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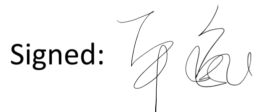
Signed: 

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"Love for China:"
An Ethnography of US-based Chinese International Students' Patriotism

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Department of Education, University of Oxford

MSc Dissertation

12 August, 2022

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Abstract

While the COVID-19 pandemic has wrecked havoc around the world, it has also caused upheavals to many Chinese international students studying in the US. Facing exorbitant prices of US-China airline tickets and stringent quarantine regulations, some of these previously mobile Chinese find themselves stranded in the US. Yet, they nevertheless declare their "love for China" after spending a majority of their adolescent and adult life abroad. Despite radical cultural and political differences between China and the US and the Chinese government's unwelcoming gesture, they show an enduring bond to their motherland.

Therefore, the following research questions are raised: In the contemporary context of China and the US, how do these international students negotiate patriotism—their "love for China"—while navigating educational and social terrains across the two nations? And more specifically, how is their institutional/lived experience in China and in the US able to reshape their understanding of and relation to these countries, and how do these well-educated youth reject, reconnect, and redefine Chinese patriotism over time as they mature academically in the US?

This dissertation explores these questions by drawing on my ethnographic engagement with a dozen of young Chinese students, who have been pursuing their education in the US for at least a quarter of their lives. Through ethnographic interviews and observations, I show that the development of these Chinese international students' patriotism is by no means a smooth transplant from China to the US but rather represents a fragmented, contingent process fraught with paradoxes and liminality. Defying simplification and dualism, these migrant students' patriotism are under continuous negotiation. By dovetailing theoretical understanding with corporeal lived experience, contrasting privilege in China with challenges in the US, conjoining Chinese political resistance and US racial awakening, and combining Confucian epistemology with Enlightenment thinking, these US-based Chinese students approach their love for China in their unique, diasporic way. This ethnography of transnational patriotism attempts to capture the complex "love for China" of Chinese international students in the US.

INTRODUCTION

An Arduous Journey Home

When American Airlines AA127 from Dallas to Shanghai arrived at Pudong International Airport on June 9, 2021, hundreds of young Chinese students in their twenties walked out of the cabin. For many of them, this marked their first time coming home since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020. I, too, after a two-year sojourn in the United States finally managed to secure this airline ticket to visit my family in China.

After alighting from the plane, the passengers were greeted by the airport staff in full protective suits; we lined up in front of the boarding gate and then proceeded to the border control as a group. Walking in a virtually empty arrival terminal evoked a strange sense of déjà vu; I cruised around this colossal and bustling transportation hub in 2018 before the pandemic. Now the billboards displaying luxury brands' advertisements were blocked out by the all-white quarantine boards. In a matter of one year, this pandemic has changed China's largest metropolis, casting a shadow on Shanghai's dazzling internationalism. A few minutes later, I reached the COVID testing station temporarily built in front of the border control. There I stared at a strikingly red banner—"Motherland got your back. Welcome home." Mu Ming, my friend who came along on this arduous journey home, took a picture of it and said to me, "After all, we are home."

We are just two of many Chinese international students in the US whose physical mobility and educational trajectories are reshaped by the pandemic. Facing exorbitant prices of US-China airline tickets and stringent quarantine regulations, some of these previously mobile Chinese find themselves stranded in the US. Yet, they nevertheless declare their "love for China" after spending a majority of their adolescent and adult life abroad. Despite radical cultural and political differences between China and the US and the Chinese government's unwelcoming gesture, they show an enduring bond to their motherland.

Intrigued and baffled, I pose the following research questions: In the contemporary context of China and the US, how do these international students negotiate their patriotism—"love for China"—while navigating educational and social terrains across the two nations? And more specifically, how is their institutional/lived experience in China and in the US able to reshape their understanding of and relation to these countries, and how do these well-educated youth re-

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This dissertation explores these questions by drawing on my ethnographic engagement with a dozen of young Chinese students in US universities, who have been pursuing their education in the US for at least a quarter of their lives. Through ethnographic interviews and observations, I show that the development of these Chinese international students' patriotism is by no means a smooth transplant from China to the US but rather represents a fragmented, contingent process fraught with paradoxes and liminality. Defying simplification and dualism, these migrant students' patriotism are under continuous negotiation. By dovetailing theoretical understanding with corporeal lived experience, contrasting privilege in China with challenges in the US, conjoining Chinese political resistance and US racial awakening, and combining Confucian epistemology with Enlightenment thinking, these US-based Chinese students approach their love for China in their unique, diasporic way. This ethnography of transnational patriotism attempts to capture the complex "love for China" of Chinese international students in the US.

The Structure of This Dissertation

This dissertation is followed by the Literature Review and Methodology sections. In Literature Review, I situate this study in the intersection between three bodies of scholarship: nationalism and patriotism, migration and diaspora, as well as Chinese educational migration. By reviewing relevant literature, I see the current research is lacking in its discussion of the nuances and heterogeneity in nationalism and patriotism, attention to students' creative agency, and examination of an interplay between materiality and sociality in patriotism. Methodologically, concerning these critiques, this dissertation selects the research design and write-up format of an ethnography. The Methodology section justifies the data collection methods selected (ethnographic interviews and observations), the evocation of auto-ethnographic accounts, and the synthesis of findings and discussion. I insist that only through attending to both interviewees' (13 Chinese students studying in US universities) and my bodily experience and deconstructing the boundary between the researcher and the researched, can this dissertation capture the dynamic complexity of Chinese patriotism in the US.

Then, the remaining dissertation is composed of two interlocking themes, Patriotic Feel-

ing and Patriotic Heart, each containing two chapters of the empirical findings and discussion. Part one: Patriotic Feeling looks at students' educational and lived experience in both China and the US as middle-class Chinese. Centered on students' pre-departure life in China, Chapter 1 shows that Chinese patriotism is simultaneously habituated by history education and felt affectively through bodily experience of living in China, building a robust foundation for students' enduring tie with China. Subsequently, Chapter 2 traces the life after these students embark on their journey across the Pacific. I demonstrate a contrast of lives—between their privileged lives in China and their dwindling social status and physical insecurity in the US—and argue that such differences compel these students to realize their privilege stripped away in the US.

While Part one: Patriotic Feeling chiefly focuses on the lived experience, the corporeality in the material-social interplay of patriotism, Part two: Patriotic Heart investigates the latter, students' theoretical understanding of their relationship with China and the US and their agency. Chapter 3 follows closely after the physical danger students face in the US as discussed in Chapter 2, and examines how some of the students acquire US racial labels to make sense of and combat US racial oppression. In it, I show students' paradoxical educational privilege which lends these intellectual students disenchantment with the very political system they once desired. In Chapter 4, a recent online political movement spearheaded by many Chinese international students highlights patriotism and political agency under negotiation. These students' fierce political engagement reflects tensions between the Confucian and Enlightenment concept of patriotism, and manifests the liminality and fluidity of patriotism as students grow and migrate.

In sum, I highlight the liminality, contingency, and inconsistency of the US-based Chinese students' patriotism. Rejecting a structuralist, congruous linear progression, I point to a dazzling array of contradictions and interplays—social-corporeal, privilege-disadvantage, enchantment-disillusion, and Confucian-Enlightenment nexuses—through which patriotism is constructed and shaped. I conclude this dissertation by drawing attention to two conceptual questions: reterritorialization of patriotism abroad and political complicity in Chinese patriotism. This dissertation urges higher education researchers to heed the complexity of Chinese students' home sentiments and attitudes in the US and illuminates future directions of research on Chinese patriotism's imprint on US universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nationalism and Patriotism

A Theoretical Debate about Nationalism and Patriotism

In public and scholarly discourse, nationalism and patriotism are variously defined. Some scholars have argued for more explicit definitions for nationalism and patriotism and attempted to draw a clear line between these ostensibly isomorphic terms. In social psychology, for example, nationalism denotes national dominance justifiable by its assumed social, ethnic, and cultural superiority (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989), while patriotism represents the feelings of attachment to and/or appreciation of one's country (Blank & Schmidt, 1993). Tied with democracy, patriotism has been argued to be more culturally inclusive and broadly defined as a positive attitude celebrating political participation, socioeconomic achievement, and people's welfare (Henrinrich, 2018; Habermas, 1994). In political philosophy, the distinction between nationalism and patriotism remains contentious. Deconstructing the historical meanings of these terms in the European context, Viroli (1995) famously argues that "whereas the enemies of republican patriotism are tyranny, despotism, oppression, and corruption, the enemies of nationalism are cultural contamination" (p.1-2). Patriotism, for Viroli (1995), differs from modern nationalism in its focus on common liberty and republic solidarity.

Nonetheless, many other scholars from sociology and anthropology either reject the dichotomization of nationalism and patriotism or disagree with such a negative connotation attached to nationalism. For example, in sociology, Schnapper (1998) has emphasized the constructive function of nationalism which, he argues, "designates claims of ethnies to be recognized as nations" (p. 23). More as a social reality than an abstract cultural-political idea, nationalism for Schnapper (1998) is concrete institutions situated in time and space. Similarly, Billig (1995) has pointed out that nationalism exists in banal forms, permeating people's quotidian life from language usage to media symbols. From an anthropological perspective, Anderson (1993) approaches nations as cultural artifacts arising from colonial technological advancement—such as print capitalism. For these scholars, nationalism is by no means an extreme patriotism; it can also be benevolent, generative, and organic. Hence, it is evident that a concrete definition of or dis-

tinction between nationalism is elusive. In the historical context of China, the definition of nationalism and patriotism is no less fluid.

China: From Culturalism to Nationalism and Patriotism

Historically speaking, the political community in China defies a simple Western notion of nationalism. Traditional culturalism predates modern nationalism in China and had governed the ways in which Chinese people view themselves and others for two millennia before the 20th century. Making distinctions based on culture instead of national criteria, Chinese culturalism explicitly demarcates the boundary between "*huaxia* (China)" and "*yidi* (barbarians)." As Chinese philosopher Feng Youlan (1996) theorizes, the reason for this distinction is that Chinese people were always concerned about "the continuation and integrity of the Chinese culture and civilization" (p. 211). Harrison (1969) also argues that "the traditional Chinese self-image has generally been defined as "culturalism", based on the historical heritage and acceptance of shared values, not as nationalism, which is "based on the modern concept of the nation-state" (p. 2). By heritage and values, these scholars refer to Confucianism which has been the pivotal moral system in China for over two millennia and continues to govern Chinese culture today. Among many Confucian ideologies, filial piety (*xiao*) remains a paramount moral code of conduct that bears significance to Chinese ancient political philosophy.

Filial piety denotes one's obedience, devotion, and respect for one's elderly family members. In Confucian ontology, one's corporeal as well as spiritual existence is not possible without one's parents: "individuals' lives are the continuation of their parents' physical lives" (Hwang, 1999, p. 169). Filial piety in Confucian terms thus mandates individuals to treat themselves and their family as a whole body, to which they should "nourish" not out of fear for superiors but based on the innate "self-respect" (Radice, 2017, p. 189). The nexus between filial piety and patriotism can be seen in the Confucian emphasis on the ontological connection between family and nation (Bell, 2014). Confucianism declares that one's familial obligation is indicative of, rather than incompatible with, his or her concern for the nation and state authority. In 1.2 of *The Analects*, Confucius says, "it is rare for someone who has a sense of filial piety and fraternal responsibility to have a taste for defying authority (*fanshang*)" (cited in Chen, 1990, p. 18). Since the act of filial piety evinces one's excellent character and respect for social harmony, the love

for the country would organically emerge from such a moral individual who loves his or her family, as like parents—one's nation is the basis of his or her existence. The Confucian understanding of people and the state is moralistic.

The fact that Chinese-ness is determined by the acceptance of Confucian values reveals that the distinction between Chinese and Others was rather fluid before the emergence of *guojia* (nation) in the modern era. As Liang Qichao, a prominent 20th-century intellectual, asserts, "we Chinese are not by nature an unpatriotic people. The reason Chinese do not know patriotism is [that] they do not know that China is a state" (Chen, 2005, p. 37). In the words of Bertrand Russell and Robert Park, who had observed the transition from a dynasty to a republic, "the Chinese polity is a cultural phenomenon" (Liang, 2021, p. 19). China then was a symbol for the cultural entity of Confucian practices, rather than a nationalist state.

However, the traditional culturalist Chinese identity was crumpled at the turn of the 20th century as imperial China's border was first cracked open by the First Opium War and subsequent invasions from the West and Japan. In 1839, after China's ban on opium import from Britain, the British government dispatched its royal navy force and defeated Chinese military resistance. Only three years later, the Treaty of Nanjing, the first unequal treaty in Chinese modern history, was signed between the Qing court and Britain, marking the beginning of China's "Century of Humiliation" (Kaufman, 2010). The military debacles in the 19th century exposed the fatal weakness of the Chinese Empire. The assumed cultural superiority embedded in traditional Chinese identity was toppled by these "*manyi* (barbarians)" military prowess as well as their culture and technology. To save China from its colonial and feudal abyss, Chinese intellectuals then rejected culturalism and instead called for an alternative way to foster a common Chinese identity in face of foreign violation (Zhao, 2004). Universal culturalism was deemed an ill-fitted identity epistemology because it "bars foreign ideas, but it may actually invite or not actively oppose foreign material force" (Levenson, 1959, p. 110). Conversely, nationalism could admit foreign ideas for its own benefits but always guards its cultural core against foreign intrusion.

Shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, Boxer Rebellion gained momentum in Northern China: it was seen by some as the first anti-colonial, anti-imperialist effort to save China from the foreign invaders (Werstein, 1971; O'Connor, 1974). Sun Yatsen, the founding father of the Republic of China (1911-1949), commended its courageous spirit in fighting against the foreign invaders (Kerr et al., 2008). A form of nationalism based on nation-states

and ethnicity was born to unite Chinese people (especially Han Chinese) to overthrow the Manchu monarchy and combat the Japanese invasion during World War II (Chen, 2005). The famous oath "Expel the Tartars, Restore China" of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) embodies this embryonic nationalist process—which Gellner (1983) calls "classic Habsburg," through which a supranational cultural empire reconstructs itself into a modern nation-state.

After this initial anti-colonial struggle, Chinese nationalism and patriotism underwent many transformations. Particularly after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), it evolved from socialist nationalism (1949-1971) to positive nationalism (1971-present) which stresses independence and diplomatic pragmatism (Chen, 2005). Within the positive nationalism period, a major transformation of Chinese nationalism and patriotism occurred in the 1980s after Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening policy (Zhao, 2004).

Chinese leadership highlighted "economic development, political stability, and national unity" as three core promises that constitute Chinese nationalism and patriotism in the new reform era (Zheng, 1999, p. 91). More importantly, patriotism superseded nationalism as the main narrative for national unity and development. In 1990, then general secretary of the CCP Jiang Zemin defined patriotism (*aiguozhuyi*) in his address to Chinese intellectuals' responsibilities as "the devotion to building and safeguarding the enterprise of socialist modernization as well as to the enterprise of facilitating the unification of China." He further distinguished a positive patriotism by insisting that "the patriotism we advocate is by no means a parochial ethnic-nationalism." (Jiang, 1990). Unlike the ethnic-nationalism (*minzu guojiazhuyi*) Sun proposed 90 years ago, the CCP leadership framed China as an evolving polity that transcends ethnic differences and unites all people toward the common goal of modernization. Current president Xi Jinping underscores the alignment between Chinese nationalism and the Communist Party; he contends that "only through the insistence on the trinity of love of Party, love of country, and love of socialism is patriotism vivid and real; this is the most prominent manifestation of contemporary Chinese patriotism (Xinhua News, 2021).

In contemporary PRC patriotism, what one should love is a trinity of Chinese ethnicity (*zhonghua minzu*), the Chinese state, and the Chinese Communist Party. By professing "aiguo (being patriotic)," Hunt (2008) contends, "Chinese usually expressed loyalty to and a desire to serve the state, either as it was or as it would be in its renovated form" (p. 63). At this stage, the

narrative of CCP patriotism presupposes a centralized political polity to exercise power over domestic issues such as education, economy, and security. This Chinese "patriotism" corresponds to what Gellner (1982) defines as the second "nationalism", which is the construction of a central political organization that manages and governs. Hence, the term nationalism due to its strong association with nation-building has lost its appeal to the ruling party. The nation has already been defined; what it needs is not so much common political identities but people's unwavering commitment to this polity. To do so, the CCP turns its attention to education.

