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Home on the Move – New Chinese Immigrants to New Zealand as Transnationals

A thesis submitted to the University of Auckland in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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November 2010
Abstract

One of the most salient features of new Chinese migrants in recent years is transnational migration. The overall aim of this research is to investigate and understand Chinese transnational migration, based on a New Zealand context and the research focuses on new Chinese migrants from the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

This study has taken a longitudinal perspective to study PRC migrants’ transnational movements and looks at their transnational migratory movements as a progressive and dynamic process. It has examined PRC migrants’ initial motives for immigrating to New Zealand; the driving forces behind their adoption of a transnational lifestyle which includes leaving New Zealand to return to the PRC, moving to a third country or commuting across borders; family-related considerations; as well as their future movement intentions. The particular angle taken by this study is through exploring PRC migrants’ conceptualisation of “home”, citizenship, identity, and sense of belonging to provide a deeper understanding of their transnational migratory experiences.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were deployed to gather data. Qualitative interviews were conducted in multiple sites, including China, Australia and New Zealand. A quantitative online questionnaire survey was conducted globally via the World Wide Web.

Both the qualitative interviews and the quantitative online survey show that PRC migrants possess great transnational mobility potential. The transnational movements that many PRC migrants engage in are the result of a combination of personal/family-related reasons and macro-level economic-political driving forces. Even though many PRC migrants originally immigrated to New Zealand for non-economic considerations, economic-related reasons contributed significantly to the decision to engage in later cross-border movements. In addition, PRC migrants intend to keep strong transnational connections with their homeland – China, as manifested by their frequent homeward travels, their strong family and personal networks, their intensive financial activities and investment in China, and a strong sense of “being Chinese” and strong identification with China. It has been found that citizenship has no real direct effect on how PRC migrants identify themselves or their sense of belonging.
In theoretical and methodological terms, this research offers some important implications. Firstly, migration studies should take a long-term perspective by looking at migration as an on-going process, a continuation of an initial moving away from a homeland. Thus, a flexible and more inclusive research framework can be formed. Secondly, the exploration of migrants’ conceptualisation of “home” may open up an unconventional way of exploring how migrants’ identity is constructed, and may provide valuable theoretical grounding for the understanding of the dynamic process of transnational migration. Lastly, my personal experience of conducting this research tells how powerful some traditional migration theories are in interpreting some aspects of PRC migrants’ transnational movements. Some researchers in the field of migration studies passionately advocate that there is an urgent need of challenging the “old” migration theories; however, the real challenge that researchers face is how to tease out useful theoretical elements from both “old” and “new” theories and put them into use towards the research topic chosen.
Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the unsung heroes in this study – the participants. Without them, this thesis would not have been possible.

Sincere thanks go to my main supervisor, Professor Manying Ip and co-supervisor, Dr. Ward Friesen for their constant encouragement, kind support and guidance. I would like to thank them for spending valuable time to read my drafts and give me prompt feedback. I deeply appreciate my main supervisor, Professor Manying Ip, who guided me along my intellectual quest on migration studies and is my role model of an academic woman. Very special thanks go to my co-supervisor, Dr. Ward Friesen. As a human geographer and an experienced quantitative researcher, his inputs are valuable to improve the overall quality of my thesis.

For the most practical of reasons this thesis would not have been possible without the generous financial support of a number of institutions and organisations. This included doctoral scholarships from the University of Auckland and the Building Research Capacity in the Social Sciences Network (BRCSS II). The Asia:New Zealand Foundation and New Zealand Asia Studies Society fully funded my fieldwork in China and partly funded my fieldwork in Australia. The Social Policy Evaluation and Research (SPEaR) Linkage Fund, Ministry of Social Development provided funding support of setting-up of the online survey, which is an important component of my PhD research. My department - School of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Auckland also provided financial support for completing my fieldwork research in Australia and conference travels.

I would like to thank Professor Paul Clark, the former head of my department. He encouraged and guided me to engage into one of my PhD research-related publications in the *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*. I would also like to thank my friends Robert Didham, David Huang, Max Zhou and Yin Hang. All of them supported and helped me with my PhD research and thesis writing in different ways. I truly appreciate Robert Didham, a senior demographer in Statistics New Zealand for his valuable advice and input on interpreting
census data relevance to Chinese population in New Zealand. David Huang and Max Zhou used their personal networks to help me recruit interviewees. Yin Hang, my fellow PhD candidate, provided technical support to the final format of my thesis.

Lastly and most importantly, thanks also go to my family. I thank my parents and grandmother for their emotional supports from far away China. I am extremely thankful to my husband, Dr. Jun Lu, whose constant support has sustained me throughout the long journey of studying in New Zealand. I would also like to thank my daughter, Anni. I started my PhD just before her birth. Her growing-up parallels my journey of PhD thesis completion. I have learnt a life lesson from her of how to balance my role as a mother as well as a career woman. I thank her for both the joys and hassles she has brought me.
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Journal Article:


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Chapter One: Introduction – Approaching the Research Topic

1.1 A personal journey

Walking along the streets of Central Paris in November 2007, I told my husband that I missed home badly, to which he replied, “So do I”. While our conversation continued, both of us knew the place we were referring to as “home”. Like it or not, our perspective of home was determined by that place we recognised was the best place for our infant daughter to grow up and where we felt was the most suitable location for our personal aspirations as well as family needs at this stage in our lives. It quickly also became obvious that our perspective of “home” was quite different from the recurring perceptions of “home” for many immigrants. That perception was either a physical household in a particular geographic locale back in the homeland or a conceptual notion of what their national country was like (Basu 2004; Mallett 2004; Waetjen 1999; Wiles 2008). Our perspective of “home”, however, was not China - the place of our origin. It was not New Zealand - the immigration destination country we had chosen, even though our house was in Auckland. Parallel to recent discussions of the concept of “home” (Ahmed 1999; Blunt and Dowling 2006; Bowlby, Gregory and McKie 1997; Butcher 2002; Mallett 2004; Rapport and Dawson 1998b; Wiles 2008), “home” for us was more than a territorial attachment and overlapped/ an overlapping of the meaning of family. It was more likely a psychological concept - a safe and secure place or space where family members can truly relax and share both thoughts and emotions.

In this sense, even though our “home” is located in a particular geographic locality, that geographic locality does not represent our complete idea of “home”. We see our “home” as that space where personal, family, and social meaning are fully grounded. It is an emotional ‘place” or terrain that is there, irrespective of either physical household or geographical locations. Our conceptualisation of “home” is not a static but rather a dynamic process that involves seeking personal security and emotional peacefulness and/or making a private living space available where similar ideas and values are shared by family members. “Home” for us can be involved with movement and multi-located. It can be located in different geographic localities if reality requires us to move. Essentially, our conceptualisation of “home” is not
tied to the boundaries of a physical territory and a geographical dwelling; rather, it represents family unity, a sense of security and identity, and emotional belonging. A dwelling can be a physical carrier of our sense of belonging and security, but that physical location is not essential. As an ethnic Chinese, I know too that in Chinese culture, “home” can quite often mean where one’s elders are and what one’s roots are, which of course implies an original homeland from which people migrate and sometimes seek to return to eventually.

My memory returns often back to 2004, when I went back to my hometown to visit my parents for the first time after several years of continuous stay in New Zealand. It was also the first time that I travelled back to China on my newly acquired New Zealand passport. When my father picked me up at the airport, he greeted me with a very formal “Welcome home”. I felt warm, but odd. On one hand, it was wonderful to see my father and family. On the other hand, I was anxious, because I knew that the “home” I conceptualised at that time differed significantly from what my father referred to often. As many parents keep for their children, my parents’ place, a three-bedroom apartment, would always be open to me as my “home” where I could return and seek comfort whenever I needed it. Even though they certainly knew that I had my own life far away from them, a shared collective concept of “home” was really important to them. It was perhaps a kind of emotional comfort for them and gave them with a feeling of still holding me close as their only baby daughter, and affirmed their intimate connection and relationship with me. Yet for me, since my life had changed significantly while I was far away from the shelter of my parents, my concept of “home” was not the one I was used to calling “home”. I had gone to a new land, New Zealand, in 2000. I had completed my undergraduate and postgraduate studies there. I had set a new life course and thus re-examined my priorities, values, identity, and perceptions toward my homeland – China. This identity I re-examined and re-formed was a much more independent one from what my parents and family used to expect of me. I met my husband in Auckland, fell in love with him, married, and then we started our own family. More importantly, the time when I felt that I really had become mature was not while I was under my parents’ shelter, but rather when I stood on my two own feet. Therefore, my real “home” now is no longer that three-bedroom apartment in China owned by my parents. That three-bedroom apartment is only my old family home; defined perhaps now as my home away from home.
At that same time, I had read some of the literature that spoke of “home” and “homeland”. However, I knew that all of the academic theories and comments would be inadequate if I tried to use them to convince a traditional Chinese father that his daughter now conceptualised her “home” differently. During my one-month stay with my parents, I sensed that they recognised the changes in me in terms of life perspective, values and worldview. In their eyes, after living in a Western country for several years, I might not be as Chinese as I used to be or as they still expected. My father was particularly disappointed about my choice of acquiring New Zealand citizenship. For him, the relinquishment of my Chinese citizenship meant a rejection of identifying myself as a Chinese. He seriously reminded me that “you are a Chinese, and will always be” several times, to which I finally lost my patience and replied cynically, “I am a New Zealander, and my home is in Auckland”. I felt upset not because I really thought I was a New Zealander. Actually, I always will feel that I am a Chinese deep down. I was upset just because my parents, my closest family members, could not understand that I had gained new perspectives by being away from “home”, and yet still tried to impose what they thought to be right from my past on me. Afterwards, although I regretted my action and recognised that I had hurt my father’s feelings, I knew I should not disguise my true feelings, not even from him.

This time, however, as the chilly evening wind of Paris started to moan, I was once again certain about my sense of “home”, a reality that was distant from what my parents continuously wished that I embrace. This journey happened back near the end of 2007 when my husband had a business trip, and I followed him to Paris to have a holiday which I had looked forward to for a long time. Paris, the cultural and arts centre of Europe, is a place full of excitement, elegance and romance and attractive to everybody. We enjoyed Le Louvre, Notre Dame, the River Seine and the authentic French cuisine. Like many travellers, we were amazed by the charms Paris offered. However, throughout the days that we were there, we experienced many differences and prospects that were beyond our expectations and abilities to relate to easily. Walking along the streets, we felt we were total foreigners because of the language, the street culture, the manner of the restaurant waiters, and all sorts of small details that made up everyday life in Paris. Perhaps in the eyes of French, it was strange to hear a young couple of Asian appearance announcing that they were from New Zealand rather than from an Asian country. To be certain, Paris is not our home. We had never imagined we would miss Auckland so badly. Every day our conversation during dinner ended with a
discussion of how wonderful Auckland’s summer was. I told my husband that what I really wanted to do was go home to New Zealand, lie on the beach and enjoy the sunshine. That year, from what I can remember, the Paris winter was cold and windy, while I knew the summer in Auckland was long and full of sunshine. My family had to be separated geographically for a while because my husband went on a business trip to Europe and the U.S. and I headed back to China to do fieldwork for my PhD research on transnational Chinese migrants from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to New Zealand. Our baby girl stayed with my parents in my hometown of Chengdu.

After a two-week stay in Paris, I went to Chengdu and lived there for a week to prepare for the subsequent intensive field interviews with some return Chinese immigrants in Shanghai and Beijing who had obtained New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship but then returned to China to live and work. My husband, in the meantime, went to Philadelphia for lab training. Today of course, high speed jet travel made our journeys easy. After an eight-hour flight, my husband landed at his destination displayed his text message to my mobile, while I went back to Asia from Europe. After a 14-hour flight, my hometown, Chengdu, the inland capital city of Sichuan Province in Southwest China came into view. My past impression of it had been a locality that was smoky and crowded. Everything seemed to be unchanged now, apart from the newly built skyscrapers, motorways, tunnels, and subways. The ride into the CBD (central business district) where my parents’ apartment was located was joyful. I was very familiar with the dialect the taxi driver used and the jokes he made. Both the Westernisation and local signs in this city were a contrast and interesting. Mum talked about which of my favourite foods she had prepared for dinner, while dad talked about his plan for decorating the new house he had recently bought. However, the subsequent stay in Chengdu frustrated me. I was unhappy with the safety conditions for my baby girl in their household. I did what I could to improve the safety conditions with extensive furniture re-arrangement. I was also irritated by traffic jams, the driving manners of local people, awful parking at the supermarkets, and the restricted access of baby strollers in shopping malls. I was very critical about people’s behaviour and the everyday life in the city, despite it being my hometown. It was where I was born, brought up, and had previously felt so comfortable. The conversation between my parents and I also started to become difficult. I was not happy about my father’s requests to visit all the relatives of the paternal extended family one-by-one within just a week. He believed that visiting the elderly relatives of the family proactively
was expected and showed the proper manners that ought to be maintained by the younger generation. However, the preparation for my fieldwork was very intensive, and I expected my father to understand my commitment and allow me to make my research as my first priority and postpone family business until I returned from my fieldwork.

After all these confrontations, I quickly started to doubt whether I could really cope with all my trips around China and deal well with the complicated inter-personal relationships of Chinese society and be able to establish positive and harmonious relationships with my interviewees. After several years of being absent from Chinese society, my social skills might be off key. I might overlook important social rules and assumptions that govern interpersonal interactions. These were essential for me to conduct my fieldwork in China productively. More importantly, I wondered whether I could successfully conduct the fieldwork interviews in terms of fully understanding the return migration journeys that were pursued by many PRC migrants who used to reside in New Zealand.

Even though the economy of China is rapidly growing, the social and environmental conditions in China are not comparable to New Zealand. Why did the migrants leave New Zealand, the country of their choice? What propelled them to return to China? These were the two central questions of this fieldwork. I quickly realised that I was going through the so-called “reverse culture shock” caused by returning to a homeland where the reality could not meet one’s expectations. This reverse culture shock not only hit me in terms of my confidence toward my research; it also hit me in other ways and more than I expected. Indeed, by the time I landed in Chengdu, my hometown, which I had constantly longed for in my dreams, my vision of it had all but fractured. I was depressed because I knew I could no longer relate to this place and its people in the same way as I had before. The life experiences, expectations and memories, whether pleasant or not, had all been disrupted for me through the passage of time. I was depressed because I knew I was no longer who I had been; yet other people there still viewed me in the old way. I was also frustrated about the feelings of being so foreign in the place I had called “home”.

The “home” in my memory was all about familiarity, comfort, and intimacy. However, that “home” fell short of what I had envisioned before my return. I could not feel the very emotions I had longed for. I also noticed changes in my own worldview, especially when it
did not match the worldview of those around me. I wished I could bend myself to fit into the current scene rather than conflicting with it. I wished I could engage the locally lived world and my globally experienced world simultaneously. I noted that to re-enter China to live and work as a temporary returning migrant actually required me to smoothly and frequently pass across two different cultural worlds. However, I found it was very difficult to effect a seamless change between the Western world and a completely different world that was China. Certainly, Chengdu was not my “home” anymore; rather, it was just my “hometown”.

Aware of that discomfort and no time to reflect on my emotions and experiences, I headed to Shanghai and Beijing to start my fieldwork interviews with Chinese migrants who had returned to China from New Zealand. It quickly became apparent that there were important similarities between Shanghai, Beijing, and Chengdu. The booming economy, the busy atmosphere, and the Westernisation amidst the old parts of the cities were obvious and eye opening for me. I then started to understand the experiences my interviewees had been through because of my daily interactions with them. Actually, my own feelings at the outset of the journey during the research trip paralleled the experiences of my interviewees. The same depression, discomfort, insecurity, and uncertainty had all been unfolded and shared, reflecting the power relations that are today reinforced by globalisation. The experiences and perceptions that those individuals had had in New Zealand and China undoubtedly shifted from one angle to another, because of the perspectives that were available to those who had to view their original homes from a distance. By concentrating on getting to know my interviewees and experiencing these cities in China, I noticed my depression lifting, and I felt a reconnection happening. I also started to feel the power of the cities and could not resist immersing myself fully into them.

After about two months of fieldwork in Shanghai and Beijing, I returned to Chengdu for the Chinese New Year. Finally I had my own personal time to meet again my old friends, classmates, and colleagues. Some of them had also studied in New Zealand. Through daily interaction with them, I started to understand the dilemma they had before they left New Zealand and after they returned to China. With their encouragement and friendly company, I also started to go out more and re-explored the city that I had been so familiar with earlier. I became more tolerant and understanding of everything I experienced in my old hometown and started to feel comfortable there. The familiar network of friendships, lifestyle, even the
diet with all of their memories came back to me and seamlessly reached out to me from the past to the present. If toleration and understanding were now emerging, then they came from knowing again the physical places, but it was actually a result of knowing the people first. I observed them, listened to them and talked to them. Eventually, when this journey came to an end, I found that I was yet just one of them.

When I look back on this journey now, I realise it was not simply an academic research journey; it was a personal and emotional journey as well. It forced me to re-identify myself and constantly reminded me of my Chinese identity and where my heart truly belongs. For a while, I had been very ambivalent and confused about my Chinese identity. However, this research trip became a journey that inscribed that Chineseness firmly onto my identity. After nearly ten years in a Western country, I realised that my Chineseness is a perpetual feature of who I am. It is always and will continue to be as a significant part of how I identify myself. This re-confirmation of my Chinese identity took place as this research journey started in my homeland - China, paralleling my long-term immigration settlement in New Zealand and many transitions across the course of my life. Even now, although the issue of how I identify myself still bothers me sometimes, I no longer feel insecure about my true identity. Yet two core questions I asked my interviewees, “who are you” and “where is your home”, are still difficult for many people to answer, for globalisation is speeding up everywhere in this world and transnationalism essentially today must denote a different and newer meaning of “home” being split.

