MASTERARBEIT

Homeland Ties in the Context of Transnational Mobility

Reflections of Chinese Students in Lyon

Verfasserin

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Abstract

In the context of this research the notion of mobility is not taken as something unforeseen or new, but as something characteristic and inherent to human nature. What is being regarded as new to the phenomenon though are the ramifications of Chinese politics' major developments in the 1980s, expressed in unprecedented levels of Chinese individuals being able to travel and to sojourn abroad. Whilst keeping in mind the unequal distribution of access to opportunities for the engagement in transnational movements it is this study's intention to cast an eye on young Chinese' lives and how they incorporate both, mobility and homeland-ties, in it.

The bond between subjects on the move and their countries of origin, as well as the countries they are living in abroad, constitute the centre of this research's interest. In elaborating on individuals coming from mainland China, living, studying and/or working in Lyon, the complex ways in which they negotiate their connection to the mainland through mobility is going to be addressed. In addition to discussing the possibilities and chances as well as difficulties and challenges engaging in an emerging globe-trotting and knowledge-accumulating lifestyle poses, the decisive role education plays in the Chinese context shall be discussed.

While no effort or expenses are spared in order to pursue the acquisition of higher education abroad, informants' accounts show that homeland-ties are nurtured and maintained, despite of the distance. As six Chinese migrants tell stories of their lives and share their personal experiences in migration, the central aspects of how they relate to their country of origin become evident. Accounts on individuals' processes of migration (including their parameters of migration, language, perceptions of foreignness and the supporting role of students' networks) and the ways in which they feel connected to and responsible for their parents constitute pieces of the answer to the research question. Likewise the ways in which Chinese migrants express their educational and professional future aspirations, engage with political issues and talk about their private lives suggest key points of how and why mobility is pursued.

As the accumulation of degrees of renowned universities around the globe is pursued as a means to reach for international careers, the question of homeland-ties becomes attached to the question of neoliberal practices and how they are linked to the mobility of the subjects of this research.

Zusammenfassung

Im Rahmen dieser Masterarbeit soll der Frage auf den Grund gegangen werden, wie chinesische MigrantInnen ihre Beziehung zum Heimatland, im Zuge der von ihnen ausgeübten transnationalen Mobilität verhandeln und leben. Unter Einbindung unterschiedlicher Ansätze wird der Versuch unternommen Migration von ChinesInnen auf eine Art und Weise zu untersuchen, die die Prämisse ungleicher Machtverhältnisse, auf derer die Mobilität jener weniger beruht, nicht aus den Augen verliert. Mobilität ist ein wesentliches Merkmal menschlicher Entwicklung und Existenz und wird als solches im Rahmen dieser Ausarbeitung nicht als "neues" Phänomen gehandhabt. Es wird jedoch sehr wohl hinsichtlich seines Ausmaßes und seiner Tragweite im Bezug auf die Mobilität junger Menschen chinesischen Ursprungs im Zuge der Veränderungen in der chinesischen Politik der 1980er Jahre als neuartig und bahnbrechend verstanden.

Indem die Lebensgeschichten von sechs chinesischen MigrantInnen, die in der französischen Stadt Lyon leben, vorgestellt, und die Schilderungen über ihre persönlichen Erfahrungen, die sie im Kontext der Migration nach Lyon gemacht haben, wiedergegeben werden, wird Schritt für Schritt dargestellt, wie die Im-Zentrum-dieser-Forschung-Stehenden Verbindungen zum Heimatland und Mobilität in ihren Leben vereinen. Im Zuge der systematischen Erfassung, Herausarbeitung und Aufbereitung von empirischem Material durch die Anwendung von Kodierungsverfahren wurden zentrale Themenbereiche herausgearbeitet, die die Kernpunkte zur Beantwortung der Thematik der Forschungsfrage bilden.

Erzählungen darüber wie die Migration nach Lyon erlebt wurde (Rahmenbedingungen, Sprache, Empfindungen von Fremdheit sowie Rückhalt durch soziale Netzwerke), wie auch Schilderungen über die Beziehung zu ihren Eltern und Ambitionen und Angestrebtes in Bezug auf die Bildung und Karriere von InformantInnen geben Auskunft darüber, von welchen Ideen und Gedanken die transnationalen Bewegungen Betroffener geleitet sind. Gleichermaßen ist die Auseinandersetzung junger ChinesInnen mit politischen Themen, sowie die Art und Weise wie sie ihr Privatleben gestalten und ihre Zukunftspläne entwerfen, als Ausdruck dessen zu verstehen, wie durch diesen mobilen Lebensstil die Beziehung zum Ursprungsland der Migration, China, gedacht und gelebt wird.

Die Form, in der die in Kernbereiche gebündelten, wiedergegeben zentralen Aspekte, von jenem Anreiz, den neoliberale Möglichkeiten bieten beeinflusst wird, ist bei der Antwortbildung zur Forschungsfrage von ebenso maßgebender Bedeutung, wie das Eingehen auf das Pflicht- und Verantwortungsbewusstsein Chinas' Einzelkinder gegenüber ihrer Eltern.

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1. Introduction

«On estime globalement le nombre d'individus composant les communautés chinoises ou d'origine chinoise à environ 50 millions d'individus de par le monde.» (Pina-Guerassimoff 2012:19) There are about 50 million people of Chinese origin living outside China, spread over 135 countries. (cf. Ong 2006:61)

The first large scale emigration occured in the late nineteenth century in the course of the first British incursions. The discontinuation of agricultural trade caused by the British incursion led to famine, which forced significant outflows of Chinese people to Southeast Asia as well as North and South America. (cf. Ong 2006:61) The great south Chinese exodus can be identified as a first more pronounced movement of Chinese people.

With respect to the primal waves of Chinese people moving and living abroad to study, the most important historical event and trigger, causing fundamental changes, can be seen in the Chinese reform policies 改革开放 *gaigekaifang*[1] introduced in the 1980s: «[...] la sortie du territoire a été, depuis 1978, facilitée et encouragée par Pékin [...]». The reasons for leaving China and going abroad were diverse. Whereas some left to pursue their goals of higher education at foreign education institutions, others contemplated migrating due to Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule in 1997.

> China's opening to the global economy, the impending return of Hong Kong to rule by Beijing, and the Tiananmen Square crackdown were major causes for an outflow of students, business people, professionals, and ordinary workers seeking political refuge or economic opportunities in the West. (Ong 2006:61)

Even though the Chinese government has promised to let the system in Hong Kong remain unchanged for 50 years, this major change caused considerable migrational outflow. As will be shown in the statistical data on the following page, incidents such as the return of Hong Kong to the CCP's rule, the terrorist attacks on 11th September2001 or the outbreak of the

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[1] By opening up China to the challenges and possibilities inherent in capitalism, Deng Xiaoping and his ideology of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' brought about fundamental change in Chinese history. Its repercussions affected all fields of society in an enduring and fundamental manner, in particular the economy, politics and the media. Deng's ideological foundation made it possible for China to tread its path to economic reform. He argued that market economy is not to be equated with capitalism and therefore is compatible with socialism. (cf. Hartig 2008:61) The policy of 改革开放 gaigekaifang has had tremendous impact on the further development of Chinese higher education and Chinese mobility as a whole.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002 can be assumed being decisive for the fluctuations in decrease and increase of individual's mobility.

The following chart illustrates the number of Chinese individuals going abroad to study. It has been released by the Chinese Ministry of Education and Bureau for Statistics. It is depicting a historical overview of the amount of Chinese students who are pursuing their studies in foreign countries within the timeframe of 1978 to 2010.

The unit of quantity given in the right column of the chart is 万 wan, a character representing 10 thousand. The information at the top of the statistic is stressing the correlation between China's policy of reform and opening up and the rise of the number of Chinese students attending universities abroad. The total number of students going abroad in the span of time between 1879 and 2010 exceeds 1.9 million students, out of which 632.2 thousand returned to China after finishing their studies.

随着我国改革开放的不断深入，我国留外学生人数不断增加，根据教育部以及中国统计年鉴提供的数据，从1978年-2010年，出国留学人数约达190.54万人，共有63.22万留学人员学成后选择回国发展。

Fig.1

The United States, Australia and Canada belong probably to the most popular destinations of young Chinese participating in transnational circuits, but European countries have been as well preferably chosen, among them France. «[...], les étudiants chinois sont près de huit fois plus nombreux à la rentrée 2003 qu'à la rentrée 1998.» (Teissier et al. 2004:30) Compared to the beginning of the academic year in 1998, the start of the academic year in 2003 listed the eightfold of Chinese students studying in France.

The number of young Chinese pursuing higher education in France has been gradually growing from approximately 25,000 in 2010, to approximately 35,000 in 2014, making Chinese students after Moroccan students the highest number of foreign students. (cf. Carrière Étudiant.lefigaro.fr) According to the French embassy in Beijing, the number of Chinese studying in France could reach approximately 50,000 by 2015. (cf. De Queiroz Étudiant.lefigaro.fr)

It is under the current events of this phenomenon that I would like to situate and conduct my research. As there is this tendency towards an ever increasing rate of Chinese individuals engaging in transnational educational experiences, the question that I would like to pose is, to what degree this being on the move influences their relationship to mainland China.

It has been my research's focus to cast a light on how Chinese students, who, incited by developments of globalisation and capitalism were enabled to pursue an in the Chinese context unprecedented form of transnational mobility, are pursuing this mobile style of life. By getting in touch with and working with Chinese students, it has been my intention to find answer to the following key question, positioned at the centre of my research:

How do Chinese students in Lyon negotiate their ties to homeland through mobility?

Why has Lyon been chosen as the destination for the execution of their educational and/or professional aspirations?

How do individuals perceive their life in Lyon?

There are many questions linked to and interrelated with the subordinate question of this research project. What are the motivations behind individuals' migration? These lead to a set of questions such as: How do they consider their life in China? What are individuals' future aspirations and in what ways are these expression of how they feel connected to their homeland? Where is their mobility going to lead them? These and many more questions that could be asked are linked to how Chinese students perceive of their life abroad and in China, of mobility and homeland.

1.1. Structure

The research question of how Chinese individuals' engage with their relation to homeland through their movements is going to be answered by various means. First of all a brief

overview shall be given of the set of methods, which has been chosen and applied in the way best fitting the research idea.

In order to be able to discuss the subject-matter of the research the key terms and concepts that shall be worked with first of all need to be clarified. Therefore right at the beginning at the thesis, the subsequent chapter to "Methodology", is going to treat the notions of "mobility" and "homeland". Starting out with the term "mobility", various approaches on the concept are going to be laid out and, upon comparison, the conceptualisation selected for its meaning with respect to this research, shall be pointed out.

After touching upon the contested application of the term "diaspora" in the context of the greater movements of Chinese people, the second major term in the research project shall be introduced and its conceptualisation determined. Related to the subjects of home and homeland are notions of "space" and "locality", which will be as well in the following clarified and its application assessed critically.

After this first introduction into the key concepts and major methods that have been applied in the course of this research, the subject-matter of how mobility is pursued by means of educational opportunities shall be addressed. Starting out with the regimes-of-mobility approach introduced before, the chapter links the phenomenon of transnational mobility to education. The important role higher education is playing in the Chinese context and its historical development over time is laid out in the subsequent chapters.

Following that the next chapter is going to outline the legal migration regulations of France for Chinese people. The chapter gives a brief overview over the various regulations with respect to Chinese migration (which will be of particular importance with respect to informants' accounts on their application process).

"Chinese Students in Lyon" is going to present the analysed an interpreted empirical data, gathered in the course of fieldwork. After touching upon how access to the field has been established, the informants involved in the research are going to be introduced.

Then the five major subject areas with respect to the main theme of the research will be illustrated.

The subsequent conclusion is functioning as the summarising reply to the research question and marking the end of thesis.

2. Methodology

The conclusions at which a researcher arrives in their scientific research is primarily dependent upon how the research question is articulated and secondly determined by the researcher's choice of scientific methods, used in order to answer that very question.

The subject-matter this thesis is addressing is the question of how young Chinese individual's connections to mainland China, including different modes of identification, is reshaped and conditioned with respect to nation-states practised mobility. This represents a complex of themes, for whose investigation a qualitative research approach is particularly useful. "Qualitative research is of specific relevance to the study of social relations, owing to the fact of the pluralization of life worlds. [...] This pluralization requires a new sensitivity to the empirical study of issues." (Flick 2002²:2) The qualitative approach in research offers a path into more efficiently getting to terms with the diversity of life worlds nowadays and is therefore of crucial importance in the context of this research. Explored are how globalisation processes induce constantly increasing rates of young agent's international mobility.

The next question that might pose itself is what exactly can be understood by a qualitative approach in research? Uwe Flick in his "Introduction to Qualitative Research" distinguishes the following defining characteristics of qualitative research:

- Appropriateness of methods and theories
- Perspectives of the participants and their diversity
- Reflexivity of the researcher and the research
- Variety of approaches and methods in qualitative research (Flick 2002²:5)

Crucial in the application of a qualitative anthropological research is the operability of basing the findings on actual empirical realities. Another precondition leading to success in the undertaking of the research is the choice and application of the most suitable methods regarding the subject.

One of the advantages in choosing a qualitative approach in the exploration of a matter is the ability to consider and pay attention to the diversity and complexity in occurrences and situations. "Qualitative research takes into account that viewpoints and practices in the field are different because of the different subjective perspectives and social background related to them." (Flick 2002²:6) A defining factor of qualitative research is, among many other things,

its ability to point to the particularities, the variety of possibilities and the interrelations with respect to the problem under research.

Nevertheless, going down the qualitative path in one's research does not at all necessarily have to be a researcher's declaration of refraining from all forms of quantitative analysis, as Christel Hopf points out. In one of her contributions she stresses the importance of being aware and mindful of the relation between methodological processes and the interpretation of the meanings of subject's accounts in research. The issue at debate is depicted in qualitative research by the questions of how, to what degree and by what means the subjectivity in the individual's accounts and descriptions need to be considered.

> The question how one demonstrates, on the basis of qualitative investigations, that some subjective account is not just an idiosyncratic attempt to come to terms with social reality, but that it expresses a collectively anchored, institutionalized interpretation, is a methodological and theoretical problem [...] (Hopf 1983:8)

Keeping during the research process in mind the subjectivity of accounts is as important as acknowledging, where justified, the occurrence of argumentation and proof. By illustrating the discussion and its inherent complexity, Hopf is making a case for her point of view that being mindful of the subjectivity in people's accounts does not have to force a researcher into completely giving up on any kind of quantification of observed data whatsoever.

"As fieldwork progresses and becomes more focused on a set of issues, fieldworkers often self-consciously collect a series of incidents and interactions of the 'same type' and look for regularities or patterns in them." (Emerson et al. 1995:29) Considering an utterance or incident as worth writing down often leads to further considerations on it and the search for the occurrence of incidences that are similar, as well as exceptions to the case.

In elaborating on the subject, in what way and to what degree it is valid to draw collective characteristics in qualitative investigations, Hopf infers that any attempt to argue for or against something is rooted in the representation of a certain majority.

The debate surrounding the analysis and the interpretation of subjective accounts is of particular significance to the content of this thesis, as it deals with the reaching of conclusions in the form of regularities, as it is being conducted in the course of my own research.

> In almost all qualitative investigations of meaningful accounts there appears somewhere the following pattern of "evidence" for some regularity: the claim that some subjective

interpretation is "typical" for some particular group, supported by the evidence of two or three quotations from interview transcripts which are classified as examples. (Hopf 1983:12)

As Hopf believes that qualitative research does not have to amount to completely shunning the idea of drawing collective conclusions, she equally rejects the view of quantitative research being devoid of any form of interpretation.

By very well showing her awareness of the danger of generalisation in scholarly analysis, she alludes in her writing to the necessary requirements in the collection, analysis and evaluation of information gained through subjective accounts.

[...] we can state that a subjective interpretation has collective validity in a particular field and within the relevant range if it is taken to be appropriate and true according to the moral and cognitive rules established in that field (rules of meaning, verification, and interpretation). (Hopf 1983:26)

The collective validity in subjective accounts is filtered out by enquiring whether it is determined by norms and rules. Hopf is engaging in the debate by on the one hand discussing the operability of deriving collective phenomena from subjective accounts and on the other hand focusing on the concept of rule. By including the relevance of rules and norms in her line of argument she aims to explain that there are certain meanings used by subjects under research in a taken for granted way. (cf. Hopf 1983:22) There are certain truths the person answering holds. There are certain things judged true or false, maybe without the respondent even thinking about or being aware of.

The idea that it is only possible to fully comprehend the meaning of utterances, by an awareness on the part of the researcher of the moral rules that guide the usage of specific terms and shape the formulation and expression of people's thoughts, has been taken as the guiding principle in the conduction of this research.

2.1. Methods used in Information Gathering

The following methods were used in order find answers to the complex of themes surrounding the research question based on Chinese mobility. The decision to pick certain methods is led by the idea to select the appropriate methodological tools to respond to the research question

in the best possible way. The research interest has been pursued by applying a combination of various methods, which will be further elaborated on.

2.1.1. Literature Research

The search and choice of literature usually takes place at the beginning of the research process. Reading, choosing and further delving into the respective literature of relevance to the research topic is equipping the researcher with a theoretical overview over the planned field of research and therefore constitutes a crucial part of the research process. The researcher is getting an initial insight into the range of issues and subjects that have already been studied with respect to the question intended to be investigated.

The research and analysis of literature is the search of scholarly writing, including books and major works, as well as scientific material and texts published in scientific journals, with respect to the subject matter that is the choice of research.

Pre-existing literature enables the determination and definition of key terms and concepts and in this way helps provide the theoretical foundation of the research project. Systematic gathering, selecting and analysing of literature makes it possible for the researcher to situate the research in a certain scientific context.

One of the objectives in literature research is to illustrate the various theoretical approaches to the question of research. By extracting diverse aspects and crucial factors discussed in the literature, it is possible as a next step to consider and contrast them with my own empirical data. "Texts serve three purposes in the process of qualitative research: they are not only the essential data on which findings are based, but also the basis of interpretations and the central medium for presenting and communicating findings." (Flick 2002²:29)

Considering the topic of this research, a particular focus in the reading and depicted selection of literature has been put, on the subject matter of Chinese mobility. Emphasis has been therefore shifted onto the historical development of young Chinese people's ability to act as mobile subjects in relation to their territorial situating, not just on the national, but more and more often global level. Included in this are the socioeconomic factors involved in this movement. By casting a light on the cultural implications of these developments, literature and empirical research are merged in an attempt to answer the question of how homeland-relations are (re)shaped and conditioned by mobility in the case of Chinese migrants studying abroad.

2.1.2. Ethnographic Research

Decisive in the accomplishment of anthropological research is an awareness of the opportunities, as well as the challenges and risks inherent in conducting one's research, and, to put it simply, to know what doing ethnographic research is about.

> Dans son sens le plus général, le terme « ethnographie » se réfère à l'étude d'une culture plus ou moins partagée par un groupe donné d'individus. [...] Comme méthode, l'ethnographie se réfère typiquement au travail de terrain réalisé par un investigateur qui « vit avec et comme » ceux qu'il étudie, généralement pour une période assez longue (plusieurs mois, voire plusieurs années). (Ghasarian 2004:14)

The term ethnography in the common sense refers to the study of a culture, to a greater or lesser extent shared by a group of individuals. Ethnography as a method refers to the fieldwork a researcher does over an adequate period of time, in which he/she is living with and as those he/she is aiming to study. Fieldwork hence does not refer to the passing by or visiting of a field site, but instead implies the action of staying and working therein.

Ethnographic research above all aims to try and understand as opposed to judge. One of its most prominent features is to try and approach the far away and make familiar the foreign, as Beaud and Weber are seeking to highlight:

> Parce que l'ethnographe s'astreint à un long travail de description-interprétation - les deux vont de pair - il met au jour la complexité des pratiques sociales les plus ordinaires des enquêtés, celles qui vont tellement de soi qu'elles finissent par passer inaperçues, celles qu'on croit « naturelles » parce qu'elles ont été naturalisées par l'ordre social: pratiques économiques, alimentaires, scolaires, culturelles, religieuses ou politiques, etc. (Beaud/ Weber 1997:9)

By devoting themselves to the long and intensive work of description and interpretation, to always making out the two sides to a story, the ethnographer is uncovering the complexity in most ordinary social practices of those under research. They are engaging in the very practices that have become internalised to a degree of taking place unnoticed and are being thought of as natural, as they have become naturalised by the social order. The research might concern economic or nutritional practices, educational, cultural, religious or political practices etc.

This implies that it is an ethnographer's goal to look behind appearances. In many ways fieldwork is occupied with doing justice to and investigating frequently ignored or misunderstood practices. (cf. Beaud/ Weber 1997:9ff.) In investigating a matter, the researcher is trying to go beyond pre-given categorisations of the social world. Ethnographers are holding up a mirror to their subjects of research. It lies therefore within the researcher's capability by means of his findings to upset, make uncomfortable, challenge, as well as make comprehensible, or even spark empathy and/or sympathy.

With respect to the research that has been carried out in the course of this thesis, I would like to address a certain particularity.

> In much traditional ethnography, the ethnographer has localized what is actually a regional/national/global nexus, relegating to the margins the external relations and displacements of a 'culture'. This practice is now increasingly questioned. (Clifford 1997:24)

If the research is focusing on Chinese individuals one could, with reason, ask why the research hasn't been conducted in mainland China itself. One of the main reasons lies in the innovative developments that have been going on within the field of anthropology, approached, among others, by James Clifford. As it is no longer valid to regard 'culture' as a territorially bounded entity shut off from any contact with the surrounding and in general global environment, new branches and opportunities for conducting anthropological research have emerged. These tendencies are mentioned here, as the exploration of young, mobile Chinese individuals can be regarded as being situated within these newer forms of ethnographic investigation.