Chinese Patriotic (Aiguo) Education

After the pro-democracy protest Tiananmen Incident broke out in the spring of 1989, the Communist Party was in an unprecedented crisis of governing legitimacy and therefore must seek ways to restore people's beliefs in the party (Chen, 2005). Instilling a sense of national solidarity and trust in the CCP through education then became a potent means through which the party-state could tighten ideological control and regain public support (Zhao, 1998). In 1991, the CCP Central Propaganda Committee issued "Circular on Fully Using Cultural Relics to Conduct Education in Patriotism and Revolutionary Traditions," the first document on Patriotic Education. Two years later, echoing the decree, the "Program for China's Education Reform and Development" placed patriotism at the center of the upcoming Chinese educational reform. More specifically, the emphasis of this Chinese Patriotic Education has been on educating young students and intellectuals on China's national conditions (*guoqing*), which aimed to make students understand the successes and setbacks of China's modern development and have a clearer sense of future goals (Zhao, 1998).

Moreover, Patriotic Education derives its inspiration from China's rich history and culture. Many scholars have noted a strong presence of history and literature throughout Chinese elementary-to-tertiary education. For example, Wang and Wang (2018) point to the role of traditional Confucian culture and literature in cultivating primary school students' national identity. Much secondary-level content highlighted the cultural and social accomplishments made possible under the CCP's rule (Kipnis, 2011), and the lessons on *sixiang pinde* (ethics and morality) propagate the ideologies and politics sanctioned by the party-state (Nie, 2008). The emphasis on culture and literature in Chinese hegemonic patriotism also represents a deliberate erasure of the

boundary between cultural identity and party loyalty. Chan (2018) has observed that the "I am Chinese" program was launched in many elite universities, aiming to encourage the young intellectuals to be "proud of being Chinese by concentrating on the great achievements of the Chinese people and especially the Communist Party" (p. 293). In contemporary China (referring specifically to the PRC in this study), this articulation between culture and politics has become increasingly salient in the discourse of patriotism.

Migration and Diaspora

The theorization of transnational migration and/or diaspora, while having undergone several generations of revisions, remains a contentious topic. Toward the end of the 20th century, scholars started to challenge the "uprooted" assumption of transnational migration proposed by their predecessors in the 70s (Handlin, 1973). Transnational migration thus represents not painful assimilation but a process "by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 48). Hence, the key to understanding immigrants' displacement across national borders is to examine both sides of migration—home society and host culture alike. Suarez-Orozco (2001) has provided a compelling account of new migrant students in the US. He argues that young immigrants, raised transnationally, do not simply enter the host society and leave everything in their home communities behind, but rather retain frequent and substantive contact with their original societies, moving back and forth between these cultures. While educational migration studies propose this bi-polar influence on migrant students based on the emphasized "root" of origin of migrants (Clifford, 1994), critical diaspora studies argue for anti-nationalist and anti-essentialist approaches to understand their cultural politics.

As an example, Gopinath (2005) illustrates an anti-nationalist conception of diaspora by arguing against the notion of national roots and authenticity as well as the heteronormative logic of nationalism. The critical studies posit transnational migrants are not predefined multi-national categories but rather are actively made from contrast, differences between "here" and "there," "us" and "them" (Bhabha, 1994). Such an anti-essentialist "third space," in Bhabha's (1994) terms, resists the bi-polar (home and host) focus of migration but instead highlights a continuum spanning throughout their migration journey. In this vein, Lukose (2007) urges us to note the

ways in which immigrant children come into the US mainstream society represent not a "straight-forward trajectory" but instead a "critical fault line in and through which national identity is forged in a new global dispensation" (p. 414).

Although the critical scholarship proffers valuable anti-nationalist reading on transnational migration and challenges the "assimilation" model of migrant education assumed in many educational immigrant studies (Lee, 2005; Lopez, 2003), it would be mistaken to outright ignore such influences from nation-states in homelands or normative national incorporation in host societies. Educational institutions, pedagogical practices, and cultural discourses situated in specific nation-state contexts are important factors that configure diaspora students' education and operationalize their transnational identity formation (Olsen, 1998; Portes et al., 1993). Therefore, to address this tension present in the study of migration and education, theory must attend to both postmodern fragmentation and structural formulation of cross-national education (Lukose, 2007).

In the case of the Chinese international students at US prestigious universities studied in this research, such dual attention (fragmentation and formulation) is necessary, for this group of migrant students often come to the host nation (the US) at a very young age and experience significant US cultural acculturation during their adolescence. Different from a majority of international students who are able to maintain geographical, cultural, and political stability before they went abroad for graduate-level study (Ma, 2015), my research subjects display greater similarities to immigrant children who are raised transnationally and have experienced institutions in multiple countries. In this logic, the analysis of these students' homeland attachment, as inherently a part of cultural politics of transnational migration, requires a concerted effort that simultaneously rejects essentialism and heeds institutional forces.

Transpacific China-US Student Migration

Transpacific Student Migration Before Deng's Reform and Opening Up

In 1872, the Chinese Educational Mission—sponsored by the Qing government—sent selected young Chinese students to the US to acquire Western science and technology, in a last-ditch effort by the perilous Qing court to reform Imperial China (Wang, 2013). But this visionary project was soon confronted by and ultimately terminated by rising domestic concerns in Qing

China as well as surging anti-Chinese racism in the US. However, despite this short-lived state-initiated study abroad enterprise, student migration continued without state-sponsored programs and gained momentum in early 20th century China. Student migration, Wang (2013) points out, is not equal to the simple relocation of human bodies, but rather must be viewed and studied as "a continuous bilateral dynamic that begins with the formation of migration culture" (p. 6). For example, St. John University in Shanghai, an Anglican university founded by American missionaries, enabled the continuation of this transpacific educational migration; such missionary schools are the product of both Western and Chinese educators to encourage and realize Chinese students' desire of studying abroad (Bays & Widmer, 2009). Chinese government officials and intellectuals then saw education across the ocean not only as elite and privileged but also as key to the reconstruction of the Chinese nation.

This period, Ye (2001) argues, was the most successful and consequential movement in modern Chinese history, and it cemented the historical foundation of studying abroad in the US. After decades of steady development of "*fumei liuxue* [studying abroad in the US]," by 1952 there were approximately 40,000 students who had received education from US colleges and universities (Ye, 2001). Given this sheer quantity, it is nevertheless important to note that this cohort of students was a select and elite few, accounting for less than 0.01% of the total population in China. For the period between 1872 and 1949, pursuing higher education in the US represented a journey for pioneering Chinese intellectuals who were then envisioning, conceiving, and constructing Chinese nationalism and modernity at the critical historical juncture of building the Chinese nation-state in face of colonial invasion and civil warfare.

Studying Abroad in the US after the 1980s

In contrast to the Chinese nation-building purpose embedded in 20th-century student migration, China-US education migration in the past two decades has evolved from and manifested a set of new aspirations. The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) that closed universities and sent students to rural regions had a devastating impact on the new communist regime. In 1978, the then vice-chairman of the Central Committee Deng Xiaoping emphasized the importance of "Four Modernizations," consequently launching an economic reform "opening up" that transformed the nation in the next four decades (Gu, 2013). One of the objectives and means of Chi-

nese modernization development was the revival of overseas education, allowing and sponsoring talented Chinese youth to study abroad in developed nations, including the US. China then was in desperate need of talents who could usher China's socioeconomic development in an era of globalization. Due to this mission, many Chinese students studied abroad in the US between the 80s and 00s, who were mostly financed by state scholarships and possessed strong cultural belonging and national identity.

This "reopening" enterprise gained momentum through Chinese economic booms in the 1990s and 2000s. By the dawn of the 21st century, the number of students studying abroad had mushroomed. From 2005 to 2015, the enrollment of Chinese students in US undergraduate institutions underwent a drastic fifteen-fold increase to 135,629 (Ma, 2020). Yet, in spite of this promising trend, studying abroad in the US has not become an effortless task for all. For example, many Chinese international students often find themselves in a politically and culturally foreign social environment where they confront racism and xenophobia (Heng, 2017). It has also been argued that discriminatory incidents are common in many US universities (Lee & Rice, 2007). Recently, such discrimination has only been exacerbated by the rising xenophobic and anti-Chinese sentiments during the COVID-19 pandemic (Huang & Liu, 2020; Gover et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). These new racial and ethnic dynamics permeate into the everyday social reality that these Chinese students are forced to grapple with in their studies abroad.

In this modern context, studying abroad in the US has not only become relatively more accessible but also less prestigious and significant (Ma, 2015; Ma, 2019). Chinese students nowadays come to the US with a more personalized, educational aspiration and develop their attachment to the motherland that is disarticulated from a grand nationalist agenda. With private property ownership, well-paying white-collar jobs, and only one offspring (as mandated by the one-child policy), the burgeoning class of Chinese middle-class parents turn their attention to international education in attempting to provide their next generations with the best resources they can afford, regardless of the expected return (Fong, 2004). Studying abroad in the US thus has become an element of this massive Chinese middle-class formation.

Even for the past twenty years, however, the implications of studying abroad in the US remain unfixed and continue to change. Fong (2011) describes the appeal of the developed world to Chinese students, propelling them to undertake transnational quests to study abroad in Western countries. That is, what lies outside of China promises the potential for a greater degree of hap-

piness and freedom and thus is worthy of their displacement. Yet, recent studies challenge this depiction of Chinese migrant students as well as the power imbalance implied in their transnational desire. Many Chinese international students nowadays are much more middle-class and financially stable. Ma (2020) notes that nowadays Chinese international students come from established professional families in China. Likewise, Jiang (2021) demonstrates that many Chinese students who benefit from family financial support and parents' educational experience believe the US for them is hardly an upgrade for these urban upper-middle-class Chinese.

Theoretical Framework and Contributions

As the literature on Chinese nationalism and patriotism has demonstrated, the use of nationalism and patriotism in scholarship has been inconsistent at best and contradictory at worst. When discussing Chinese international students' relation to China, the reference has been anchored in "nationalism" and "nationalist sentiments" and in a negative light (He, 2015; Dong, 2017; Yan & Alsudairi 2021). Such a conceptual bias reveals a lack of nuance and complexity in theorizing Chinese international students' love for their motherland. To address this, I use the word *patriotism* consistently in this research as a remedial attempt to challenge and complicate the "rise of Chinese nationalism" which is deemed monolithic, reactive, and menacing in most scholarship. Unlike nationalism which considers China an unambiguous nation-state and regime, patriotism, etymologically (Viroli, 1995), underscores a more inclusive concept of China. Hence, patriotism in my research calls for a more dynamic and nuanced examination of the ties between Chinese international students in the US and their home country. To elaborate on my theoretical approach, I point to three chief theoretical issues to which my research could contribute.

From Homogeneity to Liminality

Firstly, the studies on Chinese students' favorable attitudes toward China tend to use "nationalism" in an essentialist manner: "nationalism" seems to be homogenous, encompassing all positive beliefs, actions, and emotions toward Chinese politics, cultures, history, etc. However, as many other studies suggest, this "love for one's country" is immensely context-sensitive and varies in terms of cultural-political frames (Viroli, 1995; Habermas, 1992; Blank & Schmidt

2003; Anderson, 2006). Given this heterogeneity, I propose that Chinese patriotism must be denaturalized as a complex, dynamic, and contingent concept.

The very concept of China with which this positive attitude is concerned must be unpacked. This "China" is multilayered, entailing three "individually pursued [yet] intertwined" representatives of "China": "*minzu*, a cultural definition of being Chinese; *guojia*, the idea of legitimate governance with binding obligations for a population; and *zhengfu*, the apparatus of governance" (Siu, 2016, p. 32). The variances within Chinese patriotic expression have been further examined by many scholars (Lai, 2013; Allan et al., 2018; Shen, 2007). Rather than a unitary attitude, different groups of Chinese may develop and express distinct kinds of patriotism, based on the representative of China in question—from cultural appreciation to political allegiance.

Apart from a heterogeneous "China," I draw on Turner's (1974) notion of liminality to complicate the demographic of Chinese international students. In Turner's (1974) formation, liminality denotes a state in which an individual is neither here nor there but is "betwixt and between" and appears to be incongruous with categories and not abiding by existing social norms. Therefore, in the case of Chinese international students, they, in both geospatial and political liminal spaces between China and the US, are "inter-beings," as in Shahjahan's terms (2019). They resist confined structuralist narrative and instead embrace "liminal" patriotism, a transcultural fragment influenced by their home Chinese experience and the host US encounters. This dissertation thus would not see patriotism as a dependent variable—a whole determined by any singular factor grounded in any physical locale.

From Structure to Agency

Secondly, Chinese students are often portrayed in literature as reactionary and passive, deprived of their own critical thoughts, rendering them powerless political objects against a "powerful" and "extensive" authoritarian regime (Yan & Alsudairi 2021; Dong, 2017). In this way, patriotism (nationalism as framed in these studies) is inextricably linked with China as a communist regime and with national loyalty as passive conformity. Under this logic, Chinese students are taken as docile political objects who have no choice but to pledge allegiance to the ruling CCP.

However, what is missing from this hegemonic academic description is students' agency in forming and reshaping their relation to China and the US. The liminality, in which international students are situated, can be regarded "as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise" (Turner, 1974, p. 97). In the context of global connectivity, such agency shapes the flows of objects and ideas. Siu (2016) reflects on Ferguson (2006) and Tsing (2005) and aptly summarizes that "fragments [of material and meanings] circulate and multiply in the hands (and imaginations) of creative human agents at different historical times" (p. 25). Moreover, Marginson (2014), to international students' agency, suggests that "student subjects manage their lives reflexively, fashioning their own changing identities, albeit under social circumstances largely beyond their control" (p. 6). In this way, migrant students can enact their creative agency being under the political influence of both China and the US while resisting a reductionist binary or cultural determinism. Taken together, echoing diaspora studies' focus discussed in the Literature Review section (Edwards, 2003; Gopinath, 2005; Gilroy, 1993; Lukose, 2008), Chinese students' patriotism is not only a passive reflection of their Chinese upbringing and US assimilation—but also can be a generative statement through which these students make and negotiate their identity abroad.

Corporeality, Constructedness, or Combination

Finally, academia favors the modernist theory that deconstructs nation-states and denaturalizes patriotism as something constructed by one's experience and social structures. The Bourdieusian notion of habitus is pivotal to this theoretical approach, which refers to "a historically structured structure" and "structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices" (1986, p. 170). As a "structured structure," habitus is constructed by individuals' dispositions grounded in social interactions in milieux such as family and education. Critical political studies, for example, attempt to demystify this "love for China" as a form of "habitus" constructed by various political apparatuses (Zhao, 1998).

This approach certainly has its merit. However, to solely deconstruct patriotism is to overlook its material aspects. To highlight this materiality, I follow Zembylas (2021) as well as Militz and Schurr (2016), using affect as one of the key theoretical frameworks to analyze patriotism. Affect, related to yet not synonymous with emotions, is an "unconscious response which

precedes our conscious feelings and decisions" (Shouse, 2005, p. 8), and can be "found in those intensities that pass body to body (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p. xx). Understood in a Deleuzian (2013) and feminist way (Ahmed 2005, 2009), affects are concerned with corporeal interactions with the material and social world. Challenging the body/mind dualism (Elias, 1991; Shilling, 1997) under which patriotism as an ideology is dissociated with physicality, I recognize its interdependence with human bodies (Gibbs, 2002). As a result, the "intersubjective" (Hermann, 2015) and "corporeal" (Watkins, 2006) nature of patriotism is pivotal to this research. Not dissimilar to the human body (Shilling, 2012), patriotism must not be seen as *either* social construction *or* affective experience but as a result of an *interplay* between social making and bodily feeling.

