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Empires of Knowledge: Chinese Students' higher education experience at X University, UK

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Abstract

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Jiangnan Li

I discuss the difficulties Chinese international students (CIS) met in their UK higher education and how far their understanding of knowledge has been transformed by such experience from field research conducted at X University, UK, from 2017 to 2020. First, I flesh out the theoretical framework for the thesis: a view of power and knowledge influenced by Foucault and the interpretation of Chinese and western cultures in Sino-Hellenic studies. Second, I review the anthropological work on education, knowledge, and CIS to situate the basis and goals of the thesis. Third, I explore how legacies of thought in ancient and modern China and the transformation of higher education in the UK have influenced CIS' overseas study. Fourth, I explore CIS' life and social networking at X University, UK. Fifth, I explore CIS' classroom learning experiences. I argue that students' different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion in classroom learning represent a collision between two ways of knowing: the traditional Chinese "sage style" and the Western "post-modern critical style". Sixth, I explore research CIS' study experience and demonstrate that the British and Chinese ways of PhD training suit students based on the specific experience of individuals. CIS still favour the "master's family" tradition in Chinese research degree training after they studied in the UK.

Seventh, I explore CIS' academic writing practice in the UK. I illustrate that the difficulties they experience in UK academic writing could be explained by the different patterns of thought and ways of communication or persuasion in the two cultures. I also present the third way of knowing which CIS are exposed: the "objectivistic" Western natural science style. I conclude that though modern Western natural science's way of knowing is the dominant knowledge style today in China and the UK, it also has its limitations. A hegemonic "empire of knowledge" deserves to be reflected on, criticised, and replaced by "exchanges and mutual learning" to inject fresh impetus into the development of human knowledge.

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Declaration

The contents of this thesis are produced solely for the qualification of the Doctor of Philosophy at Durham University and consist of the author's original contribution with appropriate recognition of any references being indicated throughout.

Statement of Copyright

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The introductory chapter begins by stating the initial questions, the objectives, and the scope of the research. It then clarifies the conceptual frameworks and puts forward the central and sub-arguments of the thesis. It thirdly discusses the theoretical framework of the study. Finally, it presents arguments, materials, and debates in the following chapters through chapter introductions.

1.1 Research questions, objectives, and scope

There has been an influx of Chinese international students (CIS) into universities in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) each year since the 2000s. Agreeing with Choudaha (2017), the motive of international students who were enrolled in institutions in the early 2000s was a search of research excellence. Later, as the global financial recession deepened, more and more universities in the OECD countries started aggressively expanding international student enrolment, and an increasing expectation of career success and employability among international students arose. CIS are an essential group among them and cannot be neglected. Based on this situation, studies of CIS and their overseas life and study increased heavily in academic disciplines such as education (Watkin and Biggs 1996), anthropology (Fong 2004, 2011), sociology, language studies and psychology (as summarised in Henze and Zhu 2012). Their mutual focus lies firstly in themes of student mobility, globalisation and marketisation of higher education, for example, Xu (2020). A second theme has been intercultural adaptation, racial minorities, and the decolonisation of higher education, for example, Wang (2010) and Moosavi (2020, 2021). A third theme has been the academic teaching and learning of CIS, for example, studies by Turner (2006) and Gu (2006, 2008).

The study by Vanessa Fong (2004) looked at the single-child generation under the one-child policy in China. She also continued looking at this generation's global move as transnational Chinese students when they grew up (Fong 2011). Studies such as Fong's have provided rich explanations of CIS' international move, their motives for studying abroad and the general

difficulties they met overseas. These are the foundations on which this research is built. Decolonisation of higher education is another important theme of CIS' research, especially in the agenda of internationalisation of UK higher education since the 2010s (Ryan 2011). My study is situated in this context. Watkin and Biggs' (1996) work, *the Chinese Learner,* examined CIS' academic learning practice and tried to understand this group of international students from the perspective of intercultural education. Much similar research came out from the disciplinary area of education. However, very few anthropological studies look at CIS' learning practices. I considered anthropology could help in understanding CIS' learning practice, their ways of approaching knowledge and how they understand and react to the learning difficulties they face.

Based on the achievements of existing studies and new research issues that have arisen, this research asks two questions: first, what are the difficulties postgraduate CIS meet in their UK higher education and how to understand them? Second, how far has the CIS's understanding of knowledge transformed by such experience? To explore the challenges CIS encountered in their UK higher education, part of this research aims to draw the attention of UK universities and university teachers to the CIS group to understand the academic difficulties the CIS face and what support they can offer to the group of students. In addition to this practical need, another objective of this research is to look at collisions and tensions between various ways of approaching knowledge and examine the construction and flow of knowledge in the context of knowledge globalisation through the exploration of "the degree of the transformation of knowledge understanding of CIS by their cross-cultural study experience in the UK". This exploration aims to promote the mutual understanding of Chinese and British ways of approaching knowledge and build on the transformation of knowledge globally.

To understand the difficulties CIS met in their cross-cultural higher education from China to the UK with a focus on understanding knowledge, the research scope includes students' learning experience in UK higher education, the different educational philosophies of the UK and China learnt by CIS and the different ambient cultures to which CIS are exposed. With

such a focus, the related institutional culture that CIS was exposed to in China and the UK is discussed where relevant. In addition, an explanation of the difference between the UK and China's degree design is needed to understand CIS' expectations toward taught Master's programs and research degrees. The different ambient cultures, including ways in which the Chinese cultural values of *Ren Qing* (人情, exchangeable resources) and *Guan Xi* (关系, functional relationships between people) influence students' social life, are included to help understand the group of CIS in the field site (see details in *chapter 4*, section 4.2).

1.2 Conceptual framework and arguments of the thesis

"Knowledge" can be defined as the information or awareness gained through experience or education. In this context, I use "knowledge" to describe the information and awareness students gain through cultural experience and university education, which includes various patterns/legacies of thought and different ways of knowing. "Patterns of thought" in this context means the cultural habit of perspectives, methods and ways things are usually viewed, which have long existing historical and socio-political backgrounds. "Ways of knowing" in this context means the styles of obtaining and processing knowledge students obtained from higher education. I refer to the Chinese and European patterns of thought and ways of knowing as

"Empires of knowledge". "West" in this context means nations and states where civilisation is based on the Western culture --- rooted in the ancient Greco-Roman world.

The first central argument of the thesis is that the shared difficulties CIS met in their UK higher education are situated in classroom learning, research degree training and academic writing. In addition, the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS encountered in their UK higher education are caused by: 1) conflicts and tensions among the three "ways of knowing" in Chinese and British education to which CIS are exposed; 2) different "patterns of thought" in the Chinese and British cultures in which CIS are situated; 3) students' individualised and diversified backgrounds and characters, cognitive preferences,

critical reflection on themselves, access to learning support, degree goals, accessible ways of training and supervisory styles, discipline backgrounds, etc.; 4) the social-political and institutional forces shaping UK and Chinese academia and higher education.

I argue that there are three ways of knowing to which CIS are exposed in their higher education. They are 1) "the traditional sage way of knowing from China", which represents the respect of sage's word and the advocacy of erudition, careful thinking, and discernment; 2) "the Enlightenment's Western natural science way of knowing", which pursues knowledge certainty and advocates the objectivity of thought and understands the world by pure logic and reason; and, 3) "the Western postmodern critical way of knowing", which holds a critical attitude and a transformation of epistemology from absolute knowledge to the exploration of provisional expertise through practice.

I argue that different features of "patterns of thought" in the Chinese and British cultures where CIS are situated partly explain their learning challenges. For example, I believe "the way of criticising and displaying skills through public debate between leaders of sects in Ancient Greece" is a European cultural legacy which might have influenced the post-modern critical style of communication and persuasion in a UK classroom. On the contrary, I regard "the explication of the authoritative canon in the monarchical tradition in China" (Tanner 2009) as an influential cultural reason for communication and knowledge delivery in a Chinese classroom. In addition, the emphasis on "*Ren-Qing* (人情, exchangeable resources) and *Guan Xi* (关系, functional relationships between people)" in CIS' social network building and the "master's family" tradition in Chinese supervisory relations based on traditional apprenticeships are opposed to the focus on "independence" in daily social life and the way PhDs are trained in the UK. These also show how different patterns of thought affected CIS' life and learning practices in UK higher education.

The second central argument of the thesis is that CIS favour or suit particular forms of classroom conduct, ways of degree training and academic writing culture in China and the UK based on their diversified individual needs and preference. In addition, while CIS gained

an opportunity to broaden their cognitive ability by experiencing higher education in the UK, "the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and master's family," which still appear in the local way of approaching learning in China, continue to be valued very much by the CIS even with their cross-cultural vision. It demonstrates that both systems can give CIS room for growth, each with its advantages. In addition, communication and mutual learning rather than adherence to a single "empire of knowledge" helps to widen CIS' understanding of knowledge. It further implies that a typical way of approaching knowledge might not be universally true; it is only valid relative to different ways of looking at the world and understanding knowledge. The dominance of a particular way of knowing in education and a pattern of thought in culture is because it is more effective at that specific time and region. Exploring how CIS' understanding of knowledge is transferred would therefore show how various ways of approaching knowledge interact with each other and the potential for the future transformation of knowledge.

1.3 Theoretical framework

The theories that help the analysis in this research are the debates and discussions on cultural and philosophical thoughts from Sino-Hellenic studies and Foucault's view on knowledge and power. Tanner's (2009) review of scholars' analysis of the differences between ancient Greece and early China in the field of science, medicine, and philosophy within the SinoHellenic studies offered help in analysing the different characters of patterns of thought and ways of knowing in the UK and China's higher education. Foucault's theory of knowledge/power helps to explain conflicts and tensions among various ways of knowing to which CIS are exposed in their overseas education. It also helps explain why knowledge is not universally true and how it is made persuasive by those in power.

1.3.1 Patterns of thoughts and ways of knowing: culture, history, and philosophy in Sino-Hellenic studies

Tanner's (2009) review article on ancient Greece and early China introduced me to significant contributions and debates within the Sino-Hellenic studies. His review of the ideas given in

science, medicine, and philosophy offered help in analysing the different characteristics of patterns of thought and ways of knowing in the UK and China's higher education to which CIS are exposed.

According to Tanner's review of Lloyd's research on the development of science in ancient Greece and China, Lloyd first compared the different contexts for learning and persuasion (Tanner 2009, 91), representing the different characters of the dominant communication styles amongst Greek and Chinese intellectuals. Greek students were free to follow more than one teacher. In China, learning takes place in a *Jia* (家, family) or (intellectual) lineage, which demands the same kind of loyalty as a natural family line (Tanner 2009, 91). In addition, in Greece, there were fierce public debates between leaders of "sects", whereas, in China, there was mere "explication of the authoritative canon" (Tanner 2009, 91). Lloyd further proposed that this implies there were different contexts and styles of communication between the two cultures, linking to the social and political structure of the two types of society (Tanner 2009, 94).

Lloyd's theory helps us understand the two types of classroom teaching to which CIS are exposed in *chapter 6* and the features of traditional Chinese supervisory in *chapter 7*.

Lloyd then compared the actual content and conceptual basis of Greek and Chinese science and philosophy (Tanner 2009, 92). He identified two different thinking types: causal thought from ancient Greece, which shifted from mythos to logos and required explanation, and correlative thought from China focuses on correlation or resonances and is self-evident (Tanner 2009, 92). Lloyd further explained that, in China, settlement by discussion or arbitration was preferred to litigation. In addition, the Yin-yang synthesis unified China's natural and social order, emphasising balance. This helps explain CIS' academic writing practice in *chapter 8*.

Unlike Lloyd, whose comparisons are generally static and correlate characteristics of Greek and Chinese science with institutional and social structure features in specific periods, the Japanese scholar Kuriyama offered a very different comparison style. Kuriyama is concerned

with cultural history and explored it through different perceptions and embodiment experiences in Eastern and Western medical culture. In particular, Kuriyama compared how Greeks and Chinese interpreted the relation of pulse, muscles, etc., to outward symptoms of different qualities. Kuriyama stated that geometric analysis, such as size, speed, and rhythm is popular in Western cultures. In Eastern cultures like China, the preferred analysis style is the opposition between rough and slippery (Tanner 2009, 93). These perceptions and embodied experiences in two medical cultures could explain the dominant ways of knowing in China and the UK exposure to CIS, which will be introduced in *Chapters 6,7* and *8*. How they might explain CIS' challenges in academic writing will be considered in *chapter 8*.

Tanner also reviewed different ideas in philosophy in ancient China and Greece and advocated the work of Francois Julien. The latter argued that knowledge of Greek and Chinese philosophy allows people to stand outside both (Tanner 2009, 97). He also mentioned that Greek and ancient Chinese philosophy have different communication styles, and debate is based on different battle types. Greek battles were head-on confrontations in real life, while Chinese battles strategists preferred diversions and circuitous manoeuvres. Similarly, Chinese arts and poetry evoke mood and landscapes (Tanner 2009, 98). Julien's theory is used in *chapter 8* to explain the academic writing habits of CIS.

To sum up, the points raised above on contributions and debates in Sino-Hellenic studies helped the author's analysis of the difficulties CIS met in their UK higher education in the ethnographic *chapters 6, 7* and *8*, in students' classroom learning, supervisory experience and academic writing.

1.3.2 Knowledge and power: conflicts and tensions among various "ways of knowing"

Foucault divided power into two different kinds: repressive power and normalising power. According to Foucault, the most popular style of power in modern society is normalising power, usually presented less visibly. It makes us do what we must while seeing it as normal. This style of normalising power appears everywhere: family, school, university, hospital,

advertisements on the internet, etc. (Foucault 1980). The mode of knowledge/discourse favoured by the more "powerful" comes to dominate and be accepted as orthodoxy. It is just that the power is fluid; in all periods, the more powerful occupy the centre, and the less powerful occupy the edge. Part of anthropology's job is to look at other ways of knowing and assess their value. Shifts in the balance of power can bring alternative ways of knowing to prominence.

In this research, I use Foucault's (1980) theory of knowledge and power to explain why the typical way of knowing became the dominant paradigm in specific periods and regions and how this normalised power relates to CIS' cross-cultural learning difficulties. Then, I will show the interplay of power and knowledge among the three ways of knowing to which CIS are exposed during their transcultural higher education experience.

To explain why the typical way of knowledge became orthodoxy in specific regions and periods, I first explain how the traditional sage way of knowing, favoured by the central empire, became dominant in imperial China and how it continues its impact today on CIS' way of knowing in education. Secondly, I present how the normalisation of modern Western natural science --- the dominant way of knowing since the seventeenth century --- influenced the building of knowledge in contemporary higher education in both China (during the last 100 years) and the UK through CIS' cross-cultural learning experience. Thirdly, how the post-modern critical way of knowing advocated by Foucault and the new normalisation of a standard of "classroom teaching" in the UK influenced CIS' cross-cultural higher education experiences.

In addition to explaining three ways of knowing to which CIS are exposed and how they became orthodoxy in particular periods and regions, the interplay of power and knowledge among the three ways of knowing exposed to CIS is explained. As will be shown in the ethnographic chapters, though the traditional sage way of knowing kept an influence on CIS' knowledge acquisition in today's China, the dominant way of knowing to which CIS are exposed in their Chinese/British higher education is still the post-enlightenment Western natural science way of knowing, to which a post-modern critique way of knowing has been

added in the social sciences education in the UK. Using Foucault's theory of power and knowledge, I stated that the discourse of the post-enlightenment Western natural science's way of knowing became powerful because it works, but that is partly because people have decided that the kind of problem science solves are the most important ones in that period. The dividing line between scientific discourse and all other philosophies of knowledge is that it ascribes "facts" to "the process of historical practice" (Foucault 1969, 250). Scientific knowledge itself is a significant standard of normalisation. It works as a normalising power through university education by training the student into a person who thinks and acts in specific ways --- the objective natural science way of knowing. It shows how a particular kind of truth --- achieved through modern Western natural science --- became universally accepted. It gained hegemony in the world of knowledge and spread its value to non-science disciplines in humanities and social science. Connecting with this research, it explains how CIS struggle between the empires of knowledge of China and the UK in classroom learning, research students' training and academic writing in *chapters 6, 7, and 8.*

1.4 Introduction to chapters

Chapter 2 is a methodology chapter. It first describes the research engagement by justifying why I choose X university in the UK, the postgraduate CIS as my research target, and describing the length, site selection and content of fieldwork. After that, it presents the related methodological and theoretical literature which have inspired and informed the approach taken in the research. The research methods included in this project are participant observation, semi-structured interviews, the focus group method, which I named "informal conversations", and the multi-sited fieldwork method. I managed and analysed fieldwork materials using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA to code and conduct firstround field note analysis. In analysing fieldwork data, as recommended by James (James 1984, 189), historically and developmentally related issues are considered in writing and presented in *chapter 4*, preceding the formal ethnographic descriptions. In addition, I used a comparative method in interpretation. Apart from these, I combined explanation and

interpretation methods in analysing and presenting my fieldwork findings. The chapter ends by discussing ethical issues and reflections on this research.

Chapter 3 reviews key literature on related themes and topics. The starting section reviews the development of research on CIS by examining the critical literature on two closely related themes: intercultural adaption and teaching and learning. Among these the perspective that sees overseas study experience as a transitional experience that contributes to mutual learning, understanding of knowledge and personal growth is particularly inspiring. Wang's (2010) and Henze and Zhu's (2012a) studies take this kind of learning and growth perspective. The first chapter of "Research as development" (Sariola and Simpson 2019, 14) discusses the global direction of knowledge by examining the knowledge communication between Sri Lanka and Western European countries. It argued that knowledge does not only flow in one global direction from north to south but that there is mutual communication. Inspired by these studies while I researched the difficulties that CIS met at X university, I regard the overseas learning of the CIS as a transitional experience which might be built on the students' understanding of knowledge.

To understand the transitional experience of the CIS, studies such as Gu and Maley (2008), Bovill (2015), Turner (2006), Wang (2010) and Ryan (2011) are particularly inspiring. These studies disagree with attempts to explain all difficulties encountered by CIS as based on cultural differences. They regard the social, educational, and psychologically constructed causes, the changing national and international contexts and the individual student's agency are all factors that need to be considered. These aspects are considered in analysing and presenting the results of this study. In reviewing existing studies on the learning and teaching of CIS, the research is mainly in dialogue with Turner (2006), Watkin and Biggs (1996) and Moosavi (2021). I agree with Turner that Confucius's views about learning remain influential within contemporary pedagogy (Turner 2006, 31); however, I disagree with his argument that in China today, learning tends to focus on elitist and male-gendered students. As will be shown in *chapters 4* and *7* of this thesis, higher education in China has changed from elitist education to popular education since the 1990s. In addition, male-gendered students are no

longer the focus, which can be shown in the high proportion of female-gendered students among the CIS in the UK. I agree with Moosavi's arguments that East Asian students do use critical thinking in learning and are unfairly depicted as lacking necessary thinking skills, committing plagiarism etc., and disagree with Watkin and Biggs' claim that CIS' learning style is merely surface learning.

The second and third section review how anthropology discusses cross-cultural higher education and knowledge. Geerlings and Lundberg's (2020) work on education and the universal standard of knowledge is most closely related to my research. Their paper explores how knowledge is reproduced as "universal" in contemporary higher education and how this claim of universality affects knowledge application through a case study of clinical psychology mainly in Singapore, but also Australia, and the Netherlands (Geerlings and Lundberg 2020, 27). Geerlings and Lundberg noted science's dominant discourse, and the relationship between knowing and knowledge transfer to modernity. Still, they did not present the local way of knowing in Singapore, the alternative discourses to science. I, therefore, aim to explore further how the discourse of science influenced academic research and learning in China and the knowledge communication/dialogues between China and the UK, and whether there are alternative ways of knowing and patterns of thought that should be given attention. Also, as stated at the end of Geerlings and Lundberg's paper, their work opened up new avenues of anthropological research focusing on academic disciplines and curricula. My research, which selected X University students in three academic departments in science and non-science, makes up for this gap.

Chapter 4 starts by describing the legacies of thought from ancient Chinese higher education and philosophy, reviewing the different intellectual currents that have existed, including the so-called hundred schools of thought (Bai-Jia-Zheng-Ming 百家争鸣) and the development of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism during imperial China. Secondly, it examines the changing context in society and education in modern China, along with a description of the changing role of the CIS. The New Cultural Movement and the socialist reform provide the main social contexts. It thirdly provides a short history of higher education in the UK with the

more recent shifts as a focus. It shows how the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970s shapes, the way PhDs are supervised in the UK is highlighted.

The chapter contributes to later ethnographic chapters by arguing that: firstly, the spirit of Sage education in ancient Chinese philosophy appears in today's education in China by including the canons of Saints (with high morals and profound Confucian attainments) in the textbook of schoolchildren, which contributes to my interpretation of the CIS' academic writing in *chapter 8*. Secondly, the methodology of Chinese philosophy still influences the Chinese literature and persuasion style, which is "rich in implication and short in the written text". This explains the initial academic writing habits of the CIS in *chapter 8*, which are different from the Western ones of "precise reasoning and detailed argumentation". Thirdly, part of the ancient teaching method is inherited --- "the spirit of hard-working", "training students according to their aptitudes", and "gaining new insights through reviewing old materials", which will be shown in the discussion of CIS' practical experience in *chapter 6*. Fourthly, the hierarchical aspect has weakened in the teacher-student relationship, but the spiritual inheritance has been retained with new combinations and transformations. A detailed discussion of the inheritance and new combinations of the student-supervisor relationship will be presented and discussed in *chapter 7*. Finally, the *Ke-Ju* Examinations and *Ba-Gu* writing style affect contemporary CIS' cross-cultural writing practices. This will be shown in *chapter 8*.

In addition, the historical and political context for the changing role of the CIS in modern history and the development of modern Chinese education help the discussion in later ethnographic chapters. CIS have been essential in translating Western education/knowledge into economic and social benefits in China for an extended period. They also changed their role after the 1980s, turning to the pursuit of individual goals, and reached their historical peak in number in the 2020s. This helps the reader target the CIS group characteristics in this research. In addition, the reform of literature from the classical to a vernacular style in the early twentieth-century New Culture Movement influenced the CIS' literature writing and academic writing practice in social science and humanities in subsequent decades, which will

be discussed in *chapter 8*. Moreover, a general acknowledgement of the past historical period of "a complete inheritance of the Soviet education system" helps understand this generation of CIS' education experience in pre-university education when it started in the later 1990s. Finally, the review of the history of the Cultural Revolution can reveal the stagnation of modern higher education from the 1960s to1970s, affecting the careers of many who are now senior academics. It directly interfered with the development of social science education and related research in China, shaping the CIS' learning experience today. The review of a brief history of higher education in the UK provides a context for doing a research degree in UK higher education today. It contributes to understanding CIS' learning experience in their research degree programs in *chapter 7*, their various supervisory relationships with their supervisors presented in *chapter 7*, and their academic writing practice in *chapter 8*. *Chapter 5* describes the lives and challenges of the CIS I studied at X University. It begins with a section explaining the research site, X University. Section two continues with a discussion of CIS' life at X University. How CIS cope with studying at X University by building various networks and interacting with different student groups and local businesses is described. After that, in the third section, how CIS interact with Chinese students from other parts of China when they are in the UK is highlighted. This diversity of student composition is appreciated and helps explain the various difficulties the CIS met in their UK study in later chapters. The multiple challenges and pressure faced by the CIS are discussed. Overall, the chapter brings readers into my field to know the site and the Chinese students in this research and to understand their challenges and how they cope with them before entering their diversified learning stories.

Chapter 6 introduces the Chinese postgraduate taught (PGT) students' diversified classroom learning experience at X University based on the different non-science subject areas they are studying. Students' backgrounds in classroom teaching in China are explained to provide a better understanding of their cross-cultural education experience. Based on ethnographic

stories and interviews, this chapter first summarises the expectations of CIS for "efficiency in class", "systematic knowledge acquisition", and the transmission of "authoritative and deterministic knowledge". It also shows how these students are influenced by the "traditional sage way of knowing" in China. Chinese students are unfamiliar with the principle of "taking the classroom as a dynamic thinking process based on dialogue and discussion and participation" in a UK classroom. Secondly, it summarises the different acceptance and adaptation levels of different individual students to the new way of knowing due to their individual differences in personality and cognition after receiving a UK higher education. It also indicates that Chinese students' preference for knowing and understanding knowledge varies from one individual to another.

Thirdly, the chapter argues that the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS found in the UK classroom represent a collision between two ways of knowing adopted by Chinese students: 1) the traditional sage way of knowing, which respects the Chinese "Sage's Word" and advocates "erudition, careful thinking, and discernment" and 2) the Western postmodern critical way of knowing, which includes a critical attitude toward previous writers and a transformation of epistemology from the search for absolute knowledge to exploring provisional knowledge through practice. Fourthly, the chapter defines the distinct characteristics of patterns of thought in China and the UK. It then contributes to the thesis's first central argument by showing how different patterns of thought culturally impacted the difficulties CIS perceived in their UK classroom. In the end, the chapter contributes to part of the first central argument of the thesis, that is, the students' agency in learning, by providing evidence of students' diversified learning practices in the classroom. It shows how students' backgrounds, characters, cognitive abilities, access to learning supports and aim of studying in the UK resulted in the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS encountered in their UK higher education.

Chapter 7 is organised by discussing how "differences in education systems, training plans and methods and thoughts in the UK and China" had challenged the CIS' understanding of

knowledge through the description and interpretation of several ethnographic stories provided by doctoral students doing science and social science degree programs in the UK and China. While regarding the supervisory relationship as an essential component throughout CIS' PhD study, *chapter 7* also looks primarily at the diverse and individualised Chinese research students' supervisory experience in various disciplines. Selections from their stories and talks are presented and interpreted, followed by discussions towards their cross-cultural reflections on supervisory relations. Correspondingly, the different ways PhDs are supervised in China and the UK are also discussed in this section. The purpose of discussing different supervisory styles is also to understand the learning challenges faced by Chinese research students.

The chapter defines and explains "the post-enlightenment Western science way of knowing" (out of the three ways of knowing argued for in the thesis). Secondly, it concluded that CIS' difficulties in UK research degree programs are diverse and highly individualised. The way PhDs are trained and the supervisory styles exposed to Chinese students are not homogeneous in China and the UK. In addition, the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK study vary by field of discipline. CIS doing non-science research degrees face more challenges caused by the different ways PhD are trained in China and the UK than those doing research degrees in science. Thirdly, the confused understanding and the unequal expectations of Chinese students towards degree design in the UK and their various access to academic resources in social science contribute to my argument that in understanding the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK education, despite the tensions and conflicts of the three ways of knowing in education, the cultural reasons caused by various patterns of thoughts, and other diversified individualised reasons which were argued in *chapter 6*, the social-political and institutional reasons also need to be considered. Fourthly, the chapter answers the second research question of the thesis, "how far has CIS' understanding of knowledge been transformed after their experience of studying in the UK" by arguing that the different CIS suit various ways of training based on their individualised needs and preferences. Both research degree training styles in the UK or China can give students room for growth with their respective advantages.

However, the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and master-family, which still appear in the contemporary Chinese supervisory style, are valued very much by CIS even after their overseas study experience. Features of student apprenticeship and joining to the master's family typical of higher education in China are discussed through interpreting students' cases.

Chapter 8 explores the disorder in CIS' English academic writing experience caused by the new citation and reference system and the new academic writing standards (including structure, cohesion, clear, natural, critical thinking etc.) in the UK universities. It focuses on the experience of CIS who are doing social science and humanities programs. Students' ethnographic stories, analyses, and discussions are organised in two parts: (1) citation, reference system and plagiarism, and (2) various academic writing standards. The chapter argues that, firstly, from selected students' cases, CIS can acknowledge the challenges they met in English academic writing caused by the new citation and reference system and the new academic writing standards (including structure, cohesion, clear, natural, critical thinking etc.). These are shared problems among CIS, at least initially. CIS can understand the differences and connections between English and Chinese academic writing standards. Many can adapt to the new academic writing standard after practice; some even favour the English academic writing standard and find it easier to write in English.

Secondly, the chapter builds on previous research towards CIS' perception of plagiarism, problems in academic writing and critical thinking ability by analysing CIS' academic writing difficulties with contextual, sociocultural and institutional variables. It argues that CIS' negative perceptions of citation, reference and plagiarism and the challenges these present in English academic writing standards reflect three variables or reasons: 1) the different languages, sociocultural communication styles in patterns of thought; 2) the dominated academic writing structures and ways of knowing in social science education in the two countries; 3) the institutional forces towards UK and Chinese academia and higher education.

The chapter contributes to the thesis' central research question and arguments in the following ways. It answers the first research question by arguing that 1) conflict and tensions, and power relations arise between the various ways of knowing in which CIS are educated, 2) different patterns of thought that culturally and historically characterise China and the UK, 3) that social-political and institutional forces delayed the transfer of Western academic principles to China, and 4) the more diversified factors influencing of individual CIS, together explain the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS found in their UK higher education. It answers the second question of the thesis by arguing that: while CIS gained an opportunity to broaden their cognitive skills by experiencing higher education in the UK, the features and advantages of patterns of thought and ways of knowing originating from China and the UK are highlighted by CIS' cross-cultural vision. CIS favour either of the academic writing cultures they are taught based on their individualised experiences. Further, it demonstrated that a typical pattern of thought and way of knowing might not be universally true; it is only valid relative to different ways of looking at the world and understanding knowledge. Respect and understanding rather than stereotypes toward CIS and the academic writing culture they hold should be encouraged to widen the understanding of knowledge universally.

In *chapter 9*, the concluding chapter, I first summarise the contents and arguments in the ethnographic chapters, that is, *chapters 5,6,7* and *8*, and then present the integrated arguments of the thesis in terms of "empires of knowledge". Based on these arguments, I further explain how power transfers made the post-enlightenment objectivistic Western natural science way of knowing the dominant empire that approaches knowledge globally. After that, I state the contributions and values that this thesis makes toward the existing research on the global knowledge flow in the anthropology of education, teaching and learning of international students in the UK, and the decolonisation of UK higher education. In the end, I propose practical policy suggestions for UK universities to address the challenges of a plural and globalised constituency of adult learners to meet the UK universities' internationalisation agendas.

Chapter 2: Methodology

In this chapter, a clear description of the research engagement is first presented. After that, related methodological and theoretical literatures which have inspired and informed the approach taken in the research are expounded in the second and third sections. Finally, ethical issues and reflections on this research are discussed.

2.1 Research engagement

My research mainly explores Chinese students' intellectual learning challenges in UK higher education institutions and how such experiences transform their understanding of what is knowledge. When I selected Chinese postgraduate students at X University, a leading university in the north of England, UK as my focus, I chose a group of students studying at the postgraduate level rather than students at the undergraduate or foundation level for the reason that those full-time postgraduate students from non-EU countries of origin constitute the highest percentage of international students, namely 49% (Study in UK 2022). In addition, most international students from non-EU countries come from China, representing 32% of the total (Study in UK 2022). This situation remains unchanged from 2017, when my research started, to today. In addition to being dominant in size, Chinese students at the postgraduate level of study are primarily mature students who have received academic training in both the UK and China, unlike Chinese student group at undergraduate or foundation levels of study. As a result, students at the postgraduate level of study from China are the best choice to explore how far students' understanding of knowledge has been transformed by the overseas study experience in the UK, the goal of this research.

I chose X University as my leading field site because it is a representative UK university with many international students from China. Chinese students studying at X University were around 10 per cent of the university students when the research started in 2017 and remained this high till today. In addition, because of my familiarity with X university, it was easier for me to build field connections as a researcher using networks created by myself or to whom I was introduced by people around me.

I did a pilot study from February to March 2017, auditing various modules in various departments on campus and talking to Chinese students during class breaks to get an initial impression of my field. The formal fieldwork was carried out from July 2017 to June 2018, with May and June 2018 spent in Beijing, China, carrying out comparative research. The departments of my focus are chosen evenly from the faculty of science, social science and humanities at X University. They are the departments of engineering, the department of anthropology, and the X University language centre. The specific department I chose in each faculty area were those with which I successfully built an official connection and were selected to represent the range of teaching methods in 'hard' science, social science and the humanities. Other than the three departments, I also chose X University business school since the most significant percentage of Chinese postgraduate students in the UK choose to study business school programs, according to the statistics in the UK in the past ten years (Study in UK 2022). They are a group of CIS that cannot be ignored.

The transformation of the knowledge and understanding of the CIS is a "process" leading from existing to new ways of knowing. As the relative speed of change and development in Chinese society, which includes the higher education area, has been extremely fast in the past ten years compared to that in the UK, an additional study of the change and development in higher education in China during the past few years was an essential element of this research. This explains why additional short-term fieldwork was done in China. I selected Beijing as my China field site because it is the pioneering zone of reform and development in Chinese higher education. And B University, N University and M University were selected because of their important position in higher education reform and the possibility of my building a relationship.

During fieldwork, I audited more than 30 taught-master level classes in the anthropology department at X University, X University language centre, and X University business school. I set up more than 15 focus groups with taught and research students in anthropology and other social science disciplines. I interviewed 36 students (in both taught and research programs) and maintained long-term communication with more than 10 of them. The students

I interviewed were mainly from the selected departments where my official connections were built. However, some interviews were also done with students in other disciplinary areas through connections such as focus group organisation, on-campus activity, conference presentations, etc.

2.2 Research methods

Participant observation is often said to be defining method of anthropology. The origins of participant observation are associated with Malinowski. I used this research method in the field by auditing students' classroom learning experiences (as mentioned in the previous paragraph) and participating in observing CIS' daily life at X University both on and off campus. As much of cultural knowledge is tacit and difficult for people to verbalise, understanding by participating and observing is one of the most suitable ways of conducting research.

The interview, including life history interviews, is the second method I used in the research. I agree with Hockey (2002) that one can gain access to certain kinds of social interactions that are not accessible through participant observation through the research method of the interview. I used the method of semi-structured ethnographic interviews widely with students on campus in both countries, with X University as the leading site. Usually, an interview outline was prepared, but the actual conversation was constantly developed naturally without strict rules. My informants, willing to participate in this research, were generally active in talking and expressing themselves. Many were eager to share their life stories, express their ideas about things, and talk about their overseas life and learning difficulties. I usually played the role of a listener and enjoyed this trust. As a result, the interview questions and answers follow naturally.

The focus group method was also used, mainly in the business school's research (combined online ethnography) and the anthropology department at X University. I set up an online WeChat group (a very active social app among Chinese students) with some students I got to know in the classroom- auditing at X University business school. Students in the WeChat

group I set up would occasionally discuss their daily feelings about classes and module leaders. I sometimes asked them questions when I heard something that intrigued me. I did not use the information on WeChat without permission; however, my conversation with students in the WeChat group gradually increased my understanding of this group. In addition, I developed reading groups over two years, one year with Chinese Master's students in the anthropology department and the other year with Chinese PhD students doing social science at X University. The reading group I led in the anthropology department met weekly in the library or our home and lasted for almost two terms. Despite the field data from participant observation of students' learning process in those reading groups, fellow students in the reading groups also occasionally discuss their confusion and poor understanding of UK higher education. The two years of experience organising reading groups as a focus group style enabled interaction, discussion and debates among my research participants and allowed me to understand Chinese students' studying experience in the UK more deeply.

The method I named "informal conversations" is also an essential and helpful field method in this research. Unlike most anthropological studies, the informants in my research consisted of Master's students and PhD researchers in different areas in universities in the UK and China. Many of them had received academic training and are self-reflective. Most of them are themselves also researchers. Usually, they shared with me what they did and what they had experienced that met my topic interest and their reflections and viewpoints toward my research topic. This means that the relationship between my informants and me is one between equals. I learned much that could build on my research. This experience cannot be classified as participant observation or interview, so I named it "informal conversations". It gave me many unclassifiable but essential voices and ideas on my topic.

Finally, the multi-cited fieldwork method is also used to collect data in the field. As this research looks at the transformation of CIS' learning practice in higher education from China to the UK in the background of the globalisation of education, "single-sited research can no longer be easily located," as Marcus pointed out (Marcus 1995, 98). As a result, agreeing with Amit (Amit 2000, 13), I "correspondingly redefined the fields" into the UK site as primary

and the China site as additional, to "explore the multi-sited, transnational circulation of" CIS'
practice of learning.

2.3 Methodology and interpretation

In managing and analysing fieldwork materials, firstly, I always keep a small notebook with
me, as Barnard suggested (H.R. Bernard 1994). I occasionally recorded fieldwork data by
writing scratch notes on my cell phone for convenience. After that, I would always transfer
the scratch notes to descriptive field notes and analytic notes to my laptop before sleeping in
case my memory of the events described in the notes grew cold. Secondly, in the management
and analysis of fieldwork data, I used the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA to
code field notes systematically, extracting keywords from field notes and establishing mind
maps based on the data analysis with connections and commonalities. Influenced by Bernard
(H.R.Bernard 1994, 193), I regard "coding as the key to organising and analysing qualitative
data" in the first round. According to the coded fieldnote, I "established the themes that need
to be indexed and that patterns that need to be located and thought about", again as guided by
Bernard (H.R.Bernard 1994, 193).

In analysing fieldwork data in this research, historically and developmentally related issues
are considered throughout the thesis. In examining the transformation of CIS' learning
practice by their cross-cultural learning, as recommended by James (James 1984, 189), "the
historically influenced elements" of learning habits need to be included in the analysis. In
addition, the developmental issue relating to CIS' learning practice towards postgraduate
degree programs is considered when needed. Koentjaraningrat concluded from his research
experience in Java that "social science research in many developing countries,
anthropological research, in particular, is very much development-oriented" (George 1982,
177). This inspired me to recognize that, while doing anthropological research in or related to
developing countries, developmental issues must be considered to interpret the whole story
better. These are presented in *chapter 4*, preceding the formal description of ethnography in
the following chapters.

In addition, I used a comparative method in interpretation. Post-structuralism and postmodernism suggested that cultures were fundamentally incommensurable and incomparable (Tanner 2009, 89). However, agreeing with Tanner, when we see comparative studies as intercultural studies, it is acceptable to use the comparative method as a pragmatic approach to establish dialogues and increase mutual understanding between cultures (Tanner 2009, 94). Using a comparative method, I do not aim to compare the two cultures holistically but to understand "my research question of Chinese students' learning difficulties in higher education in the UK" by exploring "the related features" of the two cultures. As a result, all descriptions and analyses in my research are inseparable from comparing Chinese and British education, history, and philosophy. This is reflected in the interpretation in *chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8*.

Apart from these, I combined the methods of explanation and interpretation methods in analysing and presenting my fieldwork findings. From the ethnographic storytelling to the completion of anthropological work, agreeing with James, "ethnographic truths are partial" (James 1984, 7). However, the presentation should not be too fragmented. Influenced by Geertz (1983, 57), I think the two approaches of explanation and interpretation are equally important.