As the research focuses on Chinese subject's by their sojourning-abroad altered perceptions and views on mainland China and France, no particular city within China but Lyon has been chosen as the preferred field site.

> À l'ère de la globalisation des pratiques et des connexions transnationales au sein d'un monde en perte de territoire, dans lequel la dimension relationnelle des cultures prend le pas sur la dimension territoriale, les histoires individuelles sont prises dans l'histoire générale, l'étranger peut être cherché ici et le familier là-bas. (Ghasarian 2004:22)

In the age of globalisation, with transnational practices and links taking place against the background of a world on track of losing its focus on territory, the relational dimension of culture is gaining the upper hand over the territorial one. Whereas the foreign can very often be sought here, the familiar can be sought out there. Ghasarian highlights the importance of launching into processes of delocalisation and (re)localisation, in order to avoid lapsing into engaging with oversimplified dichotomies.

The vast innovations that have been going on in the fields of communication and information technology, the media, as well as the rapid developments with respect to one's options to move and travel have changed lived realities forever and have led to anthropology admitting that a researcher's field and home are no longer incompatible sites. (cf. Beer 2008:30)

In approaching Chinese migrants living in Lyon I was able to get insights into their daily lives, the activities they pursue in their free time as well as their educational and professional ambitions. In participating in their lives and in particular in the experiences they are making every day in the course of their sojourn in France, I got the chance to first-hand feel and see the routine problems they face and their ways of approaching and dealing with them. I got to observe their opinions on a wide spectrum of issues, always going hand in hand with their reflections contrasting "here" - Lyon - and "there" China. Taking part in their activities on a regular basis made me realise what issues are important to them and what issues are of lesser concern to them. I could see what worries or upsets them or make them laugh and observe how these emotions and feelings make up parts of expressing their thoughts on life in China and in France, all merging into the articulation of their homeland-relations.

Choosing Lyon as a field site provided the subjects under research with the liberty to voice their opinions and at the same time factoring out adverse consequences of them doing so. Conducting the research in Lyon also provided Chinese individuals with the space and distance to reflect upon their country of origin. The setting allowed them to express their views in an unproblematic and unconstrained manner and they were induced to share stories of their family, friends and own life with me.

Lyon, as a city and field site, was foreign to me as well. It was therefore interesting to compare Chinese migrants' narrations of their experiences in France with my own and reflect upon them. It provided me as well with the necessary detachment to cast a critical eye on potential adverse, as well as beneficial aspects of migrating to France and in this way equipped me with a deepened understanding for the described difficulties and challenges, as well as possibilities and opportunities of living in Lyon.

2.1.3. Participant Observation

In their work Emerson, Fretz and Shaw differentiate two main pillars representing the foundation of exercising ethnographic field research. The research interest is pursued by participant observation and by the generation of a written record of the experiences the researcher is gaining when spending time with the subjects under research. (cf. Emerson et al. 1995:1) Field notes constitute a written account of what the ethnographer sees and learns when being in the field.

Participant observation makes up a major part of anthropologists daily work:

> First, the ethnographer enters into a social setting and gets to know the people involved in it; [...] The ethnographer participates in the daily routines of this setting, develops ongoing relations with the people in it, and observes all the while what is going on. (Emerson et al. 1995:1)

Ethnographic research is based on the researcher initially contacting and getting in touch with the people under research. The people are situated in a certain social setting the ethnographer is seeking to investigate. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw stress the importance of taking part in activities performed by those to be researched on a daily, regular basis, for they give information on how people live, what they deem significant and what they hold true and dear. In short what their social world is made up of. The term used by Emerson et al. in this context to explain what ethnographers are aiming it is "immersion". "With immersion, the field researcher sees from the inside how people lead their lives, how they carry out their daily rounds of activities, what they find meaningful, and how they do so." (Emerson et al. 1995:2) By entering a certain field and by standing close to other people's lives and participating in their daily activities, anthropologists come across meanings, very often arising in quotidian situations and get to understand interpretations and their process over time.

"*Teilnahme* kann bei ethnologischer Feldforschung ein ganzes Spektrum unterschiedlichsten Engagiert-Seins des Forschers mit den Menschen, die er untersuchen möchte, umfassen." (Hauser-Schäublin 2008:38) What lays at the core of ethnographic research is witnessing and even more participating in what people do. As Hauser-Schäublin points out "participation" can come to mean the researcher's involvement in all kinds of ways. It does among other things also include the reflection upon one's own participation in various situations. A determining factor for a successful exercising of participant observation is a researcher's

eagerness to understand. What makes up the heart of all participant observation are the social relations between the researcher and the people to be researched.

2.1.4. Problem-focused Interview

The often as problem-focused or problem-centred interview described interview form is elaborated on by Schlehe by referring to it as thematic interview. It describes a mode of interviewing that is focusing on a certain topic.

Whereas the dynamic in the communication situation very much influences and to a certain degree even determines the interview composition, it is the interviewer's role to lead the conversation back to the issue that constitutes the research interest. (cf. Schlehe 2008:126) The conversation is started with an opening question and continued by asking questions inducing the interviewee to go more into detail into his/her answers. The posing of questions is very much influenced by the context and rhythm of the conversation. "Bilanzierende Zurückspiegelung, Verständnisfragen und Konfrontation mit widersprüchlichen Aussagen gehören ebenso zu dieser Interviewform wie Leitfadenfragen, die vor dem Interview skizziert wurden." (Schlehe 2008:126)

Questions for a better understanding and hinting at previously done utterances is as much part of this interview method as confronting the respondent with made utterances that are contradictory. A previously outlined interview guideline is helping the interviewer in leading the conversation in a manner delivering answers with respect to the research interest.

The interview method that has been used in this thesis is supported by the usage of a prior to the interview prepared interview guideline.

> Der Leitfaden enthält die wichtigsten Aspekte, die im Interview zur Sprache kommen sollen, sowie konkrete Fragen, [...] Er wird möglichst nicht nur auf der Basis von Literaturstudien und eigenen Fragen erstellt, sondern auch aufgrund der Daten aus informellen, unstrukturierten Interviews gewonnen. (Schlehe 2008:127)

The preparing of questions and issues preceding the actual interview facilitates the preparation for the interview. It also indicates an interviewer's competence with respect to the subject matter. The guideline is comprised of the most important aspects, as well as concrete questions that should be approached in the conversation.

Specific and exceptional to this method of doing the interview is that the questions do not exclusively have to be drawn from the read literature or the researcher's own ideas, but can as well be generated on the base of information obtained within informal, unstructured interview situations.

2.1.5. Data Analysis

The decision for a certain method of analysis of the gathered empirical material, including transcribed interviews, field notes, etc., needs to be made in the way that is best answering the research question. Depending on the researcher's approach, the interpretation of data is lying, with varying emphasis, at the core of qualitative research. What is of crucial importance when analysing data is to make the chosen process comprehendible.

Whereas the qualitative content analysis of Mayring (Mayring 2010[11]) is working with a predetermined system of categories along whom the data is interpreted, in this thesis chosen manner of analysis has been orienting itself towards the ideas, concepts, notions and connections appearing in the course of the research process. What has therefore been undertaken are forms of open coding and axial coding, presented in short by Flick (cf. Flick 2010[3]:pp. 386-395). Grounded Theory coding can be understood as a process of constant comparison between cases, phenomena, terms and so on, which are chosen and decided upon through the asking of questions to the text. The ultimate aim of coding is to develop theories.

The three forms of open, axial and selective coding can be understood as different, perhaps intersecting practices, of dealing with text material the researcher can choose from and apply.

What is happening through the methodological tool of coding is the assigning of terms to respective empirical data. The process of open coding is laid out by Strauss and Corbin as an analytical process, by which means ideas are first identified and then in relation to their features and dimensions further developed.

> Die grundlegenden analytischen Verfahren, mit denen das erreicht wird, sind: das Stellen von Fragen an die Daten, und das Vergleichen hinsichtlich Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschieden zwischen jedem Ereignis, Vorfall und anderen Beispielen für Phänomene. Ähnliche Ereignisse und Vorfälle werden benannt und zu Kategorien gruppiert. (Strauss/ Corbin 1996:54f)

Open coding is practiced by posing questions to the empirical material and by comparing events, incidents and other examples for phenomena. Similar events and incidents are then, as a next step grouped into categories. The generating of categories in this context means the summarising of terms to generic terms. At the same time the relations between the various categories are carved out.

After capturing phenomena and data in terms through open coding, axial coding is applied. Hereby the researcher can elaborate on the categories that arose before. Through the usage of axial coding categories can be further differentiated and, among the variety that came up, the most promising can be selected. (cf. Flick 2010³:393) In axial coding the very categories are chosen, which are of highest relevance to the research question. Selective coding can be understood as a further step of filtering out and putting in relation of categories.

The group of themes that developed in the course of these processes of coding and categorisation are represented in the final chapters, in the latter part of the thesis. They depict the key-categories of how the expressing and negotiating of homeland ties by Chinese migrants has been experienced and documented.

3. Mobility and Homeland

3.1. Tracing Mobility

If one seeks to investigate into the matter of mobile Chinese subject's connection to their country of origin, mainland China, it is of fundamental importance to first of all clarify what one aims to discuss in applying the term "mobility". What exactly is it that makes us identify an individual as mobile? What are the features and key elements of mobility? These questions are lying at the core of a successful conceptualisation of the notion of mobility and a deeper understanding with respect to its application in the research question.

In his essay "Traveling Cultures" James Clifford is seeking to get to the bottom of the transformations of a changing world, and its ramifications on ethnographic research, by rethinking cultural conceptualisations through the notion of travel.

> In my current problematic, [...] the task is to focus on concrete mediations of the two (the "native" and the "traveler"), in specific cases of historical tension and relationship. In varying degrees, both are constitutive of what will count as cultural experience. (Clifford 1997:24)

By introducing the notion of travel to the scholarly discourse on the topic Clifford is trying to overcome a spatially fixed imagination of "culture". It is not about claiming that from now on all people are travellers, but much rather about pointing to the significance of these new sites of displacement, interference, and interaction that are emerging. (cf. Clifford 1997:25) In his scholarly writing Clifford is aiming to encourage the engaging with the dynamics and reciprocal action of dwelling and travelling, of resting in one place and being on the move - in other words - mobile.

In its most common sense, "mobility" frequently describes a movement and is often used to express one's condition of being away from home. John Urry tries to do justice to the timeliness, brisance and momentousness the phenomenon of mobility poses in our world nowadays, by differentiating four basic meanings. (cf. Urry 2007:7f)

In one of its four main senses the expression "mobile" or "mobility" can describe something that is moving, or "capable of movement" (Urry 2007:7). In using the term this way, one is implying that a subject can either change its location and move from one place to another, or

be moved and (re)positioned geographically, the most simple example being the mobile phone, even though the meaning as well applies to people.

"Mobility" in Urry's second major sense can be understood in terms of an ungovernable crowd of people or rabble. Because a mob's most prominent feature is exactly its mobile and uncontrollable nature, his interpreting of the word in this sense points to the multitude of risks inherent in being mobile and living in a world determined by it.

In sociology and social science "mobility" is mainly discussed with regard to a subject's ability to move between higher and/or lower ranks in society, the social mobility of a person. In this sense "mobility" is situated in the context of a hierarchical setting of society, determining people's societal position in correlation to their parents' position as well as their own starting point in society.

As a fourth and last major point Urry identifies "mobility" as migration and a form of semi-permanent geographical movement. At its core this consideration of "mobility" is singling out, as Urry puts it, individual's "'on the move', and refers especially to moving country or continent often in search of a 'better life'". (Urry 2007:8)

While illustrating this form of categorisation regarding what it means to be mobile and mentioning that these four forms of mobility can overlap, there are as also many factors at work with respect to the meaning of the word and concept and how it actually plays out in people's lives, which Urry fails to acknowledge (which will be further elaborated on later in the chapter).

Urry does point out that in many ways mobilities need to be considered with awareness about reciprocal obligations that can steer to a high degree subjects' motivations, as well as opportunities, with respect to their movements between nation-states or continents. As Urry points out family, friendship networks, as well as professional obligations can influence people's decisions on where and over what period of time they choose to live their (im)mobile lives. These points are going to be of value when further discussing the mobility of young Chinese adults. Additionally, what needs to addressed sufficiently are the many other factors and urgent reasons which steer, influence, and determine whether an individual is able to (choose to) go somewhere. It is crucial to consider these points in order to go beyond simplistic illustrations of what the term can mean, and in order to avoid falling prey to discussing the illusion of an all-encompassing age of mobility that fails to acknowledge the lives of those whose existence is determined by an impossibility to move.

Urrys theorisation of the concept of mobility is included here, as he is in many ways referring to the subject matter and circumstances of population groups, whose lives and sojourning

abroad displays precisely the subjects under this project's research. In his numeration of twelve major forms of mobility in the contemporary world, he lists the "discovery travel of students, au pairs and other young people on their 'overseas experience', where this can constitute a 'rite of passage' and which typically involves going overseas" (Urry 2007:10) as well as the "travel and migration across the key nodes within a given diaspora such as that of overseas Chinese" (Urry 2007:11). But what is crucial to the engaging with the phenomenon of young Chinese migrants' mobility is to do so in a well-theorised manner that doesn't fail to address the immobility of others (at the cost of which the mobility of some is very often enabled).

Therefore, Urry's conceptualisation of a mobility turn (cf. Urry 2007:12f) cannot be the basis on which this research is building. It is of vital importance to start out with a theorisation of mobility, which includes and expounds upon the idea that a large part of the global population, if not the majority, is not able to participate in these mobile ways of life, or is not doing so entirely voluntarily. Therefore, what is needed is a conceptualisation imbedded in critical reflection on which individuals or population-groups have access to the opportunities of movement, and which do not have so and why. This circumstance that has been criticised with respect to the work of Hannerz (1990). His writing on cosmopolitanism and the emergence of a "world culture", as a result of today's interconnectedness, is distracting from the question of existing power relations and whether it isn't in fact a social group, or even class, of elite travellers he is referring to.

Glick Schiller and Salazar point to a variety of circumstances, in which, distinct from what Urry's or Hannerz approaches on the concept convey, mobility does not come to mean freedom, but in fact quite the opposite. (cf. Glick Schiller/ Salazar 2012) In short, the article broaches a variety of circumstances in which people involved in the movement across or within states, are not doing so completely or at all voluntarily, or are doing so in answer to the neoliberal incentives a certain place imposes upon them. In broaching the precarious conditions of refugees, people without documents and people who are moving to another country for working-agreements, (perhaps confining them completely to the exploitative arbitrariness of their employer[2],) they show the drastic differences of what the concept of mobility can encompass when assessed critically. (cf. Glick Schiller/ Salazar 2012:190)

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[2] In "A Biocartography: Maids, Neoslavery, and NGOs" Ong is addressing the issue of Indonesian maids working in Asian metropolitan cities. (cf. Ong 2006: pp.195-217) The appalling working and living conditions of Indonesian domestic workers in cities like Malaysia, Singapore or Hong Kong described in the chapter are demonstrating a drastic and expressive example of the precarious conditions subjects practicing mobility can find themselves caught up in.

As has been the case over the course of the development of the concept of migration, the discourse on mobility has changed over time, from one that is headed predominantly by idealisation at the beginning of the 21st century, to one in which the concept has fallen from grace for its share in the threats and dangers it poses, the simplest examples being the spreading of contagious diseases or terrorism.

Even though misguided or charted in too bright a light in various instances in the past, a well theorised and critical conceptualisation of mobility might provide us with a toolkit to better understand the workings of our world. As the (in)ability of movement has significant effect on how individuals make their way through life, research on the topic can be of indispensable value in the joined efforts of trying to understand evolutionary change and social change as such. (cf. Salazar/ Smart 2011:iii)

> Unless grounded in a broad historical perspective that moves beyond binary logics, including that of then and now, the study of mobility can obliterate the understanding that movement and interconnection are fundamental to the human condition - past, present and future. (Glick Schiller/ Salazar 2012:186)

As the statement very well shows, Salazar and Glick Schiller point to the fact that mobility should not be seen as something restricted to our times, a point that is as well made, in the contribution already referred to previsouly by Salazar and Smart. Rather than pointing to the new or unprecedented nature of a momentum of mobility, as it has been illustrated in other instances in the literature, Salazar and Smart highlight the historical rootedness of the phenomenon. People have been travelling and covering vast distances in the past, as much as they have been cross-culturally exchanging ideas, goods and so on, therefore "mobility" is not something the co-authors would call new. (cf. Salazar/ Smart 2011:ii) For in their point of view, the phenomenon is rather something intrinsic and characteristic to the existence of human beings. The question they actually broach in their line of argument is, whether certain groups or communities have formerly been practicing a more mobile way of life than they are doing now, as mobility and migration used to constitute much more the rule than the exception of their daily lives. (cf. Salazar/ Smart 2011:iii)

What can actually be identified as a new aspect to the phenomenon is the range and scope in which it is taking place due to the technological advances and economic and political developments that have been happening over time. (cf. Salazar/ Smart 2011:iii) But the core of a study of mobility should be less about whether the phenomenon is new or old, or has

experienced a rise or fall, but rather more about how this mobility is shaped, encouraged, or conditioned by regulations. A critical assessment of the concept that needs to be looked into, is the distribution of mobility. To conceptualise mobility without falling prey to idealisations means to cast an eye on how the ways in which mobility is regulated and distributed is "shaped and patterned by existing social, political, and economic structures of the contemporary world." (Salazar/ Smart 2011:v)

In order to prevent themselves from falling into the recreation of simplistic dichotomies, the issue at hand has been taken up by introducing the idea of "regimes of mobility". Glick Schiller and Salazar want to approach the subject matter in a way that takes in the unequal fields of power that prevail with respect to mobility: "[...] we postulate that there are several different regimes of mobility that normalise the movements of some travellers while criminalising and entrapping the ventures of others." (Glick Schiller/ Salazar 2012:189) It is their aim to show the upside and the downside to the concept, equally pointing out how people might benefit from it, but even more so, how they are being limited and suppressed by it. They are basing their regimes-of-mobility approach on the work of Shamir (2005) who is, in his elaboration, stressing the disparity in the movement of people and, in doing so, prioritising the much more urgent case of immobility, rather than mobility of individuals. While he shows his appreciation for the work of anthropologists who have been engaging in the conceptualisation of dynamics of globalisation, such as, for example Hannerz and Appadurai for example, he is seeking to contrast his contribution to the discourse from it. It is his belief that while there is plenty of theorisation on the globalisation phenomenon with regard to its social openness, the implications of social closure are not fully being dealt with. (cf. Shamir 2005:214) He is preferring to investigate globalisation processes by pointing out the fact that these processes can in fact prevent individuals from being mobile. Through various examples he is illustrating how these processes can lead to exclusionary practices and realities of entrapment and containment.

His model is based on the assumption that a person's ability (or lack thereof) to move in space and whether or not the person has access to the opportunity of enjoying a mobile way of life "has become a major stratifying force in the global social hierarchy." (Shamir 2005:200) Following this line of argument, Shamir introduces the different ways in which a global mobility regime is effective, which is on various levels either preventing or supporting the motility (ability to move) of certain subjects. Shamir is explaining it in the consecutive steps, by which individuals and groups are classified, according to the supposed threat or danger they pose. The respective individuals or groups are then, as a next step, made distinct by

means of elaborate forms of technologies of intervention. (cf. Shamir 2005:200) The ways in which "suspect" populations are determined, is, in Shamir's point of view quite clear:

> The first principle of division that governs the mobility regime is that which separates privileged countries and regions from most other regions of the world, in effect turning the latter into suspect countries. (Shamir 2005:203)

Through various means, these individuals or groups are then hindered when trying to pursue a movement of some sort. So the point that is being made by Shamir, as well as by Salazar and Smart, is that mobility has in many cases, turned into a vehicle for creating difference and otherness. (cf. Salazar/ Smart 2011:v)

It is therefore this research's attempt to critically assess the issue of young Chinese adults pursuing to better themselves educationally and professionally by means of transnational mobility in a way that is actually taking in their beneficial position in the hierarchical, global setting of a regimes-of-mobility condition.

3.1.1. Chinese "Diaspora"

In the literature the outflow of Chinese individuals and the summoning of their family members and friends to destinations all over the globe has been recently referred to as "diaspora", an issue that has been attentively discussed in scholarly discourse. Examples for the usage of the term "diaspora" labelling the massive flux of Chinese migration to Europe, the United States and Australia are in Hamilton's work "Cosmopolitan Capitalists: Hong Kong and the Chinese Diaspora at the End of the Twentieth Century" (Hamilton 1999). Another example would be in Ma Mung's «La diaspora chinoise géographie d'une migration» (Ma Mung 2000).

Rather suspicious of these new developments of applying the diaspora term is Ong, who addresses the issue in one of her latest anthropological works. The question that can be asked is: Why does it so frequently appear in scholarly writing? "The proliferation of discourses of diaspora is part of a political project which aims to weave together diverse populations who can be ethnicized as a single worldwide entity." (Ong 2006:59)

Fact is that the sheer unbelievable economic progress of mainland China and its going hand in hand with vast migrational waves, have spurred interest and increasingly raised attention, not least in the scientific world and the discipline of anthropology.

Ong is interpreting this new tendency to refer to a Chinese diaspora movement as a yearning for a form of identification across national or even continental borders. "But diaspora is loose on the information highway and political byways, and elite diasporic subjects have picked up the term in order to mass customize global ethnic identities." (Ong 2006:60 [emphasis in original]). For tempting to take an all-encompassing look all over the world imagining all Chinese individuals as part of an integral whole, would and could only result in admitting that the Chinese population actually constitutes one of the most diverse populations on earth. So the critique consists in the usage of the term's neglect of the diversity of Chinese people.