Conclusion: An Anthropological Perspective

This dissertation contributes to the existing scholarship of diaspora/migration studies and nationalism/patriotism studies in two ways. The first contribution is substantive. This theoretical repositioning—the differentiated and interlocked ethnic/national/governmental notions of China (Siu, 2016), the in-betweenness of migration and global mobility (Shahjahan, 2019), the self-formation agency (Marginson, 2104), and the material nature of patriotism (Zembylas, 2021)—has allowed my dissertation to treat Chinese students' patriotism more than a collective, structural response. By situating patriotism in the poststructuralist framework, one is able to pay attention to the uneven process in which Chinese students' patriotism is shaped through historical meanings, bodily sensibilities, contested positionality, and evolving moral responsibilities. Here, anthropological theory pertains to this educational research: human agents and their actions are diverse and complex (Scott, 1990); so is students' attitude toward a nation. I highlight this anthropological perspective of unpacking patriotism—both here and there, both power and resistance, and both social and corporeal.

The second is a methodological innovation. As I have argued previously, theoretical orthodoxy tends to heavily rely on formal institutions and abstract social powers but overlook mundane interactions between human bodies and the material world. My study, however, aims to tackle this oversight by redirecting attention to embodied practices of students and their affects. Next, I will elaborate on this in the upcoming Methodology section.

METHODOLOGY

Ethnography

This study aims to generate detailed and nuanced insight into students' educational journey and excavate the underlying complexities of their patriotic sentiments. The lacuna in extant research, as noted in Literature Review, and the research questions, as stated in Introduction, both necessitate a more humanistic approach to challenge the structuralist fixity and linearity of patriotism scholars are led to presume. To these ends, I make this dissertation an ethnography.

Doing Ethnography

When conducting ethnography, this dissertation is based on interviews taking place in Oxford and various US universities in 2022 complemented by secondary field notes from my previous ethnographic fieldwork in China in 2017 and 2021 (ethics approval obtained in 2021 from Swarthmore College, see Appendix B). All the data collection and reuse of secondary data have obtained ethics approval from the University of Oxford (see Appendix B). The newly garnered data derives from 13 Chinese international students enrolled in US colleges and universities (see Appendix A). I take liberty to transcribe and translate the quotes in Chinese (see Appendix C). I also analyze three articles, including Liao (2021), Wang (2021), and Wang (2022) on the WeChat platform introduced by my interlocutors in support of interview data, for social media, as observed by Ong (2006), constitutes a decisive part of diaspora lives.

This research approaches reality and truth via a committed poststructuralist, and constructivist lens—treating empirical data as partial and positioned and all knowledge as culturally mediated (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Thus, it is concerned less with "discovering" the universal truth but rather exploring how a version of the truth is constructed and mediated by various social actors (Ritzer, 2008). This onto-epistemic orientation undergirds my research design.

The data collection process engages rich subjectivity and affectivity of both the participants and researcher. I practice what anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1976) has called "thick description" to increase the richness and transferability of data and analysis. Rather than simply transcribing what interviewees verbally express (conversation), I pay special attention to the cultural background (discourse) against which such conversations happen, which includes human

emotions and bodily experiences. I conducted in-person interviews and participant observations when I joined the interviewees going about their days as usual: sitting on the couch of interviewees' apartment; accompanying them to work, social events, and grocery shopping; and dining in a cafe they frequent (see Appendix E). Such physical interactions invite me into their quotidian lives as migrant students. Hence, these "reflexive, dyadic interviews" (Ellis, 2004) enable me to holistically document and analyze the ambiance, participants' physical appearance and emotions, and more importantly the interplay between us. In writing my field notes, I subsequently attend not only to the participants but also to the ways in which I navigate sometimes difficult emotional terrains and changing relationships with "people in the field" (Punch, 2012; Murrey, 2018). The consequent use of autoethnographic accounts and reflexivity will be further discussed in the next section.

While analyzing interview data (see Appendix E), I reflect on the power asymmetry in knowledge production, as noted by Bilgen et al. (2021). The boundary between the researched subjects' "experience as data" and scholars' "reasonings as theory" has been questioned by multiple decolonial and feminist theorists, including Tuck (2009), hooks (2015), and Murrey (2018). Challenging this false dichotomy between theory and data and the "superiority" of theory, Boyer et al. (2015) propose to foreground the interplay between data and theory, and Biehl (2014) exhorts scholars to be disenchanted with philosophy (theory) in research and rather "engage with the complexity of people's lives and desires" (p. 106). Therefore, this dissertation follows this vigorous methodological design by inviting my interviewees to contribute their analyses, reflections, and even critiques of themselves in the form of an audit trail (see Appendix E). This data collection method results in ethnographic writing—a thematic synthesis of empirical findings and discussion (Gullion, 2016), which I will unpack in the next section.

Writing Ethnography

By "ethnography," I refer not only to the "ethnographic research methods" but also the "writing up findings as an ethnography" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 29). In conjunction with my ethnographic research design, I analyze and write up my subsequent findings in an ethnographic way. In this ethnography, there are two noticeable divergences from the "basic qualitative research" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), to ensure ethnographic rigor and richness: weaving

discussion into empirical findings and incorporating auto-ethnographic accounts throughout this dissertation.

The mixing of findings and discussion, an ethnographic writing convention (Gullion, 2016; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019), is a befitting structural choice, as this study seeks to blur the line between the researcher and the researched and to dissolve the academic's authorial stance in producing scholarship (Ping, 2022). My analysis and presentation of fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and documents follow an ethnographic practice argued by Emerson, Fertz, and Shaw (2011). The writing of this ethnography is indeed experientially driven (Van Maanen, 2011): each chapter commences with a vignette introducing the interviewees and the contexts in which we interacted, and then moves to the interwoven sections of empirical findings and analysis. Finally, each chapter concludes with a summation of findings and arguments. It is important to note that the empirical findings are positioned in-between my arguments to construct an ethnographic flow. As I have argued in Doing Ethnography, to deconstruct the boundary between data and theory (Boyer et al., 2015), I weave the discussion into my findings, honoring this collaborative inquiry and humanizing research.

Moreover, I aim to foreground affective embodiment and subjectivity, with the use of vignettes and autoethnographic writing. Autobiographical vignettes are an important element in this dissertation because they make research findings more "aesthetic and evocative" (Ellis et al., 2011) by speaking to the affective aspects of readers and "bring[ing them] into the scene" of actions and emotions (Ellis, 2004, p.142). In order to uncover undervalued subjectivity and unlock neglected nuances, I combine interview transcripts and observations with unconventional sources such as my bodily experiences and anecdotal/oral accounts, which are inherently subjective (hooks, 1989). Renouncing objectivity and distance *vis-à-vis* the field (Lofland & Lofland, 1995), my writing in this dissertation does not shy away from a poetic and passionate voice in conveying rich data in the forms of bodily interactions and subjective perceptions.

Lastly, regarding the rigor of this research, autoethnography engages with my positionality: my *emic* and *etic* identity. It provides triangulated "eye-witness accounts" (Caulley, 2008) and evocative "thick description" of Chinese international student culture. I now move to a discussion of my positionality in this research.

Reflexive Positionality

In reflecting on the relationship between ethnographers and informants during fieldwork, Jackson (2004) advocates for a more heightened level of reflexivity in social science research than currently being practiced. Reflexive positionality, to him, is more than a "reducible taxonomy" of some social identities—such as women, Asians, or working class—in "expos[ing] one's ideological card and mak[ing] empty autobiographical gestures" (2004, p. 37). Instead, we as ethnographers need to "dig deeper, to find out how differently (and even idiosyncratically) we inhabit these overly reified social categories...[and to] trouble the very categories themselves" (Jackson 2004, p. 37). Taking this practice of reflexivity in my dissertation, I deliberate not only on my culturolinguistic and socioeconomic positions vis-a-vis the participants but also my idiosyncratic engagement in social events and participation in their educational/non-educational activities.

While I grew up in a working-class household in China, my family's finances experienced tremendous change during middle school. Thanks to the booming stock and real estate market in which my parents heavily invested, my family accumulated sufficient wealth to finance my costly education in the US and stepped into the society of the Chinese upper-middle class. In the summer of 2017, I finished high school in Ohio and came back to China with an acceptance letter from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. The reputation of this top liberal arts college earned me admission to an exclusive community of Chinese international students studying in US universities (Ping, 2021). Since then, I branched out my social networking in this Chinese international student community. I subsequently frequented many social gatherings for Chinese international students and even became one of the organizers myself. My WeChat contacts ballooned that summer, including thousands of students from the top US universities and colleges. From that moment onward, I developed close relationships with these students and immersed myself in this privileged, diaspora community.

Taken together, my positionality is inherently complex in this study. On the one hand, being an international student from China myself, I share many life episodes with the demographic studied. I was able to gain access to many interlocutors and grasp their cultural references, thereby approaching this topic from an emic perspective. On the other hand, being a first-generation student from a small-town, previously working-class family, my geographical and

cultural dispositions are distinct from most of my research subjects. Hence, in relation to my research subjects, I am simultaneously an outsider and an insider. This duality, while bringing me these above-mentioned benefits, also generates additional attention and challenges that have shaped this research. Not least of these concerns are the limitations caused by my positionality.

Limitations of This Study

I acknowledge that the number and diversity of participants I draw upon in this thesis are limited by my data collection methods and positionality as an elite US college graduate. Since I use snowballing as one of my recruitment methods, there exists noticeable sample bias and similarity in this research. All interviewees have attended or are currently enrolled in selective programs (see Appendix A). Though academic pedigree and prestige are not a focus of this study, this unintentional make-up of elite school students has a considerable impact on this research as their socioeconomic and educational privilege shape, and sometimes enable, the very experience in China and the US. Moreover, my engagement with these students has been dominantly mediated by my social media personality which is very US left-leaning and generally liberal. This apparent political inclination of mine would likely attract like-minded peers whose opinions would overshadow those on a conservative end. The perspectives I garner are therefore limited by this particular academic background I have the most access to—therefore representing a fraction of this heterogeneous group of Chinese students.

Besides my positionality, the sheer sample size presents another limitation. This dissertation may present a false sense of unity like all ethnographic research does on a certain demographic. However, with 13 interviewees and a dozen secondary field notes, I neither wish nor have the ability to represent the full picture of Chinese international students' patriotism. Yet, despite this liberal group of participants, it is noteworthy that variations remain. Some students disagree with the Confucian influence on them or do not believe their quality of life in the US is any lower than that in China. This 20000-word dissertation, unfortunately, cannot present all individual differences or interviewees' accounts exhaustively (see Appendix G). Focusing on a selected group of largely liberal Chinese students enrolled in elite universities, my positionality and the length make this dissertation by no means an encyclopedic account of Chinese students' patriotism in the US but a partial attempt to illuminate such a complex topic.

Conclusion: An Ethnographic Approach

This section of the dissertation has highlighted a few noteworthy methodological and stylistic choices, including the combining of findings and discussion, the analysis of autoethnographic data, and the use of experiential evidence. These are common, even paradigmatic, practices in most educational ethnographies (Liu, 2016; Mulimbi & Dryden-Peterson, 2019; Bach & Christensen, 2021; Xu, 2022), albeit unusual in much qualitative research. My methodological decision is borne out by my research objective which is to create nuanced, embodied cultural understanding and interrogate assumed inevitability. In the remaining of this dissertation, I show a diverse array of patriotic nexuses made possible by the combination and/or contradiction between social inculcation and bodily experience, between confidence in China and insecurity in the US, between structural power and purposeful agency, as well as between Chinese enculturation and US acculturation.

Part one: Patriotic Feeling opens with an ethnographic field note that recounts a causal walk with my friend Mu Ming in his hometown. In it, Chapter 1 demonstrates how students' educational and lived experience in China gives rise to patriotism that "just comes naturally." And Chapter 2 introduces another interviewee Yuan Hang and suggests that students' subsequent encounters in the US evoke, contrast with, and consolidate this feeling for China. Chapter 3 and 4 from Part two: Patriotic Heart discusses students' patriotism on a theoretical level. Chapter 3 commences with my literary encounter with San Qi, a young Chinese intellectual who writes elegantly on the topic of physical violence Chinese minorities face in the US. Finally, in Chapter 4, I document a case of landmark political unrest spearheaded by Chinese international students in an attempt to capture their contested evolution of patriotism. Moving between vignettes and theory, I present this ethnography dedicated to Chinese international students who *feel* and *contemplate* patriotism.

PART ONE: *AI GUO QING* (PATRIOTIC FEELING)

CHAPTER 1: "It All Just Comes Naturally"

Introduction

Mu Ming and I walked side by side in the city of Xi'an when he invited me for a late-night drink in a nearby bar. That July evening in this Chinese northwestern city was surprisingly pleasant with a refreshing breeze blowing from the Qinling, a historic mountain range a few kilometers south of the city. Holding a long-handle umbrella in his hand, Mu Ming humming a tune insouciantly looked more relaxed than he had ever been in the US. After a 16-month sojourn in the pandemic-wrecked US, Mu Ming returned to his hometown Xi'an where he spent his first fifteen years before attending high school in Pennsylvania.

"Is Xi'an your home," I asked Mu Ming.

"Yeah. This is home for me" he replied, "I have always lived here; I went to school here; my family is here; I know so much about this place, the roads, the people. I guess I do have a strong sense of belonging here."

I was surprised by the conviction with which he spoke about Xi'an as his home. Having been close friends with each other for four years in the US, Mu Ming and I shared our deepest grief and joy, including our identity crisis as young Chinese migrants for half of our life. Despite his palpable struggle of navigating complex cultural, and political terrains between the two countries, Mu Ming continues to anchor his tenuous belongingness to a specific place in China. And after a decade of geographical displacement, cultural assimilation, and political disavowal, he remains mystically loyal to a cultural concept of home in China.

Interestingly, Mu Ming's "natural" attachment is not an exception. In discussing the reasons for their sense of belonging to and support for China, few Chinese international students in this study can articulate their feelings. "It all just comes naturally" is the phrase I heard most commonly throughout our exchanges. As an integral element of Chinese patriotism in this study, this ineffable feeling for China is a result of both intentional schooling and everyday affects. In this chapter, I present an interplay that underlies interviewees' patriotism before their journey to the US—between their knowledge of and experience in China. I argue that through both learning about a historical China in class and experiencing China in real life, students have formulated a robust bond with this national community.

A Historical China

As I have mentioned in Literature Review, the process of constructing patriotism is inextricably tied to one's social structures and relations. In particular, education plays a vital role in "habituating" patriotism (Bourdieu, 1986). Mu Ming's familiarity with China hinges on his knowledge of China. There are multiple ways of cultivating this knowledge (see Appendix G), through oral accounts in families (Llewellyn, 2017), visual media online (Rochez, 2015), and tourism (Suga, 2020). But here, I specifically point to the compulsory history education at school as a habituating structure that conjures up an imagined community of China, in which students perceive themselves as a member and celebrate its eminence and resilience.

As a core subject in 9-year mandatory education curricula, history classes appear quite frequently in interviews, for almost all interviewees have extensive experience with it. Si Hui, in particular, expresses his fondness for history education in middle school:

> History class cultivated my patriotism [...]after all our history is mostly glorious, for the most time, [China] appeared to be strong and prosperous, bringing me a positive national pride. For some parts of history, for example, the modern history [1849-1949], though humiliating, ended on a positive note. A happy ending, I would say: we eventually enter a peaceful and proposer era.

From Si Hui's celebratory remark above emerge two noteworthy themes: illustrious ancient history and humiliating modern (not contemporary) history. Such emphases in history education are crucial in ensuring students' positive views of China's history and their engagement with national memory.

Scholars of history education have argued that narratives of history are concerned with the "production of historical accounts by historians" and the "consumption and appropriation of these accounts by students" (Carretero et al., 2012, p. 154). Historical facts in this context are particularly generated and selected to construct a continuous narrative in which the nation is the protagonist throughout (Carretero & Lopez, 2010). Then, history education needs to ensure that students would give a positive assessment of these accounts, such as nations' political evolution, past events, and characters (Hammack, 2011).