The beginning of this thesis took shape on my personal journeys in 2007 and 2008 from Oceania to Europe and then to Asia. First, this journey gave me new personal insight toward my overall doctoral research project. It heavily influenced the development of my personal ideas and my perceptions of the research topic. Through this journey, I obtained an emotional strength through which I could identify myself more confidently and comfortably as a first-generation migrant with a strong Chinese allegiance. This affirmation consequently contributed significantly to building my intellectual understanding of the research topic. Secondly, telling my story about my research trip to China offered me a unique opportunity to build social bridges with my interviewees. It is the similarities between these interviewees and me as first-generation migrants from the same country that led to my keen interest in this research topic. Finally, the shared experiences that occurred between the interviewees and
myself upon re-entering China gave a sense of practical reality to the concepts of transnational migration in the setting of globalisation. To be sure, I am Chinese, but I am also a New Zealander, and a female academic conducting research on transnational new Chinese migrants from the PRC. Perhaps after my PhD is finished, I will go to another country to further my career development just like those transnational migrants I met who embraced another stage of their lives. These factors do not necessarily mean that I consider myself an “insider”, but they also do not indicate that I am just an “outsider” in this research. Instead, I position myself as a researcher who is able to understand my participants more deeply from a distance by sharing the same cultural background, similar life experiences of re-entry, and status as first-generation immigrants.

My personal conceptualisation of “home” was involved in my research journey. It provided an entry point that paved the way for me to understanding more clearly the migrant identity in a transnational world. Within humanistic geography and more recently within feminist geography, “home” has been an important subject to study to understand human movement (Ahmed et al. 2003; Blunt and Dowling 2006; Blunt and Varley 2004; Pratt 2004). A number of scholars have used the notion of “home” as “a powerful motif” in their work to (re)locate the relationship between “home” and migration, and identity and belonging (Ahmed 1999; Blunt 2005; Butcher 2003; Mallett 2004; Wiles 2008). In the field of transnationalism, Al-Ali and Khoser point out that the relationship between migrants and their homes is always changing, and as such, that changing relationship is “a quintessential characteristic of transnationalism” (Al-Ali and Khoser 2002: 1). Blunt found that migrants or multi-locational individuals frequently experience home as being synonymous with identity (Blunt 2005).

In Chinese terms, the character home (jia 家) is analogous to family or a place of inhabitation where a family universe lies. The term is usually used in combination with other characters as phrases that can connote different meanings. For example, jiaxiang 家乡 means hometown, jiating 家庭 means family, jiaguo 家国 means homeland or national home. Even though these phrases carry different meanings, they all connote a meaning of belonging or emotional

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1 ‘New Chinese migrants’ in the New Zealand context is a term that usually refers to Chinese who immigrated to New Zealand after the introduction of the Immigration Act 1987, which abolished the “traditional origin” preference term that favoured British migrants.
attachment to managed objects or social units. In doing this research, I believe that the idea of “home” and its relevant interpretation and explanation actually structure the experience of migration and re-location of my researched subjects – PRC transnational migrants. The notion of “home” is heavily embedded into this research project. It is hoped then that the examination of the journey between “home here” and “home there” can provide the contours of a belonging space, and PRC Chinese transnational migration can thus be examined in a fresh and different way.

1.2 Gaps in the research and the targeted research cohort

I have chosen to study the “transnational migration of new PRC migrants”, what has been considered in the research to be one of the most salient features of new Chinese migrants (Hugo 2005; Ip 2000; Skeldon 2006). In the New Zealand context, Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and the PRC are three major sources of New Zealand’s Chinese immigrant intake after the enactment of the open-door immigration policy in 1987. These three groups plus other Chinese from other regions are all categorised as new Chinese immigrants. In most literature of New Zealand’s immigration studies, terms such as Hong Kong Chinese/immigrants, Taiwanese/Taiwan immigrants, and PRC Chinese/immigrants are often used to differentiate the different origins of New Zealand’s recent Chinese immigrants. Over the last two decades, the constant mobility of new Chinese migrants has attracted much academic attention; however, there is a clear research gap that can still be identified. First, the exodus of Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese that took place from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s was widely evidenced in certain immigration countries, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This exodus has been widely regarded as a response to the political fear surrounding the takeover of the former British colony of Hong Kong by the Chinese government and in particular the Chinese Communists (Ho, Ip and Bedford 2001; Ip 2003a; Skeldon 1994a; Skeldon 1994b; Skeldon 1996; Skeldon 2006). This large migration flow and its associated counter flow toward the homeland and step-migration toward third destinations has attracted much academic attention, and propelled detailed micro studies of the various manifestations of transnational migration strategies in these two related cohorts.
Considerable attention has been given to the settlement issues of these two migrant groups, their reasons for leaving their homeland, the process of their migration decision-making, their frequent commuting habits, and their future settlement intentions (Beal 2001; Chiang, Hibbins and Chui 2006; Ho 2003; Ho, Bedford and Goodwin 1997; Ho, Ip and Bedford 2001; Ip 2000; Ip 2001; Ip and Friesen 2001; Pe-Pua et al. 1996; Waters 2002; Waters 2005). Such research often provides rich data from detailed empirical studies conducted within certain migrant groups in a particular social setting. However, such research was largely limited to just research “snapshots” of the components for the scenario of transnational migration.

What is lacking still is a full picture of the landscape of Chinese transnational migration. Without enough longitudinal studies, the on-going patterns and continuing trends of transnational migration are still largely overlooked. For example, much research has focused on the “astronauting” strategy that many Hong Kong and Taiwan migrants adopted toward balancing family economic survival with the need for obtaining a foreign passport or for gaining their children’s education in a less pressured educational system. This phenomenon is evidenced as a short-term transnational strategy but only one of many manifestations of Chinese transnationalism (Ho and Bedford 2008; Huang, Yeoh and Lam 2008). It is fair to say then that the early literature on and the interpretation of Chinese transnational migration overlooks the full picture of what transnationalism really means. In this research, I propose a non-linear model for understanding Chinese transnational migration. Transnational migration is an on-going and continuing process, actually an extension of the initial migration of leaving the homeland, that is prompted by a combination of varied personal reasons and macro-level forces. Movement under this transnational framework is a circular cycle that follows its own logic of departure, arrival, and further later movement.

The second reason for conducting this research on PRC migrants is because of the size of this immigrant group in New Zealand and the relative paucity of data regarding the group in

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2 The term “astronauting” refers to the phenomenon that occurs among some new Asian migrant families, in which usually the wife and children stay in the immigration receiving country, while the husband returns to the Asian homeland to work to provide financial support and only make periodic trips to visit his family. The adoption of the “astronauting” strategy largely is one way to cope with the persistent frustration and dilemmas that confront many well-qualified professionals and business entrepreneurs who unable to find suitable employment or business opportunity in their new country.
academic immigration studies within the New Zealand context. Unlike the immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan, who first arrived in the early 1990s, the PRC immigrants’ arrival in significant numbers began in the mid-1990s. By that time, the number of immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan had already dropped sharply because of a combination of immigration policy changes in 1995 and the onset of the Asia economic crisis in 1997 (Ip 2003b). From that time on, the number of PRC immigrants to New Zealand climbed rapidly, and the PRC became one of the top sources of New Zealand’s overall immigrant intake (See Figure 1.1). Using the most recent data from the New Zealand Immigration Services (NZIS), Figure 1.1 shows that more than 10,000 immigrants from each of 16 counties/regions gained residency approval from 1987 to 2009 and that Great Britain and the PRC were the top two contributors. In terms of absolute numbers, only Britain has a higher number of nationals accepted by New Zealand as permanent residents since the Immigration Act of 1987 came into force (Ip 2006b). The data from the most recent 2006 census also shows significant immigration arriving from the PRC (Figure 1.2).

Although the increase in the “China born” cohort was dramatic, any study of this cohort appears to be limited within the New Zealand’s national boundary. A few micro-level studies on immigrants from the PRC have been conducted, such as Henderson’s research on the New Settlers Programme, which looked at PRC immigrant English language proficiency and their generally unsuccessful employment experience in New Zealand (Henderson 2003; Henderson, Trlin and Watts 2001; Henderson et al. 1997). The most recent research on PRC immigrants used a transnational approach to explore PRC immigrant return movement to China (Ip 2006b). Thus, there remains a clear research gap in the understanding of New Zealand’s second-largest cohort of immigrant residents.

With their distinctive Chinese cultural heritage and the dynamic current eco-political position of China, PRC new migrants have significantly different characteristics from other Chinese migrants in terms of their motivation for migration, settlement strategies, movement patterns and future settlement intentions. One of the most salient features of many PRC new migrants not yet scrutinised closely is their constant mobility. In recent years, similar to migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan, PRC migrants have demonstrated considerable transnational
mobility. A recent report from the Department of Labour shows that PRC migrants are 10th on the long-term absence list, with 23.2% absent from New Zealand for 6 months or longer at the survey point of 2007 (Merwood 2008: 122). The immediate question arising here is where they are and whether they have returned to their places of origin or moved to another country. As a part of a worldwide trend of ethnic Chinese people on the move, the initial movement of PRC immigrants to New Zealand and their subsequent movement elsewhere both connect to the recent liberalisation of the New Zealand Immigration Act of 1987, the changing economic and political atmospheres in New Zealand and the PRC, and the worldwide globalisation process.

![Figure 1.1 The Top 16 countries (regions) of origin for New Zealand permanent residents. Only countries (regions) with more than 10,000 approvals are listed here (Source: New Zealand Immigration Services).](image)

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3 Long-term absence in this report is defined as: on the Department of Labour survey day in 2007, a migrant had spent a period or periods of time overseas for more than six months after his/her arrival as a resident.
In the above section, I briefly examined the development of the research on Chinese transnational migration and identified certain research gaps in this field in terms of both approach and focus. It is hoped that this current research can address the paucity of the literature and provide a critique with reference to the New Zealand local context for the literature surrounding transnationalism. In this way, this study will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary Chinese transnational migration and its changing characteristics.

4 In 2006, there were 147,567 Chinese living in New Zealand. Just over half (77,157 or 52.29%) born in China. The second largest group were New Zealand-born Chinese, who numbered 32,112 (21.76%). Among other overseas-born Chinese living in New Zealand, 10,638 (7.21%) were born in Taiwan; 6,705 (4.54%) were born in Hong Kong. 20,955 (14.20) were born in other overseas countries or did not specify a birthplace.
It is crucial to establish a working definition at this stage and a delineation of individuals who are or are not the targeted research cohort. The targeted research cohort is new Chinese migrants who arrived in New Zealand from the PRC after the review of New Zealand immigration policy in 1986. The removal of traditional source country bias in favour of selection based on personal merit, qualifications, and financial and entrepreneurial contributions to New Zealand, opened doors to increased immigration from Asia, especially from Southeast and East Asia. Qualified participants are first-generation adult migrants from the PRC over the age of 20 years who have obtained either New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship. Chinese international students were not included in this research. All participants grew up and were educated in Mainland China, but chose to immigrate in their adulthood to New Zealand, a country dominated by European culture.

“Transnational” is another core component used to determine who should be involved in this research. It is actually a broad term, which essentially emphasises the non-permanent, multi-locational, and constant mobility patterns of migrants (Hugo 1997; Hugo 1999). Similar to Hugo, four criteria are used to define transnational Chinese migrants (Hugo 2006). To be deemed a transnational, participants must meet at least one of the following criteria: 1) they have demonstrated constant geographic mobility or have employed non-permanent, multi-locality transnational strategies to meet their needs during their immigration processes; 2) they keep a close relationship with the homeland or immigration destination country (if they have returned to the place of origin); 3) some of their immediate family members are scattered in two or more countries; 4) their family’s transnational practice has persisted for at least two generations.

1.3 The research approach

Recent Chinese migrants, as Ip and Friesen argue, are neither “settlers” nor “sojourners” (Ip and Friesen 2001). The former term indicates a one-way migration from the country of origin to the immigration destination country followed by permanent settlement (Yang 1999). The latter term usually refers to the historical pattern of overseas Chinese during the gold-rush years who made a living overseas as long-term labourers without organising any
permanent residence and always expecting an eventual return to the homeland for retirement (Yang 2000). However, many of the new Chinese migrants do not fit precisely into either of these categories because of their constant mobility. Ip points out that there is an increasing number of migrants who behave in a pattern that is a mixture of migration models (Ip 2000). For example, migration to any particular host country is quite often the beginning of a “step-migration” to a third destination. Even for those Chinese who recently returned to China, their re-settlement in the homeland may not be permanent; rather, it may be only a periodic visit or stay followed by further movement.

This migration trend requires a shift in the traditional approach to understand the patterns, trends, and reasons for these migrants to stay in the country of immigration relatively permanently, return to the places of their origin, continue commuting between place of origin and immigration destination country, or further immigrate to a third country. Therefore, this research proposes a non-linear approach for examining Chinese migrant mobility. “Return migration”, “step-migration” or frequent commuting between different countries is only one part or phase of Chinese migrants’ on-going transnational trajectories and the varied manifestations of their multi-locational transnational characteristic.

Previous research tended to focus on individual migrants, especially principal applicants (PA), to investigate their transnational aspirations and future movement intentions, while other family members who might have a significant influence on the decision-making processes are often overlooked. The particular approach employed in this research, however, shifts its focus to look at individual transnational Chinese migrants in their family context. This research recognises the significant influence coming from family that may govern decision-making during the migration and re-location processes. The mobility pattern of these Chinese transnational migrant families is dictated by the needs of various family members at different stages of their own life cycles. For example, young adult migrants, either with their immediate families or not, often came to New Zealand as principal applicants. Later they found that job opportunities were more abundant in a third country or in their homeland where they had accumulated considerable social networks and economic and cultural capital. This realisation often determines their further movement to a third country or the return to their country of origin. Homeward movements are often necessitated by the fact that aging parents require long-term care because of declining health. For the children of returning
Chapter One

Chinese migrants, once they reach school age, many of their returnee parents consider bringing them back to New Zealand for their education because the education system in New Zealand is more stimulating and more liberal. This educational perspective may also produce a family split where one spouse stays in New Zealand to supervise the children while the other works outside New Zealand to support the family financially. The older generation, usually the parents of the principal applicants, might go to New Zealand to enjoy their retirement in a relatively peaceful and less pressured environment or be asked to come to New Zealand to look after their grandchildren. Quite often, when their adult children are driven to return to their country of origin by the economic attractiveness of the homeland, they will instead stay in New Zealand. They no longer like or need a bustling urban atmosphere, New Zealand’s peaceful environment is more suitable for them.

Of all of these possibilities, it is important to recognise that family units may be geographically split or extended over different continents and yet remain “a family” in the truest essence of the word. Further, where individual members of a family are located can have a strong impact on the mobility patterns of other members. Most significantly, where the older generation is located will affect the younger generation’s sense of “home”. This often impacts the younger generation’s decision to re-locate or undertake an ultimate longer term “settlement”. Children’s education has also emerged as a particularly important factor that provides a strong impetus for families to go transnational (Waters 2005).

Taking these factors into account, instead of looking at each individual migrant as a research unit, this research considers families as the major units of investigation. In doing so, the qualitative interview questions (Appendix 1 Interview Questions) and the quantitative questionnaire (Appendix 2 Online Survey Questions) that used to collect data in this research were designed to check the location and movement of three generations in the family: the principal applicants and their spouses, the parents, and the children. This means of asking questions remedies the importance of previously overlooked family factors. Instead of asking the interviewees’ own intentions, commitment, and the degree of satisfaction with their decision-making, this study asks how decision-making takes place within the family, how the movements of family members differ from each other, and what the input of other family members was in the decision-making processes.
Although the detailed research methodologies will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four, it is worth highlighting here the general characteristics of the methodologies. In summary, both orthodox qualitative in-depth interviews and quantitative on-line methods are used, drawing on widely used and tested approaches in the social sciences, anthropology and human geography (Crang 2002; Crick and Geddes 1998; Flick 2002; Fontana and Frey 1994: 361; Hay 2005; Hughes and Sharrock 2007: 93; Robson 2002: 3-15; Schweizer 1998: 41-49; Trift 2000). Guided by the multi-method research approach, the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods for this research was determined by the belief that multiple data collected by using different strategies is “likely to result in complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004: 18). In other words, the qualitative method provides rich and in-depth insights, while the quantitative method provides hard and general data (Sieber 1973). To illustrate the character of transnationality and the multi-locational movements of PRC new migrants, multi-sited ethnographic interview (Hannerz 1998; Marcus 1995) was employed to collect the qualitative data from different PRC transnational migrants who pursued different transnational trajectories. The quantitative online survey was virtually multi-locational because it targeted Chinese immigrants with New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship worldwide.

1.4 Research aim, objectives and hypotheses

The overall aim of this research is to investigate and understand Chinese transnational migration. This research is based on a New Zealand context and focuses on new Chinese migrants from the PRC. It examines their initial motives for immigrating to New Zealand; the driving forces behind their adopting a transnational life style, including leaving New Zealand to return to the PRC or move to a third country, or commuting across borders; family-related considerations; and future movement intentions. The research also focuses on an exploration of PRC transnational migrants’ conceptualisation of “home”, citizenship, identity, and sense of belonging. The more specific objectives are the following:
1. To understand transnational PRC migrants’ initial motivation to migrate to New Zealand and how decision-making takes place in their families;

2. To explore the driving forces of the migrants’ return to the homeland or stepping to a third country, as well as the opportunities and challenges faced during these transnational movements;

3. To identify the influence of the consideration of family as a unit on their decision-making processes;

4. To analyse their conceptualisation of “home”, citizenship, identity and sense of belonging.

5. To analyse and provide a critique, with reference to the New Zealand local context, of the literature surrounding transnationalism.