Considerations on whether or not recent Chinese emigrational flows should be labelled as diaspora need to be preceded by an interrogation into what it exactly is that makes a diasporic cultural form. Clifford characterises the actions of subjects living in diasporic conditions as follows:

> They are deployed in transnational networks built from multiple attachments, and they encode practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to, host countries and their norms. (Clifford 1994:307)

According to Clifford the diasporic situation is determined by a constant negotiating of attachment and detachment from one's host as well as native country. It is revolving around the question of identification with aspects and/ or not being able to identify with aspects in relation to different locations a person calls home. Clifford differentiates diaspora from travelling, in travel's inherent connotation of being of temporary nature. (cf. Clifford 1994:308) Another way to describe it is to be dwelling, staying in one place, often sharing collective homes away from home. In this sense diaspora consciousness has a rather positive connotation, whereas discussing in relation to discrimination and exclusion can evoke rather negative feelings.

With respect to taking the diaspora concept and integrating it into the discussion of the phenomenon of increasing rates of Chinese migration to overseas destinations, Clifford writes as follows:

This pseudouniversal cosmopolitan bravado stretches the limit of the term diaspora. But to the extent that the investor, in fact, identifies and is identified as Chinese, maintaining significant connections elsewhere, the term is appropriate. (Clifford 1994:312 [emphasis in original])

What can therefore be concluded with respect to the conceptualisation of the phenomenon of augmenting Chinese out-flux, is that when discussing the issue at hand one might be terming the processes going on as diasporic movements, but nevertheless ought to be aware of the particularities of the term and what is implied when it is used. In summary it can be said that the meaning of the term diaspora is in process of changing, for it is ever closer linked to transnational identity formations.

Even though the diaspora concept has not been directly included into the research question and interest, it constitutes a concept of significance closely intertwined with Chinese agent's mobility and therefore broached here in short.

3.2. Conceptualising Home

"Home is where the heart is" or "There's no place like home" are two sayings that demonstrate very well the prominence the idea of home is taking up in people's lives. In an attempt to analyse the interaction and dynamics between rootedness and displacement, connectedness and mobility, the terms of home and homeland first need to be determined more precisely.

There are various approaches to the issue of home. One might find it astonishing that something that seems so familiar can be so hard to define.

Whereas home may become a fairly abstract space of self-knowledge in narratives, it is a very concrete place of mutual relations of exchange, usually involving concrete rights and obligations, in the social life of the narrators. (Rapport/ Dawson 1998:235)

In their attempts to clarify what home exactly is and how it is correlated to a subject's identity, Rapport and Dawson are emphasising the role social relations play. They're aiming at breaking down big conceptualisations of home, to what home comes to mean in people's everyday lives.

"All too often, home is regarded as a place upon which society impacts, rather than a place that impacts on society." (Chapman 2001:136) Chapman points out the circumstance that considering the concept of home has been neglected for a long time, as domestic issues were often deemed rather insignificant in the bigger picture. He therefore stresses the central role the concept of home is taking up in society and how it should be much rather seen as the foundation stone society rests upon.

In a similar way Ahmed talks about the various ways by which home is receiving a negative connotation in the literature as it is being equated with a static existence.

> Home is implicitly constructed as a purified space of belonging in which the subject is too comfortable to question the limits or borders of her or his experience, indeed, where the subject is so at ease that she or he does not think. (Ahmed 1999:339)

Ahmed also criticises attempts building their definition of "home" by predominantly contrasting it to what it is not. Clarifying "home" in such a manner means to entirely distinguish between being away and being home and is therefore inapplicable in today's world on the move.

The definition that is being used in the conduction of my master's thesis is therefore the one stated by Chapman. He's trying to get to the bottom of what "home" stands for by distinguishing different layers of meaning. (cf. Chapman 2001:144)

On the surface using the term "home" means its location, fabric, decoration - it's the brick and mortar so to speak one is referring to. On the next level "home" is symbolising the relationships, people in the home have with others in the home. Chapman explains that it could also be the relationships one would like to have (when for example living along). "Home" is also created in response to the ways other people appear to see it. And at its deeper level Chapman is stating that "home is a representation of cultural identity and provides a collective sense of social permanence and security." (Chapman 2001:144)

Chapman's illustration of these different layers of what home represents, shows very well the various aspects entering into the idea of home and how what maybe first comes to mind, which would be a notion of home connected to space, a certain location, is touching only the surface of what the concept is comprised of. In this context it is important to be mindful of how if one is discussing home, the concept of space can intentionally or unintentionally come up. In his work Morley points to the risk of a careless usage of spatial concepts and metaphors when discussing the issue of home. (Morley 2000) He's describing the circumstance of how

scholars are running in danger of using space, among other things when talking about home, in a given manner, without further questioning or reflecting on it.

Several contributions have tried to find out what "home" could come to mean in a world of movement. Anthropologists have tried to get down to what impact people's staying in various places and the estrangement from people or places it initiates, has on where people feel at home in the end.

In her article Ahmed is touching upon an interesting approach to this matter. If people increasingly turn into nomads, mobile agents moving around the globe, "[...] we can consider how the expansion of the meaning of home involves the creation of a new imagined home and community, that of the globe itself." (Ahmed 1999:337) Following this line of thought would implicate to suppose that people engaging in movements across the globe are detached from any place symbolising their home. Ahmed herself is very critical about these kinds of approaches which give the term migration the meaning of a "destabilization of identity". Her critique becomes very evident in the following statement:

> The assumption that to leave home, to migrate or to travel, is to suspend the boundaries in which identity comes to be liveable as such, conceals the complex and contingent social relationships of antagonism which grant some subjects the ability to move freely at the expense of others. (Ahmed 1999:338)

Ahmed is opposing very clearly assumptions claiming that being mobile means for subjects to have a better vision of the world and instead chooses to stress the point that in many cases mobility comes with the fact of an individual's privileged status in the world, an approach that will be carefully taken into consideration with respect to this thesis' research.

A similar line of argument is followed by Rapport and Dawson, who highlight the importance of examining the social relations of individuals when analysing identity in terms of conceptualisations of "home":

> By emptying a home of its social content it can be erected as a generalized icon of social collectivities of various kinds, such as a nation or homeland for those of the *right* ethnic, religious or economic background, or as an ideal community that reminds one of a long-lost childhood. (Rapport/ Dawson 1998:236[emphasis added])

What Rapport and Dawson are highlighting here is that in our globalised world home can often become a fetish. Stripping one's conceptualisations on home from the social relations

and, as one might add, the power relations they're embedded in, can result in the missing of the point that whereas home is an ideal place to identify with for some, it does not have to be so for others.

Whether home is evoking ideas of one's house, one's nation, or whether it is discussed as a construct of imagination pinned down to a certain place - fact is that home is a concept that is to a high degree value-laden. However mobile individuals are, some sense of home often remains, functioning as a kind of 'save harbour', from which people on the move plan and organise their travels.

Whilst keeping in mind the various approaches it is my research's attempt in displaying its inherent complexity to address the issue of homeland relations in a manner, holding that even "[i]f home is not necessarily a spatial concept, it is nonetheless often lived out as if it were such." (Morley 2000:8)

3.3. Space and Locality

It is therefore important to address the issue of space as well. While engaging with the concepts of space and place could fill a thesis on its own, what is being undertaken in this sub-chapter is broaching the subject-matter in a way that points to its relevance with respect to their implications on the question of this research. Dealing with the idea of space is not only important with respect to its appearance in the discourse on home and homeland, but even more so with respect to the chosen locality, subjects under research negotiate their relation to homeland from, in this case the city of Lyon.

Critically reflecting on migrants' homeland ties requires addressing the issue of space. The problematic nature of casually incorporating spacial references with the underlying assumption that space can be simply taken as a territorially fixed given, is elaborated on in a contribution by Gupta and Ferguson (Gupta/ Ferguson 1992). The two anthropologists are criticising points of views which automatically assume the existence of a "natural" link between people, culture and place. Looking at the world as a "collection of 'countries'" goes hand in hand with picturing each country as representing "its own distinctive culture and society", a perspective they strongly oppose. (Gupta/ Ferguson 1992:6) Gupta and Ferguson call upon social scientists to move beyond localised perceptions of culture, which are theorising cultural difference by ascribing it to space without further reflecting on it. They stress the need for "[...] understanding social change and cultural transformation as situated

within interconnected spaces." (Gupta/ Ferguson 1992:8) What they are trying to express in this quote, as well as in their contribution, is that it simply no longer makes sense to analyse cultures in an enclosed manner, within the boundaries of a nation-state or regional border. For regarding them as autonomous spacial entities is only distracting from what should really be the core of interest in the subject-matter, the spacial distribution of fields and networks of power.

Gupta and Ferguson emphasise that the experience of space is something that is, above all, socially constructed. (cf. Gupta/ Ferguson 1992:11) With particular respect to homeland ties and the ways in which home is imagined as a place from afar Gupta and Ferguson provide some valuable insight:

> The irony of these times, however, is that as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, *ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient. (Gupta/Ferguson 1992:10[emphasis in original])

Notions of home and homeland expressed in people's imaginaries created from a distance[3], are going to be of special interest, when looking at informants' accounts in the empirical part of the thesis.

The problem of regarding nations or regions as closed entities with respect to the cultures, peoples and so forth who inhabit them, this assumed accordance between space, place and culture has been problematised in various ways in the social sciences. One of the different approaches is the discourse on methodological nationalism:

> Methodological nationalists confine the concept of society to the boundaries of nation-states and the members of those states are assumed to share a common history and set of values, norms, social customs and institutions. (Glick Schiller/ Salazar 2012:191)

When taking a closer look at the interaction between migrants and the cities they are living in and how they are conducting transnational ties to their country of origin, as well as to other destinations of their sojourning abroad, it is easy to blunder into the application of methodological nationalism. As is pointed out in this quote, as well as in contributions by

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[3] A contribution which is through the ethnographic example of a Sierra Leonean migrant in London reflecting on the ways of how migrants express their connection to homeland, and how homeland imaginaries come into play in it, is Jackson's "The Shock of the New: On Migrant Imaginaries and Critical Transitions". (Jackson 2008:pp. 57-72)

Çağlar (2013) and Glick Schiller (Çağlar/ Glick Schiller 2013) the fact of how methodological nationalism equates society or culture with a certain nation-state has proven to be its undoing. As migrants are engaging in transnational networks and, as seen in this research, as they are frequently following their educational and professional aspirations in more than one or two localities, methodological nationalism is inadequate and insufficient to depict the complexity inherent in the subject's matter. Methodological nationalism means to follow the point of view that "those who happen to be natives to the territory of a nation-state are assumed to share a common culture" (Çağlar 2013:31) At its core methodological nationalism puts its focus on the nation-state. In the same way as it lumps together people who have been born and are living on the same national ground, it claims for the ones, who are emigrating from the same national territory to another "as sharing a common identity, values, and culture" (Çağlar 2013:31). In conveying an image of homogeneity and unity that is deviating from reality it contributes to the creating of stereotypical and generalising assumptions about migrants sharing the same national origin, which is not useful in the combined efforts to better understand migrants' lived realities.

As they lay down the decisive, regulatory rules and set the administrative and institutional frame under which people migrate (or cannot do so), nation-states do play a significant role. Their ways of encouraging the mobility of some, while discouraging the mobility of others, their modes of inclusion or exclusion determine how easy or hard it can be to cross borders. But it is just as important to discuss mobility beyond the scope of action and power of disposal of nation-states. Therefore another important issue that needs to be addressed when analysing how Chinese migrants go about their lives in Lyon is the importance of treating migrants as active agents. Moving away from a passive image of migrants means to not only see them in the ways they react, or are forced to react on the regulations of nation-states, but rather to acknowledge the ways in which they in many respects take on an active role and are able to shape the environment around them. By introducing migrants as scale makers (Çağlar 2011:12) and ascribing to them the ability to take part in shaping urban structures and life, Çağlar is empowering them and connecting them to the neoliberal-transformation processes at work within cities. Migrants are active agents

1) as part of the labor force upon which the cities build their competitiveness;

2) as historical agents;

3) as agents of neoliberal urban restructuring who contribute or contest the changing status and positioning of neighborhoods and cities;

4) by facilitating privatisation and neoliberal subjectivities; and

5) by offering alternative social visions. (Çağlar 2011:12)

By shifting the analytical lens from the imposing power of nation-states to the ways, in which migrants are participating in the (re)shaping and neoliberal development of cities, migrants are empowered to gain centre stage in the mobility-discourse.

As is outlined by Çağlar migrants take on important roles as they enhance cities regional, national and global competitiveness, function as historical agents and, where states stop to offer financial aid through public services, frequently represent the self-reliant and self-enterprising subjects that neoliberalistic processes urge them to be. (cf. Çağlar 2011:17) In addition migrants are taking part and influencing urban life in the ways in which they are carriers of alternative social visions. The contest of neoliberal processes or the search for social justice frequently leads them to be active in social movements or adherents to global religions.

All these different factors show that migrants make up a crucial part of the developments of urban space over time. What is of particular interest with respect to the actions of migrants are the neoliberal incentives, the constraints and opportunities delivered by the institutional frame a particular locality poses to them. Therefore, what this research aims for is an approach by which

> migrants' local and transnational networks of connection are considered in relation to local institutions, structures and narratives, as they emerge at particular moments in the historical trajectory and multiscalar postitioning of specific cities. (Glick Schiller/ Çağlar 2013:495)

Choosing the city of Lyon for their professional and personal aspirations has been a decision led by various reasons. Young Chinese migrants' motivations to live in Lyon are related to and are co-dependent on the research's topic of how they negotiate their ties to their homeland. Therefore the ways in which they conduct their lives in Lyon, and why they chose to do so are questions which automatically lead to an interrogation into the neoliberal incentives and institutional structures playing into that choice, as well as migrants everyday lives and eventually future aspirations.

4. Mobility through Education

The regimes-of-mobility approach laid out in the introductory chapters is built upon the assumption of an existing regime, comprised of technologies of intervention, which is putting into effect an unequal distribution of the mobility of subjects all around the globe. In order to keep people's movements in check modes of regulation are at work.

> The development of travel documents (not in widespread use until the First World War) and controls at ports of entry and other checkpoints mark how governments categorize the rights to mobility across well-defined territories. (Salazar/ Smart 2011:iii)

The introducing of passports, first taking place in France in 1792 (cf. Shamir 2005:209), was a way of trying to get a grip on people's movements. No matter what intention or purpose one ascribes to the document, an implication of its existence is illustrated quite frankly by Shamir:

> Holding a Turkish or a Russian or a Nigerian passport does not so much indicate one's identity as a bearer of rights as much as it marks one as a potential unwanted immigrant. (Shamir 2005:206)

For the nationality imprinted on it can be of benefit to some, it can also place others equally at a disadvantage. Over time the passport's ability to identify where a person is coming from or "belongs" could be called more and more into question, as people are performing their circuits through the possession of two or more passports. Originally intended to signify a citizens place (and sense) of belonging its purpose has experienced an outright change, as Yuval-Davies (1999) in one of her contributions as well states. In this context Yuval-Davies critically remarks:

> An international system of stratification has been created, at the top of which are found western passports which can almost always guarantee their carriers the right of free international movements and at the bottom of which are those who have no right to carry any passport at all. (Yuval-Davis 1999:125)

Yuval-Davis and Ong both state that there has been a growing number of people who carry two, three or more passports and that in times of global capitalism passports no longer

account for where a citizen belongs. To which state the loyalty of a citizen belongs and how migrants' ties to their homeland is shaped through these forms of mobility are questions the empirical part of the thesis shall shed a light on.

The broached issue of caused inequalities by the effectiveness of various regimes-of-mobility needs to be addressed not only on a global level, as in terms of the unequal distribution of access to the resources enabling individuals to be mobile between nation-states, but as well with respect to their variously-shaped occurrence within one particular nation-state. State politics steer people's ability to access the neoliberal opportunities of particular regions, in the ways they are granting or denying it to respective groups or regions. Ong is approaching the issue by introducing the terms "graduated sovereignty" for it:

> In short, 'graduated sovereignty' is an effect of states moving from being administrators of a watertight national entity to regulators of diverse spaces and populations that link with global markets. (Ong 2006:78)

Zoning technologies deployed by the CCP are the strategic selecting of certain localities or regions, and subsequently providing them with special rights and opportunity structures, paving the way for the pursuit and achievement of neoliberal goals. Finding themselves located in the right zone is equipping individuals as well as their offspring with the ability to access job opportunities, to reach social facilities and to benefit from loosened restrictions of various sorts, denied to or gained only limited access to in other parts of the country. In terms of the institutional potential-base these chosen regions offer to young Chinese, they are given a head start in achieving a goal of attaining a more successful career.

In the course of this thesis the acquirement of skills and knowledge, in particular in the illustrated context of state policies and neoliberal striving, shall be addressed. "In the late nineties, on the cusp of spreading financial crises, knowledge became the new answer to the problems of the developing world." (Ong 2006:162) Ong is drawing attention to the fact of how knowledge can also be handled as a resource in national development. Approximately 200,000 engineers graduate each year from universities in China. (cf. Ong 2006:162)

> S'ils viennent étudier dans une grande école, les étudiants chinois ont choisi en 2012-2013 majoritairement des écoles d'ingénieurs (61%) avant les écoles de management (37%). (http://etudiant.lefigaro.fr/les-news/actu/detail/article/les-ecoles-d-ingenieurs-francaises-seduisent-les-etudiants-chinois-4174/)

An online article published by *Le Figaro* shows that out of the number of Chinese students who are coming to France to attend one of the elite universities, 61% go to schools for engineering, followed by 37% who choose schools for management training.

The acquisition of degrees at renowned universities abroad has a special significance in the striving for academic, and later on professional success, for its ability in enhancing chances to take off into a prosperous future. "Thousands of mainland Chinese travel to Southeast Asia to learn English, in the hope of eventually testing into universities in the West." (Ong 2006:108) The enormous striving for educational success and degrees abroad is seen as an important step in order to be able to subsequently reach into the pool of desired well-paid jobs and be able to choose between emigration, settling down in mainland China, or living mobile lives as a combination of these two options.

> Flexible strategies linked to specific educational availability in different countries further normalize the production of flexible, multilingual, and multicultural subjects, as well as their disembedding from a particular national set of values. (Ong 2006:153)

Asian, and in particular Chinese in recent times vastly augmenting agility with respect to educational and entrepreneurial ambition, as well as the flexibility with respect to the places, they choose to pursue them, has become a subject of scholarly discussion. The question of how values formerly attached to nation-states are interpreted and the connection to homeland is negotiated in the course of the ambitious movements of young Chinese, shall be laid out in the course of the thesis.

4.1. Higher Education in the Chinese Context

4.1.1. The Role of Education

In the subsequent chapters the phenomenon of increasing rates of Chinese transnational migration shall be addressed, by pointing to the particular role education, specifically higher education plays in it.

The mobility of Chinese individuals can be perceived as a rather new development, induced by a major event in recent Chinese history. The rigid parameters of the rural-urban divide, work unit boundary, cadre-worker dichotomy and political classification prior to 1978 for the most part prevented and tried to limit individuals from being socially, nationally or internationally mobile. The subsequent market reforms and developments of opening up have been milestones changing and opening up new paths with respect to social networks, status attainment and career mobility in an unforeseeable and irreversible manner. (cf. Bian 2002:104)

There are several reasons for the prominence of attaining education in the Chinese case. As will be later seen more clearly when examining Chinese student's accounts of their student's life in China compared to France, a constant striving for reaching the best possible results in one's educational career is an essential aspect of young individual's ambitions as, a characteristic feature of Chinese society as a whole. The vigorous efforts of young Chinese people with regard to the attainment of a successful educational background is rooted in various historical and socio-cultural aspects and nowadays closely linked to educational, transnational mobility.

One of the reasons why succeeding in one's education is taking up such a major role in young people's lives is an issue further ventilated on by Bian. He introduces a model, saying that a person's attained status can be attributed to two reasons. A person can either gain in status by inheritance or by achievement. (Bian 2002:104) Whereas inheritance of status is reflected in the starting situation young people have in their lives due to their parents, "personal achievement is usually measured by education." (Bian 2002:104) Bian highlights that in mainland China the CCP's governing is as well adding to the equation in a way that personal achievement is as well evaluated and therefore determined by party authority. In the years after the CCP's takeover, statuses inherited through parental ties strengthened one's social position. But one could as well enhance one's status by means of one's own educational

achievement: "[...] one's education led to a high-income job" (Bian 2002:105). With respect to women's chances of changing their status Bian resumes by casting a rather dark light on this period of time: ", but being a female was a disadvantage in both educational and occupational attainments." (Bian 2002:105) In the context of Chinese people's mobility, the past and present perspectives for women are of particular interest and will as well be elaborated on in the course of the analysis of subject-under-research's accounts.[4]

Through developments over time the role of education in Chinese society, if anything, only increased in significance. Along with one's involvement in the CCP through membership, education was the most important factor in improving one's status and life conditions.

> A superior education increased one's chance of working in public or government organizations, where desirable jobs were located, in all periods, but a college education was becoming important for one's attainment of a party membership in the first decade of post-1978 reforms. (Bian 2002:106)

As Bian shows in his contribution there are close ties between one's educational success, one's membership in the party and one's acquisition of social prestige. These facts are of importance, as they are indicators for why it is that education is valued so highly and making up such a huge part of young Chinese adults' lives.