"Explanation" here means focusing on finding the patterns out of commonalities behind individual stories, while "interpretation" concerns self-meaning to participants, individuals, context, and diversity. Linking to this research, Chinese students' diversified attitudes toward knowledge understanding after their higher education experience in the UK are interpreted based on their individualised experience and cognitive ability. In addition to the presentation and respect for individual differences and preferences, this research also pays attention to the group commonality of the patterns of thought and ways of knowing behind the Chinese students' UK study experience. It also aims to search for common cultural and social explanations. To conclude, I regard anthropology as presenting the interweaving of science and humanities.

Finally, in the ethnographic interpretation of this work, I first introduced the fieldwork place and how CIS organised their life on and off-campus as a group and as different individuals in *chapter 5*. The various backgrounds of all key informants in the research run through the description as they are introduced. Continuing beyond *chapter 5*, *chapters 6, 7* and *8* contain the ethnographic materials on the difficulties postgraduate CIS met in their study and how they deal with them, which includes classroom learning and participation, academic writing, and supervisory relationships for researching and dissertation writing --- the significant aspects of postgraduate students' academic curriculum. As there are differences and overlaps between the focuses of training programs for taught and research students, the ethnographic stories are divided into three chapters: classroom learning and participation (with taught Master's students as primary subjects), research training and supervisory relations (with research students as primary subjects), and academic writing, which shared by both taught master students and research postgraduates.

2.4 Ethics and reflexivity

To reflect on this research, firstly, the most crucial feature of this study is that I did "fieldwork at home". As in Soraya's survey in Saudi Arabia, cited in George (1982, 168), I study my kind of people, postgraduate CIS in the UK as my own. I agree with Caputo that compared with the traditional type of fieldwork that is "removed from the everyday situation, relations and routines", fieldwork at home involves "adding another dimension to the existing social relations and commitments" of the investigator (V. Caputo 2000, 27). There are both advantages and constraints to this type of ethnography.

The advantages include that I know the Chinese language fluently and the customs of CIS, and I observed them in their daily lives. In addition, I have no problem establishing rapport with my informants given my existing social connections in the group. However, there are also constraints in anthropology at home. I experienced the same feeling as Dyck, namely that anthropology at home entails "the potential costs entailed in transforming friends into informants and informants into friends" (cited in Amit 2000, 50). Moreover, another downside

may be that some of the informants will not be as frank and relaxed while facing me as they would when talking to strangers as we are in the same community.

Secondly, to reflect on my relationship in the field, I regard my relations with my informants as reciprocal, embodying trust and friendship. As a senior student at X University, I sometimes offered help to my informants on university and life-related issues. I sometimes invited them to dinner at my place. I also volunteered in the university's International Student Welcome Team from 2018 to 2020. I worked as a co-leader in 2019 and 2020 to welcome pre-sessional international students to the airport who are mainly from China.

Thirdly, my positioning as a female in my late twenties might have unconsciously limited my access to male interviewees. However, according to the statistics of international students on X university's official website, postgraduate students from China are mainly female students, especially those doing taught degree programs. This is also common in the UK. This explains why more female informants are included in fieldwork and ethnography.

Fourthly, fieldwork is not simply observing something as an insider and abstracting out the things we are facing, but also understanding our mode of thinking and the context in which we researchers are working. My understanding of the same fieldwork data had changed and developed year by year throughout my PhD journey. As a result, the explanations and interpretations of all these fieldwork materials must be perceived as conditioned by my existing insight and ability, and they must have limitations.

Last but not least, though these haven't been presented fully in this thesis, some Chinese students in my fieldwork experienced different degrees of psychological difficulty. I had considered this possibility when I anticipated ethical issues that might arise during fieldwork. But I only made simple preparations for the solution and did not anticipate the emotional substitution of the actual situation and its impact on myself. I would usually work as a listener and tell them all the possible routes through which they could ask for help while simultaneously comforting them. However, I also realised that many Chinese students are not accustomed to seeking counselling services on campus. They do not think the difficulties they

met could be understood or solved by UK counsellors as they were international students from another culture. As a researcher and a listener, apart from sharing part of their emotions and intermittent greetings and concerns, I often felt helpless in supporting them in the way they would like to accept.

Chapter 3: A literature review

My research explores the difficulties Chinese postgraduate students met during their academic study in UK universities and how the students' learned patterns of thought and ways of knowing collided and communicated. To understand the current research stage in this field, I reviewed key literature on several related themes and topics. The first section starts with a general review of the research development on CIS. It continues by examining the key literature on the two closely related themes: intercultural adaptation and teaching and learning. The second section begins by reviewing how anthropology discusses cross-cultural higher education and continues by reviewing the literature most relevant to this study. The third section reviews how anthropology discusses knowledge and its connection with my research. By examining these most relevant areas, the starting point of this research and the potential contribution of the study to the research area is identifies.

3.1 The international student studies

3.1.1 CIS study abroad, in general

The group of CIS and their overseas study and life have been studied in several academic disciplines, such as in the fields of education (Watkin and Biggs 1996), anthropology (Pelissier 1991; Fong 2011, 2004), sociology, language studies and psychology (as summarised in Henze & Zhu, 2012). Most CIS go to the UK, the US, Canada, and Australia for higher education. The group composition of Chinese students is divided into the bachelor, taught postgraduate degrees and postgraduate research degrees. The key themes in the literature are generally intercultural adaptation and teaching and learning.

Student mobility, globalisation, and marketisation of higher education

The changing needs and profiles of international students since 2000 resulted in different educational interests while studying in overseas universities. Agreeing with Choudaha (2017), the mobility of international students who were enrolled in institutions in the early 2000s was

in search of research excellence. Since 2008, the deepening global financial recession triggered stronger financial motivations among some institutions in traditional top destinations. More and more universities in the OECD countries started aggressively expanding international student enrolment. In recent years, increasing competition among new and traditional destinations to attract international students and the increasing expectation of career success and employability among international students has arisen. Selected studies on this topic include Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring (2012); Counsell; Fong (2004, 2011); Gamst Page (2019); Xu and Montgomery (2019); Xu (2020). As a result, the academic development in university education in recent years is such that, as Kim and Otten argued, transnational academic mobility and internationalisation are both enclosed by the market and shaped by neoliberal policy and market-framed research competition. (Kim and Otten 2009, 395).

Intercultural adaptation, racial minorities, and the decolonisation of higher education

Intercultural adaptation of international students into the host country and university is an enduring topic, along with the mobility of international students. Acculturation (e.g. Gbadamosi, 2018), the difficulties in life and study (e.g. C & J, 2006), adaptation (e.g. Gu & Maley, 2008), and student agency (e.g. Wang, 2010) are popular research topics. In addition, along with the internationalisation of higher education and the student mobility from nonWestern countries to universities in leading Western countries such as the US and the UK, the concerns about racial prejudice in universities and the decolonisation of higher education started to grow, see for example Moosavi (2020a, 2021b) and Ackah (2021). Moreover, while I was writing up this research in 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic broke out around the world, and CIS overseas encountered yet more challenges in their life and study, therefore researches especially looking at how COVID-19 affected CIS' intercultural adaptation was carried out (e.g. Hu, Xu, & Tu, 2020).

Academic teaching and learning

Apart from the previous two perspectives of research on CIS, academic teaching and learning is another research focus. As reviewed by Ryan (2011), research in academic teaching and learning of the CIS in UK higher education has experienced three phases, each characterised a different trend. In the 1990s, students were expected to adapt to the host institution, and there was a focus on how international students lacked certain (Western) academic skills. In that phase, students were asked to be responsible for changing and adapting to the new educational environment. Since 2000, as the numbers and proportion of international students accelerated, the research focus began to shift to lecturers and the style of their teaching and learning practices, with a focus on how lecturers need to accommodate international students and make their teaching and learning practices more explicit to give international students a greater chance of success in their new learning contexts (Gu and Maley 2008; Ryan 2011). In this phase, there was recognition of the need to make explicit the "rules of the game" to assist international students in learning how to play them (Ryan 2011). In the third, current phase, universities' internationalisation agendas have led to debates about "the internationalisation of the curriculum (for both home and international students) and the broader internationalisation of higher education. Universities are beginning to explore how to better respond to their more diverse student populations" (Magyar and Robinson-Pant 2011).

The current problem in phase three is that Western educators lack knowledge about different cultural intellectual and academic paradigms and teaching approaches, especially in nonWestern and non-Anglophone contexts. This inhibits the development of new, more contemporary approaches to cross-cultural teaching that draw on an international range of approaches. Given this background, by understanding the learning challenges, Chinese students met in their overseas study, the knowledge of cultural intellectual and academic paradigms of the non-Western context can be acquired. This is the aim of my thesis.

The overall situation regarding research publications on the teaching and learning of CIS is as follows. There are general studies (such as Turner, 2006; Wang, 2010), studies on the learning

shock experienced by CIS when they start their education in an unfamiliar culture (e.g. Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006), on the stereotype held by teachers towards CIS and other east Asian students (e.g. Pelissier 1991; Moosavi 2021a), and on the 'typical' Chinese learner (e.g. Watkin & Biggs, 1996). Secondly, scholars are looking more specifically at the knowledge transfer to the CIS (e.g. Oramas, Gringarten, & Mitchell, 2018; Watson & Hewett, 2006), interested in the modes of education the CIS experienced before leaving China such, as Gu & Schweisfurth (2006b). Additionally, exploring the Confucian tradition is a highly relevant topic that cannot be ignored; see, for example, Biggs (1999) and Turner (2006). To categorise the learning challenges CIS encountered in higher education more finely, there are studies on the communication of the students in the classroom, e.g. Gu & Maley (2008), on academic writing, e.g. Zhang & Zhan (2020); Zhang (2018), on plagiarism, e.g. Flowerdew & Li (2007), on supervisory relations, e.g. McClure (2007) and Kun & David (2009), and also on critical thinking, e.g. Durkin (2008), Holmes (2016), and Moosavi (2020b).

3.1.2 Intercultural adaptation and academic teaching and learning

In this part, I review the key literature on intercultural adaptation and academic teaching and learning of the CIS and explain how they relate to my research.

Intercultural adaptation

The perspective that sees overseas study experience as a transitional experience that contributes to mutual learning, understanding of knowledge and personal growth is particularly inspiring. Wang's (2010) study on CIS in the UK takes this kind of learning and growth perspective, which views the intercultural study experience as "a transitional experience reflecting a movement from one stage to another" (Wang 2010, 16). Henze and Zhu consider the adjustment of CIS abroad as a challenge and option for mutual learning (Henze and Zhu 2012a). Bovill et al.'s paper also advocates the mutual benefit/learning of home and host country students (Bovill, Jordan, and Watters 2015, 22). In addition to these studies, the first chapter of "Research as development" (Sariola and Simpson 2019, 14) discusses the global direction of knowledge transfer. Their research examined the knowledge

communication between Sri Lanka and Western European countries. It argued that knowledge does not only flow in one global direction, from north to south, but that there is mutual exchange. Renn also looked at the globalisation of knowledge and agreed that "the worldwide circulation of knowledge is now considered not just as a one-sided colonial or postcolonial diffusion process but rather an exchange of knowledge in which each side is active" (2017, 53). Inspired by these studies while looking at the difficulties that CIS met at X university, I also regard the overseas learning of the CIS as a transitional experience which might build on the students' previous understanding of knowledge.

To understand the transitional experience of the CIS, discovering the difficulties students met in their intercultural adaptation are essential. Studies which share this theme are included in, for example, Turner (2006), Gu and Maley (2008), Wang (2010), Ryan (2011), Bovill, Jordan, and Watters (2015). Gu studied how the CIS adapted to their life and learning in the UK universities and argued that "personal, pedagogical and psychological factors are equally important in influencing their adaptation process and outcomes" (Gu and Maley 2008, 224). Bovill et al.'s (2015) work on the transnational approaches to teaching criticised the idea that the challenges encountered by students in their learning process can always be explained by the "dichotomous" model of cultural differences. They argued that understanding "the genuine differences in the context other than the culture that influences the learning environments" is essential (Bovill, Jordan, and Watters 2015, 21). Turner (2006) looks at CIS' reflection on the teaching and learning in a UK business school and concludes that the students did not change over the year owing to "the culturally implicit nature of UK academic conventions and that they experienced high levels of emotional isolation and loneliness, which affected their academic confidence" (Turner 2006, 27). Wang's study on the intercultural adaptation of CIS towards teaching and learning focused on developing an individual learner's learning culture (Wang 2010, 5). She argued that the learning behaviour of CIS was not just culturally transmitted and socially constructed but also individually interpreted and open to change and development. The review of literature by Ryan (2011) also claimed that research in cross-cultural communication is usually limited to differences between cultures and ignores the

changing contemporary contexts and realities in countries such as China, for example, which is undergoing profound and rapid change, as well as the enormous diversity of sub-cultures and amongst individuals within them (Ryan 2011). Rather than focusing on supposed "differences" between cultures, Ryan advocated that changing national and international contexts need to be reviewed.

To conclude, these studies disagree with attempts to explain all difficulties encountered by CIS as based on cultural differences. Social, educational, and psychologically constructed causes, the changing national and international context, the student agency, etc., are all factors that need to be considered. Building on these debates, firstly, my research answers the question Ryan raised by providing a thick and complex description of the current context of Chinese students' academic and cultural background in the contemporary Chinese academic tradition. Secondly, apart from the cross-culltural differences encountered by CIS in their intercultural adaptation process, connections and standard foundations in the changing process of the CIS' backgrounds of learning are presented throughout my fieldwork findings. Thirdly, other than the cultural reasons, historical, educational reasons and diversified student experiences are also given in this research. Fourthly, responding to the question of the flow of knowledge in the era of globalisation, this thesis aims to identify the advantages of both Western and nonWestern academic traditions and ways of knowing, along with revealing Chinese students' difficulties in the cross-cultural learning process. I hope the findings in this research will build on creating an actual international curriculum in the new phase of global university building in the UK.

Learning and teaching

In this part of my literature review, key studies in the learning and teaching of classroom behaviour, communication styles, modes of education etc., are reviewed.

Behaviour in the classroom is one theme in research connecting the teaching and learning of the CIS. Studies on this are included in the works of, for example, Kim (2009), Wang (2010) and Gu and Schweisffurth (2006a). The common result, shared by all these studies is that they

all found the difficulties CIS encountered in classroom communication were caused by the different educational systems they had experienced and exemplified the cultural and historical roots of their behaviour.

Inspired by this finding, focusing on the cultural, historical, and educational backgrounds of the CIS represents another theme in the teaching and learning of the CIS. Turner (2006) found in his study of a group of CIS in a UK business school that, in a broader picture of Chinese education, Confucius's views about learning remain influential within contemporary pedagogy (Turner 2006, 31). I agree with Turner on this viewpoint. However, I can't entirely agree with his argument that in China today, learning tends to focus on elitist and malegendered students. As will be shown in *chapters 4* and *7* of this thesis, higher education in China has ceased to be elitist and become a form of popular education since the 1990s. In addition, male-gendered students are no longer the focus, which can be shown in the high proportion of female-gendered numbers of the CIS in the UK.

To conclude from the two themes of research on the teaching and learning of the CIS, the cultural, historical and educational influences on the intercultural learning of the CIS are essential and cannot be neglected. However, the agency of the students and the context of the discussion need to be considered.

There are also studies on the stereotypes toward the CIS' learning behaviour concerning critical thinking, learning style, academic writing, etc. For example, in their 1996 study, Watkin and Biggs claimed that CIS' learning style is surface learning, whereas the Western learning style is deep learning focused on questioning and critical thinking (Watkin and Biggs 1996; compare Holmes 2016, 295). I disagree with Watkin and Biggs' claim. Moosavi (2021) also studied the stigmatisation of East Asian students in Western higher education. I agree with his arguments that East Asian students use critical thinking in learning and are unfairly depicted as lacking necessary thinking skills and committing plagiarism. He calls upon academics and universities to actively resist the stigmatisation of East Asian students. Wang (2010) included the analysis of critical thinking, teacher-student roles and relations and the

coping strategies CIS adopt to adjust (Wang 2010, 13). As in these studies, my participants identify difficulties for learning caused by classroom behaviour, teacherstudent relations, academic writing and the stereotype of CIS committing plagiarism. These issues are discussed in *Chapters 6,7* and *8* of the thesis. The students' patterns of thought and ways of knowing are interpreted during the discussions in these three chapters.

Summary

To summarise what I reviewed in research on international student studies, I began with a general presentation of the disciplinary concerns, the popular destination countries, the group composition of the students, and the key themes of mobility, intercultural adaptation, and teaching and learning in separate parts. By reviewing these different themes, I could identify issues closely relevant to this study: among them, intercultural adaptation and academic teaching and learning were selected as primary foci for my research. The key literature within the two themes was separately reviewed in detail.

To conclude from the reviewing of key literature in 3.1.2, issues that can contribute to this study are, firstly, that when explaining the difficulties encountered by the CIS in the intercultural adaptation of life and learning, cultural, educational, and historically constructed reasons play essential parts that cannot be neglected. However, other than structural explanations, students' agency, personal-psychological based reasons and the changing social context nationally and internationally should be considered. This concern is presented in this study in *chapter 4*, with the cultural, educational, and historical background of the CIS reviewed, and at the same time, with a description of the changing national and international context of the society and education that CIS have experienced. In addition, the diversified student experience and their agency in adapting to life and learning are presented in *Chapters 5,6,7* and *8*.

Secondly, inspired by previous research, apart from acknowledging the differences encountered by CIS in their intercultural adaptation process, connections and standard

foundations in the changing process of the CIS' backgrounds of learning and education are also worth noticing. This is presented throughout my writing of the fieldwork findings.

Thirdly, as had already been found by the studies I reviewed, my participants identified difficulties in learning caused by classroom behaviour, teacher-student relations, conventions of Western academic writing and the stereotype of CIS as liable to plagiarise. These issues are presented in the course of *Chapters 6,7* and *8* of the thesis. The students' patterns of thought and ways of knowing are interpreted during the discussions in these three chapters.

Fourthly, inspired by research on knowledge communication, this thesis aims to identify the relative advantages of Western and non-Western academic traditions and ways of knowing while revealing Chinese students' difficulties in the cross-cultural learning process. The findings in this research will contribute to creating a genuinely international curriculum in the new phase of a global university building in the UK.

3.2 Anthropology of education

This section reviews anthropological discussions of learning and teaching, intercultural higher education and knowledge transfer. It starts with a context description of anthropology and education and educational anthropology, which states the tradition, features, themes, and trends of the discipline area and its links with this research. It secondly presents and discusses the relevant literature on cross-cultural higher education, knowledge transfer, and CIS in the anthropology of education. Building on this, the third part states the innovative features of this research based on these reviews and discussions.

3.2.1 Background

Anthropology and education

An essential aspect of anthropological theory is the cultural inheritance and cultural learning of human groups, cultural exchange and development, and the essential functions of knowledge transfer and communication (Teng 2010, 6). Anthropological discussions of the history of education had two trends. One has a focus on education in its social context. Boas

used statistics and other methods to study the relationship between immigrant child development and education and society during World War II, refuting the Nazi genetic deterministic view (Boas 1962). Benedict proposed three significant functions of education in American culture: conveying, transforming, or transitioning culture and transforming cultural functions, accepting that education can "establish and break" social order (Benedict 1935). Mead proposed three primary forms of cultural adaptation to illustrate what she proposed to be the historical trends of human evolution and the evolution of educational forms and expose the roots of generation gaps and psychological conflicts in modern industrial society (Mead 1928). Mead has, however, been heavily criticised in later decades by Derek Freeman, who claimed that "her determination to prove her theory blinded her to contrary evidence" and that "the two girls on whom she mainly relied invented what they told her" (Freeman 1983), so Mead's study must be treated with caution. In opposition to the UK and US trend, which focuses on education in society, the German-speaking countries attached importance to the speculative rationality of philosophy (Biesta 2014). As described by Biesta, H. Roth published two volumes of "Educational Anthropology", emphasising the study of human nature, the human soul and spiritual changes and formulating ideal educational goals and methods by exploring human development processes and their laws (see also Feng 2008, 30). The two traditions of the discussion of education in anthropology influenced the later developments and features of the academic field of educational anthropology.

Educational anthropology

Educational anthropology was formed in the late 1950s, with George Spindler as its founding father in the US. Spindler made an essential contribution to the anthropology of the cultural context of education about human development. This is documented in his book *Fifty Years of Educational Anthropology,* published in 2000 (Spindler 2000). The anthropology of the philosophy of education was also influential. Scholars from European countries represent this trend, and its contribution came from the perspective of interpretation and modelling of perfect human nature (Biesta 2014). However, the dominant scholarly influence in the US was

situated in the cultural school of educational anthropology, which has a closer connection with society and is more readily applied.

Reviewing the key literature in educational anthropology in the US from the 1970s reveals change and development in the value orientation of research: from the "disciplinary standard" perspective --- the use of the theoretical framework and research methods of the subject as the starting point to judge the value of the research object according to the pre-defined "problem standard" to Postmodernism's deconstruction, criticism, and the characteristics and spirit of advocating pluralism and difference, which have made it a popular and vital philosophical trend in Western society from the second half of the 20th century (Hassan 1985). When reflecting on modern education, the postmodernist view believes that education's purpose is cultivating people's critical ability, reflective spirit, and pluralistic integration. It also emphasises the relationship of equal dialogue between teachers and students.

Following this spirit, postmodernists believe that the academic failure of ethnic minority students is not an intellectual problem but due to the "cultural deprivation" they have been suffering from (Bryson and Castell 1994).

My research, which seeks to understand Chinese postgraduate students' learning experience in UK high education institutions, holds a postmodernist perspective toward education and a question-oriented value orientation which responds to the current problem of cross-cultural higher education and diverse classrooms in a global university.

3.2.2 Relevant current research

The popular research themes within the field of educational anthropology since the new century are citizen education, immigration, globalisation and cosmopolitanism as, for example, Fong (2011); transnational education and knowledge, for instance, Pelissier (1991), Geerlings and Lundberg (2020); culturally relevant pedagogy and social mobility, for example, Liu (2020), cultural diversity, for example, Anderson (2020); language, identity, and equality in education among migrants, for instance, J. Dong and Y. Dong (2013), Han (2014), Stambach (2015). There are also studies on educational equality and education disability, for

example, Hernández Saca (2019), and the educational experience of ethnic minorities worldwide. I review the relevance of these studies to my own research in the following paragraphs.

As Pelissier claimed, learning and teaching, the social process involved in transforming knowledge, lies at the heart of anthropology (Pelissier 1991, 75). Pelissier claimed in her 1991 study that anthropologists' interest in how those from other cultures think and see the world is partly concerned with modes of thought (Pelissier 1991, 76). According to Pelissier, anthropologists such as Morgan, Boas, and Levi-Strauss held theoretical perspectives of evolutionism, structuralism etc., all in the context of structures that limit social action (Pelissier 1991, 91). She then argued that the role of structure in relation to practice, activity, and agency needs to be considered (Pelissier 1991, 91). This is similar to my review in 3.1, which argued that both the structure and individual agency must be considered.

Han (2014) and Stambach (2015) discuss language and identity issues among Chinese immigrants. Han argued that language and race intersect in complicated ways to racialise immigrants and their children differently and argues that linguistic nationalism as a form of structural racism permeates everyday interactions (Han 2014, 54). In other words, Han's research focuses on language in education. Stambach examined the relationship between language, culture, and education. His article explores how Confucius Institute teachers and U.S. students use language to index the qualities of Chinese people and culture (Stambach 2015, 55). It explored the relationship between language, culture, and education. The two pieces of research share the theme with part of my research on the discussion of language, culture, and education in relation to Chinese students. However, unlike their focus on voicing and oral language in education, *chapter 8* focuses on the written language – academic reading and writing and how language, education, and thinking are linked together and influence Chinese students' education practice.

Liu (2020) discussed culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), global citizenship, and social mobility. He argued that CRP, and other similar approaches, are commodified and repurposed to advance social mobility in an increasingly competitive marketplace that values political and

aesthetic cosmopolitanism (Liu 2020, 107). Fong (2004) presented her ethnographic study on the first generation of children born under China's one-child family policy who were born during the 80s and 90s in China in her 2004 book. She then continued her study on these students from only-child families who were college-age studying abroad (Fong 2011). Her 2011 book looks at the mobility of these students in the globalisation era and their quest for global citizenship. Although not the focus of my research, Liu and Fong's study inspired me throughout my research and writing.

Among all the literature reviewed, Geerlings and Lundberg's (2020) work on education and the universal standard of knowledge is most closely related to my research. Their paper explores how knowledge is reproduced as "universal" in contemporary higher education and how this claim of universality affects knowledge application through a case study of clinical psychology in Singapore (mainly), Australia, and the Netherlands (Geerlings and Lundberg 2020, 27). The research presents how a dominant discourse of science and a standard of knowledge in the global North is built and then taught in the South.

The authors argue that in Singapore there are limitations in the imagination of good scientific knowledge in clinical psychology. There is no voice in locally developed knowledge in that field, so that reliance on International Edition textbooks that normalise EuroAmerican research findings is reinforced. Furthermore, psychology graduates employ a science discourse as objective and value-free, producing non-locally developed knowledge as "universal". Secondly, it explained how standard knowledge is built during the internationalisation process. The authors reported that students, academics, and clinical psychology professionals in Singapore regard themselves as less experienced and less fluent in their psychology knowledge than people from European countries and North America. They must learn from the "more mature and experienced" leading countries in clinical psychology—the Western empire of knowledge. The article thirdly criticised the exercise of power in knowledge transmission in a postcolonial world.

Geerlings and Lundberg's paper provides ethnographic examples of how "universal" knowledge is made coherent through standardisation and accreditation. The evidence further reveals that the discourses of the universal truth of science and the desire for modernity assist in knowledge coherence. This research is related to my research in several ways. We share the same focuses on transnational higher education between Asian Countries and the Western world, knowledge transfer, the standard of knowledge, and knowledge and power. Geerlings and Lundberg's research mentioned the dominant discourse of science and the relationship of knowing and knowledge transfer to modernity and criticised this using postcolonial theory. However, Geerlings and Lundberg did not present the local way of knowing in Singapore or the alternatives of discourses other than science although, as stated at the end of Geerlings and Lundberg's paper, their research illustrated the value of such an investigation. It opened up new avenues of anthropological research focusing on academic disciplines and their curricula.

3.2.3 My research

In my research, I aim to explore the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK higher education and the knowledge communication or dialogue between China and the UK through CIS' cross-cultural education experience in the UK.

The background of anthropology and education revealed two different traditions of schools in European countries and the US. One is the search for an excellent education centred on people and knowledge, and the other focuses more on the context of education in society. My research takes account of both traditions. In my understanding, the knowledge-centred trend meets the personal needs for "good" education. It represents the philosophical wisdom of ideal education, while the cross-cultural understanding trend in the US responds to community needs and represents the practical wisdom of education in society. Exploring the crosscultural learning process allows for dialogues between the two educational cultures in China and the UK. It gives space to create a good education for all from the legacy of thoughts of the two cultures while responding to the current problems.

The review of the anthropology of education presented in this chapter identifies the recent trends and themes which are question-based and react to the post-modern style of education, with its primary focus on problems of cross-cultural education. My research on knowledge and educational understanding among Chinese students in transnational higher education in the UK is consistent with the trends and themes at the forefront of academic attention in educational anthropology. It reacts to the insights of postmodernism in educational theory. The review of the current and relevant articles in educational anthropology showed what has already been done in my research field, among which Geerlings and Lundberg's work is of great relevance and inspired me to find out what I can do to take this line of research further. As I explained above, Geerlings and Lundberg noted science's dominant discourse and the relationship between knowing and knowledge transfer and modernity. Still, they did not present the local way of knowing in Singapore, the alternative discourses to science. I therefore aim to explore further how the discourse of science influenced academic research and learning in China and the knowledge communication/dialogues between China and the UK, and whether there are alternative ways of knowing and patterns of thought that should be given attention. Also, as stated at the end of Geerlings and Lundberg's paper, their work opened up new avenues of anthropological research focusing on academic disciplines and curricula. My research, which selected X University students in three academic departments in science and non-science, makes up for the gap in knowledge identified by Gerlaings and Lundberg.

3.3 Anthropology of knowledge

As Crick (1982) had reviewed around 40 years ago, a discussion of the anthropology of knowledge since the mid-1970s has several approaches: the linguistic and cognitive approach; the categories and universals approach; the symbols, knowledge, rationality and ritual approach; a focus on knowledge, power, and ideology; an emphasis on self-knowledge of the discipline; a perspective on the politics of anthropology, and the translation of knowledge. These approaches reflect various aspects of the anthropological discussion of knowledge, in

theory, methodology, epistemology, etc. The review in this section will focus on several relevant discussions of knowledge related to this research on cross-cultural learning since Crick's study.

In 1995, Barth wrote a paper about cultural phenomena and ways of knowing other than culture. In his understanding, culture makes one group of people different from "the other", but it does not represent their grounds for action (Barth 1995, 65). Seeing individuals as embodiments of culture turns physical persons and their behaviours into cultural specimens and misrepresents the truth of their actual actions in daily life (Barth 1995, 66). He further suggested that we need to find a better prototype for cultural phenomena, which does not so readily induce these distortions, and this new prototype is knowledge. He defines knowledge as "what people employ to interpret and act on the world: feelings as well as thoughts, embodied skills as well as taxonomies and other verbal models" (Barth 1995, 66). The image of culture as knowledge acknowledges the fact of globally continuous variation. It is used and reproduced in different local populations to provide grounds for people's thoughts and actions and includes wildly divergent ways of knowing within one group. Thus, other modes of representation and more dynamic questions come to the fore when we model culture in such modalities: variation, positioning, practice, exchange, reproduction, change, and creativity (Barth 1995, 66). Above all, Barth advocated that our analysis and comparison should inspect the different criteria for validity in various knowledge traditions and the different kinds of knowledge produced by embracing these criteria (Barth 1995, 67).

As my argument in 3.1 shows, I agree with Barth that cultural differences should not be polarised, and the aspects of the individual cognitive process, learning environment, and socio-historical context are all conditions that should be evaluated alongside the role of culture. But unlike my review of literature in 3.1, Barth offered a new prototype other than culture. Agreeing with Barth, knowledge traditions and various ways of knowing can be seen as prototypes for cultural phenomena, especially under continuous global variation. In my research, the education, culture, and patterns of thoughts encountered by CIS were quoted constantly to help understand the ways of knowing generated in China and the UK. In other

words, this is research in the anthropology of knowledge that explores various ways of knowing in different cultures of the human world.

Cohen's (2011) paper looked at anthropologists' theoretical and methodological challenges "in the explanatory accounts of the emergence, spread, storage, persistence, and transformation of knowledge." Her paper argued that although anthropologists are uniquely positioned to address some of these challenges, joint engagement with relevant research in disciplines such as cognitive science and work on neural and social mechanisms holds considerable promise for advancement in knowledge across cultures (Cohen 2011, 193). Cohen explained further that if we genuinely aspire "to understand how we come to know, to espouse theories of knowledge acquisition, storage, retrieval, and communication processes, and to account for the importance of bodily and mental states in learning and performance, we cannot afford to ignore the vast and increasingly sophisticated scholarship on such issues in neighbouring disciplines" (Cohen 2011, 194). Agreeing with Cohen, what we know depends upon the brains, bodies, and environments within and among which transmission occurs. Concerning my research, the difficulties students meet in the learning process and how they understand and deal with them is also a question that combines social-historical, cultural, educational, and personal factors, among which the individual part consists of cognitive and brain activities that are difficult to measure, but which work as the final step in students' learning process. Cohen suggested at the end of the paper that "a range of cognitive scientific findings can facilitate the development of an explanatory understanding of apparent contradictions in what people say, and in what people do… across variable social, cultural, environmental, motivational, and emotional contexts" (Cohen 2011, 198). Because of the complexity of patterns in people's knowledge transmission, I agree with Cohen that one single tool or finding will not be enough. However, in my research, I am not using cognitive methods. As the knowledge transmission process does not occur in a determined, measurable period, it is uncontrollable even if other methods are applied to test human behaviour. What anthropologists could do, in my understanding, is to try to present detailed and rich descriptions within the scope of the discipline. The uncertainty about the last step of

individual cognition within the studying process could be clarified by working through the in-depth report of individual cases. Moreover, as I see CIS' understanding of knowledge as a window to reflect upon the ways of knowing in the human knowledge world, which consists mainly of the discussions in this thesis, the data on cross-cultural learning of CIS obtained in the fieldwork is enough to support the argument in this thesis.

To sum up, the enlightenment gained from reviewing the anthropology of knowledge is that 'knowledge' can be seen as a new prototype for understanding cultural phenomena. In addition, the review of cultural differences can be used to understand the various ways of knowing and thought patterns in understanding knowledge acquired by the CIS in intercultural education.

Summary of the chapter

In exploring the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK higher education and how far their understanding of knowledge was transformed by such experience, relevant literature is reviewed in this chapter: international student studies, educational anthropology, and the anthropology of knowledge. The research in these three areas is built on the presentation and discussion of later chapters.

The review of the anthropology of education presented the recent trends and themes which are question-based and react to the post-modern style of education, with its primary focus on problems of cross-cultural education. My research on knowledge and educational understanding among Chinese students in transnational higher education in the UK is consistent with the trends and themes at the forefront of academic attention in educational anthropology. It reacts to the insights of postmodernism in educational theory. The review also mentioned the most relevant latest work of Geerlings and Lundberg, which gave foundation to my research and allowed my further exploration of how the discourse of science influenced the way of knowing in China and the knowledge communication/dialogues between China and the UK, and whether there are alternative ways of knowing and patterns of

thought to which attention should be given attention. This shows how my research will be realised in the field.

The reviewing of the international student studies and the anthropology of knowledge contributes to the study as follows; firstly, as in the reviewed studies, my participants identify difficulties in learning in the areas of classroom behaviour, teacher-student relations and academic writing and the stereotype of plagiarism applied to CIS. They corresponded to *Chapters 6,7* and *8* of the thesis. The students' patterns of thought and ways of knowing are interpreted in the discussions in these three chapters. Secondly, while explaining the difficulties encountered by CIS in the intercultural adaptation of life and learning, cultural, educational, and historically constructed reasons are essential and cannot be neglected. However, other than structural explanations, students' agency, personal-psychological constructed reasons, the changing social context nationally and internationally, etc., should be considered. Thirdly, "knowledge" can be seen as a new prototype for understanding cultural phenomena. In addition, the review of cultural differences can be used to understand the various ways of knowing and patterns of thought in understanding knowledge acquired by the CIS in intercultural education. This concern is presented in this study in *chapter 4*, with the cultural, educational, and historical background of CIS reviewed. At the same time, it describes a changing national and international context in the society and education within which the CIS is located. In addition, the diversified student experience and their agency in adapting to life and learning are presented in *Chapters 5,6,7* and *8*. Fourthly, I am also inspired that, apart from acknowledging the differences encountered by CIS in their intercultural adaptation process, connections and common foundations in the changing process of CIS' learning and education backgrounds are worth noticing. This is presented throughout my account of the fieldwork findings. This paragraph shows how the literature review underpins the development of specific chapters and the interpretation of the story of the CIS.

In the end, inspired by research on knowledge communication, this thesis aims to identify the advantages of both Western and non-Western academic traditions and ways of knowing, along

with revealing Chinese students' difficulties in the cross-cultural learning process. The findings in this research will contribute to creating an actual international curriculum in the new phase of a global university building in the UK.

Chapter 4: Context

Continuing from *chapter 3*, to further understand the difficulties the CIS met in their UK higher education and the changes in their understanding of knowledge, this context chapter starts by describing the legacies of thought from ancient Chinese higher education and philosophy, reviewing the different intellectual currents that have existed. Secondly, it examines the changing social context of education in modern China, along with a description of the changing role of the CIS. It thirdly provides a short history of higher education in the UK with the more recent shifts as a focus. How the reviewed contexts shape the CIS' learning practice today is stated at the end of each section. They provide a background understanding of the CIS before entering their diversified individual stories in *chapters 6,7, and 8*. A description of the changing role of the CIS in history helps the reader better target the characteristics of the CIS group I am researching, described mainly in *chapter 5*.

4.1 The legacies of educational thought in ancient Chinese higher education and Chinese philosophy

This section explores how ancient culture and history have imbued the educational thoughts carried by CIS in China today. It first describes the legacy of Confucianism and other Chinese philosophies and then outlines the history of ancient Chinese higher education.

4.1.1 Chinese philosophy and its legacy in Chinese students' education today

This section presents a brief history of Chinese philosophy in three parts, with a summary of its continuing influence on educational thought in China. Part one is an introduction to the six most famous schools of thought in the pre-Imperial Bai-Jia-Zheng-Ming (百家争鸣) era (770-476BCE), which Karl Theodor Jaspers addressed in his book *The Origin and Goal of History* (Jaspers 1953). The second part summarises philosophical ideas in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, the three primary forces of thought throughout the history of the Chinese empire. The third part discusses the eternal spirit of Chinese philosophy, its links to Western thought, and its legacy in Chinese students' education today.

A hundred schools of thought (Bai-Jia-Zheng-Ming 百家争鸣)

There were six leading influential schools of thought in the Bai-Jia-Zheng-Ming era. The key features of each school are summarised here based on the reading and understanding of the classic book on the history of Chinese philosophy by the Chinese philosopher Feng Youlan (Feng 1948).

The Confucian school founded by Confucius consisted of teachers of ancient classics. They were the inheritors of the ancient cultural legacy (Feng 1948, 30). The Confucian school pays attention to benevolence (Ren 仁) and righteousness (Yi 义). It advocates love with a graded intensity, to love people around oneself first and then others. These are upper-class values. The Moist school, in contrast, had a close-knit organisation and strict discipline (Feng 1948, 31). They searched for objective moral standards and advocated a harmonious society led by a benevolent ruler. Contrary to the Confucian school, the Moist school represents the interests of the middle and lower class. It pays attention to Ren and Yi as the Confucian school does but advocates all-embracing love and equality. It is also a critic of some ancient civilisations. For example, it criticises Confucianism for not believing in ghosts and gods. It also criticises the mourning system, regarding it as a waste of wealth and energy for ordinary people, which is different from Confucius. The two schools are both practical, but the Moist philosophy is more utilitarian than the Confucius one.

After Confucius, two important branches of Confucianism appeared. They are the idealist wing of the Confucian led by Mencius (孟子) and the realist wing led by Xun Zi (荀子). The Mencius school regards human nature as initially good and pays attention to the super-moral values and people's spiritual world. It embraces individual freedom. Conversely, the school led by Xun Zi regards human nature as initially evil. It advocates social control and the cultivation of people in daily life. It is anti-spiritual.

The Taoist school centres its metaphysics and social philosophy on the concept of Non-being, which is the Tao (道 or Way), and concentrates on the inherent virtue of the individual, called De (德). De is generally translated as "virtue" but better rendered as the "power" that inheres

in any individual thing (Feng 1948, 31). The three essential branches of the Taoist school have a single origin but are opposed. The first branch, led by Yang Zhu, advocates having no activity and following nature by doing nothing. It claims people can get relative happiness by escaping society and hiding in the mountains. The second branch, led by Lao Zi, revealed the laws underlying the changes in the universe and claimed that people could live happily by following the law and turning everything to their advantage. The third branch, led by Zhuang Zi, advocates for people to see life and death, self and others from a higher perspective. It claims that one can transcend the existing world to achieve absolute happiness.