First, as Si Hui's account shows, by focusing on the "glorious history" of ancient China, history education aims not to present a holistic view of China's history but is primarily con-

cerned with students' perception of a "strong" historical China. The preeminent dynasties such as Han and Tang—albeit two-thousand and one-thousand years apart from now—are emblematic of an unbroken nation, whose glory can be traced back to millennia. In reading this selection of history, students develop not only a particular historical perspective that China is the longest, continuous civilization but also a positive vantage point of its history.

Second, while it appears to be contradicting the principle of positive portrayal, the study of "humiliating history" enhances students' imagined community of China by highlighting the resilient characteristic of the nation. National mythologies and heroes are an important constitutive element of nation-building (Bell, 2003; Smith, 2009). While delineating 19th-century China teetering on the brink of collapse, these history lessons accentuate the pertinacity of the Chinese people by contrast. Commenting on the tribulation of Chinese people over that historical period, another interviewee Wu Tao mentions that he is impressed by a Chinese historical figure, Lin Zexu, a late Qing official praised as a national hero for his bravery in opposing British opium in China. Through this link with a historic national character, Wu Tao establishes a connection—an imagined tie as Anderson (2006) suggests—with a member of a national group whom he had never met. Hence, similar to the idolization of national characters in Vietnamese history (Kelley, 2005), hero-making in times of national crisis in Chinese history is effective in generating a temporal Chinese national community, one that is imagined to be continuous in time and that engages students' imagination of a collective.

Through history education, students are habituated to imagine China as both a historical entity to which they feel connected, and of which they feel proud. The historical knowledge of China as endurable dispositions shapes students' "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1986), which in turn structures their conceptualization of the national entity. That is, China transcends temporal boundaries and metamorphoses into *a historical China* which has been grasped by students since an early age.

An Affective China

In addition to understanding China through formal learning, another way in which many Chinese international students feel China is through unconscious and deep-founded affects arising from their lived experience in China. As a wealth of literature on critical emotions and

affectivity has suggested, affects, which entail everyday bodily encounters, are powerful in shaping one's patriotic dispositions (Zembylas, 2021; Wetherell, 2012). Grounded in this body of theoretical literature, I argue that many Chinese students in this research naturalize a commonsense of Chinese national belonging because of the affective intensities felt through their mundane life in China.

Born and raised in the city of Nanjing where his maternal family lived for generations, Si Hui considers himself certainly a *Nanjingren (*a person of Nanjing origin*)*. Given this deep connection to this place, he recalls the thirteenth of December in his fifth grade—the National Memorial Day of the Nanjing Massacre—with unmediated and unalloyed anguish:

> On the 13th, the city would turn on its air-raid siren, and you can hear the wail of the siren coming from every corner of the city. It felt like a war [...] with fighter planes in the sky, fire burning on the ground. This was not like role-playing or formality; it reminded me of actual pain.

The Nanjing Massacre in December of 1937, immediately after the fall of Nanjing to the Japanese invasion, caused more than 200,000 civilian deaths and countless atrocities. This shocking tragedy has irrevocably traumatized Chinese people, especially the people of Nanjing (Xie, 2021).

The memorial siren functions as an acoustic monument essential in responding to shared memory and in creating a common identity (Pretes, 2003). Yet, differing from the discursive ways in which people visualize and subsequently theorize a physical monument (Johnson, 1995; Levinson, 2018), Si Hui in this case responds viscerally without rational mediation. This instantaneous outburst of intense sensation demonstrates a rather affective response to the national tragedy and common memory. Si Hui's subliminal reaction or his imageries of war illuminate this pre-discursive bond with a greater community: "Maybe then I didn't have a clear idea of what Chinese means, but I definitely knew who '*Nanjingren*' are and I am one of them." Hearing the wail of siren penetrating the entire city while the whole metropolis came to a standstill, Si Hui at that particular moment needed not a history lesson about facts and theory, but resonated with the trauma of a city and a nation through his own body.

Many positive affective experiences are also generated through students' mundane life in China as wealthy urbanites. During interviews, many students evoke nostalgic memories. San Qi said he was proud of China when he was strolling on the Bund of Shanghai and glancing at the

skyscrapers across the Yangtze River. Guo Liang felt a sense of relief and comfort when hopping on a city bus going to whatever places the bus goes; Zhen Feng relished in a traditional Chinese cuisine only the locals would appreciate. As Mu Ming in the opening vignette testifies, his feeling *for* China is based on his living *in* China. These quotidian details—experiencing its landscapes, temperatures, and favors through their body—constitute students' affective dispositions of China (Merriman & Jones, 2017). Sobbing under the siren or being awestruck by skyscrapers is not a formal social structure but represents exactly the "embodied encounters" that bring about "human-objects entanglements" that shape one's perceptions and dispositions (Militz & Schurr, 2016). These dynamic relations between bodies and objects, in Deleuzian (2013) and feminist approach (Ahmed, 2014) which are crucial to this dissertation, must be considered essential elements in one's biographic-history—constituting one's habitus of patriotism.

Conclusion: A Knowledge-Experience Nexus

I have argued that students' memory of, and love for, China goes beyond orthodox habituated logics. Though fleeting and indescribable, students' affects emerging from their lived experience constitute durable and transposable dispositions (habitus) that continue to connect the students with their motherland. The collaboration between rational and affective patriotism has begun to shape students' relation to China even before they embark on their journey to the US. During this pre-departure time, these students develop both a rational understanding of and an affective feeling for China. Throughout this dissertation, I show that this interplay between knowledge and experience (constructed and corporeal) undergirds these Chinese students' development of patriotism.

Next, I analyze how these students' social experience in China and the US, respectively, fashion their perceptions of both nations and Chinese patriotism. In line with the "anti-essentialism" in diaspora studies (Hall, 1999), I argue that, rather than stand-alone privilege or disadvantages in either one country, what drives some students to remain connected to their motherland is difference—a contrast between China and the US regarding their socio-political status as well as personal safety. When social insecurity is compounded by physical danger, these frustrated young migrants feel their plights in the US and look back to where they come from.

CHAPTER 2: "I'd Rather Not Be Here!"

Introduction

I met Yuan Hang five years ago in a club in Chengdu, Sichuan, when he just turned 18 and finished his first year of college. He was reveling in the music with his friends, who also appeared to be students studying in US universities. While becoming a more popular activity, clubbing remains an expensive entertainment affordable to a few young urban residents, many of whom are students studying abroad. Yuan Hang stood out in this throng of young students, exuding charisma with his sporty-sophisticated outfit. The following day, we went out again, and Yuan Hang shared his family history in the Chinese communist revolution and upbringing in such a household. In his distinctive Beijing accent, he talked with a cavalier attitude and playful humor which have not changed since we saw each other again on a Zoom call in 2022. This time we pick up our conversation from his reflection on the instances which make him feel strong about his Chinese identity. He mentions some of his "*gaohua* (snobbish)" family relatives who have immigrated to the U.S and who believed China is still inferior to the West. Yuan Hang protests, "What's in my mind then was like—to take Beijing, Shanghai, these big cities in China for example—where are we lesser than you America?"

Despite tongue-in-cheek, his scorn echoes the frustration of living in the US as some Chinese youth who used to occupy the top socioeconomic strata in China. The everyday reality these middle-class students experience and perceive in China's flourishing urban area, in Yuan Hang's words, is "unparalleled in any part of the developed world." In this chapter, I argue that Chinese students in this research are traumatized by the US and reconnected to China due to a discrepancy between the desirable lifestyles in China and the racial violence and inequality in the US. Unlike their predecessors who emigrated from China twenty years ago for a "paradise abroad" (Fong, 2011), this group of privileged Chinese students finds this "paradise" in the US far away ideal.

"Unlike What We Had in China": Privilege in China

As Yuan Hang's "Where are we lesser than you America?" shows, some Chinese students consider their lives in China superior to that of the US. In this study, most share their enjoyable

experience back "home" in China, as some interview data in Chapter 1 has shown. However, intriguingly, many of these urbanites extol the comfort and conveniences of living in China by contrasting it with the lack thereof in the US. For example, Guo Liang brings up the predicament of public transportation in California, "There are bus services in the cities, but they are so bad: dirty, ill-organized, and always not-on-time, *unlike what we had in China*." Her comparison serves as an indictment of ill-governance in US urban public service, but more importantly, shows the student's perceived comfort in the Chinese bustling urban life they used to be able to enjoy.

Another interviewee, Ali, who resonates with this nostalgia, commented on the infrastructure in New York City where she currently lives. Pointing to the 50-meter-long LED screen newly installed in the World Trade Center underground path, she was pleased.

"This is what I am talking about, New York! The rest of the city? What are those? They're like slums in China!"

I looked at the dazzling lights and shops around us, and said, "yeah, this place looks a bit like China."

"Right? Only this place suits me, a refined urban lady." she grinned in her floral mini shirt with a black blazer jacket.

Ali's words unveil the great disparity some students perceive between lives in China and the US. Nonetheless, rather than universal Chinese experience, this idea of a more desirable lifestyle in China is contingent upon these students' socioeconomic status. It is a privilege enabled by the elite status—their urban residency and family affluence. As many recent studies show (Ma, 2021; Jiang, 2021), Chinese students nowadays are generally coming from a well-off background. Most interviewees are highly aware of this privilege. For instance, Yuan Hang acknowledges his "biases" in judging the superiority of China by identifying himself as a "beneficiary of China's development" and a "natural-born Beijing resident" who has not experienced or even witnessed the hardships that some working-class or rural-based Chinese peers might face. And many others mentioned how "lucky" they are being born in Shanghai or "comfortable" households. In terms of Bourdieusian habitus (1986), these characteristics constitute a crucial privileged disposition and identity which continues to structure students' transnational voyage. Students' socioeconomic privilege, to a great extent, grants them symbolic capital which represents one's ability to marshal resources based on their knowledge and recognition (Bourdieu, 1984;

Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013). This symbolic capital of social status and power becomes particularly pertinent to their attitudes to China when they move to the U.S—a foreign nation where their security dwindles and agency curtailed.

"I Can't Fight But at least I Can Run": Disadvantage in the US

"I was walking into the dorm elevator, and someone just said things to me like: 'Beijing's sky is just gray; you Chinese can't even breathe. And Chinese eat dogs.' These were just thrown to your face," Yuan Hang recounts an incident of anti-China biases he encountered on the campus of his undergraduate university. This racial encounter on campus is by no means singular or exceptional. Si Hui, who attended a flagship state university in the Midwest, saw on "the main street of the campus a graffiti of 'Chinese-virus'," a prevalent racial slur labeling the new coronavirus. However, what is interesting about these students' reports of their negative experience with discrimination on universities' campuses is their responses (or lack thereof) to these malicious instances. Yuan Hang appears to be rather escapist, "honestly, if Americans look down on us, then I'd rather not be here anyway!" Si Hui does not give more comments on his campus instance either. Jaded and dispirited, these students are no longer the assured urban elites but become vulnerable social pariahs constantly combating for their dignity. Hua Yi, a 24-year-old interlocutor, said to me, "*I can't fight [racism], but at least I can run*."

With their economic prowess and prestigious education, these migrant students are surprisingly unable to speak up in the US. Despite the fact that these international students certainly have little political rights as "residential aliens," their inaction in the face of racial injustice remains baffling. To this, I argue a lack of political capital debilitates many Chinese students, precluding them from making political changes in the US. As a consequence, some of these students feel powerless about the racial annoyance and suffer even more from this injustice.

Regarding transnational discontinuity of socioeconomic privilege, Ong (1999) challenges Bourdieu's (1984) notion of the accumulation of cultural capital, contending that the "reproduction of social power, especially for the newcomers deploying start-up symbolic capital, is never guaranteed or certain" (p. 91). As they move across national-cultural "fields," many elite migrants may experience "class-fraction" change (Brisson & Bianchi, 2017), especially of their symbolic capital. That is, although they remain elite in their economic class, their intra-class po-

sition dwindles as their socio-cultural skills and practices are not recognized in a new country. They are now deficient in symbolic capital. In the context of Chinese students studying abroad in the US, this mistranslation can be attributed to these students' political illiteracy—lack of knowledge and experience in political activities

In the spring of 2018 when I was an undergraduate student at Swarthmore College, two campus publications Voices and The Phoenix released several documents of sexual misconduct on campus. Immediately after the release, Organizing for Survivors (O4S), a student-led initiative, organized a series of protests demanding administrative action to end sexual harassment. While empathizing with the grievance and the overall cause of the student protesters, most Chinese international students were skeptical of this student movement. One commented, "but even if we [international students] do speak up, the school wouldn't care because we don't have a say." In this study, several Chinese students, like Yuan Hang, echo such a dissociative attitude. While Si Hui believes "the school has done what it could do," Hua Yi appears to be succumbing to this injustice, "Then, what can I do here?" As my field notes and interviews show, these students' frustration or acquiescence reveals a degree of political resignation.

Regarding the Chinese diaspora's apoliticism, Dong (2017) denounces this apathetic mindset of Chinese international students in the US as "sophisticated egoist" and argues that students' cynicism toward the Chinese government and fear of confronting political power are the cause of it. There was indeed a period of collective silence of democratic discourse and suppression of student movement in China during the 80s and 90s—two decades following the monumental Tiananmen pro-democracy protest in 1989 (Zhao, 1999). As a result, many Chinese youth then were, understandably, traumatized by political activism. Yet, I argue that this wound does not belong to the international students nowadays who were born between 1995 and 2000. Si Hui, for example, sympathizes yet disagrees with the previous generation of Chinese who were disappointed in the government, "they've really been through the darkness during that time, so I can totally understand why some of them would feel this way. I didn't experience or even see any of those." Without inheriting this trauma from the previous generation, Chinese students born after 1995 may not practice political silence for the same reasons as their parents. Instead, I argue students' withdrawal does not stem from traumatic experience but from no experience at all. That is, rather than jaded cynicism, a paucity of political expertise is one of the main reasons that students shy away from campus activism and politics (Landorff, 2019).

As in the case of O4S protests at Swarthmore, many students are not involved because they had little experience in student movements on campus. In this study, most interviewees had no first-hand experience participating in any form of protest. When Yuan Hang describes the high school he attended in Beijing, he declares with pride that his school was so unique that it even had a "principal mailbox" through which "students can report any issues they notice about the school directly to the principal, even complaints toward their instructing teachers." This pedagogical innovation in Yuan Hang's high school, however, is exceptional, as he correctly summarizes, "this is quite atypical for a Chinese school." Tied to the contentious Tiananmen demonstration, *xueyun* (student movement) and student governments' political gestures, considered aberrant behaviors and inciting instability by many Chinese authorities, are discouraged by most elementary and secondary schools in China, or even explicitly banned in some (Wright, 2001).

As a result, most interviewees mention their first encounter with student activism after their education abroad. They speak of student activism as if it is a historical term that only existed in the 80s. Some ask rhetorically, "Did you see any [*zhengjing*] legit Chinese student doing [activism on campus]?" implying these works are pointless. Lack of political literacy and practice, many Chinese students face powerlessness during their political baptism in the US. This apoliticism in China tends not to be an issue for these elite students in China, since their symbolic capital does not hinge on their activism but rather represents a Gramscian (1988) notion of hegemony. They are confident, comfortable upper-middle-class without the urgency to fight for their rightful existence. However, for marginalized minorities in the US—the subalterns, the extent of mobilization has historically been crucial in showing one's political agency and subsequently potential symbolic capital (Lichtman, 2014). These Chinese political neophytes, who fail to generate adequate political force respected by institutions, find their naïveté only makes them more susceptible to inequalities and harder to rebuild their socio-political capital. Rich in the material capital but falling short in the symbolic one (Ong, 1999), these students lose their social power in transit and negotiate this jarring disparity between their privilege in China and disadvantage in the US.

Next, I move to these students' collective traumatic affects of physical violence that repeatedly befalls their peers. While their voices are muffled and hands tied, the rampant violence becomes the last straw that forces many Chinese students to reflect on their sacrifice in studying abroad in the US.

“Like What Happened in Chicago:” Violence and Physical Risk

On November 12th, 2021, Shaoxiong Zheng, a graduate student at the University of Chicago was fatally shot on the street after the gunman robbed him of his belongings (Associated Press, 2021). This was not the first time the Chinese international student community in the US mourned for a member killed in gun violence. Just ten months earlier, in January 2021, a shooting spree in Chicago killed 30-year-old Yiran Fan, a Ph.D. candidate in Financial Economics, while he was in his car in a garage (CBS, 2021). The killing of two young Chinese scholars shocked the Chinese international student community, devastating many with sorrow and terror.