6. To establish ways that a combination of insights from this research and the previous literature can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of transnational migration, and thus drawn together for critical interrogation.

The research hypothesises that the forces determining the movement of new Chinese migrants from the PRC are multi-layered, and it is far too simplistic to try to examine these forces in the traditional model of “permanent settlement”. The transnational behaviour of new Chinese migrants is instead associated with a variety of macro and micro factors and the forces of globalisation and economic and political transformations in both New Zealand and China, the “Greater China” region and beyond. Out of necessity and/or out of choice, new

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5 The idea of “Greater China” is one of those products derived from speculation on the re-emergence of China as a powerful actor in world politics and economy. There has been no precise definition of the concept. Whether the term should cover Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and all of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) or only parts of it, depends on which aspects are emphasised in a particular context. If this term derives from a political perspective, it may refer to a future unified China when Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and the PRC are brought together. If this term is from an economic perspective, it may only refer to the Southern coastal provinces, Hong Kong and Taiwan, which represent the South China Economy Periphery. If this term is from a cultural perspective, it may refer to the tradition of Chinese civilisation and what has transformed that culture in modern
migrants will employ multi-locational strategies to suit the different stages of their own life cycle, as well as the particular needs of their family members. This research also hypothesises that family is no longer a tight integral unit in contemporary immigration flow. Family members are spatially scattered, but they remain connected by only loose, yet resilient, networks. Particular needs and family links across continents and likely dictate the locations of individual family members.

1.5 Positioning the thesis

This research proposes then that the kaleidoscopic facets associated with contemporary Chinese immigration have been frequently examined, but under-theorised. The traditional approach, such as neo-classical economics\(^6\) and the new economics of migration\(^7\), which regard migration processes as economically driven, are inadequate to explain the complex phenomenon of contemporary Chinese immigration. While permanent migration has been an enduring feature of immigration practice, transnational migration seems to be more in line with the multi-faceted nature of contemporary Chinese migration. As discussed earlier, the complexity of current Chinese immigration to New Zealand requires a shift in approach to understand the migratory movements of the researched cohort.

This thesis also takes shape within a growing body of literature on transnationalism. With the size of current migration flows and the extent of homeland and destination linkages, transnationalism deserves new significance in any understanding of immigration (Bartley 2003; Spoonley and Macpherson 2004). As Hugo suggests, through the first decade of the twenty-first century, the importance of “temporary” migration, as distinct from the classic times. In this way, many ethnic Chinese now residing abroad might find this idea of a cultural “Greater China” more possible to identify with quite easily.

\(^6\) Neoclassical economics assumes that people move permanently abroad to maximize their lifetime earnings. The concept focuses on differentials in wages and employment conditions between countries and also on migration costs.

\(^7\) New economics of migration conceptualises migrant movements as temporary measures designed to overcome market deficiencies in the homeland and undertaken as a household decision to minimise risks to the family income.
“settler” migration of the previous century, will become ever more obvious to researchers and policy makers (Hugo 1999). In the particular case of focusing on the new Chinese migrants in the New Zealand scene, the powerful forces of globalisation seem to be complicating their permanent settlement in a local society. The phenomenon of many of these newcomers’ keeping a tie to their homelands or with the trans-Pacific region is very much alive and actually a current facet of world economic trends and technological advancements that range beyond the borders of individual nations and affect communities in broadly similar ways.

The mobility of new Chinese migrants also associates with the economic, social, and political transformations that have occurred in both New Zealand and the countries of origin for these new Chinese migrants. On the one hand, the strength of the economic and political development in “Greater China” seems to place powerful strings on these migrants, pulling them back to Asia (Studwell 2003; Wang, Wong and Sun 2006; Zeng and Williamson 2003). This characteristic is not only witnessed in New Zealand, but also in other countries of immigration such as the United States, Canada, and Australia (Hugo, 2005). On the other hand, New Zealand’s economy “has turned about from a highly protected economy toward one of the most open market economies” (Lidgard, Bedford and Ho 1995: 16). It is characterised by extensive overseas linkages in addition to high export dependency, which has significantly impacted patterns of international migration, including Chinese migration. Moreover, the increasing competition for skilled migrants, often from much larger economies, will ensure that New Zealand remains relatively low on the list of priorities for potentially long-term high-skilled settlers. Short to medium-term residents will increasingly dominate its skilled immigrant flow (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2000: 29).

New Chinese migrants are a very mobile social group. They share similar characteristics to many other new immigrant groups, particularly middle-class professionals. They are young, highly educated and trained professionals, technocrats, or business entrepreneurs. Their transferable skills and internationally recognised credentials make it easier for them to develop transitional careers and multi-locational lives. Therefore, New Zealand might be a place where they undertake a relatively short stay. It is also unrealistic to expect that these immigrants will necessarily show a great “loyalty” to New Zealand, as evidenced in a long-term residence intention.
Apart from the contradiction between the traditional concept of “immigrant settler” and contemporary “transnational migrant”, there is another contradiction to consider when examining immigration within the family context. The traditional assumption is that the family is always an integral unit, even when it moves. However, the recent transnational approach adopted by many migrant families challenges this assumption and suggests that locations of family individuals are probably more likely dictated by particular needs at a certain stage of career development and family links stretch across continents (Chan 1997; Huang, Yeoh and Lam 2008; Waters 2005; Yeoh, Huang and Lam 2005). Ip observed that many new Chinese migrant families in New Zealand have both their immediate family members and their extended family members scattered around the cities of the Pacific Rim (Ip 2000). She argues that such a phenomenon “is highly significant and has far-reaching implications for the future of the diaspora network…An optimistic view is that the long-term future of many new Chinese diasporic centres, New Zealand among them, could develop into linkage points of the overseas Chinese network…In economic terms, it means the possible development of business networks linking New Zealand to economic centres of ‘Greater China’… ” (Ip 2000: 10).

In summary, migration is a result of the behaviour of individuals; and equally, it has also an aggregate social form. Therefore, migration should be analysed not only at the individual level, but also at the family and broader social group levels, depending on what emphasis one gives to the key determining factors. With the on-going trend and complexity of contemporary Chinese immigration to New Zealand, as discussed, it is necessary then to develop an approach for studying contemporary Chinese immigration to New Zealand and explore the specific factors that do affect the movement behaviour of Chinese migrants within their family context.

1.6 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters organised into four parts: The first part includes the first two chapters and provides a contextual backdrop. The first introductory chapter is followed by a discussion of the contemporary trend for Chinese migration to New Zealand
from early 1990s onwards with an emphasis on migration from the PRC. The discussion traces the shifting approach to migration in both sending countries (i.e. China) and receiving countries (i.e. New Zealand). China’s changing policy perspectives regarding international emigration since the late 1970s and its changing geo-political circumstances has resulted in Chinese nationals being able to participate in international migration movements. New Zealand’s approach has shifted since 1987 from a highly-selective policy based on race and national origin to one that approaches migration as rational economic subjects within a neo-liberal regime of profit. This policy change opened the door to migrants from a wider region, especially immigrants from Asian sources.

The second part of the thesis (Chapters Three and Four) offers a theoretical and methodological framework for the analysis and the discussion. The key theoretical assumptions that inform and guide the research are outlined in Chapter Three. They are based on a principal literature review of transnationalism as the theoretical framework for understanding the practices and experiences of transnational Chinese migrants from the PRC. Considerable attention is given to tracing the original theoretical articulation of this theory, its conceptual refinement, theoretical reformulation, and recent development in relation to those issues immediately associate with transmigration, such as citizenship, identity, sense of home, and belonging. The insights obtained from this literature review are then integrated into the discussion of how the theory of transnationalism in migration studies is relevant to and used in this research project. Chapter Four introduces the methodological approach, which consists of both the qualitative and quantitative techniques used to collect the data and arrive at an overall precise understanding of the research topic.

The third part of the thesis (Chapters Five and Six) presents the results from the two components of substantial research already conducted. Chapter Five draws on multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork interviews in China, Australia, and Auckland with return Chinese migrants, Chinese who stepped into Australia, Chinese who commute between New Zealand and China or other places frequently, and Chinese who have had no prolonged absence from New Zealand, but have kept strong ties with immediate migrant family members outside of New Zealand. Chapter Six shifts the research approach from in-depth qualitative interviews to a quantitative online anonymous survey of PRC Chinese migrants. It intends to ascertain participants’ intentions of staying or going, motivations of transnational movements, future
movement intentions, and how committed these migrants are to their identity and sense of belonging. It also aims to discover precise factors that may influence their transnational movements.

The final part of the thesis (Chapter Seven) draws together the contextual and theoretical discussions offered with the data presented in the third part of the thesis and delivers a discussion and a conclusion. Chapter Seven offers summarising remarks based on the most significant findings of the research. Concluding this thesis, Chapter Seven also discusses the implication of this research, and the insights gained from the analysis for use in further scholarly research within the field of transnational migration.
Chapter Two: Transnational Migration - New PRC Immigrants to New Zealand

Chinese immigrants have made up a significant part of the post-1987 immigrant intake of New Zealand after the enactment of the Immigration Act 1987. Of the new Chinese immigrant intake, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) are the three main contributing sources (Ho 2003). Immigrants from the PRC are the most recent arrivals. Unlike the immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan who made their presence felt from the early 1990s onward, the presence of the PRC immigrants in significant numbers was later (Ip 2006b). Most started to arrive in the mid-1990s, and their number increased rapidly in the late 1990s to make the PRC become not only the top contributing region for New Zealand’s Chinese or Asian immigrant intake, but also one of the top sources of New Zealand’s overall immigrant intake (See Figure 1.1). In recent years, PRC immigrants have shown a strong tendency toward return migration and trans-migration (Ip 2006b), just like their Hong Kong and Taiwan counterparts. These movements are infused with the changing geo-economic situation in both China and New Zealand, and also inseparably connected to globalisation processes happening throughout the world.

The objective of this chapter is to illustrate who these new PRC immigrants are and how this cohort is distinguishable from other ethnic Chinese in New Zealand in terms of time of arrival, migration patterns, and demographic structure. Based on the China-born\(^8\) specific data from Statistics New Zealand and the NZIS, this chapter specifically differentiates PRC migrants from other new Chinese immigrant groups from Hong Kong and Taiwan and provides the background to answer certain of the questions raised in this thesis.

First, a brief overview is provided for the migration-related policies of both the immigrant sending country (i.e. the PRC) and receiving country (i.e. New Zealand). Since migration is often regarded as a product of discrete pushes and pulls because of changing geopolitics in

\(^8\) It should be noted that “country of birth” is the category used for the national census, while NZIS data uses “country of origin/citizenship”. A small proportion of “China-born” arrivals may hold passports from Taiwan, Hong Kong, or Southeast Asian countries.
both the receiving and the sending countries (Liu and Norcliffe 1996; Ong 1992; Zolberg 1989), the perspectives of migration-related policies of both countries should be examined. New Zealand immigration policy after 1986 was conditioned to the arrival of new Chinese immigrants, while changing policy perspectives toward international emigration since the late 1970s in the PRC propelled immigration flows out of that country. I will first consider the conditions in the sending country (i.e. the PRC) - its policy perspectives regarding emigration and the changing geopolitical circumstances resulted in Chinese being able to participate in international migration movements. I will then turn to review recent immigration policy changes in New Zealand. Those policy changes are analysed in more detail elsewhere (Bedford, Farmer and Trlin 1987; Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005; Henderson et al. 1997; Ip 1995; Trlin 1997; Trlin and Kang 1992); however, some significant changes, especially those relevant to Chinese immigration, are outlined and sketched here to provide an overview of their effects on the new Chinese immigrant inflow. Those policies are then reviewed alongside an examination of the increasing or decreasing size of the ethnic Chinese population in New Zealand using the national census data from 1986 to 2006. In this way, the influx of new PRC immigrants can be placed in the context of policy changes since 1987 and the significance of New Zealand’s immigration policy change on Chinese immigration is made known.

Secondly, the current characteristics of the PRC immigrant cohort will be illustrated by examining the most recent statistical data from the New Zealand Census 2006 and NZIS. A critical analysis of the relevant academic literature on new Chinese immigration into New Zealand will also be carried out to assist in this overview. The focus here is to exhibit the demographic structure, arrival conditions, and education and employment situations, as important indicators of Chinese settlement outcomes and socio-economic integration within the wider society.

The final part of this chapter highlights the further movement intentions of many PRC immigrants. In the case of New Zealand, their further movement is inseparable from the changing economic-geographical relations between China as the immigrant-sending country and New Zealand as the immigrant-receiving country. Such migratory movements are also a result of the general globalisation of international migration systems.
2.1 Migration policies of receiving and sending countries

2.1.1 The PRC perspective on international emigration

Conditions in countries of origin play a decisive role in the migration process. In the case of the PRC, policies regarding overseas Chinese are well documented and researched (Biao 2003; Guerassimoff 2000; Nyiri 2002; Wang 1985; Zhuang 2006), but little attention has been paid to how Chinese authorities manage actual migration issues. This section presents a brief discussion of the conditions regarding the PRC’s changing social, economic, and political situations and that country’s policy towards international emigration. Individual Chinese migrant perspectives and motivations to immigrate to New Zealand are also discussed. The recent favourable economic development and social changes in the PRC may influence immigration decision-making. On the one hand, these economic and social conditions have the potential strength to hold its residents in the PRC; on the other hand, these same economic and social conditions may provide people with more financial and social capital available for migratory mobility. Since there is limited literature on the topic of the PRC’s policies and perspectives on emigration issues, the discussion that follows applies information from a few research articles and the author’s personal empirical observations and knowledge of contemporary Chinese migration from the PRC.

Compared with Hong Kong and Taiwan whose people started moving overseas in the late 1960s, the PRC came to the migration arena rather late (Ip 2006b; Skeldon 1996; Skeldon 2004). As Liu and Norcliffe point out, the reason was geopolitical (Liu and Norcliffe 1996). Even though China was the major source of Chinese immigration historically, the PRC, a nation-state, established by the Chinese Communist Party after the Communist revolution of 1949, imposed extreme restrictive control over the international movements of its citizens. Like other Communist countries in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Cold War geopolitics characterised by East-West/socialist-capitalist confrontations, led the PRC to pursue strict border control and be a closed society with rare contact with the West until the late 1970s. Overseas travel was only possible if it was officially sanctioned. Such politicised border control blocked nearly all direct international emigration (Biao 2003; Liu and Norcliffe 1996). The early years of the Cultural Revolution (from 1966 to 1969) further isolated the PRC from the rest of the world. There were no new diplomatic relations...
established between the PRC and other countries, and even worse, already established foreign relations were lessened and thus damaged. This situation literally meant the absence of official channels that could link the PRC with immigrant-receiving countries (Liu and Norcliffe 1996).

That situation started to change in the late 1970s. The PRC government allowed students and scholars to study overseas beginning in 1978, but in the hope that they would still return to China. Most of these students were either on state scholarships or under institute sponsorship (Gittings 1989: 248; Luo, Guo and Huang 2003: 89). After the implementation of economic reforms and Open-door policies in 1979, the market-oriented economic system gradually opened China to contact with the outside world and freed its people’s spatial movement, resulting in a gradual acceleration of international migration. The reason for this change was also geopolitical. With the recognition of Mao’s foreign policy as perilous, a broken relationship with the Soviet Union, and the serious damage caused by the 10-year Cultural Revolution, the PRC was forced to shift its foreign policy and seek an improvement in Sino-West relations and put an end to its isolation (Liu and Norcliffe 1996). There were also significant changes in the Chinese government’s perspectives on emigration. Biao described the change as “a trend toward neutralization” (Biao 2003: 22). With this departure from a politicised perspective toward emigration, emigration is increasingly treated as a matter of individual choice and one that is “unrelated to the person’s role in the state system” (Biao 2003: 22). Going to a capitalist country is no longer treated as a “betrayal” or politically incorrect.

Throughout the early 1990s, the Chinese government relaxed its restrictive control over international migration, producing a wave of Chinese people moving overseas. In 1981 the Chinese government formally recognised self-financed overseas study for the first time. That recognition produced a wave of student migration. Most were postgraduate-level students whose academic performance was good enough to secure scholarships at overseas universities (Biao 2003; Luo, Guo and Huang 2003; Skeldon 1996). This new wave of student migration led to settlement later in some cases, but it is fair to say that direct settlement migration rarely happened immediately. The vast majority of the PRC population then had not yet been touched by international migration, and there was no official regulation that allowed Chinese citizens to go overseas. From a practical point of view, these were
significant blockages in terms of encouraging Chinese nationals to migrate. To obtain a passport, one had to go through a long and complex process. Permission had to be sought from a variety of authorities and sources, and personal contact (Guanxi 关系) was crucial in charting such a course through the complex bureaucracy (Skeldon 1996).

The official trigger for the increasing migration flow was the adoption of the Emigration and Immigration Law in November 1985. It guaranteed the rights of Chinese citizens to travel outside China and allowed those who wished to leave the country for private reasons to do so (Liu and Norcliffe 1996; Skeldon 1996). Together with the transformation in immigration policy that was occurring in some developed countries in North America and Australasia, migration from the PRC was reinforced, and complex migration patterns began to appear (Skeldon 1996). The 1965 Immigration Act in the United States effectively removed all discriminatory quotas; the introduction of a revised immigration regulation in 1962 in Canada terminated the White Canada policy; ten years later, Australia ended its white immigration policy; and New Zealand removed racial bias from its immigration policy in 1987. These radical changes in immigration policy in these prospective immigrant-receiving countries, together with China’s open-door policy to the outside world, allowed some people from the PRC to become part of the international context of transnational population mobility. Apart from student migration, there was also an increasing complexity in the migration patterns, such as settlement migration and labour migration (Biao 2003; Skeldon 1996; Skeldon 2004).