The school of names (Ming-Jia 名家) was interested in the distinction and relation between what they called "names" and "actualities" (Feng 1948, 31). The followers of "the school of names" are usually Sophists and Logicians, who like metaphysical discussions.

The school of Yin-Yang follows early China cosmologists. As stated by Feng, "The combination and interaction of Yin and Yang are believed to result in all universal phenomena" (Feng 1948, 30). The followers of the school of Yin-Yang actively explain nature.

The legalist school, on the other hand, consists of politicians who maintained that good government must be based on a fixed code of law instead of on the moral institutions that the literati stressed for an excellent government (Feng 1948, 31).

In short, among the six most influential philosophical schools, the Confucian school, the Moist school in its earlier period, and the legalist school are more pragmatic than the Daoist school, the school of names, and the school of Yin-Yang. The relations and features in comparison among the six schools in this era are summarised and shown in *table 4.1*. All these schools of thought influenced the development of philosophy and knowledge in imperial China, and some maintain their influence today.

Philosophical schools	Features in comparison					
Moist School: Mo Zi	Criticiser of the ancient civilization. Criticise "on elaborating funerals, three years of mourning on the death of a parent, practice of music, the belief in predetermined fate" (Feng 1948, 52).	Militant preacher;	Middle and lower class	All-embracing love; Enjoy equally; Suffer equally; (outer power)	Ren (human-heartedness); Yi (righteousness)	Practical (but more utilitarian)
Confucianist School: Confucius	Rationalizer and justifier of the ancient civilization,	Refined gentleman;	Upper class	Love with gradation; Love people around you first and then the others; (inner power)		Practical
Confucianist School: Mencius	idealistic wing	Individual freedom	Super-moral value; Spiritual;	Human nature is originally good; Value comes from culture and culture is the achievement of man;		
Confucianist School: Xun Zi	realistic wing	Social control	Naturalist; Anti-spiritual;	Human nature is originally evil;	Cultivation; Philosophy of daily life;	
Daoist School: Yangzhu	Escape the world to maintain their personal purity by flees from society and hides himself in the mountains and forests (Feng 1948, 65).	Relative happiness: natural, naïve, have-no knowledge		"Doing nothing, yet there is nothing that is not done." Having no activity; No action; Following the nature.	Nature; Things spontaneous within a person;	Same origin; but on the contrary to each other;
Daoist School: Lao Zi	Reveal the laws underlying the changes of things in the universe, following the laws and and one can then turn everything to one's advantage.					
*Daoist School: Zhuang Zi	To see life and death, self and others from a higher point of view. One can transcend the existing world.	Absolute happiness:				
		No-knowledge (knowledge which is not knowledge)				
*The school of Names	Sophists; Logicians; Dialecticians; Debaters; Metaphysics;					
*Mohist School: Later period	Intrust in Logistics and epistemology;					
*The school of Yin-Yang	Early Chinese cosmology;	Actively explain the nature;				
The legalist School				"Doing nothing, yet there is nothing that is not done." Having no activity; No action; A ruler should do nothing himself but should merely let others do everything for him --- he relied for good government or disorder upon laws and methods (shu 术) (Feng 1948, 162).		

Table 4.1: Relationships, and differences, between schools of philosophy in ancient China

The development of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism during imperial China

After imperial China established in 221 BC, Confucianism and Taoism became the two most influential philosophical schools. During different periods, each became the officially recognised orthodoxy. However, the Confucianism and Taoism of the Chinese empire were

modified according to the need of each historical period. They became hugely different from the original Confucianism and the Taoism of Kong Zi (孔子) and Lao Zi (老子). Also, with the introduction of Buddhism into China, Confucian and Taoist thoughts were mixed with Buddhist thoughts and influenced China's imperial history in various combinations. The development and combination of these forces of thought are introduced in this part.

Confucianism became a religion and achieved a dominant position around CE 2, during the Han dynasty (206 BC- CE202). As the famous Han Confucianist philosopher Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒) proposed, the universe consisted of ten constituents: heaven, earth, Yin, Yang, man, and five elements of wood, fire, soil, metal, and water. His political philosophy was that: "a ruler rules thorough the mandate of Heaven, but had to be watchful for manifestations of Heaven's pleasure or displeasure, and to act accordingly" (Feng 1948, 200). Han Confucianism emphasised the interpretation of the original *Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋), one of the five Confucian classics. These thinkers interpreted the original canons into ideas that served to meet the need of the Han empire and made it the only philosophical school authorised by the government.

Between the third and fourth centuries C.E., New Taoism flourished. The new-Taoist philosophy reinterpreted the thoughts of Lao Zi (老子) and Zhuang Zi (庄子) and developed a particular interest in discussing ontology. Buddhism flourished in China in the fifth century, spreading many Buddhist scriptures promoted by the emperor. Buddhists believe all universe phenomena are manifestations of the mind (Feng 2012, 594). All Buddhist doctrines and practices attempt to contribute to Bodhi (菩提 Pu Ti) --- the reduction of greed. Among all the Buddhist schools, Zen Buddhism (Chan-Zong 禅宗), which combined Taoist thoughts with Buddhist thoughts, became the most influential school that profoundly affected Chinese philosophy, literature, and art. Zen Buddhism is the philosophy of silence. The critical feature of Zen Buddhism was its meditation practice. The practice methods of Zen Buddhism consisted of three phases: live naturally, have faith in oneself and let go of anything else; practice is no practice- letting things take their course, achieving epiphany (Dun-Wu 顿

悟), a moment of insight or enlightenment; not to achieve is to achieve (Feng 2012, 644). With the revival of Taoism and the introduction of Buddhism in the late Tang dynasty, people became more interested in metaphysical problems and values beyond morals (Feng 2012, 648). Then, New Confucianism developed with the theoretical heritage from the old idealist school of Confucianism (Feng 2012, 652), from Taoism through the agency of Zen-Buddhism, and from the Yin-Yang cosmology. The target of cultivating saints (Sheng-Ren 圣人) was one of the main concerns of New Confucianism. Saint, in this context, means those with high morals and profound Confucian attainments. The "saints" in Buddhism followed different practices from the "saints" in New Confucianism; while the Buddhists had to escape from society to improve their spiritual cultivation, New Confucians must strengthen their spiritual cultivation within social relations (Feng 2012, 658). As a result, new Confucianism further developed Zen Buddhism in the late Tang dynasty. However Buddhism fell into disrepute at the end of the Tang dynasty, as it was held to have misdirected government policy.

New Confucianism then underwent further development during the Song (CE 960-1269) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties, led by two influential schools: the Cheng-Zhu (程朱) school of Li (理) and the Lu-Wang (陆王) school of Xin (心) (Feng 2012, 683). The core argument between the two schools was whether or not the principle of the universe was created by the human mind (Feng 2012, 684). Zhu Xi (朱熹), a representative of the Li school, held the opinion that there are two worlds --- an eternal world that is thinkable and is waiting for people to discover it and a concrete world that is sensible. The Xin school held that there is only one concrete world, and the universe is the human mind. The method of practice of the Li school (Feng 2012, 698) was the first to have deep thoughts based on a rich knowledge of things in the world. After such intelligent practice in the first phase, man needed to "show respect" and experience an epiphany. Then, man will reach the third and final phase in which he can learn all principles of things and feel the core of beauty. However, the method of

practice the Xin school (Feng 2012, 762) continued the approach of Zen-Buddhism and encouraged the people to follow their "intuitive knowledge" (Liang-Zhi 良知) to behave well. Philosophers in the Xin school believe that intuitive knowledge represents the human mind/heart. One could learn right and wrong by following one's "intuitive knowledge".

Spirit and legacy of Chinese philosophy on CIS' education today

Based on the above review of Chinese philosophy, the legacies of the spirit of Chinese philosophy in Chinese students' education today are briefly summarised. Firstly, the basis of Chinese culture is ethics, especially Confucian ethics, but not religion because philosophy has satisfied Chinese people's need to purchase values superior to/above the natural world and values beyond the morals that religion provides people in the Western world. Also, as summarised in part two above, the development of Chinese philosophy is a combination of ancient philosophical schools and the religion of Buddhism. As a result, agreeing with Feng, "the place which philosophy occupied in Chinese civilisation has been comparable to that of religion in other civilisations" (Feng 2012, 32).

Secondly, Chinese philosophy is both this-worldliness (Ru-Shi 入世)and other-worldliness (Chu-Shi 出世)--- both "idealistic and extremely realistic, and very practical, though not in a superficial way" (Feng 1948, 8). The character of the Chinese sage is described as one of "sageliness inside and kingliness outside" (Nei-Sheng-Wai-Wang 内圣外王) (Feng 1948, 8). This image is still the mainstream image of students/ academics/ intellectuals in China today, as stated in Wang's 2010 study on the CIS in the UK (Wang 2010, 58) (which I discussed in *chapter 3*). The mutual development of Wei-Xue (为学) --- to enrich one's active knowledge and Wei-Dao (为道) --- to lift the level of one's spirit, are both essential.

Thirdly, epistemology had never been developed in Chinese philosophy. There is no such demarcation; the knower and the known are one whole. The Chinese philosopher only tells us

what he sees, while the Greek philosophers took concepts by postulation as their starting point. The latter developed mathematics and mathematical reasoning (Feng 1948, 25). This idea also explains why Chinese literature and persuasion (e.g., academic writing in social science and humanities) are rich in implication and short in written text, while Western ones are always precise in reasoning and detailed argumentation. The consequence of this difference in the experience of CIS is discussed in detail in *Chapter 8*.

Fourthly, the training target of Chinese philosophy in becoming a "saint" influenced students' education in PR China by supporting elite education in fostering lofty ideals and lofty aspirations of life. For example, while "active knowledge" forms the main content of education today, the canons of ancient Chinese philosophy in different theoretical schools are still frequently included in textbooks for Chinese classes before higher education. These profound thoughts provided students with the possible ground to build their ambition in life with lofty ideals and aspirations.

4.1.2 Educational ideological heritage from ancient Chinese higher education

Based on the reading of two books on "ancient Chinese higher education history" written by Xiong Mingan (1983) and Li Zongtong (Li 1958), who are experts in the history of Chinese education, and an understanding of the history of ancient Chinese higher education, the legacies of ancient higher education are summarised in this section from the aspects of teaching content, teaching methods, training objectives, the teacher-student relationship, and examination methods. Since "teaching content" in ancient higher education consisted of various schools of Chinese philosophy before the Qin dynasty (221-207BCE) and has been dominated by Confucianism since the Han dynasty (206BC-220CE). This aspect has already been discussed in the preceding section as "*the legacies of thought in Chinese philosophy*". Therefore, this section will discuss teaching methods, training objectives, the teacher-student relationship, and examination methods in ancient Chinese higher education.

In the course of Chinese history, teachers have often paid great attention to cultivating students' independent learning abilities, especially during the more prosperous periods of academic development. As early as the Spring and Autumn period (771-476 BCE), Confucius had put forward ideas that "learning should be based on reading and students should have their understandings from reading" (Xiong 1983, 31). "Students should think positively and are encouraged to ask questions to teachers in class" (Xiong 1983, 31). In addition, during the Song dynasty (CE 960-1279), which was the most flourishing period in higher education in ancient China, "self-learning was encouraged as the main learning method, assisted by teaching" in government universities (Xiong 1983, 192). Moreover, "self-learning was the dominant learning method" in private colleges (Xiong 1983, 192). Students were also allowed to choose major and minor courses based on their interest in private colleges during the Song dynasty (Xiong 1983, 192).

Furthermore, there is a straightforward narrative in the famous Song educationist Lv Zuqian's (吕祖谦) educational thoughts. He advocated that "teachers should not teach in great detail to students; students should be encouraged to think independently and exercise their ability to research on their own, learn creatively and have the courage to put forward their ideas" (Xiong 1983, 215). This spirit was continued in private colleges during the Ming dynasty (CE 1368-1644) (Xiong 1983, 263). As well as advocating independent learning, there were other teaching methods whose influence continues till today, such as "the spirit of hardworking", "training students according to their aptitudes", and "gaining new insights through reviewing old materials" as advocated by Confucius (Xiong 1983, 42).

Throughout ancient Chinese history, the training objective of students was dominated by cultivating *Jun Zi* (君子)--the gentleman with both high moral character and extraordinary ability in governance. They formed a new class called "*Shi*" (士) in traditional Chinese society as early as the Spring and Autumn period (771-476 BCE), (Xiong 1983, 479). Also during the Spring and Autumn period, Confucius advocated that "students should learn to self-cultivate their moral integrity in the process of learning" (Xiong 1983, 31). In the Tang

dynasty, it was advocated that the purpose of university education was to "*give a sermon*" --- which teaches the principle of things other than imparting knowledge (Xiong 1983, 166). During the Song dynasty, the famous ChengZhu-Confucianist Cheng Yi (程颐) (mentioned in the previous section) claimed that "the purpose of education was to teach men to be saints, to know the way of being saints" (Xiong 1983, 207). In the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), training was not limited to knowledge; it also contained much on "explaining justice and the practice of physical and mental cultivation" (Xiong 1983, 263), while students also attached great importance to moral cultivation. In addition, the famous educational idea that "knowledge is practice and practice is knowledge; they should go hand in hand" came from an educationist in the Ming dynasty called Wang Shouren (王守仁) (Xiong 1983, 272). In Chinese, we call it the spirit of "*Zhi-Xing-He-Yi*" (知行合一). This idea still has a significant influence in China today in the self-cultivation of intellectuals and ordinary people. Other than Wang, Gu Xiancheng (顾宪成), who was an educationist in the late Ming dynasty, also stated that the objective of education is to cultivate the "well-cultured" man (Xiong 1983, 280). We could summarise from these examples that in ancient Chinese education, not only ability in governance but also moral integrity and self-cultivation of a noble soul were essential standards of the class of "Shi" (士). To be a saint and pursue the truth (Wen Dao 问道, in Chinese) were essential training objectives of students in ancient China. However, there were also ideas on training objectives other than Confucian ideals that also hold influence today. For example, In the Moist school philosophy, in 476 BC (see section 4.1, above), there was a strong focus on "practice"; the training objective of students was to actively combine knowledge with social life --- production and military skills (Xiong 1983, 45). This training objective was more practical than advocated by mainstream Confucian thinking.

There was a long tradition of close relationships between students and teachers throughout ancient China. The ideology of "respecting teacher and truth" was written in the brochure for students called *Xueji* (学记) as early as 476 BC (Xiong 1983, 31). It was also claimed by

Confucius that "teacher and students will benefit each other during the process of teaching and learning" --- Jiao Xue Xiang Zhang (教学相长) (Xiong 1983, 32). Half a century later, students and teachers were getting much closer in the Han dynasty, and students showed great respect for their teachers. For example, if the teacher died, students automatically mourned for three years after the day of their teacher's death. The custom of going to teachers' funerals has continued for nearly two thousand years till today in China (Xiong 1983, 81). Ancient China also had a long tradition of a "master-family" (Shi-men 师门) relationship. There was strong unity between teachers and students within such a master-family unit, but there was always competition among different master families (Li 1958, 14). "Teaching students by the teacher's example" --- Shen Jiao (身教) --- was a feature between teacher and students in a master's social family (Xiong 1983, 263). Students can learn this way because of the close relationship between the teacher and students within a master's family (see *chapter 1*, section 1.3).

The exam system in ancient China also greatly influenced modern education. The "Civil Service Exam System of *Ke-Ju* (科举)" was founded in the Tang dynasty (CE 618). Before that, talents were selected by recommendation and oral exams. The *Ke-Ju* exam experienced two different trends based on the changes in the social environment, with one more controlling and the other having a relatively more unrestricted style. In the Tang dynasty, the *Ke-Ju* exam focused on "memorising poetry" (Xiong 1983, 154), which bounded students' thoughts. However, in the Song dynasty, teachers were free to expound their academic opinions in class, and different opinions could be discussed and debated (Xiong 1983, 192). With the influence of this educational environment, the *Ke-Ju* exam in the Song dynasty focused more on argumentation in an essay (Xiong 1983, 154). This period was also a time of high academic freedom in ancient China. Cheng Zhu-Confucianism (introduced in section 4.1.2), which originated in the Song dynasty, was also adopted as state orthodoxy in the later Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties (Xiong 1983, 178). However, since academic thought was very autocratically regulated in later dynasties (Xiong 1983, 250), intellectual thought

development was seriously hindered and associated with a revised writing standard in the *KeJu* exams. The new essay style was called the Eight-legged essay --- *Ba-Gu* (八股) (Xiong 1983, 225). The *Ba-Gu* essay still encouraged argumentation but imposed tight restrictions on the essay's length, style, and contents.

Summary

To summarise the existing intellectual currents, firstly, agreeing with Wang (2010, 58), I argue that some Confucian ideas and practices in education still retain their influence in modern China. To start with, the spirit of Sage education in ancient Chinese philosophy appears in today's education by including the canons of Saints (with high morals and profound Confucian attainments) in the textbooks of schoolchildren, which contributes to the interpretation of the CIS' academic writing in *chapter 8*. In addition, the methodology of Chinese philosophy still influences the Chinese literature and persuasion style, which is "rich in implication and short on written text". This character explains the initial academic writing habits of the CIS in *chapter 8,* which are different from the Western ones of "precise reasoning and detailed argumentation". Moreover, part of the ancient teaching method is still taught: "the spirit of hard-working", "training students according to their aptitudes", and "gaining new insights through reviewing old materials", which will be shown in the discussion of CIS' practical experience in *chapter 6*.

Secondly, by comparing the existing legacies of thought summarised in 4.1, it is argued that not all of them have been perpetuated and advocated by the current educational environment. Some thoughts have been carried forward under a complex and constantly changing process, just like the changes of the dominating thought among the former dynasties in Imperial China. To start with, the aim of academic training today is very different from Imperial China. The goal of training an ideal man --- a saint with high morals and profound Confucian attainments --- is no longer the goal of training a university student today in China. As higher education shifted from elitism to popularisation since the 1990s, the training goals of education have become more practical, closer to the non-mainstream educational purposes of

Mohists in ancient China. More details will be given in *chapter 7*, where today's Chinese students' higher education is discussed. In addition, the hierarchical aspect has weakened in the teacher-student relationship, but the spiritual inheritance has been retained with new combinations and transformations. A detailed discussion of the inheritance and new combinations of the student-supervisor relationship will be presented and discussed in *chapter 7*, which is a separate chapter on the student-supervisor relations based on the experience of the CIS. Moreover, the degree of freedom in teaching methods for students has been changing. Finally, *Ke-Ju* Examinations and *Ba-Gu* academic writing style also impact on contemporary CIS' cross-cultural writing practices. *Chapter 8* will describe in detail how the impact is felt.

Thirdly, in responding to the end of *chapter 3*, it is argued that culture, history, and philosophy are essential influences on the CIS' acquired learning habits but are not the "only" influencing factors on the patterns of thoughts and ways of knowing of the CIS. Except that the exertion of influence of "culture, history and philosophy" is undergoing change and transformation, the social transformation in "developing China" is also a factor influencing the obtained learning habits of the CIS. Wang also values the factor of the dramatic changes taking place in modern Chinese society (Wang 2010, 11). For this reason, a description of "the changing social contexts in the post 1860s China and the changing role of CIS in modern history" is included in the context description in 4.2.

4.2 the changing national context and the changing role of the CIS

Chinese students' modern higher education integrates many ideological resources, partly inherited from imperial China and partly imported from the West. Greatly influenced by social development and ideological choices, the higher education of CIS in China obtained before entering the UK has been undergoing changes and growth since its appearance in the 1860s, as has the role of the CIS themselves in China's modern history. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the historical context existing since the 1860s when understanding the changes in modern Chinese education and the role of the CIS. In this section, the changing

context in history, society, and higher education in China and the changing role of the CIS is reviewed in three separate parts: the transition period from traditional to modern, the establishment of the Republic of China and the New Culture Movement; education reform in PR China from the planned economy that existed between 1949 and 1978 to the market economy since 1978. They are several significant periods in modern Chinese history. How they shape the higher education of the CIS obtained in China before entering the UK is demonstrated.

4.2.1 Transition from traditional to modern

In this section, the historical background of how China entered the modern world at the end of the imperial period is presented, and a related description of changes in education and the role of CIS in this transitional period is included to show how they shaped the learning cultures of the CIS today.

The first Opium War, also known as the Anglo-Chinese War, was a series of military engagements fought between the UK and the Qing dynasty of China over diplomatic relations, trade, and the administration of justice in China (Guan 1987). In the 17th and 18th centuries,

the demand for Chinese goods, particularly silk, porcelain, and tea in Europe, created a trade imbalance between Qing imperial China and the UK. European silver flowed into China, favouring the Chinese economy. To counter this imbalance, the British East India Company began to grow opium in India and smuggle it into China illegally. The influx of narcotics reversed the Chinese trade surplus, drained the economy of silver, and increased the number of opium addicts inside the country, which worried Chinese officials.

In reaction to this problem, in 1839, the Dao-Guang (道光) Emperor, rejecting proposals to legalise and tax opium, appointed as viceroy Lin Zexu (林则徐), whom he sent to Canton to halt the opium trade completely. Lin confiscated chests of opium, which amounted to around 1210 tons. The British government responded by sending a military force to China. The Royal Navy used its ships and gunnery power to inflict a series of decisive defeats on the Chinese Empire, later referred to as gunboat diplomacy. In 1842, the Qing dynasty was forced to sign

*the Treaty of Nanking (*南京条约*)*—the first of what the Chinese later called the unequal treaties—which granted an indemnity and extraterritoriality to Britain, five treaty ports were opened to foreign merchants and ceded Hong Kong Island to the British Empire. The failure of the treaty to satisfy British goals of improved trade and diplomatic relations led to the Second Opium War (1856–60), and the perceived weakness of the Qing dynasty resulted in social unrest within China, culminating in the *Taiping Rebellion (*太平天国运动*)*. In China, this war is considered the beginning of modern Chinese history.

The Taiping Rebellion was a civil war in China that followed the first opium war. It was waged from 1850-1864 between the established Manchu-led Qing dynasty and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom under the leader of the peasant uprising Hong Xiuquan (洪秀全). The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was an oppositional state based in Tianjing (present-day Nanjing, southeast China, near Shanghai). It held a Christian millenarian agenda to initiate a significant transformation of society. A self-proclaimed convert to Christianity and the brother of Jesus Christ, Hong Xiuquan led an army that controlled many parts of southern China during the middle of the 19th century. The Qing government did not defeat it until 1864.

After the First Opium War, the Qing government still believed in the Confucian social order. It did not think reform was needed until it failed again in the Second Opium War against the British army and only defeated the Taiping Rebellion with help from private armies. Immediately after that, there were strong calls for reform. The renewal of Confucian scholarship and the revival of educational institutions were basic policies for restoring imperial authority in the Tong-Zhi (1862-1874) reign (Keenan 1994, 9). The rationale for the restoration's revival of Confucian education was not the Qing court's blind reassertion of the old order after the defeat of the Taiping revolutionary movement. Instead, the revival of Confucian education sought to address critical social demands created by wartime dislocation (Keenan 1994, 9). Other than this, another post-Taiping policy authenticated alternatives to the orthodox route to success through civil service examinations: the introduction of foreign military and industrial technology. Though most of the ruling elite still subscribed to a

conservative Confucian worldview, following China's severe defeats in the First and Second Opium Wars, several officials argued that adopting Western military technology and armaments was necessary to strengthen itself against the West. This thought was promoted through the national program of self-strengthening called *the Western Affairs Movement (洋务运动)*.

The Western Affairs Movement was a period of institutional reforms. Arsenals, interpreters' schools and the introduction of Western transportation and communication technology contributed to a dynamic re-strengthening in the Tong-Zhi period (Keenan 1994, 10). A foreign language school for interpreters called Tong-Wen-Guan (同文馆) was established in 1861; foreign language schools, army, and navy schools were established more and more throughout the country. At the same time, according to Dai, Rong Hong (容闳) was the first advocator and leader of the international students sent abroad by the government (Dai and Xu 1997, 85). He sent 120 children between 10 and 16 years old to the US from 1872 to 1875 and to European countries in 1876 to study science and modern warfare (Huang 1957, 6). This first round of CIS abroad contributed significantly to the first steps of the modernisation of China in modern science, technology, and education (Qian 2018).

At the same time, while the traditional local academic training of scholars for state examinations was still run, a new sort of academy which eschewed examination preparation appeared (Keenan 1994). Favoured by more conservatively orientated officials, these schools were ethical communities staffed by elite teachers who could develop moral talent by their virtuous example. These academies refused to offer classes in eight-legged essay examinations and instead introduced monthly essay contests whose winners were richly rewarded with prizes of cash and wine.

There was a significant shift in elite academic formation after 1894-1895, with fundamental changes from the top down in curriculum and pedagogy. Elite schools such as the *Zhengmeng Academy* (正蒙学堂) began relating moral principles to political issues on the one hand while promoting military drills, social sciences, engineering, and Western language instruction on

the other. Keenan (1994) dates the pivotal turning point from neoclassical to Sino-Western education to 1901, when the public academy in each provincial capital became a university-level institution (Da-Xue-Tang 大学堂). In this period, the reformers were no different to the conservatives in upholding the Confucian moral doctrine as being of fundamental importance. However, they realised the necessity of adapting the traditional principles to current conditions in a new approach. To use the words of Zhang Zhidong (张之洞, a representative of the *Western Affairs Movement*): Chinese learning as the foundation and Western learning for practical purposes (中体西用 Zhong-Ti-Xi-Yong) (Huang 1957, 5). The unforeseen consequences of this program prepared the ground for the Chinese scholar class to earnestly undertake more extensive reforms of Chinese political and social institutions (Huang 1957, 6).

In short, from the review of the historical context of this transition period, it can be recognised that China's reformation from the imperial period to the modern period was forced to begin after the failures of several wars of aggression. After the internal and external wars were lost, the Qing government started to reform and learn from the West in military matters, technology, economy, and education. The batch of CIS educated in this period was vital in promoting China's reform of science and technology. Although Confucianism was still the focus of education, learning modern Western technology also received adequate attention in this period. The foreshadowing and beginning of the transformation in modern education also took place during this period.

4.2.2 The establishment of the Republic of China and the New Culture Movement

In this part, the historical context of the first half of the twentieth century in China and the New Culture Movement is presented, combined with a description of the changing historical role of the CIS in different stages and the development of modern Chinese education. The purpose of this part is to provide a context for the modernisation process in China and to present how it shapes the CIS' learning practice today.

The First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) was fought between China and Japan primarily over influence in Korea. After more than six months of failure in war and losing the port of Wei-Hai-Wei (威海卫), the Qing government sued for peace in February 1895. Not until this moment, when Japan defeated the Qing military, did the government realise that political reform of a fundamental nature had become inevitable. Kang Youwei (康有为), a Confucian scholar of the modern type, who advocated following the examples of Peter the Great and the Japanese Meiji Emperor, also founded the *Qiang-Xue-Hui* (强学会, a society for strengthening learning) to draw the progressive elements among scholars into his alliance for reform. With the support of the emperor Guangxu (光绪), the Reform Movement led by Kang Youwei called *Wu-Xu* Reform (戊戌变法) started in 1898. It was a 103-day national, cultural, political, and educational movement in the late Qing dynasty of China. Ultimately, it failed because of the conservative opponents led by Empress Dowager Ci-Xi (慈禧). Around ten years after that, however, the Xin-Hai Revolution (辛亥革命) took place; a revolution that overthrew China's last imperial dynasty and established a Western-style new Chinese Republic in 1911 (Huang 1957, 5).

To defend itself against Western aggression, then, China became increasingly aware of the necessity for modernisation by learning from the West. In that era before 1912, the CIS worked as an essential channel for introducing Western political thoughts and modern education into China. They were actively involved in the anti-Imperial revolution and the modern reform of China. Most of the CIS in this era went to Japan. According to Zhou, 22,000 Chinese students went to Japan to receive higher education before 1912 (Zhou 1996, 79). Many returning students from Japan became "later members and backbones of the Alliance established by Sun Zhong-shan (孙中山, founder of the Republic of China in 1912) and made positive contributions to the overthrow of the Qing dynasty" (Dai and Xu 1997, 85). Men such as Chen Du-Xiu (陈独秀 a leading advocate of the New Culture Movement),

Chiang Kai-shek (蒋介石 Kuomintang leader), Cai Yuan-Pei (蔡元培 later president of Peking University and an early communist) were representatives of this movement.

As well as their role in the political reform of China, the CIS also contributed to the modernisation of education in China. Firstly, a bureaucratic talent selection system was imported in 1901 because the upper class in the Qing dynasty realised that "Japan's success lay in its ability to absorb Western civilisation" (Wang 1991, 107). Secondly, in 1902, "a new education system instead of the Si-Shu (私塾 ancient Chinese private school) was imported from Japan" (Wang 1989, 1). Curriculum design was also based on experience from Japan because the Japanese educational system was adopted from the West and maintained a solid loyalty to the emperor, favoured by the Qing government (Wang 1989, 1). Thirdly, returned students from Japan also contributed significantly to the provision of teachers in modern China, as a ruling in 1907 decreed that "all government-sent students returning from Japan need to teach for five years as a responsibility to the country" (Wang 1989, 2). Fourthly, CIS who studied in Japan also introduced a large number of characters the Japanese had adopted for unfamiliar concepts in English, such as religion, art and -ism (transcribed as "Zong Jiao" (宗教), "Yi Shu" (艺术) and "Zhu Yi" (主义) respectively) (Thoraval 1996; Chung 2013). These Japanese loan words are used in China today.

Once the political reform over the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China succeeded, how to build a new China was on the agenda. Correspondingly, the CIS in the era developed freely and brought back different schools of thought inherited from different destination countries, such as the US, Japan, the UK, France, Germany, and the Soviet Union, to change the pedagogical system of China. The various strains of thought introduced by the CIS then arose out of discussions over the ideological reconstruction of Chinese life. This new ideology provides the impetus and guiding principles for establishing a new social order compatible with modern life in an industrial age (Huang 1957, 7). The New Culture Movement, therefore, occurred in the mid-1910s and 1920s out of disillusion with traditional Chinese culture. The pioneers in this movement are Chen Duxiu (陈独秀), Cai

Yuanpei (蔡元培), Li Dazhao (李大钊), Lu Xun (鲁迅), Zhou Zuoren (周作人) and Hu Shih (胡适), all of whom had overseas study experience. Under the favourable atmosphere of academic freedom promoted by its chancellor Cai Yuanpei, and under the influence and inspiration of eminent scholars such as Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, and Hu Shih, Peking University was soon to become the centre of intellectual leadership and the cradle of the New Culture Movement (Huang 1957, 8).

All the thinkers in the movement had received a classical Chinese education but began to lead a revolt against Confucianism. The New Culture movement called for a new Chinese culture based on global and Western standards, especially democracy and science. Firstly, they rejected the old ethics (loyalty, filial piety, chastity) in favour of individual freedom and women's liberation. They destroyed old art (Chinese opera), old religion ("ghosts and spirits"), and old politics (ruled by privileged men) (Huang 1957, 10). Secondly, they claimed that China is not a uniquely Confucian culture. As a result, they started the re-examination of Confucian texts and ancient classics using modern textual and critical methods, known as the Doubting Antiquity School (古史辩派) (Huang 1957, 10). Thirdly, to express and disseminate their propositions, *New Youth* (《新青年》), the New Culture movement's journal, started publication in 1915. Fourthly, they also called for vernacular literature to be promoted over literary or classical Chinese. Chen Duxiu charged that literary or classical Chinese, the written language before the movement, was understood only by scholars and officials. As a result, the revolution was considered necessary as it is the instrument that transmits thought, and vernacular literature could attract a larger community of readers (Huang 1957, 110). For this reason, Chen Duxiu established literary societies such as the Crescent Moon Society (新月社), whose members had received a new education in the West.

It imported social Darwinism ---which is the application of the evolutionary concept of natural selection to human society, and the pragmatism of John Dewey, which held that people must actively interact with their environment to adapt. The movement promoted cultural exchange between the East and the West, which gave China a deeper understanding

of Western culture and society. Chen was a revolutionary leader and a fervent advocate of Western liberalism before his conversion to Marxism (Huang 1957, 8).

However, there were also other voices in this period. Yan Fu (严复), like many of his generation, eventually reversed his admiration of the West. He had favoured a thorough reform in his earlier period but a gradual or evolutionary one, not a sudden change. However, in later years, after 1911 and especially after the First World War, Yan Fu's ideas changed sharply. Yan then considered that the Chinese governmental system and learning were more suited to Chinese society than those of Europe. "When we recall the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, they are as broad as heaven and earth, and their influence is extended to the people all over the globe," wrote Yan (Huang 1957, 17). He also noted that it was clear that there had long been an inseparable link between Chinese thought and literature. From ancient times, literature had been a vehicle of orthodox ideas (Yi-Wen-Zai-Dao 文以载道). However, the literary revolution --- the backbone of the New Culture Movement --- sought to create new literature that would convey the ideas and thoughts of a new age (Huang 1957, 71). Yen foresaw that if the vernacular were to take the place of the classical language, then most of the old culture would be lost to future generations (Huang 1957, 72).

Since China's intellectual awakening was affected and stimulated by the changing political situation of the country, trends in ideology tended to run parallel and sometimes merge with the thought guiding the political revolution. The 1921 split within the leadership of the New Culture Movement brought to light the existence of two significant trends of thought competing with one another, namely liberalism and Marxism. Hushi stood on one side, and Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao on the other. It brought a new vision to the Chinese people for the first time, and it pointed out the two main objectives of the Chinese revolution: to overthrow imperialism and abolish tradition (Huang 1957, 21). After 1920 *New Youth* turned into a purely political periodical, advocating communism, while Hushi favoured wholesale Westernisation (全盘西化), to be realised by an accumulation of moderate reforms (Huang 1957, 75).

Other than introducing and advocating strains of thought from the West, which resulted in the New Culture Movement, returned CIS also contributed much to the modernisation of China in areas such as science and technology, industry, education and politics through different kinds of professional newspapers. For example, *Education* was a journal advocating modern education; *Min Duo* first propagated anti-dynastic ideology and then introduced Nietzsche, Bergson, Kantian philosophy, and Darwin's theory of evolution. While introducing Western philosophy, there was a particular focus on the philosophy of Marx and Engels, the history of the First International, and the theory of Socialism, which were introduced to China at that time (Ye 1991, 69). Returned students also introduced other ideological thoughts, such as anarchism (Furth 2008, 395) through the *Tianyi* newspaper (Tu 1994, 80). *Xin Yi Jie* introduced the latest Western science and technology. It also introduced the specialism of Western business management, which significantly contributed to the revitalisation of China's industry and the development of modern science and technology (Tu 1994, 80). Other more professional newspapers founded by the CIS focused on railways, medicine, the navy, and modern industry (Tu 1994, 80). While the CIS went to various countries including Japan, the US and European countries to study before the Anti-Japanese War started in 1937 (Zhou 1996, 79), there was a boom of learning in the US as the US supported Chiang Kai-shek's (蒋介石) government during the war with the China Communist Party (CCP) after 1945. These returned students became talents in national defence, technology, economics, and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries.

In this period, there was also remarkable progress made in academic education, especially in higher education, thanks to the power of returning students. While Japan had much influence on education in China before 1919, the US became the most influential power in modernising education in China in later decades (Wang 1989, 2). China's modern educational system is generally copied from the United States, although experiences gained from the Soviet Union and France were also incorporated. A group of communist youth was sent to Moscow Oriental University by the communist youth league and directly introduced the education experience of the Soviet Union into China. In addition, the newspaper *French Education* introduced the

situation of French education comprehensively and systematically, which also inspired the development of China (Ye 1991, 70). Many experiences and practices "such as compulsory education, worker education advocated in China in later decades, and the emphasis on imparting scientific and technological knowledge was introduced from France by Qin Hongjian, a Chinese student in France" (Ye 1991, 70). All these experiences of CIS in Western countries contributed to the incredible speed of development of modern education in twentieth-century China.

In summary, the significance of reviewing this period of history lies in the following. Firstly, the reform of literature from classical to vernacular in the New Culture Movement influenced the CIS' literature writing and academic writing practice in social science and humanities in China's later decades before they entered the UK higher education system. This influence will be discussed again in *chapter 8*. Secondly, the discussion on the choice between the traditional/old and the introduced/new culture and the choice of ideology between liberalism and Marxism in the New Culture Movement are the source of ideas that continually influenced modern China's development and selection of the route taken. This feature is also profoundly reflected in the educational domain in PR China in the later discussion in section 4.2.3, which further influenced the learning habits obtained by the CIS. Finally, this section also shows an essential stage in China's modern history, which provides the reader with a picture of the context of modern Chinese society where the CIS are currently living.

4.2.3 Social context, educational reform, and the role of the CIS in PR China

This section will introduce the education reform in the People's Republic of China (PRC) with its social context in three stages: Firstly, the period from the establishment of the PRC in 1949 to 1965, the eve of the *Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (Cultural Revolution 无产阶级文化大革命). Secondly, the Cultural Revolution stage from 1966 to 1978. Thirdly, the market-oriented stage since the *Reform and Opening-up* (改革开放) policy was implemented by the political leader Deng Xiaoping (邓小平) in 1978. The changing role of the CIS in different

stages will also be discussed, and how this context shapes the study practice of the CIS today is presented.

Stage one: 1949-1965

The first 15 years of the new PRC saw the establishment of socialist ideology and the general construction of infrastructure in the new country. The positioning of education, the content and source of socialist education, and the debate on how to critically adopt various kinds of education into the new socialist country in this specific period will be introduced in the following paragraphs.

The central government announced in 1949 that "the positioning of education should be in line with national developmental goals. Political education was the most important, while professional works came next" (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 6). Whether in content, system, or method, higher education must "closely cooperate with the country's economic, political, national security defence, and cultural construction" (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 19). Education should consist of theory and practice, train persons to a high level so they have mastered modern science and technology achievements and can serve the people wholeheartedly and advance nation-building. Young workers and peasants should be recruited into institutions of higher learning to train new types of intellectuals of worker and peasant origin (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 19).

The content and source of socialist education came mainly from the socialist Soviet Union. Altogether around 18,000 students, including university students, language learners, and technical students, participated in a series of selections and were sent by the government to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to study (Miao, Chen, and Yang 2019). Since the northeast was the industrial base of the new China, it held a high position in socialist China in the 1950s and 1960s, and it carried out activities to learn directly from the educational experience of the Soviet Union. The ministry of education of the people's government of northeast China organised teams to compile textbooks for middle schools based on the natural science textbooks of the Soviet ten-year middle schools and organised

visits to the great Soviet middle school (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 9). In addition, during the 1950s, central and local publishing departments published various Soviet education books. Many newspapers and magazine articles by Soviet education experts were translated and introduced into China (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 32).