More than anything, racial violence ruptures the transnational transferral of the socioeconomic privilege of Chinese international students from China to the US. If the loss of social and cultural capital in migration undermines these students' hitherto privilege and thrusts them into a disturbing reality, then the risk of physical harm topples their fundamental rights as humans, aggravating the already precarious situation. I argue that the violence, though not personally experienced by many Chinese international students, precipitates an affective aftermath that compels them to reconsider their situation in the US. As trauma contaminates geographical locales and spreads through social media, more Chinese students in the US affectively feel physical risk. These students find what Yuan Hang said "cold, hard reality" in the US, in contrast to a rosy nostalgia for the good old lives in China.

In interviews, the despair over US racial violence has been a tacit consensus, as if it needs no further explanation. When discussing this topic, some just pursed their lips or shook their heads without a word. Such silence serves as a deafening outcry of these international students in the US. The interviewees collectively feel the agony and fear, albeit never personally encounter violence in the US. One way through which this post-violence grief circulates within the Chinese community and becomes collective trauma is geographical contamination. Drawing on Gampel's (2000) theory of "radioactive trauma," Kellermann (2007) posits that this "collective trauma contaminates the physical locations," making certain places trauma-inducing. In the case of US racial violence, the physical spaces where racial crimes have taken place become geographical markers that traumatize "the collective consciousness of the community affected" (Kellermann, 2007, p. 34). Feeling the trauma from the "contaminated" geography, Chinese students who nev-

er encounter violence themselves become nonetheless fearful that their lives are at risk merely for walking, running, shopping, or sitting in their cars.

In this study, some interlocutors corporeally experience distress by merely physical presence at the scene. One afternoon when I was walking down the stairs of New York City subways (MTA) after Ali—a 24-year-old Chinese female student, I saw her on the platform quickly pressing her back on a metal pillar facing the opposite direction of the trail. I asked her why she wanted to keep such an uncomfortable position while waiting for the train. With her usual composure, Ali replied, "I don't wanna be shoved in front of a running train." Startled, I suddenly recalled an incident three-month ago in the MTA, where an Asian female was fatally shoved on the subway tracks by a homeless man. Ali's subconscious behavior (leaning on the wall/pillar) in the subway station points to her trauma of knowing an Asian woman like her was murdered in a similar setting. She bantered with me: "Every time I take the subway, I was like, 'please don't push me, please don't push me [...] If I stand like this, the worst case is just hitting a pillar, better than being run over by a train." Ali's quip suggests her dread about the violence in the city. As Ali's account shows, New York subways are "contaminated" by the violence once unfolded there—becoming traumatic for some students.

If geographical contamination is only impacting a few students living nearby, then many more feel this trauma through the dissemination of information regarding every violent incident. The online circulation of these crime-related details holds performative, affective power in intensifying students' perception of vulnerability and ultimately giving rise to collective trauma. To performativity, Derrida (1982) argues that the performative potential is realized through citing previous instantiation—actions and objects evoking emotions. The violent acts could be performative as it "says" the things they "do" (Rutherford, 2012). In the case of violence-related stories, Luna (2018) contends that crime information has its affective performativity, capable of generating a sensation of "fear of bodily harm" (p. 84). This affective trauma is amplified by digital connectivity (Watson et al., 2020)—many widely circulated, heartfelt obituaries for the victims.

Many interviewees mention a blog entitled "In memory of Yiran Fan: His Dreams and Perseverance" (Liao, 2021). In this beautifully written eulogy, the author Yuanxin Liao, a friend of Fan's, posthumously published some excerpts of Fan's oral journals with many graphic details, such as the interior design of his apartment in Chicago and Sartre's play *No Exit* that he was

directing in his spare time (Liao, 2021). Through these mundane life episodes, the author brings back Yiran—a tenacious scholar who aspired to "become a professor upholding academic integrity in China" but also struggled with his anxiety of "preparing his Ph.D. applications" (Liao, 2021). Conveying the similarities with Yiran, this article elicits powerful affective responses from many student readers, and its wide circulation constructs communal affects of trauma shared among most, if not all, of them. One month after the incident, that obituary blog has accumulated hundreds of thousands of views and hundreds of heartbroken comments left by Chinese students. "Only we [Chinese international students] could understand this pain of almost getting there but everything vanishing," a comment was made by an anonymous student from the University of Chicago. Their bodily sensation of sorrow and dread communicates and reverberates, as these evocative stories reach more in this community.

This collective trauma triggers poignant reflections. Reeling in the aftermath of incomprehensible slaughters of one after another innocent student, many of them are forced to recognize the futility of their socioeconomic privilege in the face of rampant violence. "No matter how hard you worked for everything in your 20 years of life, a random homeless man can ruin it, *like what happened in Chicago*," says Guang Da, a 22-year-old student soon heading to Yale for his Ph.D. study. Thinking about returning to China after his study, Guang Da's concern is not unfounded: although both victims in Chicago are considered privileged—born in middle-class families in China, educated in top-notch universities, and based in a decent neighborhood—these socioeconomic advantages and hard-won entitlements did not protect them from this "American carnage" of gun violence.

Conclusion: Privilege in Vain

Potential bodily harm eviscerates all existing privilege, compelling many of these students to rethink the social precarity that they face in the US and would have avoided in China. Ultimately, they have to grapple with a dilemma: how much privilege has been given up for studying abroad in the US, and is it worth the sacrifice? For these elite migrants, who have lost their privilege in the US, there remains an option for them to resort to their homeland and easily reclaim their comfort and confidence. Such a contrast of symbolic power and physical security makes students gravitate toward China, a place where they *viscerally* feel more comfortable and

secure. Elucidating the first research question—how institutional/lived experience reshapes students' relation to China and the US, Part one of this dissertation has highlighted an affective basis on which, and a fragmented process through which, students physically make sense of their love for China. That is, they feel patriotism through difference, a contrast between their positive affects in China and adverse conditions in the US. Patriotism shared by this cohort of elite international students is not a linear rationalization but fundamentally experiential and contingent. The contingency (interplay and contradiction of multiple factors) and unevenness (various formulations in China and the US) will continue to be an important theme throughout.

Furthermore, as prefaced by Chapter 1, this patriotism is as social and reflexive as it is corporeal. To highlight students' agency, I show that this love for China is neither a mere response to their negative experience in the US; nor is it compliance with the Chinese government. Part two: Patriotic Heart, addresses the second research question—that is, on a more theoretical level, how do these privileged Chinese students in the US reconceptualize patriotism? Chapter 3 illustrates how a small group of well-educated Chinese international students rejects their patriotic teaching in China yet later repudiates racial injustice in the US. In Chapter 4, I show that these politically conflicted students' patriotism evolves through different educational phrases and represents an amalgamation between Confucian ideas and Western political thinking. Still characterized by contingency and conflicts, patriotism in Part two: Patriotic Heart exhibits ideological incongruity yet the potential for political actions. Rather than political quiescence, a few Chinese international students exert creative agency to make sense of the tragedies in the US, and actualize their civic engagement in China.

PART TWO: *AI GUO XIN* (PATRIOTIC HEART)

CHAPTER 3: From Everyday to Theoretical

Introduction

The day when the murder of Shaoxiong Zheng broke out in news, an essay in my WeChat Moment temporarily distracted me from my grief. It was inappropriately lengthy and polished for an Instagram post—standing out from others with its bold, white text printed against a black background:

> The murder of late Dr. Yiran Fan and today's victim, who is said to be of Chinese origin, sent alarm to me as the racial tensions in the United States have reached a critical point since the beginning of the pandemic. The already unsafe surrounding could be even more fatal especially when some politicians in this country continue to conflate the idea and rhetoric of yellow peril and Asian hate—only fueling the already precarious racial situation in the United States.

The author was San Qi whom I have befriended because of his eloquence and candor in writing his public blogs; he is as much a sojourner in the US as I am. Although his reputation precedes him, we never met until he graduated college in 2021. When we finally met in June, his ensemble differed from many Chinese international students in the US. Wearing a pair of metal frame round glasses while parting his hair in the middle, San Qi spoke English unhurriedly with a distinctly British accent. Born into a traditional, affluent family, San Qi received both Chinese education and US education. He mastered the performance of the *guqin*—an ancient Chinese instrument favored by literati, meanwhile well versed in the ideological variations of US political leaders—unknown by many Americans.

Such bicultural expertise and educational experience in both China and the US make some Chinese international students in this study a *sui generis* class—a small group of Chinese students sharing elite, liberal arts education. Instead of simply grieving for the tragedies, they undertake US racialization for a political voice and to disabuse themselves of the American dream. Focusing on students' theoretical transformation in this chapter, I argue that this educational privilege, while lending them much admiration of the US, paradoxically enables their systematic disenchantment.

Privileged Resistance to China

In interviews, some students recalled their approval of Western democracy and particularly of that in the US. San Qi used to reject China's authoritarianism and applaud US democratic elections. "During[my high school], I believed that American democracy is *the* way to achieve real prosperity. It is the ultimate form of government." Si Hui likewise expressed his approval (when 13 years old) of Western political systems, "I used to be very cynical toward China and its politics and thought that North America, Canada or the US, probably would be a better place, with its democratic elections and multi-party systems." Such positive attitudes toward the West (especially the US) may be attributed to students' educational privilege in China. Previous research has suggested a positive correlation between students' socioeconomic privilege with anti-nationalist sentiments. Sinkkonen (2013), for example, finds that urban, middle-class students are less aligned with the nationalist propaganda in China when compared to their rural, working-class peers. Such a finding rings true as many scholars have argued that elite education intends to bring students a cosmopolitan outlook (Igarashi & Saito, 2014), which may counter nationalist narratives (Robbins, 1992).

Reflecting on his experience in an international high school in China, San Qi said, "my US Institution and Government class was particularly interesting; […] it teaches me US democracy and how it differs from China." Different from the Chinese Politics classes mandated in public schools, San Qi's curriculum, which exposed students to Western democratic systems, gave him a comparative lens to explore political topics as he wished. Additionally, students' progressive families with rich educational experience foster a critical perspective that challenges formal patriotic content taught at school. Ri He, who thanks her college-educated parents for their political ideas, says, "it is like a joke" to recite the "*barong bachi* [Eight Honors and Eight Shames]," the CCP's moral concepts coined by the then president Hu Jingtao. Similarly, Si Hui used to object to his Ideological and Politics classes in China, "The pedagogy was depository and the content superficial. So I was having a *rebellious* mindset against it [...] wanting to do the opposite of what they told me to do."

As the interviews above indicate, students' alignment with Western/American political ideas arguably stems from their *rebellious* rejection of the Chinese political education they received and their liberal curriculum and well-educated parents. However, it is important to note

that many students then did not have experience living in the US, making their favorable opinions less grounded in reality but more in impulsive speculation. Little did they know, the US they once admired brings them only disappointment.

Privileged Disenchantment with the US

While these privileged students used to regard the US as a political paradigm, their elite education—ironically—enables them to make sense of their experience abroad and disenchant themselves with this American dream. In this study, I find a small group of Chinese international students are able to familiarize themselves with US political rhetoric and assume novel political identities, thereby reconceptualizing US racial and social reality. Armed with apt theories and a recognizable political identity in the US, these students philosophize on and generalize discrimination and insecurity—undertaking disenchantment with this country.

In this critical transformation is students' evolving perceptions of the US. Many interviewees spoke about the changes in their understanding of US socio-racial dynamics. For example, Ri He believes that prior to her knowledge of racism, she could not distinguish incidents that were personal from those driven by racial prejudice. In a follow-up exchange, she references "categorical perception" to describe the underlying changes in her racial conceptualization. Categorical perception, according to Goldstone and Hendrickson (2012), is defined as "the phenomenon by which the categories possessed by an observer influence the observers' perception" (p. 69). In short, before knowing what racism is, students were not able to comprehend, let alone critique, racist encounters.

In almost all interviews, students did not use phrases—such as "bullying"—common in the Chinese cultural context, but rather explicitly racially charged terms—including "racial inequality" or "racism"—to denote the injustice they have experienced in the US. The adaptation into the US racial context could arguably be attributed to these students' elite US education. When many Chinese international students arrived at their universities, they faced a different kind of political education which, Apple (2005) argues, has been characterized by its left-leaning ideologies and politics. Especially at the top-notch universities (i.e. those attended by the interviewees), there exists an ideological and political "lopsidedness" that renders US universities a liberal hegemony (Rothman et al., 2015) that exposes students to US liberal values and politics,

which tends to discuss racism and structural inequalities (Brow, 2017). Accordingly, "categorical perception" changes would occur to many international students, including those from China. Wu Tao, a student studying at a prestigious university in California, mentions "I gradually get myself used to these liberal terms and ideas." With four years in this liberal stronghold, he confesses, "I now become more accepting of this." As illustrated by Ri He and Wu Tao's example, some Chinese students in liberal, elite US universities may alter their lingua franca through which they communicate their US experience—reframing the offenses they encounter not as interpersonal spite but as manifestations of something as structural as racism.

Yet, liberal narratives alone would not suffice for this theoretical transformation. A few Chinese students also acquire and harness their racialized Asian/Chinese identity to castigate the US racial systems. Many interviewees only share in retrospect their perceived unfair treatment: "I didn't think of it then" or "I only feel like it now that was definitely racist." For example, Kuo Yi, who attended high school in the US, recalls that she once received a patronizing comment—"your English was good enough"—from her English teacher. She reflects, "it sounded innocent then, but I was like, do you mean my standard is supposed to be lower?" Similarly, Zhen Feng, in reflecting on his high school experience in the Midwest, asserts that many events, such as World Culture Fair, which he found unoffensive then, are "racial profiling." Such hindsight occurs to these Chinese students, I argue, as they not only undergo but also undertake US racialization: now operating under US racial framework, these newly racialized migrants start to reexamine seemingly innocuous racial encounters and reconceptualize them as racist and discriminatory.

Race and the process of racialization have been argued as prominent colonial projects devised to construct and reify human hierarchy in order to justify social domination and slavery in the then US (Omi & Winant, 2015; Smedley & Smedley, 2012). In this logic, being categorized into a subjugated racial category (Asian, Latino, or Black) is fundamentally disempowering because of its historical, political ties with racial inequality and racism (Smedley & Smedley, 2012). Scholars have argued that the racialization of Asians in the US, in particular, is oscillating between submissive "model minority" and powerful "yellow peril" (Kim, 2007; Li & Nicolson, 2021). However, the racialization of some Chinese students in this study defies such unavoidable racial abjectness. Many of them enact their educational privilege to systematically repudiate US racial inequality and reject US political superiority.

To illuminate this, I draw on Judith Butler's notion of interpellation (1990) and argue that some Chinese international students become political "subjected subjects" (Davis, 2012) in response to the hail of US racialization. Butler (1990) borrows from Althusser's (1970) notion of interpellation—that ideological and repressive state apparatuses constitute individual subjects' identity by a process of "hailing" in social interaction—and argues that people feel the compulsion in answering the social "hailing" of authority. That is, people being interpellated are not only subjected to repressive power but also become recognized as social subjects who can enact agency as a group: "the reprimand of the interpellative law that punishes at the same time as it constitutes" (Davis, 2012, p. 881). In this way, Chinese international students, being interpellated as "Asians," become racialized subjects in the US. Yet, they assume not only the "subjection" (Foucault, 1991) of racial power but also the political agency as a racial minority.

"When in Rome, do as Romans do," San Qi summarizes his strategy in the posts addressing US gun violence against Chinese international students (quoted in the opening vignette). By framing Chinese students primarily within the US racial structures (Chinese vs White American) instead of a national framework (Chinese vs American citizens), his deliberate racial evocation fits squarely with the liberal racial discourse in US elite universities, which are more inclined to empathize with this cause. As this case shows, US racialization is not only an external process students like San Qi involuntarily undergo; it is also a tactic they willingly undertake. Some others in this study attest to this theoretical shift. Frequent in my conversations with many interviewees is their identity alignment with Asian/Chinese Americans in the specific context of racial violence. Hua Yi identifies herself as "an Asian female" when talking about the NYC subway incidents, and Ri He resonates with the "Stop Asian Hate" movement during the pandemic. It has been shown that students strategically transform their identity from international students whose political status is deemed ineligible to participate in US political discourse to racial minorities whose experience is indicative and representative of domestic racial problems.