Following the international opening-up of the PRC, there has been significant social transformation and economic development. This development was accompanied by ever increasing geographical mobility of its nationals and more population movement across borders. By the late 1990s, international migration was a growing phenomenon in the PRC. These new Chinese migrants significantly differed from the Chinese migrants of the early 19th Century. Very little migration took place to traditional destinations in Southeast Asia; instead settler societies in North America and Australasia became preferred choices (Skeldon 2004). The earlier Chinese migration in the 19th century was mainly driven by both pull and push factors, with internal poverty, natural disasters, and warfare being the key factors that propelled that movement across the seas. The early Chinese migrants were mostly uneducated male peasants from rural Southern China, and they migrated primarily because of
the economic opportunities found in the gold mines in the Western world and the tin mines and plantations in Central America (Eng 2006a; Eng 2006b; Skeldon 1996; Skeldon 2004).

Compared with these early Chinese migrants, the majority of contemporary Chinese migrants are highly educated and possess specialised skills or financial capital, which lets them qualify and meet the entry criteria of the receiving countries. Looking for economic opportunities overseas is no longer the primary reason for the Chinese to migrate; rather, their movements are often hastened by non-economic reasons. Searching for “Greener pastures” is a significant feature of contemporary Chinese migration. A better lifestyle and living environment, an advanced educational system, and sometimes the securing of foreign passports have propelled this migratory movement (Eng 2006a). Some new types of migration also take place, such as settlement migration of families or individuals under skilled or business immigration categories. These immigration categories have in fact become the main channel used by many Chinese to migrate overseas (Skeldon 1996; Skeldon 2004).

It is important then to recognise that the fast-developing economy of the PRC produces great means of capital mobilisation for Chinese international migration. By the turn of the 21st Century, it became clearly apparent that the PRC had the potential to become a future economic superpower. Their joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 further accelerated PRC integration into the global economy. The PRC is currently the fastest-growing market in the world, and its GDP was growing more than three times faster than the US economy in early 2000s (Zeng and Williamson 2003). What happened simultaneously of course was that the PRC also contributed significantly to those ethnic Chinese on the move. Toward the end of the 20th century, the estimate was that there were 33 million ethnic Chinese living outside China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. These 33 million Chinese living overseas actually increased from around 22 million in 1985 and 12.7 million in the early 1960s. Given the general low fertility of overseas Chinese populations and much smaller population pools in other main sources of Chinese migration (i.e. Hong Kong and Taiwan), the significant increase of overseas Chinese population suggests the central role that the PRC people have played in Chinese international migration in recent years (Skeldon 2004).

Meanwhile, the changing attitude of the Chinese government toward international emigration has also contributed significantly towards initialising Chinese nationals’ movements
internationally. International migration has been increasingly seen by the Chinese authorities as a means to enhance China’s integration into the world economy, and the Chinese government has shown both a apolitical and a neutral attitude when dealing with migration issues over the last twenty years, compared with earlier times (Biao 2003). The stance the Chinese government has taken most recently towards emigration as being non-ideological and non-political has given Chinese citizens an unprecedented freedom of international movement, which consequently has resulted in a further increase in the volume of international emigration.

There are also practical reasons for PRC immigrants to come to New Zealand. Socially, New Zealand is perceived as safe, liberal, and easygoing. Politically, its democratic and stable government is generally perceived as an advantage compared to that in China. In practice, the entry criteria and living costs are comparatively lower than for other settlement immigration countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. Culturally, New Zealand’s historical linkage to Britain also gives this country the image of a Western society. Therefore, the Chinese can have a “Western experience” in New Zealand. Empirically speaking, to have such a Western experience plays an important role in motivating immigration to New Zealand among the PRC people. The pleasing natural environment, advanced education system, and welfare system are perhaps also attractions for the Chinese (Friesen and Ip 1997; Ip 2006b). More importantly, to obtain New Zealand permanent residency or citizenship for many prospective PRC immigrants means they have obtained a safeguard for their future or a “stepping stone for climbing to new financial and social heights” (Ip 2006b: 72). Ip indicated that the PRC immigrants might not necessarily attain their goals in New Zealand, but possibly later in a third country or homeland (Ip 2006b). Therefore, New Zealand citizenship, which immigrants can usually get after five-years of residency, is especially important for those who want to move to a third country in the future. It gives the passport holder more mobility. For people who want to return to China, New Zealand passports signal an individual’s higher social status, which can directly or indirectly assist those returnees in attaining a higher level job and then climbing to a higher financial status in China (Ip, 2006b).

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9 New requirements for obtaining New Zealand citizenship came into effect in April 2005. As a result, one now has to live legally in New Zealand as a permanent resident for five years (formerly three years) before being eligible to apply for citizenship.
Although migration is often driven by a mix of factors, in the case of recent Chinese migration, it seems that economic motivations are no longer the primary reason for many Chinese to move overseas in the contemporary era, and New Zealand is no exception. This trend echoes certain recent work in the field of international migration (Castles 2000). That work challenges the classic assumptions about migration motivation, namely that business or employment opportunities contribute primarily to the decision-making of immigrants. Ip and Friesen’s research on the new Chinese community in New Zealand revealed that less than ten per cent of the respondents referred to business or employment opportunities as the primary reason for their coming to New Zealand, while both lifestyle and environmental advantages, a democratic system, political stability and education appear to be the stronger motivations of new Chinese immigrants’ decision to move to New Zealand (Ip and Friesen 2001).

Compared with China’s booming economy and better business and career development opportunities, the local New Zealand market for entrepreneurs is comparably limited because of small size, geographical isolation, a small consumer market, and higher labour costs (Ip 2001). Therefore, the reasons that motivate immigration to New Zealand for PRC migrants must be more than pure economic factors, for example, just making money or pursuing career and business development opportunities.

There is a need here to point out that there is a clear gap between the primary objective of New Zealand’s open-door immigration policy and the PRC migrants’ perspectives in terms of motivating immigration. The overall objective of New Zealand’s immigration policy is economics, namely, servicing a labour shortage and business stimulation, while the primary motivation for many PRC migrants New Zealand is not purely economics. When these migrants decided to immigrate to New Zealand, they intended to place lifestyle choice high on their list of motivations and they may also have utilitarian purposes, such as having/gaining Western experience and/or obtaining New Zealand educational qualifications, work experience, or citizenship. These utilitarian purposes are relevant to their future employment opportunities and economic well-being, but they are mainly considerations attached to one overall priority, which is essentially not economically related. These disjointed perspectives result in a divergence of perspectives on immigration outcomes. However, that is not to suggest of course that economic factors are not important for immigration decision-making by PRC migrants. Now, the migration decision of the PRC
migrants is not based on a single factor; rather, it is an action based on a rational assessment of how to balance all aspects of the immigration outcome.

With competition for skilled migrants from other richer and more prosperous destination countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, New Zealand, for many PRC migrants, is not the first choice as an immigration destination country. According to a survey conducted within China by the Population Studies Centre in Shanghai, the most preferred immigration destination country is the United States, followed by Canada and Australia (Luo, Guo and Huang 2003). New Zealand, however, does rank fourth on the list of preferred immigration destination countries. This finding probably indicates that the settlement pattern for many PRC migrants in New Zealand will remain that of medium term residence rather than long-term or permanent settlement.

2.1.2 New Zealand immigration policy change and its effects on new PRC immigrants: 1987 to present

The presence of new PRC immigrants in New Zealand is a direct result of the Immigration Policy Review 1986 that introduced a proactive immigration policy to recruit talent and economic investment (See Appendix 3A). The policy was refined further with the introduction of a points-based selection system in November 1991(See Appendix 3B). The policy change opened the country to a much wider range of immigrants, irrevocably led to profound changes in New Zealand’s migrant source countries (Trlin 1992), and had a major impact on both the size and characteristics of the Chinese population in New Zealand.

The distinguishing feature of New Zealand’s immigration policy from the late 1980s onwards has been a consistent emphasis on encouraging the intake of both skilled and business immigrants (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 1-2). The Labour government initiated this emphasis, and since, it has been carried on by both the National (1990 – 1999 and 2008 - current) and the Labour (1984 – 1990 and 1999 – 2008) governments. Although the 1999
national election marked a watershed in official discourse and policy about immigration, the consistency of the policy targeting for skilled and business immigrants has been maintained.

The overall policy of encouraging skilled and business immigration was consistently maintained. However, the specific way for selecting migrants under the points system underwent many changes. The changes of the finer details through the years seemed to be designed to better fit the country’s immigration and social dynamics. Rather than developing a policy based on long-term social goals, the policy is very much influenced by short-term immigration outcomes (Bedford and Ho 1997). Usually, changes took place to counteract swings in permanent and long-term arrivals, and the departures and net migration flow. Such changes also sought to curb the numbers of skilled immigrants through the introduction of more restrictive entry criteria as a response to the negative societal backlash provoked by a higher influx of new immigrants (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 1-2). It seemed that when the New Zealand government embarked on a revolutionary step forward towards adopting a colour-blind immigration policy, the society and public were not well enough prepared to encounter the cultural diversity that these new immigrants, especially those from “non-traditional” sources, were to bring into this country.

The post-1986 policy was criticised by several New Zealand scholars in the field of immigration studies as having inconsistent and haphazard features and lacking overall planning and settlement support (Henderson 2003; Ip 2006b; Ip and Friesen 2001; Lidgard 1996). Through the years, we have seen the swing of the country’s immigration door caused by the unstable and fluctuating entry criteria. In the following sections, the reactive and frequent fine-tuning features of the post-1986 immigration policy will be illustrated along with reviews of the immigration policy after 1986. Trans-Tasman migration is also

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10 Before 1999, the policy emphasised numerical targets and economic outcomes. However, after the Labour government gained power in 1999, its policies shifted the emphasis towards the labour market and settlement outcomes (Bedford, R., E. Ho, and J. Lidgard. 2005). With a view toward improving the possibility of successful settlement, the government has introduced a few important changes to the structure of the New Zealand immigration programme, especially between 2001 and 2003.
highlighted. Based on the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement, New Zealand and Australian citizens were not subjected to controls by the points systems in either country before the Australian policy change in 2001. Hence any policy relaxation in New Zealand that might lead to an increase of uncontrolled flow to Australia always has attracted close scrutiny (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2000: 10-11).

It is impossible to provide a full policy review here, but the researcher does recognise that a solid grasp of the legal and institutional context for the targeted research cohort (i.e. new Chinese migrants from the PRC) is crucial to a better understanding of this cohort. This section thus highlights some of the significant changes to the structure of the New Zealand immigration programme after 1986 which had a major impact on the immigration of the research cohort. They include the August 1986 Immigration Policy Review (See Appendix 3A), the introduction of a point-based selective system and the business/entrepreneurial immigration scheme in 1991, the tightening of criteria governing the operation of the point system in 1995, the launching of the New Zealand Immigration Programme in 2001, and finally, the introduction of a new selection system in 2003.

Immigration policy changes in the early 1990s and impacts on Chinese immigration

It is well known that New Zealand used to be extremely selective regarding its immigrant source country based on race, in particular preferring Britain (Mckinnon 1996: 1-4). Asian immigration was closely regulated, and the entry of Chinese was effectively banned for a long period of time. The change started with the review of immigration policy in 1986 (See Appendix 3A), which provided the policy basis for the 1987 Immigration Act. This policy review proclaimed a liberal philosophy of selecting immigrants based on an assessment of personal merit, qualifications, and their potential financial and entrepreneurial contributions to New Zealand society (Ip 1995: 187). With the removal of the traditional source country preference in favour of selection based on “… criteria of personal merit without discrimination on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin” (Burke 1986: 11), Asian
immigration increased dramatically, and Chinese arrived in unexpectedly large numbers.

It is necessary also to note the social, economic, and political context of the policy change in 1986. First, this immigration policy change was part of the Fourth Labour government’s overall economic de-regulation and restructuring programme (Poot 1992: 29; Trlin 1992: 1). For more than a decade earlier, New Zealand had suffered a serious economic downturn for a variety of reasons, including a closed economy, loss of Britain as a guaranteed market, growing public debt and the costs of maintaining a universal welfare system (Ho et al. 1997: 42). The Fourth Labour Government which came into power in 1984 was determined to embark upon a radical path of economic de-regulation in order to revitalise the country’s economy. It is in this context that immigration was encouraged, especially entrepreneurial immigration that “demonstrated ability and investment capital” which could contribute to the process of “economic restructuring and … the development of new competitive industries and markets” (Burke 1986: 19). The use of immigration was seen as a positive means to attract more foreign investment capital and stimulate domestic economic growth.

Secondly, the new immigration policy sought to use immigration to remedy the “brain-drain” that was resulting from steady net migration loss due to the strong out-migration of young educated New Zealanders (Henderson 2003: 143; Kasper 1990: 1-14). During the 1970s and 1980s, New Zealand had been steadily losing people with a net migration loss averaging 18,000 per year (Bedford, Lidgard and Young 1995: 1). Therefore, opening the door of the country to immigration was seen as necessary and a major part of New Zealand’s social restructuring. The country chose to invite quality immigrants to make a contribution to the society.

Finally, there was a tentative desire to use immigration as a way to link to the Pacific Rim countries of Asia where a booming economic miracle was exemplified by the “Asian Little Dragons”\textsuperscript{11} (Henderson 2003: 143; Ip 1995: 188; Trlin and Kang 1992: 49). Upon seeing a competitive global economy that was increasingly influenced by Asian industrial production

\textsuperscript{11} The “Little Asian Dragons” is a popular term that is used to describe the robust economies of South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore.
and markets, New Zealand gradually realised the importance of integrating their country more closely with that part of the world where it was geographically located and to establishing stronger business links with the new powerhouses of Asia. This policy choice partly depended on the human capital that the new immigration policy might allow to enter the country (Trlin 1992: 23-24).

As a part of the Labour commitment to a free market economic philosophy and programme, the removal of the traditional source country bias was coupled with some significant changes in the way of how New Zealand selected immigrants (See Appendix 3A). Apart from the abolition of selection criteria for national origin, a new business immigration scheme - the Business immigration Policy (BIP) was introduced to replace the earlier scheme, known as the Entrepreneur Immigration Policy (EIP) (Poot 1992: 41; Trlin 1992: 4-5; Trlin and Kang 1992: 49). The priority for selection criteria for the new scheme was an individual applicant’s personal merits rather than an investment proposal. The impact of this introduction of BIP was immediate. Poot indicated that in a 42-month period (September 1986-March 1990), 2,874 cases involving 10,581 people were approved for residence under the BIP scheme, compared with 225 EIP applications in the same period that only produced 788 successful applicants (Poot 1992: 41). The new arrivals under this BIP were also increasingly dominated, from April 1987 onwards, by migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan (Trlin and Kang 1992: 51). It was the first time that ethnic Chinese immigrants arrived in New Zealand in large numbers based on an equal selection basis with other immigrants. Since then, ethnic Chinese have become a sizeable cultural group in New Zealand. According to the census, the ethnic Chinese population in New Zealand was just below 19,500 in 1986, and it increased to around 38,000 in 1991. By the next census in 1996, it had doubled yet again to just over 80,000 (Ip 2006a: 290).

When the National Government came to power in 1990, it maintained the previous Labour government’s programme of economic deregulation, but then accentuated it with a more proactive stance towards international immigration. National’s 1991 policy changes primarily featured the introduction of a revised Business Investment Category (BIC) to replace the previous BIP and the encouragement of skilled immigration via a General Category (GC) that involved a point-based selection system (Trlin 1997: 1-7) (See Appendix 3B). While the BIC aim was to deal with the shortcomings of the BIP, the point system shifted the focus from
obtaining immediate economic and financial benefit from new immigrants to a greater
determination to secure human capital and quality migrants who had as their objectives
making a contribution to the nation’s economic growth and strengthening international
linkages required for that growth (Birch 1989; Trlin 1997: 1-5). It was supposed to be a ‘‘key
instrument’ to attract greater number of ‘quality migrants’ who would make a positive
contribution to economic and social development” (Trlin 1997: 5). This new system
favourably targeted people with tertiary education who were young and had a track record of

This auto-pass, point-based system had a significant impact on the numbers and composition
of the new Chinese immigrant cohort arriving in New Zealand. The Asian presence\textsuperscript{12} among
the new arrival cohort became even stronger. By 1993, the Asian percentage of all those
approved for permanent residency jumped from almost 50 per cent to slightly more than 60
per cent. The major Asian contributions came from Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and
China. In terms of arrival conditions, the GC category, especially the General Investment
Category (GIC), a sub-division of the GC category, quickly became the main channel through
which Asian applicants gained residency. By 1993, the percentage of Asians under the GIC
sub-division reached as high as 86 percent or almost 58 percent of the total GC approvals
(Trlin 1997: 9). The numbers of approved applicants under both the BIC and the GC
categories from Britain were thus overtaken by Chinese from the three main origin countries
(Table 2.1).

It should be noted too that when the government introduced these pro-immigration policies,
for example, welcoming applicants with skills and entrepreneurial capital to enter New
Zealand, no one foresaw that the policy would lead to such a sizeable influx of ethnic Asian
immigrants, including new Chinese immigrants (Ip 2002).