How to critically inherit the Western philosophical schools and Chinese philosophy from before 1949 was the primary debate in socialist China in this period. With the background of the CCP's failure to systematically criticise bourgeois education, such as Dewey's pragmatism (mentioned above regarding the New Culture Movement) in previous years, the CCP wanted to strengthen the party's ideological work and, in 1956, implemented the policy of "a hundred school of thoughts" among intellectuals in higher education institutions in China (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 145). It was a short-lived policy but essential. Courses introducing and criticising Russell's philosophy, Hegel's philosophy, and Gaines's economic theory were given at Peking University and the Renmin University of China. The purpose of developing these courses on bourgeois philosophical schools was to: broaden students' horizons, cultivate their independent thinking ability, enable them to "correctly" understand the "mistakes" of Western idealism, better study materialism, and overcome dogmatism (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 181).

On the other hand, the philosophy department and academia of Peking University discussed how to inherit the philosophical heritage of its own country, in other words, what could be kept of pre-1949 China. According to Professor Feng Youlan, many philosophical propositions could only be inherited in a general sense. Many other scholars disagreed. At the same time, educational circles discussed the heritage of education. One view held that education is part of society's superstructure (ideology) and transcends class and politics. The new education could therefore inherit aspects of the old education. An alternative view holds that, according to the concept of historical relics, education belongs to the category of history and serves various societies' political and economic development at different times. Therefore, the educational heritage can only be absorbed critically (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 200).

Besides the CIS with a Soviet Union background, there were also Chinese students sent to European countries by the government to learn languages. In this phase, CIS played an essential role in developing science and technology in China. The Chinese government also worked hard to get back the CIS after they finished their overseas study as they were all elites in their study areas and could contribute to the construction of the new country, especially in science and technology. According to Li, modern science in China was transplanted from the West, and in the process of transplantation, many CIS played significant roles in the Chinese Academy of Sciences (Li 1989, 34). They had learned a broad range of scientific knowledge, thoughts, and research methods. They also understood the characteristics of scientific work and its basic principles, which helped immensely in the later development of science and technology in China, as stated by Li (1989, 32). To conclude, due to its backwardness in those times, China had been unilaterally learning from more advanced science, technology, and other components of modern society from abroad. CIS has been essential in translating Western education/knowledge into economic and social benefits for individuals, institutions, and the nation in China for an extended period after they appeared.

Stage two: 1966-1978

The decade from 1966 to 1978 was the time of the Cultural Revolution in China. The theme of this period was cultural and political class struggle. Social context and influences on culture and education in this period will be discussed in this section.

The Cultural Revolution was a socio-political movement launched by Mao Zedong (毛泽东), Chairman of the CCP. The campaign was launched in May 1966 after Mao alleged that "bourgeois elements had infiltrated the government and society at large, aiming to restore capitalism" ("16 May 1966 | Today's History.," n.d.). Mao, therefore, believed that revisionists should be removed through violent class struggles. China's youth responded to Mao's appeal by forming Red Guard Groups (known as Hong-Wei-Bing in Chinese 红卫兵) around the country ("16 May 1966 Today's History.," n.d.). The movement spread to the military, urban

workers, and the CCP leadership, intending to break the old thought, culture, and customs ("16 May 1966 | Today's History.," n.d.).

Education as an ordinary social function was put aside for the duration, and many institutions became buildings in which immediate political activities were discussed, planned, or carried out (Bratton 1978, 240). New socialist intellectuals were cultivated, the consciousness of the old scholars was reformed, and socialist education was reformed critically during the revolution, as I outline in the following paragraphs.

To improve the class distribution of new students and cultivate new socialist intellectuals, a new method of enrolment, a combination of recommendation and selection, went into effect in both senior middle schools and universities in 1966 (Bratton 1978, 193). Applicants who have tempered themselves in the three great revolutionary movements (class struggle, production struggle, and scientific experiment), whose ideology was progressive, and who have reached a certain educational level were favoured. They are not necessarily just those who have been through senior middle school (Bratton 1978, 189). This change enabled significant numbers of outstanding workers, formerly poor and lower-middle peasants, and demobilised army men to be admitted to college (Bratton 1978, 20).

The party leadership also found it necessary to devote a significant campaign to reform the consciousness of the old intellectuals: the educated, educators, writers and artists and scientists, all those who are usually classified in discussions of Chinese affairs as the intellectuals (Bratton 1978, 238). From 1966 to 1967, hundreds and thousands of scholars were sent to labour camps in rural China (Li 2015, 42). In her autobiography, Li Yinhe (a famous Chinese sociologist of sex and gender) remembered that she and her brother were sent to Baiyangdian (白洋淀 a rural area near Beijing) to learn about the countryside, farmers, and Chinese society (Li 2015, 49). According to Li, most intellectuals experienced life with heavy physical labour, cold meals to satisfy hunger, and inferior accommodation during that time.

Zhao Yannian (赵延年), a famous Chinese artist, was condemned to live in a "cowshed"[1]

together with Pan Tianshou and Wang Dewei (two other artists) during that time (Chiu,

Zheng, and Asia Society. 2008, 85–89). They were also asked to attend a struggle session.

"Millions of people were persecuted in the violent struggles and suffered a wide range of

abuses, including public humiliation, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, hard labour, sustained

harassment, seizure of property, and sometimes execution" (Chiu, Zheng, and Asia Society.

2008, 85–89). These were grim and terrifying days for those intellectuals.

Socialist education was reformed critically during this period, led by the central Cultural

Revolution group. The old education system had evolved during the late Qing dynasty and

later accepted teaching content and teaching method from the Soviet Union and the capitalist

world. As a result, there was considered to be an urgent need to break the old system and

build a new socialist one (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 412). There were

criticisms of the reactionary educational thought of Confucianism. However, legalism's

ancient progressive academic propositions, which could serve the current struggle, were

advocated (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 465). There were also voices arguing

that moral values to be taught should be more general ethical principles, combining the best of

traditional values and new communist morality. The concepts of loyalty, filial piety, chastity,

righteousness, propriety, modesty, and the bourgeois way of making careful calculations

should be inherited.

(Bratton 1978, 14).

Agriculture, national defence, and public infrastructure developed well with the additional

support of an intellectual-labour camp during the Cultural Revolution. It promoted equal

rights to education among all social classes. It was also utopianist and spread to European

countries such as Italy and France. After the industrialisation of northern Italy, the wealth gap

between the north and the south increased. In the 1960s, Tuscan peasant families fought for

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[1] "Cowshed" in the context of the Cultural Revolution means the places the revolutionary government used to restrict and remould the freedom of the intellectuals, such as offices, schools, basements, hostels, farms, etc.

longer school time to meet their basic education needs since they did not have extra money to pay for education after school. *Letter to a teacher*, a book written by poor country schoolchildren, has touched the lives of many readers in Italy and other countries. It generated enormous social and educational concerns and resulted in changes in the middle-class oriented schools of Italy (Scuola 1971, 3). The Cultural Revolution and the Paris Movement of 1968 also influenced each other. In China, the Red Guards sang the Internationale imported from France and chanted the slogans of the Paris communes. In France, Maoism and the little red book became the spiritual arm of radical youth. They also learned how to organise and mobilise social forces (Phoenix History 2015). However, the Cultural Revolution and the Paris Movement were opposite in spirit, and the Cultural Revolution did more harm to society. Firstly, for many French people, the Cultural Revolution was anarchist, a spontaneous revolt against the oligarchy that, as many later recalled, was akin to the French revolution attacking the Bastille (a notorious prison in Paris). Second, unlike what was happening on the street in Beijing, where cultural and religious sites were destroyed, in France, knowledge and scholarship were treated with unprecedented respect instead of scorned and broken. Far from being buffeted by students, the scholars as a whole, Sartre, Michel, Lacan, and other cultural figures sided with the students and even joined the front line of the movement. Also, art and culture, from performance art to new film genres, have flourished far from being suppressed. Different thoughts and philosophies flourished --- from structuralism to deconstructionism, from existentialism to anarchism, and so forth, in Paris.

To conclude, the Cultural Revolution brought China's higher education to a virtual halt for some time. "All colleges and universities were closed until 1970, and most universities did not open until 1972." (Meng and Gregory 2002, 936). The entrance exams were not restored until 1977. Between 1968 and 1979, 17 million of China's urban youths were sent to the countryside, which deprived them of the opportunity for higher education. The status of traditional Chinese culture was also severely damaged due to the Cultural Revolution, and the practice of many traditional customs weakened. Values in formal education were abandoned.

This history weighed heavily on the social science higher education that CIS' obtained in China, which will be discussed more in *chapter 7*.

Stage three: 1979-the 2010s

After ten years of the Cultural Revolution, the CCP authorities began economic reforms and, in 1978, introduced the market principles promoted by the leader Deng Xiaoping. With the Reform and Opening-up of the economy, China's higher education reform and development were again on the agenda. At the same time, Chinese students started again to go abroad for life and study, but the students were of a different type from those of former generations.

The reform of education started with institutional reforms in high education institutions. The Ministry of Education introduced new teaching materials for Chinese primary and secondary schools. Resources came from the US, the UK, West Germany, France, Japan, and other countries to compile teaching materials for reference (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 521). In addition, the People's Education Press published a Foreign Education Series in 1980 (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 601). The following decade of the 1980s witnessed market-oriented structural reform and the respect for knowledge and talent in higher education. Key primary schools and key universities were established. Students who could pass strict examinations were enrolled in key middle schools and universities (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 492). Social science education began again after a twenty year pause (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 609). In 1981, the central government claimed that China should build on social science and humanities while developing science and technology. In addition, traditional knowledge regained respect. For example, students in primary school were required to start reading some ancient prose (Zhong yang jiao yu ke xue yan jiu suo 1984, 628).

The characteristics of the era of CIS since the 1980s have been open and harmonious. When the policy for self-funded students going abroad opened to the public in the early 1980s, some Chinese people went abroad to study from 1980 to 2000, though the vast majority of them were from the elite. In contrast to those CIS before 1978 who returned as leading talents to help China's development, after the opening-up policy in 1978, and especially after the

experience of the Cultural Revolution, the intention of studying abroad in this phase was no longer to save the country. The intention changed into "understanding the world and experiencing new ways of life with a focus on individual experience, no matter whether it was good or bad" (Cheng 1999, 76). Entering the 21st century, the number of self-funded CIS was rapidly growing worldwide. The project forms and range of destination countries increased, and the age group for CIS enlarged. For example, there were around 3,200,000 CIS just in the period of six years from 2013-2018, which was surprisingly equal to about 53% of the total CIS since 1978. The US and the UK are the two most popular destination countries, and other countries in the OECD have followed. CIS in the post-2000s displays popularisation, with diverse motivations and more robust individuality for studying abroad. Affected by the marketisation of global higher education and the new stage of modernisation in China, the wave of CIS has reached its historical peak in the 21st century. Large numbers of CIS see their education abroad as a comprehensive behaviour that seeks education and degree and an international perspective and opportunity for folk cultural exchanges between China and the world.

Chinese people's kinship and social relations experienced some apparent changes as well. *Guan Xi (关系) – "functional relationships between people"*, formerly regarded as a unique factor in the normal order of Chinese society, was now seen as a utilitarian means to strive for personal interests since the 1990s. *Guan Xi* constitutes a Chinese individual's small local world, in which they have their moral code on which basis people interact (Yan 2017, 135). In this small world, *Guan Xi* is what Mauss called a general social phenomenon because it provides individuals with a social network encompassing economic, political, social, and extracurricular activities (Yan 2017). Equally important, this small local world is both moral and emotional, reflected in the concept of the so-called *Ren Qing* (人情). Yan (1996) interprets *Ren Qing*, in its traditional sense, as an ethical system based on common sense knowledge in rural society. Moreover, the villagers also make essential judgments about the propriety of a person based on *Ren Qing* (Yan 2017, 300). In other words, *Ren Qing* gives value to everyday interactions. However, in the new China in the 1990s, Chinese individuals

added many functional relationships to the existing network of *Guan Xi*. "When they have to give gifts to get things done, the original flavor of *Guan Xi* and *Ren Qing* are changed. "Zou Hou Men (走后门) --- Through the back door" became a synonym for new *Guan Xi*, and new *Ren Qing* became exchangeable resources. The emotional and moral elements in the original meaning of *Ren Qing* have disappeared, and they have mainly become tools to achieve utilitarian goals (Yan 2017)." By the end of the 1990s, the new *Guan Xi* and *Ren Qing* became increasingly important in Chinese peoples' social interactions.

In conclusion, the social context, the related education reforms in each period of the PRC, and the changing role of the CIS since the 1950s have been briefly introduced in this section. Firstly, a general acknowledgement of the past historical period of "a complete inheritance of the Soviet education system" helps understand the pre-university education that this generation of CIS' obtained in China when it started school in the later 1990s. Secondly, the review of the history of the Cultural Revolution can reveal the stagnation of modern higher education during the 1960s-1970s, which directly interfered with the development of social science education and research in China, and hence shapes the learning experience that today's CIS obtained. How this stagnation influences Chinese students' social science learning and academic writing practice today will be explained in detail in chapters *7 and 8*. Thirdly, a description of CIS' changing role since the 1950s, especially since the 2000s, helps the reader to focus on the group of CIS discussed in this thesis. Fourthly, an explanation of the changing meaning of *Guan Xi* and *Ren Qing* in Chinese culture will help us understand how CIS built their social networking at X University in *chapter 5*.

Summary

In sum, besides legacies in Chinese philosophy and ancient Chinese higher education, the radically changing social context in modern China also affects the study practice of CIS today. Firstly, due to various political needs during different periods, CIS have, for an extended period, been essential in translating Western education/knowledge into economic and social benefits for individuals, institutions, and the nation of China. They also changed their role after the 1980s, turned to chasing individual goals and reached their historical peak in number

in the 2020s. The review of this role change provides a context for the reader to target the group of CIS included in this research.

Secondly, the reform of literature from classical to vernacular in the New Culture Movement influenced the CIS' literature writing and academic writing practice in social science and humanities in recent decades, which will be discussed in *chapter 8*. Thirdly, introducing modern education from Japan and the US contributed to academic development in science and technology. This resulted in China's scientific research and education becoming very similar to that of the West. It provides a background understanding of CIS' learning practice in the field of science in *chapter 7*.

Fourthly, the review of the history of the Cultural Revolution can reveal the stagnation of modern higher education during the 1960s-1970s, which affected the careers of many who are now senior academics. It directly interfered with the development of social science education and related research in China, which shapes the CIS' learning experience today. Fifthly, the review of the development of higher education in modern China reveals a feature of continual change and development in higher education in China, with resources from different eastern and Western countries. This feature of change and development is still evident during the time of this research. The details of this will be highlighted again in related parts in *chapter 7*.

4.3 A brief history of higher education in the UK and the changes in the research degree program

This section briefly reviews the birth of modern UK higher education, highlighting key events. The first is how the Scientific Rebirth in the seventeenth century set the foundation for modern UK higher education. Secondly, how higher education in the UK has been transformed since neoliberalism in the 1970s. It especially looks at how this shift affects the way PhDs are supervised. This review aims to provide a context of the CIS' research degree study in their UK higher education, which could build on the related ethnographic discussions in *chapter 7*.

Universities are among the few institutions directly contributing to society continuously from medieval Latin Christendom to contemporary Western civilisation (Mehl, Kittelson, and Transue 1985, 1). Only in Latin Christendom were the scholars --- the company of masters and students --- gathered together into the Universities whose entire purpose was to develop and disseminate knowledge continuously and systematically with little regard for the consequences of their activities (Mehl, Kittelson, and Transue 1985, 1).

The second half of the fifteenth century and the first two decades of the sixteenth constitute a phase of university history under the rising star of humanism (Mehl, Kittelson, and Transue 1985, 48). At the same time, Chinese higher education was dominated by the new Confucianism. Although the modern university emerged in the early 19th century, the Western scientific renaissance, which was directly influenced by the Humanistic Renaissance (Gribbin 2003, 5), laid the foundation for the emergence of the modern university in the UK. Before science entered the university and, inspired by the Reformation, gradually replaced the dominance of scholasticism (Mehl, Kittelson, and Transue 1985, 52), independent research institutions such as the Royal Society were "invisible colleges" of natural philosophers and physicians ("History of the Royal Society | Royal Society" n.d.). The Society's early years saw revolutionary advancements in the conduct and communication of science. They were known as "the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge" ("History of the Royal Society | Royal Society" n.d.). Scientific research methods were widely used by scholars of that age and have become the mainstream method to explore the world's truth. According to Gribben's review of scientific development in the seventeenth century, "in the discovery of secret things, and the investigation of hidden causes, stronger reasons are obtained from sure experiments and demonstrated arguments than from probable conjectures and the opinions of philosophical speculators" (Gribbin 2003, 71). These scientific research methods have also become the basis for the division of disciplines and research methods in various disciplines in modern UK universities.

Leaving aside these ancient foundations, the leading universities established in Britain from the late 19th century to the present were created by "royal charter", a form of state license

granted by the Act of Parliament. They were primarily created on the initiative of business and political élites in particular localities; at least since 1945, they were funded by the central government but managed with considerable autonomy. Strong academic independence was traditionally coupled with close relations with business, local government and the professions (Radice 2013, 409).

Recent shifts in the way PhDs are supervised

The British PhD is a relatively new degree. It has its roots in the birth of universities in medieval Europe in the thirteenth century, where the award of a doctorate was a license to teach, not a recognition of ability or achievement in research. In Germany, the doctorate came to acquire special status as a research degree. This development owed much to the vision of Humboldt, who founded the University of Berlin in 1810 as the first modern research university (Park 2005, 191). In Britain, higher doctorates (the DSc and DLitt) were introduced by the Universities of London, Edinburgh, Oxford and Cambridge during the 1870s. Still, the first lower doctorate (the PhD) was not introduced until 1917, initially by Oxford. Then, the PhD was established in almost all departments of all British universities with practically identical regulations for nearly three years (Park 2005, 192). The award of a doctorate required successful attendance at seminars, submission of an acceptable thesis, passing a comprehensive oral examination, and emphasising original and creative research (Park 2005, 191).

Because of the rise of neoliberalism since the 1970s in the Western world, there were transformations in the economy and politics (Radice 2013, 407). Within this context, the United Kingdom was one of the first countries to adopt the new public management policies of the 1980s (Williams 2004, 241) and the first country to apply neoliberal thinking to higher education (Radice 2013, 411). Since then, the purpose of the university has changed from teaching elites in business, politics, culture, and the professions to provide marketable skills and research output to the knowledge economy (Radice 2013, 408).

Concerns over cost efficiency and the needs of the labour market have influenced the reformulation of government policy and the research councils responsible for funding research degree education (John Hockey 1996a, 359). In the 1980s, "full cost" fees were imposed on overseas students, mostly postgraduates, who thus became a significant source of discretionary income for universities (Mehl, Kittelson, and Transue 1985, 411). The research degree education thus changed dramatically. Undertaking a PhD has traditionally been viewed as a form of academic apprenticeship, and training inevitably has a part to play in producing a well-rounded academic practitioner (Metcalfe 2006, 79). However, according to the UK Council for Graduate Education (1997), the qualifications obtained through a doctorate involve "mastery of the subject; mastery of analytical breadth (where methods, techniques, contexts, and data are concerned) and mastery of depth (the contribution itself, judged to be competent and original and of high quality)" (Park 2005, 193; Metcalfe 2006, 79). This means that after the 1970s the doctorate has been reconceptualised in Britain as a training period for future researchers rather than a work that changes the course of human knowledge (Park 2005, 190).

The 1980s saw a continuing debate within educational circles in the United Kingdom over various aspects of the social science PhD, including, in particular, "poor" submission rates (John Hockey 1996b, 481; Metcalfe 2006, 80). Responding to these governmental concerns, research councils have made their financial support to academic departments (and in turn to individual students) conditional upon a gradually increasing submission rate for doctoral theses within a four-year deadline ("Science and Engineering Research Council Research Report" 1991; John Hockey 1996a, 359). In addition, departments are now required to provide a mandatory course in research methods for their first-year PhD students. This course constitutes up to 60% of the student's academic time during their initial year of study (John Hockey 1996b, 482).

The way PhDs are supervised was also changed. In the UK, these changes have been underpinned by *A Code of Practice for Research Degrees*, published nationally by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2004). The Code introduced minimum standards for

research degree programs, including team supervision and annual progress monitoring, etc. (Humphrey and Simpson 2012, 2). Building on earlier research into supervisory styles, Gatfield and Alpert (2002) have extracted two dimensions upon which supervision styles have been arrayed, namely "structure" and "support" (Deuchar 2008, 490). Two general overarching strategies were found in this context: a relatively unstructured approach, giving students a large degree of intellectual freedom, and a much more structured approach within which close operational control was maintained by the supervisor (John Hockey 1996b, 481). A typical format within this kind of structured relationship is for the supervisor to demand the student that a particular piece of work must be accomplished within specific deadlines. The thesis is then undertaken in a series of steps, where one piece of work is completed, subjected to critique, and revised, and then the student and supervisor move on to the next work. The former kind of strategy that supervisors adopt is relatively unstructured in that it is less explicit in terms of the specific direction of the thesis, its timetabling, and so on. (John Hockey 1996b, 484).

The review of the birth of modern UK higher education, the changes in higher education since the 1970s and the changes in doing a research degree provides a context of the current situation of doing a research degree in UK higher education. It further contributes to understanding CIS' learning experience in their research degree programs in *chapter 7*, their various supervisory relationships with their supervisors presented in *chapter 7*, and their academic writing practice in *chapter 8*.

Summary of chapter

In summary, this chapter provides context information on CIS' cross-cultural learning challenges and difficulties in knowledge understanding by reviewing "the existing intellectual currents in ancient China", "the changing national context in modern China", and "a brief history of higher education in the UK".

To conclude from each section, the chapter argues firstly that some of the Confucian ideas and practices in education still retained their influence in Chinese education over the CIS. In

contrast, others have been carried forward and transformed under a complex and constantly changing process. Those still maintained are as follows: to start with, the spirit of Sage education in ancient Chinese philosophy appears in today's education in China by including the canons of Saints in the textbook of schoolchildren, which contributes to my interpretation of the CIS' academic writing in *chapter 8*. In addition, the methodology of Chinese philosophy still influences the Chinese literature and persuasion style, which is "rich in implication and short in the written text". This explains the initial academic writing habits of the CIS in *chapter 8*, which are different from the Western ones of "precise reasoning and detailed argumentation". After that, part of the ancient teaching method is inherited --- "the spirit of hard-working", "training students according to their aptitudes", and "gaining new insights through reviewing old materials", which will be shown in the discussion of CIS' practical experience in *chapter 6*. Those transformed are as follows: as higher education shifted from elitism to popularisation since the 1990s, the training goals of education have become more practical, closer to the non-mainstream educational purposes of Mohists in ancient China. In addition, the hierarchical aspect has weakened in the teacher-student relationship, but the spiritual inheritance has been retained with new combinations and transformations. A detailed discussion of the inheritance and new combinations of the student-supervisor relationship will be presented and discussed in *chapter 7*. Moreover, the degree of freedom in teaching methods for students has been changing. Finally, *Ke-Ju* Examinations and *Ba-Gu* writing style affect contemporary CIS' cross-cultural writing practices. This will be shown in *chapter 8.*

Secondly, the historical and political context, the changing role of the CIS in modern history and the development of modern Chinese education help the discussion in later ethnographic chapters. The concluding points are as follows: CIS has been essential in translating Western education/knowledge into economic and social benefits in China for an extended period. They also changed their role in the post-1980s, turned to the pursuit of individual goals, and reached their historical peak in numbers in the 2020s. This helps the reader target the CIS group characteristics in this research. In addition, the reform of literature from classical to

vernacular in the New Culture Movement influenced the CIS' literature writing and academic writing practice in social science and humanities in later decades, which will be discussed in *chapter 8*. Moreover, a general acknowledgement of the past historical period of "a complete inheritance of the Soviet education system" helps understand this generation of CIS' education experience in pre-university education when it started in the later 1990s. Finally, the review of the history of the Cultural Revolution can reveal the stagnation of modern higher education from the 1960s-1970s, affecting the careers of many who are now senior academics. It directly interfered with the development of social science education and related research in China, shaping the CIS' learning experience today.

Thirdly, the review of a brief history of higher education in the UK provides a context for doing a research degree in UK higher education today. It contributes to understanding CIS' learning experience in their research degree programs in *chapter 7*, their various relationships with their supervisors presented in *chapter 7*, and their academic writing practice in *chapter 8*.

Chapter 5: CIS' life and challenges at X University

This chapter describes the life and challenges of the CIS I researched at X University. It begins with a section explaining the research site, X University. Section two continues with a discussion of CIS' life at X University. How <u>CIS cope</u> with studying at X University by building various networks and how they interact with different student groups and local businesses is described. After that, in the third section, how the CIS <u>interact</u> with other Chinese students from other parts of China when they are in the UK is highlighted. This diversity of student composition is appreciated and helps explain the various difficulties the CIS met in their UK study to be considered in later chapters. The multiple challenges and pressure faced by the CIS are discussed. Overall, the discussion of the chapter aims to bring the readers into my field, to know the site and the Chinese students in this research, and to understand the challenges they face and how they cope with them before entering their diversified learning stories. Since my field site in China has been introduced in the methodology chapter *(chapter 2)*, it will not be repeated here.

5.1 A description of the site

X University is a collegiate public research university in a northeast city in England, UK. The university was founded by an Act of Parliament in 1832 and incorporated by royal charter in 1837. Situating X University in the UK higher education system, it was the first recognised university to open in England after Oxford and Cambridge. It has ranked within the top 6 best UK universities for many years. X university is one of the few universities still maintaining the college system. The main functions of the university are divided between the academic departments and its 17 colleges. Generally, the academic departments perform research and provide teaching, while the colleges are responsible for life arrangements on campus. Although the city is much older than its university, the university is integrated into the city of X, and the city of X expanded as the university grew. The River W flows through the town and creates a peninsula in the city's centre. At the base of the arm is the Market Place, which hosts regular markets on Saturdays.

It is the city's centre, and you can always see university students and residents getting together in the Market Place. The Market Place and the surrounding streets are the city's main commercial areas. From this square, the H road leading south is occupied by the university, castle and the cathedral. They composed the earliest core of the university departments and colleges. Over time, the scope of X University expanded. It occupied most of the area south of the city centre, part of the area east of the city centre and a small portion north of the city centre. Academic departments, colleges and other on-campus facilities are distributed in the abovementioned areas.

Apart from the academic departments' settings like other universities, the college system is unique at X University. There are, at present, 17 colleges. Five old colleges are situated on the peninsula in the city centre. Most of the newer colleges are in the city's south, while a few other colleges are in the east. Colleges are mixed communities of staff and students from all subject areas. Some students live in college accommodations and eat in college during term time. Each college provides student support staff and a vast range of student-led activities with the college's characteristics.

Other than departments and colleges, places where students are active are the universities' libraries, the students' unions, the student societies, the universities' sports centres, student accommodations off campus, churches, and other public places in the city centre.

5.2 An ethnographic sketch of CIS' networks on and off campus

In this section, I sketch how CIS built their life at X University based on my participant observation. I analyse students' needs in life in the university context with the assistance of Maslow's *hierarchy of needs* theory. After that, I describe how students integrate themselves into university life in various student groups, with different individual cases. A brief introduction of the background of my key informants will be given, along with the descriptions.

Agreeing with Mcleod's explanation of the five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow 1954), a person needs first to fulfil the demands on the physiological level, which includes basic human needs such as water, food, and rest. All Chinese students can meet this

level of needs with additional economic support from their families or other funding sources. After achieving this basic level of needs, one needs to satisfy their needs on the psychological level of belongingness and love, including safety and security, intimate relationships, friends, and other types of group inclusion (Mcleod 2018). For most Chinese students in UK universities, after settling down with their basic life needs, they wish to build their world of "psychological support" in their new life and focus on their academic studies.

There are two circles of society (*Quan Zi* 圈子) for Chinese students at X University-- the international students' circle and the Chinese students' circle. The international students' circle can be described as a *stranger's circle*. In this circle, Chinese students get to know other mates through classrooms, research postgraduates' offices, college dining halls, on and off-campus shared accommodations, student societies, bars, church activities, etc. The international students' circle is always friendly, open, and inclusive. Chinese students more curious about different people and cultures will enjoy the circle and actively participate in related activities. Socialising with international students is usually more relaxed for Chinese students who come from a society with complex social relationships.

Yuan, one of my key informants, immensely enjoyed her campus life in the baseball society. Yuan was born in a small city in south China in Guangxi province but was admitted to a top university in Beijing. She came to the UK for a Master's degree program with an open mind to experience UK education and culture. Yuan told me she loved the year at X University very much. Despite a good result in her academic study, Yuan also actively engaged in baseball society and made many good friends from various cultures. Yuan said that the time she spent on the baseball team was the most relaxed; she could always enjoy simple happiness with team members in the student society. Like Yuan, other Chinese students can consistently meet their needs for primary emotional support in such a friendly international students' circle.

A similar experience is appreciated in my participation in the research postgraduates' room in the anthropology department at X University. Students in the research postgraduates' room

come from very different backgrounds, for example, Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Sweden, the US, Iran, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, China, and Korea. The research students in the room share foods and stories from their own culture and get together both in and out of the office. Chinese students actively participated in this international students' circle and enjoyed good friendships with mates from different cultural backgrounds.

But one interesting observation in the field is that Chinese students do not socialise with local UK students very often. Several informants in my field shared with me their experiences. May is a Chinese postgraduate student who did taught Master's programs in anthropology at X University. She came from a working-class family in Shenzhen (a big city in south China, opposite Hong Kong). I have known her since her first arrival at the university and kept in contact with her throughout her academic year. May participated in a conference organising committee in the department of anthropology. Her unhappy experience of socialising with UK students on that committee impressed me greatly. *"I joined this conference committee with a relaxed mind since undergraduates are very active in participation and don't need us to do anything. So, I use it as a small field to observe each of them. The conference organisers are indifferent and reluctant to talk to us Asian students. They are only willing to talk to the department's white British students and teachers. Then I began to be disappointed with the department. I felt that the students in this department were too judgemental; their prejudice was too deep. They do not act like students studying anthropology. It was not until I met a few good teachers in the department that I gradually changed my mind. That handsome and well-dressed British guy was very unfriendly to me. I was arranged to sit next to him and asked him language and course-related questions. He responded indifferently and told me to go to the language centre for a class. A few of my Western classmates are also friendly, but they are also international students."* Similar words are spoken by Xi. Xi is a Chinese student doing psychology at X University; she also had a bad experience with her British classmates, so she gave up socialising with them. *"I don't understand why the British are so indifferent; they are very reluctant to communicate with us. I was the only Asian student in my class, and I greeted*

them warmly every time I went to class, but they didn't respond accordingly. No one even wanted to sit with me in class, making me uncomfortable. I said hello to them when I met them on the bus in town, but they ignored me. In the end, I was tired of getting along with foreign classmates. It is better to find a relaxed state for myself." I was once curious and asked a friend in the anthropology department from the

US about his contact with our young colleagues from the UK. He said, "*I also find it difficult to develop a close relationship with British students. Difficult to build a close friendship with them*".

Besides the interaction of Chinese students with British students, the only field material of contact between Chinese students and British Chinese is from me. I once volunteered in the students' Open Day and was divided into the same group with a British Chinese. I've remained as friendly as ever and shown a little more kindness to the British Chinese girl as we share some background, but she appeared to be more willing to belong to the British identity and has no extra intimacy with me. So our brief conversation ends here.

However, all these experiences in the international students' circle are regarded as the "spice of study life" for most CIS in my field site, regardless of whether or not they are good. As implied in *chapter 4* (see section 4.2.3), since most of the CIS today are here to get a highvalue degree for the job market back in China, they value the Chinese students' circle as of much greater importance than did former generations of CIS, to accumulate social relations of *Guan Xi* in their future life and career in China.

As for the Chinese students' circle, I divide students' social activities into three styles: *the acquaintance social circle* of social, *the distant acquaintance social circle*, and *the stranger circle* in which new friends are made. The appearance of the combination of three different social types of CIS in the Chinese students' circle is caused by the varied reasons of 1) CIS' various life backgrounds in China, 2) their different expectations of life and study in the UK,

and 3) the changing forms of interpersonal relationship in this mobile and fluid modern information age. CIS in UK universities will need to adapt to a global campus environment and adjust to a vast and diverse Chinese student group consisting of people from different geographic areas and cultures, family backgrounds, social classes, etc. Therefore, three different social styles appeared within the Chinese students' circle. In the following paragraphs, I will introduce how students socialise with each other in the three different contexts at X University.

Agreeing with anthropologist Yan Yunxiang's (1996) description of *the flow of gifts: reciprocity and social networks in a Chinese village*, it is widely accepted that the Chinese society is a *Ren Qing* (人情) society (see section 4.2.3). To accumulate *Guan Xi* (关系) is essential in China. Though Yan used *Ren Qing* to describe social relations among people in rural China, *Ren Qing* and *Guan Xi* are the common foundation of Chinese society, even in urban areas. As Weiwei, a key informant, once said to me:

"My White colleagues always say that Chinese students stick to their group and do not socialise with other home and international students. It is true. It wastes huge energy for me to socialise with colleagues from other countries. We could discuss our research in the office, but I prefer to socialise with Chinese mates for the time outside the office. Since most of us will return to China to build our careers and family, Chinese mates have more social values than those from other countries. We are also here to know more Chinese and accumulate useful Guan Xi, which we could bring back to China for our future life. Westerners would not understand this deeply."

Weiwei was a mature student at X University. She was a PhD student in anthropology when I interviewed her. She came from a family in southeast China doing business. Before coming to X University, she did two Master's degrees in the UK and had several years of working experience in China. Compared with younger Chinese students with no working experience, Weiwei had a clearer mind about how she would like to spend her time at X University during her PhD journey, after years of exploration. She valued this opportunity very much. As

Weiwei says, Chinese students must accumulate *Guan Xi* in the *Ren Qing* society of China, and the organisations are called *Quan Zi*.

There are different kinds of *Quan Zi* among the CIS at X university. Firstly, students naturally get together through "groups" online and offline. Online social groups such as WeChat groups (a social media app widely used among the Chinese) work as a platform for students to share information, resources, social support for university life, and networking. In addition to WeChat group chat, the WeChat friend circle, Facebook and Instagram also work as online social groups, providing students with platforms to conduct their social life online and network with others. For example, I got my key informant "Six" through the WeChat friend circle. Unlike most Chinese students at X University, Six was awarded funding by the China Scholarship Council (CSC) and was doing a PhD degree in Global China studies at a top university in Beijing, China, while he was an exchange student at X University. Before coming to the UK, Six had exchange study experience in Japan and New Zealand. He liked to write reflections on life at X University, comparing with his former life experience each month on the WeChat friend circle. One day, I read the following piece: *"I am getting more homesick this month. After the honeymoon period in the first month, different kinds of social events end due to the higher work pressure. What is left for me is a sense of loneliness. I do not know how friends from Germany, the Netherlands, etc., deal with this feeling. I am a person who enjoys being alone. But sometimes, I feel that the night is too quiet in X city."* Because of this information from the WeChat friends circle, I contacted Six, asked him out to chat, and invited him to participate in my research (see below). In addition to online social groups, students also get together offline through classrooms, dormitories, shared houses, college activities, pre-sessional school, church events, and student societies, especially the *Chinese Students and Scholars Association* (CSSA), *W Society* (a game society organised by a Chinese student at X University) and *H Society* (another student society managed by a Chinese student at X University).

Secondly, to get along with each other further, the Chinese students organised *Ju* (局, themed parties) to form their *Quan Zi*. Any excuse you can imagine could be used to set up a *Ju*. For example, there are Fan *Ju* (饭局) --- cook and eat a meal together, hotpot *Ju* (火锅局), Karaoke *Ju* (唱歌局), photography *Ju* (拍照局), traditional festival *Ju* (传统节日局), birthday-themed *Ju* (生日局), gossip-themed *Ju* in the form of the afternoon tea party (八卦 局), game-themed *Ju* (游戏局), spirits-themed *Ju* (酒局), hiking-themed *Ju* (徒步局) etc. For example, one of my key informants, Lin, whose stories about learning will be presented in later chapters, liked to organise Fan *Ju* very much with her department friends from home and abroad. Lin did a bachelor's degree in anthropology from a top university in China. She came from a local official's family in Beijing. She has the ambition of doing an academic job after graduation and went to the UK to expect an excellent degree program design in anthropology, where the discipline originated. Lin has got an outstanding character, and she is a good cook. She and her classmates often got together when she was at X University. Lin told me that her classmates always helped her with group work in class, and she wishes to express her love to her classmates by cooking dishes for them and having parties with them. She enjoys knowing people from different cultures through organising Fan Ju.

Thirdly, the "social butterflies" among Chinese students each year also have the ability and attraction to form *Quan Zi*. These include those who stayed at X University for more than five years and the leaders in university associations and societies. For example, there is a *Quan Zi* named "Year After Year". It is organised by PhD students from China who stayed at X University for years. They get together with students at similar stages and support each other by having dinner monthly.

Last, the *Quan Zi* of Chinese businesses at X University should not be ignored. There was only one Chinese supermarket in city X when I arrived in 2016. However, by 2021there were three Chinese restaurants, five Chinese supermarkets, and two Chinese bubble tea shops in the small centre of X city. The growth of these Chinese businesses confirmed the rapid increase of Chinese students in UK universities. The Chinese businesses also have close connections

with the Chinese student societies and students at X University and became an inevitable part of *Quan Zi* among Chinese Students. Firstly, the owner of a Chinese supermarket provides housing for Chinese students to rent. Chinese landlords in X city are willing to offer short-term rentals to the CIS when it is difficult for the CIS to rent anywhere else at the end of their studies. Secondly, Chinese supermarkets provide part-time positions and give Chinese students work-study opportunities. Thirdly, the Chinese businesses in city X also closely relate to the Chinese student societies on campus, such as the *Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA)* and the *W Society* at X University. They will sometimes sponsor events held by Chinese student societies. Students who maintain good relationships with local Chinese businesses will also reciprocally promote the businesses. Fourthly, the Chinese supermarket offers luggage storage and postal services for Chinese graduates. It is a valuable service in regular times and especially useful for Chinese students during the COVID-19 epidemic.

In sum, Chinese students get together in the social style of *acquaintances societies* at X University*,* accumulating *Guan Xi* and bringing them back to the *Ren Qing* (人情) based culture in China with the organisation of *Quan Zi*. They start forming their Quan Zi through the various online and offline groups and further develop their relationships through the themed activities of Ju. There are central figures in the Chinese students' circle in city X, just like anywhere else in Chinese communities. In addition, the Chinese business flourishes in X city as more and more Chinese students come to study at this university. They, in turn, provide helpful service to the CIS in X city.