No longer Chinese expatriates but Asian minorities, these US-liberal-educated Chinese students thereby attain a righteous voice and domestic perspective to reevaluate their plights in this racist nation. They now are able to formulate suitable structural criticism. Kuo Yi, on the topic of racial violence and inequality against Asians, describes the US as "a country [that] got so many things fundamentally wrong." Echoing Kuo Yi's detestation, this well-educated group of Chinese international students stops to view the US as a place where some unfortunate incidents

took place. Instead, it is perceived by these students as an active agent—a political edifice whose establishment and everyday operations are premised upon the pernicious building block of oppression. When these Chinese students start to play by the rules, they already know about the corrupted nature of this game. From the deadly shootings in Chicago Hyde park to fatal attacks in New York subway stations, they are no longer foreign bystanders but are actual domestic victims attesting to the everyday brutality in this nation.

Conclusion: Paradox of Elite Education

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that both critical thinking in China and the US political framework (identity politics) shape their relationship with the US. And I have argued that this elite education disabuses a few educationally privileged Chinese students of the illusion of the American dreams itself once created. But it is worth emphasizing that many interviewees conceded their critical opinions are unpopular or atypical. Wu Tao and Ali both express that many peers are "unwilling to do critical thinking" because of their professional education. Ali, specifically, mentions her "elite" education in helping her attain this criticality. To this discrepancy, San Qi draws the distinction between "*Shu* [technique]" and "*Dao* [methodology]": the former points to the techniques professional education brings to students, while the latter is the philosophy and methodology that liberal arts education imparts. The privilege of receiving liberal arts education (usually more expensive) provides a few students with *Dao,* through which they can see and then resist oppression. From China to the US, the shift of privilege and political environments brings about this ironic paradox of elite education. This, yet again, illustrates the very contingency and fragmentation of patriotism I have been arguing for in this dissertation.

However, a question remains: neither aligning with the CCP's patriotic indoctrination nor sanguine about US politics, are they patriotic to China? And if so, how would they profess this love? Without a master guiding principle, these "liminal" subjects find themselves in a disjuncture as well as nexus between Confucian thinking and Western episteme. It becomes these Chinese migrant students' journey to look for their normative conception of Chinese patriotism.

CHAPTER 4: Love, Reproach, and Patriotism

Introduction

On April 22, 2022, marking one month since Shanghai's lockdown, an amateur documentary—entitled Voice of April—went viral on the Chinese internet (404 Archive, 2022). This 4-minute film timely captures the lived experience of Shanghai citizens: the confusion and chaos. However, in just a matter of a few hours, this content was nowhere to be found (Wen, 2022). Out of numerous content censored in China, the expurgation of this very video, however, triggered waves of protest and intense emotional backlashes from not only people in China but also the Chinese diaspora including many international students in the US. Within hours after the removal of the original content from the WeChat platform, a virtual relay took place. Many Chinese international students kept on posting and reposting different versions of the film. At that moment, all Chinese social media is swamped with these posts. "Come on! Don't Let Me Talk! Don't Let Tens of Millions of Shanghainese Talk! Don't Let 1.4 Billion Chinese Talk!" said one anonymous Chinese student. The comments as such culminated in an emotional avalanche that compelled more students, who usually would have been silent, to mobilize themselves for political actions. Although the fate of this film was not overturned by public outcries, what these Chinese students showcased was nothing but robust political activism.

Chinese students are by no means ideologically subservient; on the contrary, as Chan (2018) and Wang and Shi (2018) show, contemporary Chinese students often utilize online platforms to enable and enhance their political participation. As Chapter 3 has demonstrated, these privileged students are disenchanted: rejecting either Chinese patriotic indoctrination or the US preaching on liberty. Their sometimes apathetic outlook in Chapter 2 notwithstanding, students in this study do sometimes marshal their symbolic resources (education) to maneuver a treacherous political terrain in China. In this chapter, engaging with Confucian texts (Appendix F), I argue for the patriotic heart of some Chinese students and analyze the displays of patriotism—particularly their disapproval of the Chinese government. This final chapter suggests that students dynamically situate themselves in a clash between Confucian morality and Western political philosophy; far from a perfect reconciliation, they negotiate different ideas of "love for China" while practicing their patriotism through their trenchant criticism of the Chinese government.

"*Ai Zhi Shen* [The More One Loves]"

For many students in this study, their patriotism is fraught with tensions: not least of which is a tension between traditional Confucian morality of patriotism-as-filial-piety and Western enlightenment ideas of state responsibility and civil rights. Many interviews betray these students' conflicted stance on their support for the Chinese state due to a prominent Confucian influence. San Qi, for example, concedes, "sometimes I feel like I am defending the indefensible." By the "indefensible," he refers to the outright racist and/or homophobic policies and ambivalent attitudes toward marginalized minorities in China. When I asked why he would like to defend it in the first place, San Qi paused and said, "I felt like I had to." This unspeakable conflict of "defending the indefensible" is echoed by Guo Liang:

> The nation 'gives birth' to you and 'raises' you; it is like your parents. How could you not love your parents? Even though your parents could wrong you or harm you, you can't reject the fact that they're your parents. I don't know why China feels equivalent to the parents, but it just does.

This equation implies a parallel between patriotism toward one's state and filial piety to one's parents. Considered to be one of the fundamental moral acts in Confucianism, filial piety *(xiao)* demands individuals to show unconditional respect (*jing*) to their parents (Radice, 2017).

Nonetheless, beyond mere domestic affairs, the Confucian notion of *xiao* governs the governments in ancient China. To the political nature of *xiao*, Confucius argues, "just by being a good son and friendly to one's brothers and sisters you can have an effect on government" (The *Analects* 2:21). In Confucianism, upholding *xiao* constitutes a political act, for this virtue is not only domestic but also crucial to government. Mencius declares, "The root of the kingdom is in the State. The root of the State is in the family." (The *Mencius* 4A5). In another cardinal Confucian work the *Classic of Filial Piety*, *xiao* has been argued to "commences with the service of parents; it proceeds to the service of the ruler; it is completed by the establishment of character" (1:6). As these Confucian texts indicate, Confucianism regards political loyalty as an extension of one's virtuous filial piety.

Almost all Chinese international students, however their varying political inclination or US education, stress the importance of their Confucian family upbringing and K-9 schooling

which stresses on Neo-Confucian texts study. Confucianism, as Miller (2010) observes, has "shaken off its anti-modernity image" previously thought by the CCP and become the "best way [for the Party] to rebuild a strong cultural identity to regain legitimacy" (p. 10). In schooling, for example, the quintessential Confucius classic *The Analects* was a compulsory read for all elementary school students in China (after the 1990s) and would be tested on secondary school entrance exams (Fang, 2003). Although few students cite Confucian texts in interviews, their repeated use of "mother" and "father" metonyms for the Chinese nation-state allude to this prominent Confucian teaching. Yuan Hang once borrowed a proverb to explain his gratitude for and support of the CCP regimen even at times of its failure: "you can't eat while holding the bowl and then curse the mama [who cooks for you] after you finish eating." China, to Yuan Hang, represents this mother he cannot criticize.

In this Confucian ontology, the nation is not constructed but rather a born congenital political family (*guojia*), and the rulers are not monarchs but the lord father (*junfu*) (Ren, 2003; Freiner, 2012). As San Qi eloquently argues in his interview audit, "the English word 'compatriots' etymologically means people from the same land, but the Chinese equivalence '*tong* [same] *bao* [siblings]' means people from the same parents." To some students raised in Chinese Confucian tradition, the word "motherland" or "fatherland" is not a concrete place whence they came, but symbolizes an abstract parental figure that gives birth to them, fundamentally enabling their aspiration and existence. For these students, withdrawing their commitment to the country is to be seen as an affront to themselves—an act of moral betrayal.

"*Ze Zhi Qie* [The More One Reproaches]"

However, given their immersion in such Confucian enculturation of filial piety, some students still criticize their own government in China. Zhen Feng is one of a few student interviewees who reject the moral guidance of Confucianism as well as the filial and political order it prescribes. He argues cynically:

> it is all constructed by the ruling elites, these [Confucian] dogmas, silly filial piety, and 'patriotism.' When I was studying at [my undergraduate school], a Chinese historian called Zhao Suisheng came to visit and gave us a speech about how the CCP controls public ideology, which [I found] very convincing.

This critical opinion on Confucian patriotism was once shared by Wu Tao, who was born into a family with rich Confucian traditions. He recalls that during his high school years, "I really had a distaste for these traditional thinkings, believing that they are nothing but tools used for ideological manipulation and control—the basis of Chinese patriarchy and monarchy." Zhen Feng and Wu Tao's disapproval of the Chinese filial piety and unconditional loyalty reveals the liminal complexity of these migrant students' conception of patriotism. That is, the experience of studying abroad in the US gives rise to and reshapes how these Chinese alter their patriotism to be in/out of tune with Confucian doctrine and Western democratic tenets.

As Zhen Feng's account illustrates, some migrant students when moving to the US experience substantial ideological changes that challenge their Confucian ontology. To this radical departure, Wu Tao reflects:

> I became familiar with the Western canon of political science, Enlightenment thought more specifically, in Government class or History class. [And I later] make better sense of this [Western] way of thinking about the relationship between the state and the people as rights and obligations.

Such educational changes are emblematic of these students' ideological "rite of passage"—constituting a polar opposite of Chinese Confucian patriotism. The social studies provide these students with a critical reading of the Western notion of citizenship that contradicts the Chinese patriotism-as-filial-piety. It enables students to negotiate the conception of patriotism and thereby reconceptualize it as contextual and contractual. As a result, these students now attempt to jettison the constraints imposed by the Confucian filial directives and voice their defiance.

This epistemic departure might suggest similarities to the students' rebellious resistance to Chinese patriotic education before their education abroad. However, after their US education, such a change represents not a smooth conversion but a tumultuous struggle that pushes them into a political "liminal state" of in-betweenness (Turner, 1974). Instead of replacing "traditional" Chinese patriotism with "modern" Western political science, students negotiate both competing theories of patriotism. Paradoxically, this bond is rationalized by a mystical cosmological order on one hand, and on the other, constructed by power negotiation. One on each end of a spectrum, these two epistemologies thrust many of my interviewees into confusion: In which way should they situate themselves in this relationship?

"*Shi Fumu Ji Jian* [In Serving Parents, One Should Gently Remonstrate With Them]" (The *Analects* 4:18)

After an hour-long interview with Yuan Hang, I thanked him for his generous insights and stopped the audio recording at 10 p.m. U.K. time. Yet, he seemed unfinished; so the conversation continued. During this unexpected, informal exchange, he talked about his reflection regarding his version of patriotism. Yuan Hang's playful-looking eyes became more solemn and his countenance sterner. I couldn't help but feel that my heartbeat was racing. I asked for his consent and quoted him extensively here:

> I, too, was wondering if I would become more patriotic toward China after I left. Maybe so, but I have known more dark sides of China than before. I read those banned books and documentaries, and even talked to some 'separatists.' Seriously, I do empathize with their cause and experience. But am I not patriotic anymore? No, because I now know more about my country, its glory as well as its illness. I now can see the breadth and depth of it, and this only made me feel more attached to it.

Yuan Hang's powerful words speak to the potential agency of Chinese international students' liminal patriotism. Neither here (the Confucian notion of compliance) nor there (Western contractual understanding of citizenship), these migrant students in the "betwixt and between" state of "pure possibility" (Turner, 1964, p. 97) straddle the US and China and enact their agency to foster a distinct patriotic idea. They maneuver between the Confucian loyalty to the state and the Enlightenment thinking of social contract theory, simultaneously absorbing from and being tugged by both sides.

As anthropologist Mary Douglas (2002) famously argues, "to have been in the margins is to have been in contact with danger, to have been at a source of power" (p. 98). The liminal patriotism possessed by some Chinese international students symbolizes this marginality and power. Many interviewees express their frustration and disagreement with both the mainstream Chinese patriotism and pro-US attitudes. Yuan Hang refers to these two stances on the patriotic spectrum as "toxic extremes" and "ought to be balanced by each other." Zhen Feng speaks about his patriotic identity struggle while he lived in China during the pandemic, "I was really disappointed in some people in China, some fanatics on social media. But I also respect those who claim their patriotism. I would just challenge them to critically think about 'to what exactly you are

feeling patriotic'." As these two students show, their patriotism is "in the margins" (Douglas, 2002), sitting at an intersection between the Confucian and Western concepts of citizenship.

By seeing their relationship with the states as defined by rights and responsibilities and yet respecting the Confucian bond that defies this Western theorization, some Chinese students use this liminal patriotism as "a source of power" to critique the government and make social changes (Douglas, 2002). As evidenced by the opening vignette of "Voice of April," many interviewees show no hesitation in protesting online against the government brutality during the pandemic. Yuan Hang and Zhen Feng, despite their dissimilar political stances, helped circulate the mutual aid posts (*huzhu tie*) among Shanghai residents. Another interlocutor, Zhao Yu rallied thousands of Chinese students abroad to form an ad hoc NGO in response to the material shortage in Wuhan. "I was livid seeing the news when the COVID broke out and the government was lacking in so many aspects. I felt like there is a place for me to contribute, " said this iconic student activist whom the largest CCP newspaper the *People's Daily* covered.

The possibility of individual participation in intervening in governmental crises invites students' liminal patriotism. These elite students do not simply obey their country, but they honor it through remonstration. Liminal between the Chinese and Western thinking, they creatively resort back to the ancient Confucian wisdom. In Confucian filial piety, while obedience and devotion to the superiors (fathers, state) are pivotal, mere compliance is questioned. For example, Confucius's student Xunzi in the chapter entitled "The Way of the Son" argues:

> To be filial inside the home and respectful to elders outside the home is the lowest form of conduct. To obey one's superiors and be generous to one's subordinates is a higher form of conduct. To follow the Way instead of one's ruler, and [*cong yi*] to follow moral guidelines rather than one's father is the highest form of conduct (cited in Wang, 1988, p. 529).

As Xunzi's text suggests, the best form of filial piety is for one to "cease to follow the arbitrary will of one's superior" and to adapt to a more independent and objectively benign standard (Radice, 2017, p. 199). The adherence to *yi* (moral guidelines) thus represents a task of higher priority than allegiance. Under this logic, the paramount objective of patriotism is not to simply obey the state but to ensure that justice is delivered and that ethics are honored. And when *yi* is jeopardized by the superiors, it is implied that the right patriotism is not complicity but resolution to gainsay one's ruler and fight to uphold "the Way." As the *Analects* (4: 18) admonishes, "in

serving the parents, one should gently remonstrate with them." Granted, students' actions in the opening vignette—an expression of civil disobedience—may be influenced by Western political ideologies. Nonetheless, I maintain that their political action is underpinned by their liminal conception of patriotism that simultaneously draws on Chinese philosophical wisdom of "remonstrating with the parents."

Zhao Yu declares in his interview that he believes in "a natural responsibility to help this country and '*tongbao*'" even if that means contradicting the propaganda or undermining the legislation. In this way, students' trenchant criticism can be seen as evidence of their patriotism: their way to "*cong yi*" in order to be truly *xiao*. Wu Tao, who rejected Confucian filiality, also becomes more understanding of this cultural legacy. Zhen Feng, albeit his claim as "non-patriotic," has nevertheless reposted numerous articles during the pandemic that question China's public health policies and COVID regulations. These articles can also be found on the social media of Si Hui, a passionate self-proclaimed patriot. Despite their political disagreements, Zhen Feng and Si Hui both fulfill their patriotic duties by practicing this "highest form of conduct." Despite their ambiguous reasonings, these students continue to negotiate their patriotism, in conjunction/disjunction with different traditions of philosophy.