4.1.2. Historical Development of Chinese Higher Education since the 1950s

When looking into the matter of Chinese students' perceptions of their life abroad and whether it has impact on their relation to their land of origin, mainland China, it is necessary to take a closer look at Chinese higher education itself. As is the case with the subjects of this research, transnational mobility is for the first time undertaken through the participation in educational programmes and granted scholarships. In order to be able to have access to these very programmes, access to the "right" educational institutions/ universities first needs to be achieved. The chances of being able to access educational facilities and academic institutions in the PRC are, among other factors, subject to the ways in which higher education is

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[4] As the empirical research is including a higher number of women than men, it is considered of particular importance to also address women's obstacles and chances in their striving for education and furthermore educational mobility.

structured and organised throughout the country. This chapter's content is therefore devoted to an illustration of Chinese higher education and the major developments and shifts it underwent since the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) takeover in the 1950s.

As was China itself at the time the CCP took rule over, higher education was very much fragmented due to its unsteady political and economic conditions. In the course of the national conference held in November 1951 the following key problems were identified in education:

- an imbalance of geographical distribution;
- a dispersion of teachers and facilities which led to uneconomical practices;
- impractical specialities that failed to train very specialised personnel;
- and a shortage of students. (Yang 2000:321)

To sum it up what could be concluded was the existence of an education system, that was by and large operating in an anarchic manner. Efforts to unify and centralise the system led to the making of the national higher education adjustment in May 1952. "The main task of 1952 was to reorganise institutions in Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Wuhan, Changsha, Guangzhou as well as in some big cities in Anhui and Shandong provinces." (Yang 2000:321) So what was decided upon after the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 was the enormous project of a nationwide reorganisation of higher education. In order to bring an end to department's running business haphazardly and in by and large absence of correlation to each other, attempts to centralise the system were made. With respect to the field of education the path to follow the Soviet model was chosen, as was the case in the development of other domains of government to ensure and further establish the party's consolidation of power. "China modeled its higher education reorganization in the early 1950s on the Soviet patterns, and thus traditionally aligned itself to the corner of state authority." (Zha 2009:42) To implement the extensive project of the reorganisation of the education sector across the country unifying and centralising measures were taken. These resulted in government ministries and provincial governments in being affiliated to or in charge of education institutions.

> The ministry-sponsored ("strip") institutions were of higher quality and status over the local-supported ("block") institutions. Prior to the restructuring in the 1990s, these institutions made up almost all of the 98 "key-point" higher education institutions [...] (Zha 2009:43)

So as part of measures to insure the establishment of a restructured education system, institutions henceforward were in some way linked to, and answer to an authority. Another structure implemented to achieve the CCP's development plan of that time can be seen in the focus on engineering institutes. (cf. Yang 2000:321) Whereas the number of polytechnic institutes was attempted to be diminished, comprehensive universities and engineering institutes were brought to the centre of attention.

Specialisation became a basic feature of the changes carried out in the reform and was put into practice through the encouraging of the formation of specialised colleges and engineering institutes. (cf. Yang 2000:322) Comprehensive universities were adapted and paid special attention to.

Reform plans and efforts to restructure the education sector were continued by concentrating on institutions situated in formerly neglected areas and adjusting old universities. The next step was that institutions of technology and teachers training colleges were supported and enhanced. In the course of the restructuring, institutions of finance and administration, and politics and law were often united and expanded. (cf. Yang 2000:322) The government's plan of reorganising education in China was achieved in its core structure by 1953. The overall effect became the specialisation of major studies, by which for example one subject such as forestry, or engineering, medicine, law, foreign languages, physical education and agriculture became individually a sole purpose of an institute.

After the 1950s reform of Chinese higher education, the next big movement that brought about radical change in the education sector can be identified in the restructuring of higher education taking place in the 1990s. China's 改革开放 *gaigekaifang* policy of economic reform and opening up as well induced a new wave of major reforms in higher education.

By opening up China to the challenges and possibilities inherent in capitalism, Deng Xiaoping and his ideology of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' brought about fundamental change in Chinese history. Its repercussions affected all fields of society in an enduring and fundamental manner, as well as the economy, politics and the media. Deng's ideological foundation made it possible for China to tread its' path to economic reform. His line of argument was that market economy is not to be equated with capitalism and therefore compatible with socialism. (cf. Hartig 2008:61) The policy of 改革开放 *gaigekaifang* is given special attention to, because it has had tremendous impact on the further development of Chinese higher education and Chinese mobility as a whole.

As China entered into the arena of international competition the difficulties in holding its' ground globally became more pronounced. Education institutions were no longer up to date and were forced, for the first time, to compete in the international arena of education institutions. The predominant structure of single discipline education institutions had satisfied the needs and demands of a planned economy, but failed in doing so in a market economy. (cf. Zha 2009:43) With comprehensive universities failing to actually be comprehensive and being in their rigid structuring prevented from "thinking outside the box" of their specialisation, the system was inapt to meet the challenges of transformation. In order to get to terms with the fundamental social changes induced by a policy of economic modernisation, the CCP in the middle of the 1980s decided on a reform of Chinese higher education, which was extensively implemented in the 1990s. The following outlines this reform's principles:

> In December 1994, a national forum consolidated reform proposals into 5 principles: joint construction, co-operative administration of institutions, institutional amalgamation, transference of jurisdiction, and participation of other social sectors in institutional operation. (Yang 2000:322)

While the Chinese government continued to exercise its scrutinising and monitoring role, the general trend in Chinese higher education was directed towards decentralisation and giving institutions more autonomy. Through employing the objective of joint construction the CCP supported central and provincial governments in their ability to govern institutions in the most profitable and efficient manner. Another method used in order to improve the conditions in Chinese higher education was the merging of previously separately ran institutions through institutional amalgamation. As was the purpose of other taken measures, the uniting of institutions was supposed to increase institutional efficiency and enhance educational quality. Through cooperative administration of institutions the government tried to improve the usage of resources in a way that enables institutions to make better use of and benefit off each other's resources.

Part of the set of principles incorporated in the 1990s educational reform was the transference of jurisdiction which had the purpose of reducing the overlap of jurisdiction over institutions. By getting rid of the overlap of jurisdiction by the central and provincial governments in the same region, it was possible to eliminate many of the obstacles which had been constricting institution's room for manoeuvre.

China's transformation from a centralised economy asked higher education for an innovation that would achieve the goal of higher quality in output. To meet the economy's demands educational institutions tried to develop a higher degree of responsiveness to the market. In order to attain that goal measures have been taken to link educational institutions' research to companies. In practice a closer relationship has been established between facilities of education and research, and sites of production.

As has already been noted above the CCP was step by step moving away from a centralised leadership style in higher education towards a framework, empowering institutions to take action and be in charge to a greater extend of their management, finances and decisions over their curriculum.

With the increase in students and institutions, the necessity for a legal framework, structuring higher education become more and more apparent. "The architecture for a less centralized higher education system began to emerge in the late 1990s, legislated by the *Higher Education Law* that takes effect on January 1, 1999." (Zha 2009:44 [emphasis in original]) The Higher Education Law symbolised a step in a new direction in education policy in China because for the first time there was institutionalised autonomy of educational institutions. The legal provision should enable education bodies to decide upon their own future aims, to develop new specialisations and to accordingly adjust curricula. The law has declared universities as independent legal entities (cf. Zha 2009:44) and could be interpreted as one of the Chinese government's attempts to get to terms with the fast-paced economic development, market transformation and social upheaval taking place all over the country.

In order to ensure the acceleration of China's catching up the government enacted two further policies: the 1998 *Action Plan for Vitalizing Education for the Twenty-first Century* and the 1999 *Decision on Deepening Educational Reform and Pressing Ahead Quality Education in an All-Around Way.* (cf. Zha 2009:45 [emphasis in original]) The two policies again represent the efforts the CCP made, to decentralise higher education in China and to provide institutions with higher degrees of autonomy and independence.

With respect to the financial situation of higher education institutions as well, major changes in the wake of implementing 改革开放 policy could be assessed. The changes with respect to the financial means provided to universities had great impact on students lives, as they had to start to come up with the money for university education themselves.

"First, from the 1950s up to 1980, the institutions were almost totally supported by State appropriation. In 1978, for example, 96.4% of higher education expenditures came from the State." (Zha 2009:46) In return for adhering to state plans, the CCP offered dormitories for

housing and covered major expenses for food and other living costs of students. In the course of the second major reform of higher education this was going to change. Before the diversification of higher education the state provided necessary funds and paid university education. Students were not being charged tuition fees and were allocated jobs following their graduation. In the course of the 1990 education reform education institutions gained the freedom to individually capture revenue beside state appropriations. This was done through research contracts, raising private donations and charging student tuition fees.

Starting in 1989 universities were permitted to collect an annual fee of 100-300 *yuan* RMB, as well as an amount due for accommodation. In 1994, 37 institutions were charging student fees and by 1997, all higher education institutions demanded tuition, with fee levels rising at an escalating pace. (cf. Zha 2009:47) Currently it increasingly falls to the universities themselves, to resource greater portions of their funding. The current trend is defined by State appropriation declining while tuition fees increase:

> A notable fact is that the ratio of direct State appropriation to total revenue declined from 83.4% in 1990 to 46.7% in 2001. Clearly, the tuition contribution of students has been on the rise in terms of its ratio to the total revenue, from almost nothing in 1990 to 24.7% in 2001. (Zha 2009:48)

In summary the major changes in Chinese higher education in the more recent history are articulated by major withdrawals of governmental funding, the decentralisation of the education sector allowing rise in tuition fees and a huge increase in student enrolment figures.

4.2.1.1. Neoliberalism meets Higher Education

Regarding developments in higher education in China as well as global trends in higher education several key points of criticism can be identified from academic discussions. They are elaborated on in the course of this chapter, as they are of crucial importance to the subject of mobility in the educational context.

Scholarly critique on global tendencies and trends in higher education is depicted here, as the correlation between global processes in higher education and developments in the national systems of education, against whose background the mobility of students is taking place, are fundamental for a proper understanding of the complex of themes.

The circumstance of economic globalisation increasingly influencing education is frequently discussed as alarming in various scholarly contributions. Ong addresses the issue and problematic character of universities orientation towards the neoliberal logic of market driven forces. In her analysis she is in particular focusing on developments in higher education in the United States, but also China and Singapore.

> Our best academic institutions have responded to the market-driven demands of knowledge and research where the rational ethos is premium. Especially at the level of graduate training, the stress on individualistic skills and entrepreneurial competition often leads to the overlooking of humanistic concerns and cultural values. (Ong 2006:153)

Ong is pointing to the various ways in which higher education is affected by economic forces. In her research she focuses on Asian individual's mobility in the domain of U.S. education, but her statement of facts and the concluding remarks drawn from it, are as applicable within the research agenda of this thesis of Asian mobility situated in the European context.

In her writing Ong is finding fault with the condition of the economic rationale having gained entrance into places of higher education. She is issuing a warning against the increasing prevailing instrumentalist approach on education and stressing the outcomes the utilisation of education as a commodity might bring. What Ong is aiming at showing in her critique is the danger of an instrumentalist approach on education resulting in an omission of its philosophical underpinnings. The following statement exemplifies her point of view that the moral message incorporated and provided by education to young individuals is at stake.

> [...] educational availability at the global scale has not necessarily produced a constituency of humanistic values, but it has produced highly trained calculative individuals capable of maneuvering effectively in the fields of corporate business, law, medicine, engineering, biotechnology, and architecture (favorite fields of specialization among overseas Chinese). (Ong 2006:154)

In her writing Ong is calling into question the values conveyed currently in education. She criticises the by striving for economic success guided re-orientation of education towards a generating and constant encouragement of egoistic and individualistic self-entrepreneurialism.

The circumstance of neoliberal strategies finding their way into and having increasing impact on educational institutions, in the Chinese context, is among others problematised by Zha who is stating: "As dependence on State financing and provision alone would never satisfy the growing demand for higher education, the Chinese government has therefore increasingly looked to market and private sector to venture into higher education provision." (Zha 2009:55) In his article he is criticising the by the current CCP practiced mode of distributing resources which, by elevating a small number of elite universities from the rest, in this way simultaneously granting and withholding possibilities, it is creating a hierarchical system. This is positioning educational institutions along a yardstick measured by their respective success and competitiveness. The particular role and meaning that is given to elite universities in Chinese society has impact on the lives of students as they put all their effort into gaining access to them. Numerous accounts in the interviews of Chinese students lend weight to the assumption that it constitutes an issue of fundamental significance when investigating into the perceptions of their lives in China and how they relate to it.

The manner in which national economic striving has been linked to education policy is also critically perceived by Yang. His opinion is that today's striving for better degrees of efficiency in higher education manages to draw away attention from the fact of declining quality in education. Yang stresses the danger of reducing the worth of education only with respect to its economic applicability. (cf. Yang 2000:332) He highlights universities duty to equip young individuals with lifelong learning skills rather than telling them how to run a business.

The issue of how neoliberal trends impact on the development of sites of higher education and the repercussions this circumstance has on students' education is of particular interest.

As it is predominantly education, by which means the subjects under research are able to enjoy transnational mobility, the global developments and trends in higher education are of vital importance. As academic institutions have been shown in following neoliberal incentives, students are in many respects encouraged to do so respectively.

As subjects under research's ability to access universities and facilities of higher learning constitutes the precondition for engaging in the educational opportunities of transnational mobility, information on how Chinese higher education is organised and structured and how its policies are answering global trends are of vital importance.

5. French legal Migration Regulations

The permits that are required for migrating to France are dependent on a person's nationality, purpose and time of stay. The legal obligations that need to be met for staying in France depend on various factors, which shall be explained in the following. Unless your nationality belongs to one of the countries exempt, the acquisition of a visa is in general necessary.

The acquisition of a French visa is a vital step for Chinese adults, when deciding to migrate to France. In order to better comprehend the options and challenges the French legal migration regulations pose with regard to their requirements and provisions to Chinese individuals they are laid out in this chapter.

5.1. Short-stay Visa ("Schengen" Visa)

As has been noted above, depending on the duration and reasons for the stay there are different visas to obtain. For stays equal to or shorter than 90 days the visa needed is a short-stay visa, often also called "Schengen visa". (cf. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa/article/what-type-to-apply-for) Equipped with this visa you are allowed to enter France or any other Schengen[5] country for up to three months within a six-month period.

Members of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland are among the countries people don't need to obtain visas from in order to stay in France. A detailed list of the nations from which the acquisition of a visa is obligatory can be found on Service-Public.fr (http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F2231.xhtml).

Family members (defined as a spouse, children under 18, dependent children or dependent parents) of nationals of EU and EEA member states including Switzerland are also exempt from having to obtain a visa. (cf. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa/) If a person intends to stay for longer than three months in France it is necessary to get a *visa de long séjour*.

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[5] Up to the present the following 26 countries are part of the Schengen Agreement: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and France. cf. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa/article/list-of-schengen-area-member

5.2. Visa de long Séjour

Visas of this type are issued to the following categories of people: People married to a French national, students, interns, people doing scientific research, employees (in possession of a working contract for at least a year), temporary workers (in possession of working contracts between three months and one year), visitors (living off their own resources and committing themselves not to take on work) and spouses of foreign citizens legally residing in France applying for family reunification. (Exempt from this regulation are Algerian citizens who enjoy different regulations.) The costs for the respective visas issued varies and can range from €58 to €241, depending on your reason for stay. (cf. http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/A-votre-service/Mes-demarches/Etranger-Europe/Etrangers-en-France/Titres-documents-de-sejour-et-de-circulation-des-etrangers-non-europeens/Cartes-de-sejour-temporaire/Etrangers-en-France-visa-de-long-sejour-valant-titre-de-sejour)

As all of the informants are studying or pursuing some kind of studies in addition to the jobs or internships they are having, the legal regulations for staying in France as a student are explained here in detail. If you do not have French nationality and want to study in France you need to obtain a *visa de long séjour valant titre de séjour* or *une carte de séjour temporaire mention étudiant*. (http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F2231.xhtml) In short this visa is referred to in abbreviated form as VLS-TS. This visa is valid for up to one year and will grant you free mobility within the Schengen countries. It enables you to move freely within the Schengen area as long as you don't exceed the maximum duration of three months abroad.

You are asked to obtain the visa before coming to France at the French embassy or consulate in your native country. China is one of the countries where people are posting their application online through the website of Campus France:

http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/page/procedure-cef-creez-votre-dossier.

5.3. Carte de Séjour

The *carte de séjour* is an official residency card in France. Due to a legal regulation implemented in 2009, certain long-stay visas are functioning automatically as residence permits - *cartes de séjour*. (cf. http://www.ofii.fr/visa_long_sejour_titre_de_sejour_193/visa_

de_long_sejour_titre_de_sejour_pour_les_etudiants_955.html) Students are among the group for whom this regulation applies, upon successful application they receive a *carte de séjour à solliciter* (best translated as a residence permit to be applied for locally). (cf. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa/) Information on the time people have to do so varies. Fact is that up until three months at the most of the people's concerned arrival in France they are asked to contact the local office of the *Office Francais de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration* - French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII). The documents necessary are the OFII residence form (including the stamp from the consulate that granted the visa), a copy of the ID pages of the passport and the immigration stamp, the certificate of enrolment, three passport pictures as well as, proof of the accommodation in France. (cf. http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F2231.xhtml)

An appointment for an interview has to be made and a medical examination is compulsory. (cf. http://www.ofii.fr/tests_197/la_visite_medicale_est_-_elle_obligatoire_1007.html) To complete the process a fee of €58 (for students) is due. (cf. http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F2231.xhtml)

5.4. Working as a Student

As an international student you are allowed to work up to 964 hours a year (making up about 60% of a full time employment a year). (cf. http://www.immigration-professionnelle.gouv.fr/nouveaux-dispositifs/fiche/acc%C3%A8s-%C3%A0-l-emploi-des-%C3%A9tudiants-%C3%A9trangers?highlight=etudiants)

5.5. Prolonging your Stay

If people holding a long-stay visa have the intention to stay for more than a year and extend their stay, they are asked to apply for a *prolongation de visa*. Visa extensions are required to be submitted two months before the expiry date of the visa with the required documents. (cf. http://www.ofii.fr/tests_197/je_souhaite_prolonger_mes_etudes..._1008.html)

5.6. Working in France

People who would like to work in France and are coming from the EU or the EEA member state or are from Switzerland can do so without further restriction. If you are not from the mentioned areas it is necessary to first find an employer. The employer then has to contact the DIRECCTE - Regional Directorate of Enterprises, Competition, Consumption, Labour and Employment. (cf. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa/article/faq-visas#sommaire)

_12) If the contract is approved, it is then forwarded to the OFII and to the embassy/ consulate of the applicant's home country. Depending on the length of the working contract, long- or short-stay visas are needed.

There's an array of permits that are granted to non-European nationals who aspire to work in France varying enormously in their asked requirements and the duration of stay they respectively allow for. Some types of working visas might even allot people favourable exceptions like the necessity to sign the *Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration* (which will be explained in the following). One type of permit, in particular of interest in the way it is trying to attract non-European of skills and expertise, is the *carte de séjour "compétences et talents"*. This card, granting 3 years of residence, is eligible to individuals, who, through their involvement in an economic, cultural, intellectual, humanitarian or other kind of project, are considered of having the potential of making a major contribution of some sort to France or their country of origin. (cf. http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F16922.xhtml)

5.7. Long-term Migration

5.7.1. Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration

On the website of the OFII with respect to the *Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration*, also referred to as CAI, the following information is stated:

> L'article L.311-9 prévoit que toutes personnes voulant s'établir durablement en France, prépare son intégration dans la société française.
> Vous devez signer avec l'Etat Français, un contrat d'accueil et d'intégration, le CAI.

Il vise à instaurer entre la France et vous « une relation de confiance et d'obligation réciproque » (http://www.ofii.fr/tests_197/le_cai_est_il_obligatoire_1029.html)

In January 2007 a legal regulation came into effect, binding foreign nationals, if intending to stay in the country permanently, to sign the CAI. As the quote above states this contract has been drawn up in order to build and foster a relationship between the individual and France. The aim is to create a bond of trust and mutual obligation.

Ce CAI, (Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration) vise à faciliter votre accueil et votre intégration sur le territoire français, ainsi vous serez en mesure
• de découvrir la France,sa langue et ses valeurs
• de faciliter votre accès à l'information sur les dispositifs et les structures qui peuvent vous aider dans la vie quotidienne
• d'accéder à des formations linguistiques adaptées
• La signature de ce contrat implique des engagements réciproques entre le pays d'accueil et les migrants.
(http://www.ofii.fr/tests_197/quel_est_l_objectif_de_ce_cai_1030.html)

The OFII's website explains that in order to achieve successful integration, through the CAI, people need to agree to the conditions of learning to master the French language and learn about the Republic's values. Therefore upon the first meeting with the OFII people have to get their level of French language skills evaluated and take an oral and written exam. This way, the appropriate further language training, people have agreed to through signing the CAI, is determined. The French state provides 400 hours of language training. Upon successful completion of the training people receive the Diplôme Initial de Langue Française (DILF). (cf. http://www.france.fr/en/coming-france/what-are-formalities-moving-france.html)

The second requirement is the participation in a course in which participants are imparted knowledge about the institutions and values of France, as well as the organisation and functioning of the state and its local authorities. The quote from the OFII's website states that these measures are effective as they help migrants to find out about structures that can help them as they go about their daily lives.

5.7.2. Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration pour la Famille

The *Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration pour la Famille*, abbreviated CAIF, is added to the CAI and is therefore including a few supplements. As the CAI, the CAIF is addressing non-European nationals. Likewise it is compulsory to sign the agreement. The CAIF differs from the CAI in that it is also addressing migrants' spouses and children who have been benefiting from family reunification. Upon signing the contract people agree to do a course on the rights and obligations of French parents and respect children's compulsory school education from the age of 6 to 16. The course lasts one day and is treating the subjects of parent's authority, children's rights and education in France and equality between men and women. Attendants take the course for free and receive a confirmation of participation at the end. (cf. http://www.ofii.fr/tests_197/pourquoi_un_contrat_d_accueil_et_d_integration_pour_ la_famille_caif_1046.html)

Following these steps and providing that you have met all the requirements explained above the prefect will sign your CAI or CAIF. This means that you successfully obtained or renewed your *titre de séjour* or received your *carte de résident* (which grants residency for 10 years). (cf. http://www.france.fr/en/coming-france/what-are-formalities-moving-france.html)
After living for 5 continuous years in France people may apply for a 10-year renewable card of residency or can apply for French citizenship. (cf. http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F17359.xhtml) Many different factors such as financial status, employment or language ability can play into whether you are granted either of these options.