The effects of these immigration policy changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s took a
much longer time to affect the PRC cohort compared with their effects on the Hong Kong and
Taiwan cohorts. Of these three main Chinese immigrant intake sources, the Hong Kong

\textsuperscript{12} The “Asian” here means people from three Asian regions: North, South and Southeast.
arrivals were the earliest and peaked in 1991. They were followed by people from Taiwan whose numbers peaked in 1996. However, the size of the PRC cohort was much smaller than both of the Hong Kong and Taiwan cohorts before the mid-1990s (Ip 2006b). Migrant totals from the PRC started to catch up with the Hong Kong and Taiwan cohorts after the 1991 policy change and then increased steadily, but cyclically as shown in Figure 2.1. By the late 1990s, PRC migrants became predominant. NZIS data can be used as a clear indicator of the recent trend of Chinese immigration from the PRC to New Zealand (See Figures 2.1 and Figure 2.2). Even when the 1995 policy change reduced the number of Hong Kong and Taiwan approvals significantly, it seemed that this policy change had little effect on the number of immigrants arriving from the PRC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>GC</th>
<th>BIC</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Humanitarian</th>
<th>Refugee</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>2312</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Chinese</td>
<td><strong>5187</strong></td>
<td><strong>299</strong></td>
<td><strong>797</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td><strong>6382</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td><strong>2959</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>4573</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 Entry approvals to New Zealand, 1993 – policy categories and a British/Chinese comparison (New Zealand Immigration Services)
Figure 2.1 Annual New Zealand residence approval number for people from China (PRC), Hong Kong and Taiwan for 1982 to 2008 (Source: New Zealand Immigration Services).
Figure 2.2 New Zealand residence approval numbers for people from China (PRC), Hong Kong, and Taiwan for 1987-2006. (Source: New Zealand Immigration Services)

*The tightening of entry criteria in 1995*

The significant increase in the number of new Asian immigrants and their high visibility soon put pressure on New Zealand’s immigration system. Although there were immigrant quota “targets” set by the government, and in theory regulated by a “floating” points system prior to the change, the actual intake regularly exceeded the target, resulting in peak migration for the years 1994 to 1996 (Ip and Friesen 2001). With the already high visibility of new Asian immigrants, the influx of new Asian immigrants caused great unease in the New Zealand society. The public’s attitude toward Asian immigration was generally negative throughout the 1990s, and a number of opinion polls revealed that there was a consistent anti-Asian sentiment although welcoming attitude toward immigration from United Kingdom and South Africa (Ip 2001: 47). Fuelling the public’s anti-Asian sentiment was the media’s negative representation of new Asian arrivals. An article titled “Inv-Asian”, published in the suburban
newspaper *The Eastern Courier* in April 1993, presented a stereotypical view of the new Asian migrant and undoubtedly intensified public unease toward the rapid increase of immigrants from those ‘non-traditional’ sources. The issue of Asian immigration were also capitalised on by some politicians, including Winston Peters, the leader of the New Zealand First Party. He used an anti-Asian strategy for his party’s campaign in the 1996 election. By playing the race card, he made sufficient political capital out of the public concerns over immigration in that election to ensure that his party gained enough seats to secure a coalition agreement with the National Party. His anti-immigrant rhetoric further stirred up great social tension in the months that preceded the 1996 election. Public opinion polls showed that support for the New Zealand First significantly increased from below 3 per cent in February of 1996 to 28 per cent in July of that same year (Ip 2002).

A combination of immigration policy changes had taken place in October 1995 (See Appendix 3C). As Ip and Henderson point out, the October 1995 review of immigration policy brought about a subtle change in the policy emphasis on maintaining “social cohesion” as an important policy goal, together with the goal of economic growth (Henderson 2003: 167-169; Ip 2001: 48-49). This policy revision was a response, as least in part, to the influx of new Asian immigrants. As Bedford suggests, migration systems are shaped and re-shaped by links between migration policies and the broad economic and political objectives of a government (Bedford 2005: 132-136; Bedford and Ho 2006). The introduction of the Mixed-Members-Proportional (MMP) voting system in 1996 also made immigration issues more sensitive in the New Zealand political terrain. Since the MMP system offers great

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13 This party was widely regarded as opportunistic, anti-immigrant, and anti-Asian.

14 Under the MMP election system, there are 120 members in a single chamber Parliament. The political parties win seats according their nationwide share of the vote. There are two different kinds of members in parliament: Some are “electoral MPs”, and some are “list MPs”. Sixty-five seats go to the highest polling candidates of the country’s 65 electorates (with about 52,000 people each). At the election, every voter can cast two votes: One for the preferred electoral candidate and one for the preferred party. Political parties that win a greater share of the total vote than the actual number of their electorate MPs will “top up” by adding candidates from the parties’ ranked lists. This system was introduced partly to guarantee that the place and role of minorities are adequately represented. Under the old system, it was highly unlikely that candidates from ethnic minorities could be chosen by any major parties to be electorate candidates. Parties thus needed to choose candidates who had broad appeal and can draw a majority of votes from the local population – who are mostly of European origin. Under the new MMP system, an ethnic candidate can be picked as a party-list candidate as a focus to appeal for the support of the ethnic community nationwide and be then used as a vote-drawing magnet for the ethnic population throughout New Zealand.
opportunities to ethnic minority groups and can guarantee that the places and role of minorities are adequately represented, with the increasing population of new Asian immigrants in New Zealand, dominated by Chinese, the “Chinese factor” started to catch politicians’ attention and become a significant consideration in New Zealand politics. First, the advent of Chinese voters could influence the election outcome. More importantly, the MMP electoral system gave the Chinese as a community the chance to be politically represented and potentially influence the nation’s politics in a way they would not have been able to under the old electoral system (Ip 2002). The first practice of the MMP system in the national election of 1996 coincided with the significant presence of many new Chinese in New Zealand, which made the 1995 policy change even more important for the political scene.

During this policy revision, more challenging criteria for entry were introduced. This policy tightening-up was particularly welcomed in Australia because it reduced their concerns about “back-door” entry\(^\text{15}\) from New Zealand of those migrants who otherwise would not have gained direct entry under Australian policy. On the policy level, these changes were introduced to tackle some of the shortcomings of previous policies (See Appendix 3C). In reality, some changes to the entry criteria, especially the English language requirement for both principal and non-principal (over 16) skilled and business migrants was actually a designed strategy to reduce the rapid increase of Asian immigrants (Henderson et al. 1997). It was pronounced as being necessary to enhance the social cohesion of the country and “a key to successful settlement” (New Zealand Immigration Services 1995: 10). In fact, as Henderson argues, “It was hoped that the language requirement would reduce the “over-supply” of high quality migrants from Asia and alter the migrant mix over time” (Henderson 2003: 145). When the new immigrants surged to 40,000 in the year ending March 1994 and then peaked at 57,520 for the year ending March 1995 where unexpectedly more than half were Asians, the language requirement of attaining Level 5 of the General Module of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS, See Appendix 3C) was set as a bar to restrict the entry of migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds (Ip 2001: 48-49).

\(^{15}\) It is a negative comment used in Australia referring to the sharp increase of New Zealand citizens’ moving to Australia, but born outside of New Zealand.
All principal applicants from non-English speaking backgrounds under both BIC and GC categories had to achieve a minimum Band score of 5 in the General Training Module of the IELTS, and a NZ$20,000 language bond was applied to spouses and dependants 16 years and over if they failed to meet the English language requirements within the specified time. Looking back at the history of Chinese immigration to New Zealand, one finds that history has again repeated.

Ip argues that “no other settler countries from the Pacific Rim had such rigid and financially punitive English language requirements in the modern age of immigration” (Ip 2001: 48). The introduction of the English language filter in 1995 was just like the English language reading test of the 19th century, both of which were designed to cut back Chinese immigration. Even though well-polished wording like “English is a key to successful settlement” (New Zealand Immigration Services 1995: 10) was used to make the language filter look reasonable at first glance, the similarity to the past policy was notable.

The 1995 policy change took effect quickly and led to a substantial immigration decline in the late 1990s (Bedford, Lidgard and Ho 2005: 56-57). The number of approvals from Chinese sources declined dramatically. Those from Taiwan and Hong Kong were hit particularly hard (Henderson 2003: 145; Ip 2001: 49-50). The tightening of policy, coupled with the handover of Hong Kong to China on 1 July 1997 and the onset of the Asian economic crisis that began in the second half of 1997, effectively reduced the inflow of migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan. From 1996 to 2000, the number of immigration applications from Hong Kong and Taiwan dropped from over 10,000 to only a couple of thousand and then further declined to a few hundred per year. By 1997, Hong Kong had dropped to number 10 on the “source regions list” while Taiwan completely disappeared from the “Top Ten” list (Ho 2003: 168-169; Ip 2001: 48-51).

The 1995 policy change had a particularly strong impact on obtaining business immigrants. Until the mid-1990s, Hong Kong and Taiwan were the two major sources of business migrants to New Zealand. Between 1987 and 1996, over 17,000 Hong Kong and Taiwan nationals were granted permanent residence under the business category. After the policy
change in 1995, business migrant intake from the same two sources declined to just 1,000 between 1997 and 2001 (Ho 2003: 168-169).

While applications from Hong Kong and Taiwan dropped dramatically, the raised entry criteria in 1995 did not deter PRC applicants. During the following years, applications and approvals from the PRC steadily increased. The reasons behind this trend were more likely that the China applicants relied on the accrual of points for human capital rather than financial capital. Therefore, the tightening-up of selection criteria on business immigration had little effect on the China cohort. In addition, because China has a huge population base, there were still many applicants from China who were skilled and had good English skills (Henderson 2003: 145-146).

Relaxation of entry criteria near year 2000 and more fluctuation in immigration policy

Having received sharp criticism to the impact of the 1995 policy change on business immigration and a net migration loss, the government instituted a number of changes to the selection requirements in 1997 to try to remedy the migration decline. These included some relaxation in the English language requirements for applicants under the business migration scheme (Bedford and Ho 1998). That was followed by the introduction of the 1998 policy package (See Appendix 3D), which aimed to make New Zealand more attractive to economic migrants (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 9-10). The most significant changes included the abolition of the English language bond for non-principal residence applicants and its replacement with pre-paid English language training in an approved course and the introduction of the new categories of entrepreneur/investor migration and long-term visas for business people. The relaxation of immigration in 1998, however, did raise concern in Australia over “back-door” migration. Concerns were forwarded to New Zealand regarding large number of New Zealand citizens who had been born outside of New Zealand and then emigrated to Australia after gaining New Zealand passports.

Following the 1998 policy package, a series of more proactive immigration programmes were initiated at the turn of the new millennium; these resulted in a return to sizeable net migration
gains. After more than a decade’s experiment on opening the immigration door, the new Labour Government, which came into power in 1999, determined to open the door even wider. The most significant immigration policy initiative during the Labour Government’s first term (1999-2002) was the launch of the New Zealand Immigration Programme (NZIP) in October 2001 and the introduction of a managed entry regime (Appendix 3E). Further relaxation of entry criteria was initiated between 2000 and 2001. These changes reflected the Government’s desire to keep the entry criteria reasonably low in order to recruit more skilled and business immigrants. However, they also led to a high-level political debate about the cost of the unrestricted access of New Zealanders to Australia and their associated entitlement to welfare support. In February 2001, the Australian government introduced stricter controls over access to welfare provisions to New Zealand migrants who arrived in Australia, but not under Australia’s immigration programme. The new policy made New Zealand migrants ineligible for most of the social security support in Australia, and sufficiently reduced “back-door” migration. Since then, “back-door” migration has no longer been a major concern in Australia (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 15-16).

Apart from the October 2001 package, there were certain side-stream immigration channels promoted by the government. The enactment of the Government’s initiative for “work to residence” in April 2002 (Appendix 3E) was significant in terms of its high potential to attract highly employable people to become permanent residents. There are two components of this initiative: The “talent visa” and the “POL (Priority Occupation List) work permit”. Both aim to attract highly skilled people to New Zealand and “generate value-creating ideas and knowledge in an economy placing increasing emphasis on innovation and technological change in the drive for improved productivity and higher incomes” (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 20). Later, the Job Search Visa (JSV) was introduced in November 2002. As Bedford and co-authors discuss, all these initiatives show the willingness of the government to facilitate transition for people with temporary work permit status and student visa/permits and wish to obtain residence (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 20). The results show that these initiatives worked very well in terms of channelling more skilled/business immigrants into New Zealand by providing a more viable transitional stage. In the year ending June 2000, a total of 34,075 principal applicants were granted work permits. By the year ended June 2002, the total number of principal applicants granted work permits had risen by 74 per cent to 59,148. In the same time period, principal applicants who held student permits increased
from 28,646 to 73,525, an increase of 158 per cent - more than double the increase in work permits (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 20).

These policy developments were highly relevant to the arrival conditions of new Chinese immigrants from the PRC, especially those who obtained their residence after 2003. Since the NZIS data shows that a large percentage of Chinese immigrants (including PRC migrants) used the on-shore application process to gain residency (Table 2.2), the work permits/JSV could be used by most on-shore Chinese as a transitional way to apply for permanent residence. Given the massive increase in the number of Chinese international students from 2000 and 2002, it was highly likely that PRC applicants after 2002 comprised a large number of Chinese international students who then stayed and sought residence after finishing their studies.

Adjustment of the immigration policy between 2000 and 2002 led to a return of sizeable net migration gains and promoted immigration from Asia, especially China. The permanent and long-term (PLT) net migration gains from countries in Northeast, Southeast and South Asia showed that immigration from all three of these sub-regions reached its highest recorded level in 2002 and 2003. Chinese immigration dominated the Northeast Asian flow with migrants from the PRC comprising the largest share of the net gains since 1996/97. Meanwhile, as mentioned, immigration from Hong Kong and Taiwan, the two main sources of Chinese immigrants in the early 1990s, was much less significant after 1996. Between 1989/1990 and 1995/96, the net gain was 29,130 for Hong Kong and Taiwan, while only 10,100 came from the PRC. However, the aggregate PLT net gain from the PRC for the period 1996/1997 to 2002/2003 turned out to be 51,220, compared with only 9,320 from Hong Kong and Taiwan (Bedford, Lidgard and Ho 2005: 56-57).

The 2001 census data can also be used to demonstrate the significance of Chinese immigration from the PRC from the mid-1990s onwards. It shows that the “China born” population was 38,334, constituting 35 per cent of the total ethnic Chinese population in New Zealand, which stood at 105,057. The PRC-born Chinese was the largest single group, outnumbering the New Zealand born (25%), Taiwan born (12%), Hong Kong born (10%) and other overseas born (17%) Chinese (Figure 2.3). The increase of a “China born” population can also be seen in the 2006 census. As shown in Figure 1.2, the 2006 census data shows that
the “China (PRC)-born” population in New Zealand increased further, reaching 52.29% of the total Chinese population, while the Hong Kong-born and Taiwan-born Chinese population shrunk to 4.54% and 7.21%, respectively.

Table 2.2 Residence approval divided by on-shore and off-shore applications for 1997-2009. (Source: New Zealand Immigration Services)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On-shore</td>
<td>Off-shore</td>
<td>On-shore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997/98</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>2,736</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998/99</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999/2000</td>
<td>1,117</td>
<td>2,323</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000/01</td>
<td>1,357</td>
<td>3,973</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/02</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>6,946</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>1,970</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>2,365</td>
<td>2,444</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>3,470</td>
<td>1,591</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>5,316</td>
<td>1,457</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>4,558</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>4,862</td>
<td>1,208</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>5,368</td>
<td>1,422</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New Zealand’s overall immigrant intake, between 1996/97 and 2002/03, shows that immigrants from Great Britain, China, India and South Africa dominated New Zealand’s international migration system (Bedford, Lidgard and Ho 2005: 64). The year 1997 was the first time that the PRC was featured as the second largest source country for New Zealand’s immigrant intake, just after Great Britain. The PRC continuously increased without any significant slump, especially after the launching of the New Zealand Immigration Programme in 2001, and it peaked in 2003 (Figure 2.1).

This increased inflow of immigrants soon put pressure on the immigration system. The number of resident approvals for skilled/business migrants comprised 68 per cent of the total resident approvals by July 2002, slightly exceeding the target resident approvals (60 per cent) for the “skilled/business” stream (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 19). Even though the
overall number of approvals\textsuperscript{16} proved to be difficult to obtain, the new immigration wave, together with the arrival of a large number of international students from Asia, did result in an impression of “Asianisation” to many New Zealand locals, especially in the Auckland region. Similarly to what happened in the mid-1990s, these immigration issues were quickly subjected to intense public concern and scrutiny and capitalised on once again by the leader of the New Zealand First party, Winston Peters, in the 2002 central government election (Spoonley and Trlin 2004: 24-25). During this period, significant changes were made to tighten up the immigration entry criteria (See Appendix 3F). First, there was an increase in the “pass” mark for the GSC category, from 28 to 29 in September 2002, and then to 30 in October 2002. Secondly, higher English language requirements were implemented. The minimum IELTS score for the GSC category increased from an average of 5 to 6.5 across all 4 bands, while the score for business categories increased from an average of 4 to 5. All applicants, including those already under consideration when the policy changes were announced, were required to meet the new criteria. Lastly, there was a tighter, more restrictive requirement and operational control for obtaining Job Search Visas (JSV) and Long Term Business Visas (LTBA) as well as for the Investor Category (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 36-43) (See Appendix 3F). These changes, especially the raised English language requirements, resulted in a major outcry from immigration consultants and prospective immigrants, and the New Zealand Association for Migration and Investment (NZAMI) legally challenged the Minister’s decision.

