, 2009.
Grant Initiative Award, Sociology Department, University of Kentucky, 2008.
Presidential Fellowship Nomination (not attainment), Sociology Department, University of Kentucky, 2008.

Award for Excellent Teaching, Shandong University of Technology, China, 2006
Award for Excellent Teaching, Shandong University of Technology, China, 2005
Award for Outstanding Young Teachers, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China, 2000
Margaret Turner Teaching Award, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China, 1999

Publications:
  Articles:

Zhang, C.B. (2012). Book Review: The Modern Firm. *Social Problem Forum*. 43, 2, 13-14.

Zhang, C. B., & Ahmed, P. (2011). Democracy at Work. *Connections* (Official Journal of International Network of Social Network Analysis). 31, 1, 44-52.

Zhang, C. B. (2006). An Analysis of the Philosophy of American Agrarianism. *Journal of Henan Normal University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*. 5, 7-11.

Conference Proceedings:

Zhang, C.B. (2012). Social Network and Identity. *ASA (American Sociological Association) Annual Meeting Paper Archives.*

Zhang, C. B. (2010). Contingent Legitimacy: The Decoupling of Teamwork. *ASA (American Sociological Association) Annual Meeting Paper Archives.*

PAPERS PRESENTED AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS:
Regional, National, and International

2013 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "The Negotiation of Multiple Identities." Paper Session at the Annual Meeting of SSSP (Society for the Study of Social Problems) in New York, NY, August 9-11.

2013 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "Identity and Social Networks: How Emotion Embedded in Social Capital Links the Two". Paper accepted by paper session at the INSNA conference (International Network of Social Network Analysis) in Xi'an, China, July 12-15.

2012 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "Identity and Social Network". Paper Session at the annual meeting of ASA (American Sociological Association) in Denver, Colorado, August 17-20.

2012 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing; Thomas, Trent; Liberato, Ana; and Glass, Bradley. "Acculturation and Access to Health Care among Asian Immigrants." Paper session at the annual meeting of SSSP (Society for the Study of Social Problems) in Denver, Colorado, August 16-18.

2011 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "A Comparative Study of American and Japanese Auto Industry: A Boolean Analysis." Roundtable paper presentation at the annual meeting of ASA (American Sociological Association) in Las Vega, Nevada, August 20-23.

2011 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "Chinese International Students' Social Network and Networking." Paper presentation at the annual meeting of SSSP (Society for the Study of Social Problems) in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 19-21.

2010 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "Contingent Legitimacy: The Decoupling of Teamwork." Paper presentation at the annual meeting of ASA (American Sociological Association) in Atlanta, Georgia, August 14-17.

2010 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "Social Capital in the Interplay of Culture and Inequality." Paper presentation at the annual meeting of SSSP (Society for the

Study of Social Problems) in Atlanta, Georgia, August 16-18.

2010   Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "Four Dimension of Social Capital in the Interplay of Ethnicity and Inequality: A Network Perspective." Paper presentation at the annual meeting of INSNA (International Network of Social Network Analysis) in Riva del Garda, Italy, June 29 – July 4.

2010 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "Democracy at Work: Political Participation." Paper presentation at the annual meeting of ESS (Eastern Sociological Society) in Boston, March 18-20.

2009 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "The U.S. and Japanese History from a Comparative Perspective: The Impact of Founding Conditions on Change and Innovation in Automobile Industry in the U.S. and Japan." Paper presentation at the Bluegrass Symposium at the University of Kentucky, March 27-28.

2009 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "Change, Innovation and Their Consequences for Employees in Automobile Industry in the U.S. and Japan." Roundtable paper presentation at the annual meeting of ESS (Eastern Sociological Society) in Baltimore, March 19-22.

2008 Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "Globalization of Automobile Lean Production System and Sustainability." Paper presentation at the Rural and Development Seminar Series at the University of Kentucky, Oct. 10th.

2008   Zhang, Cynthia Baiqing. "The Curious Mix of Rationalization and Social-technical Approaches to Production: A Comparative Study of Model Changeover and Standard Production Process at Toyota and GM." Poster presentation at poster session on teamwork at the 12th International Workshop on Team Working, Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom, September 11-12.

Research Training:

       Research Assistant, the Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky. July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013.

       Appalachian Studies Center Summer Survey Research. Worked as a student researcher to visit households to distribute and collect surveys in Martin County, Kentucky. June 3-5 and June 10-12, 2011.

       LINKS Center summer Social Network Analysis workshop. Instructors: Steve Borgatti, Dan Brass, Rich DeJordy, Dan Halgin, Joe Labianco, and Ajay Mehra. Gatton College of Business and Economics, the University of Kentucky. June 7 – June 12, 2010.

       Social Science Research Writing Workshop. Workshop Assistant.

Recognized for participation with distinction. Speakers: Dr. Doris Wilkinson, Dr. Stanley Brunn, Dr. Carrie Oser and Dr. Patricia Ahmed. The College of Arts and Sciences, the University of Kentucky. June 30 – July 17, 2009.

Research Assistant to Professor Thomas Janoski on his NSF grant program on auto worker stress. Department of Sociology, the University of Kentucky. July 4 2009 – June 30, 2010.

LINKS Center summer Social Network Analysis workshop. Instructors: Steve Borgatti, Dan Brass, Rich DeJordy, Dan Halgin, Joe Labianco, and Ajay Mehra. Gatton College of Business and Economics, the University of Kentucky. June 1 – June 5, 2009.

Research Writing Experience Workshop. Recognized in writing as an outstanding participant by the host Dr. Doris Wilkinson – former vice president of ESS, former president of SSSP, etc. June 24 – July 3, 2008.

Participant of the Yale-China Association's summer institute in American Studies for East Asian Scholars held on the campus of Beijing Foreign Studies University. May 28 – June 6, 2001.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:

Organizer, Presider and Discussant for Session Multiculturalism in Education 2012 with SSSP (Society for the Study of Social Problems).

Candidate for the Chair of the Division of Education Problems 2012 with SSSP (Society for the Study of Social Problems).

Candidate for the Membership and Outreach Committee 2012 with SSSP (Society for the Study of Social Problems). The election has yet to be conducted.

National Panel Member, China National Band 4 English Exam for English Majors (with Zukang Jiang, etc.), July 2000- June 2001.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE:

Sino-German Institute:
Director of English Department, 2003

Beijing Foreign Studies University:
National Band 4 Exam Supervising Group for Faculty Training, 2001

COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Volunteer English Editor for "Friends of Nature," newsletter for the first Chinese environmental protection NGO Friends of Nature, 2005 – 2010.

Volunteer English Editor for China's Annual Green Book, 2006 – 2010.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

Social Psychology, Social Stratification, Social Network Analysis, Gender and Race/Ethnicity, Complex Organizations, Work and Occupations.

LANUGUAGES:

Chinese (native language)
Japanese writing (intermediate)
English (working language)