6. Chinese Students in Lyon

6.1. Conducting the Fieldwork

The question of what impact mobility and the new experiences gained abroad have on young Chinese minds and relations to their country of origin can only be answered through establishing contact with and entering into dialogue with Chinese individuals staying abroad, or having stayed abroad.

6.1.1. Gaining Access to the Field

Next to delving into the literature on the subject, my initial efforts have therefore been funneled into making contact with young Chinese people living in Lyon. I tried to get in touch with my subjects of research by various means.

In October 2012 I decided to inscribe myself at «Coup de Pouce Université», or as most of the students simply call it - CPU. The words used in the name of the association can be translated as giving someone a helping hand or providing help. CPU is a very popular point of contact among foreign students living and studying in Lyon, as it provides an array of French language courses. (cf. http://www.cpu-lyon.com) The association was founded on July 7th 2007 through the initiative of various religious and Catholic organisations (cf. http://www.jesuites.com/2012/03/cpu/). Le Coup de Pouce Université is one of the members of an association named «ROSAE», which has opened several centers of the same kind in various cities. In offering to students classes for learning and improving French grammar, pronunciation, oral communication and text-writing to a low price, the facility is drawing in many foreign students, not least of them from various Asian countries. Located in Guillotière district, the school building is situated next door to diverse Asian grocery trades and restaurants. As soon as one enters the school's doors, one has to agree with what is written on one of the association's homepages, where it says that since it's opening in 2007, at least half of its students body is made up of Asian students, predominantly of Chinese origin. (http://www.jesuites.com/actu/2008/cpu_lancement.htm)

6.1.2. In the Field

Participating in the classes two times a week was a very casual way of meeting and getting to know Chinese migrants. While many of them suffered from the same French language problems I did, communicating in English with the help of Chinese or French expressions every now and then, constituted no problem.

Attending classes at CPU provided a very suitable opportunity to enter into dialogue with young Chinese. Another measure I decided for in order to get in contact with people from China was by approaching «La Direction des Relations Internationales», or short DRI.

As people from DRI are not allowed to pass on student's personal information and data, I asked them for the opportunity to have an e-mail spread in my name. In the e-mail I shortly introduced myself and in a few words explained my research topic. After that I was able to meet new students through my encounters and meetings with the Chinese I was already acquainted with.

6.2. Overview Empirical Data

The following presented information has been gathered in the course of my fieldwork in Lyon and selected through the processes of data analysis and interpretation (outlined in chapter 2: Methodology). The categories presented in the following have been chosen for their value and relevance to the main topic of research.

In the first part of this chapter's display of ethnographic data, the informants involved in the research are going to be introduced in short. This brief overview of the informants, which I have been able to talk to, accompany and observe through the activities of their daily lives shall serve as an introduction to the subjects under research. It will provide the reader with basic information on each individual, which will be of importance and value, when continuing to the chapters that follow. Starting out with "Experiences in migration" these subsequent chapters are going to lay out the key issues filtered out of the empirical material for their significance with respect to the research question.

6.2.1. Presentation of Informants

The introduction and short display of subjects-under-research's background and personal information is endowing the reader with condensed knowledge about major points of their personal lives. The short presentations and table on the sociodemographic data of informants will help in better understanding the major categories presented as a next step in the subsequent chapter.

This first introduction contains condensed information on the following points: It is going to describe in short how access has been established and contact to the person has been made. As well it is telling major points with respect to informants' personal lives and background. Of course there would be an endless supply of information with respect to this point, which is why it has been limited to the selection of points of particular value to the subsequent chapter and hence the research question. Therefore information on their family background has been preferentially chosen, as well as information that is related to the person's migration to Lyon.

Informant A.

I got acquainted with informant A through a friend. She introduced us in December 2012 and we have been in contact from that time on until her departure from Lyon in June 2013. Our communication base over the time of several meetings developed therefore into one of a friendship nature. I had the chance to get to know A. over the period of time of seven months and was therefore able to share in the problems she faced here in Lyon. I also heard accounts of the challenges she would face in Beijing.

A. is a female student studying in her undergraduate studies Translation at Université Jean Moulin 3 in Lyon. In her studies she is translating from French into Chinese and vice versa, but she is as well fluent in the English language. In the course of her time spent in Europe A. visited a collection of European countries and cities, among them London, Athens and Rome. In Lyon A. was living in a student's residence. In our conversations she repeatedly addresses the issue of how she reluctantly returns to China and how much she would like to come back to Europe.

Informant B.

Informant B. and I got acquainted through A. Informant A. and B. already have been roommates in their second year of university in Beijing and happened to come together to Lyon and study, in different programmes, at Université Jean Moulin 3.

The communication base during our interview and informal conversations always was a pleasant and open one, so that meetings for interviews were gradually increasingly conducted on a friendship- level. In the course of our meetings she shared information about her life story with me. She told me that she was born in Dalian. At the age of five she moved with her family to Shanghai. In her third year of high school B. had to choose between majoring in science or art. Her father made her choose science, so she would be able to take classes in physics and chemistry. She described having had a very hard time studying in the major. As her score at the college entrance examination wasn't sufficient to enter one of the desired universities in Shanghai, she chose one in Beijing and moved there. (cf. B. 135-150) So before migration to Lyon, she has been involved in internal migration in China. In Lyon B. is living in a house with a French host family. The house is located in the suburbs of Lyon, 15 minutes by bus from the city. During the time of her stay the family has also been hosting another student. Informant A. and I were invited to visit her once on a weekend at the house, while her host family was on vacation.

B. has got relatives who are living in Austria. In her second marriage her aunt married an Austrian man. During the time of her stay in Lyon she has been visiting them in Austria.

Informant C.

In the case of informant C. contact has been established through attending a class for improving French oral communication at CPU. In the course of the weekly classes we have been meeting on a regular basis I was able to get to know her. After some time we arranged meetings outside of class and I was able to do an interview with her. When answering questions C. usually talked in a manner that was considered. The communication base during meetings with C. always was a very comfortable one.

In Lyon C. is sharing a flat with D. and a second young Chinese woman, whom I briefly met when I was visiting her and another French student. C. described her migration and integration process in Lyon as one that went quite smoothly. As she upon her arrival in the city already had a friend, who had arrived before her, she immediately had an attachment to

show her around and help her get adjusted to the new environment. (C. 91-95) Although she notes having had to catch up on some of the content of teaching and expand her knowledge on French philosophy, she's depicting her classes as a beneficial factor in integration. Through a class she was having with a professor from Italy, she got to know and make friends with many of her Italian classmates, which made her feel comfortable in Lyon right away. (cf. C. 95-106)

Informant D.

Informant D. and I got acquainted through C.. D. is sharing an apartment with C. and two other roommates. Unfortunately I was only able to meet and do an interview with D. one time. On that occasion I was invited to her apartment to have a dinner of Chinese food with them.

D. got married in 2008. She and her husband have been in a long distance relationship while she had been conducting her studies in Lyon. She had originally planned to be able to complete her degree within two years, she only realised once commenced, that it would take longer than she expected. (cf. D. 402) She describes the supporting role her husband has been playing throughout the conduction of her studies and stay abroad.

D. is describing the time of her arrival in Lyon as a difficult phase. Among the various reasons for having problems getting used to the new environment she's listing the circumstance that she didn't have friends and had, due to her language issues, difficulty in getting to know local people. (cf. D. 79-82)

Informant E.

I have had the chance to make contact with informant E. during a get-together on the occasion of the birthday of a colleague of informant F. The people attending this party (taking place on 01.06.2013) were predominantly of Chinese origin. (Out of approximately 20 people present, 3 persons were not of Chinese origin: One was from Mexico, one from Luxembourg and the third was French and the host's boyfriend.) As I was told later on by E., many of the students present at this gathering as well happened to live in the same residence in Lyon. After first being hesitant to bring someone along, F. then offered for me to accompany him. At the party I was able to get acquainted with E. In Lyon E. is sharing a flat with two more people, in Écully, in the suburbs of Lyon.

In the course of informal conversations and the interview he shared with me pieces of his life story. His migration to Lyon, he says, has been a process that went smoothly. He told me that adapting to the new environment of the city of Lyon carried no major difficulties for him. He had left the city, in which he grew up, Nanchong, at the age of 11 to attend a boarding school in the province's (Sichuan) capital. In Chengdu he went to middle and high school. Only at the occasion of holidays, he explained, did he return home and visit his family. After graduation from high school he moved to Guangzhou (in Guangdong province) to take up his studies. So before leaving China and migrating to France, he had already been engaging in internal migration. He explained that because of these major steps in his life, he was already used to being away from home, living on his own and therefore prepared to adjust in an unproblematic manner to the new environment of the city of Lyon.

The differences with respect to local food and the challenges of learning how to cook, were the only exception depicted to the otherwise unproblematic arrival. (cf. E. 63-67)

As he has been active in the volunteer activities of various students' organisations at his former university in Guangzhou, for the next semester E. is planning on joining one of the local associations in Lyon and this way hoping to get to know and make friends with new people.

Informant F.

Informant F. and I were brought into contact through informant C.. F. was born in Beijing where he grew up and began his pursuit of Mathematics and Finance. Before starting his Master studies in Lyon he had already been working in Beijing for four years. In Lyon he is studying his Master degree studies at the academic institution Grande École which is renowned among Chinese students. He's accommodated in a house with a host family in the suburbs of the city, but is planning on moving once he knows for sure that he will be able to stay for a longer period of time.

With respect to his former life in Beijing he told me that his parents are very occupied with their jobs. His father is working in a company in the suburbs of Beijing. He often had too much work to get home in the evening and therefore used the opportunity of staying at a place provided by the company. (When talking about the company in which his father is working he used to talk in a low voice, almost whispering.) His mother was equally busy at her job, at which she was often sent to other cities for work. He remembers that the longest time she was gone was for one year when he was five years old. Therefore he has been living with his

grandparents since the age of 6. His grandfather used to be a judge at the Supreme Court in Beijing. During conversations F. reemphasised how in his childhood he had received a strict upbringing. F. told me that among the sentences his grandfather pronounced as a judge there was, on occasion, penalties which included execution. So when F. as a child interrupted his grandfather while he was working, his grandfather often told him off by saying that someone could die if he continued disturbing him. When F. was in university his grandfather passed away and he continued living with his grandmother. His grandmother is 80 years old now and sick with cancer. Therefore he told me about his plan of surprising and visiting her in China soon.

Sociademographic Data on the Informants

	Year of Birth	Sex	Occupation of Parents		University Studies		Marital Status	Native City	Chinese City of Studies	Previous Place(s) of Domicile	Overall Time in Lyon
			Mother	Father	Field	Level					
A.	1991	♀	Working in the government; Selling tea leaves online; Started a training school;	Formerly: Soldier; Now: Personnel Manager	Translation Studies	BA	Single	Jinggang-shan	Beijing	Jinggang shan Beijing	September 2012 - June 2013 (10 months)
B.	1992	♀	Accountant at Volkswagen automobile manufacturer	Shipbuilding engineer	Translation Studies (in Beijing); French/ English Language Studies (in Lyon);	BA	Single	Dalian	Beijing	Shanghai Beijing	September 2012 - June 2013 (10 months)
C.	1983	♀	Accountant; Now: Owns a small business/ half in retirement;	Working as an engineer in a prison; Now: Half in retirement;	Philosophy (Contemp. Aesthetics)	PhD	In a relation-ship	Dalian	Beijing	Dalian Beijing	September 2010 - present (3 years 7 months up to now)

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D.	1978	♀	Was working in a military hospital; Then in the government; Now: Retired;	Was in the army; Then in the government; Now: Retired;	Pedagogic (Education Science and Didactics)	BA	Married	Guiyang	Guiyang	Guiyang	2009 - June 2013 (approx. 4 years)
E.	1991	♂	Accountant	In charge of a local industrial area;	Management Studies	Master of Science Studies	Single	Nan-chong	Guang-zhou	Chengdu Guang-zhou	September 2011 - present (approx. 2 years 8 months)
F.	1985	♂	Engineer	Director of a state-owned company producing arms; Now: Retired;	Master in Finance	Master Studies	In a relation-ship	Beijing	Chang-chun	Beijing	September 2012 - present (1 year 8 months)

Concerning informants' language skills it can be noted that all of the participants are fluent to different degrees in Chinese, French and English.

(The only exception was informant B who in addition to Chinese, French and English is in command of Korean.)

None of the informants is affiliated to a particular religious denomination.

With respect to the composition of informants' families it can be stated that all of the listed above are the only child in their family.

The displayed information has been collected in the course of the field research from November 2012 to June 2013.

Abbreviations: female (♀), male (♂), Bachelor of Arts (BA), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD);

6.3 Experiences in Migration

6.3.1. Parameters of Migration

Whether for the purpose of working or studying or both - all of the informants had to pass through some kind of application process in order to be able to go to Lyon. Depending on the purpose of their stay the informants give account of varying requirements for the issuing of the respective types of visa.

With respect to the acquisition of students' visas, accounts show that requirements depend on the programme or scholarship through which students are going to Lyon. Whereas A. states that the duration of her visa application process was six months, D. estimates receiving the visa after only two months and C. after only one month. The reasons for these differences are possibly rooted in the fact that C. didn't have to submit an application in the traditional sense, but received an offer to do the Doctorate in Lyon from her university in Beijing. She describes that after she met the dean of the department of philosophy, she got the scholarship, implying of the visa acquisition process that *"[...] there's someone who will take care of the visa, the flight, you know the billet d'avion, and things like that."* (C. 125-126)

D. also describes the application process as quite unproblematic. B., on the other hand, completely agrees with A. in emphasising how difficult it was for her to finally receive the visa: *"It's exhausting and frustrating and it sometimes just makes you out of hope, like you will never be in France. Cause it took us like six months to really get the visa. And, like, in the process we need to talk in French, take a French exam and take an interview in the embassy."* (B. 194-197) B. is telling me how tiresome the process of filling out of forms and approaching the administrations was to her. A. is also stressing the economic aspect of the application process. She estimates the costs involved in the application process of having reached up to €700. (cf. A. 6.) In addition to that, she explains to me that in the course of filing the application, she is required to show that she is in possession of 60 thousand Renminbi by submitting a summary of her bank account. (cf. A. 341-342) The amount that needs to be shown is dependent on the country students are applying for.

With respect to this requirement A. is telling an interesting story. A. explains having started her application process on February 14th by submitting an online application and states she would receive the visa in July. After completion of her online application she had to hand in papers and received a date for her French exam. *"Like, it's like again I have to pass this*

process to reach another process. So I finish all my paper - like they ask me to hand in and all hand in and they say ok, you can join - you can go to next game." (A. 75-77) In this case the "next game" was taking the test to prove one's French language competence. The test lasted two hours and cost €200 A. recalls. (cf. A. 79) She explains to me that achieving a low score can adversely affect your interview, which is the next step along the way to obtaining the visa. *"You know the thing is you never know, whether you pass it or not until you know - until you know the final result that is you get a visa or not. If you don't get a visa you may failed at the first step, but nobody will tell you, you failed."* (A. 131-133) So until applicants reach the last step of the application procedure they don't know whether they have passed the previous ones or not.

The interview students are required to take as the final part of their application takes about 15 minutes and costs €300. (cf. A. 144) (This means that either there were additional costs due that were not listed by the interviewee, or the actual costs involved in the process amount to €500 instead of the previously stated €700.) A. is telling me that the earlier students pay for the various steps, the better it reflects on their application.

With respect to the modes of selection applied in the application process there are many rumours circulating among the pool of students who currently are, or formerly have applied for a visa to be issued for sojourning in France. These myths, which are circling around the selection procedures of authorities, display a certain pattern that shall be pointed out after their presentation.

The first one to be introduced is a rumour connected to applicants' appearance when taking the interview, which constitutes, as explained before, the last step on the road of the visa application. A. is explaining to me how students are advised not to wear clothes that are considered too fashionable. She further explains that when she went to take the interview, it was in a group of four people. Out of the four, three have been accepted, a fact A. is ascribing to their visual appearance: *"[...] we three are wearing T-Shirts. It's like very student and very simple."* (A. 175) She goes on by saying that wearing make-up or high heels at the interview might give the impression that the person is not intending to go to France for purposes of studying.

"The French people, they are really afraid of Chinese people immigrate to their country. So the problem is, if you wear too fancy, they thought you want to marry there. Maybe you're wearing so fancy and you're not studying there - you're going to hook with men there." (A. 169-172) The examples A. is giving for what constitutes too fancy or fashionable in appearance is the wearing of make-up and/or wearing of high-heels. Students are tipping each

other off about dressing up too much for it might for it might convey the image of wanting to go to France for purposes of long-term migration.

The second example that shall be introduced is also connected to the interview situation. Regarding the interview, A. points out that originating from a certain region in China can also adversely affect one's chances of being issued a visa. She says that people who come from Zhejiang province, in particular Wenzhou, have the highest chances of being refused in the application process. She calls them *"the Jewish people of China"* for their penchant for money earning. She concludes that because they have the financial means for it, they constitute the group of people that is most likely to migrate to France. Since A. explained before that until the completion of the application process students don't know their results, I ask her how the friend who was being refused could know that she's being refused because of her origin. She answers: *"Zhejiang is maybe very sensitive to French people. They know lots of people from Zhejiang in France."* (A. 200-201)

The main purpose of presenting these examples of myths about the selection procedures in French-visa-application among Chinese youth is by no means to prove them right or wrong, for a trace of truth might be found in all of them. But what really strikes the listener as most important when hearing these stories are the ways in which they are connected to feelings of rejection, not by the local authorities carrying out interviews and exams, but by the unfathomable entity of "the French" or "French people". What is being illustrated are perceptions of refusal ascribed to a French subjectivity that seems to block Chinese individuals from entering the country and judge them, from afar, leading to exclamations like this: *"I don't know why French people are always refusing others!"* (A. 450)

In these accounts it becomes evident that applying for a visa is, apart from exceptions as those mentioned towards the beginning, a stressful and strenuous process. Since students are only allowed to register for classes either at the academic institution in France or their home university in China, even more is at stake. (cf. A. 317-319) When explaining their difficulties in acquiring the documents to come and stay in France, interviewees have frequently referred to friends who have been applying for studying programmes in other countries. In the course of an interview A. is telling me, how she envied a friend who chose to apply to study in Ireland. While she pointed out how she would have preferred the requirements demanded in his application, she highlighted that eventually it turned out she had made the right choice, for one reason in particular: *"But my friend was jealous of me, later, cause when she wants to travel in Schengen-countries, she has to do another visa."* (A. 266-268)

All of the informants involved in this research stated they have travelled within the Schengen area. It is therefore a noteworthy observation mentioned by A., with regard to the strategic aspect behind acquiring a French visa, versus a visa to a non-Schengen country.

6.3.2. Language

During interviews language skills have been described as an important factor with respect to personal experiences in migration. Whether or not and to what degree Chinese students were able to speak French at the time of their arrival has been a frequent topic of conversation. The challenges that mastering the French language poses to new arrivals has been addressed by several of the interviewees: *"When I arrived my French is not that good, I can't understand everything."* (F. 1) Language deficiencies often became particularly apparent when confronted with them in class. *"Especially the professor talks very fast. It took me maybe more than six hours to understand what he said. Three hours of class already - and then I had to take another six hours. And I failed that course."* (F. 3-5) Informants often expressed their difficulty at the beginning in being able to follow in class due to language problems. Sometimes help was provided by French classmates. E. has had diverse experiences when working in groups with French students: *"I was in a group with all French students and they were really very nice. They knew that my French was not that good so they actually, they all spoke English to me. And they were really friendly."* (E. 37-39) He's reflecting positively on the behaviour of the French group members and telling me of how, whenever one of the members started to speak in French, others would remind him of E.'s language problems and continue in English language. Another time, he wasn't so lucky, and the members of the group he was working with were less considerate. He explains having a hard time in the working group and is venting his disappointment: *"They even did not look at me when they talked to me."* (E. 42-43) Nevertheless he's summarising the experiences when working with French students as predominantly positive, saying that the majority of the people he met were friendly and helpful in the way they were interacting with him. Still he remarks his relief about the fact that in his studying programme students are also offered classes in English language. Students have to pick classes in both languages, but at the beginning he could, for example choose to do only English classes to do the French classes later on, once his overall French language level has improved.

All of the informants had prepared themselves before coming to France for the difference in language through various classes and training programs. C. had been taking courses for two years at Alliance Française[6] in Beijing. Nevertheless she points out her feelings of being overexerted during the initial phase of university in Lyon: *"The first time I was here I listened to a conference on philosophy [...]and frankly speaking the first day I didn't understand anything."* (C. 33-35) The experience C. describes has also been shared by D. who recalls: *"I just sit in the, in the classroom, but I can't understand all the things. And this is so difficult for me."* (C. 70-71) Just as the interviewees before, C. describes having had problems in understanding the French language as well as expressing herself and communicating in French. While many informants stress the challenges language problems pose in class, A. is mentioning the difficulties when dealing with public authorities in French: *"[...] you know the language, but you only know the, like basic conversation, like you can buy something but you can't read the papers, right, the administrative things. But that's the things you are always asked to do in, in like abroad."* (A. 490-492) As many of the informants stressed, dealing with administrative things often constituted quite a challenge to them, a necessity complicated by shortcomings in the French language.