\textit{A new selection system in 2003: From a numerical target and economic outcome to a settlement outcome}

Following the tightening of the entry criteria in 2002, the NZIS began to tailor a selection system that would focus much more on ensuring that migrants with skills were actually needed in the labour market rather than merely accepting all those who met a specific points

\textsuperscript{16} Under a managed entry regime introduced in 2001, overall permanent residence approvals include both “economic” and “social” streams of immigrants. This “economic” stream includes the “skill/business” category, while the “social” stream includes family and humanitarian categories.
target. In July 2003, the Minister of Immigration suddenly announced that a new Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) would come into force in December 2003 and replace the GSC. The essence of the new selection system was summed up in then Immigration Minister Dalziel’s 2003 package of press releases (See Appendix 3G). In general, the new SMC shifts the way the point system worked from the passive acceptance of residence applications to the active selection of skilled migrants. It replaced the “pass” mark system with a process whereby people who qualify above a certain level of points can submit an expression of interest (EOI) to a selection pool, from which they are then invited to apply for residence. Without wider consultation and no warning, this change was passed under a sense of urgency, struck down the High Court’s ruling on the NZAMI case, and made it clear that in the future, all immigration policy decisions to cancel any applications in any category could not be challenged in court.

It should be noted here that the introduction of the new selection system took place in the context in which successful settlement outcomes of migrants was recognised by the government as being more important than numerical and economic outcomes. As mentioned before, 1999 was the turning point on the emphasis of immigration policy. Before 1999, the policy put the emphasis on numerical targets and economic outcomes. The political debate around immigration leading up to the national election in 1999 saw an increased emphasis on ensuring successful settlement outcomes. By recognising the difficulties that many new immigrants, especially new immigrants from Asia, were experiencing in obtaining employment, the government realised the importance of assisting new immigrants to settle successfully and attain a better labour market. Several initiatives undertaken by the NZIS’s Settlement Information Programme between 1997 and 1999 evidenced this shifting emphasis in policy (See Appendix 3H).

The emphasis on successful settlement outcomes was further enhanced after the election of the Labour Government in November 1999, and the appointment of Dalziel as Minister of Immigration. After the 1999 election, as an initial response to calls for a clearly defined official settlement strategy, the Minister asked the NZIS to develop a budget proposal that sought approval to use funds collected through the migrant levy (part of the fees paid by applicants for residence) for a series of settlement pilots (See Appendix 3H) that targeted different groups of refugees and migrants (Ho et al. 2000). The settlement pilots showed a
commitment to assisting refugees and migrants to get the support they needed to settle effectively, but as Bedford and co-authors argues the pilots failed to develop a coherent enough settlement strategy and provide on-going financial support for effective services designed to assist new settlers (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 24-25). Following the introduction of the new selection system discussed at the beginning of this section, the government’s approach toward achieving more successful settlement outcomes did not depend on co-ordinated settlement support; rather, like Bedford and co-authors argue, it lay in the way that the points selection system worked and how migrants were selected (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 24-25). This was how the new selection system was initiated and developed. By December 2003, the shifting emphasis from a target-based to an outcome-based policy was well advanced, and there has been no major change since then except for minor modifications 17.

In terms of policy effect, the very different policy landscape up to 2003 resulted in a greater mix of approvals from more diverse sources. Between 1996/97 and 2002/03, immigration from China dominated New Zealand immigration flows from Asia, with Chinese migrants comprising the second-largest share of residence approvals right after the Great Britain. After 2003, the United Kingdom remained the largest source country for New Zealand’s immigrant intake, but the number of residence approvals for those from Europe and North America increased, and there was some reduction in immigrant numbers from China and India. The approvals for applicants from China sharply reduced for a while after 2003, but started to climb back again in 2005 (Figure 2.1). Even though the immigrant numbers from China has not returned to their highest recorded level at the beginning of the new millennium, China still remains the second-largest source for residence approvals in New Zealand post-1987 (94,859), after Great Britain (149,969) as shown in Figure 1.1.

2.2 Building on secondary resources: Profile of PRC migrants in New Zealand

Immigrants from the PRC are the most recent arrivals among the new Chinese groups. Unlike the earliest Chinese immigrants to New Zealand who were mostly humble peasants from rural Southern China forced to leave by natural disasters and warfare and who then arrived in New Zealand as gold miners, the new PRC immigrants are mainly well educated and highly skilled professionals and urban dwellers (Ip 1995: 187; Ip 2006b). They gained entry because they were considered by New Zealand’s Immigration Service as potential migrants well equipped with useful human and financial capital and able to contribute to New Zealand’s economic and social development. They are also quite different from other new Chinese groups.

In this section, both the China-born specific data from the latest New Zealand Census (2006) and data from NZIS illustrate the unique characteristics of the PRC migrants. Four aspects are addressed: migration patterns, migration categories, employment status, and educational background. It is necessary too to consider Hong Kong and Taiwan cohorts in the discussion because the arrival of all three cohorts in New Zealand resulted from the 1987 open-door immigration policy. Also, these three regions have been the three main sources of New Zealand’s Chinese immigrant intake. Through a comparison, the distinguishing feature of the PRC cohort can be identified. Drawing from the results of other research and also empirical observation, this discussion addresses the factors associated with the settlement and socio-economic integration of the PRC cohort into the wider New Zealand society.

2.2.1 Immigration patterns and categories of PRC migrants

PRC migrants tend to use the on-shore application process often (Ip 2006b), especially after 2002, when most applications from the PRC cohort were on-shore. Several scholars point out that the PRC cohort preferred to use the on-shore application process for permanent residence visas more often than did the Hong Kong and Taiwan cohorts (Bedford and Ho 1998; Ip 2006b; Lidgard 1996). However, this was the case only before 1997. After that date, the situation changed. The main trend of immigration applications for all three main Chinese
immigrant sources switched to on-shore. It is clear from Table 2.2 that there is no statistical
difference between the on-shore application percentages for PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong
cohorts for the period of 1997-2008. This trend is directly related to the entry criteria
tightening that took place in 2002 and the introduction of the new selection system in 2003.
The stricter entry criteria require a definite job offer that seems to be the most difficult
obstacle for PRC applicants as well as for all other Chinese applicants. Being on-shore gives
those applicants more time, space, and opportunity to obtain a job offer. In addition, a large
number of Chinese international students obtain Job Search Visas after finishing their studies
in New Zealand and are subsequently approved for residence (Ho 2005). This group also
contributed to the large number of on-shore applications.

The PRC immigrants tend to obtain entry based on their human capital rather than financial
capital, given the fact that there were far more PRC applications for permanent residence
under skill categories than there were under business categories (Ho 2003: 169). Compared
with Hong Kong and Taiwan, two locales that contributed significantly to New Zealand’s
business immigration in the early 1990s, business categories have never been the main
channel for PRC immigrants to gain admission into New Zealand (Ho 2003: 168; Ip 2001:
50). During the period from 1998 to 2009, PRC business migrants did increase somehow, but
the percentage was still the lowest of the three regions, and majority of PRC applicants were
approved for residence under the skilled migrant sub-category (Table 2.3).

Before 2003, the auto-passed point system, which gave points based on educational
qualifications, age, work experience, business track record, family and community support,
and settlement funds, did provide an opportunity to those well-educated young professionals
from the PRC to accumulate enough points to satisfy the entry criteria. Even though the
introduction of the new selection system in 2003 did deter PRC applications for a while,
because of its huge population, and vast potential talent pool, the PRC had no shortage of
skilled immigrants who could meet the stricter entry criteria.

Some previous studies have suggested that PRC immigrants far more frequently used the
family reunification category to obtain permanent residence than did Hong Kong and Taiwan
cohorts (Henderson 2003: 160-161; Ip 2006b). Ip used the China-born, age-sex pyramid
drawn from the New Zealand 2001 census to show that there was an “echo bulge” in the 60-
to 70-year-old age group and then indicated that this “echo bulge” represented the parents of the new PRC migrants (see Figure 2.4). She suggested that this bulge was partly attributable to China’s “one-child policy”\(^{18}\), because many of the skilled immigrants from the PRC big cities were from “one-child families”, and their parents could easily qualify for family reunification under New Zealand’s immigration legislation (Ip 2006b).

Table 2.3 Business and Skilled migrant residency approval between 1998 – 2009 for the three major sources for New Zealand new Chinese immigrants (Source: New Zealand Immigration Services).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>9,735</td>
<td>28,789</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>1,085</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>2,303</td>
<td>1,813</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, as shown in the 2006 Census, using the family reunification category to bring elder parents to New Zealand is no longer frequently practiced by immigrants from the PRC. The 2006 Census shows that the “echo bulge” for the PRC-born cohort seems to be disappearing.

\(^{18}\) The “one-child policy” was introduced by the PRC government in 1979 to combat that country’s overpopulation problem. The policy decrees that a couple should have only one child and inflicts penalties if a couple has a second child.

\(^{19}\) Total Business residence approval is the sum of the number of sub-categories, including Old Business, Employee of Business, Entrepreneur, and Investor.

\(^{20}\) Total Skilled residence approval is the sum of the number of sub-categories, including General Skills, Skilled Migrants, and Work to Residence.
(compare Figure 2.4 to Figure 2.5), probably because of the large number of newly admitted residents that decreases the percentage of older migrants. The most highly represented age groups are 20-29 and 35-44\textsuperscript{21}, corresponding to high residence approval around 1996 and 2003. Most of the newly admitted young residents have working-age parents who are unlikely to come to New Zealand within a short time after their children do, at least not before their own retirement in China. Their reason for not coming to New Zealand following children is also economic, given that the parents of many young Chinese immigrants are actually at the age when their earning ability is the highest.

Figure 2.4 Age-sex pyramid for the China-born ethnic Chinese population in the 2001 Census (Adapted from Ip, 2006).

\textsuperscript{21} International students from China may contribute to these two young-age groups, since everyone residing in New Zealand for 12 months or more will be defined as “usual residents” by the New Zealand Census. However, many overseas students are highly unlikely to complete the census form. Specific advice on this issue was sought from a demographer at Statistics New Zealand. He particularly noted that overseas students are known to be a group that may have a significant undercount in the New Zealand Census (Robert Didham, Personal Communication). Also, from the author’s personal experience and knowledge as a former international student, overseas Chinese students generally do not fill in the census form, as they do not want to be counted in the New Zealand population. Based on this information, the use of census data is an accurate way to determine that the most highly represented age groups of 20-29 and 35-44 on the census are also those residents who are newly admitted.
Figure 2.5 Age-sex pyramid for the China-born ethnic Chinese population in 2006 Census (Source: Statistics New Zealand)

### 2.2.2 Social indicators: Educational background and employment status

The most recent New Zealand census data (2006) shows that PRC Chinese are one of the best-educated groups in New Zealand, with 24.7% having bachelor’s degrees or higher, compared with the New Zealand national average of 14.2%. Unfortunately, their advanced qualifications did not give PRC Chinese an advantage in job-seeking. The 2006 census shows that the percentage of PRC Chinese who are employed full-time and those who are employed part-time are both lower than the national averages, and their unemployment rate is higher than the national average (Table 2.4). Many studies have found that immigrant
performance in the labour market is an important indicator of how well immigrants settle in their adopted locales (Baker 1994; Miller 1986; Poot 1993; Winkelmann and Winkelmann 1998). Usually, immigrant labour market performance closely relate to immigrant education level, that is, the higher one’s educational level is, the better performance one should have in the labour market. However, the PRC Chinese good educational profile has been a serious mismatch with their performance in the labour market, indicating a waste of valuable human capital.

Table 2.4 Labour market participation by New Zealand residents born in the PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan compared to the national average (Source: New Zealand Census 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour market participation</th>
<th>PRC</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>NZ national average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in the labour force</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, PRC Chinese have a higher percentage of self-employment and not-in-labour-force status than the national average (Tables 2.4 and 2.5). Among those who are not in the labour force, the majority are studying full-time (Table 2.6). In fact, the PRC group presents the highest full-time study participation percentage among adults over 18 years old - more than 6 times the national average and much higher than immigrants born either in Hong Kong or Taiwan (Table 2.6). Even though the high percentages of PRC migrants who are studying and are not-in-labour-force in the census data include Chinese international students, given the
fact that international students are highly likely not to participate in the New Zealand Census, these percentages still can be used as an indicator of the poor performance of PRC migrants in the labour market, since self-employment and additional education are often strategies undertaken to overcome unemployment (Ip 2001; Waldinger 1990). When many were rejected for employment in the local labour market, they realised that obtaining a recognised local qualification could give them a better chance to secure employment in the future. Retraining is generally perceived by many PRC migrants as a feasible strategy for upgrading themselves or to help them gain employment in New Zealand.

Table 2.5 Employment status of New Zealand residents born in the PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, compared to the New Zealand national average (Source: Statistics New Zealand).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>PRC</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>NZ national average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed without employees</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family worker</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not included in the above categories</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on empirical observation and knowledge, some of PRC migrants take further study in their previous academic or professional areas, but some instead chose completely different areas. This choice may not be their personal choice, but based on job prospects. A better job that can generate corresponding income to sustain living and match one’s educational and
previous professional background is usually the preferable circumstance for a new migrant of working age. A sense of settlement and commitment to New Zealand is also largely dependent on whether staying and working in the immigration host society does address migrants’ and their families’ economic well-being.

Table 2.6 New Zealand residents from the PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan over 18 and participating in full-time or part-time study in comparison to New Zealand national average (Source: New Zealand Census 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study participation</th>
<th>PRC</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>NZ national average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time study</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time study</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in study</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in study</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These features indicate the common difficulties currently present in the wage employment that many new PRC immigrants have encountered and also the overall moderate economic outcomes of PRC migrants within the wage economy. Since PRC migrants are one of the most highly-educated groups in New Zealand and are also comparatively young, their only moderate labour market performance is a serious mismatch to their age-education profile. Ip pointed out that this mismatch represents a “serious wastage of human capital as well as great personal frustration” (Ip 2006b: 76). The experience of unemployment is usually associated with financial cost and loss of self-esteem.
Some scholars suggest that the employment problem may be one of several factors that motivate some PRC migrants to return to China or to move to a third country (Henderson 2003: 153; Ip 2006b). Whether that is true or not, it is understandable that the decision to stay or leave the host country for many immigrants may partly depend on whether the economic and social outcomes of immigration meet their initial immigration expectations.

2.3 From settlement to trans-migration: A step forward?

Recently, the PRC cohorts have shown a strong tendency of return migration and trans-migration. As mentioned in Chapter One of this paper, a recent Department of Labour report shows that PRC migrants are 10th on the long-term absence list, with 23.2% absent for 6 months or longer at the survey date in 2007 (Merwood 2008: 122); Taiwan migrants have the highest absent rate (47.1%), followed by Singapore (35.8%) and then Hong Kong (34.2%).

These absence rates can be a reflection of the transnational characteristics of these groups. Given the large size of the PRC population located in New Zealand, it is fair to estimate that the absolute absentees for the PRC group is a significant figure and much higher than that for those from Hong Kong and Taiwan. It is impossible to establish actual numbers for those absentees because the relevant statistical information is not available. However, what can be deduced from the rates is that new Chinese migrants, including PRC migrants, do have a high rate of trans-migration behaviour and do exhibit frequent mobility.

Given that a significant proportion of PRC migrants are highly skilled and equipped with internationally recognised New Zealand qualifications and English language competence obtained during residence in New Zealand, they are in demand outside the New Zealand labour market. When they find that New Zealand’s labour market and employment opportunities are limited and do not offer them what they expect, they seek opportunities in other places worldwide. The financial capital many PRC migrants possess will allow them to journey around the world, and the human capital of certain PRC migrants makes them sought-after employees in the international labour market (Ip 2006b). This aspect, together with other macro-level factors, can propel their further movement. Portes suggests that
migrants’ choice to adopt transnational behaviours and movement can be affected by considerations of both homeland and host society issues. Both the policies and the social features in the local setting of the host society, including employment opportunities, access to social welfare, and mainstream attitude toward immigrants, can affect the migrant decision of whether to stay or not (Portes 1999). On the other hand, whether homeland governments encourage an on-going connection with expatriate communities also has a significant influence on migrant decisions regarding further movement.

In the case of PRC migrants, the success of China’s economic reform and its strong business/career development opportunities are obvious forces that encourage many PRC migrants to return to the homeland. The Chinese government’s proactive policy toward “overseas talents” is another strong “pull” factor. Recent study found that the broad policy guidelines set by the central government had moulded an attractive socio-economic and political environment to welcome overseas talents, which was designed to reverse “brain-drain” of the PRC. In response to the central government’s policy, local government authorities also became aggressive recruiters of overseas talents. Apart from the government, universities and government-funded research institutes also actively engaged in encouraging return migration (Zweig 2006).