Unlike the *acquaintance circle* described above, where people know each other well, caring about and helping each other in daily life, the *distant acquaintances' circle* is organised in the same form as the *acquaintances' circle* but with weaker emotional links. Students choosing this way to socialise with others aim to accumulate the social support and safety requirements necessary for them based on the principle of profitable exchange. Usually, students will use the power relations among *Quan Zi* to seek the help they need. They use the *Quan Zi* they have accumulated to seek the information, resource, and personal development opportunities

they long for. The social style existed because many CIS needed to focus their energy on study and job preparation, at least during part of their study time. With limited time, emotional exchanges and support among people seem to be a big luxury to some of the CIS. Because of the limited resources and high home competition, some students experience considerable anxiety. During my fieldwork, Cai was a student of this type. He once told me, *"Do you think only female students get depression or low mood? Not really. Men will have the same problem. We also need to face loneliness in our tiny dorm. We must face the study pressure, the pressure of a job application, and the pressure of living in a new environment in this country. I stayed in bed all day when I was in a negative mood. I could not even bear to leave my room to eat. I lay on my bed all day and wasted my time while feeling anxious at the same time without doing anything."*

Cai is a male student at X University business school. His pressure came not only from life and study at the university but also from the anxiety of the high competition in jobs and life in Shanghai, China, where he wanted to settle down. Cai was born in a city near Shanghai and did his bachelor's degree in Shanghai. Like many other young Chinese people who have ambitions to develop their careers and settle down in big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai or Shenzhen, Cai aims to achieve a degree at X University business school to better prepare for his job search in Shanghai after the one-year program finishes. He arranged many other tasks for himself in his year of study at X University. For example, to get the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) exam certificate. Cai did not socialise very often with Chinese mates with limited time and energy but concentrated on his academic work and job preparations.

Besides the former two social styles, there is also a *stranger's circle* of social interactions among CIS at X University. As China is developing fast and at an unbalanced speed from region to region, some students come from rather internationalised metropolises such as Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Shenzhen. These big cities are more like Gesellschaft societies and advocate individualism in the social environment. As a result, Chinese students in the community of X University who come from these areas might have a custom of social relations which are less complicated than the traditional and typical Chinese way of social

life. For example, the way Hong Kong student behaves is usually very different from a student who originated in northeast China. Despite this, different personal characters also result in different forms of socialising and building one's circle of support.

To sum up, there are different styles of social interactions among Chinese students at X University, which generate the Chinese students' circle. Together with the international students' circle, all these social styles constitute how CIS could positively engage in relationships and meet their needs for emotional security and support, friendship, intimacy, and respect in their life in X city, and seek help in emergencies their life. The description of CIS' life and networks at X University also shows that Chinese students respect informal systems outside the existing formal systems the university provided and are unwilling to distinguish between them. They use the resources provided by the university to integrate into the international student community while maintaining their local traditions of Chinese social life. More details on the diversity among the CIS will be described in the next section.

5.3 The diversified Chinese students and their diversified life challenges

Focussing on what was touched on in 5.2, an essential feature of the CIS at X University are the complexities of the composition of the Chinese students. They differ geographically and interact with each other differently. They also face very different challenges because of such differences. This section looks at the diversity among the CIS at X University and their diversified difficulties in life on campus.

5.3.1 The diversified Chinese students at X University

Chinese students occupy around ten per cent of the student population at X University. Geographically, some came from metropolises such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou. Some came from major cities such as Hangzhou (Southeast Chiang near Shanghai) and Chengdu (the biggest city in southwest China). A small portion of the students

came from small local towns. It is worth noting that the small local cities in southeast China are generally wealthy and fast developing. In contrast, the small local cities in the rest of China are usually economically less developed. My informants Alex, Lin, Joy, and May, are the representatives of students from the metropolis. Yang, Cai, Ying, and Miumiu came from major cities. Weiwei represents students from small local cities in the southeast of China. Xi, Six and Yuan represent students from other small local cities in China. The differences in geographic distribution partly represent their diverse family and cultural background. In my field, Chinese students' interactions with other Chinese students from different geographical regions in China are generally good. Such interaction allows everyone to meet people from different provinces in China, make different friends, taste foods from other parts of China, and learn about their diversified regional cultures. However, there are always different voices.

"*There is also geographical discrimination among Chinese students. Students from Beijing and Shanghai are very proud. They look down on their mates from other places and have less contact with them. Students from Shanghai will look down on the rest of the country. Students from Guangzhou will feel they are culturally similar to Hong Kong people. They speak Cantonese to distinguish themselves from students in other parts of China. The students from Shanghai and Guangzhou are also proud of speaking their regional dialects. The students from Hong Kong are the proudest and consider themselves foreigners.*" As a researcher and an international student from China, I do not have this feeling and have not heard this more in the field. But this is what May felt in her experience of socialising with Chinese students at X university.

The age of international students varies greatly. When the youngest undergraduate Chinese student is only 18 years old, the oldest doctoral Chinese student could be 35 years old. Age differences also affect students' ability to adapt to overseas independent living. CIS of similar age gets along with each other more often. In addition to the age gap, there is a significant gender gap in the number of Chinese students studying abroad. Turner (2006) argued that in China today, learning tends to focus on elitist and male-gendered students. I disagree with this argument; as shown in *Chapter 4* (see section 4.2.3), higher education in China has changed

from elitist education to popular education since the 1990s. In addition, there is a higher proportion of female CIS in the UK. In my field, there are also more female informants than male informants. The reason is that more female students are willing to continue their studies after achieving bachelor's degrees and more families are eager to support their daughters financially. The underlying reason lies in China's social background.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree, male graduates are more encouraged to enter society earlier to earn money so that they can start a family sooner; as a Chinese saying goes, *Cheng-Jia-Li-Ye* (成家立业) --- a man should start a family and a career by the age of 30.

Chinese parents are also more willing to make more financial preparations for their sons in marriage if continuing to study is unnecessary. On the other hand, Chinese parents of girls feel no such pressure. They are more willing to support their daughters to learn, gain more knowledge and broaden their minds, especially since this generation of international students is from single-child families, as researched by Fong (Fong 2004).

The explanation for the gender difference raises another question, the source of funding for international students. CIS at X University have three primary sources of grants. The first is a scholarship from X University. The proportion of Chinese international students who come to study through such funding channels is small because there are few scholarships for students from mainland China. The second source of funding is the China Scholarship Council (CSC). The CSC cooperates with UK university departments to jointly provide students with tuition fees and living expenses. My key informants, Six, Yang and Mo, came to X University to study through this channel. The third source of funding is self-funding. It is also the most widespread way of studying in the UK among the CIS. Weiwei, Yuan, May, Six, Lin, Cai and Joy represents this type of student. And the primary source of financing is the parents. Based on my participant observation, there is no significant difference in the relationship between students from different sources of funds.

The family backgrounds of international students are also different. In addition to geographical differences, they can also be divided on financial grounds into middle-class

families, lower-middleclass families, and working-class families financially. Most CIS in this generation came from middle-class and lower-middle-class families, with a small portion coming from working-class families.

Regarding degree goals, around 80 per cent of Chinese students come to study for a Master's degree. The numbers for Bachelor's and doctoral degrees are similar to each other, and the overall number is small. This study looks mainly at the postgraduate CIS at X university, which composes around 90 per cent of the total. Overall, students at the same academic stage socialise more together. For example, in this research, postgraduates who stay for years at X university find it difficult to maintain a friendship with taught postgraduates who leave only after one year's study. Further, in terms of academic background, some students come from First Class ('985') universities (such as my informant Yuan, Yang, Six, Lin and Joy), some students come from Second Class ('211') universities (such as my informant Cai, Ying) and some from other universities in China (such as my informants Weiwei and May).

Students I studied in my fieldwork were enrolled from 2012 to 2018, and their chosen majors are widely distributed. My informants came from the diverse academic departments of anthropology, business school, chemistry, education, engineering, geography, international relations, language centre, law, psychology, etc. The three departments most often chosen by Chinese students are the School of Business, the School of Education, and the Language Centre. As mentioned in *Chapter 1*, Chinese students in business schools make up the most significant proportion of taught postgraduate students from China. This also partly explains why I focus on selecting these departments for further investigation in the field. Differences between disciplines create greater power for CIS' intragroup differentiation. Business and law students are different from those who study anthropology. Their concepts of life and learning goals might vary.

The overseas experience of the CIS is also varied. Some of my informants, such as Weiwei and Six, already had overseas education experience in Western countries, while others did not. This leads to diversity in the difficulties encountered in their life and study. Different students also have different goals for studying abroad. For example, the focus of business school

taught postgraduate students is to get a degree and quickly return to work in China. The primary purpose of Chinese exchange students at X University is to experience the life and culture of British universities. Chinese students also continue studying for degrees and visas for permanent residence in the UK. Yu is a student of this type. Yu studied art for her bachelor's degree in China and wishes to become an artist and stay in the UK. She did two Master's degrees in the UK to get more extended UK visas to continue her art career. During her stay in the UK, she joined the life circle of local artists in north-eastern England for her painting career.

To conclude, CIS vary widely in their region of origin, age, gender, funding source, family background, degree goals, educational background, subject choice, and overseas experience. Some of these differences facilitate students' communication with each other, and some become factors that separate them.

5.3.2 CIS' challenges in life

The previous section described how CIS were actively involved in building their social support network, and this section discusses the difficulties students encountered in university academic life. There are common difficulties that all students share, but individual Chinese students at X University also face individualised challenges.

Students' common difficulty lies in adapting to the many differences between Chinese and UK universities, from space to organisational form. Traditional Chinese universities have a campus concept. The walled area is called a university campus. But X University, like many other British universities, has no idea of the campus in a way familiar to Chinese students. British Universities are usually integrated into a town or city. Corresponding to this are the different organisational forms and minimum units of universities. The smallest unit of a Chinese university is a class. As a fixed unit led by the class tutor, the tutor arranges students' university studies and life. Through the fixed organisation of the class, students usually passively receive information from departments and the university. This organisational unit also provides the original emotional sense of belonging to the students in the same class. Over

the years, WeChat groups of university classes have become the most effective communication platform for information delivery on campus. But that is not the case with UK universities. British universities have classes, but they are relatively loosely organised. This is not a platform where you can steadily obtain personal academic information about the department, college, and university. The University email box takes on this role. Students get in touch with everything about the university primarily through email. When Chinese students first enter university, they are not aware of this and need to take time to understand and adapt to it. Xi is an example of such a Chinese student who took some time getting used to gaining university information through email. In the initial stage, she missed the induction week.

The CIS also face diversified challenges. Though the CIS act positively in adapting to the new life and study at X University, some students are less lucky and less successful in adapting to the new environment, temporarily or permanently. Based on my fieldwork findings, most Chinese students experienced different levels of depression or loneliness during their time at X University including me (see *chapter 2*, section 2.4). Turner (2006) researched CIS' teaching and learning in a UK business school and concluded that the students did not change over the year owing to "the culturally implicit nature of UK academic conventions and that they experienced high levels of emotional isolation and loneliness, which affected their academic confidence"(Turner 2006, 27). Agreeing with Turner's finding, loneliness and depression became high-frequency words in my field conversations. Students experience depression and loneliness for various reasons. It is not just a simple thing like academic pressure, but it also has something to do with the pressure from family, cultural differences, and other personal reasons. Students' backgrounds determine how they approach these issues and how long it will take to overcome them.

The first difficulty comes from dealing with the loneliness of studying abroad alone. Based on fieldwork findings, not all Chinese students are social-loving and can adapt to changes quickly, and many experience different degrees of loneliness. Cai, the male student learning business, told me, "*Male students may also feel lonely, depressed, and unhappy. But we rarely cry. In the UK, a more individualised society, it's still important to have someone to talk to. I*

occasionally want personal space, but I mostly want to communicate with people as people's social attributes are still powerful. What I've learned is that many Chinese students here get depressed. And we don't know how to ask for help. Furthermore, I don't know if I can find practical help."

In addition to Cai, May, my key informant who did an MA anthropology program, was very depressed during her early stay at X University. *"I was depressed for a long time before; later, I fell in love with cooking and doing makeup. In addition, I go to church very often. That is also why I choose X university. Every student experienced a hard life when they were first here. There is a Chinese girl in my class; she works very hard but cannot catch up with the class. She feels terrible. There is another girl from Shanghai. She arrived later than the others and continued having a cold. I do not know how she feels now and whether she can continue her study."*

As I introduced above, May was born in a small city in northwest China, and she immigrated with her family to Shenzhen in middle school. Before coming to X University, May had just finished her bachelor's degree at a local Shenzhen university. Like many other students in their earlier twenties, May had not determined her life direction yet, and she had painful memories in her personal life not long before she arrived at X University. As a result, the year she studied here was also a year of self-healing and self-discovery away from her familiar hometown. It was my impression that May's state fluctuated wildly during the year. The psychological burden and the difficulties that appeared in the new overseas life often made her unable to maintain a stable psychological state. This poor psychological state also affected her academic performance, as will be shown in *chapter 6*.

Pressures from family cause the second difficulty. As reviewed in *chapter 4*, section 4.2.3, and Fong's (2004) work, most of the CIS in this generation come from one-child families and are the families' "only hope". With a long tradition in history, Chinese parents tend to regard educating their children well as an essential family responsibility. As a result, with parental funding, Chinese students' decision to study abroad is a personal and family decision. Most students actively choose to study overseas, while a few are passive. Xi, an informant in my

field, is a representative of those who passively made the studying abroad decision. The following is Xi's story.

"When I arrived at Newcastle airport, there was only one Asian. That's me. I am timid and scared of my un-fluent oral English. As a result, I did not talk to anyone around me.

When the coach arrived at H college, volunteers led us to our rooms and then left. Do you know what my feeling was at that moment? It was like I was thrown away, and I was at a loss.

I did not know what to do at all. There are six students in my block, only one Chinese. All the other students have their bedding except me. I also felt hungry at the same time. However, I did not know where to buy food or how to get there. I did not know whom I should turn to for help. I did not know where I could ask about my bedding. The new environment is too new for me.

I am majoring in Education and Psychology. There are only two students from Asia in the Education class, and I am one of them. Moreover, I am the only one in Psychology. What's even worse is that I am also lonely in college. There are three from Hong Kong, and they are getting on very well. It was very awkward that I had nobody to talk to at the table. I am a very dependent person and would go to the toilet with girls together when in high school, and my parents will sort out everything for me. I am not good at living on myself at all.

I am not open-minded, either. I do not have the ambition or desire to know or adapt. I am a negative person."

Unlike most Chinese students at X University, the decision to do a degree overseas was not agreed upon by Xi but decided by her mother. Xi was born in far-north China and studied in her local city until one year before she came to the UK. At first, she got an offer from a university in Beijing; however, her mother was not satisfied with this result and thought that the platform at that university was not good enough for her. As a result, without asking about Xi's preference, she was arranged to apply to UK universities after one year's university life and quit her degree program in Beijing. As shown in Xi's words, she was negative towards

what she was facing and was not prepared enough to live her life overseas, far away from her family.

Some other students also face pressure from family to study. Xi and Cai chose to apply for self-funding degree programs because they failed the entrance exams of Chinese universities, but they still wished to get a good education. So, they are under pressure both financially and academically. A similar feeling was experienced by May, the girl from Shenzhen. At the end of the academic year, I took a long walk with May. I believed that she trusted me and opened up with me. May told me about her most profound stress of the year. Not long before May came to the UK, she lost her father. May could not help crying during the early days of her UK life. This heartbreak has not been well resolved by the time of our talk. As she faced the sudden change with her mother, she always felt guilty when she was not hardworking enough or failing academically in the university. This feeling often tormented May during this year of study and life. I was a good listener, but I know that only she bears all this in silence.

Despite the commonly and individually diversified challenges in CIS' life in their UK study, I also wish to mention the extraordinary difficulties the CIS met, together with all other people in the world, during the COVID-19 epidemic. Although this occurred after my fieldwork and was not the focus of my research, I would like to point out what I have observed, the difficulties of the CIS in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Firstly, unlike home students and EU students at X University, the CIS were far from home when COVID-19 started in the UK in early 2020. They had to depend on themselves to selfprotect in spiritual and daily life practice. Secondly, as the outbreak of COVID-19 was first detected in China, several Chinese students experienced verbal racism on the streets in city X. Thirdly, as researched by Hu, Xu and Tu (Hu, Xu & Tu, 2020), the international mobility of CIS became very difficult. Due to the development of the epidemic in Europe, the Chinese government has severely restricted access to and from border crossings. It then became difficult for CIS to buy air tickets and return to China. The difficulty of returning home continues to bother the CIS today (in 2022). Fourthly, their academic study was disturbed for those CIS who flew back to China in 2020 before the border closed. This group

of CIS could only attend classes online and had to deal remotely with accommodation issues and items they left in the UK. Finally, Chinese students staying at X university were also suffering. With limited offline activities for a certain period, CIS' college experience is little, and their social support network is weakened.

To conclude, the experience shared by students in this section revealed the various difficulties that CIS might meet and need to face in their overseas education life. The pressures on them also revealed the characteristics of CIS in the present generation and its connections with the context globally and locally in China.

Summary of the chapter

This chapter provides a comprehensive introduction to CIS' life at X University. It introduced the field site geographically and its position within the UK higher education system. Secondly, it introduced how the CIS actively build their life and social connections with Chinese and other international students on campus. It thirdly explained the internal differences among the CIS from different perspectives. After that, it described the interaction within the Chinese students' group. Finally, the academic challenges the CIS met in their university life are introduced.

The above description fully reveals the background of my main interviewees in the field, leaving an impression on the readers. This chapter also explains how the reviewed social context (see *chapter 4*, section 4.2.3) affects the student's campus life. Understanding the different ways CIS deal with life at X University and the diversities within the Chinese students' group helps understand the academic challenges students face that will be detailed in the following chapters *6, 7* and *8*.

Chapter 6: Chinese students' classroom learning experience

Postgraduate study in higher education in the UK includes taught Master's Programs based on classroom teaching and tests/essays and research degrees which include research-Master's and PhDs based on dissertation work or a thesis and the supervision during meetings between students and their supervisors. The two training roads lead to a different emphasis on students' independent learning. In addition, science majors usually do not set up a separate Master's program, as the Master's programs in science are generally linked to the doctoral programs. This explains why I separate the discussion based on various degree levels of programs in *chapter 6* and *chapter 7* and why CIS majors in taught postgraduate science programs are not discussed in this chapter.

This chapter introduces the Chinese PGT students' diversified classroom learning experience at X University based on the different non-science subject areas they are studying. Students' backgrounds in classroom teaching in China are explained to provide a comparison to understand their cross-cultural education experience better. The aim of this chapter is, first, to define the two ways of knowing in education experienced by the CIS in their classroom learning experience. It then contributes to the thesis's first central argument by showing the conflicts and tensions between the two ways of knowing (out of the three identified in *chapter 1*, section 1.1) in education, to which CIS are exposed. Secondly, the chapter defines the distinct characteristics of patterns of thought in China and the UK. It then contributes to the thesis's first central argument by showing how different patterns of thought culturally impacted on the difficulties CIS perceived in their UK classroom.

Thirdly, the chapter contributes to the central argument of the thesis of the students' agency in learning by providing evidence of students' diversified learning practices in the classroom. It shows how students' backgrounds, characters, cognitive abilities, access to learning support and their goal when studying in the UK resulted in the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS encountered in their UK higher education. I use theories from scholars of Sino-Hellenic studies to explain the different characteristics of patterns of thought

and ways of knowing in the UK and China and Michel Foucault's view on knowledge and power to explain conflicts and tensions among the various ways of approaching knowledge, to which CIS are exposed in their overseas classroom.

6.1 Classroom teaching and learning in Anthropology

6.1.1 The story of May

May was doing the MA program in anthropology at X University when I met her in the field. As was introduced in *chapter 5* (see section 5.2), May was born in northwest China and immigrated to Shenzhen (a city in south China opposite Hong Kong) with her family at middle school age. She finished her first degree at a local university in Shenzhen and came to X University to study for a Master's degree. She enjoyed living in the UK but did not enjoy her program very much. May was in the reading group I organised with Chinese PGT students in my fieldwork year, and we met about once a month. The following is May's story of learning.

"I know I am proud inside. I was reticent in class initially since I could not get all the ideas in the lectures and was not confident enough to speak. It was primarily a language problem. However, some students will think you are not talking because you are stupid. My foreign classmates would raise questions in class, but it was apparent that most of them did not read the literature before class, and the questions were ridiculous, to my understanding. They ask everything. Chinese students will think they could solve this question before or after class and not ask in class.

But we have a very kind module leader who cared for international students. When he realised that Asian students are often shy in class, teacher Andy tried a new discussion method by giving each of us some notepads, letting us write down our ideas, and then sticking the notes on the classroom's whiteboard. It was a helpful method for us in the first term. So, I enjoyed Andy's module very much."

May shared this with me during her first term of study in the anthropology department at X

University. Her experience reflects Chinese students' awareness of how others may hold prejudicial views about them and how teachers help them adjust to a British university classroom. This reminds me of another example I experienced in the anthropology department.

When I was once auditing a module on British anthropology theory, the module leader asked a Chinese student in class one question, but the Chinese classmate did not know what to answer. The module leader then called all the Chinese students in her class to her office after class. She asked us if we understood and why we didn't ask questions if we didn't. The teacher was from Greece. She shared with us her experience of doing a PhD degree in the UK years ago, so she understands what the Chinese students in her class were experiencing. In the end, the Greek teacher said she would like to add an extra office hour for the Chinese students every week. Students could come to her office if there were anything they didn't understand in class.

As I reviewed in *chapter 3* (see section 3.1), studies have been made of the stereotype held by teachers and students toward Chinese and east Asian students in learning, for example, Pelissier (1991); Holmes (2016) and Moosavi (2020). Their concerns about the stereotype toward Chinese students are valuable. In response to this concern, I see positives in my field that some teachers began to work on helping Chinese students adjust to their new academic life with more understanding and care than prejudice.

Back to the story of May, months later, when all her modules were finished, we talked again about how she felt toward her academic learning, and she told me that:

"I thought I would receive a very different kind of education in the UK, but up to now, my experience is that the administrative staffs in the department are very nice, the teachers are very nice, but I can hardly admit that the classes are efficient enough for me. I do not think the open-ended discussions in the seminar classes work effectively. In the classrooms in China, we are getting used to receiving knowledge in class. But in the UK, we cannot learn enough in class. Classmates will raise stupid questions and waste the limited lecture time

each week. I learned some new things here, but most are outside the classroom, during conversations with classmates and teachers. I did not achieve much after the teaching year finished. I have a feeling that I have wasted too much money. I am disappointed."

May believed that asking questions that only interested herself would affect the efficiency of a classroom and waste her classmates' time. It should be solved privately if it is not a helpful universal question. This reasoning shows Chinese students' pursuit of "knowledge delivery" and classroom "efficiency" in their previous classroom learning experience, words frequently mentioned in May's reflection on her academic year. In a UK classroom, the teacher will tell the students that there are no silly questions. As May said, the UK anthropology classroom for taught Master's programs consists of lectures followed by seminar discussions, in which seminar discussions occupy a significant segment. Academic discussions through conversation are the dominant way of knowing in social science classrooms in the UK.

Studies such as Ryan (2011) argued that the learning challenges of CIS were not just culturally transmitted but also socially constructed and individually interpreted. I agree with Ryan that reasons other than cultural expectations add to CIS' learning challenges. However, I agree with Kim (2009) and Gu (2006) regarding what May shared. They both see different educational systems as the main cause of the difficulties CIS encountered in classroom communication, and it also exemplified the cultural and historical roots of their behaviour. May's focus on the "efficiency" of a classroom and "knowledge delivery" reveals the conflict between the dominant styles of communication and learning in the two education cultures she was exposed to.

May's original expectations of a classroom based on "efficiency" and "knowledge delivery" reveal that Chinese students tend to value a classroom of "knowledge-based, textbook-based with standard answers" from the teacher, but not a platform through which to "participate in the thought process" in a seminar class which works as a process of dialogue. The latter shows the characteristics of the British classroom. According to Tanner's review of Lloyd's theory in his Sino-Hellenic studies, the different contexts and styles of communication

between the two cultures might be linked to the social and political structure of the two types of society in China and the West (Tanner 2009, 94). In ancient Greece, there was always a fierce public debate between leaders of "sects". To use Lloyd's theory in his Sino-Hellenic studies, the public debate between leaders of "sects" in Greece is a way of criticising and displaying skills; this legacy of a "pattern of thought" could explain the post-modern critical style of communication and persuasion in a UK classroom, which May attended. While in China, there was a mere "explication of the authoritative canon" in the monarchical tradition, which could explain the traditional sage style of communication and knowledge delivery in a Chinese classroom.

6.1.2 The story of Lin

Lin was another female student in anthropology who encountered the crisis caused by the different classroom format. Unlike May, Lin had a training background in anthropology in her bachelor's at a First Class ('985') university in China, which is also one of China's centres of anthropology in China:

"Prof. Pan's notes on the history and theory of anthropology are beneficial to me. I was lucky to remember to bring all his notes to the UK. What we are taught here is the same as what I was already taught at the university where I got my bachelor's degree. We are not satisfied enough with the theory lectures. The department did not provide an experienced module leader but only a post-doc researcher to lead this module this year. There is another more difficult theory module available for us to choose from, but we cannot catch up with that module, and we are afraid of getting a very low module score. Most of my classmates, including me, wished to continue doing a PhD in anthropology, so we worked very hard. I wished to come to the UK to study anthropology, where this discipline originated, to build a more solid theoretical foundation in my Master's stage and establish a systematic network of knowledge of the discipline. However, the desire for a more systematic approach did not come true; my original knowledge system was also broken. Up to now, I have been a little disappointed with the program. I almost depend on self-learning in the UK."

"Knowledge" and "systematic" are the most frequently used words in Lin's narrative. This shows her firm understanding of the value of "knowledge delivery" as the content in a Master's classroom and a way of knowing of emphasising "historical tradition" and "systematism'. The taught Master's program in anthropology she received in the UK is outside her expectation and conflicts with her original way of knowing. Despite showing an expectation of a

"knowledge-based, textbook-based with standard answers" classroom by bringing Prof. Pan's lecture notes, Lin also hinted at her expectation that only a textbook, or knowledge of an area must be systematically summarised in the writing of respectful saints is adequate. This idea shows that an ancient Chinese academic tradition of respecting the "Sage's Word" (Zhou 2003) continues its influence (as also stated in *chapter 4*, section 4.1). In addition, it demonstrates a concern for seeking "knowledge certainty" among Chinese students. A classroom-based reading list of a collection of articles/chapters/books rather than one text/lecture note/ authoritative source makes Chinese students anxious about knowledge integrity and certainty.

Lin is also a representative of a group of Chinese students who are more conservative and cautious, the way of thinking behind "her struggle for a more systematic knowledge foundation of theory and history of the discipline" is limited by the exemplary role of the Chinese traditional intellectual bureaucrats. According to Zhang, who looked at the knowledge transformation in modern China, the traditional Chinese intellectual advocated "erudition, careful thinking, and discernment" (Zhang 2019). In their book, *the Chinese learner*, Watkin and Biggs claimed that CIS' learning style is surface learning, whereas the Western learning style is deep learning with a focus on questioning and critical thinking (Watkin and Biggs 1996; Holmes 2016, 295). I disagree with Watkin and Biggs' proposal. Lin appreciates that careful thought and discernment will not happen unless systematic knowledge of a field has been established. This cannot be defined as surface learning. We can only conclude that this tradition is inconsistent with the requirements of a post-modern UK

classroom, which aims to develop students' independent and critical thinking abilities through questioning and participating in the thought process.

6.1.3 The story of Yuan

Unlike May and Lin, Yuan was the first Chinese student I observed in the anthropology department who actively embraced the new way of approaching knowledge. As also introduced in *chapter 5* (see section 5.2), Yuan got her first degree from a 985 university in Beijing. She is originally from a border province in south China, where the area's university enrolment rate is relatively low compared to other regions in China. Yuan told me she is ambitious and always wished to be the best at each stage in school. Yuan was also in the reading group I organised together with May. They were classmates in the same program. Yuan participated in the reading group from the beginning to the end, and we had some great times together. The following are selections of Yuan's sharing of her experiences during our conversations during different periods of the year we spent together:

"Students from the EU have no difficulty in asking a question in class. This was beyond our ability at first due to the problems caused by language and different classroom cultures. Chinese students became even less active when the teacher did not allow Asian students to speak or do presentations. But I do not think our classmates are ignoring us. They just do not know what we are thinking. They just do not know what to talk about with us. When I tried to start speaking first, I found that they were all very nice to me. For example, while I was once the only Asian student in a discussion group, I was initially nervous. But the groupmates are very patient and will care about my reaction. I appreciated it very much. After that, I was about to think that maybe sometimes it is not the problem of others. If we do not close ourselves and be open-minded and brave, actively participating in the discussion, there will be no problems in class." (Nov. 2017)

"We have too many essays on working, and everyone is busy catching the deadlines. During my arrival, I felt unbelievable that the international students only eat cold sandwiches with hot drinks in the library for lunch. I thought it was too poorly. However, I am very much

getting used to this now. I changed a lot in this term. Now I am not afraid of speaking in class at all. I will always ask questions bravely. I am also getting used to studying in the library with very simple meals. I also noticed that some of the teachers in the department are doing something to get all the students involved. I am delighted with my department life now. I grew up a lot this year." (Feb.2018)

Yuan's experience shows how some Chinese students tried actively participating in the new style of classroom teaching in self-presentation and academic presentation and finally adapted to it. Agreeing with Wang's argument in her 2010 study on CIS, the learning behaviour of CIS is also individually undertaken and open to change and development (Wang 2010, 5). Yuan's narratives reveal that, after months of exploration, she understood that a studentcentred classroom combined with academic debates and group works composes part of the ways to approach knowledge in UK higher education after months of exploration. Secondly, like May's experience, Yuan mentions that teachers in the department provide learning support to international students from east Asia. With additional learning support, students adapt to the new style of classroom easier.

The last time I met Yuan was in September 2018, just before she left the UK. We talked about her year at X University. Yuan said to me:

"I grew up very fast this year. I love my major. I wrote my dissertation with all the hard work. It is like giving birth to a child. I am delighted with it. I cried loudly after I submitted my dissertation work. I love it so much. I love the year so much and am not ready to leave yet. I could remember that while writing the dissertation, I always switched my phone to flight mode, stayed in the library all day, working efficiently from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day. I enjoyed the hardworking time very much. That is why I cried after submitting my dissertation. I love X University. I love the feeling that I am here. I have many good friends like you here. We can discuss things we like in common. I do not know how life will change when I go back. I do not know whether I can still meet good friends like those I have now when I return to work in China."

Weeks later, Yuan shared the great news that she got a distinction for her dissertation paper. I was very happy for her. As Durkin concluded in his study on east Asian Master's students' adaption to the Western norms of learning in the UK, "the timescale for students' adaptation is one year, so students need to adapt rapidly to the new academic norms" (Durkin 2008, 16). May and Lin failed to do this. Yuan represents those who actively adapted to it and openly accepted new ways of approaching knowledge without much struggle. To sum it up in Tanner's words, Yuan's experience showed an excellent example of those CIS who grasped the opportunity to "broaden their sensibilities, ceaselessly reassess their habits of perceiving and feeling and imagine alternative possibilities of being- to experience the world afresh" (Tanner 2009, 94).

6.1.4 The story of Weiwei

As also introduced in *chapter 5* (see section 5.2), Weiwei was a mature student who saw the merits of the different teaching methods in the UK. She studied in the UK for more than six years and was doing a PhD after achieving two Master's degrees when we met. Weiwei shared her education experience since her first Master's degree at B University (in the south of England) as early as 2010.

"I did an MA degree in art history nearly ten years ago. That was at B University. I remember that there were three Chinese and two Japanese in my class. All the others were Western students. I could not understand around one-third of the classes and could only complete a relatively comprehensive understanding with reading and additional pictures. But I had excellent learning motivation. I found I was very talented in English academic writing. I could get 68, while my classmate from Peking University (the top 1 university in China) only got 58. Because of my low first degree in China, I was consistently underestimated under the evaluation of the Chinese academic standard. As a result, I was very excited. The UK's humanities and social science teaching method emphasised independent thinking ability instead of memorising knowledge. I think I am talented in this.

I remember that though the three students from China could not understand the lectures, we all had a strict attitude to learning. We phoned each other every night, discussed aspects of the course we did not understand and formed a supportive learning group. I remember we had the study pressure of writing one essay each week with three additional presentations. Chinese students were nervous because they feared losing face, mainly because of our poor English listening and speaking ability. As a result, I was always restless at night, and my hands kept shaking when there was a presentation the following day. But the overall study results in that year were excellent, and we all graduated smoothly. Although by the end of the year, the classes were still incomprehensible for us, it did not seem to affect anything.

My second Master's degree in anthropology was under even higher pressure. Unlike art history, there were no pictures that could help me understand the contents of anthropology. Anthropology is more theoretical. My first lecture in the MA anthropology module at L University was a discussion of chapter five of Bourdieu's "Distinction". I was just ignorant. Moreover, since most of the students had an interdisciplinary background, we couldn't understand anything. However, the curriculum of anthropology at L University was excellent. At that time, we had a module with a theme for each class, led by professionals in each topic area. We also had reading group discussions, with four to five students in each group, led by one professor, and met every two weeks, arguing with each other --- my academic debate ability developed during that year. But I was also very embarrassed since I didn't know what to say. I was also very young at that time. My team members treated me like a younger sister and cared for me well. All in all, that year was enjoyable. But until the end of the course, I still felt I could not understand the lectures. Until now, I have not denied that my reading and writing skills are strong, but my listening and speaking skills are feeble, and it is hard for me to change this in a short period."

Weiwei's story shows that she adapted to the new learning environment without struggling.

The divergent training method in UK classrooms looks suitable for Weiwei's character. According to her self-evaluation of academic ability in listening and speaking, reading, and writing, Weiwei knows her strengths and weaknesses under UK's academic evaluation standards. She also has confidence in herself and is full of hope for her future progress. Her open-minded personality contributed much to her educational progress in the UK. Barth (1995) argued that the individual cognitive process and learning environment, alongside the role of culture, influence Chinese students' learning practice overseas. In Weiwei's case, critical thinking instead of knowledge memorising is where she considers herself talented. This finding is consistent with Barth's argument. It then contributes to the first central argument of the thesis by providing aspects of evidence of the influence of students' background, characteristics, and cognitive abilities on the understanding of challenges CIS met in their UK studying experience.

Weiwei also represents the Chinese students who agree that social science knowledge is changing and there is no absolute authority. As a result, Weiwei was not anxious about "patterns of thoughts" or "ways of knowing", unlike other students I introduced above. She accepted that she lacked a good knowledge foundation but believed that all the theories in social science only offer different perspectives of understanding society/culture. Training in questioning and academic debate in class helps develop independent and critical thinking abilities vital to intellectual skills in social science in the UK tradition. Her knowledge of literary battles and the way of developing academic ability via classroom discussion goes with Lloyd's summary of the Western communication and persuasion style in Sino-Hellenic studies that "the public debate between leaders of sects in Greece as a way to criticise and display skills and recruit new followers" (Tanner 2009, 91). In other words, Weiwei's original way of thinking was consistent with her social science training in the UK. Students of this type usually naturally adapt to the UK classroom and can achieve academic success more quickly than in China.

Henze and Zhu (2012) look at the adjustment of CIS abroad as a challenge and option for mutual learning. Agreeing with them, I argue that there are different ways of approaching

knowledge, which are equally valuable. Weiwei's story contributes to the thesis' second central argument by proving that a typical "way of knowing" might not be universally true; it is only valid relative to different ways of looking at the world. An exploration of how CIS' understanding of knowledge is transferred would show how various ways of approaching knowledge interact with each other.

6.1.5 The story of Joy

Unlike any previous stories, some Chinese students met challenges caused by cultural differences among international students. Joy, an MA student in energy and development at X University, once complained to me about one of her experiences in doing a group presentation: *"We were given a presentation topic, and I was assigned to do the presentation with a Mexican girl in the same group. But we understood the topic very differently. I realised that we had a cultural difference in examining the research question. Secondly, in terms of arranging and talking about this issue and how to do teamwork, we also had very different ideas. When I was doing my part, to avoid overlapping in content and logical breaks, I asked my Mexican groupmate about what she was planning to include in her part of the presentation. Surprisingly, my Mexican classmate was angry and said, 'We should respect each other. Since the division of labour has been completed, everyone should do their part. Now you still ask me how I do my part; that shows you do not have enough respect for me because you manage too much.' I was shocked. I have already compromised a lot in examining the research title, but I still accidentally annoyed her. I felt this was ridiculous, and I was speechless."*

Joy's experience showed that Chinese students studying in the UK are exposed to both the British way of education and the culturally international classroom. Their disagreement over group work shows how the distance and degree of cooperation and personal space differ in cultures and how this cultural difference directly caused challenges in Chinese students' cross-culture study. Joy's experience also revealed that in an era of global higher education, Chinese students are not just exposed to British teachers, staff, and students but also a diverse cultural environment.

6.2 Classroom teaching and learning in the Business School

The classes in the Business School were significantly different from any of the former classroom experiences. The first time I audited a course at X University business school was on February 27th, 2017. It was a module called *Corporate Finance for Managers*. Because I had obtained permission from the Business School, I simply walked in and integrated into the classroom. It was a huge lecture hall, and more than 100 students were sitting inside. I sat in the front block's last row, close to the door where most students came in. No one noticed my appearance as that of a researcher since I was among the many Chinese students in that module. In fact, I counted that there were only around ten non-Chinese students in the classroom. It felt as if a Chinese classroom had been moved to a British campus, especially when I saw the module leader was from Hong Kong. Like the classrooms of Chinese universities, the first row was filled with hard-working students. Most students chose to sit in the middle and back of the front block and occasionally played on their mobile phones in class. Those students who arrived late decided to sit in the back block. One Chinese male student came forty minutes after the lecture began. Jack, the module leader, focused on classes and asked questions occasionally, but only the very few Western students in the classroom and those Chinese students who sat in the front row would react towards Jack's words. *"Sorry?" "What is this guy"? "Questions? OK. All right," ...* Jack Asked. Usually, an inadequate response would follow after Jack repeated his questions. I felt the classroom was almost unbearable since there was nothing new compared to the classrooms in China. I started to worry about how I could learn about Chinese students' learning experience in the Business School when most of them were not concentrating on learning in class. As a result, I started to look forward to the end of the session, when it would be possible to chat with the students around me. That was how I met Cai, the male student who got his first degree in a business school in Shanghai, whom I introduced in *chapter 5* (see section 5.2). Cai told me that:

"I was disappointed about modules in the first term since I had already learned most of the contents in my previous degree in Shanghai. Most students aim at the job market in China, so we do not care much about scores. We just want a 'pass'. As a result, students neglect lectures

and seminars. We use the time to prepare for other things, such as the CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) tests. The degree program in Accounting and Finance is already a program that is highly valued in our department and we can learn some real things. But I heard from department mates in other programs that they are no better than ours, which are hugely below the value of the high tuition fee. You can learn nothing new here from the classroom."