Even though the majority of students states having chosen to study in Lyon in particular because of the French language, it's apparent that it is still as well an aspect of living in France they are struggling with: *"It's just, it's harder to live in France I think, because of the language, mainly. But I think, I'll try to handle it. And this is, this is a process of learning."* (E. 318-320)

6.3.3. Foreignness

A topic which has been raised by many of the interviewees with respect to their migration to Lyon and growing accustomed to the new environment, are descriptions of felt sentiments of foreignness. *"I'm not saying there's racial discrimination. But when I'm here in Europe, in France, first thing: I'm an Asian. I do something good, I'm a good Asian. I do something bad, I'm a bad Asian."* (F. 366-369)

F. is depicting his perceptions of how he feels he is being seen by people in Lyon. What he emphasises is the identification by others as Asian. When inquiring if he could further explain

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[6] The Alliance Française is an organisation, with branches located in numerous cities all over the world, among them Beijing. As can be read on the website of its headquarter in Paris it's aim is phrased in the "spreading of French language and Francophone culture" all over the world. (cf. http://www.alliancefr.org/en/who-are-we) Several of the informants noted having taken language classes at the institute in their respective city in China.

the phrasing "good Asian" or "bad Asian" he's essentially repeating that if he's a nice person and does something nice, he will be ascribed being a good Asian. In contrast, if he does something bad, people will see him as a bad Asian. Then he's adding: *"But you're always Asian. You're always someone outside the culture first."* (F. 377-378) F. further describes it by saying that he feels like he's a different person in European people's eyes than in Chinese people's eyes. The circumscribed processes of "othering" F. feels subjected to when living abroad in Lyon, often appear to go hand in hand with feelings of reclusiveness and loneliness. In this context D. is depicting the problems she had in making contact with other people, which she ascribes to her deficient French language skills. She describes how, particularly at the beginning, she was feeling lonely and was predominantly only able to get to know Chinese people. (cf. D. 79-82)

C. is explaining that what she is missing in her life abroad are the close relationships to people like she has them in China. For her, the lack of relations to people at a deeper level are the main source for the loneliness felt by foreignness: *"And that's the most hard part for us living here, cause even we, we can go around, we can see different paysages, things like that, all these beautiful things in Europe, but ah we don't, we don't have these strong ähm lien (.) I always feel isolated, lonely in this life. Cause we tend- as Chinese we tend to imagine our world, the personal world, with all these relationships."* (C. 591-599) C. is putting feelings of foreignness into words, by pointing to the relationships people are building in life and how she is missing the depth of the relationships she has in China. D., as well as F. sees the reason for sentiments of loneliness directly connected to the separation from their friends and family at home in China. When thinking about his life in China F. is concluding *"[...] I'm always surrounded by my family. I never feel lonely."* (F. 399)

F. is accentuating that one of the things he likes most about his life in China is that, when being with his friends, he is first and foremost himself, whereas *"[...] in France it's like 'You're my best Chinese friend!' or 'You're my best Asian friend!'. I'm not saying it's a negative discrimination but it's a difference."* (F. 391-392) F. is disturbed by the fact that he is always attached to the term "Asian", as it indicates to him sentiments of foreignness and not belonging.

6.3.4. Chinese Students' Network

While many of the Chinese sojourning in Lyon expressed sentiments of foreignness and feelings of loneliness while they have been staying in Lyon, quite often the unity among students of Chinese origin in Lyon has been emphasised. In various instances, individuals have been highlighting how the support of other Chinese students has been helping them. The information exchange between older and younger students, the communication between migrants, who have been staying in Lyon for a longer period of time with others who have just arrived, has been repeatedly addressed.

These communication networks are also already at work prior to a person's arrival in Lyon or France, while students are still engaged in the application process, as elaborated on at the beginning of the chapter. *"[...] the former students, they told me how to do it [...]"* (A. 61-62) During the process when students are taking the various steps required for successful application for the French visa, there are numerous obstacles to overcome. Through their advice, older students help younger ones who are in the process of applying to avoid mistakes. They draw younger students' attention to various circumstances which can benefit or adversely affect their application. An example of the kinds of advice experienced students are giving to younger ones is the importance of paying all the fees involved in the application process as fast as they can, for it will reflect favourably on one's application. Another hint older students gave to succeeding students intending to go abroad was to dress properly when taking the interviewed required upon the last stages of the application. *"[...] the former students gave us some tips: It's like - don't wear it, it's too fancy!"* (A. 181-182) As can be seen the content of these pieces of advice can include all kinds of hints and information. Another fact that can be discerned is that through these networks of communication between Chinese students abroad and those resting in mainland China there is a high level of correspondence among individuals. The imparting of knowledge between Chinese students is conducted while students are still in China and involved in their applying, as well as upon their arrival and throughout their stay at their destination abroad. This assumption is also confirmed by E.'s accounts: "*It's like the older students, the students who came here last year, earlier, they also provide us with information because it helped us. This is, the unity is really something impressive to me.*" (E. 398-400) E. is describing how other students supported him during his arrival in Lyon, whether by helping him to learn how to cook, or by taking care of each other while sick - he emphasises the supporting role of other and, in particular, older Chinese students over the course of his migration to Lyon. E. is glad to be able to depend on

this network of information and therefore wants to take on the role himself a year from now, when new arrivals are likewise in need of advice: *"These Chinese students are the main source of information. So next semester there will be some other Chinese students coming here for the studies, so probably I'll try to tell them where they should go, what they should pay attention to if they want to live here in France [...]".* (E. 240-243) By taking on an active role and advising other students he himself is becoming a part of the information network.

On the one hand, the various examples can be seen as evidence of how among young Chinese information exchange networks and communication are at work, while on the other hand they show how these information networks favourably impact the migration process of individuals.

6.3.5. Synopsis

Over course of this chapter, different subject areas linked to the migration process have been broached. They have been illustrating, on the one hand, how Chinese students perceive their host society and on the other hand how they think their host society perceives of them. In addition, they have been depicting important factors, which have been described by informants as having major influence on their quality of life during the period of time of their arrival in France.

Accounts on the visa application process have been illustrating how Chinese students perceive of their host society prior to their arrival in France. Students' stories regarding application procedures have been demonstrating how, depending on the programme or scholarship with which they are affiliated, they face varying requirements and obligations in the process. According to these differences in regard to the effort students have to put in to be able to go to France, the construction of myths surrounding refusal during the selection process are being spread by those disadvantaged. Information on the do's and don'ts of the application process is being communicated through the networks of current and former Chinese students. They have also been highlighted as having taken on a beneficial role with respect to migrants' period of arrival in Lyon. Different factors linked to the migration process, such as the challenges the French language poses, as well as felt sentiments of foreignness, have been raised during conversations. All the presented factors flow into the parameters of migration under which Chinese subjects are performing their mobility and construct their relation to host society and country.

6.4. Family and Filial Duty

"You are the only hope for some families." (A. 522-523)

Family and perceived filial obligations constitute a subject matter lying at the core of how young Chinese people experience and organise their ties to homeland. Through the subjects' accounts in interviews and informal conversations it became apparent that the bonds of family are of utmost importance to individuals, no matter whether those affected have crossed the country (mainland China), or oceans and continents. Family ties nevertheless loose nothing of their urgency in the decision-making-processes of Chinese migrants as is reflected in many of the informants' accounts. All of the informants reported standing in close relationships with their parents and communicating with them on a regular basis through e-mail and Skype - video -conversations.

During interviews and conversations students often expressed their close relationship and gratitude towards their parents: *"My parents is always supporting me, anytime."* (A. 504) A. is describing her relationship with her parents in a positive way, stressing how her parents always encourage her in her decisions.

The majority of informants still completely rely on their parents' financial means. They often emphasise how thankful they are: *"I think they miss me for sure, but they really supported me for studying abroad because ahm you know my parents pay for my education and pay for my living expenses, pay for my food, accommodation, everything.[...] So actually it's my parents that pay for everything, for my life in France and they really support me. I'm really grateful for their support,[...]"* (E. 103-107) Frequently accounts seem to indicate how parents' motivations to a certain extent steer those of their children: *"[...] actually ahm my father was more convinced for me to go [...] to study abroad. And ahm, actually at first I was a little hesitating but ah he pushed me ((laughing))."* (C. 368-372) Where C. is describing the relationship to her parents throughout positively, other informants' stories as well imply something else. It appears that the parents' support is as well creating a certain dependency and conflicted feelings, especially with respect to young individuals sojourning abroad.

B. who is on exchange in Lyon, has a visa issued limited to one year, addresses the issue during one of our conversations. As she has been frequently telling me before, she really would like to return to France after finishing her Bachelor studies in Beijing. A plan her father is strongly opposed to. She tells me about a video -conversation of two hours she was having the day before, during which she tried to persuade her father to let her go abroad again. But up

to now her efforts of persuading him have been ineffective. The problem, she's explaining to me, is that she has no actual "proof" she can show for what she learned in Lyon. Because of this circumstance her father is convinced that if she studied hard enough, she could make the same progress through studying back in Beijing. (cf. B. 27.05.2013)

Quite often the issue of parents' monopolising children's decisions has been broached through stories about unfortunate friends of informants. In this way F. is telling me a story about a friend who has been living abroad for several years. He says that this friend had already built a life for herself in the country she was living abroad in. But then her parents really needed her, so she went back to take care of them. *"[...] they're living in a small town, not the capital, but a small town in Shandong. And her family has a factory. Her father called her back to manage the factory. She was so regretting it. It's a new industrial area and there's nothing, just the factory to work and after there's no - there's no life."* (F. 240-242) Following this he told me that she got married before 30, implying that this finally set the seal on his friend's fate. Stories like these came up repeatedly: *"My friends' mum is always controlling about her, everything. It's like - her plans, her mum is settling everything down and she basically has to follow the path her parents set."* (A. 542-543) On another instant F. is telling me a story about a friend of his, who has been studying at Columbia University in the United States, finished her PhD and recently got married to a man, who as well studied at Columbia and became a banker in Wall Street. He told me about how she frequently told him her regret about the fact that she is simply following her parents' plan. (cf. F. 1034-1048)

The stories about other people's lives often share major elements with their narrators. The protagonists in it are usually of about the same age as they are themselves and share similar backgrounds, with respect to their educational achievements and sojourning abroad. In many ways the stories seem to convey the concern and worries they have with respect to their own lives and futures. Even though he points out that he does miss them, in many ways F. is depicting the geographical distance he has to his family while staying in Lyon as a relief. *"[...] the positive thing here is, you always can be quiet here, be more quiet here. Because your family's not here, there's no pressure."* (F. 325-326) When inquiring whether he could describe more precisely what he means by saying "quiet" he adds that in Lyon no one is pushing him.

In a similar manner C. is reflecting on what her life in China would be like right now and pointing out how different she thinks it would be to the life she's living now in Lyon: *"[...] if I stayed in China, I'd be more practical and determined in my life that is to say I'd have very clear objectives. And for example to find a certain job, to maintain this job daily. So at a*

certain age, I should be married and then, in one year or two I'd be having a baby [...]" (C. 440-443) The notion about her age, in her expression and the connection of felt obligation for starting a family is going to be addressed more in detail in the subchapter "Great Expectations". What is striking about the paragraph is how dwelling in a certain place or social environment, in this case is impacting on how the informant feels she ought to live her life. She continues by saying *"When I'm here, actually I feel more open and ah free, cause there's noone to, to, to look over your shoulder and say 'You should do this! You should do that!'"* (C. 444-446) In her statement it is not clear who it exactly is, who is telling her what to do. What can be concluded is that F. and C. share the similar sentiment experienced in their stay in Lyon, a certain kind of liberating distance to otherwise felt obligations.

6.4.1. The Only Child

As will be again shown in the following chapter on education, future plans and educational or professional projects are to a high degree informed by thoughts on parents' expectations towards them: *"[...] cause I'm the only child in the family they kind of want me to live ahm in the same city with them, but it's - they're, they're being very supportive of me in my education cause it's very important for my future career."* (B. 131-133) The fact of how Chinese daughters and sons feel responsible for their parents wellbeing has been expressed in almost all of the interviews and conversations with informants, whether that means gaining experience and seeking knowledge abroad, or the opposite, standing by your family and staying at home. In this regard F. is explaining to me that where parents encourage the pursuit of educational achievements or internships abroad, while their child is still attending school or university, they might not do so any longer once the child is already in possession of a well - paid job in China. He points out how hard it was for him to persuade his parents and how they only agreed upon his receiving an offer. He highlights that these circumstances are prevalent among a large number of his friends back in China. *"They have money actually. They can go. They speak English very well. But their parents don't agree, so they stay."* (F. 196-197) F. thinks that the reason for his parents' opposition can be traced back to their life histories and the time they themselves had when entering the workforce. He explains that to them, being stable and having *"a stable job is everything"*. (F. 220)

In her ethnographic study Fong addresses the issue of China's one-child policy's repercussions on the experiences of young Chinese when they grow up and attain full age. The fierce

struggle for elite education and work gained momentum from the 1980s onwards and has been caused by various factors, out of which one can be singled out in particular:

> In addition to being the sole focus of parental love and pride, singletons were expected to be the main source of their parents' post-retirement income, medical payments, and nursing care. (Fong 2004:28)

Young adults of this generation will not only have to take care financially of their parents and children, but also might have to take responsibility for supplying for their grandparents and husband's or wife's parents and grandparents. "In a modern economy that promotes increasingly large inequalities, only an elite job can supply enough income to enable one person to provide so many dependents with a respectable lifestyle." (Fong 2004:28f) Therefore the only child of this generation, as not being able to abdicate from or share its responsibility with other siblings, is growing up in awareness of the importance of educational and professional success.

6.4.2. Synopsis

The focal points and personal tales summarised and presented within the category of "Family and filial duty" are illustrating the various ways of how being the only child is evoking in subjects a sense of obligation and an urgency to take responsibility. Through empirical accounts it has been shown, how decisions of young Chinese' sojourning abroad, settling down, family planning or taking up residence are interwoven with the strong bonds connecting an only-child to their parents. It displays well how family -ties are persistent throughout the distance of their migration and not only influence their connection to homeland, but as well impact on the various other fields of young adults' lives such as employment, ambitions, personal relationships and future planning.

6.5. Education & Career

"To be good at examinations is the only way to change their life." (B. 10.05.2013)

A crucial point when looking at young Chinese adults' mobility are their educational and professional ambitions. The educational and professional goals Chinese individuals are striving for, as will be shown, frequently make up the anchor of their pursued mobility and reflect how their relation to homeland is lived out in their sojourning abroad and/ or returning to China.

6.5.1. Academic Achievement

The heavy focus on the reaching of educational success in China is expressed in various ways. It starts even before children go to school through the precautions and measures parents take to enhance their child's future perspectives. In an informal conversation (A. 07.04.2013) A. explains the circumstance of how parents try to get the hukou[7] of bigger cities. She says that they are trying to do so, because this way the child has a better chance of making it into one of the leading universities. The reason for that is lying in the difference of universities' admittance quota of students. E. is ventilating on it by telling me how the scores students need to attain in order to be able to access a certain university differ. In her story she explains that for example in order to have a chance of getting into Tsinghua or Beijing University, different scores need to be reached depending on whether you are domiciled in Beijing, or a city of another region. *"It's really unfair but there's nothing we can do about it. It's just most of the resources are reserved for the Beijing students, for the local students and then if the students from other provinces want to go to these first universities they really have to try really hard. Because there's a quota."* (E. 151-154) E. is showing his disapproval and regret about these prevailing circumstances. His discontent about the advantage local students of a particular city have over contenders from rural areas is shown: *"I think the biggest problem is that there's kind of inequality. People in different provinces have different resources, have*

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[7] The PRC internal migration policy is composed of a core policy, the household registration system, "hukou" in Chinese, and a number of supplementary regulations and decrees. Hukou administration is determining and conditioning labour migration in China, resulting in a rural-urban divide. In spite of its loosening since the 1980s it is implementing the restraining of rural labour mobility with the following repercussion: "[...] the prevailing *hukou* system provides an institutionalised means to separate peasants from city dwellers in the labour market. [...] The few labour markets that are open to peasants are building, road, bridge and port construction for men, and the textile industry, housework and service sectors for women." (Huang 1999:93[emphasis in original])

different access to the educational resources. And the scores they need to enter the same university is different for students in different regions." (E. 141-144)

The unequal access to resources and the hardships this situation is entailing for the academic aspirations of students from rural areas was a fact, talked on quite intensively by the interview partners. *"If he or she can go to a university in a big city, he can change everything about the family. He got a good education, he will have a higher ability to get a higher job, a well paid job, he can support the family and maybe get them out [...]"* (A. 524-527) What has been becoming apparent in informants' accounts is the link between striving for educational success, involving academic achievement abroad, and family responsibilities. Whether what is strived for is getting out of a village, a city, a province or the country - what is reached for appears to be a brighter future.

6.5.2. Competition

During one of our conversations B. stresses the fact that doing good at examinations, for many people in China is the only way to change their life. *"The thing that drives you is the competition."*, she says. (B. 10.05.2013) She emphasises the social implications failing at exams carries. She describes that if people don't study, they lack behind. And if they lack behind they aren't doing well in their exams, which means that they can't stay with their friends-circle. But friends are not the only factor, or most frequently mentioned social factor with respect to Chinese students' efforts to perform well.

The unequal distribution of opportunities of access to academic institutions is necessitating for young Chinese to engage into fierce competition over examination scores. The strain the relentless combat for ever better results is putting on young people's lives has been expressed repeatedly. *"[...] for example if I'm a boy, my parents compare me with other childs. They don't care what you really achieve. They just put everything in a vertical system and compare it."* (F. 341-342) F. is complaining about how good results are never appreciated, but always opposed to even better results of colleagues or friends. He is telling the story of how he recently in the course of a video-skype conversation announced to his father, that his results showed that he's currently one of the best students in his class. His father then asked him whether that's all. After he told him that it was in fact everything he wanted to say, his father said goodbye and hung up. (cf. F. 427-430) This pressure of constantly trying to work harder in order to attain better scores is an issue that has been addressed by the majority of

informants. B. expresses her exhaustion by remarking that for her in China it's always about reaching a certain score, achieving a certain grade. It comes down to numbers, statistics, she complains. (cf. B. 27.05.2013)

The competitive striving for ever-better results appears to peak when young students take the gao kao. The gaokao is an exam, which decides upon whether or not a students can access a university and if so, which university they have chance of being admitted to. Having a sufficient score at gaokao is only the precondition to be admitted at a certain university. Students also have to choose a major. The major usually cannot be changed anymore after being picked, a fact strongly criticised by E.

Because of this admission at universities depends on the one hand on the score you are able to achieve and on the other on the number of students who apply for a certain programme at a certain university. The time during which Chinese students prepare for gaokao is described as an extremely stressful phase. A. is emphasising that students from the countryside in particular have to try their very best at gaokao, as it often constitutes their only way "to get out", as she's phrasing it. (A. 07.04.2013)

A very commonplace situation of exchange of words between two of my informants, who are meeting for the first time, is showing how the various aspects illustrated above, can flow into the instance of a brief moment of communication. At Lyon's Place Bellecour B. and I are meeting F., whom she hasn't met before. As we are walking towards a small restaurant, l'Épicerie, F. is trying to start a conversation with B. by asking her about her studies, whereupon B. quickly answers that she would rather not tell him the name of her university in China, for it is not a well-known, renowned one. In this brief instance the relation between the university a student is attending, it's positioning in the hierarchical setting of educational institutions, and one's own attained achievement including felt personal success or failure in, is succinctly expressed.

6.5.3. Money

"To Chinese people, Chinese parents their child's education is the most important thing. They invest whatever they can to get the child well-educated." (F. 1006-1007) Parents are supporting are trying to support their children in their education as best as they can.

An issue that has therefore been addressed repeatedly is the impact a family's economic situation has on a child's future perspectives. Regarding studying abroad, attending good

schools or universities, informants have made it clear in their accounts that financial capability is what, apart from diligence in studying, determines your destiny. A. is putting it simply by stating *"Those who have a lot of money, their children are able to attend good schools, have good teachers, have better chances of entering one of the better universities and so on."* (A. 07.04.2013)

Whether a family is able to afford its child's attending of good schools or a good university and whether they are able to pay for their child's sojourning abroad has been described as the necessary precondition, for the child to have the chance of a prosperous future.

6.5.4. Relation between Teacher and Student

In many ways informants have been addressing their experiences in class and how the way students are taught in Lyon by their teachers at university differs from how things are done at their respective university back in China. A basic difference, which has been singled out several times by informants, is the way teachers and student interact with each other. The manner in which students talk to their teachers and vice versa is something that has been noticed as something migrants had to get used to.

F. is trying to illustrate this point by telling me a story about his experience in this regard. He tells me that in high school he was a very good student in mathematics. One time he realised that his teacher had made a mistake. When he pointed it out to the teacher, the teacher seemed uncomfortable and didn't further respond to it. Only during the next teaching unit did he address the mistake and correct it, deliberately not commenting on the fact that it had been a mistake of his own. F. is concluding *"In China you're never supposed to question the authority."* (F. 495) A.'s account has been corresponding to F.'s in its finding about the relation between teachers and students at their educational institutions in China. B. is describing in a similar way: *"Students are supposed to respect their teachers and follow their instructions and it's a little bit like: Do as what they told you to do."* (B. 491-493) She declares that above all students' relationship to their teachers needs to be characterised by respect.