Firstly, numerous state programmes promised generous financial incentives to overseas scholars and students who had completed their studies if they would return to China. For example, a number of programmes had been set up, such as “Financial Support for Outstanding Young Professors Programme” (1987), “Seed Fund for Returned Overseas Scholars” (1990), the “Cross-Century Outstanding Personnel Training Programme” (1991), “National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars” (1994) and “The One Hundred, One Thousand, and Ten Thousand Programme” (1995). The state also increased funding for universities and the Chinese Academy of Sciences to be spent on enhancing the quality of researchers and faculty staff. Additional funds for universities were also used to attract overseas talents. Secondly, to encourage overseas talents to return, the Chinese government improved the dissemination of information about conditions in China and encouraged communication between organisations in China and scholars overseas. The state mobilised officials in embassies and consulates to engage overseas scholars and organise communication activities. In the 38 countries with the highest concentrations of overseas
students, the government set up 52 educational bureaus in embassies and consulates. Service Centres for Overseas Study under the Ministry of Education were set up in most major Chinese cities. Their duty was to dispatch “recruitment delegations” to encourage overseas graduates to return. Thirdly, the government adopted policies with an aim of simplifying and easing the process of return and resettlement. These include special measures of housing allocation, subsidised housing, schooling for children of returnees and job arrangement of returnees’ spouses. The residency and entry visas requirements for returnees with foreign citizenship were also simplified. Long-term residence visas for returnees with foreign passports were also established. Fourthly, aiming at strengthening local economic development, the preferential policies instituted by local governments that allow returnees to work in cities other than their hometowns created a new talent market. This, in turn, stimulated inter-city competition for returnees. Now, cities could use various incentives to attract overseas talents who had emigrated from other cities. For those private enterprises established by returnees, they were entitled to tax breaks and import tax exemptions (including cars). Many cities also established “enterprise incubators” for returnees. These are called “parks for overseas scholars to establish businesses”, and serve as entry points for many overseas entrepreneurs to establish business in China. Lastly, institutional efforts were also made to attract overseas talents. Various central government programmes encouraged key academic and research institutes to recruit quality staff trained overseas. For universities national wide, the most important programme is the Cheung Kong Scholar Programme. Many universities developed their own programmes to recruit academics from overseas. Under such programmes, recruited overseas talents were granted high salaries, privileged academic positions and access to national and institutional research funds. Additionally, the government encouraged overseas scholars to return even just for short periods to engage in cooperative projects or giving guest lectures. The aim of this policy was to give overseas scholars a taste of how China had changed, thereby encouraging them to return permanently (Cao 2004; Zweig 2006; Wang et al. 2006).

Apart from the attractions offered by the homeland, a superior work environment, and the potential for further professional advancement also influence the decision of Chinese immigrants to leave New Zealand and move to a third destination. For example, many new arrivals in Australia from New Zealand are no longer native-born New Zealanders, but rather new migrants who were originally born in Asia, including the PRC (Bedford, Ho and Hugo
Moreover, a globalised economy sustained by transnational flows that involve exchanges of goods and information and contacts between countries also facilitates the establishment of businesses across continents and its associated movement of human capital (Garcia 2006; Portes 1999).

In this sense, the PRC migrants leave New Zealand not simply because they failed to settle down there. Some studies suggest that many new Chinese migrants left New Zealand mainly because they could not find suitable jobs at their skill level and saw better opportunities in their homeland or other places (Henderson 2003: 153; Ho et al. 1997). The apparent trend indicates that they move because of better opportunities that often New Zealand cannot provide. Ip in her study on recent returning PRC migrants argued that “many of the PRC migrants made the homeward move precisely because they had the high qualities needed to be successful” (Ip 2006b: 79). It is common sense for migrants to move for a better life; the seeking of opportunities can take place not only in the homeland where economic activities may be superior to those in the adopted immigration country, but also can be expanded anywhere around the world where better opportunities do exist.

2.4 Summary

In this section, the recent transformation in the PRC perspectives on international emigration and New Zealand’s international migration system were examined with regard to their impact on immigration flow from the PRC. That discussion was followed by an overview of the profile of the PRC cohort. Focuses were given to migration patterns, employment status, and educational background. Lastly, this section highlights one special characteristic of the PRC migrants - their constant mobility. It needs to be pointed out also that when New Zealand’s post-1986 immigration policy targeted migrants who are skilful, well educated and possess considerable investment capital, there was little awareness by the policy-maker that this targeted group might not settle permanently in New Zealand. Emigration nowadays for many migrants is not necessarily an irrevocable step no matter what destination is chosen. Migrants
in this modern age will never forfeit their options to maintain frequent contact with their homeland as well as their adopted country.

The next chapter offers a discussion of the systematic theoretical framework employed for this project. It details the growth of the academic literature for the theme of “transnationalism” and the ways that this theory has contributed to migration studies. The literature review of the theories around “transnationalism” will point to how this project was constructed theoretically.
Chapter Three: “Transnationalism” in Migration Studies - Constructing the Theoretical Framework

Since the main focus of this research is the transnational character of the new PRC migrants, the primary theory employed to lay out the theoretical groundwork for the work was transnationalism, especially transnationalism in migration studies.

The study of transnational migration stems from the interrogation of traditional international migration scholarship and the academic debates involving migration and globalisation (Bailey 2001; Faist 2004; Kivisto 2001). The reality that increasing numbers of migrants maintain contact and involvement with their origin nations and locales and also engage in cross-border activities has brought about serious questions regarding the processes, causes, and consequences of these new patterns of migratory movements. Previous scholarship in migration study has often viewed migration as a linear process or series of processes. It can be a permanent uprooting followed by assimilation into a new society or a temporary sojourn followed by a permanent return to the homeland or circulatory movement between a fixed home base and a temporary destination in which an unequal commitment to two places is maintained. Within this basic linear framework, as Heisler points out:

… theory and research in international migration have centered on two basic sets of questions: Why does migration occur, and how is it sustained over time? What happens to the migrants in the receiving societies and what are the economic, social, and political consequences of their presence? (Heisler 2008: 83)

The interpretation of Heisler’s opinions might suggest that there are two primary study focuses in the previous scholarship of migration study. The first has been a focus on the causes behind migration and the second was migrant adaptation and settlement issues and the impact of migration on the immigrant-receiving countries. These two focuses have remained perpetual themes in migration study and indeed extensively examined. Both the push-and-pull and the centre-periphery models are often used to chart the reasons for migration. The
former simply concentrates on internal factors in the migrants’ receiving and sending countries that together conspire to promote emigration. The latter views migration flow between emigration and immigration countries as a structural dependence that exists between the core and the periphery regions in a capitalist world economy. Namely, emigration countries are post-colonial regions that are economically less developed and a politically penetrated periphery, while the immigration countries are in a higher position in the politico-economic world hierarchy. This structural dependence between emigration and immigration countries is the primary cause of migration from the developing world to the economically more developed world (Faist 2000b: 11-13).

While previous migration scholarship paid attention to analysing the causes of migration, research priorities were also given to the post-migration processes and the patterns of migrant adaptation and integration, or sometimes even exclusion from their host society (Heisler 2008: 83; Vertovec 2001b). The assimilation perspective was regarded in the past and is still regarded to some extent as a useful concept that offers possible ways to understand and describe the migrant adaptation and integration process and the settlement outcome (Alba and Nee 1999: 137; Gans 1999: 161-162; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 15-18; Heisler 2008: 83-86).

However, the current migration processes commonly associated with globalisation have brought into serious question the previous models and theories used to examine the movement of people. The main problem associated with the traditional models and theories of migration is the lack of a global perspective that can fully explain the complexity of the current situation and changed processes of migration. For example, the centre-periphery model that implies an enduring trajectory of migration from global South to North is insufficient to explain the recent return migration process from the economically well-developed countries to the economically developing countries, such as China and India. Traditional neoclassical economics and the new economics of migration that simply view

22 The assimilation theory pioneered by the members of the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920s and 1930s postulates that the assimilation of immigrants is an eventual outcome of immigration and a process in which immigrants break off all homeland social relations and cultural ties and take full acceptance of the mainstream culture and become totally incorporated with the economic, cultural, and political life of the immigration host society.
migration as a flow and an outcome of individuals and families’ conscious consideration of their economic well-being (Massey et al. 1997: 258-261; Massey et al. 1993; Massey, Goldring and Durand 1994) is insufficient for a comprehensive understanding of the variety of migration rationale beyond economic motivations. Although the “world system theory”\textsuperscript{23} moves beyond the examination of migration within a structured framework that emphasises micro-level economies as the main motivation of migration, its essential view of migration as labour transfer between different geographic regions that perform unequal functions in a global division of labour (Massey et al. 1994; Massey et al. 1993) carries certain limitations, because other important aspects, such as social, political, cultural, and historical factors that are actually associated with migration are ignored (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 8). The theory of circular migration emphasises the importance of dual home bases (i.e. the homeland and immigrant-receiving countries) within the migrants’ movement circle (Hugo 2003; Vertovec 2007), which is highly relevant to our understanding of the movement pattern of recent Chinese migrants. However, other movement patterns that are beyond this homeland-receiving country circle, are largely left out.

Theories that particularly focus on the post-migration processes of adaptation also seem to be largely out-of-date. For example, assimilation theory that relies on the ideology of hegemony and emphasises the efforts migrants made to integrate into the host society seems hardly convincing today when exploring current migrants’ frequent commuting behaviours that look highly likely to be an alternative strategy of adaptation. Another main limitation of the traditional models and theories comes from the way migration study has been built. Early social science, the cradle of migration study, has been dominated by static models for a long time wherein society and culture were viewed as bounded units within nation-states and territories to set the backdrop of viewing migration as only a fixed and closed process (Bailey 2001; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 6-8).

\textsuperscript{23} The “world system theory” was developed by sociologist, Immanuel Wallerstein in 1976. This theory generally sees migration as a natural consequence of economic globalisation and market penetration across national boundaries. The penetration of capitalist economic relations into peripheral, non-capitalist societies creates a mobile population that is prone to migrate abroad. As capitalism has expanded outward from its core mainly in Western Europe, North America, and Oceania, ever-larger portions of the globe and growing shares of the human population have been incorporated into the world market economy. Increased labour demand in the capitalised sectors inevitably generates a large-scale international labour transfer from non-capitalised sectors.
The inadequacy of such theories and models in examining current international migration has stimulated increasingly diverse debate on the topic of migration. This debate is often paralleled by a discussion of globalisation, partly because the increasing occurrence of transnational activity among many migrants is facilitated by the process of globalisation. It is also an outcome of the increasing availability and affordability of transportation, changed border configurations and international relations, and the development and increased use of new information technologies. These debates have forced migration researchers to reconsider the ways they examine international migration and rethinking the basic concepts closely associated with international migration, such as citizenship, race, class, and ethnicity.

Migration is increasingly perceived as a fluid and dynamic process of movement. In this sense, migration is neither a process of uprooting and leaving the homeland permanently nor a process of sojourning with constant longing and expectation of an eventual return to the homeland. Rather, based on an on-going connection between the homeland and the immigration destination country, it is an open process in which migrants never completely leave their homeland nor totally stay at a new destination. It is a process with the potential for continuous movement ahead.

The rest of this chapter is divided into three parts. The first will briefly discuss the original theoretical articulation of the framework of transnational migration, its related critiques, and further conceptual refinement and development. After this review, the second part will detail recent developments in transnational migration studies, which is the focus of this literature review. Particular research areas that closely relate to my research topic are identified and discussed. The last part will summarise the development of the transnationalism theory and focus on the discussion of how relevant the theory of transnationalism in migration studies is for this project.

### 3.1 Theoretical articulation of transnational migration, its critiques, and conceptual refinement and development

#### 3.1.1 Original theoretical articulation of transnational migration

Some of the first efforts that were made to conceptualise transnationalism in migration studies were by American anthropologists, Nina Glick-Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-
Szanton, in the early 1990s. Their primary aim in conceptualising transnational migration was to chart a new research paradigm “in which global economic processes, and the continuing contradictory persistence of nation-states can be linked to migrants’ social relationships, political actions, loyalties, beliefs, and identities” (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 8). The debut of this transnational perspective in migration study was an introductory chapter titled, “Transnationalism: A new analytic framework for understanding migration” published in 1992 in the edited collection of articles on migration titled, *Towards A Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered* (Glick-Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992). In the chapter, the authors made clear that they sought to lay out the conceptual parameters for a transnational framework that could analyse international migration. Two years later, another book titled, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* was published by the same research group (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc-Szanton 1994). In this book, two introductory articles reiterated and expanded the scope of the original transnational migration concept (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1994a; Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1994b). These three chapters together were the first theoretical articulations of the transnational perspective on contemporary migration. In the following section, I treat these three articles as a unified statement of the authors’ opinion and focus on them to provide a brief critical review of the original concept of transnational migration. Other migration theories will be referred to, were needed, to show the benchmark for the advancement to using transnational perspectives when studying migration.

The idea of “transnationalism” in migration study was based on empirical case studies of increased cross-border activities of contemporary migrants from Haiti, the Eastern Caribbean, and the Philippines living in New York. In this work, the authors defined transnationalism as follows:

… the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders. (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1994b: 7)
The term “transnationalism” is often used interchangeably with the phrase “transnational migration” in migration studies to emphasise migrants’ on-going and simultaneous embeddings in more than one society. Migrants who build social relationships across geographic, cultural and political borders, develop and retain multiple relations that span borders, and practice constant geographic mobility were defined as transnational migrants (Glick-Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 1).

The conceptualisation of transnational migration, as Kivisto later critically commented, basically made two points, “one historical and the other theoretical” (Kivisto 2001: 552). The historical point of view advocates a dichotomy of migrants from the past and present migrants. The former would break off homeland social relations and cultural ties and intended to fully assimilate into and seek permanent residence in the host society. The latter were more likely to conduct their lives across national borders and actively engage in cross-border activities, especially between their host society and their homeland; thus, they would “bring two societies into a single social field” (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1994a: 27; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 1). This view was regarded by the authors as expressing something qualitatively different about migrants today compared to their historical counterparts.

The theoretical point that Glick-Schiller and co-authors made suggests that the traditional existing theoretical frameworks for analysing migration were not up to the task of analysing the multi-faceted situation of contemporary migration. The transnational approach derives from a recognition that the constant flow of people back and forth cannot be captured accurately by the term “migrants,” which traditionally evokes the meaning that migrants are people who uproot and move themselves to their country of destination and then settle there permanently. Other categories/terms are also used to identify different patterns of migration, such as “return migrants”, “temporary migrants”, “sojourners”, or “diaspora”, but are still not adequate to provide a holistic view of the contemporary situation of migrants. Glick-Schiller in her later work makes this point more explicitly by saying that scholars should be “discard[ing] previous categorizations of return, circulatory, or permanent immigration” (Glick-Schiller 1997: 158). Bailey supports the idea of changing the typologies for categorising migrants. He argues that the traditional classification of migration types is, defined by using national borders as the paradigm of analysis in which individual migrants
and groups are viewed as “retain[ing] fixed and monogamous connections to the territory of one nation-state or another, either the host or the origin”, is highly problematic (Bailey 2001: 415). The reality usually undermines the generalisability of using national borders as the defining basis for portraying the true picture of current migration.

To chart a new research paradigm, Glick-Schiller and co-authors introduced two key conceptual points. The first is that the study of migrants and migration in the social sciences must unwind from its traditional focus on the nation-state as the key container of social action. The authors criticise the limited focus of the previous migration, which failed to consider migration within a global context and the much wider social space that contemporary migration today inhabits. They advocated discarding the analysis of migration within nation states and situating contemporary migration in a global context “by recognizing that the world is currently bound together by a global capitalist system” (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 8). The second key conceptual point the authors made is that within the framework of transnational migration there is a need to rethink certain long-accepted understandings of class, race, nationalism, and ethnicity. What Glick-Schiller and co-authors suggest is that if migration is conceptualised in a new way as transnationalism indicates, concepts such as race, class, ethnicity, and nationalism that are immediately associated with migration have to be viewed in an alternative way (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 11-20). Fundamentally, race, class, nationalism and ethnicity in a transnationalism framework need to be more flexible to take into account the new multiple forms of identification that transnationals and transnational migrants potentially possess and apply.

Apart from these two key conceptual points is another important premise to understand regarding the conceptualisation of transnationalism. That premise is that transnationalism is grounded in the daily lives, activities, and social relationships of individual migrants (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 5). In other words, transnationalism is a grassroots activity. This idea was further developed and conceptualised by other scholars as transnationalism “from below” or “grassroots transnationalism” (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999). This concept suggests that transnational migration and movement does not originate and is not initiated by actions or policies of governments, national or local. Rather, it is an individualised process and solidly grounded in personal and family decisions (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999; Smith 1992; Smith 1994). The concept is a complementary one
to the concept of transnationalism “from above” that is regularly manifested by multinational corporations, media, governments, and other macro-level structures and processes. These structures and processes transcend two or more societies controlled by powerful elites who seek economic, political or social dominance in the world (Guarnizo 1997; Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 1-11; Mahler 2003: 66-67). In terms of this project, a good grasp of the differences between the concepts of transnationalism “from below” and transnationalism “from above” is important, since migration, especially voluntary migration, is essentially an individual choice or a decision made by an individual family, but at the same time also closely related to government policies in both the immigration sending and the immigration receiving countries.

The original idea of transnationalism proposed several reasons for transnational migration. The first rationale is deeply rooted in “a global restructuring of capital based on changing forms of capital accumulation” (Glick-Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995: 50) and economic dislocations in both the Third World and the industrialised nations. This imbalance of capital distribution stimulates an increased immigration volume, but simultaneously makes it difficult for migrants to construct “a secure terrain of settlement” (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 9). Under such circumstances, migrants construct a transnational existence as a survival strategy. The second rationale follows the first. Rapid economic, cultural, and labour exchanges can heighten the exclusion of new immigrants from the host populations or in some cases even from the host institutions. Concerns about labour market competition and economic well-being can be racialised and linked to immigration-related issues, and immigrants often become the scapegoat for any tightening of labour markets. Thus, racial discrimination and hostile attitudes toward migrants can result in the non-permanent residence of migrants in immigration receiving countries and even contribute to a permanent departure of migrants to seek opportunities either in the homeland or elsewhere. The last rationale refers to the fact that national building projects of both the home and the host society still try to cultivate national and political loyalties among immigrants, which has a significant impact on migrant maintenance of a connection to both societies (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1995).