Conclusion: Patriotic Ideas under Negotiation

These Chinese students demonstrate their liminal patriotism by remonstrating with the state authority for the sake of justice. Through this liminal, contested patriotism that draws on both the Western and Confucian notions of patriotism, these students work and rework the complex theoretical underpinnings of their patriotism. Eventually, this chapter has intended to demonstrate an ongoing process of contestation instead of a settled result with reconciliation of different norms at play. For these student in the US, filial piety and Western citizenship will continue to confuse, unsettle, and urge them to reformulate their patriotism toward China.

Part two: Patriotic Heart has demonstrated that these students' patriotism represents their fragmented, contingent agency. Students' power to speak up, resist, and theorize is never guaranteed or developed linearly. Instead, such agentic patriotism entails a continuous negotiation of conflicting ideas in the context of students' transnational displacement, educational privilege, and political acclimatization—all of which present contradictions and require active maneuvers. Stu-

dents, in this case, are not simply objects of patriotic structures but also essential agents who constantly negotiate and attempt to reconcile competing notions to align with their evolving idea of patriotism.

CONCLUSION

Love for China: Ongoing Tension and Change

On April 29th, after over a month of Shanghai's lockdown, I met Hua Yi, one of the interviewees, in New York. Born and raised in Shanghai, this young woman in a professional suit uttered her utter disappointment and despair about the Shanghai government.

She asked me if I had an immigration plan: "You are going to '*run* (running away from China),' aren't you?"

"I don't know, to be honest, at this point, as so many things are changing," I replied.

"Yeah, you are not wrong. I am not against coming back to China when [the pandemic] pan out," she followed, "but I really feel like patriotism is like a romantic relationship, which would be worn out if one keeps hurting the other."

In this dissertation, I have followed through the educational trajectories of some privileged young students, from their K-9 education before studying abroad to their higher education in the US. To recall the research questions I have posed in the introduction, this dissertation has shed light on the contingent and fragmented nature of Chinese international students' love for China. Patriotism in this dissertation is anything but a guaranteed, smooth or congruous monolith; no single factor or experience in either country can dictate its form or development. Rather, it represents a relation under various construction as well as agency under continuous negotiation.

The dissertation has been divided into two parts to underscore such complexities. Part one: Patriotic Feeling has examined the affective experience that shapes students' patriotism, while Part two: Patriotic Heart has focused on students' theorization that highlights their agency. Throughout my arguments, I have shed light on many contradictory, yet constitutive, elements pertaining to patriotism. In each chapter, I have analyzed the nexuses of these elements: the interplay between the knowledge of China and experience in China (Chapter 1); the contrast between students' comfort in China and their precariousness in the US (Chapter 2); the paradoxical educational privilege that enables them to resist Chinese patriotism and to demystify the US (Chapter 3); and the liminal agency embedded in both the enculturated Confucian norms and acculturated Western thinking (Chapter 4). Shaped through the interplay, difference, paradox, and

liminality, Chinese patriotism entails a myriad of tensions and changes. Concluding this dissertation, I highlight the central theoretical contributions my research hopes to bring to an ongoing discourse on transnational student mobility and patriotism.

Chinese-ness: Deterritorialized and Reterritorialized

Without a doubt, the patriotism of these Chinese international students in this study exemplifies “deterritorialization,” in Deleuze and Guattari’s (1988) terms, that enables a previously geographically specific imagination (i.e., patriotism) to cross pre-existing geopolitical demarcations and to unfold within a transnational context (the US and China). In the US, they continue to showcase their patriotism by inveighing against anti-CCP campaigns, organizing cultural celebrations for traditional Chinese festivals, and rallying themselves to the social causes in China. These Chinese students, in assembling their Chinese community in the US, enable their Chineseness to transcend territorial limits and abstract from a territorially defined China.

Yet, this dissertation’s reformulation of patriotism begs new questions that explore future patriotism and nationalism that challenges a strict territorial reading. I have shown that patriotism is felt through students’ bodies, through their lived experience in both countries. Therefore, when patriotism becomes unhooked from politically defined territories, they are simultaneously entangled with physical surroundings and material life—hence reterritorialization. The space in the US is constantly being reterritorialized by different cultural logics and political agendas, not least of which is the congregation of Chinese residents and entrepreneurs (i.e., Chinatowns). Thus, to the effect of this plausible Chinese patriotism reterritorialization, I ask: How would physical landscapes and campus environment be reshaped by these powerful ideologies from afar and actions unfolding here? How would this Chinese patriotism—such as pro-CCP protests and festival galas—engage and interact with the US peers? And what does this global connectivity between, not just ideas, but also materials reveal to us regarding future global higher education? These are some of the questions worth asking and investigating.

Being Patriotic: Political and Cultural

Apart from patriotism in transit, the political nature of patriotism is another crucial point in this dissertation that I have aimed to unpack. There is a tendency for educational research to

either over-politicize or depoliticize students' "love for their country" by either viewing it through a Foucauldian notion of power as institution-led nationalist propaganda (Wang, 2008), or by reducing it to a natural sense of ethnic pride and cultural identity (Sinkkonen, 2013). As a consequence, studies tend to demarcate the boundary between Chinese patriotism and nationalism, arguing the former is internal and cultural, whereas the latter is external and political (Gries et al., 2011).

However, the discussion of Chinese patriotism in this dissertation defies this dualism. I have demonstrated that students' love for China is inherently both political and cultural. Students' patriotism encompasses their approval of China's history, culture, and contemporary economic development, but such appreciation cannot be decoupled from their discussion of the CCP's leadership. In this research, students' ambivalent attitudes toward the government have exemplified this messy entanglement between politics and culture. Although they wish not to glorify or justify many human rights violations committed by the CCP regime, these students nevertheless cannot deny the benefits of the poverty reduction and opening-up policies that have indeed transformed millions of Chinese families' lives, theirs included. The seemingly apolitical endorsement of the Chinese rejuvenation is closely tied to CCP's governance. This inextricable bond to politics thus renders Chinese patriotism politically charged, despite some individuals' intention to disarticulate this joint between "*minzu* (culture)" and "*zhengfu* (governance)" (Siu, 2016).

This reconceptualization implies that by acknowledging patriotism, just like nationalism, is value-laden and politically charged, one is able to excavate the underlying political power (not always agency) of international students' patriotic acts. Even though they are not in China, these students' patriotism can reshape their Chinese political consciousness and drive them to stand up and speak up. In Chapter 2, I have discussed the political inactivity of some Chinese international students due to their lack of symbolic capital. Nonetheless, as illustrated in Chapter 4, some students choose political actions showing remarkable online mobilization in relation to China's societal problems. Building on the deterritorialized postulation of patriotism, it is worth more scholarly attention to US-based Chinese international students' activism driven by their Chinese patriotism. When they rally themselves against xenophobia (particularly the so-called sinophobia) on the US campuses, or when they protest online bashing the Chinese government, these patriotic youth do so out of their genuine love for China. Yet, little do they know exactly

how political this love is. For US universities that profess democracy and liberty, to what extent is this tribute paid to the fellow Chinese people; to what is this subordination to and complicity with the government?

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Appendix A: Interview Participation

List of Interviewees

Pseudonym	Time of Interview	Interview Format	Gender	Age	Years in the US	University Ranking	Residence in China
San Qi	March13 May 5	Online	Male	23	5	Top 20	Yun'nan
Ali	April 28 May 30	In-person	Female	24	9	Top 3	Sichuan
Ri He	March 13 April 10	In-person	Female	23	8	Top 20	Beijing
Yuan Hang	March 2	Online	Male	22	5	Top 30	Beijing
Si Hui	March 5	Online	Male	23	4	Top 40	Jiangsu
Guo Liang	April 3	Online	Female	21	4	Top 20	Guangdong
Wu Tao	March 15	Online	Male	23	8	Top 20	Zhejiang
Kuo Yi	March 21	Online	Female	21	7	Top 5	Shanghai
Zhen Feng	March 8	Online	Male	24	6	Top 5	Beijing
Hua Yi	May 1	In-person	Female	24	6	Top 20	Shanghai
Mu Ming	April 7	In-person	Male	23	8	Top 3	Shannxi
Guang Da	May 13	Online	Male	22	7	Top 20	Jiangxi
Zhao Yu	May 24	In-person	Male	21	5	Top 10	Zhejiang

Interviewees' Pseudonym

In this dissertation, I refuse to assign generic English pseudonym to the interviewees. Instead, each interviewees are asked to design their own aliases as they wish. Many of the pseudonyms are based on beautiful Chinese characters and are creatively restructured to showcase students' aesthetics and aspirations.

Pseudonyms (romanized)	Pseudonyms (original)	Translation
San Qi	散骑	Unfettered chivalry
Ali	阿俪	Parallel beauty
Ri He	日和	Amicable sunshine
Yuan Hang	远航	Long voyage
Si Hui	斯辉	Radiance as such
Guo Liang	国梁	Backbone of a nation
Wu Tao	武韬	Military strategy
Kuo Yi	栝益	Agrarian boon
Zhen Feng	臻锋	Attaining acumen
Hua Yi	华弈	Illustrious game
Mu Ming	沐明	Basking in brillance
Guang Da	光大	Glorifing spirits
Zhao Yu	兆玉	Foretelling virtue

Recruitment Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	1. Chinese nationals (holding Chinese citizenship) 2. 18-year-old or older by the time of interview 3. Completed elementary education in Mainland China 4. Fluent in both Chinese and English (Speaking, Reading, Writing, Listening) 5. Enrolled at/graduated from the universities in the U.S. 6. Spent a minimum of 4 years in the US
Exclusion Criteria	1. No other (US included) citizenship held 2. No higher education received in China 3. No college underclassmen (first and second year) 4. No graduates prior to the 2018 5. No significant political affiliation (party membership) held 6. No prosecution from either China or the US

Recruitment Material

Recruitment Post (on English social media)

Hi dear friends! I'm xxx, a graduate student studying Education at the University of Oxford. I am writing to invite you for an interview for my Master's thesis about Chinese international students' national identity and educational experiences. The goal of this research study is to understand how U.S. educational experience shapes Chinese students' identity formation. The interview would take approximately 60 minutes and we would conduct it online over Wechat.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and your privacy will be thoroughly protected. If you would like to participate in this research or learn more about my research, please contact me：

Email: xxxxxxx WeChat: xxxxxx

Best,

Xxx

Recruitment Post (on Chinese social media)

朋友们好！我正在为我在牛津大学的研究论文收集数据需要长期在美留学的朋友参与采访。我的论文关注中国留美学生的爱国主义和国家主义情怀，在完成后会有可能发表在学术周刊上。采访大概持续45-60分钟，形式可以是线上也可以是面对面。作为受访者你的个人信息会被严格保密，不会被公开。如果有对我研究感兴趣的同学，欢迎私聊我！

Appendix B: Ethical Approval

Informed Consent

Oral Consent Script (English)

I am conducting research for my MSc thesis about Chinese international students in the U.S. and their Chinese identity. The goal of this research study is to understand how their education shapes Chinese students' identity formation and reconstruction in America. Your participation will involve one informal interview that will last approximately for thirty minutes. This research has no known risks. Participation in this study is voluntary, and will not disclose any personal information that could trace back to you. I will do everything I can to protect your privacy. Your identity or personal information will not be disclosed in any publication that may result from the study. Notes and audio that are taken during the interview will be stored in a secure location. Would it be all right if I audiotaped our interview? Saying no to audio recording will have no effect on the interview.

Oral Consent Script (Chinese)

我正在为我的硕士论文进行关于长期在美国的中国国际学生及其中国人身份的研究。本研究的目的是了解他们的教育如何影响中国学生在美国的身份形成和重建。您的参与将涉及一次持续约 30 分钟的非正式面试。这项研究没有已知的风险。是否参与这项研究是绝对自愿的，研究不会透露任何可以追溯到您的个人信息。您的身份或个人信息不会在研究可能产生的任何出版物中披露。面试期间记录的笔记和音频将存储在安全的位置。现在我开始录音可以吗？拒绝录音不会影响面试。

CUREC (Central University Research Ethics Committee) Approval from the University of Oxford, UK

Dear Yifan,

Two Competing Lands: How elite Chinese international students in the U.S. navigate their political identity CIA-22-082

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

Our prior discussion on this was very useful – an impressive team as ever, and project, vastly experienced, and a model of genuine care in relation to research ethics.

I am pleased to inform you, then, that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

Please continue to follow all current guidance issued by CUREC during the pandemic, notably COVID-19: CUREC guidance on research involving human participants, https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/coronavirus

If relevant please also check the CUREC website for their best practice research guides, these can be very useful in refining the writing up of ethical considerations in your research – see https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources/bpg

Good luck with your research study,

Yours sincerely,

Liam

Chair, DREC

Liam Francis Gearon, PhD, FHEA, FRSA, Docent

DRC (Departmental Review Committee) Approval from Swarthmore College, USA

Farha Ghannam <fghanna1@swarthmore.edu> Sun, May 31, 2020, 2:42 PM

to Yifan, Stacey, Maya, Shani

Thanks Yifan. Your application is now approved and you might start your research. I'll let the college know about this and hope they will move forward with your check very soon.

Stacey, please keep this final copy for our records.

Good luck with your project Yifan.

Farha

Appendix C: List of Chinese Vocabulary

aiguo	爱国
aiguo qing	爱国情
aiguo xin	爱国心
aiguozhuyi	爱国主义
ai zhi shen	爱之深
barong bachi	八荣八耻
congyi	从义
dao	道
fanshang	犯上
fumei liuxue	赴美留学
gaohua	高华
guojia	国家
guoqing	国情
huaxia	华夏
huzhu tie	互助贴
jing	敬
junfu	君父
Lunyu	论语
manyi	蛮夷
Mengzi	孟子
minzu	民族
Nanjingren	南京人
ren zhi chu xing ben shan	人之初性本善
run	润

shu	术
sixiang pinde	思想品德
shi fumu ji jian	事父母几谏
tongbao	同胞
xueyun	学运
Xiaojing	孝经
xiao	孝
Xunzi	荀子
yi	义
yidi	夷狄
ze zhi qie	责之切
zhonghua minzu	中华民族
zhengfu	政府
zhengjing	正经
Zengzi	曾子

Appendix D: Original Quotes in Chinese

p.6

“Motherland got your back. Welcome Home.” “祖国在你身后，欢迎回家”

“After all, we are home.” “我们终于要回家了”

p. 11

“the Chinese polity is a cultural phenomenon” “中国实为一文化体而非国家”

“the devotion to building and safeguarding the enterprise of socialist modernization as well as to the enterprise of facilitating the unification of China.” “为献身于建设和保卫社会主义现代化事业，献身于促进祖国统一事业”

“the patriotism we advocate is by no means a parochial ethnic-nationalism.” “我们所提倡的爱国主义，决不是狭隘的民族主义。”

“only through the insistence on the trinity of love of Party, love of country, and love of socialism is patriotism vivid and real; this is the most prominent manifestation of contemporary Chinese patriotism. “只有坚持爱国和爱党、爱社会主义相统一，爱国主义才是鲜活的、真实的，这是当代中国爱国主义精神最重要的体现”

p.29

“I have always lived here; I went to school here; my family is here; I know so much about this place, its roads, its people. I guess I do have a strong sense of belonging here.” “我一直住在这，在这里上的学，这边的街道，家人，认识的人都在这。我觉得这就是我的家。”

p.30

“History class cultivated my patriotism […]after all our history is mostly glorious, for the most time, [China] appeared to be strong and prosperous, bring me a positive national pride. For some parts of the history, for example the modern history [1849-1949], though humiliating, ended on a positive note. A happy ending, I would say: we eventually enter a peaceful and proposer era.”“历史培养了我了爱国主义吧。毕竟我们的历史，大多数历史都是很辉煌的，富强，这给我一