The ways of how communication and interaction between students and their teachers differs, has impact on how classes and teaching methods are experienced and perceived by Chinese students in Lyon. Many of the interviewed migrants emphasise the differences between styles of teaching in their university education in Lyon with their respective city in China. Among

them is informant B. who says: *"I feel like when you have classes in Europe it's ahm more in the form of discussions rather than just teachers speaking and you're listening, like without making any sound. But in China it's usually about teachers speaking to the whole class and nobody really - we don't have conversations, discussions or debates about something [...] They're aware of the problems but because this, this has been a problem for such a long time that it's really difficult to really change the situation."* (B. 94-99) B. thinks that through this style of teaching the critical thinking of students can be discouraged. For Chinese students, she states, this way of teaching is quite challenging, because students are supposed to speak comparatively much. *"[...] after you're being educated in this way for ten years, you've kind of internalised in your mind that this, this is the normal way of (.) ahm listening in a class. And when you're suddenly in a European class you just feel a little bit lost and you can't just suddenly be very (.) [...] be very daring to really raise your hand and speak up your opinions in front of all the class. Especially, ahm, I don't know (.) ahm, like when you're strongly against something."* (B. 119-124) B. is describing the conflict she feels she's in when confronted with the different expectations required from her in the educational setting in Lyon. She goes on by telling me that she thinks many of her Chinese colleagues feel the same way, as they are as well, in comparison to other colleagues, predominantly silent in class in Lyon. In her point of view the reason for how students behave can be mainly attributed to the way the Chinese education system is impacting on how classes are held in China. E. is expressing similar criticism on the Chinese education system. He explains that there is in particular one point he sees as problematic with respect to the workings of education in China. What he is describing as a basic problem is that teachers in China don't have enough autonomy. He believes that the fact, that the administration staff at a school has power over professors and therefore always has control over teachers' pedagogic plans, is of disadvantage to the quality of the classes. (cf. E. 113-122)

Despite the challenges classes at university in Lyon pose to B., she states that she likes them and prefers the classes the way they are taught in Lyon and describes them as more open. (cf. B. 105) The topic of how, what is expected of students in classrooms and lecture halls in Lyon, differs from what is required from them during class in China, has been brought up repeatedly by various students. D., who is studying pedagogic, as well believes that the teaching methods she experienced herself in class, as well as in the course of what she learned through her studies, here in Lyon were new for her. (cf. D. 257) She tells me that she would like to take some of the methods she got into contact with here with her and use them once she would be working as a teacher after her return to China.

6.5.5. Career Aspirations

An interesting point is that the relation described above between teacher and student, as well, appears to be reflected in the world of work through individuals' engaging with workers or employers who take up higher ranks: *"You know when I was going to work at a state-owned company, the first thing I was told was that: when you're manager told you to do something don't think too much about it. Just do it."* (F. 477-479) A. has been broaching the subject in a similar manner by pointing out to me that if a person works in a company and realises that their boss is saying something wrong, they will never tell him, for fear of getting fired. (cf. A. 07.04.2013)

Many of the aspects that have been represented as of importance with respect to the educational ambitions of Chinese migrants are as well valid with regard to their professional aspirations. As has been particularised in relation to their academic strivings, professional goals are by and large determined by individuals competitiveness. Studying abroad is considered an important step in young Chinese educational career. *"[...] it's becoming a necessity for college students to go out of China to see what the world is like, [...]"* (B. 181-182) Increasingly gaining experience abroad, whether through going on exchange, a complete studying programme or an internship is seen as crucial in order to be a successful competitor. This circumstance becomes revealed in the way Chinese migrants plan and conduct educational and professional steps: *I always wanted to be more competitive. I already speak English and I did say: Why don't I learn to speak French? Because for a telecommunication engineer, if you speak French, there's a lot of chance in Africa.* (F. 38-41) As is shown through F.'s explanation on considerations leading his future planning, finding a lucrative niche with one's talents and skills can be of benefit to one's position in competition. *"[...] you have to have several really special skills other people don't have. You're going to have a more competitive advantage. That's the reason why I started to speak French [...]"* (F. 53-55) F. is expressing his belief of how mastering the French language might be of advantage with respect to his job opportunities.

In a similar manner E. is telling me: *"[...] originally I applied for universities in English speaking countries, like Britain, United States or Australia. [...] I was enrolled in actually five universities in three countries."* (E. 275-279) In the end he decided for the university in Lyon for it would put him into an advantage position, as he would be able to learn another language. *"My, my mother wanted me to go to Australia. And my father wanted me to go to Britain and I was really struggling and I finally chose France, because I thought that I would be good to*

study a foreign language. I would be able to speak French really well after one year or two years." (E. 292-295) The casualness with which nations are picked as destinations for academic and career achievement and strategically incorporated into future planning becomes very well apparent in this quote.

From the examples listed above, it can be concluded that the principle of competition is not only monopolising young Chinese throughout their school and university education, but something that is equally relevant when entering into the labour market. They are of importance as they contribute to how Chinese students or young Chinese engaged in employment experience life in their country of origin, as well as abroad and negotiate their relation to their homeland.

6.5.6. Synopsis

In this chapter several of the core aspects discussed in the course of conversations with informants on the main theme of education have been presented. The topics that have been treated are different subcategories all connected to the intensively discussed theme of education. Talking about their school and university education often led to the telling of personal stories and reflections on a students' life in China, as opposed to the one in Lyon.

Among the topics that have been broached are the unequal distribution of access to educational resources, the fierce competition students are engaging in and the factor of how economic wealth and the possession of the right hukou are putting some subjects ahead of others in it. The chapter on education has been closed by showing how individual's educational achievements are planned and strategically used in order to reach the final goal of finding well-paid jobs.

All these points have been listed and elaborated on as they contribute to and shape how individuals perceive their life in Lyon. They are giving insight into the motives of individuals' migration to France, as well as to how they plan on further proceeding professionally. The various factors illustrated within the pages of the chapter show, how Chinese migrants are challenged in their educational life in Lyon, as well as hint at as to how they plan on using the knowledge they were planning to gain. The simple amount of accounts on the main theme of education shows, besides their present students' status, the momentousness of the topic itself and has been giving valuable indication on the manner of how ties to homeland and their country of migration are conducted.

6.6. Lifestyle

6.6.1. Great Expectations

One thing informants all seemed to notice and express, although in different ways, were the perceived differences in people's leisure activities and lifestyle in general in Lyon as opposed to people in their respective cities in China. *"The life-style is different. Because for European people maybe that's natural to go out to bars, meet friends, maybe it's just a place to talk."* (F. 752-754) While informants have been stressing the popularity of karaoke bars (KTV), they have made quite clear that regular bars, pubs or clubs do not count among the places they would usually go to. The topic of how Chinese migrants perceive differences in the ways people are spending their free time, and how doing so in the way people usually do in Lyon would be condemned back in China was approached in various stories. On one occasion B. explains to me, how amazed she is about how all her European friends in Lyon always like to go to the park to relax and lie down on the lawn. She stresses that it is extremely uncommon for Chinese people to do that. (cf. B. 25.05.2013) When recalling my own strolls through the parks of Beijing, in which only on rare occasions people would be spotted on the lawn I asserted the truth in her words. But apart from the reason that getting tanned doesn't enjoy popularity among young Chinese, another more important reason appears to lie at the core of the matter. B. tries to explain it to me by pointing out how her father would call people he spotted relaxing like that lazy. *"You're not supposed to start to enjoy your life when you're so young. You're supposed to make contributions to the society, make a lot of money or something like that."* (B. 623-624) B.'s father told her on various instances. It's quite astonishing how in this context B.'s father is directly connecting the responsibility of citizens' agency to make contributions for the wellbeing of society to neoliberal practices of capital-accumulation and the increasing of wealth. When further inquiring on which age group B. is referring to in her story she specifies: *"When you're 20, when you're 20 to 30, you're not supposed to enjoy your life."* (B. 625-626)

The time span between the age 20 and 30 is, with respect to people's personal lives, is described as a particularly stressful one. Several informants have been implying how within this period of time certain expectations ought to be met: *"I think it's trend that when girls get 24, 25, their parents started to get worried. Let's find her a good boy!"* (B. 596-597) B. says that the average age for getting married as a Chinese woman is 23, 24, for Chinese men she

says it is a little bit higher. She points out that this fact is putting Chinese in this age-group under a lot of pressure. The fact of how stressful meeting the expectations in their personal lives in addition to educational and professional pressure to achieve for young Chinese, has been addressed repeatedly by informants. In this context sojourning in France has been described as a way of escapement.

"[...] when you're 25 it's, it's totally different, when you're 25 in Europe and in China. It's just (.) when you're in China, I don't know, you get the pressure from the society, from your parents and the fact that you're friends, most of them maybe are getting married or are about to get married." (B. 612-615) B. is explaining the urgency starting a family has for Chinese people, in particular women, at that age and is at the same time comparing it to the freedom Europeans have in her point of view in this regard. Living in Lyon, she describes, she can enjoy going to bars and clubs, where as in China she always knows how much her parents oppose to it and therefore rather chooses not to go. (cf. 523-528) In contrast to that she describes the period of time for men and women in China as a rather stressful phase and complains about the fact of how many men and women are ending up in an unhappy marriage due to the sudden urgency to find a partner.

To B. Chinese young men are *"immature"*. The problem, in her point of view, is that they are lacking *"a phase to play around. They jump from having no relationship to girls at all, to entering into a really serious relationship."* (cf. B. 18.05.2013) F. on the other hand is lamenting on young Chinese women's behaviour. He has a girlfriend of Chinese origin who in the winter semester was studying in Paris. He has been frequently visiting her. He's complaining about the fact that whenever he's meeting Chinese young women in Lyon, they are immediately supposing him to be interested in them and inquiring into whether he has a girlfriend. (cf. F. 24.05.2013)

The in the research included informants vary significantly in the ways their private lives are shaped. In the course of our interview D. explains that she has a husband in China she married prior to her arrival in Lyon in 2009. After spending four years in long distance relationship with him, she expressed her relief of being able to return to him soon.

C. as well stated having a boyfriend in China. She was already in a relationship with him when she started her PhD in Lyon. Where C. and D. have already been in relationships at the time they arrived in Lyon and have been maintaining them ever since. A. and B. are delineating completely different experiences with respect to the situation of their private lives, as will be shown in the subsequent chapter.

6.6.2. Mobility and Romantic Entanglements

> Official rhetoric might continue to have a hand in shaping a hybrid or ambiguous Chinese-Western image for today's modern Chinese women, women of most ages might experience tension and confusion in meeting a pluralism of mixed Chinese and Western expectations, but more than ever before China's youngest daughters expect to assume a cosmopolitan culture. (Croll 1995:179)

Female informants have been giving accounts of friction and areas of conflict emerging in the gap they are feeling between on the one hand their position as women in Chinese society and as the daughters of their parents, and on the other the mobile styles of life they are engaging in, through their sojourning abroad.

In the course of our meetings A. admitted her affection for a young English musician she has been getting to know and dating in Beijing prior to her stay in Lyon, and recently visited in England. She as well talked about her interest in a German student, she as well got to know and was seeing while she was still conducting her studies back in Beijing. She has as well been visiting him in Munich in the course of her year on exchange in Lyon.

In a similar way B. is telling me in the course of our meetings about her romantic relation to a German man, who is living in Graz. He has been visiting her in Lyon in September and she has been travelling two times to Graz, where he is conducting his studies in medicine. When talking about her involvement with him, she explains the uncertainness she feels, of whether being able to see him again.

"Fast young women entangled with foreign men seem an iconic image of the intoxicating swirl of fast capitalism in Shanghai." (Ong 2006:235) While Ong in this quote is referring to Zhou's novel "Shanghai Baby", she is nevertheless in her approach emphasising Chinese women's success in benefiting from economic opportunities through professional capability, outplaying men in the "aphrodisiac game of global emergence". (Ong 2006:235)

In one of our conversations F. is touching upon the subject area of how many young Chinese women in Lyon are in relationships with foreign men: *"In China we have some - you know sometimes we have to, we are not comfortable - oh no not comf-, we don't have confidence in ourselves, we feel inferior, sometimes to European people. So for that reason - I don't represent Chinese guys, but at least I think that we feel inferior to European people so - we feel even worse when Chinese girls want to date European guys."* (F. 598-602) F. is explaining how Chinese women's preference for men who are not of Chinese origin, is putting

young men into the humiliating back-position of a competition, they cannot succeed in balancing through dating foreign women.

He says that as a Chinese woman telling, a Chinese man about her European boyfriend, can cause for her to be looked down upon. (cf. F. 604-605) The answer to the question why they do so might partly lie in a piece of information shared in the course of interviews with A. and B. An interesting aspect to their reports on their involvement with foreign men, is the fact that none of them has been telling their parents about it. *"[...] my dad would say: Why? There's no need to meet a foreign boyfriend."* (B. 589) A. and B. express their belief that their parents would oppose them being in relationships with men who are not of Chinese origin. But the assumption is not restricted to the private life of young Chinese women. F. as well received the same upbringing, convincing him of the fact that non-Chinese partners are not considered suitable in the eyes of their parents. He's giving an example: *"When I was going to the airport my mother pointed out a group of European people and said to me 'Do never ever bring a girl like that to your home.'"* (F. 611-612) F. explains his parents attitude by saying that it is mostly caused by their fear of change. Chinese parents are afraid family might not be treated as important by the foreign partner, resulting in cases of divorce. As well they are concerned that foreign partners might not respect them in the way Chinese people do. The main reason why Chinese parents oppose to their son's and daughter's involvement with foreign men and women is explained by B. as follows: *"[...] when you meet a foreign boy, they usually don't want to marry you. They are not into marriages."* (B. 587-588) As their sons and daughters reach a certain age without having a boyfriend, parents frequently help their children find suitable partners B. explains. (cf. B. 574) As she is touching upon the subject, she is expressing her worries about suffering this fate herself and being set up by her parents.

Another concern has been voiced connected with the expectation to find a suitable partner who is of Chinese origin. In telling me a story of a personal experience she was having in this regard, B. was bringing up a subject of delicate character to her, in the course of a conversation we were having after several weeks of meetings. Under embarrassed laughter she is telling me about the prevailing fact that young Chinese men expect the young women they are seeing, to be virgins. If women are not so, B. notes, it is a problematic matter often resulting in break-up and shame on the part of the woman. B. is trying to explain the problem and is getting to the heart of the issue by voicing her thoughts *"If you're not a virgin they will think you're a whore."* (B. 26.05.2013)

B. says that it is a stressful and troublesome issue she and her friends often have been discussing and worrying about. Notwithstanding the fact that he himself has a different

attitude towards the issue, F. confirms that it is a widely-held, stout opinion among young men in China. (cf. F. 24.05.2013) B. expresses the fact that the European men she has met care less about women's innocence, as one of the reasons why she is more inclined to go out with them. (cf. B. 18.05.2013)

This issue appears to be of major importance to the life of informants as it seems to impact on how relationships are formed, and the romantic relationships of young Chinese have been expressed as critical factors in the decisions they make with regard to migration and sojourning abroad. Therefore it constitutes an issue of deep significance to the research complex.

6.6.3. Talking Politics

On June 13th F. and I slowly walk our way from Croix Rousse to Vieux Lyon, we were crossing several streets. As we approach the first traffic lights, their colour is red and despite there's a car approaching in the distance, F. is casually crossing the street. While I am waiting, he continues talking while walking, sure that I would as well be about to cross the street. At another point a little later, the traffic lights at a crossroads turn green and without looking further left or right I confidently cross the street. At this F. says *"There you see - we Chinese don't have any confidence anymore into the system."* (F. 13.06.2013) While it's quite clear that the topic that is being broached is not his take on Chinese infrastructure, Chinese politics has proven to be a topic rarely broached directly. F. is adding to his statement things need to change. He believes that change is taking place, but it is doing so very slowly. After an instance he contemplates, that change of course needs to be happening slowly since China is such a big country, a view, as came out during conversations, shared by other informants:

"[...]the central government in Beijing. I mean, like the president, like the prime minister - they, they really want to make the life to better, the life of Chinese people. I, I believe that's the original idea. BUT the point is, the idea - cause China is so big [...] it can't be applied in every region." (A. 857-861) Even though A. is casting a critical eye on many aspects of China's political situation, the rule of the CCP itself is not something she has been calling into question, nor has any other informant. "Support for one-party rule in China is widely viewed as crucial for maintaining the stability that allows capitalism to flourish and China to become more powerful." (Ong 206:233)

Whether in the form of political regulations such as Chinese one-child policy, or through accounts on informants' grandparents' experiences in historical socio-political movements and campaigns, Chinese politics has proven to be an issue coming up and playing into all of the within "Chinese students in Lyon" presented subject areas.

At different points of conversations informants have been touching upon how disturbing it can be for them to talk about politics with other non-Chinese or local students. *"[...] they ask me whether it's terrible to live in a situation like that."* (B. 437) Chinese migrants expressed the difficulty they often haven when discussing topics including aspects about political life in China with friends who are not from China. Likewise an informant has been stressing her difficulty in discussing the issue with friends who are in mainland China while she's spending her time abroad. A. is telling me about an incident, in which she posted the following sentence on her QQ[8] profile: "*Since I'm here I found my country is lovely and ugly at the same time."* (A. 881) The text along with the sentence caused A. a full discussion with one of her friends in China. She complains about not being able to talk about politics with many of her Chinese friends because they're not interested in it: *"You know the politics are very sensitive in China. And few people are willing to talk about it, or they just don't care about it. Cause it doesn't have any (.) - you know we can't, we people can't change something, like political. [...] So we - basically - and some - if you care so much about politics you will get in trouble. So lots of people they choose to ignore it."* (A. 700-704) A. emphasises her interest in political issues. She complains about the fact that in order to start a Master's studying programme in China, it is compulsory for students to take four exams, one of which is a exam on Maoist' tenets. (cf. A. 676-688) But she stresses that it's better not to criticise political issues too much, for it could get you into trouble, and not only you, but also your family. (cf. A. 783-785) In this regard F. recounts: *"[...] my mother told me, especially after 1989, especially after that: 'Never, ever ask about politics.' Yeah because, you know, you can't make any improvement, but you destroy yourself. (.)"* (F. 681-684)

While informants have drawn attention to the fact that getting involved in political debates could put you and the ones close to you in danger, A. highlights her view, that most people at her age don't want to deal with it or talk about it, because they are not interested in the topic. (A. 758-756) A. suggests that this circumstance might be a problem to her once she has returned to China. She fears that there might be a gap between her and her friends. (cf. A. 928-929)

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[8] An IP telephony service and instant messaging client allowing you to make phone calls and send messages via your phone or computer with subscribers. It can be used in the same way as the VoIP service Skype.

In interviews several of the informants give account of engaging with Chinese politics in different ways, one example is through watching movies. During one of our meetings F. is telling me that he tries to keep informed about political events in China by regularly reading articles online. He believes that change is slowly taking place. He's giving the example of developments at his former workplace. He describes how, as it was a state-owned company, regulations were usually in favour to the company's strategies and plans. In addition, he elucidates, the staff used to be going on a luxurious holiday at the end of the year. *"We leave for several days like a little vacation. We don't really work that hard, we don't deserve that. But now, the new president, the new government, after that, the state-owned companies no longer do that."* (F. 675-677) He believes that change is gradually taking place and that it is something induced and encouraged by the Chinese elite. (F. 665)

6.6.4. Synopsis

In the course of this chapter, out of the many subjects that have been broached during conversations with respect to their lives in Lyon and how they reflect on it, two have been chosen. They have been selected for their significance with respect to the relation and influence they have on the other major categories that have been introduced, as well as for their relevance with respect to how homeland ties and norms and values, are negotiated in mobility as the style of life for these individuals.

By various means the presented issues are interrelated to previously introduced topics. While informants romantic relationships often seem to coincide with sought destinations of migration, they are at the same time as well shaped and conditioned by informants' parental ties. In a similar way informants express their engagement with political issues in China in the course of their time in Lyon, influencing on how they perceive and approach the obligation to study Maoist' and Leninist' tenets to start a Master programme in China. The various factors at work introduced in the chapter all contribute to how informants' life in China is pictured from the distance and related to, or in part, no longer related to in the course of transnational mobility.

In the first part of the chapter the expectations parents have towards the lives of their children, was not only presented with respect to their career achievements, but as well with regard to their selection of suitable partners and subsequent family formation. Through the showing of

various statements and opinions, the pressure young Chinese feel they are under, as well as the diverse factors at work when choosing their partners have been illustrated.

The subsequent sub-chapter on the ways informants are dealing with Chinese political life, while being in France, has shown how they are negotiating political issues, which arose in the course of mobility, with themselves and their environment. It has depicted how young Chinese when talking about political issues with their environment, be it Chinese or non-Chinese, have met incomprehension, or had difficulty themselves to see things through the eyes of someone else.

What conflates the two subject-matters illustrated in this chapter, is their ability to impact on Chinese individuals' mobile lifestyle, as they constitute pieces in the puzzle of how their relation to homeland is constructed.

6.7. Future Perspectives

Chinese migrants' future hopes and dreams are lying at the core of how they decide to live out their ties to homeland. Their sojourning abroad is led by a range of motives all linked to their plans for the future. The disclosing of informants educational and professional aspirations and the sought destinations where they wish to implement them, as well as prospective intentions with regard to their personal lives all contribute to and make up how homeland ties are shaped. When asked about her future plans A. is telling me that she would like to return to Europe and do a Master studying programme in Germany. She would like to learn German and is eager to continue studying in a city in Germany. (cf. A. 549-551) She really likes living abroad and has been discussing the topic several times with her parents. *"My parents would joke: 'If you stay abroad, but we can't speak the language, then we're gonna stay in our hometown.' And I say: But my dream, one of my dreams is to take my parents outside China to see the world, cause I don't think they have other chances."* (A. 582-586) A. would like for her parents to join her abroad. She would like for them to be able to see the places she has seen and enable them to live a life with her in another country. At the same time she says that it might be difficult to realise the dream because of the foreign language and the required financial means. D. has quite different future intentions and objectives. She says that upon finishing her studies, which was going to be in a few months, she would return to China and to her husband. (cf. D. 304). C. is as well telling me about her plans of returning to China after finishing her PhD

studies in Lyon. As she's the only child in the family, she explains to me that she is feeling the urge to take responsibility for them: *"So when they are still strong and happy I can allow myself to go around and see other places but it's fair to finally - to stay by their side."* (C. 343-345) Since she and her boyfriend have been in a long-distance relationship for the time she has been in Lyon, upon her return home she intends to marry him. She feels that after they passed this test it is time for her to marry him. (cf. C. 345-348) As to her professional goals she hopes to get a job at a university in China. As was the case in A.'s prospective plans, C.'s intentions are involving taking care of her parents and incorporating them into her plans for the future. As has been illustrated C.'s account about her next objectives is including major steps in her personal life.