I audited many other modules in different programs in the Business School and found that the classrooms of business school modules are often big, reaching up to 300 students in one lecture hall. Not surprisingly, over 95 per cent of them are Chinese. As reviewed in *chapter 4* (see section 4.2.3), I agree with Fernandes (2006, 133) that "as the potential economic value of higher education to be traded on the world market for profit has been recognized by OECD countries, market forces increasingly play a role in higher education and, as a result, there has been a commodification of education." This showed that the implicit dominant logic behind student mobility is the value of degrees from the OECD countries. The primary aim of students, especially those who, like Cai, choose to major in Business School is to obtain an education in the UK for commercial purposes and job preparation. Most of them admitted that they use their money to buy a degree in the UK, which has a high reputation and needs less time. As a result, when they realised that the modules provided by the department were not of great value, they did not take the classroom teachings seriously enough. Students of Cai's type tend to use their energy elsewhere based on their various aims of studying abroad. The case of Cai demonstrates the diversity of CIS' perception of their UK classroom and shows the diversity of students in different majors.

Conclusion of chapter

To conclude from the various stories above, I argue that Chinese students' shared difficulties in the UK anthropology classroom are partly caused by the inconsistency of the two different forms of classroom exposed to them in China and the UK. As I have argued here, a typical Chinese classroom is "teacher-centred, knowledge-based, textbook-based with authoritative answers", which delivers systematic knowledge concerning historical tradition. On the

opposite, the feature of a UK classroom is "student-centred, academic debates-based", which aims to develop students' independent and critical thinking abilities through questioning and participating in the thought process.

Based on the first argument, I argue that different forms of classroom teaching, as components of the different educational systems, partly reflect two different ways of knowing to which CIS are exposed. Further, the tensions and conflicts between the two ways of knowing CIS experienced caused the difficulties many CIS met in their UK classroom. Ways of knowing here, as defined in *chapter 1*, refers to the styles of obtaining and processing knowledge students obtained from their higher education. This section proposes two ways of knowing (out of three) accessed by the CIS. The first one is defined as "the traditional sage way of knowing from China". The second one is defined as "the Western postmodern critical way of knowing".

Thirdly, I argue that, despite the conflicts between various ways of knowing, the difference between patterns of thought in China and the UK also explains CIS' challenges in a UK classroom. Again, as defined in *chapter 1*, "patterns of thought" in this context mean the cultural habit of perspectives, methods and ways things are usually viewed. Concluding from this section, I regard the different communication styles between the two cultures contributes to understanding CIS' difficulties encountered in their UK classroom. I believe "the way of criticising and displaying skills through public debate between leaders of sects in Ancient Greece" is a cultural legacy which might have influenced the post-modern critical style of communication and persuasion in a UK classroom. On the contrary, I regard "the explication of the authoritative canon in the monarchical tradition in China" as influential cultural reasons for communication and knowledge delivery in a Chinese classroom that are passively received by the student.

Fourthly, by concluding the diversified student stories of May, Lin, Yuan, Weiwei, Joy, and Cai, I argue that in addition to the objective influences of various ways of knowing and patterns of thought, other influential factors on students' academic practice in the UK classroom are students' diverse backgrounds and characters, cognitive preferences, critical

reflection upon themselves, learning support available for them and various purposes of studying abroad.

Combined the arguments of Gu (2006), Ryan (2011) and Kim (2009), I argue that the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS encountered in their UK classroom are caused by: 1) conflicts and tensions between two "ways of knowing" in Chinese and British education exposed to CIS; 2) the different "patterns of thought" in the Chinese and British culture within which CIS are situated and 3) students' various backgrounds and characters, cognitive preference, ability to reflect critically upon themselves, access to learning support, and their degree goals.

Other than a comprehensive explanation of the difficulties the CIS met in their UK classroom, this section also demonstrated, from the diverse stories of May, Lin, Yuan and Weiwei, that Chinese students favour either form of a classroom in the UK or China based on their diversified individual experience. I disagree with Watkin and Biggs' (1996) claim that the Chinese learning style is surface learning and Western learning is deep learning. I consider that both systems can provide students with room for growth with their respective advantages. It further implies that a typical way of approaching knowledge might not be universally true; it is only valid relative to different ways of looking at the world. According to Foucault (1980), knowledge, defined in this thesis as "the information and awareness students gain through cultural experience and university education, which includes various patterns/legacies of thought and different ways of knowing", is made persuasive by those in power. The dominance of a particular way of approaching knowledge in a culture is that it is more effective at that specific type of society. As a result, an exploration of how CIS' understanding of knowledge is transferred would show how various ways of approaching knowledge interact with each other and the potential future transformation of knowledge.

Chapter 7: Research students' study experience

"I remembered my first doctoral training course at L University. The tutor gave us a bunch of Lego and asked us to build a bridge. All the Chinese students felt confused and did not know where to start. We are waiting and trying to find an instruction paper; however, there is no manual for our reference. When we looked around, we found that almost all the other students were not hesitating and enjoyed the fun of free play. I was shocked! ..." --- Fan, 2017, at G University, UK

Fan is among hundreds of thousands of Chinese research students in the UK. Fan's words show that challenges in the new study environment occur from the program's start. Continuing from *chapter 6*, where Chinese taught Master's students' classroom learning experiences are discussed, *chapter 7* looks at Chinese research postgraduates' learning challenges in their UK studies and how far their understanding of knowledge has been transformed after this experience.

Despite presenting their diversified personal learning stories, the chapter also analyses the

shared context of Chinese research students' learning challenges by comparing the Chinese and UK postgraduate education systems, training plans, methods, and supervisory styles. It is important to emphasise here that, as stated in the aim and scope of research in *chapter 1*, the purpose of "comparing the education system, training plans etc. of higher education in China and the UK" is to explain "what difficulties are created by these different institutional cultures" for CIS' study in the UK.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: section 7.1 discusses how "differences in education systems, training plans and methods and thoughts in the UK and China" had challenged the CIS' understanding of knowledge through the description and

interpretation of several ethnographic stories of doctoral students doing science and social science programs in the UK and China. The three stories selected come from Mo, who was studying for a PhD in engineering at X University, UK; Ren, who studied PhD in chemistry at a top ('985') university in China; Six, who studied PhD in international relations at both X University and a second rank ('211') university in China. The reasons for choosing these three students are: firstly, their stories show the different forms of doctoral study and the diverse problems possibly encountered by the CIS from different perspectives. Secondly, their social sciences, sciences, and engineering backgrounds reflect CIS' challenges in various disciplinary backgrounds in science and non-science areas. Thirdly, the three stories present the CIS trained in a UK research program, those trained in a Chinese research program, and those trained in both UK and Chinese research programs. The contrasts of students' training backgrounds presented help readers understand how differences between educational systems contribute to the difficulties encountered by the CIS.

While regarding the supervisory relationship as an essential component throughout CIS' PhD study, section 7.2 looks primarily at the diversified and individualised Chinese research students' supervisory experience in various disciplines. Selections of their stories and talks are presented and interpreted, followed by discussions towards their cross-cultural reflections on supervisory relations. Correspondingly, the different ways PhDs are supervised in China and the UK are also discussed in this section. The purpose of discussing different supervisory styles is to contribute further to an understanding of the learning challenges faced by Chinese research students.

7.1 Various education systems and CIS' challenges in research programs

This section presents the stories of Mo, Ren and Six, research students from different disciplines and countries of training. Along with a description and interpretation of their

learning stories, how differences in "education systems, training plans of aims and contents, methods and thoughts in the UK and China" had challenged the CIS' understanding of knowledge in the UK are discussed.

7.1.1 The story of Mo

Mo comes from China's Shandong province (a city in the north). She did half of her bachelor's degree in China and the other half of her first degree in the UK. After that, she continued her Master's and doctoral degree programs at X University, UK. As a result, city X is like a second home to Mo, where she stayed for years. My first private meeting with Mo was in *V Cafe* in the city centre of X city. We made an appointment to meet at the marketplace in the town. I was punctual, but she was already there when I arrived. Mo looked very happy, and I did not understand why until she shared the great news that she had just gotten a job offer from N University (in Singapore) that morning. Mo was in the fourth year of her PhD program in engineering when we met and was right into the stage of finding a job.

"I just finished tutoring Master's students in my department, and since I live in B town (a town to the east of city X), it took a while to reach here." She explained. But as I had mentioned, Mo still arrived even before me. "*You said you wish to learn about my study experience in the Department of Engineering, right? What do you want to know exactly?*" She dominated our conversation and entered straight into the subject before I had time to politely chat with her about life and then begin the interview gradually. *"Let me help you with what you wish to know first, and then we can start our casual chat freely."* She added. The first time I met Mo was at a friend's birthday party; this was our first private conversation. I was a little surprised by her straightforward character, and an idea flashed into my mind: see, this is precisely the acting style of a student training in engineering --- focusing on practicality and efficiency.

Mo then started sharing her research life by introducing the programs provided in her department, the training plan she got and her daily life in the engineering department at X University. Mo told me that the X University engineering department has several branches:

electronic engineering, communication engineering, computer engineering, environmental engineering, automatics, and information engineering. She was based in the unit of electronic engineering.

"There is a large percentage of Chinese students in my department. MA degrees are more popular, and there are no MPhil degrees available in our department. For doctoral programs, we normally graduate within three to four years. During the first nine months, we read literature independently. We need to search for reading materials by ourselves. As the nature of the discipline is practical and most of the research we are working on aims to be used in the next twenty to fifty years, there has a strict rule in the literature reading that the articles must have been published within the past three years. Papers earlier than three years ago are outdated and useless to us. We need to present papers at conferences to test the feasibility of our project and get some feedback. We must attend an annual review and pass the oral defence to become a PhD candidate by the end of the ninth month. The tenth to the fifteenth month are the most important. They demand much thought. We need to determine our research topic, starting to use a computer to build models. It needs a huge amount of calculating at this stage. Once I made a tiny mistake in the mathematical calculation in the modelling part, but this meant I had I wasted three months of achievement and started all over again, calculating for another three months. Precision is valued highly, and there is very little room left for making mistakes. After that, we start our experiments and compare the results with the model to see if it works. After the 24th month, thesis writing begins, producing publications and starting the next experiment. We have loose working times and can work whenever we want to if we finish the work on time. We will be based in labs or computer rooms depending on the different types of projects and directions. Our daily life is lived at a fast pace and very tiring but is very simple and happy."

According to the training plan shared by Mo, the PhD program in engineering at X University is highly autonomous in both form and content, and independence is a high-frequency word in her description. Independence is reflected in her program by mainly deciding when to present papers at conferences, which conferences are suitable, how to control the experimental

process and how to balance the PhD thesis writing, paper publishing, and the start of the following experiment on her own. At the content level, independence is reflected by reading and searching for literature independently, finding your potential areas of interest and research questions independently and doing and analysing research experiments independently. As Mo also said, *"to compare the difference of the UK and China's engineering education, I think the most different point is that in China, students are not made to find questions independently on their own; most of the time, they were given a topic from their supervisors. Here we need to spend nine months to find the research question we are interested in by ourselves."* The ability to think independently as an essential part of training researchers has been effectively cultivated under such a training plan.

Despite this, concluding from Mo's research method in electronic engineering, her research is carried out through the process of "deciding a research topic, making a model on the computer, calculating to test the model, starting experiments, comparing the experimental results with the model, then test the two results to see if it works". Gribben's (2003) book *Science: a History* reviewed how the first scientist in Europe in the seventeenth century laid the foundation for the scientific method of approaching knowledge, a method which "starts by a scientific hypothesis and prediction, continues by carrying out experiments to test hypotheses, modifying or abandoning those hypotheses if the outcomes of the experiments did not match their predictions, and ends by finding the results" (Gribbin 2003, 86). Mo's method of approaching knowledge in her area of electronic engineering sits right in the centre of this post-Enlightenment Western natural science way of knowing, which pursues knowledge certainty, advocates the objectivity of thought, and understands the world by pure logic and reason.

Returning to my talk with Mo, she continued by saying:

"The keywords for us are independent thinking, ability to find and solve problems, innovation, efficiency, precision and cooperation. In my case, I design automobile rechargeable batteries. I cooperate with students in the business school and psychology department at X University

because the car battery I designed needs to go into the market. I need to learn the consumers' thoughts. Since everyone is doing a very different topic for students within my department, we do not have much competition. We count on cooperation because we are not experts in every aspect and need help from others in specific parts of our research project. Supervisors will choose students that share the same working pace with them since they need cooperation. It would be better not to have communication problems. They will keep an emphasis on efficiency and no procrastination. We need to be independent, and the supervisors are there to help us when we need them. They sometimes will remind us to attend conferences and do publications. We usually meet once a week for half an hour, reporting what we did over the week and asking questions if we have some over the week. We will also have a group meeting every two weeks."

To interpret Mo's words, other than the quality of independent thinking, efficiency, precision, innovation, cooperation in doing engineering research and the ability to solve problems are also essential. The spirit of cooperation is reflected among teachers and students, colleagues, and researchers across departments.

Returning to my conversation with Mo, Mo shared her life history and daily life in city X after introducing me to her academic life. I enjoyed talking to her and was impressed by her professionalism as an engineering graduate student. The last time we met in city X was before she graduated after successfully passing her viva. *"I finally got offers from N University in Singapore, S University in the UK, K University in China, and so on. I am happy with my job offers, but the process was a hard journey. I finally chose S University in the UK because I fear it might be too difficult to adapt to the new environment in China or the Pan-Asia region."*
I was extremely happy for Mo. As I learned from Mo's story, she adapted very well to her UK study life, and she decided to continue her research career in the UK after her experience of studying in the UK.

To conclude Mo's story, firstly, the qualities of independent thinking, efficiency, precision, innovation, and cooperation are essential in doing a research degree in engineering in the UK.

Secondly, Mo's research method in engineering studies shows the second way of knowing I wish to argue in this thesis: "the post-Enlightenment Western natural science way of knowing". It is proposed and explained based on Mo's research story. Thirdly, Mo's decision to continue her academic career at a UK University demonstrates that she favours research life in the UK after her study experience here.

7.1.2 The story of Ren

Ren was a PhD student in Chemistry at a Chinese university when I interviewed her; she was trained in China throughout her academic experience. There are four best institutes of Chemistry in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Ren was studying at one of them, the *D Institute of Physical Chemistry*, for her doctoral degree when I interviewed her.

Ren's institute's training program lasts five years, with two years of Master's study and three years of doctoral training. Usually, students are trained in the institute's affiliated university -- *the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC)*, with lectures and seminars during the program's first year. Students would be sent back to the institute from the second year and begin their independent research.

"*I had a perfect time at the USTC in Hefei, Anhui Province (where my first-year training was gained). It is the best university in China for cultivating scientists, which can be compared to Tsinghua University. The university is in a tranquil place, and the campus has a strong academic atmosphere. The training courses designed for first-year postgraduate students are of high quality. I did my bachelor's degree in biology and environmental engineering at M University (a 985 university in Beijing). But, as you know, M University is famous for its social science and humanities degree training. Hence, the renewal of information in biology is slow, and the resources of the biology department are limited. The USTC provides training courses such as 'scientific paper writing', 'how to use online databases', 'how to use endnote to manage your bibliography', 'how to use google scholar', etc. We use google scholar and*

Web of Science instead of CNKI (中国知网)[2]. The teacher also taught us how to subscribe to

SSR.[3] under google scholar to receive the latest domain-specific news and publications from

the West. This is a much more convenient way for us to access literature. But I was not

satisfied with myself during that year. Some students took advantage of the year's opportunity

to get into research groups in that university and help the teachers with their research

direction. They had accumulated much experience, which benefited their future research in

the institute. However, I missed the chance."

According to Ren, she was trained in the USTC with high international standards academic training courses. As reviewed in *chapter 4* (see section 4.2.3), modern science in China was transplanted from the West (Li 1989, 34). Unlike social science and humanities, which had been severely affected by political movements, Chinese academic development in science has been continuous since it was introduced into China in the early twentieth century. To compare Ren's case with Mo's case, since modern science in China was transplanted from the West and the development in Chinese science has been continuous, science educations in the two countries are essentially equal, except for a different emphasis on the independence of students. From that, we understand why CIS doing research degrees in science in the UK, like Mo, did not face much difficulty in their overseas learning. Native Chinese students' way of knowing in science is also dominated by the post-enlightenment Western scientific way of knowing.

Returning to Ren's case, she continued, "*after finishing the first-year courses training in*

USTC, I was sent back to city D to our physical chemistry institute and formally started my

independent research life. Each student has two supervisors; one is called the 'big boss', and

the other is called the 'small boss'. The big boss usually has greater power. They are mainly

responsible for applying for projects/research funding and grasping the general direction of a

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[2] CNKI (*China National Knowledge Infrastructure*), a key national research and information publishing institution in China, is led by Tsinghua University and supported by the PRC Ministry of Education, PRC Ministry of Science.

[3] Software that breaks Internet censorship.

research project. We rarely see our big boss or can speak to them. Our actual supervisors are researchers and associate researchers under the big boss. In addition, there are several academicians above our big bosses. This is the whole system of our institute.

I was not satisfied with my first entry into our institute. The supervisors were eager to let us work immediately without providing adequate equipment, laboratory, and safety training. This resulted in many mistakes during our operation in the first months. Lots of time was wasted during the starting period.

The motto of our institute is 追求卓越，协力攻坚（*Zhui-Qiu-Zhuo-Yue, Xie-Li-Gong-Jian), which means 'strive for distinction and work together'. This shows that, firstly, we are expected to maintain a relatively high standard of research. For example, we are required to have at least two English publications and one patent before graduation. In addition, the English publication must be in the best SCI (Scientific Citation Index) journals. Secondly, we are encouraged to work together. For example, since there is no equipment for my current topic in our institute, I can borrow a laboratory from the other research groups and use their equipment to carry out my research."*

From the motto "strive for distinction" and the graduation requirements of two best SCI papers, the *China Academy of Science* is seeking to be a World's first-class academy under the evaluation system established by the Western academic world. PhD students like Ren must write English-standard academic papers and publish them in the best SCI journals to meet the graduation standard, despite being poor in English academic writing. In addition, her statement, "*eager to let us work immediately without providing adequate equipment, laboratory, and safety training*", shows that the institute advocates fast speed. It reveals the urgency of the academy to bridge the gap with world-class standards. Geerlings and Lundberg (2020) looked at education and the universal standard of knowledge. They explored how knowledge is reproduced as "universal" in contemporary higher education through a clinical psychology case study in Singapore (mainly), Australia, and the Netherlands. The paper provides ethnographic evidence of how "universal" knowledge is made coherent through

standardisation and accreditation. The evidence further reveals that knowledge coherence is assisted by the discourses of the desire for modernity. Looking through Ren's case, I agree with Geerlings and Lundberg's argument that universal knowledge in science is made coherent through the standardisation and accreditation of SCI. Students and the academies in China who desire to be "world first class" in science assist the process of such standardisation established by the Western academic world. Returning to Ren's story, she said:

"*After I was sent back to our physical chemistry institute in D city, I started working in my research group right away. As I said, the small boss will give us our topic directly. They consider it a waste of time for students to spend several months searching for a research question independently. They are much more experienced than us students. Other than the research project we are doing and the publication requirements, we need to sit an entrance examination to continue to further PhD studies before the end of the institute's second year (the end of the first year). Most of the students will pass it without question. If you gave up and left, you would get an MPhil degree. This is the end of the first out of five steps in a PhD degree. The second step is to finish an academic, public report ---a popular type. Thirdly, there is a mid-term examination inside the small project group, which is easy to pass. The fourth step is a second academic lecture --- with deeper insights, as required. This is an essential step for PhD researchers in our institute. I finished this step not long time ago. The last, 5*[th] *step for us is the final oral defence.*"

Comparing Ren's case with Mo's reveals that there are shared forms of tests for being a doctorate in Chinese and UK science education. However, students are trained differently in relation to the degree of independence in their research. The two findings reinforced my argument that CIS who study science degrees in the UK did not face much difficulty adapting to new research methods except that they need to learn how to be independent researchers.

Ren's experience also shows a strong spirit of cooperation in their research training, a style different from the cooperation in Mo's story. As stated in its motto, "to work together", the institute relies on the governmental ability to orchestrate and schedule the best academic

resources in combining the best universities for training scientists with the best destination research institutes that students are suited to. In addition, it enables the mutual borrowing of experimental resources between different institutes. For example, Ren got great lab facility help from another research institute, not her own, to finish her doctoral thesis in her last year in the institute. This style of cooperation organised from top to bottom is the typical experience of Chinese students, and Ren benefitted from it.

To conclude the comparison of Ren's case with Mo's, firstly, native Chinese students like Ren also use post-enlightenment Western scientific way of knowing in approaching knowledge in Science as Mo does. In addition, building on shared science education in the two countries and the global shared standard of research training courses, CIS who do research degrees in science did not face much difficulty adapting to their UK education.

Secondly, there are some differences in how PhD's are supervised in the two countries although these do not much affect adaptation. For example, there are different ways of cooperation and different emphasis on independence towards research students' training. Thirdly, Ren's case of catching the Western standard of best research by publishing SCI research papers revealed that the universal knowledge in science is coherent through the standardisation and accreditation of SCI. Students and the academy's desire to be "world first class" assist the standardisation process through the SCI established by the Western academic world.

7.1.3 The story of Six

I met Six for the first time at a dinner party at U College at X University. As I had introduced in *chapter 5* (see section 5.2), Six is an exchange PhD student majoring in international relations and is funded by the *China Scholarship Council* (CSC). We had minimal social time before and after dinner, and I sat far away from him, so we did not have the opportunity to talk much. But we exchanged *WeChat* account numbers that evening. A few days later, I occasionally noticed that he posted his study reflections and life in the UK on *WeChat*. I was very excited when I read the posts and thought he must be interested in getting involved in my research. So, I texted him immediately. Fortunately, I got a positive reply from him. Six

shared much with me about his degree training experience in both the education systems of China and the UK. Before entering our conversations, I wish to show the fascinating reflections of Six, translated from his posts on *WeChat* for his first four months of experience in the UK:

First month:

The UK is a very dull country. Young people have no off-campus life other than pubs and clubs. English people also break traffic light rules. Electronic systems and commercial internet services are very backwards, even not better than China one decade ago. Compared with Japan and New Zealand, where I had study and life experience, this country is not inclusive enough. English people are very proud inside, even a little overconfident. The staff working for the government are very friendly to you. They will listen to your complaints and suggestions, and they will also complain about society and then tell you they could do nothing.

You can see almost no students doing things other than studying in the library. They all concentrate on learning. They are polite enough, and you can hear words like excuse me, sorry, and thank you very often. Traditional nobility, labourers, and intellectuals all have relatively high social status. There is an extremely democratic environment in the UK; various ways of expressing opinions exist.

Second month:

I experienced the fast pace of study this month. I am getting more familiar with my supervisor, and my weekly work is increasing. For those with a perfect background in English academic writing, it is not difficult to write 2,000 words book reviews each week. But it is a hard job for me. Now let me share some of my feelings this month:

I am getting more and more homesick this month. After the honeymoon period in the first month, different kinds of social events ended due to the higher work pressure. What is left for me is a sense of loneliness. I do not know how friends from Germany, the Netherlands, etc.,

deal with this feeling. Usually, I am a person who enjoys being alone. But sometimes I feel that the night is too quiet.

When studying, I repeatedly felt that the previously mastered things were too old-fashioned. It is related to the resources I could get access to in China. I stay in the library all day and feel like a monkey just out of the forest. There is too much to conclude and to learn. I had not even heard of some of the books' names…

Martin Wolf came to the university to give a lecture this month. Before that, I always wondered how, if the UK students are not working as hard as Chinese and Indian students, why can they do excellent research. Then during the lecture, I find that all the staff in various departments sit in the first two rows of the seats. This is hardly seen in China. At that moment, I felt that as long as these kinds of scholars are alive, the research in this country will not be backward and will not be replaced by us.

Finally, I want to complain about Amazon. Whenever I shop on Amazon, I realise how great Taobao[4] is in China. It is better in every aspect. In addition, the food in the UK is … Every time I eat British food, I miss noodles in Japan and desserts in my hometown.

Third month:
Time is getting faster this month. I do not dare write English as much as in the past two months, but it is a long way from writing to good writing. The keywords for this month are not enough time and not enough sleep.

I did not make significant progress in oral English. But I did an excellent job of enhancing my listening. Recently, I found that I could understand the meaning without Chinese captions when watching videos online. Maybe some of you have already experienced this, but it is significant progress for me.

UK hairdressers can never understand what kind of hairstyle Asians favour, so many students achieved the ability to cut their hair by themselves. I am in that group as well.

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[4] A Chinese online shopping website. It is the world's biggest e-commerce website.

I also want to complain about the internet in the UK. It always breaks when I am in my room. Most of the time, I am out of contact.

The atmosphere of Christmas in China is very different from that in the UK.

At last, I have to say that after three months, I can live a life as the natives do. I am also getting used to cold sandwiches with hot drinks for lunch. I am getting used to the strong wind. I am starting to enjoy the peace of the small town. British are very gentlemanly, and they can behave to their standard no matter what background they have.

Fourth month:

The UK is a country that sees tradition as an essential thing. No matter whether castles, roads, bridges, etc., they all have long histories. They do not like new things very much, and they respect history.

These were all translations of Six's posts on his WeChat. The four posts presented Six's first observation of UK people, political culture, student life and research based on his four-month experience in a university in northeast England. Some of his feeling toward loneliness and food on campus goes with discussions of CIS' life experience in *chapter 5*. Six's reflections on the academic study also reveal how students' social science study in China differs from that in the UK. Six mentioned in his reflection notes that "*the previously mastered things in China were too old-fashioned*" and "*academic resources accessible in China are limited*". It shows that the academic resources available for research students differ in the two social science training systems. As appeared in Ren's story, the scientific research resources in China reached an international first-class standard. However, according to Six, in social science, the literature resources are somewhat limited in China.

The limited resources in the social science field could be explained by its particular socialpolitical context in twentieth-century China. Unlike science and technology, higher education's academic and educational development in social science and humanities was interrupted several times due to political issues, such as the choice between different ideologies (see *chapter 4*, section 4.2). Many Western classics in social sciences were not

introduced and translated promptly in China until the early 1980s after the Culture Revolution was over. Again, as referring to reviews of academic and educational development throughout the twentieth century in *chapter 4* (section 4.2), social science disciplines are modern designs which originated from European countries; the growth and achievements in social science research towards the understanding and reflection of modern societies are always ahead. The Chinese academic circles always delay the translation and dissemination of new academic achievements in related fields. As a result, Six, who studies social science, had a better learning experience in the UK than in China regarding the resource available for him to access, compared with Mo, who was doing a degree in science and technology. The interpretation further proves that the difficulties encountered by CIS in their UK study vary between science and non-science disciplines, and part of the learning challenges held by the CIS are caused by social-political factors.

Returning to Six's case, I joined Six's university life at X city after I saw his above reflections on life and study at X University; we became friends and got together through *Ju* (themed parties) held by CIS on campus occasionally. I also asked him out every few months and talked about our research and life in the UK based on our shared Chinese background. The following paragraphs are selections of Six's remarks during our conversations:

"In China, most of the Master's students experienced solid training. They can learn much in the three years program. They read widely but solidly. I think some of them might have a higher level of attainment than PhD students in the UK. My supervisor in China is very good at identifying students' academic abilities. Last year, four PhDs with overseas degrees were interviewed at our research centre, and they all failed. I got to know some of the PhD students here at X University and found that they do detailed research but are only interested in the narrow field they are in and know nothing about others. For instance, a student who works on the topic area of the history of England is unfamiliar with world history. This is unbelievable to me."

"I think the bachelor's degree program design in China is problematic. I do not know about you, but I know that most students can learn nothing in four years. I only learned some real stuff during preparation for 'Grad School Entrance Exams' and in my Master's. I read a lot during my Master's period. I think the undergraduate degree training in the UK is excellent and could develop your independent thinking abilities. I audited master's classes in the UK and saw some UK students ask silly questions. But after that, I had another idea that maybe I could not have raised questions as good as this one at his age. He is excellent. Some PhDs in China failed to develop this ability even after graduation from their PhD program.

The primary problem is still the right to speak of the country/culture. There are so many ideas of the West introduced into China, but on the opposite, they know little about China. They might only see the surface, which is still stuck in the understanding of 1990s China. Let us learn from each other."

From Six's review of the training content and goals of different Master's and doctoral programs in China and the UK, the concepts of a Master's degree in the UK and a Master's degree in China are different. The MA program in the UK is a taught degree prepared for students with little background in a discipline or who have got a related first degree but are not fully prepared enough for the job market. The MPhil degree in the UK is, on the other hand, a research degree designed for those with related academic backgrounds who wish to continue their studies through a doctoral degree. They are both transition degrees in the UK.

Conversely, China's degree regulations require Master's students to possess "solid basic theory and systematic expertise". As Six stated, the requirements for a Master's degree in China are generally higher than in the UK. With this understanding in mind, when looking back at the taught Master's training experiences of May and Lin in *chapter 6* (see section 6.1), it was shown that the confused understanding and the unequal expectations of Chinese students such as May and Lin towards degree design in the UK are partly caused by their existing knowledge of a Master's and a doctoral degree in the Chinese system despite the cultural reasons analysed in *chapter 6*. This again supports my argument that in understanding the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK education, despite the tensions and conflicts of

the three ways of knowing in education proposed in my former arguments, the cultural reasons caused by various patterns of thoughts, the social and institutional reasons and other diversified individual reasons, all need to be considered.

Built on his exchange study experience at X University, Six favours the easy access to rich and original literature resources at X University that were not yet widely available in China. In addition, Six appreciates the academic enthusiasm of elderly professors at X University, which was not commonly seen in China. Moreover, Six endorses undergraduate education in the UK for its inspiration toward students' independent thinking ability. He affirms the significance of training students' questioning ability in the UK MA programs. According to Six, under the undergraduate education system in China, the practice of questioning was not as widely encouraged by the teacher as it is in the UK. These are all things that Six appreciates in his UK research experience.

On the contrary, Six's words also revealed that when evaluating the quality of a research student who does social science, a comprehensive knowledge foundation is much more highly emphasised under the Chinese system. This goes with Yuan's finding that a Chinese PhD requires students to have a solid and broad basic theory and deep systematic expertise to produce creative results in their discipline (Yuan 1999, 16). While, as reviewed in *chapter 4* (see section 4.3), the ways PhDs are trained in the UK since the 1970s changed from the original form of "academic apprenticeship, and training in producing a well-rounded academic practitioner" (Metcalfe 2006, 79) into "mastery of the subject; mastery of analytical breadth (where methods, techniques, contexts, and data are concerned) and mastery of depth (the contribution itself, judged to be competent and original and of high quality)" (Park 2005, 193; Metcalfe 2006, 79). Together with what is to be shown in the next section, Six favours the
Chinese way of doctorate training and the Chinese style of supervision after he experienced UK doctorate education today. Like Six, Yang, an exchange Chinese PhD student who

majored in aesthetics, agreed. Yang once said, *"I had an imagined picture of UK doctorate education before I came. But I found it is no better than China. In China, the doctoral student is trained more systematically in several ways, maybe because of our better historical tradition in doing research."* This idea goes with Six's and Lin's case in *chapter 6* (see section 6.1) on taught Master's students' experience.

The above two paragraphs' interpretation aims to respond to the second research question I proposed in the thesis: how far has Chinese students' understanding of knowledge been transformed after studying in the UK? The above interpretation among research PhD students demonstrates that while Chinese students favour many aspects of research training from their UK university, they also favour part of their original way of approaching knowledge. Reviewed in *chapter 3* (see section 3.1), Wang's (2010) and Henze and Zhu's (2012) research both looks at the adjustment of CIS abroad as a challenge and option for growth and mutual learning. I agree with them by arguing that based on Chinese students' experience of doing research degrees in China and the UK, communication and mutual learning rather than adherence to a single "empire of knowledge" should be encouraged to widen students' understanding of knowledge.

To conclude Six's case, firstly, it revealed that the difficulties encountered by CIS in their UK study vary between disciplines in science and non-science. Secondly, the confused understanding and the unequal expectations of Chinese students towards degree design in the UK and their various access to academic resources in social science contribute to my argument that in understanding the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK education, in addition to the tensions and conflicts of the three ways of knowing in education proposed in my earlier arguments (the traditional sage style, the objectivistic Western natural science style, and the Western post-modern critical style ways of knowing), the cultural reasons caused by various patterns of thoughts, and other diversified individualised reasons, the social-political and institutional reasons need to be considered. Thirdly, the interpretation among research

PhD students demonstrates that while Chinese students favour many aspects of research training from their UK university, they favour part of their original way of approaching knowledge. This further supports my argument that communication and mutual learning should be encouraged rather than adherence to a single "empire of knowledge" to widen students' understanding of knowledge.

Section summary

To combine the stories of Mo, Ren and Six, the section reaches the following conclusions: firstly, the post-enlightenment Western science way of knowing (out of the three ways of knowing argued in the thesis) is defined and explained in the cases of Mo and Ren. This way of knowing pursues knowledge certainty and advocates the objectivity of thought and understanding the world by pure logic and reason. It was also accepted by the CIS doing science programs before they entered UK higher education.

Secondly, the confused understanding and the unequal expectations of Chinese students towards degree design in the UK and their various accessibility to academic resources in social science contribute to my argument that in understanding the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK education, despite the tensions and conflicts of the three ways of knowing in education, the cultural reasons caused by various patterns of thoughts, and other diversified individualised reasons which were argued in *chapter 6*, the socio-political and institutional reasons need to be considered.

Thirdly, taken together, the stories of Mo, Ren and Six revealed that the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK study vary by field of discipline. Despite differences in cooperation and attitude towards independence, CIS doing research degrees in science are not facing many difficulties in their UK study. Conversely, CIS doing non-science research degrees are facing more challenges caused by the different ways PhD students are trained in China and the UK.

Fourthly, based on the third conclusion, the stories of Mo, Ren and Six answer my second research question "how far has their understanding of knowledge transformed by such experience". It contributes to my argument that Chinese students favour either the research degree training style in the UK or China based on their different individual experiences. Both systems, through their respective advantages, can give students room for growth.

Fifthly, Ren's case of chasing to meet the Western standard of the best research in science which was made coherent through the standardisation and accreditation of SCI, shows how knowledge is reproduced as universal in contemporary higher education and how a standard of science is built worldwide. Using Foucault's (1980) theory of knowledge and power to explain, the mode of academic standard of SCI created by the more powerful West toward modern science research comes to dominate and works as the orthodoxy of evaluating science researchers' work worldwide. Geerlings and Lundberg's (2020) study also looks at education and the universal standard of knowledge in Asian and European countries. They reached the same conclusion as me, namely that power is fluid and, in each period, the more powerful way of knowing and standard of knowledge occupied the centre and became the worldwide standard. They called for attention to other ways of knowing and standards of knowledge in education. They also suggested that researchers look at other academic disciplines and curricula other than clinical psychology, the focus of their study. However, they did not provide alternative discourses other than the orthodoxy. To respond to this question in conjunction with my discussion of Chinese students' learning stories in China and the UK, this study has developed understanding by providing an alternative discourse of education and a way of knowing from China. It also looked at a number of academic disciplines in science and non-science fields. And finally, it argues that communication and mutual learning rather than adherence to a single "empire of knowledge" helps to widen CIS' understanding of knowledge.

7.2 Various supervisory styles and CIS' challenges in supervision

"…… I think it is hard to conclude in one sentence. The teacher-student relationship is also diverse in today's China. Take my boyfriend as an example. When he was in his doctoral program in biology in Shanghai several years ago, he never saw his main supervisor and did everything independently. I guess many students might be like him in China. I have a friend studying at J University; he was supervised very carefully by his teacher. But when he came to F University (in Shanghai) to continue his doctoral study, no one cared for him. Supervisory experience is related not only to the great environment but also related to the supervisor you meet. But I must admit that the master-family tradition in China is very traditional. It also relates to ancient Chinese culture…it is the same in the UK: not all supervisors are the same. Everyone is different from each other. My supervisor will read my essays very carefully. Even most of the supervisors in China would not do this. But, overall, the supervisory relationship is much simpler in the West than in China."

--- Weiwei, March 2018, X city, UK

Weiwei's words show her understanding of the different supervisory styles in China and the UK based on her cross-cultural experience. The supervisory relationship is an essential component throughout CIS' PhD study. Agreeing with Weiwei, the various supervisory stories collected during my fieldwork prove that CIS' understanding of their supervisory experiences in the UK and their expectation of an excellent supervisory relation are diverse and individualised. In this section, several CIS' cross-cultural reflections on their supervisory experiences are presented through selections from their stories and talks. Correspondingly, native Chinese students' diversified supervisory experience is presented and discussed while needing to understand better the alternative supervisory style that CIS are familiar with in contemporary China. The analysis of CIS' reflections towards the two supervisory styles aims to answer the two research questions of the thesis, how to understand the challenges CIS met

in their UK education and how far CIS' understanding of knowledge is transformed after their cross-cultural degree training.

> *"I wish to find a post-doc in China after graduation to continue in the academic field. The student-supervisor relationships between UK and China are very different. I wish to discuss more with my supervisor, but I have no opportunity here. The supervisor in China is not only a supervisor but also a social resource. I prefer that sort of master-and-apprentice relationship. You do not need to do your research. You only need to get along with your supervisor daily, help them with their work and learn much from the details behind the work. This is what I am not able to achieve here. At least, it is not widely supported here."*
>
> *--- Alex, a PhD student in human geography, X University, UK*

> *"I did not work on my project in the first year. I just helped my supervisor do her research project. She will pay for us, and I love to research with her together. I will search the literature, do a basic analysis, and write a report for her, and my supervisor will do a deeper analysis based on it. I enjoy this because my project is related to her research. I am making achievements in my project while helping her. In addition, sometimes it is complicated for me to get data from governments; but, while doing a project for my supervisor, I can straightforwardly get the data I need along with the data collected for my supervisor with my supervisor's title".*
>
> *--- Su, a PhD student in medical school at B University, China*

Alex was a PhD student in human geography at X University. I was introduced to him by a mutual friend. As Alex was trained in China for his Master's degree and then continued his PhD in the UK, he had many reflections on the supervisory experience based on his cross-cultural research degree training experience. According to Alex, his challenge in supervisory relations is that he did not get enough communication and learning opportunities from his UK supervisor. McClure's (2007) study looked at the Chinese

overseas research students' experience of supervision and found that "the CIS may very largely understand the supervisory relationship in terms of unrealistic or unfulfilled expectations being brought to the new study context but grounded in the home culture" (McClure 2007, 3). Agreeing with McClure, Alex's expectations of a master-andapprentice relationship in which students can learn from the supervisor by working for him daily and communicating with him daily is grounded in his home culture in China.