种民族自豪感吧。有一些历史，比如近代历史就比较屈辱，但是我们还是有一个比较好的结局，我们终于现在在一个和平富强的时代。”

p.33

“On the 13th, the city would turn on its air-raid siren, and you can hear the wail of the siren coming from every corner of the city. It felt like a war […] with fighter aircrafts in the sky, fire burning on the ground. This was not like a role-play or formality; it reminded me of actual pain.” “十三号那天，整个南京城都会有警报响，你在哪里都能听到，从四面八方来的。我感觉就像打仗一样，有战斗机在天上，火在烧。不像是走走过场，就是真的，我能感受到很强烈的恐惧。”

p.34

“Maybe then I didn’t have a clear idea of what Chinese means, but I definitely knew who ‘Nanjing Ren’ are and I am one of them.” “或许那个时候我还不清楚中国人代表着什么，但是我肯定知道南京人是什么意思，就是我身边的所有人。”

p.36

“What’s in my mind then was like—taking Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, these big cities in China for example—where are we lesser than you America?” “我心想，就拿北京上海广州说，这些中国一线城市，哪里不比你美国？”

p.37

“it’s public transportation, There are bus services in the cities, but they are so bad: dirty, ill-organized, and always not-on-time, unlike what we had in China.” “公共交通吧。是有公交的，但是不是中国那样的，特别脏乱差，还老是晚点。”

“this is what I am talking about, New York! The rest of the city? What are those? They’re like slums in China!” “这就像话吗！其他地方就啥啊？就中国城乡结合部一样。”

“Right? Only this place suits me, a refined urban lady.” “是吧，这种地方才适合我这种都市丽人。”

“beneficiary of China’s development” “中国发展的既得利益者”

p.38

“I was walking into a dorm elevator, and someone just said things to me like: ‘Beijing’s sky is just gray; you Chinese can’t even breathe; and Chinese eat dogs.’ These were just thrown to your face.” “我就往电梯里走，然后就这些你们北京天都是灰的，你们中国人都不能呼吸，你们都吃狗肉，这些东西都扔到你脸上。”

“honestly, if Americans look down on us, then I’d rather not be here anyway!” “我说实话，如果你们美国人这么看不起我，我还不稀罕待呢！”

“I can’t fight [racism], but at least I can run.” “我打不过，我还跑不过吗？”

p.39

“but even if we [international students] do speak up, school wouldn’t care because we don’t have a say.” “我们就算说什么，也没有人听”

“the school has done what it could do, Then, what can I do here?” “学校已经做了它们能做了的，我也不指望更多”

“They’ve really been through the darkness during that time, so I can totally understand why some of them would feel this way. I didn’t experience or even seen any of those; it is natural that we may hold very different views on [politics].” “他们是真的经历过黑暗的时刻的，所以我其实能理解为什么有些人会有这些想法，因为我没有经历过。很正常，我们想法是非常不同的。”

p.40

“students can report any issues they notice about the school directly to the principal, even complaints toward their instructing teachers.” “学生可以直接向学校，校长投诉，甚至投诉他们的班主任任课老师。”

“Did you see any serious Chinese student doing [activism on campus]?” “正经人，谁搞这事儿？”

p.42

“I don’t wanna be shoved in front of a running train.” “我不想被推进地铁里。”

“Every time I take the subway, I was like, ‘don’t push me, don’t push me! If I stand like this, the worst case was just hitting a pillar, better than being run over by a train.” “我每次坐地铁的时候，我就在想：别推我别推我。所为这样的话，我顶多就撞到柱子吗，不会被车撞死。”

p.43

“Only Chinese would understand this pain of almost getting there but everything vanishing,” “这种努力一辈子顿时什么都没有的痛真的只有中国人懂。”

“No matter how hard you worked for everything in your 20 years of life, a random homeless man can ruin it, like what happened in Chicago.” “不管你人生前二十年多么努力，一个流浪汉就可以毁了，这不是很可怕吗？像芝加哥那事情。”

p.44

“During that time [in my high school], I really believed that American democracy is the way to achieve real prosperity. It is the ultimate form of government.” “我那个时候觉得美式民主是最佳的，是一种最终形态。”

“before [studying abroad] I was very cynical toward China and its politics and thought that North America, Canada or the US, probably would a better place, with its democratic elections and multi-party systems.” “之前我对中国政府是非常批判的，我觉得西方北美的才是好地方，有民主的选举和多党制。”

“The pedagogy was depository, and the content was superficial. So I was having a rebellious mind” “教育方式我觉得就是填鸭然后内容也非常表面，我当时就有点叛逆，你不告诉我什么我就偏向学什么。”

p.49

“all these liberal terms [that] I graduated get myself use to.” After four years in this liberal stronghold, he confesses, “I now become more accepting of [liberal terminologies].” “这些左派的东西我也慢慢习惯了，而且我也不反感了，有时候自己也会用。”

“I didn’t thought of it then” “我那个时候没想过。”

"I only feel like it now that was definitely racist." "我现在才觉得是racist的。"

"It sounded innocent then, but I was like, do you mean my English is supposed to be subpar? "那个时候觉得没什么，但是现在一想，不就是说你觉得我英语就应该差吗？"

p.51

"unwilling to do critical thinking because college education does not teach them this." "他们不愿意做critical thinking因为他们的教育没有给他们这个条件。"

p.52

"Come on! Don't Let Me Talk! Don't Let Tens of Millions of Shanghainese Talk! Don't Let 1.4 Billion Chinese Talk! "来呀，别让我说话，别让几千万上海人说话，别让14亿中国人说话！"

p.53

The nation 'gives birth' to you and 'raises' you; it is like your parents. How could you not love your parents? Even though your parents could wrong you or harm you, you can't reject the fact that they're your parents. I don't know why China feels like equivalent to the parents, but it just does. "国家生你养你，就好像你的父母一样。你怎么能不爱你的父母呢？就算你的父母做错了伤害到你了，你也不能否认这个事实。我不知道为什么中国就给我一种父母的感觉，我说不清，但就是。"

Just by being a good son and friendly to ones brothers and sisters you can have an effect on government (Analects 2:21) 惟孝，友于兄弟，施于有政。是亦为政， 奚其为为政

The root of the kingdom is in the State. The root of the State is in the family. The root of the family is in the person of its head (Mencius 4A5). 天下之本在国，国之本在家，家之本在身。

Xiao commences with the service of parents; it proceeds to the service of the ruler; it is completed by the establishment of character (The *Classic of Filiality* 1:6) 夫孝，始於事親，中於事君，終於立身。

p.55

“really had a distaste for these traditional thinkings, believing that they are nothing but tools used for ideological manipulation and control—the basis of Chinese patriarchy and monarchy.” “真的不懂这些传统文化，这就是封建父权的糟粕和控制手段。”

“became familiar with Western canon of political science, Enlightenment thought more specifically, in Government class or History class.” “我对西方的东西更加了解了，特别是我上很多社科课让我对西方启蒙运动的政治思想很多接触。”

p.56

“I, too, was wondering if I become more patriotic to China after I left it. Maybe so, but I have known more dark sides of China than before. I read those banned books and documentaries, and even talked to some ‘separatists.’ Seriously, I do empathize with their cause and experience. But am I not patriotic anymore? No, because I now know more about my country, its glory as well as its illness. I now can see the breadth and depth of it, and this only made me feel more attached to it.” “有时候我也在想，我是不是也是出国之后更加爱国了呢？有可能吧，但是我也看了很多中国的阴暗面啊，我对了禁书，看了一些国内不能看的纪录片，甚至和一个疆独港独的人聊过。讲真的，我有时候我都很理解他们。但是我还是爱国的，因为我感觉我更了解这个国家了，他好的和他不好的。我感觉我站的更远了，所以看到更多了，这种感觉是很有触动的。”

p. 57

“I was livid seeing the news when the COVID broke out and the government was lacking in so many aspects. I felt like there is place for me to contribute.” “当我看到疫情爆发的时候，政府那种不作为的时候，我真的非常愤怒。我觉得我有一种天然的义务去。”

p.59

“You are going to ‘run (running away from China),’ aren’t you?” “你要润吧？”

“Yeah, you are not wrong. I am not against coming back to China when [the pandemic] pan out,” she followed, “but I really feel like Chinese patriotism is like a romantic relationship, which would worn out if one keeps hurting the other.” “你说的不错。疫情不结束我肯定不回的。但是我觉得爱国就和感情一样：如果有一方不行，就是会累的。”

Appendix E: Methodology

Audit Trail

Audit trail has been used multiple times during the data collection as well as the analysis process to ensure the accuracy of my transcription, elicit updated opinions, and encourage reflexive reflexive criticality of the participants (Merriam, 2009). All participants have received their quotes that would be cited in this dissertation, and I have secured confirmation from eight of them.

Of all the interviewees, four of them—San Qi, Si Hui, Ri He, and Kuo Yi—have offered their constructive feedback on their own interviews. After the first round the interviews, they reviewed and analyzed their statements and/or arguments, and provided revisions either through direct messages or brief exchanges online. For example, San Qi's philological analysis of the word *tongbao* and *junfu*, Ri He's reference to "categorical perception" in explanation of her own racial awakening, and Si Hui's political dilemma are all generous offering from these interviewees' post-interview feedbacks.

For the coherence and flows of the dissertation as well as my constructivist commitment, I have not make clear distinction between the data garnered from the first, formal interviews and those from the audit trail. These data, however their sources, all constitute empirical evidence and theoretical discussion pertaining to this research.

Fieldwork and the Field

Field in this dissertation's ethnographic method refers to the space, both physical and virtual, where I interacted with the participants, in the forms of interviews and/or observations (Emerson et al., 2011). For this dissertation, I have newly conducted fieldwork in space such as cafes in Oxford, restaurants in Manhattan, a private car own by an interviewee, subways stations in New York, etc.

Except for the case of the private car, all space are public, easily accessible venues where my interviews did not interrupt other personnel or require their consent. For the exchange done in the private car, this interview is concerned with Guang Da, whose informed consent was granted. Additionally, during that exchange, there was no uninformed individual involved.

For the secondary fieldnotes that I have used, which was produced before 2022, such as the exchanges with Yuan Hang and Mu Ming, I have conducted them in public space as well. The conversation between Yuan Hang and I in 2017, though involving multiple students, was taking place in a very noisy hotpot restaurants, and others possibly involved were no longer identifiable due to discontinuation of contacts. The conversation with Mu Ming, however, was private where the surrounding then was free of human presence.

Interview and Analysis

In this dissertation, I do not intend to comprehensively list my interview questions, for the questions being asked vary radically depending on the interviewees and the directions our conversations led, and sometimes data emerged before and/or after the interviews. As in the example of Yuan Hang, who spoke of something crucial regarding his reflection on patriotism, I record and use this kind of interview data after obtaining consent from the interviewees.

For the analytical process of data, I did not do so with any aid of qualitative research software. Instead, I read the transcripts multiple times and highlight the moments, words, interactions, which I find important or relevant. The reason for this meticulous, old-fashioned way of thematic coding is because of this dissertation's emphasis on affectivity and subjective embodiment. As an inherently reflexive and subjective kind of inquiry, ethnographic fieldwork and its analysis hard ever rely on coding softwares that only offer mechanical, lexicon-based coding, but demands researchers' measured discussion of the field experience (Merriam, 2009). The affective, bodily responses elude verbal expressions, and thus demand iterative, reflexive analysis of the researchers themselves who can engage with their own affects.

For instance, in coding the affective memory of students in China, I listened through the interviews and open coded all the instances in which my affective responses were drawn by my interviewees. And the I undertook focused coding, zooming onto these resonating moments and unpacking their cultural meanings. In short, the coding in this dissertation, grounded in the researcher's subjective perceptions, follow a different methodological practice commonly used in critical, feminist studies (hooks, 1994).

Appendix F: Confucian Texts

This dissertation adduces texts from multiple Confucian classics, including the *Analects (lunyu),* the *Classic of Filial Piety (xiaojing),* the *Mencius (mengzi),* and the *Xunzi*, in support of the arguments in Chapter 4. In conducting this particular section of research, I engage with scholarship in both Anglophone (Radice, 2017; Bell, 2014) and Sinophone academia (Wang, 2018; Lu, 2019), as well as the primary source written in classical Chinese.

By doing so, I attempt to sincerely draw from the Confucian school of political philosophy, instead of using it as a decolonizing token, to illuminate the complexity of Chinese patriotism. It is my belief that meaningful critical studies need not solely rely on Western theorists but can learn significant from indigenous wisdom (Ping, 2022). In order to fully realize this anti-colonizing potential (Tuck &Yang, 2018), I have attached the original texts in Chinese of the classical texts I took liberty translating.

Here, I briefly introduce the Confucian classics I referenced. The first is the *Analects*, which presents a diversity of dialogues and stories of the Master himself and his disciples. As the cardinal Confucian text, the *Analects* is argued to be the most reliable representation of Confucius's ideas and teachings, and thus holds paramount significance in Chinese confucianism (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2020). The *Analects* contains 20 chapters, discussing topics from social and political philosophy, education, and to cosmology. I draw heavily from Chapter 2 Wei Zheng "Exercising Government" in which Confucius and his students discuss the nature of good government.

Second, the *Classic of Filial Piety*, though its author is unknown, records the conversation between Confucius and his disciple Zengzi. It argues for the connection between filial piety and political loyalty. Emperor Xuanzong of Tang annotated on this volume. Scholars have argued that this royal commentary signifies the ruler's intention to challenge the domestic reading of filial piety confined to individual families and highlight its political meaning of loyalty (Chen, 2005). Third, the *Mencius* is regarded as one of the two most representative Confucian classics, after the *Analects*. It showcases a collection of dialogues and anecdotes of Mencius, the renowned Confucian philosopher, whom revered as the "second Sage" only after Confucius himself. In it, the assertion that "human nature is good [*ren zhi chu xing ben shan*] was famously argued by Mencius.

Finally, the *Xunzi* came after the *Mencius* and rejects the "good-human-nature" theory. It proposes *Dao*, the Way, a constant principle of the universe which human can only obey. Instead of the moral nature of the external world, Xunzi argues that people should pay more attention to the social realm, such as education which can cultivate good behaviors.

Appendix G: Additional Interviewees' Accounts

In addition to history, literature in Chinese education—with the canonical poems and essays—engages with students' geographical imagination and thus generates a geospatial imagined community of China. The importance of literary canons in national-building curricula lies at their unique power to disseminate "dominant aesthetic, ethical or cognitive images, central to the society," reproduce "its leading ideologies, norms, conventions, values," and create "identificational patterns and imaginary cultural totalities, such as a 'nation'" (Juvan, 2004, p. 114). In presenting national literary canon to students, literature education forges common cultural and linguistic identities and hence patriotic national belonging (Heede et al., 2012; Haltof, 2007; Yiannakis, 2014). In the context of Chinese literature education, such culturolinguistic cohesion is achieved through the geographical references ubiquitous in Chinese literature classics selected in textbooks.

During interviews, many students had no problem naming a few classic literature learned in schools in China, and the range and diversity of their picks is prodigious: from The *Book of Songs* (c. 15th to 6th century B.C.E.) and The Music-Bureau Folk-Songs (2nd to 1st century B.C.E.), to T'ang Dynasty's poems (c. 700 to 900), Song Dynasty's lyrics (c. 1000 to 1225), and modern novels and essays (1912-). However, among these canonical Chinese literature, those depicting landscape and geography often rise to the top of students' preference. One interviewee, Guo Liang, adores a short essay Duck's Eggs of Dragon Boat Festival, a contemporary classic which details the customs of the Dragon Boat Festival in Gaoyou, a small town in Yangtze River Delta. "It is actually a part of China I don't know much about, but it is interesting that I could learn more about it and feel the beauty of it through the words." said Guo Liang a Cantonese girl who never travel to this town of Gaoyou thousand miles away from her hometown. In spite of this, she recalled graphically the salty duck eggs and the name of an obscured town in China. Incorporated into Chinese elementary school's text books, Gaoyou becomes well-known for many Chinese students like Guo Liang.

The technical details of how a festival in a distant town may fade away, but what remains is existence of such places and the stories attached to these otherwise obscured locales; piece by piece they constitute the territory of China. The cultural significance of these places is that they mobilize student readers' spatial imagination in conceiving a common territorial identity (Watts, 1992). From Northwest dessert to Southwest wetland, from Northeast plain to Southeast forest, Chinese poetry in this way functions as a map—representation of objective reality (Anderson, 2006, p. 177) with which students can see a vast Chinese geography of 960 million square kilometer (Chinese sovereign territory) extending beyond their everyday city landscape, thereby imaging a greater territorial community of China.