As opposed to this, E.'s vision of how he plans on further proceeding in the future is predominantly oriented towards his educational and professional ambitions. After the second year of the Master programme he is currently doing, students are required to complete a year internship. If possible he plans on trying to find a suitable internship in France or in Europe. After finishing his studies in Lyon, he would as well like to gain working experience abroad and wants to try to find a job in Europe. His plan is to work for three to five years at a company in a European country after which he might return to China. On the other hand he's considering doing a second MBA programme in the United States, depending on how and whether it could further the development of his career. (cf. E. 477-482) Although he assesses that another MBA programme is not indispensible or absolutely necessary, he concludes that if it will enhance his professional opportunities he will try to find a programme to get a degree in the U.S. and work for a couple of years there. *"And finally I think I will go back to China. Yeah it's my final destination. Before that I may just try to accumulate some foreign experiences, like working abroad and doing studies in different countries."* (E. 482-484)

He adds that if he will return to China to settle down he will choose to do so in Guangzhou, the city in which he pursued his previous studies. He really likes the city and could as well imagine living there permanently. (cf. E. 487)

When asked about what B. is picturing her future to be like, she is talking about the steps she would like to take within the next couple of years. As opposed to E., B. is predominantly talking about her intentions for the near future. She is stressing her wish to learn German and to go to Germany. (cf. B. 215) But before she can do that she thinks it's necessary for her to further improve and master the French language perfectly. Therefore she would like to apply for a graduate school in France. Which city in France she would like to conduct further studies she says is not important to her. (cf. B. 330-331). *"That's what I want to do with my*

life, I just want to be a language learner" (B. 708) she exclaims with a small dry laugh, followed by an explanation of how her father would be opposing of this idea.

F. is expressing his high expectations for his professional career and future. He says about himself that in life he was always trying to reach higher goals. Even though he could already now have a good job in Lyon or in Beijing, he says that he wants to try to achieve more and is setting his goals higher. His enthusiastic and ambitious planning of future objectives is expressed in his projects for the near future. He is applying for a Master of Finance in Lyon, which would imply two more years of studying in Lyon. While he is not sure yet about whether it will be possible to realise that dream as he would also depend on his parents' (financial) support, he's informing me about his application for an internship he would like to do in Paris. During our last conversation in March 2014 he told me about having just completed the internship in Paris. His imagines his future to follow the following path:

"I plan to work for several years here, because I want to make my studies valuable. I want to have some abroad-experience, I think like most Chinese students here. But after that I'll go back to China, because all my relations are there. All my resources are in China. And my family is China. I have to go back [...]" (F. 1083-1086) As the majority of the informants, F. is as well evincing his intention to eventually return to China and coming to rest there.

6.7.1. Synopsis

Through the summarising and the comparing of young Chinese's prospective ambitions and accounts on what they imagine their future to be like, various conclusions can be drawn. Conformities in what the subjects under research deem important and of value in their future reveal certain major points hinting at how mobility and ties to homeland are planned to be negotiated in their future lives.

Educational aspirations and professional goals have been repeatedly expressed as domains of crucial importance to how Chinese sojourning abroad are intending to shape their future lives. Through enunciating their respective planned destinations, individuals have illustrated the various steps by which they intend to make their dreams come true.

Equally in its frequency and its ascribed relevance to academic and career projects, the ties connecting young Chinese sojourning abroad to their parents have turned out as a major theme in future considerations. While the wish to take parents out of China and have them

join their daughter abroad has been described, the scheme of returning themselves to a city in their native country has been expressed explicitly and more often.

Another factor which played into future decision-making are the personal relationships individuals are holding.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the brief illustrations of informants' regards on their future is expressed in the focus on two major fields of interest. This is next to academic and professional success, the effective maintenance of the relationship to one's parents by taking care of them, is constituting a core element of migrants thoughts on the future.

7. Conclusion

In the course of this thesis the question of how Chinese students in Lyon negotiate their ties to homeland through their mobility has been raised. Through the adducing of theoretical approaches and systematic collection of empirical data this research has tried to get to the bottom of how Chinese individuals' connection to their land of origin, mainland China, is shaped when living their mobile ways of life. In the course of empirical research central aspects of importance to the lives of young Chinese have been identified.

7.1. Central Aspects

The collecting of ethnographic data and its subsequent analysis has led to the filtering out of five major categories, through which an answer to the question of how migrants negotiate homeland ties is formulated. The five categories and their subsequent subchapters illustrate major points of how their life abroad is described by them. They illustrate circumstances expressed as important with respect to their migration and arrival in Lyon. As well, the categories point out the various motivations young Chinese hold and point to what they see as important in their lives at the moment, as what they wish for in the future. For the drawing of conclusions they shall be displayed again in compressed form.

The migration process and circumstances of migration play an important role in how informants' perceive their life in Lyon in this initial phase. Depending on the difficulties they had to face and how easy or hard it was for them to deal with them, adjustment to the new environment has been described in varying ways. What has been astonishing is that prior to actual arrival in France, the visa application process and its challenges have been initiating the generating of peculiar forms of myths, with respect to the selection processes of applicants. With two exceptions, the period of time of visa application in China, has been described as a strenuous period of time due to a number of reasons. First of all the application process is associated with the financial expenses of up to €700 and the necessity to prove being in possession of 60 thousand RMB. The economic aspect to the application process has not been expressed as an obstacle in the process, but it has been described as a factor putting additional pressure on the performance of students. The fact that applicants have to complete the whole application process in order to be told whether or not they have failed perhaps even towards the beginning of the process, has been expressed as a major strain in the procedure. While

going through the various steps of application, what informants described as the biggest obstacle in the process, was taking the application interview.

Whether through the tales of refused students from Zhejiang province or through the suggested proper dress code to convey most adequately the image of a student: it is through the circulation of these rumours that perceptions of refusal have become expressed in the accounts of informants. By blaming the unfathomable entity of "the French" or "French people" a first assessment of individuals' future host society is being enunciated. This first perception has been expressed in sentiments of rejection.

In contrast to that, quite a different story has been told by students such as C., who has been offered a Doctorate in Lyon. Contrary to the accounts of other informants, she describes having had someone who would take care for her of the tickets for the flight and all kinds of other administrative or organisational tasks. What is of particular interest with respect to her story is the difference in how the steps of gaining access to the life in Lyon has been described in totally different ways. Whereas C. emphasised the simplicity in the process within a couple of sentences, A. is going into the details of her experience of visa application and emphasises its many inherent hardships.

As has been illustrated in the chapter on French legal migration regulations, by introducing the *carte de séjour "compétences et talents" (*a visa granting particular advantages with respect to the duration of its validity and its possibility of releasing people from the obligation to sign the CAI), there are major differences in the ways people are able to enter France. Due to various reasons, being granted access to France can deviate strongly with respect to the required effort students have to make. What can be concluded is that the differences in how informants were able to get to France, in particular the disparity in the effort and trouble involved, caused for those meeting major obstacles for the creating of myths of selection procedures initiating sentiments of rejection, where in the case of the other it meant for a more or less unbiased arrival in France.

There are certain issues to the migration process and the adjustment to the new environment upon individuals' arrival in France that have been addressed repeatedly. The subject-area of language has been highlighted by young Chinese as a determining factor in their migration to Lyon. Difficulties in expressing oneself when attending classes and lectures, handling administrative tasks or simply making contact with local people in Lyon has been expressed as an impairment to migrants' life-quality and the generating of feelings of reclusiveness and loneliness. In different ways sentiments of foreignness have been brought up in the informants' stories of the time spent in Lyon. F.'s story on how he has noticed that in Europe

he is always first identified by being attached to the term "Asian" has been illustrating how discerned processes of othering can evoke in migrants sensations of alienness.

In other instances the impossibility to rely on 关系 *guanxi*-relations the way informants can in China, has been described as a major aspect of why life in Lyon can feel lonely to them.

The activities of communication networks, on the other hand, have been positively evaluated and highlighted by the majority of informants for their supporting role. Students have emphasised how the exchange of information prior to their moving to Lyon, while still engaged in the application process, as upon their arrival and throughout their stay continued to have favourable effect on how comfortable they feel in migration.

While accompanying individuals' through the activities of their daily lives and conducting interviews with them, one issue has been in particular elaborated on and referred to repeatedly: the ties to informants' parents. The bonds connecting subjects-under-research to their parents appear to stay strong and lose nothing of their prominence in young adults' lives, in spite of the distance. During interviews informants point out how, through their parents' support, they have been able to aspire educational goals and engage in transnational mobility. Whether they concern educational aspirations or the choice of the right partner, parents' consent on young individuals' intentions have been described as the prerequisite for their plan-makings.

Frequently young Chinese have been stressing the gratitude they feel towards their parents. At the same time a certain kind of concern has been depicted, even if not directly but through the stories about friends. The support of individuals' parents also seems to create a certain dependency. The circumstance that all of the informants constitute the only child in their family causes for them to strongly feel the responsibility that rests on them. As forecasts predict, Chinese singletons in future might have to take care and provide for their parents, grandparents, as well as their spouse's parents and grandparents, in addition to a child of their own. Drawing the balance of this circumstance means for Chinese singletons to grow up in awareness of the fact that their reaching of the professional goal of a job providing good income is not only expression of their personal ambitions, but even more so a necessity.

Many informants delineated their fear of simply passing a predetermined plan, their sojourn in Lyon often describing as a means of escapement from it.

"One can say that filial piety has been bent and channeled to serve the governmentality not only of the family but of global capitalism as well." (Ong 1999:127) Informants have been emphasising the circumstance that their parents invest everything and do everything in their power to enhance their child's educational and professional perspectives. The attainment of university education and reaching for ever-higher professional goals has been expressed as an

issue of utmost importance to them, always encouraged by their parents. Therefore, in "Education & Career" the prominence education has in young people's lives has been addressed.

In the chapter on the historical development of Chinese higher education the fact that at the time of informants' parents' youth students didn't have to pay for their education and upon graduation got allocated a job, has been stated. In the course of conversations the generational conflict arising from these many differences with regard to the circumstances under which individuals grow up, graduate and start out in the job market now and then, have been described. Informants explain how it can frequently cause conflict between parents and their children. F. emphasises how hard it was for him to persuade his parents to be able to go to Lyon to study. As he has already been in possession of a well-paid job in Beijing, his parents were at first opposing of his plan to go abroad. *"They have this kind of thinking in their mind: Find a good job and then spend all your life in that job. Being stable is the most important thing to them."* (F. 224-226) While otherwise the ambitious striving of their sons and daughters for ever higher educational and professional goals has been from a young age constantly encouraged, it appears that parents are not entirely prepared for the eventual implications of their upbringing.

Students have been stressing the pressure they are subject to with respect to reaching ever higher and better scores. Gaining educational experience abroad is increasingly seen as an integral part in order to be able to keep up in competition. The importance of being competitive in life has been stressed by the majority of informants. F. is cutting right to the chase of the matter by saying: *"You got more, you got positive - the more you get, the less your rival gets. So to Chinese people it's always this kind of situation to other Chinese people."* (F. 937-938) But students have pointed out that gaining entrance to the leading universities of the countries is not solely a matter of diligence and hard work. Several informants have illustrated the inequalities in young Chinese' ability to access educational resources.

The issue of how deployed zoning technologies imprint space with a certain meaning has been addressed in "Mobility through Education". As the state provides certain zones with a set of opportunity structures, he is at the same time creating disparity and inequality. In the course of interviews and conversations informants stress the unequal ability to access the renowned academic institutions located in the biggest cities of China. Differences in the university admittance quota are making it particularly hard, if not close to impossible for students from rural areas to gain access to China's elite universities.

Another issue that has been broached with respect to students' lives in Lyon are the ways in which the interaction between teachers and students differs from what informants are used to in classrooms in China. Individuals have explained the conflict they feel they're in when confronted with the difference in teaching style and expectations posed towards them in class in Lyon.

Subsumed in the chapter titled "Lifestyle" other major topics, which came up in the course of interviews and conversations are briefly broached. While the up to this point presented categories have been dealing with various aspects of young people's lives, so far none has been engaging with the personal lives of the subjects-under-research.

Therefore, towards the beginning of this chapter, the ways of how informants express the expectations that are put into their personal lives are depicted. When talking to informants, the period of time between the age of 20 and 30 has been described as not only being stressful with respect to the educational and professional goals that ought to be achieved, but even more so with regard to the partner that shall be chosen. In the course of our meetings, informants have shared with me stories of their personal lives including romantic relationships. Whereas one of the informants described being already married for years, others have confided in me stories of how they are frequently dating foreign men. With respect to this circumstance several interesting observations could be made. Where those informants involved with foreign men had no reluctance in talking about it, in the course of meetings it became at the same time quite clear that they would not want their parents to find out about it. Several informants have pointed out that their parents would strongly oppose to a relationship with a non-Chinese partner. When inquiring into why they would do so, individuals told me that they think the reason lies in the fact that parents are afraid a foreign partner might not have the same values as a Chinese one. The high divorce rate for example in European countries has been taken as an example why choosing a partner of Chinese origin would be a better choice.

Another interesting observation that could be made with respect to informant's age is that older subjects-under-research are in strong relationships or married, whereas those who are younger are single. With respect to the in "Great Expectations" elaborated on issue of the time by which Chinese men and women are expected to get married and start a family, these observations are of particular interest as they correspond with informants' accounts.

The second issue that has been broached through the category of "Lifestyle" are the ways in which Chinese migrants talk about politics. Talking about politics did not constitute one of the major conversational topics during meetings, but was usually briefly touched upon.

Students told stories about instances in which they had met incomprehension when talking about politics, whether to Chinese students on mainland China, for French students. Whereas one of the informants emphasised the fact that talking about politics was something he was always advised against, another one told me that she had been discussing political issues frequently with foreign students while she still attended university in Beijing.

An opinion all informants used to agree upon was that one-party rule as such was not called into question.

The final and last category that has been presented was the future plans and ambitions of the subjects of this research. In the course of this chapter the different plans Chinese migrants hold for their future lives have been introduced in short. Within this category certain tendencies could be made out.

In the course of conversations two major subject areas with regard to migrants' future ambitions could be singled out. They have been the most frequent topics addressed with respect to what informant plan on doing in the course of the years to come.

The first issue broached were the educational and professional ambitions students intend to realise in the future. Informants talked about their intention to find a job in Lyon or another city in France, to return for a Master studying programme or choose a second programme they could be doing in another country following the present one. In various ways the strategic element to the selection of places for the pursuing of studies or applying for internship has become apparent.

The second major topic with respect to Chinese migrants' future planning was the focus they put on incorporating their parents and their prospective wellbeing into the targets they set for themselves in the future. Taking care of one's parents has been enunciated as a task of vital importance. Refraining from doing so was described as "abandoning" the family.

Students may engage in transnational circuits and ought to make use of educational and professional opportunities while they are still young to upgrade the tradeability of their knowledge, but in the end returning to their parents in mainland China has been described as the set plan of the majority of informants. During interviews informants implied that this in the end is what is expected of them: *"Because we're the only child in the family, they don't want the child to go abroad and never go back after. And that happens actually, that happens."* (F. 229-230)

Another interesting detail with respect to migrants future ambitions is the fact of how romantic entanglements play into the setting of sought destinations for further attainment of knowledge. As arguable as the future plans of the youngest among the subjects-under-

research might be, it is an interesting fact that the nationalities of their foreign entanglements represent the foreign languages and nation-states they are eager to seek educational opportunities for.

7.2. Discussion

It is not this research's attempt on the basis of the gathered empirical material, to claim being able to make assumptions on the situation and life of Chinese migrants, or Chinese students, in Lyon in general. Much more what is being attempted is to convey glimpses of the life stories and life realities of six people of Chinese origin, sojourning in the city of Lyon in France, by showing how, through the way they live their life, they negotiate their ties to homeland. It is also important to note that the scope of this research only raises the subject. Much more research with regard to this subject area could still be done.

When looking at the empirical material and starting to categorise it, it became clear that there are a number of categories, which best capture what has been expressed by informants as important, and at the same time shows how mobility and connections to homeland are lived out. The five categories that have been presented above have been chosen and elaborated on as they illustrate in a spectrum of examples and stories, how individuals perceive of their migration and negotiate their sense of belonging. Through each one of the presented categories, different aspects have been shown, which are exemplifying how migrants deal with the ways in which they are connected to their country of origin. Many of the displayed conflicts informants are struggling with, have been vividly coloured showing how migrants are challenged by their mobility. What can therefore be concluded is that young Chinese individuals' mobility is involving them into simultaneously happening and ongoing processes of negotiating questions of home and belonging. Their sojourn in Lyon constitutes for most of the informants only a temporary stop on their movements and even if further transnational mobility is not pursued, informants' lives have already been, prior to their departure to Lyon, involved in internal migration in China and are likely to do so again.

What is therefore of much more representative value with respect to young Chinese adults' lives is how they constantly engage in processes in which they are resituating themselves, not with respect to the spatial conditions of a locality, but much more with respect to the plurality of relationships they conduct. The ties linking young Chinese adults to their parents are lying at the core of how individuals negotiate their connection to homeland. The in "Family and Filial Duty" presented ways of how the parents of young Chinese influence, encourage, steer,

but at times also prevent and stop their sons and daughters in what they are setting their minds on, shows quite clearly the prominent role they take up in their children's lives. As has been pointed out by means of empirical examples (as well as by Ong), as young Chinese take up their position in the nationwide competition for the reaching of ever-better scores and later on jobs, they become involved in the neoliberal ethos of self-reliability and entrepreneurialism. "Besides acquiring the habitus of continual striving, children, especially sons, are expected to collect symbolic capital in the form of educational certificates and well-paying jobs that help raise the family class position and prestige." (Ong 1999:118)

While parental ties have been expressed to a large degree as homeland ties and have therefore been highlighted for their importance and scope of impact, education, in particular higher education, has been identified as a further key subject in the matter. As has been broached in "The Role of Education", as it constitutes the springboard by which individuals' sojourn in Lyon has been enabled, higher education is lying at the core of this research' matter. "For many ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, both the well-off and not-so-rich, strategies of accumulation begin with the acquisition of a Western education, [...]" (Ong 1999:95)

When taking notice of the ways in which during conversations (see "Career Aspirations" E.) gained access to universities all around the world is listed in a taken for granted manner what resonates are the neoliberal strategies and the instrumentalist approach on education that have been illustrated in "Neoliberalism meets Higher Education" through Ong's approach.

In a similar way an interrogation into the empirical material on why migrants chose the city of Lyon for their educational and professional projects, brought to the fore answers that inherent a certain element of scheming. The most frequent answer to this question was the opportunity the city, one could as well say country, poses to them with respect to being able to learn the French language. Another reason that has been mentioned is that being in possession of a French visa enables migrants to travel to a large extent (see "French legal Migration Regulations") unrestrictedly within all the countries of the Schengen area. As Lyon is one of the biggest cities in France, Chinese students were as well inclined to choose studying in Lyon, for the offer of universities, but this reason did not constitute one of the first reasons when asked the question.

Nevertheless it can be stated that these Chinese migrants do take on active roles in the way they shape their environment and contribute to developments of urban life in Lyon. By making use of the opportunity-structures provided by local associations such as the CPU and through their consumer behaviours, by preferring to buy their groceries at the shops run by

owners of Asian descendant located in Guillotière District, they support urban structures of that neighbourhood. These examples show that Chinese migrants take part in shaping urban life in Lyon.

Looking at these noticeable aspects is of importance, as it is giving indication of how homeland ties are conducted and how mobility with respect to nation-states is "applied".

The connection of Chinese individuals to their country of origin can, of course, also be challenged by other means, for example through Chinese migrants' engagement with issues with regard to Chinese politics (see "Talking Politics"). In this way the relation to homeland can as well be subject to negotiation.

But nevertheless the identified key aspect with respect to the research question is represented in the ties Chinese subjects conduct to their parents and the filial duties involved in them. The mobility of the students, a light has been cast on in this research, can be determined as a kind of mobility that is (with exception to A.) predetermined to expire when the time has come and children feel they are needed by the side of their parents. Therefore it can be concluded that the mobility through which ties to homeland are negotiated, in the case of this research' is one, shaped to a large degree accordingly to parental ties.

The second major conclusion that can be drawn is that educational aspirations, as the precursors of careerism, make up the guiding principle of Chinese individuals mobility. The accumulation of knowledge and advancement of skills lying at the core of future considerations, are illustrating why and with what goals Chinese students have been plunging into transnational mobility. The highest variable in the movements of young Chinese adults might turn out to be the romantic relationships of young Chinese, for their element of unpredictability, has as well been observed in the field.

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9. Appendices

9.1. Table of Figures

9.2. Table of Abbreviations

CAI	Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration
CAIF	Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration pour la Famille
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPU	Coup de Pouce Université
EEA	European Economic Area
DILF	Diplôme Initial de Langue Française
DIRECCTE	Directions Régionales des Entreprises, de la Concurrence, de la Consommation, du Travail et de l'Emploi
DRI	Direction des Relations Internationales
IP	Internet Protocol
KTV	Karaoke Television
OFII	L'Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Integration
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMB	Renminbi
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrom
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol

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