Su's supervisory relations at B University in China, which was presented next to Alex's, is rightly what Alex longs for. The student learns by working for the supervisor and using the supervisor's reputation as a social resource for easier access to research data.

The master-and-apprentice relationship, as mentioned by Alex, is regarded as a feature of Chinese supervisory tradition that cannot be ignored. This was inherited from folk traditions of apprenticeship since the Song Dynasty when folk handicraft workshops were significantly developed in China (Chen 2008, 26). The apprenticeship system is characterised by "learning by example" --- Yan-Chuan-Shen-Jiao (言传身教) and "heart-to-heart" --- Xin-Chuan (心传), focusing on "on-site" learning --- Xian-chang Jiao-xue (现场教学) and maintaining close teacher-apprentice relationships (Sun 2007, 74). Apprentices mainly watch, do and learn during the actual production process. The general approach is that the apprentice looks at the master next to him and understands the basic situation of production. After that, the apprentice can help the master to do some simple auxiliary activities. Later, the apprentice can start systematic work under the guidance of a master and gradually transition to independent work (Sun 2007, 74). Su's experience of learning by helping her supervisor conduct research is consistent with this tradition of apprenticeship.

Interestingly, this was similar to European guild organization in the Middle Ages. The academic apprenticeship of PhD training in the UK lasted until the 1970s, "when neoliberal thinking was applied to higher education" (Radice 2013, 411). According to the brief review of UK higher education and the changing ways of PhD training in *chapter 4* (see section 4.3), undertaking a PhD has traditionally been viewed as a form of academic apprenticeship.

Training inevitably has a part to play in producing a well-rounded academic practitioner (Metcalfe 2006, 79) before the marketised reform took place in UK research degree education. Since the doctorate has been reconceptualised in Britain as a training period for future researchers rather than a work that changes the course of human knowledge (Park 2005, 190). After the 1970s, the ways PhDs are supervised also changed. Alex's dilemma is that he can no longer enjoy the academic apprenticeship in the contemporary market-oriented British research degree education, so he yearns for a Chinese-style supervisory relationship where the academic apprenticeship type of PhD training is still available.

> *"I have a very close relationship with my supervisor. She is on her way up in her academic career. As a result, she pushes me a lot. She is always busy. I have to work very hard under high pressure. But I enjoy this style since I am not self-disciplined enough. Usually, the older supervisors will be more patient with you and read your writings very carefully. However, you won't be held to high standards."*
>
> *--- Miu, a PhD student in education, G University, UK*

> *"We need to be independent, and the supervisor is there to help us when we need them. My supervisor will remind us to attend conferences and put out publications occasionally, but he respects me as an independent researcher and does not provide me with too detailed guidance. We usually meet once a week for half an hour, reporting what we did over the week and asking questions if we have some over the week. We will also have a group meeting every two weeks."*
>
> *—— Mo, a PhD student in electronic engineering, X University, UK*

I knew Miu from an academic conference at G University when we were on the same panel. Miu achieved her bachelor's degree in China and her Master's degree at X University, UK. After that, she continued her research degree education at G University, UK. We exchanged WeChat accounts during the conference and became friends after that. Despite chatting online, I also met Miu at city X and in Beijing, China, in later months and years. Miu's above words were selections from our talks, and they provide a voice

expressing CIS' supervisory experience in the UK. Unlike Miu, who kept a close relationship with her UK supervisor and enjoyed working under pressure, Mo's case provides another voice of CIS' supervisory experience in the UK.

As revealed from Miu's words, there are also different supervisory styles in the UK, one style providing more support and the other giving more pressure. Gatfield and Alpert (2002) have extracted two dimensions upon which supervision styles have been arrayed, namely "structure" and "support" (Deuchar 2008, 490), after 1970 in the UK. This explains Miu's words. In addition, as reviewed in *chapter 4* (see section 4.3), there are two general overarching strategies toward the ways PhDs are supervised in the UK since the 1970s: a relatively unstructured approach, giving students a significant degree of intellectual freedom and a much more structured approach within which close operational control was maintained by the supervisor (John Hockey 1996b, 481). Mo was supervised under the former type, which is relatively unstructured. Her supervisor gives her a significant degree of intellectual freedom. Controversially, Miu's experience represents the latter type, in which her supervisor demands by specific deadlines she must accomplish a particular piece of work.

As seen from the above selection of quotations, Miu and Mo have adapted to their own UK supervisory styles. It demonstrates that firstly, as Weiwei said, the supervisory types available in contemporary UK research degree education are not homogeneous. There are two general overarching strategies toward the ways PhDs have been supervised since the 1970s: structure and support. Secondly, Miu and Mo's preference for supervisory styles proves that Chinese students' needs and attitudes towards how they are supervised are also diverse.

> *"Supervisors in China are more like the masters of a master-family. As for my supervisor in China, he is the oldest in our centre, and all the others are his students. We meet once a week for one hour and talk about everything. He is concerned about me, my study, my life, my relationships, and even my roommates. He will read my essays*

very carefully. But he does not like you to have your ideas. He will ask you what you think, but he usually will say no to your ideas and tell you what you should do and what is good for you.

At X University, David asked me to write 3000 words weekly. But he will not read them carefully and will not give me any comments. He just asked me to write whatever I wish to report, and I must practice writing. Occasionally, he will make some comments. We meet for half an hour each week and only talk about our studies.

—— Six, an exchange PhD student in international relationships, X University, UK;

A PhD student in Global China Studies, Z University, Beijing, China

"My supervisor in China is a special one. He got trained in the West; thus, he is very much like Western supervisors. He never asks me about my work. We meet once a term. We do every step independently, and we waste one year if we make a mistake. However, because of our better master-family tradition, more Chinese students return to China to continue their PhD degrees and be close to our supervisor's family. We celebrate our supervisor's birthday every year together with good wishes to him. They always say that those Chinese students doing degrees in the West are academic orphans, no one knows you in China, and no one cares about you."

--- Yang, exchange PhD student in movie studies, X University, UK

A PhD student in aesthetics, Z University, China

"I chose him as my supervisor because he is the best choice. He has a good moral standard, personality, academic reputation, funding resources, interpersonal network resources, and political status. However, good things will never happen all in one person. I need to do 'X' studies if I choose him. In addition, since he already had authority in 'X' studies in China, my fieldwork and research development were very limited. I do not have the space and freedom to do research independently. My

supervisor offered me two fieldwork places to choose between, and he also has his mature ideas and conclusions, which means I have very little space to do critical thinking on my own. I very much like collecting data for him and supporting his idea. But despite this, I think I have learned a lot from studying under his supervision. He treats me as a granddaughter and lets me engage in all the work in which he is involved. He also takes me on many occasions that could benefit my research work and future career. He is a typical Chinese supervisor to me."

--- Ai, a PhD student in anthropology, M University, Beijing

The combined presentation of the above stories of Six, Yang and Ai aims to give the reader various understandings of CIS towards the master-family relationship, an essential feature of the traditional Chinese supervisory style. It also seeks to provide the reader with an explicit acknowledgement of the characteristics of master-family relationship from comparative stories of students in China.

Six's case of "*we meet once a week and talk about everything"* and *"he is concerned about me, my study, my life, my relationships, and even my roommates*" shows that his supervisor cares about all aspects of his life like a father. It implies a patriarchal teacherstudent relationship between them. Yang's case of "*celebrating the supervisor's birthday every year together*" is also an example of a "total relationship" between students and supervisors. These are master-features, an essential component of the traditional Chinee supervisory style. As reviewed in *chapter 3* (see section 3.1), studies such as McClure (2007) and Kun & David (2009) look at the supervisory relation experienced by the CIS; however, they did not pay attention to or analyse the essential master-family tradition carried by the CIS in their overseas education.

The master-family (Shi-men 师门) tradition, which originated during the Han and Song dynasties and was influenced by Confucian ethic of patriarchy, yet is still influential. In the Han dynasty, students respected and foresaw their teacher as a father (Li 1958, 14). The custom of going to the supervisor's funeral continued for nearly two thousand years until

today in part of the experience of Chinese students. Yang's case of celebrating their supervisor's birthday each year is a variant of this tradition, which shows a "total relationship" between student and supervisor.

In addition, Six's case of *"he does not like you to have your ideas, he "tells you what you should do and what is good for you in his opinion"* and Ai's experience of *"very limited fieldwork and research development" " do not have the space and freedom to do research independently"* implied that there has a strong unity between teacher and students within the master-family and the "Dao Tong" (道统) --- inheritance of Confucianism thought system --- is considered to be maintained mainly by this relationship (Zhao 2005, 111). Following the supervisor's argument in their research reveals the supervisor's intention to keep the academic Dao Tong within a master's family. Additionally, Yang's naming of overseas Chinese research students as "academic orphans" also means that CIS when overseas cannot maintain the academic Dao Tong with a supervisor in a master-family as a strong union that native Chinese students like Ai can. As reviewed in *chapter 1* (see section 1.3), in China, learning takes place in a *Jia* or (intellectual) lineage, which demands the same kind of loyalty as a natural family line (Tanner 2009, 91).

Moreover, the supervisor as a form of social resource is widely approved by Chinese students. According to Ai, her supervisor lets her engage in all the work he carries out and takes her on many occasions that could benefit her research and further work. This is also implied in Alex's words by expressing that he will do a post-doc in China if he wishes to continue in the Chinese academic field. Yang's words, *"because of our better master-family tradition, more Chinese students return to China to continue their PhD degrees and be close to our supervisor's family"*, express the same idea that supervisory relation in a master-family is a form of social resource for Chinese students. The studentsupervisor relationship as a "total relationship" in China is mixed with *Ren Qing* (explained in *chapter 5*), the typical character of Chinese society. Although the anthropologist Yan (1996) introduced the concept of *Ren Qing* in the context of a village in rural China, *Ren Qing* is

a culture more widely spread in urban China and is an aspect of local knowledge shared by all the Chinese. Students usually cherish their supervisors as a social resource to build on their future careers, and students under the same family master usually cherish each other and form an academic network in their future careers. To conclude, the master-family is an essential feature of the traditional Chinese supervisory style agreed by Alex, Six, Yang and Ai. It represents a "total relationship" between students and supervisors and works as a strong unifier between teacher and students within the master-family and the family's Dao Tong. It also works as a social resource for students within the master-family, which could benefit their future careers. As revealed from the stories of Alex, Six, Yang and Ai, they all cherish and prefer the master-family system to train the PhD.

However, as mentioned by Weiwei and described in Yang's case, the Chinese supervisory style is diverse and changing. Yang's supervisor, who was trained in the West, provides Yang with a supervisory style that combines "the master-family tradition" in China and the introduced "relatively unstructured approach" of supervision, which offers students a significant degree of intellectual freedom. Various voices towards how they are supervised appeared from my informants in my China part of fieldwork. The following are selections of some of the voices:

> *"I did my Master's degree at the R University, Beijing. My supervisor was a lady in her thirties. She did her PhD in LSE. 'We do not have a Master-family', my supervisor said at our first meeting. That is why I had a straightforward supervisor-student relationship during my stay at R University. Maybe the old generations would favour the master-family and would love to get together occasionally.*
>
> *I have a friend doing a PhD in political economics. She is in her second year, under immense pressure, and very miserable. She thought her supervisor never helped her and she needed to do everything independently; she felt very baffled and could not find a way out.*
>
> *Compared with her, I felt fortunate to have my supervisor with me."*

Ryan (2011) claimed that research in cross-cultural communication should not be limited to enduring differences between cultures and ignore the changing contemporary contexts and realities in countries such as China, which is undergoing profound and rapid change. I agree with Ryan by demonstrating through April's case that even though master-family and student apprenticeship training are still essential features in contemporary Chinese research degree training, the Chinese supervisory style is diverse and changing. As reviewed in *chapter 4* (see section 4.2), higher education development in modern China is continually evolving and developing, with resources from different eastern and Western countries. Like the more recent shifts in how PhDs were supervised in the UK in the 1970s, higher education also shifted from elitism to popularisation in the 1990s in China. The ways PhDs are supervised are experiencing a transformation. The new forms of supervision (as presented above) combine traditional Chinese student apprenticeship, master-family and the newly introduced supervision methodologies from Western countries such as the UK (from LSE). Conflicts, collisions, and chaos between the various compositions and procedures still create instability and are under exploration. Weiwei, April and Yang's cases represent explorations under this unstable transforming period. This feature of change and development is still evident during this research (to be demonstrated again in Qing's case at B University in *chapter 8*).

The aim of explaining the complexity within the Chinese supervisory styles is to argue that, like the different supervisory types in the UK concluded in the section earlier, the supervisory styles available in China are not homogenous. They are diversified and changing. After the experience of overseas research degree training, the CIS respond differently to various ways of training based on their individualised needs and preference. However, the many cases presented here revealed that the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and master-family, which still appear in the contemporary Chinese supervisory style, are valued very much by CIS after their overseas study experience. Responding to Geerlings and Lundberg's (2020) work on education and the universal standard of knowledge again, this

research finding builds on their study by providing an alternative discourse on the local way of approaching learning in China.

Section summary

Concluding this section, firstly, the section argues, based on the cases of Miu, Mo, Weiwei, Yang and April, that ways of supervision are not homogenous in either the UK or China. There are two general overarching strategies toward the ways PhDs have been supervised in the UK since the 1970s: structure and support. The way of supervisory in China combines traditional student apprenticeship, master-family and the newly introduced supervision methodologies from Western countries such as the UK, which are incorporated in diverse ways and are still under change. Secondly, based on the cases of Alex, Miu, Mo, Miu, Six and Yang, it argued that the CIS suit various training methods differently based on their individualised needs and preference.

Thirdly, based on the case of Alex, Six and Yang, it argued that the difficulties CIS met in their supervisory relations are caused by their unfulfilled expectations being brought to the new study context but grounded in the home culture in China. Continuing with this argument, I argue fourthly that though the contemporary supervisory styles available in China are combined and changing, the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and master-family are still valued very much by CIS after their overseas study experience. Fifthly, the features of the master-family are presented and discussed through the interpretation of Six, Yang and Ai's cases, which represents a "total relationship" between students and supervisors, work as a strong unity between teacher and students within the master-family and the family's Dao Tong, and works as a social resource for students within the master-family which could benefit their future career. Finally, I argue that this research builds on the latest analysis of Geerlings and Lundberg (2020) by providing an alternative discourse on the local way of approaching learning in China, which is "the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and master-family".

Summary of the chapter

This chapter looked at CIS' diversified doctoral training experience in their UK research programs with a unique look at the student's supervisory experience. The chapter analyses Chinese research students' learning challenges by comparing the Chinese and UK postgraduate education system, training plans, methods and supervisory styles. It is carried out through the description and interpretation of ethnographic stories and the selection of talks of doctoral students doing science and social science programs in the UK and China.

The chapter contributes to the central argument of the thesis in the following ways. Firstly, it defines and explains "the post-enlightenment Western science way of knowing" (out of the three ways of knowing argued for in the thesis). Secondly, it concluded that CIS' difficulties in UK research degree programs are diverse and highly individualised. The way PhDs are trained and the supervisory styles exposed to Chinese students are not homogeneous in China and the UK. In addition, the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK study vary by field or discipline. CIS doing non-science research degrees face more challenges caused by the different ways PhD are trained in China and the UK than those doing research degrees in science.

Thirdly, the confused understanding and the unequal expectations of Chinese students towards degree design in the UK and their various degrees of access to academic resources in social science contribute to my argument that in understanding the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK education, despite the tensions and conflicts of the three ways of knowing in education, the cultural reasons caused by various patterns of thoughts, and other diversified individualised reasons which were argued in *chapter 6*, the social-political and institutional reasons also need to be considered.

Fourthly, the chapter answers the second research question of the thesis, "how far has CIS' understanding of knowledge transformed after their experience of studying in the UK" by

arguing that CIS suit various ways of training based on their individualised needs and preference. Both research degree training styles in the UK or China can give students room for growth with their respective advantages. However, the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and master-family, which still appear in the contemporary Chinese supervisory style, are valued very much by CIS after their overseas study experience. Features of student apprenticeship and master-family are discussed through the interpretation of students' cases.

Based on this, the chapter builds on the latest research of Geerlings and Lundberg (2020) and contributes to my second central argument by providing an alternative discourse on the local way of approaching learning in China, which are "the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and master-family". It also proves that communication and mutual learning rather than adherence to a single "empire of knowledge" helps to widen CIS' understanding of knowledge.

Chapter 8： Chinese students' academic writing experience

"I am baffled about writing. I do not know why we need a reference for every

sentence. My dissertation supervisor pointed out my sentence and commented,

'where is the reference'? I was shocked and could not utter a word. Can't it be just a

sentence that I wish to say? Why do we need a reference for everything? I write an

essay and every word is a paraphrase of other literature. I do not know what the

value of it was." ⸺ Lin

"You can only have one research question and one central argument in an essay, and

you need to write it with a Ba-Gu (八股，eight-legged essay, introduced in chapter

4) style with very detailed citations. But when you write papers in Chinese, repeating

your ideas again and again in one paper is allowed. It is easy for our Chinese people

to understand the paper with obvious logic. Still, when I used the same method to

write an essay when I came to the UK, the teacher got very confused and said Chinese

students do not use logic and do not know what critical thinking is."

⸺ *Six*

These quotes are taken from my conversation with Lin and Six, whom I introduced in *chapters 6* and *7*. Like Lin and Six, many CIS share the same confusion in English academic writing when they first arrive: the disorder caused by the new citation and reference system and the new academic writing standards (including structure, cohesion, clear, natural, critical thinking etc.) in the UK universities. As laid out in *chapter 4* (see section 4.2) and concluded in *chapter 7* (see section 7.1), CIS doing science disciplines in the UK did not face significant challenges in their education since the development of science in China meets the global academic standard. The same applies to academic writing in science. As a result, this chapter focuses on the experience of CIS who are doing social science and humanities programs. Chinese Students' academic writing experience towards the citation system, plagiarism and academic writing standards are presented and discussed.

8.1 Citation, reference, plagiarism, CIS' challenges in academic writing

Citation is an information retrieval and evaluation system. It attributes previous or unoriginal work and ideas to the correct sources, allowing readers to determine independently whether the cited material supports the author's argument in the way claimed (Dickerson and Association of Legal Writing Directors, 2010). It also "relates to the way authors perceive the substance of their work, their position in the academic system, and the moral equivalency of their place, substance, and words" (Roark and Emerson, 2015). It also has the purpose of avoiding plagiarism ("Avoiding Plagiarism - Cite Your Source | Academic Integrity at MIT," 2018), which is defined as "borrowing someone's ideas, information, or language without documenting the source but paraphrasing the source's language too closely without using quotation marks to indicate that words and phrases have been borrowed" (Flowerdew and Li 2007; Rodriguez 1991, 507).

As reviewed in *chapter 3* (see section 3.2), the latest review article on citation and plagiarism (Flowerdew and Li 2007) shows that there are already some studies focusing on Chinese students' academic writing and plagiarism in North America (Currie 1998; Gregg 1986; Shi 2004, 2006) or Great Britain (Gu and Schweisfurth 2006b; Sowden 2005) in particular. However, the review reveals that most studies on perceptions and attitudes towards citation, reference and plagiarism lack an in-depth analysis of the "relationship between the perceptions of plagiarism and other contextual, sociocultural and institutional variables." (Flowerdew and Li 2007). In this section, through my field findings, I wish to build on the understanding of CIS' unintentional plagiarism and their perception of citation and reference systems with more connections to contextual, social, cultural and institutional variables.

8.1.1 CIS' experience toward citation and reference

> *"... In addition, the citation has been emphasised too much in English academic writing. I must cite the paragraphs in books in the process of writing. This is deliberate and is not relaxed enough, especially when electronic reading is not fully*

popularized. I always forget the book and pages I must cite and add references. The process of citing is like the deliberate process of time planning. Life plans are often detrimental to truly enjoying the moment and life itself, just as the former is very bad for thinking and writing naturally. But I also learned that the citation and reference system was formalised in the West after WWII, which means it has a very short history."

These are reflections from Alex, the PhD student studying human geography at X University, whom I introduced in *chapter 7* (see section 7.2). I was introduced to Alex by a friend occasionally in 2017 when I had just started my PhD program. In 2018, we formed a reading group of several Chinese PhDs who did social science and met weekly. His perceptions toward academic writing were shared along with our weekly reading discussions.

Combining Alex's case with Lin's shows Chinese students were unfamiliar with the reference and citation system when they first came. In addition, they were not comfortable with doing references and citations after they knew what it was. Lin and Alex experienced incongruous feelings in their thought and writing processes. Moreover, Alex developed further insights into the opposition between the two academic writing cultures: natural versus technical. Unlike the strictly structured English academic writing, where a citation is closely related to the logic and academic chain (Li 2015), a citation is not always working as the foothold of the author's thinking and is not always embedded naturally with logical thinking but seems, taking Alex and Lin as examples, to be added stiffly afterwards. Finally, it is also important to note that the system was only formally established in the West after WWII.

As I was away from the Chinese higher education context for several years before I started my fieldwork in 2017, I used my fieldwork time in universities in Beijing to get updated information about the related changes in the Chinese academic writing standard, to see whether academic writing is a widespread problem for CIS in this generation. As I reviewed in *chapter 4* (see section 4.2) and justified in *chapter 2* (see section 2.1) and *chapter 7* (see section 7.2), the fieldwork in Beijing was necessary to get updated information about the

latest developments in Chinese higher education, since it was changing during the time of my research. I learned the following information once from a dialogue on the changes in Chinese academic writing with Qing, a law school student at B University, in 2018. Qing told me that

> "*B University is the very first university in China that provides such kind of academic writing training courses, which were started in 2014* ("Library Workshops | Peking University Library" n.d.). *We have training sessions such as 'how to cite right' and 'how to use endnotes to manage your literature and bibliography'. It also has special training in Intellectual Property provided on campus. In recent years, several others among the best universities in China are also learning from our university library.*"

According to Qing, the awareness of citing, referencing, and intellectual property protection was not formally institutionalised as training courses until 2014 at the top university of B in China, where reforms are always initiated. This is to say, China recently started developing an institutional culture of reference and citation. Therefore, it shows that most of the current generation of CIS are still strangers to citing and referencing cultures when they arrive at their UK universities.

To conclude, the cases of Alex, Lin and Qing prove that citing and referencing is a shared problem in the generation of CIS in the UK, at least initially. In addition, Alex and Lin's negative perceptions of citation, reference and plagiarism reflect three variables or reasons: 1) the different patterns of thought in communication/persuasion style and ways of knowing; 2) the different degrees of penetration by institutional forces; 3) different social-political reactions towards the emergence of new document management demand in the information age after WWII.

8.1.2 Patterns of thought, ways of knowing and CIS' experience towards citation and reference

Many Chinese students and academics in humanities and social science are not sensitive to citation, compared with those in the UK, partly because of the different patterns of thought in

communication/persuasion style and the dominant way of knowing in education in the two countries.

Firstly, citing and referencing are not naturally embedded in CIS' cultural habit of communication/persuasion style but are carried out mechanically. According to Lin and Alex, "explicit points" and "direct support" are expected in English academic writing. The tradition of communication or persuasion is structured around Aristotelian notions of directness, justification and proof in ancient Greece. The use of citation is adapted to the writer's thinking and writing logic in the language of English. On the contrary, the Chinese communication/persuasion tradition is more like literary writing. Referring to Alex, *"when you write papers in Chinese, repeating your ideas again and again in one paper is allowed. It is easy for Chinese people to understand the paper which has an obvious logic…"*. With the reform that took place during the New Culture Movement (as reviewed in *chapter 4, section 4.2)* in the 1910s and 1920s, a Qi (起)-Cheng(承)-Zhuan(转)-He(合) four-part organisational pattern was widely used in expository and persuasive writing, which literarily means "the introduction, the elaboration on the topic, the transition to another seemingly unrelated point and the summing-up" (Cai 1993, 8), It is still having an impact today in China. This thinking and writing habit also works at paragraph and sentence level, which means that there are no strict structural regulations on details of academic writing, and a certain amount of naturalness and space is reserved along students' writing process. As a result, citation is not always working as the foundation of Chinese authors' thinking and is not always embedded naturally with Chinese students' patterns of thought. Still, it is added stiffly on some occasions in the Chinese context. As I reviewed in *chapter 1*, according to Tanner, Lloyd identified two different thinking types: causal thought from ancient Greece, which shifted from mythos to logos and required explanations, and correlative thought from China, with focuses on correlation or resonances and is self-evident (Tanner 2009, 92). Lloyd further explained that Yin-yang synthesis unified China's natural and social order, emphasising balance

(Tanner 2009, 92). Agreeing with Lloyd, to the author's understanding, the correlative thought with emphasis on "relationships and self-evident" and causal thought with emphasis on "the individual, truth, and precision" partly explains CIS' lack of sensitivity to citation.

Secondly, affected by the traditional sage way of knowing in China, Chinese students are not sensitive enough to the plagiarism culture and tend habitually to ignore it, resulting in unintentional plagiarism in English academic writing. Examine Lin's complaint about English academic writing again; firstly, she was unaware of "what is plagiarism and why citation and reference are needed"; secondly, she emphasised this is her article and she cares about the subjectivity of her voice in a written work as an author. The two points are widely shared by Chinese students educated under the traditional Chinese sage style of knowing.

To perceive CIS' negative attitude towards citation and reference within a wider cultural and educational context, firstly, Chinese academics favour reading the classics directly since there is a culture of "respecting authority". As the classics are the minority, academics tend to neglect the interpretations based on the classics by other scholars or readers (Li 2015) and only refer to the original classics, such as Si-Shu-Wu-Jing (四书五经) --- the Four Books and the Five Classics, which convey the thinking and teachings of Confucius (Cai 1993, 7). Because these constituted the main form of academic discourse in ancient China and were used by the ruling class to recruit local officials (Cai 1993, 6), this principle is called Jing-Dian-Zhi-Wai, Zhi-Zhi-Bu-Li (经典之外，置之不理) in Chinese --- ignore everything beyond the classics. Secondly, in Chinese culture, "plagiarism" is, to some degree, a compliment. For example, when you mentioned Confucius' ideas in your essay, it represents that you are showing respect to Confucius. As the classics are the minority and remembering the classics is encouraged in Chinese education, most students tend to know what the others are actually "citing" from.

Other than this, academics trained in China tend to pay attention to the thinking called DaiTian-Di-Li-Yan, Wei-Li-Min-Qing-Ming (代天地立言，为黎民请命) (Li 2015) --- speak in

the name of heaven and the earth for the people, they tend to place great value on what they say in their writing. An emphasis on the citation will undermine the central rule of their independent voice, as revealed in Lin's complaints. This also explains why, as Alex said, it is permissible to repeat the main idea again and again in an essay in China.

Unlike China, the UK has deeper foundations for developing a citation culture. Firstly, there is an overwhelming concern with authorial rights historically in the Anglo-Saxon culture. The UK has its Anglo-Saxon cultural commercialisation and copyright protection heritage, while China does not. There was concern with authorial rights back to the rise and spread of the printing press during the 15th – 16th centuries across European countries (Flowerdew and Li 2007; Scollon 1995). The birth of copyright law --- the Statute of Anne, also occurred in the UK during the 17th-18th centuries (Flowerdew and Li 2007; Scollon 1995). In summary, there was already copyright protection in the UK in the broader context outside the academic world.

As also reflected in what Qing said, the first academic training courses introduced at B University included "intellectual property protection". By contrast, even though the art of movable-type printing was invented in China around 400 years ahead of Europe (Carter 1931), it failed to spread to a broader public due primarily to high cost of manufacturing the Chinese characters, which have more complex structures then Western alphabet, and that there are thousands of Chinese characters, each requiring a separate block if a moveable type is used, which have to be located in the trays where the characters are held (Carter 1931); more commonly, therefore, each page of a book is individually carved in its entirety.

To sum up, firstly, the different patterns of thought and communication/persuasion styles in the cultures of China and the UK partly explain CIS' different perceptions of citation and reference. Using citations is adapted to the writer's thinking and logical persuasion in English. Controversially, the citation is not always working as the foundation of a Chinese author's thinking and is not always embedded naturally with Chinese students' communication/persuasion style. Secondly, the traditional sage way of knowing explains CIS' different logic of writing and referencing. Influenced by the traditional sage way of knowing

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through respecting authority and referring to the classics, "plagiarising" is a compliment, and caring about the subjectivity of the voice in a written work as an author explains CIS' unintentional plagiarism in English academic writing.

8.1.3 Institutional forces and CIS' experience towards citation and reference

As stated above, the second factor causing CIS' negative perceptions of citation, reference and plagiarism is the different degrees of penetration by institutional forces in education. Referring to Qing again, *"B University is the very first university in China that provides such kind of academic writing training courses, which were started in 2014... in recent years, several other among the best universities in China are also learning from our university library".* Qing's statement in 2018 revealed that China hasn't yet developed a complete and stable institutional culture of a detailed reference and citation system. And as I repeatedly emphasised in *chapters 4, 7* and *8*, China's transition from traditional to modern university has been taking place during this research; an in-depth and detailed platform of citing and referencing cannot be constructed unless modern social sciences and humanities education and the associated academic publishing industry are completed. On the contrary, though UK higher education and degree training had also experienced reform in the 1970s (see *chapter 4*, section 4.3), the degree of penetration by institutional forces into modern education is relatively complete and highly systematic after fifty years of exploration.

The development of modern social science and humanities in China has been relatively recent. Taking sociology as an example, although it was introduced gradually from the West in the late 19th century and experienced a period of growth and construction in the first half of the 20th century (Xueshutang 2015), political factors after 1949, especially the disturbance of the Cultural Revolution during the 1970s (see *chapter 4*, section 4.2), obliged sociology, together with other social science and humanities disciplines to experience a period of adjustment and reconstruction from the 1950s to the 1980s (Xueshutang 2015). As a result, it was not until the 1980s that the recovery periods for sociology and other social science and humanities began

again in China. Furthermore, no solid academic community was built in China until the new century (Xueshutang 2015).

A further factor is the uneven development of Chinese academic journals, which have also experienced a long period of disorder, resulting in very scattered theoretical viewpoints with no intellectual coherence. The first issues of the two widely accepted mature journals in sociology, *Sociology* and *Chinese Social Science*, were published in the 1980s. The modern academic publishing industry is recently developed as well. Citing and referencing systems, like "accessories" built on academic writing and the academic publishing industry, were penetrated by institutional forces even later. To conclude, this rather delayed penetration by institutional forces in Chinese academia and higher education could partly explain CIS' negative perceptions of citation, reference and plagiarism.

8.1.4 Social development, the Information Age and CIS' experience towards citation and reference

In addition to cultural and educational factors and institutional development in academia, the social reactions towards the emergence of the Information Age after World War Two, which imposed new document management demands, is also a vital force in explaining the CIS' negative perceptions of citation, reference, and plagiarism. There was an absolute necessity for the invention of citation as a better way of managing information after WWII. Moreover, the possibility of automated computer processing of information and the potential of the electronic revolution in text production was already anticipated during the 1960s.

The Science Citation Index (SCI) (mentioned in *chapter 7* in Ren's case) was developed in 1961 by Eugene Garfield and encouraged by the US government. It then quickly spread throughout the English-speaking world (Clarivate Analytics 2011). Before WWII, as the academic community was small, there was no real need to develop detailed citing systems. For example, when you look back at the ethnographies before WWII, such as the very famous ethnographies --- the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940) and Argonauts of the Western Pacific (Malinowski 1922), it can easily be seen that there is only a minimal number of footnotes

throughout the book and scarcely any citations. However, the research community grew bigger as much government money was poured into research and development after WWII. It naturally began to publish its findings through accepted channels of publishing scientific journals (Clarivate Analytics 2011). "Keyword searching" and "bibliography" are not enough for managing a considerable quantity of information (Clarivate Analytics 2011). In addition, there are also commercial considerations. The invention of citation systems can better control academic data, especially scientific research results (Clarivate Analytics 2011).

Secondly, the invention of the personal computer was anticipated in the 1960s, and it was recognised that an electronic revolution in text production was coming (Flowerdew and Li 2007). The pioneers, such as Eugene Garfield, knew very well that with the coming of communication networks such as the World Wide Web and personal computers, there was a possibility that computers would automatically process information and be widely used by ordinary people in daily work. Thus, an invention of the citing index system in the academic world would help better manage data in the electronic era of text production (Flowerdew and Li 2007).

What happened in China was that while the irreversible advent of the digital age began to influence the academic world in developed countries, the related indexes and databases in China were not developed until the turn of the century. For example, the Chinese Social Science Citation Index was created in 2000, and the Chinese Social Science and humanities online databases were developed in 1999 (Lu 2017). In addition, it was not until the beginning of the 21st century that academic journals began more professional. Again, as stated by Qing, a law student at B University, "*B University is the very first university in China that provides such kind of academic writing training courses, started in 2014.*" Only recently was a more complex document management system introduced in China. Chinese students recently started learning the new system from the more experienced West. The social development in China and its reactions to the electronic bibliography management system in the information age could partly explain why the CIS in their UK study commonly faces citation, reference and plagiarism issues.

To conclude this section, as revealed by the cases of Alex, Lin and Qing, citing and referencing is a shared problem among CIS of this generation in the UK, at least initially. Responding to Flowerdew and Li's (2007) critique that most studies lack an in-depth analysis of the relationship between students' perceptions of plagiarism and other contextual, sociocultural and institutional variables, this section has been developed to provide answers to this issue based on CIS' citing and referencing experience. It argued that CIS' negative perceptions of citation, reference and plagiarism reflect three variables or reasons: the different patterns of thought in communication/persuasion style and ways of knowing; the institutional forces in Chinese academia and higher education; the social context in China and that delayed its reaction to the emergence of new document management demand in the information age after WWII.

8.2 Different academic writing standards, CIS' challenges in academic writing

Referring to Six's case at the beginning of the chapter, the academic writing standard in the UK puzzled him. Significant differences and connections exist between English and Chinese academic writing standards, including structure, cohesion, clear, natural, critical thinking etc. This section shows examples of CIS' various experiences towards the two different academic writing standards. It examines how the various patterns of thought, representing the communication and persuasion methods in the two cultures, and the different ways of knowing in education in China and the UK affected CIS' perception of English academic writing standards.

8.2.1 CIS' practical experience towards academic writing standards

In the first writing class I attended at X University English Language Centre several years ago, I remembered that the teacher showed on the projector several pieces of students' writing to demonstrate to us what the bad examples of academic essays in social science are. Among them there was one piece of writing from a Chinese student. The teacher negatively commented on the paper and expressed her confusion. She read a few sentences with a

puzzled tone and said: "*there is no logic at all between sentences and paragraphs; a very unclear piece of writing, isn't it?*" Several students in the classroom felt that it was an amusing piece of writing and started laughing while the teacher was reading. I had to admit that it was not a good paper. However, the essay's structure was reasonable, and the logic was clear if translated into Chinese. I did not remember this incident until my informants shared many related stories about the difficulties they have experienced in English academic writing.

> "*My supervisor commented on my paper that he could not find my central argument, and there was too much nonsense in my writing. Also, I do not paraphrase the words of others. I was confused during the first two months of English academic writing practice.*
>
> *Still, it was not long before I found out that in Chinese academic writing, repetition of an argument in an essay is allowed and widespread. In addition, there is space for you to write some 'less relevant words'. Sometimes, you will get praised for good writing because of the 'nonsense words' since they are rhetorical words that do not affect the argumentation much. Then I learned what my problems in English academic writing were. Now, I am getting much clearer about how to do better in English academic writing. But there is a long way to go from writing to good writing*".

This is an extract from my conversation with Six, the PhD student studying international relations at X University. This conversation happened at the end of November (his third month at X University). Six's experience towards the English academic writing standards is very similar to what was revealed from my participatory story in the English language centre. Concluding the above cases, "no logic", "unclear", "repetition of arguments", and "nonsense words" are the phrases describing CIS' writing under the standards of English academic writing. Moreover, the selected case of Six provides an example that Six is making progress in English academic writing after three months of writing practice.

Similar conversations often happened in the reading group I was in with several Chinese PhD students doing social science at X University (as mentioned in the former section).

"Let's look at this sentence: 'Most works are often like seeing through a fog. Very confusing. They are also like a simple diet. Difficult to find it tasty (the original Chinese text: 大多数作品常常像是"雾里看花"一样，搞不清就里，又似粗茶淡饭，不易咂摸出味道*).' Writing in Chinese is not logic- argumentation, but rhetoric. It has come down in one continuous line with the way of communication in Chinese. This sentence would never appear in an English academic paper in social science"*.

This was said to Alex, a friend of mine with a literati temperament, who was doing a PhD in human geography at X University. Everyone else in the group agreed. This sentence is a perfect example. It is very beautifully written in Chinese and used a figurative rhetorical style. Similar writing styles are usually allowed to appear in Chinese academic papers though they are "nonsense". However, it lost its beauty and became neither logical nor functional if translated into English. As Alex claimed, the way of communication and persuasion in the language of Chinese is carried by the CIS into their academic writing, and the language itself is rhetoric but not logical enough. Zi, a Chinese PhD student, studying anthropology at C University, UK, agrees that the Chinese language is less logical. Zi said that:

"When speaking of the difference between Chinese and English, I think the logic of Chinese is less strong than English. Chinese is hard to visualise. Especially when we do translation, it is hard to find an appropriate translation, from abstraction to specificity."

Zi's sharing of experience reminds me of my English learning experience before university and academic writing practices in these years in the UK. Suppose I think back to how I was taught in English grammar lessons in primary school. In that case, I always needed to notice where to add a "pronoun" or "conjunction" since, in many instances, pronouns can be omitted in Chinese. For example, "where did you get it?" could be "where did you get" in Chinese. The omitted 'it' does not affect the sentence's meaning.

To conclude the findings from the cases of Alex, Six, Zi and my own experience, firstly, CIS regard Chinese academic writing as "unstrict and allowing repetition of arguments" in structure. In contrast, the English academic writing standard requires "clear logic-

argumentation and no repetition of arguments" in structure and cohesion. Secondly, CIS regard the Chinese language as "rhetorical, less logical, using euphemisms and hard to visualise" and the language of English as clearer and more straightforward. The less logical Chinese language as a way of communication and persuasion carried by the CIS influenced their practice of English academic writing. According to Tanner's review of Kuriyama's theory in Sino-Hellenic studies, geometric analysis, such as size, speed, and rhythm, is popular in Western cultures. In contrast, the preferred analysis style in Eastern cultures like China is the opposition between rough and slippery (Tanner 2009, 93). This also explains CIS' understanding of the differences between the Chinese and English languages. Thirdly, all the cases illustrate that

CIS could acknowledge the differences between the two academic writing standards. Six's case demonstrates that CIS can adapt to the new literary writing style after months of practice.

Returning to the fieldwork story, I audited an applied linguistics module at X University English Language Centre in 2018. The theme of the lectures was how L2 (the second language) would influence the use of L1(the first language). Chinese students in that module shared many of their experiences on language links with logic, speaking and writing, and culture. One Chinese student said in class that.

> "*Language will influence cognitive thinking. When I started to use English very often, I found my ability to write in Chinese was weaker than before*." Another Chinese female student added, "*Yes when I video chatted with my mother from here in the UK, my mother noticed that I always use inverted sentences while talking. This must be affected by the grammatical habits of English, which are very different from Chinese.*"

Yuan (introduced in *chapter 6*) also shared this experience. Yuan achieved excellent results during the one-year Master's program with distinction in her dissertation. She once told me that while writing her master's dissertation, she turned to using an English-English dictionary in the writing process after a failed attempt to use a Chinese-English dictionary for a while.

"Writing in English is very different from writing in Chinese, and the structural difference is not the only reason. The languages themselves are very different from each other. It is not difficult to find that there are many 'nonsense', omissions and vague expressions in Chinese, both in speaking and writing, which are considered normal by Chinese people."

Yi, a PhD student in the Law School at X University with whom I happened to have a conversation, expressed the same opinion.

"For me, to speak and write in English is much easier than in Chinese. The logic is clearer. The art of speaking and writing in Chinese is sometimes too indirect and ambiguous. I prefer using English, and it is more straightforward to some degree."

Revealing from the cases of Yi, Yuan and the applied linguistics module observation, they all emphasised how language influences thought patterns, cultural expression traditions, and communication/persuasion in academic writing. They described the language of Chinese as "indirect and ambiguous in expression and allowing nonsense, omission and repetition" compared to the English academic writing standard. In addition, it implied from the case of Yi that she is getting used to the English academic writing standard and favours it very much.

To conclude all the above cases presented in section 8.2.1, CIS could acknowledge the differences between English and Chinese academic writing standards. After practice, many can adapt to the new academic writing standard, and some even favour it. In addition, the above cases also presented two influential aspects that challenge CIS' approach to meeting English academic writing standards. The first is the Chinese language's influence on thought patterns, cultural expression traditions, and communication/persuasion in academic writing. The second is the difference between the two academic writing structures and ways of knowing. The following paragraphs in section 8.2 will explain this further.

8.2.2 Language and communication style, CIS' perception of English academic writing

standards

Zi, Yuan and Yi's cases regard the Chinese language as inadequate in reasoning compared with English and relatively vague and abstract in expression. In addition, they thought the Chinese communication/persuasion style was rather euphemistic and not precise. Hinkel pointed out in his 1997 paper that in Anglo-American academic writing, straight points, direct supports of an argument and clearness are expected. Indirectness, repetition, vagueness and ambiguity characterise students' writing raised in Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist societies (Hinkel 1997, 361). I agree with Hinkel towards his summary of the two academic writing cultures. At the same time, I do not regard "indirectness, repetition, vagueness and ambiguity" in language and writing as bad. They are just features of a specific language and communication culture, and people in this culture see them as reasonable.

Chinese scholars/writers always wish to maintain a harmonious relationship with readers (Cai 1993, 6). This is to say, Chinese scholars/writers treat the process of writing as face-to-face communication between people. From Six and Yuan's words, euphemistic expressions are considered normal since academic writing in non-science fields in China was always regarded as a communication between a writer and their readers. Alex also expressed the same opinion: "*writing in Chinese is not logic-argumentation but rhetoric. It is like daily communication and social interaction between the Chinese. It is always indirect and implicit*." As Alex said, indirectness and implication are equal to politeness and modesty in this circumstance. It means that the author allows for unforeseen circumstances in his writing. This attitude is advocated in people's behaviour in Confucian culture, no matter whether in writing or daily conversations. In addition, rather than using a neutral, objective and impersonal way of writing, Chinese scholars/writers tend to write in the first person with the author as the subject (Li 2015). As was discussed in the former section on citation, Chinese writers will not use as many citations as the writers in the UK because they do not want their dominant position to be violated by other people's ideas (Li 2015). Chinese students' writing in non-science fields

tends to focus only on what they would like to say in an article and will not use neutral, objective tones in information delivery.

On the contrary, clear and logical argument is highly regarded in English academic writing. The communication/persuasion style in ancient Greece, an essential foundation of modern European civilisation, could explain this. According to Tanner's (2009) discussion on the link between rhetoric and battle in ancient Greece, the styles of communication, which were transferred from law courts and popular assembly to ancient Greek science --- "polemic with competitors, modelled on styles of persuasion and use of evidence characteristic of exchanges in key democratic political institutions" --- encouraged the academic writing style in the UK today which advocates "clear logic, giving argument and supporting evidence". In addition, the post-enlightenment Western natural science way of knowing also corresponds to the English academic writing style based on argument and supporting evidence.

8.2.3 Writing structures and way of knowing, CIS' perception of English academic writing standard

In terms of writing structure, the intellectual resources of China and the UK have some features in common. CIS' practices in English academic writing can also be explained by the changing writing structure in China and the different ways of knowing in the two countries today.

"*English academic writing is like an updated version of the argumentative essay in Chinese we learned in middle school.*" I saw this post from a Chinese international student on my social app, WeChat. Before entering higher education, most Chinese students are trained to write essays for exams. Therefore, several writing styles have become the most popular for entrance exams to higher education to get high scores. As popular writing styles are used more often, students tend to neglect that they were also taught how to write argumentative papers in their primary education, even though that is very similar to the structure of English academic writing.

"When we were in middle school, we were taught that writing styles consist of narrative, argumentative, expository, poetry, novels and so on. Academic papers in the UK are the advanced form of argumentative writing. Argumentation consists of an argument, supporting cases and a conclusion. The argument in argumentative papers corresponds to the innovation points of academic papers. Cases in the argumentative papers can refer to allusions or life examples, while academic papers require scientific facts (investigation) or discussion (literature) as support."

This is quoted from students' sharing in the reading group I organised with Chinese Master's students. However, the student added that because this argumentation style is more like writing in a scientific field, it is not widely seen in non-science fields in China. This demonstrates that Chinese students knew this writing style and could write good argumentative essays with a clear structure.

"You can only have one research question and one central argument in an essay, and you need to write it with a Ba-Gu (八股, eight-legged essay, introduced in chapter 4) style with very detailed citations. But when you write papers in Chinese, repeating your ideas again and again in one paper naturally is allowed. It is easy for our Chinese people to understand the paper with obvious logic. Still, when I used the same method to write an essay when I came to the UK, the teacher got very confused and said, Chinese students do not use logic and do not know what critical thinking is."

This is a selection of Alex's words. *Ba-Gu* (八股) --- eight-legged essay --- means an article of eight parts: poti, change, Lijiang, qigu, xugu, Zhongguo, and Dajie. The literal meanings of these words are "opening-up, amplification, preliminary exposition, first point, second point, third point, final point, and the conclusion" (Cai 1993, 6). In addition, each part must be carefully balanced on the paragraph and sentence level through rhymed words, paired phrases, and matched length of sentences (Cai 1993, 7). As agreed by Alex, the structure of the eight-legged essay is very similar to the English academic writing standard, which is well recognized among many Chinese students after they master the standard of English academic

writing. *"At first, I thought academic writing in social science English might be challenging, but it was easier than writing in Chinese. It has a rather fixed structure. You can write it like a scientific paper"*, said Six (the exchange PhD student from China studying international relations at X University) in our meeting several months after his arrival at X University. Cai, the Master's student I met in business school classrooms, said directly, *"English academic writing is very similar to Bagu – eight-legged essay. They are both rigid in styles."* As Cai noted, an eight-legged essay was always praised for its beautiful writing and rigorous logic. However, it was also criticised for its limitations on the creativity of Chinese literati.

The eight-legged essay, very rigid, as stated above, was invented as a part of the Chinese civil service examination in the 1300s and used by the Chinese ruling class to recruit local officials and maintain its empire (Cai 1993, 6). All topics for eight-legged essays came exclusively from Chinese classics such as the *Four Books (*四书*) and the Five Classics(*五经*)*, which are Chinese classic texts illustrating the core values and belief systems in Confucianism (Gardner 2007). With the fall of the Qing dynasty, the end of the Empire and the start of comprehensive explorations towards modern China at the turn of the twentieth century, a reform took place during the New Culture Movement in the early 1900s (see *chapter 4,* section 4.2). As the pioneers of modern China attributed the reasons for the decline of China at that time to the backwardness of the Chinese traditional culture represented by Confucian culture, young scholars in the movement called loudly for vernacular literature. They overturned the old and rigid style of the ancient literary form of the eight-legged essay, representing the traditional Chinese culture in content and format. Expository and persuasive writing then came to follow the newly generated qi(起)-cheng(承)-zhuan(转)-he(合) four-part organisational pattern (Cai 1993, 8). This structure has been used since the movement in the 1920s and continues to spread its influence today, even after one hundred years. The system demands consistency between the introduction, body part and conclusion, but only generally.

Many studies have examined CIS' academic writing practice and ability to critical thinking, including Durkin (2008), Holmes (2016) and Moosavi (2020). They all noticed the stereotype

of Chinese students in Western higher education. They argued that Chinese students could think and write critically, and called for more understanding in the group of students. I wish to build on their arguments by proving that English academic writing structure and cohesion are not strange to the CIS. Some CIS can use this writing and persuasion style well after practising. The modern variant, the academic writing structure of the *Ba-Gu*, still occurs in today's middle school education, but it is not widely used by students. It demonstrates that CIS can think critically and write academic essays with logical structure and cohesion. They can achieve this by practising the *Ba-Gu* writing style.

Despite the changing writing structure, the traditional way of knowing about social science and humanities in China also influenced CIS' academic writing standard. In traditional Chinese literary culture, "literature, history and philosophy" were not separated, and there were no social science disciplines in traditional China. Moreover, though Western social science disciplines were introduced to China in the 1910s and rejuvenated after 1980, the academic circle still pays great attention to "researching as a whole rather than being too specialised" in humanities and social sciences. This was also presented in Six's reflections on UK education in *chapter 7*. As a result, in a piece of Chinese academic writing in non-science fields, literariness is allowed to express the author's views more vividly. This explains why "less relevant words" are allowed in Chinese academic writing and makes the writing less coherent and structured.

On the other hand, being "objective, neutral, clear, cold and impersonal" is advocated in English academic writing structure. Affected by the Western scientific paradigm after the 17th century, the research spirit of the natural sciences became the absolute mainstream and influenced humanities and social science research. The fine academic divisions and the science-led way of knowing penetrated the humanities and social sciences research and academic writing standards in these fields. In addition, humanism makes historical research more rigorous and scientific. As Willey said, those who advocate a more precise and strict spirit have dominated (Willey 1964, 9). Undeniably, this scientifically dominant way of

knowing is still affecting the academic sub-disciplines of social sciences and the norms and spirit of academic writing in the UK today.

Section Summary

To conclude section 8.2, firstly, CIS in my field can understand that there are both significant differences and logical connections between English and Chinese academic writing standards, including structure, cohesion, clear, natural, critical thinking etc. Secondly, many can adapt to the new academic writing standard after practice, and some even favour the English academic writing standard. Thirdly, it illustrated that language, cultural communication style, academic writing structures, and way of knowing in education explain the challenges in CIS' practice in meeting English academic writing standards.

To start with, CIS regard the Chinese language as "rhetoric, less logical, euphemism and hard to visualise" and the language of English as more precise and more straightforward. The less logical Chinese language as a way of communication and persuasion learned by the CIS influenced their practice of English academic writing. Based on this, I argue there is no right or wrong between the two languages and writing cultures. They are just features of a specific language and communication culture, and people in this culture see them as reasonable.

In addition, CIS regard Chinese academic writing as "unstrict and allows repetition of arguments" in structure. They believe the English ones as with "clear logic-argumentation and no repetition of arguments" in structure and cohesion. I argue that English academic writing structure and cohesion are not strange to the CIS, and some CIS can use this writing and persuasion style well after practising. A similar rigid academic writing structure, *Ba-Gu*, appeared in Chinese history.

Moreover, CIS tend to write in the first person with the author as the subject. This is consistent with the traditional sage way of knowing in education they received in China. On the contrary, the English academic writing style based on argument and supporting evidence is consistent with the post-enlightenment Western natural science way of knowing. This dominant way of knowing affects the academic sub-disciplines of social sciences and the

UK's standard and spirit of academic writing. Conflicts between the two ways of knowing interfered with CIS' academic writing practice.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the disorder in CIS' English academic writing experience caused by the new citation and reference system and the new academic writing standards in the UK universities. It focused on the experience of CIS who are doing social science and humanities programs. Students' ethnographic stories, analyses, and discussions are organised in two parts: (1) citation, reference system and plagiarism, and (2) various academic writing standards.

The chapter concludes that, firstly, from selected students' cases, CIS can acknowledge the challenges they met in English academic writing caused by the new citation and reference system and the new academic writing standards. These are shared problems among CIS, at least initially. CIS can understand the differences and connections between English and Chinese academic writing standards. Many can adapt to the new academic writing standard after practice; some even favour the English academic writing standard and find it easier to write in English.

Secondly, the chapter built on previous research towards CIS' perception of plagiarism, problems in academic writing and critical thinking ability by offering an in-depth analysis of CIS' academic writing difficulties with contextual, sociocultural and institutional variables. It argues that CIS' negative perceptions of citation, reference and plagiarism and their challenges in English academic writing standards reflect three variables of reasons: 1) the different languages, sociocultural communication styles in patterns of thought; 2) the dominated academic writing structures and ways of knowing in social science education in the two countries; 3) the institutional forces towards UK and Chinese academia and higher education.

The chapter contributes to the thesis's central research question and arguments in the following ways. It answers the first research question by arguing that 1) conflict and tensions,

and power relations arise between the various ways of knowing to which CIS are exposed, 2) different patterns of thought culturally and historically characterise China and the UK, 3) social-political and institutional forces delayed the transfer of Western academic principles to China, and 4) more diversified influential factors of individual CIS, together explain the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS found in their UK higher education.

It answers the second research question of the thesis by arguing that: while CIS gained an opportunity to broaden their cognitive ability by experiencing higher education in the UK, the features and relative advantages of patterns of thought and ways of knowing originated from China and the UK are highlighted with CIS' cross-cultural vision. CIS favour either one or the other academic writing culture based on their individualised experiences. Further, it demonstrated that a typical pattern of thought and way of knowing might not be universally true; it is only valid relative to different ways of looking at the world and understanding knowledge. Respect and understanding rather than stereotypes toward CIS and the academic writing culture they hold should be encouraged to widen the understanding of knowledge universally.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

My research started by posing two questions: first, how to understand the difficulties postgraduate Chinese International Students (CIS) met in their UK higher education experience, and secondly, how far has their understanding of knowledge been transformed by such experience? "Knowledge" can be defined as the information or awareness gained through experience or education. In this context, I use "knowledge" as a concept to describe the information and awareness students gain through cultural experience and university education, which includes various patterns or legacies of thought and different ways of knowing. By "Patterns of thought" in this context, I mean the cultural habit of perspectives, methods and ways through which things are usually viewed, each of which has a long historical and socio-political background. "Ways of knowing" in this context means the styles of obtaining and processing knowledge that students acquired from higher education. I refer to the Chinese and European patterns of thought and ways of knowing as "Empires of knowledge".

In this final chapter, I first summarise the contents and arguments in the ethnographic chapters, that is, *chapters 5,6,7* and *8*, and then reach the integrated arguments of the thesis in terms of "empires of knowledge". Based on these arguments, I further explain how power transfers made the post-enlightenment objectivistic Western natural science way of knowing the dominant empire that approaches knowledge globally. After that, I state the contributions and values of this thesis toward the existing research on the global knowledge flow in the anthropology of education, teaching and learning of international students in the UK, and the decolonisation of UK higher education. In the end, I propose practical policy suggestions for UK universities to address the challenges of a highly plural and globalised constituency of adult learners to meet the UK universities' internationalisation agendas.

9.1 Summary of arguments

This section summarises the contents and arguments in the ethnographic *Chapters 5,6,7* and *8* to remind the reader. After that, it presents the integrated arguments of the thesis.

Chapter 5 comprehensively introduces CIS' diversified lives and challenges at X University. It presents the field site geographically and its position within the UK higher education system. Secondly, it describes how CIS actively build their life and social connections with different student groups and local businesses in city X. It thirdly explains the internal differences in the CIS from different perspectives. The multiple and diversified challenges faced by the CIS are presented. The chapter provides the background information about my main interviewees, whose contributions are discussed in *chapters 6, 7* and *8*. It also explains how social context and cultural habits affect CIS' social network building and the life challenges on campus. Moreover, the chapter revealed the diversity within the Chinese students' group and students' diversified reactions to the challenges they met on campus, which helps understand CIS' varied academic performance in the following *chapters 6, 7* and *8*.

In *chapter 6*, I explore Chinese postgraduate taught students' diverse learning challenges in their UK classrooms at X University in non-science subject areas and how far their understanding of knowledge has been transformed after such experience. I argued in this chapter that CIS' shared difficulties in the UK taught Master's classroom are partly caused by the inconsistency between the two different forms of classroom teaching to which they are exposed in China and the UK: a typical Chinese classroom which is "teacher-centred, knowledge-based, textbook-based with authoritative answers" and delivers systematic knowledge concerning historical tradition; and a UK classroom which is "student-centred and academic debate-based" and aims to develop students' independent and critical thinking abilities through questioning and participating in the thought process. Based on this argument, I argue secondly that different classroom forms as components of the different educational systems partly reflect two different ways of knowing to which CIS are exposed: "the

traditional sage way of knowing from China", which represents the respect of sage's word and the advocation of erudition, careful thinking, and discernment, and "the Western postmodern critical way of knowing" from the UK, which holds a critical attitude and a transformation of epistemology from absolute knowledge to the exploration of provisional expertise through practice. Further, the tensions and conflicts between the two ways of knowing CIS experienced caused the difficulties many CIS met in their UK classrooms.

I argue thirdly that, as well as the conflicts and tensions between various ways of knowing, the difference between patterns of thought in China and the UK also explains CIS' challenges in a UK classroom. Using Lloyd's theory in his Sino-Hellenic studies , as reviewed by Tanner (2009), I consider that the different communication styles between the two cultures contribute to understanding CIS' difficulties encountered in their UK classroom. I believe "the way of criticising and displaying skills through public debate between leaders of sects in Ancient Greece" has left a cultural legacy which might have influenced the post-modern critical style of communication and persuasion in a UK classroom. On the contrary, I regard "the explication of the authoritative canon in the monarchical tradition in China" as an influential cultural reason for the methods of communication and knowledge delivery in a Chinese classroom.

Fourthly, I argue that in addition to the objective influences of various ways of knowing and patterns of thought, other influential factors on students' academic practice in the UK classroom are students' diverse backgrounds and characters, cognitive preferences, critical reflection on themselves, learning support available for them and their purpose in studying abroad.

This goes with my third argument in *chapter 5*.

To summarise, the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS encountered in their UK taught Master's classroom are caused by: 1) conflicts and tensions between two "ways of knowing" in Chinese and British education to which CIS are exposed 2) different "patterns of thought" in Chinese and British culture in which CIS are situated and

3) students' various backgrounds and characters, access to learning support, and their degree goals.

Finally, the chapter argues that Chinese students favour either the form of a classroom in the UK or China based on their diversified individual experience. I disagree with Watkin and Biggs' (1996) claim that the Chinese learning style is surface learning and Western learning is deep learning. I consider that both systems can provide students with room for growth and have their respective advantages. It further implies that a typical way of approaching knowledge might not be universally true; it is valid only relative to different ways of looking at the world. The dominance of a particular way of approaching knowledge in a culture is because it is more effective at that specific stage of social and political context. As a result, exploring how CIS' understanding of knowledge is transformed would show how various ways of approaching knowledge interact with each other and the potential future transformation of knowledge.

Chapter 7 looks at Chinese research postgraduates' diversified learning stories and challenges in their UK studies and how far their understanding of knowledge has transformed after this experience by comparing the Chinese and UK postgraduate education systems, training plans, methods, and supervisory styles. Several ethnographic stories of doctoral students doing science and social science programs in the UK and China are presented and interpreted. After that, the diversified and individualised Chinese research students' supervisory experience in various disciplines is presented and discussed.

The chapter defines and explains "the post-enlightenment Western science way of knowing" (out of the three ways of knowing argued for in the thesis), which pursues knowledge certainty and advocates the objectivity of thought and understanding the world by pure logic and reason. Secondly, it concludes that CIS' difficulties in UK research degree programs are diverse and highly individualised. The way PhDs are trained and the supervisory styles to which Chinese students are exposed are not homogeneous either in China or the UK. In addition, the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK study vary by field of discipline. CIS

doing nonscience research degrees face more challenges caused by the different ways PhD are trained in China and the UK than those doing research degrees in science.

Thirdly, *chapter 7* argues that the confused understanding and the unequal expectations of Chinese students towards degree design in the UK and their various access to academic resources in social science demonstrates that in understanding the difficulties CIS encountered in their UK education, despite the tensions and conflicts of the three ways of knowing in education, the cultural reasons caused by various patterns of thoughts, and other diversified individualised reasons which were argued in *chapter 6*, the social-political and institutional reasons also need to be considered.

Fourthly, the chapter answers the second research question of the thesis, "how far has CIS' understanding of knowledge been transformed after their experience of studying in the UK?" by arguing that the various ways of training suit CIS according to their individualised needs and preferences. Both research degree training styles practised in the UK or China can give students room for growth with their respective advantages. However, the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and master-family, which still appear in the contemporary Chinese supervisory style, are valued very much by CIS after their overseas study experience. Based on this, the chapter builds on the latest research of Geerlings and Lundberg (2020) and contributes to my second central argument by providing an alternative discourse on the local way of approaching learning in China, which are "the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and in a master's family". It also proves that communication and mutual learning rather than adherence to a single "empire of knowledge" help to widen CIS' understanding of knowledge.

Chapter 8 explored the disorder in CIS' English academic writing experience caused by the new citation and reference system and the new academic writing standards (including structure, cohesion, clear, natural, critical thinking etc.) in the UK universities. It focused on the experience of CIS studying in social science and humanities programs. The chapter argues that, firstly, from selected students' cases, CIS can acknowledge the challenges they met in

English academic writing caused by the new citation and reference system and the new academic writing standards. These are shared problems among CIS, at least initially. CIS can understand the differences and connections between English and Chinese academic writing standards. Many can adapt to the new academic writing standard after practice; some even favour the English academic writing standard and find it easier to write in English.

Secondly, the chapter built on earlier research towards CIS' perception of plagiarism, problems in academic writing and critical thinking ability by in-depth analysis of CIS' academic writing difficulties with contextual, sociocultural and institutional variables. It argues that CIS' negative perceptions of the standards for citation, reference and plagiarism and their challenges in English academic writing standards reflect three variables: 1) the different languages and sociocultural communication styles in patterns of thought; 2) the dominant academic writing structures and ways of knowing in social science education in the two countries; 3) the institutional forces shaping UK and Chinese academia and higher education.

The chapter contributes to the thesis's central research question and arguments in the following ways. It answers the first research question by arguing that 1) conflict and tensions, and power relations exist among various ways of knowing to which CIS are exposed, 2) different patterns of thought culturally and historically characterise China and the UK, 3) social-political and institutional forces delayed the transfer of Western academic principles to China, and 4) the more diversified influential backgrounds of individual CIS, together explain the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS found in their UK higher education.

It answers the second research question of the thesis by arguing that: while CIS gained an opportunity to broaden their cognitive ability by experiencing higher education in the UK, the features and relative advantages of a pattern of thought and way of knowing that originated from China or the UK are highlighted with CIS' cross-cultural vision. CIS favour either of the academic writing cultures based on their individual experiences. Further, it demonstrated that

a typical pattern of thought and way of knowing might not be universally true; it may only be valid relative to different ways of looking at the world and understanding knowledge. Respect and understanding rather than stereotypes toward CIS and the academic writing culture they hold should be encouraged to widen the understanding of knowledge universally.

To integrate these arguments in all ethnographic chapters, the thesis answers both my two research questions: 1) what are the difficulties CIS met in their UK higher education and how can they be unerstood, and 2) how far their understanding of knowledge has ben transformed by such experience?

In response to the first research question, the first central argument of the thesis is that the shared difficulties CIS met in their UK higher education are situated in classroom learning, research degree training and academic writing. In addition, the different reactions and attitudes toward the perceived confusion CIS encountered in their UK higher education are caused by: 1) conflicts and tensions among three "ways of knowing" in Chinese and British education to which CIS are exposed; 2) different "patterns of thought" in the Chinese and British cultures in which CIS are situated; 3) students' individualised and diversified backgrounds and characters, cognitive preference, critical reflection on themselves, access to learning support, degree goals, accessible ways of training and supervisory styles, discipline backgrounds, etc.; 4) the social-political and institutional forces shaping UK and Chinese academia and higher education.

I argue that there are three ways of knowing exposed to CIS in their higher education. They are 1) "the traditional sage way of knowing from China", which represents respect for the sage's word and the advocacy of erudition, careful thinking, and discernment; 2) "the postenlightenment Western natural science way of knowing", which pursues knowledge certainty and advocates the objectivity of thought and understands the world by pure logic and reason; and, 3) "the Western postmodern critical way of knowing", which holds a critical attitude and a transformation of epistemology from absolute knowledge to the exploration of provisional expertise through practice.

In this thesis, I argue that different features of "patterns of thought" in Chinese and British culture CIS situating partly explain their learning challenges. For example, I believe "the way of criticising and displaying skills through public debate between leaders of sects in Ancient Greece" is a cultural legacy which might have influenced the post-modern critical style of communication and persuasion in a UK classroom. On the contrary, I regard "the explication of the authoritative canon in the monarchical tradition in China" as influential cultural reasons for communication and knowledge delivery in a Chinese classroom. In addition, the emphasis on "*Ren Qing* (人情, exchangeable resources) and *Guan Xi* (关系, functional relationships between people)" in CIS' social network building and supervisory relations characteristic of the way PhDs are trained in China is opposed to the focus on "independence" in the way PhDs are trained in the UK, also shows how different patterns of thought effected on CIS' learning practice in UK higher education.

In response to the second research question, "how far has CIS' understanding of knowledge transformed after their experience of studying in the UK?" the second central argument of the thesis is that CIS favour or suit either form of classroom, way of degree training and academic writing culture in China and UK based on their diversified individual needs and preference. In addition, while CIS gained an opportunity to broaden their cognitive ability by experiencing higher education in the UK, "the traditional supervisory features of student apprenticeship and master-family," which still appear in the local way of approaching learning in China, are valued very much by the CIS with their cross-cultural vision. It demonstrates that both systems with their respective advantages can give CIS room for growth. In addition, communication and mutual learning rather than adherence to a single "empire of knowledge" helps to widen CIS' understanding of knowledge.

This argument further implies that a typical way of approaching knowledge might not be universally true; it is only valid relative to different ways of looking at the world and understanding knowledge. According to Foucault (1980), knowledge, defined in this thesis as "the information and awareness students gain through cultural experience and university education, which includes various patterns/legacies of thought and different ways of

knowing", is made persuasive by those in power. The dominance of a particular way of knowing in education and pattern of thought in culture is that it is more effective at that specific stage and region. As a result, an exploration of how CIS' understanding of knowledge is transferred would show how various ways of approaching knowledge interact with each other and the potential future transformation of knowledge.

9.2 Power transfer and the flow of empires of knowledge

Continuing with the argument at the end of section 9.1, in this section, I wish to explain further how the post-enlightenment objectivistic Western natural science way of knowing became the mainstream way of approaching knowledge since the seventeenth century and what its limitations are. The background of its appearance, the characteristics of this way of knowing, its relation to the broader society, and how it gained hegemony in the flow of empires of knowledge worldwide through the transfer of power are discussed first. After that, the limitations of this way of knowing and how they are represented in this thesis are explained.

Firstly, the objectivistic modern Western natural science way of knowing is an empire of knowledge that is dominant today in both the UK and China. However, such an "empire of knowledge" was not always popular and unchanged in the history of the UK and China. The separation of the "truth" from the "false", the "real", and the "illusory" have been the task of thought at all times. Still, such an exploration process had been carried on much more actively and consciously in the period of Greek philosophy and the centuries following the Renaissance in the West (Willey 1964, 9). It is generally agreed that in the seventeenth century, representative thinkers made great efforts to see things as they are in themselves with the advocation of the ideas of "truth or fiction" (Willey 1964, 7). Traditional medieval Western European theology beliefs were then exposed to this "narrowed philosophy" (Willey 1964, 7). At that time, men began to desire the kind of truth which would enable them to measure, weigh, and wish to control the truth, to "extend more widely the limits of power and

greatness of man" (Whetham 1930, 137). According to Gribben's review of scientific development in the seventeenth century, "in the discovery of secret things, and the investigation of hidden causes, stronger reasons are obtained from sure experiments and demonstrated arguments than from probable conjectures and the opinions of philosophical speculators" (Gribbin 2003, 71). Therefore, the objectivistic Western modern natural science way of knowing, which is based on this scientific research method of "hypothesis-test thinking", building on "causal thought" from ancient Greece, which shifts from mythos to logos and requires explanation (Tanner 2009, 92), appeared.

This objectivistic modern Western natural science way of knowing is built on causality and linear reasoning. It has an emphasis on logical thinking and positivistic induction. Objectivity and rationality are the core spirits. This knowledge and thought revolution contributed much not only to knowledge production and higher education but also to the modernisation process of Western countries in many essential areas, such as modern science and technology. The discourse of the post-enlightenment Western natural science way of knowing became powerful because it works, but that is partly because people have decided that the kind of problem science solves are the most important ones in that period. The dividing line between scientific discourse and all other philosophies of knowledge is that it ascribes "facts" to "the process of historical practice" (Foucault 1969, 250). Using Foucault's (1980) theory on knowledge and power to explain, the objectivistic modern Western natural science way of knowing, favoured by the "more powerful" post-enlightenment Western counties, has come to dominate and has been accepted as a mainstream way of approaching knowledge since then. Scientific knowledge itself is a significant standard of normalisation. It works as a normalising power through university education by training the student into a person who thinks and acts in specific ways --- the objective natural science way of knowing. Furthermore, because of its value in exploring the natural science world and in developing modern science and technology, this way of knowing was introduced into China and other non-Western countries to take the place of their original local ways of approaching knowledge --- for example, the traditional Chinese sage way of knowing explained in this thesis --- as the

intellectual empire's way of knowing. This shows how a particular kind of truth, the objectivistic modern Western science way of approaching knowledge, became universally accepted in the flow of empires of knowledge because of the transfer of power to Western society.

However, I wish to argue that this hegemonic way of knowing through modern Western natural science also has its limitations. Solving repetitive problems and exploring the natural science world might be compelling, but rationalism is not a panacea. Segmentation can easily lead to rigidity. Intuitive thinking is equally important in understanding the humanities and social science world, and it might have other ways of reaching the "truth". To connect it with this research, as shown in *chapter 5*, CIS' flexible use of both formal and informal systems on and off campus in organising social support networks at X University indicates that both the formal system --- established upon the "institutional structure on campus" and the informal social connections --- developed upon "*Guan Xi* (关系 functional relationship between people)", the soil in which informal connections grow, work for CIS. In addition, based on the analysis of the characters of the two communication, the conciliatory and adversarial or battle styles in academic writing in *chapter 8* and the advisability of the traditional Chinese sage way of knowing in the ways PhDs are trained in *chapter 7*, I argue that the traditional sage way of knowing from China and the epistemological basis developed upon informal systems of

"relationships" are also worth receiving attention as additional ways of reaching the "truth" in knowledge.

Moreover, as I have also mentioned in several places in this thesis, many ideological resources in the two educational cultures were once historically interlinked. Each has its advantages and suits different people in different historical periods and regions. This finding strengthens my argument that power is fluid. In different periods, the more powerful way of approaching knowledge occupies the centre, while the less powerful one occupies the edge. It is the transfer of powers that results in the flow of empires of worldly knowledge. Since part of anthropology's job is to look at other ways of knowing and assess their value, anthropology

can highlight how the shifts in the balance of power can bring alternative ways of approaching knowledge to prominence. This study claims that the era of an exclusive, allpowerful knowledge empire should end and should be replaced by "mutual understanding, compatibility, coexistence, and mutual appreciation" to contribute more fully to global knowledge construction.

9.3 Contributions and values

The thesis contributes to the existing studies in two separate areas, responding to my literature reviews in *chapter 3*. They are: 1) studies on knowledge transfer in the anthropology of education, 2) the teaching and learning of CIS and the decolonisation of UK higher education.

9.3.1 Power and the universal standard of knowledge

Reviewed in *chapter 3* (see section 3.2), Geerlings and Lundberg's (2020) work on education and the universal standard of knowledge is most closely related to my research. Their research looks at the modernisation of world knowledge. It explores how knowledge is reproduced as universal in contemporary higher education and how this claim of universality affects knowledge application through a clinical psychology case study in Singapore, Australia, and the Netherlands. The research presents how a dominant discourse of science which is

"objective and value-free" and standard of knowledge in the global north through an "international edition textbook that normalises Euro-American research findings" is built. The article criticised the hegemonic power in knowledge transmission in a postcolonial world.

Geerlings and Lundberg's research provides ethnographic examples of how universal knowledge is made coherent through standardisation and accreditation but it does not present the local way of approaching knowledge in Singapore or other alternative discourses other than Western modern natural science. Though my research focus is not on global North-South knowledge flows but East-West, the concerns on "transfer of power and the flows of empires of knowledge" are common. My thesis builds on this latest research in knowledge transfer in the anthropology of education in several ways. Firstly, beyond the critique on the hegemony

of the "post-enlightenment objective Western natural science way of knowing", I bring other local ways of knowing and alternatives of discourse other than science into attention: the traditional Chinese sage way of knowing, the postmodern critique way of knowing, and the communication/persuasions styles in thought from China. Secondly, as stated at the end of Geerlings and Lundberg's paper, their work opened up new avenues of anthropological research focusing on academic disciplines and curricula. My research, which selected X University students in three academic departments in science and non-science, makes up for this gap.

Thirdly, this research developed by arguing that, from a knowledge perspective, different Chinese students gain from adapting to different training methods. In addition, differences in the history, culture and philosophy spirits of China and the West have existed since ancient times. They are integral attributes of human civilisation. More understanding and communication between different patterns of thought and ways of knowing should be encouraged to enrich students' cognition. As I had concluded in *chapter 6*, a postmodern reflexive and critical way of knowing has already appeared in the UK higher education classroom, which aims to reflect critically upon the natural science way of knowing. On the other hand, CIS' higher education practices in the UK and China also reflect China's exploration of the compatibility of traditional and modern thought resources while developing. The two practices of reconstruction and reflection upon knowledge are not contradictory and can be carried out simultaneously. A hegemonic empire of knowledge deserves to be reflected on, criticised, and replaced by "exchanges and mutual learning" to inject fresh impetus into the development of human knowledge.

9.3.2 Teaching and learning, the decolonisation of higher education

In response to the reviews of the literature on Chinese student studies in *chapter 3* (see section 3.1), along with the internationalisation of higher education and the student mobility from non-Western countries to universities in leading Western countries such as the US and the UK, the concerns about racial prejudice in universities and university teaching and the

decolonisation of higher education grow. Post-modernists did not hesitate to support the views expressed by ethnic minorities: ethnic minorities have a vibrant culture, and their children fail in school, probably because the school did not adopt the children's culture and did not let the children use their way of thinking to learn, and did not use the children's cultural standards to test. The children's culture is thus discontinuous, interrupted, and so on (Teng 2014, 19). Correspondingly, the research in this thesis builds on the existing studies in the following ways.

Firstly, as reviewed in *chapter 3* (see section 3.1), Ryan (2011) concluded that academic teaching and learning in UK higher education had experienced three phases, each characterised a different trend. In the third, current phase, universities' internationalisation agendas have led to debates about the internationalisation of the curriculum (for both home and international students)' and the broader internationalisation of higher education. My research builds on the research in academic teaching and learning in UK higher education in the current phase by "providing knowledge about different cultural, intellectual and academic paradigms and teaching approaches (from China)" in *Chapters 4,6,7* and *8*. This contributes to the UK university's need to build a global university in the third (current) phase.

Secondly, the thesis calls for more understanding and less prejudice to racial minorities in UK universities by providing an ethnographic description of the reasons for Chinese students' negative perceptions of "citation, reference and plagiarism" and "academic writing standard" in their UK study with more connections to contextual, social, cultural and institutional variables in *chapter 8*. The conclusion of the chapter shows that Chinese students can understand the new rules of academic writing and write well under the new evaluation standard after practice.

9.4 Practical policy suggestions

As mentioned in section 9.3, in the current phase, UK universities' internationalisation agendas have led to debates about the internationalisation of the curriculum (for both home and international students) and the broader internationalisation of higher education in

addressing the challenges of a highly plural and globalised constituency of adult-learners. Based on my fieldwork on the learning practice of postgraduate Chinese students at X University, I offer the following suggestions to UK universities and university teachers to address the challenges of the more and more diversified student populations in UK universities. I hope these suggestions can help improve the study experience of Chinese students in the UK, who make a significant financial contribution to UK universities. I also hope these suggestions could help enhance students' higher education experience in the UK from other countries and cultures.

Firstly, as described in *chapter 5* (section 5.3), a challenge for CIS at the beginning of UK university life is caused by the differences between Chinese and UK university organisational forms. Chinese students are strangers to the need to actively get universityrelated information and build connections with universities, colleges, and departments through the university email account. The smallest unit of a Chinese university is a fixed class with a class tutor who arranges students' university life and study. International students from some other Confucian cultures share this. As a result, I would suggest the international student welcome team of UK universities provide international students with a package of introduction papers on "*how to start your UK university life*" on their first arrival.

Secondly, as described in *chapter 5* (see section 5.3) of CIS' difficulties on the UK campus and reflected in *chapter 2* (see section 2.4) on ethics and methodology of the research, Chinese students face diversified individual challenges on campus, not in themselves part of academic study, but which negatively affected their academic study, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

X university provides its students with counselling services on campus. However, many of the CIS do not go to use the service as they consider the assistance given by counsellors from another culture would be limited, because such counsellors could not understand what they had experienced and thus help them effectively. As a result, I would suggest that UK universities that aim to build a global university include counsellors in the counselling service team with more diversified cultural backgrounds according to the proportion of ethnic

minority students in the university. I believe this would help international students actively use the services on campus and better adapt to their life and study on campus.

Thirdly, the ethnographic story of CIS' classroom learning practice in *chapter 6* (see section 6.1) shows that students can adapt to the new learning environment more easily with additional learning support from the teachers. In addition, students' academic writing experience in *chapter 8* also implied the necessity of bringing more learning support to international students' training in English academic writing. In responding to the more diverse student population, the author calls for UK universities and university teachers to provide more learning support to ethnic minority student groups in classroom learning and academic writing. For example, firstly, to provide one more office hour for international students who do taught Master's degrees to ask questions in the first term of the academic year. Secondly, students can use academic writing services on campus three times each academic year at X university. I would suggest providing international students more chances to use the academic writing service, especially for those students who did not attend the pre-sessional language courses.

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