Still another widely-recognised reason frequently mentioned by scholars is the availability of technological advances in long-distance transport and communications, such as jet air
transport, long-distance telephone, facsimile communication and the Internet. These provide a technological basis for the emergence of transnationalism. With these facilitating factors, the space and cost of transnational transportation and communication have shrunk. Thus, the frequency and scope of transnational activities of contemporary migrants more easily accelerates and in recent years, expanded to an unprecedented level (Bailey 2001; Portes 1999; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999; Vertovec 1999).

Overall, the original concept of transnational migration, as developed by Glick-Schiller and co-authors, is an additional conceptual tool useful for analysing and understanding contemporary migration and increasing migrant mobility. Even though this theoretical concept has attracted a series of critiques from scholars based on different research perspectives, it still provides a useful platform for further theoretical development and refinement of the transnational concept.

3.1.2 Transnationalism in vogue and its critiques

As a novel theoretical concept, it is not surprising that the emergence of the transnational perspective resulted in rapidly growing interests in the field of migration study. As Bailey points out, of the “scholars of migration studies, many are now “turning transnational”” (Bailey 2001: 413). The range of activities considered within this realm of transnational migration expanded even further. The economic, political, and cultural dimensions of transnational migration have all been vigorously examined (Appadurai 1997; Appadurai and Breckenridge 1989; Beaverstock and Boardwell 2000; Castells 2002; Cohen 1996; Colic-Peisker 2002; Hannerz 1996; Lessinger 1992; Ong and Nonini 1997; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Roudometof and Karpathakis 2002; Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997; Smith 1994; Smith 2001; Yeung 1998), and the term “transnationalism” has been applied to the discussions in divergent ways. Vertovec identified at least six distinct uses of the term transnationalism. These include transnationalism as social morphology, a type of consciousness, a mode of cultural reproduction, an avenue for capital movement, a site of political engagement, and representative of the (re)construction of notions of place in the contemporary world (Vertovec 1999). This wide range of usages of the term
“transnationalism” in the research actually means, like Vertovec admits, that “in the excited rush to address an interesting area of global activity and theoretical development, there is not surprisingly much conceptual muddling” (Vertovec 1999: 448).

Vertovec also summarised the major critiques that the transnational approach toward migration processes attracted. The most common critique was not on the framework itself, but the use of the concept. First, there is a lack of an exact and clear sense of what transnationalism refers to. A wide range of phenomena that require different levels of analysis have been all included in transnational migration studies. Vertovec suggested that rather than using a single over-arching theory of transnationalism and migration, a theorisation of typology was necessary (Vertovec 2001b).

Secondly, the concept over-emphasises migrant mobility by ignoring the difficulties of movement and an historical perspective. Reasoning along the same lines, Guainizo and co-authors and Pries point out that the manner of ethnographies commonly employed in transnational migration research tends to sample exclusively the dependent variable - highly mobile transnational migrants. This focus results in a false impression that the more ordinary majority who are indeed not that mobile are represented as being as highly transnational as those few migrants who are indeed highly mobile. This tendency exaggerates the existence and the extent of the transnational phenomenon (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Pries 2004). They point out that migrant transnational engagement “is far from being as extensive”, and it is only “regularly undertaken by a small minority” (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003: 1211).

Thirdly, since the empirical basis of the early transnational research largely relied on case studies in certain nation states or specific regions, there was a persistence of what might be called “methodological nationalism” in much of the transnational migration research (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002). This refers to the tendency to employ research methods common to regional study wherein the unit of analysis of migration was delimited and constrained within just the nation-states and territories. Some critiques also suggest that this persistence of methodological nationalism in migration studies was caused by the gap between the development of new conceptual measures and the methodological tools (Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003; Hendry 2003; Marcus 1995; Vertovec 1999). Even though early
research on theorising transnational migration proposed the advanced idea that research on migration should become “unbound” from a focus on the nation-state as the key container of social action, the relevant methodological development was weak. The “unbound” idea in transnational theory was not well executed in transnational methodologies as they have not yet been freed from the constraints of empirical studies based on particular nation states.

Lastly, there is a claim that the early studies on transnational migration were empirically weak and needed be re-grounded empirically, conceptually, and disciplinarily (Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 11-15; Mitchell 1997; Vertovec 2001b). Additionally, a significant amount of the scholarship sought to generalise the patterns of transnationalism in a case-by-case fashion where the research was often based on individual narratives within small ethnic migrant groups. Mitchell called for the theories and vocabularies of transnationalism to be explicitly connected to “actual movements of things and people across space” (Mitchell 1997: 110). From a geographical perspective, Mitchell also suggests that scholars in transnational studies should start “bringing geography back in” as a way to locating a deterritorialised analysis and formulate a more nuanced theorisation of transnationalism (Mitchell 1997). Similar arguments have been made using the cultural studies approach and saying that transnationalism is often treated as “… a set of abstracted, dematerialised cultural flows, giving scant attention either to the concrete, everyday changes in people’s lives or the structural reconfigurations that accompany global capitalism …” (Nonini and Ong 1997: 13).

Mitchell and Crang and co-authors further argue that a lack of empirical details in the field of transnational migration studies in turn results in other weaknesses in the field, such as an unclear definition of what are or are not transnational activities, and continued methodological nationalism (Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003; Mitchell 1997). Guarnizo and co-authors point out that a lack of speciality in defining the size, scope, and determinants of transnational practices have been consistent weaknesses in this field and never addressed sufficiently. The authors recalled that more empirical evidence of the scale and determinants of transnational activism are needed to establish a robust theoretical and analytical framework for the concept (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003).

Perhaps, the works most responsible for contributing to the further development of the theoretical conceptualisation of transnational migration are by Portes, Vertovec and Faist
(Faist 2000a; Faist 2000b; Faist 2004; Portes 1999; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999; Vertovec 1999; Vertovec 2001a; Vertovec 2001b). Broadly speaking, the research proposed to refine and develop a theoretical conceptualisation of transnational migration, is mainly devoted to four aspects. The first would define the analytical scope; the second, delimit the phenomenon; the third, address the significance of transnational migration; and the last, approach transnational migration by challenging current social theory, especially the “nation-state container” theory. In the next sub-section (Section 3.1.3), I will briefly discuss these aspects.

3.1.3 Conceptual refinement and development

Portes and co-authors point out that transnational migration study was highly fragmented by saying that “narratives presented in existing studies, for example, often use disparate units of analysis (that is, individuals, groups, organizations, local states) and mix diverse levels of abstraction” (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999: 218). The authors suggest that the concept of transnationalism must be turned into “a clearly defined and measurable object of research” (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999: 218). By inheriting the concept of transnationalism “from below”, Portes and co-authors are particularly interested in “bottom-up” transnational activities and define individuals and their support networks as the proper unit of analysis. A structured working typology grounded within the framework of transnationalism “from below” and “from above” as economic, political and socio-cultural categories, is also proposed (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999). From the authors’ point of view, that categorisation falls appropriately within the definition of both transnationalism “from below” and transnationalism “from above”. Such an approach is used to define the analytical unit and to categorise different types of transnationalism, even if it is largely based on methodological convenience (Kivisto 2001), at least provides a platform to use to organise the chaotic empirical studies on transnational migration.

For purposes of providing further clarity about what transnationalism refers to in migration studies, Portes and co-authors realised the importance of delimiting the scope of “transnational migration”. They attempted to delimit the use of transnationalism to those
migration-related activities that involve a “significant proportion of persons in the relevant universe” and “require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation” (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999: 219). The authors particularly stressed that occasional contacts, trips, and activities across national borders for members of an expatriate community are not sufficiently distinct enough to justify as being transnational migration or to form an empirical basis for a new area of investigation. The true transnational migration phenomenon should be characterised by a “high intensity of exchanges, new modes of transacting, and the multiplication of activities that require cross-border travel and contacts on a sustained basis” (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999: 219). Such a point of view implies that not all recent migrants are actual transnationals.

Portes also attempts to identify the necessary preconditions that can extend the transnational phenomenon to the current intensive level. He particularly asserts that people with greater economic resources and human capital are more likely to forge transnational linkages (Portes 1999; Portes 2001). Apart from this, Portes identifies other important forces that can shape individual migrants’ movement choices. These forces include the migration incentive for the first movement, the maintenance of social networks with the homeland, and whether homeland issues remain salient for immigrants (Portes 1999; Portes 2001). Vertovec concurs with these points and then adds a more macro factor that also contributes to the formation of transnational linkages, namely, the shifting economic and political circumstances in both sending and receiving countries, which may have a significant influence on shaping migrant desire to be involved in economic and political activities across borders (Vertovec 2001b).

In addressing the significance of transnationalism, Portes and co-authors compared transnationalism to the traditional theory of assimilation. In some of the literature, Portes and co-authors view transnationalism as “an alternative adaptation path for immigrants” (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999: 228). Elsewhere, Portes perceives transnationalism “as an effective antidote to the tendency towards downward assimilation” (Portes 1999: 471). Regardless of the nuance, the point Portes and co-authors intend to make is that involvement in those transnational activities does not contradict the successful integration into a host society; rather, they facilitate successful adaptation by providing economic security and geographic mobility for immigrants through non-conventional pathways. The conventional path for economic success and climbing to a higher social status largely relies on the degree
and speed of migrant acculturation and integration into the mainstream society of the host country. However, the non-conventional path is cultivating strong social networks across national borders to create a transnational social field in which economic security can be achieved, followed by a gradual lift in social status in the immigration host country (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999).

Economic well-being is perceived as crucial for immigrants, because it is an infrastructural and material basis for immigrants who intend to climb the social ladder. Nonini and Ong’s work on Chinese transnationalism supports Portes’s point by perceiving Chinese transnationalism as a process as well as a strategy of capital accumulation, and such strategies are integral part of the transnational process and in turn are affected by them (Nonini and Ong 1997: 3-5). As well as addressing the economic aspect of transnationalism, Portes also sees transnationalism as a way for immigrants to reinforce their self-confidence and re-affirm their collective worth by locating their original cultural anchors; thus, offers a level of confidence, so immigrants can overcome the difficulties of adaptation to a certain degree (Portes 1999).

Another significant wave of theoretical development in transnational migration studies was to conceptualise transnational migration by challenging social theory and reformulating the notions of space and social structure (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). This development explicitly challenges the “nation-state container” theory that limits the research entity to migration studies within national borders; thus, missing out on the movement flow between nations and the cross-border engagements of migrants. Two widely used concepts that aim to re-conceptualise the meaning of transnationalism are then “transnational social fields” and “transnational social spaces”.

The use of “transnational social fields” was initiated by several scholars (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992; Goldring 1998; Levitt 2001; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999), but without a detailed articulation of what that concept really means (Kivistö 2001). When Glick-Schiller later revisited the idea of transnationalism, she suggested that “transnational social fields” is an unbounded terrain in which the practices and interpersonal relationships of the transnational migrants span specific geographic, cultural, and political borders (Glick-Schiller 2004: 455). Others have suggested that transnationalism changes people’s relations to space, particularly by creating “social fields” that connect and position
some of the actors in more than one location (Goldring 1998; Levitt 2001). Levitt then suggests a key point that “transnational social fields … often form from connections between multiple localities” (Levitt 2001: 197), within which lie all aspects of social life that migration engenders, including economic relations and social, religious, and political connections between “here” and “there”. Portes frequently used the notion of “transnational social fields” in his discussion and examination of transnational communities (Portes 1996a; Portes 1996b; Portes 1998). Recently, Levitt and Glick-Schiller strongly suggested that within the transnational migration research, social field “as a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed”, became “a powerful tool for conceptualizing the potential array of social relations linking those who move and those who stay behind” (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2007: 188).

The concept of “transnational social spaces” also applies to the transnational approach for investigating international migration by moving beyond “the container theory of society” (Beck 2000). This is a boundary-breaking process in which two or sometimes more nation-states that are closely linked together become a singular new social space (Faist 2000a; Pries 2001: 3-6). Compared with the concept of “transnational social fields”, the geographic metaphoric use of the concept of space that was stimulated by studies of social practice and relationships among migrant communities spread across multiple localities (Castells 1996: 410-411; Vertovec 2001b), was theoretically conceptualised in a more systematic way. When Thomas Faist, a political scientist, first introduced this concept, he clearly defined it as: “combinations of ties, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that reach across the borders of multiple states” (Faist 2000a: 191). He privileged social relations and institutions, defining these spaces as “characterised by a high density of interstitial ties on informal or formal, that is to say institutional levels” (Faist 2000a: 190). Influenced by the theoretical perspective of the Swedish school of time-geographers (Kivisto 2001), Faist’s use of the term “space” was not equivalent to “place” which usually denotes physical localities. His emphasis on the term “space” was both symbolic and social, and different from physical places and expressed as follows:

Space here does not only refer to physical features, but also to larger opportunity structures, the social life and the subjective images, values,
and meanings that the specific and limited place represents to migrants. Space is thus different from place in that it encompasses or spans various territorial locations. It includes two or more places. Space has a social meaning that extends beyond simple territoriality; only with concrete social or symbolic ties does it gain meaning for potential migrants. (Faist 2000b: 45-46)

In these new social spaces, not only are people, goods, and information circulated, but also ideas, symbols, and material culture (Faist 2000b: 13). Faist emphasised that trust and reciprocity are crucial in the sustainability of transnational networks (Faist 2000a), and Kivisto explained that reciprocity and trust play an important role “in combating economic risk” and “serve to underpin and make instrumental transactions” (Kivisto 2001: 568).

Three types of transnational social spaces are identified using a structural approach: Transnational reciprocity in small groups, namely, kinship groups; transnational exchange in circuits; and solidarity within transnational communities. As Faist suggests, the basis for the formulation of each type of transnational social space has its own characteristic\(^{24}\), and such a categorisation of three types of “transnational social spaces” indeed indicates three different units of analysis - ranging from a more individual-level analysis to a more community-level analysis (Faist 2000a). Thus, the concept of “transnational social space” is well framed both theoretically and methodologically.

Faist identified the factors that contribute to the formation of transnational social space as economic, political, cultural, and technological. Economically, transnational business networks established by migrants in the emigration country (e.g. lower production cost) can

\(^{24}\) Transnational kinship groups are formed by those who uphold the same social norm of equivalence, and whose transnational ties are sustained by a personal reciprocity in which one receives from others while others may require something in return in the meantime. Remittance is a typical example among transnational kinship groups. Transnational circuits require an instrumental reciprocity/exchange and are characterised by “a constant circulation of goods, people, and information transversing the borders of emigration and immigration states” (Faist, 2000b: 206). Transnational communities are based upon a solidarity within which members share collective identity and are connected by “dense and strong social and symbolic ties over time and across space to patterns of networks and circuits in two countries” (Faist, 2000b: 207). Such a connection requires not only personal intimacy and emotional depth, but also moral commitment, social cohesion, continuity in time, and “a common repertoire of symbolic and collective representations” (Faist, 2000b: 208).
stimulate the existence of sustainable transnational linkages across borders. Obstacles of economic integration encountered by many immigrants, especially first-generation immigrants in the immigration-receiving country, also contribute significantly to the creation of transnational social spaces. Many migrants choose to conduct cross-border businesses or conduct businesses offshore where the social and business networks they are more familiar with become a strategy to overcome economic difficulty or maintain economic well-being. In this sense, transnationalism is treated as an additional/optional trajectory of immigrant adaptation. Culturally and socially, the lack of cultural belonging to the mainstream society or social discrimination towards immigrants is suggested as being extremely conductive to the formation of transnational social spaces, within which immigrants can generate a culturally comfortable zone for themselves by keeping physically or virtually constant contact with their original culture. Politically, liberal democracies and the multicultural claim of nations provide wider opportunities for immigrants to maintain their cultural distinctiveness and contacts with their countries of origin. Technologically, the development of communication technology and improvement in means of long-distance travel has accelerated the emergence of transnational social spaces (Faist 2000a).

It should also be acknowledged that the most advanced aspect of “transnational social field” and “transnational social space” is the explicit challenge of the “nation-state container” theory that tends to treat the nation-state as the norm and its boundaries as a given unit in social analysis (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2007: 186-187). Earlier social theory applied to migration study was the assimilation theory where immigration adaptation within nation-states was considered a normal process and one not significantly influenced by border-crossing transactions. However, the increasingly large scale cross-border activities that contemporary migrants engage in provide strong evidence that those traditional theories do not relate well to the contemporary reality.

3.2 Re-grounding transnationalism in migration studies

Further development in transnational migration studies has been characterised by more detailed empirical work and more thoughtful conceptualisation. Greater efforts that have been
put forward in the further development of the concept can be summarised as follows: 1) development of new research approaches; 2) More micro-level empirical studies of transnational practices of migrants, leading to an empirical and theoretical re-grounding of the field; 3) expanded studies on to the consideration of broader effects that transnational activities of migrants have on the broader context of particular localities. The following text discusses the three aspects and particularly focuses on the research areas most relevant to my research topic.

### 3.2.1 Developing new research approaches

A great contribution to developing a new research approach for transnational migration studies took place in the field of anthropology and in particular with the work of George Marcus (1995) and Ulf Hannerz (Hannerz 1998). George Marcus’s work on multi-sited ethnography and his argument that transnational research techniques need to involve more than one site provides enormous inspiration for further transnational migration scholarship. Marcus presented seven propositions for transnational research: follow the people; follow the thing; follow the metaphor; follow the plot, story or allegory; follow the life or biography; follow the conflict or engage in “strategically situated (single-site) ethnography” capable of grasping a multi-sited context (Marcus 1995: 110). He particularly indicated that migration studies that focus on mobile and contingently settled populations across borders “are perhaps the most common contemporary research genre of this basic mode of multi-sited ethnography” (Marcus 1995: 106). Hannerz advocated further, stating that the research should be “not merely multi-local, but also trans-local” (Hannerz 1998: 247). These approaches do not simply suggest conducting research, such as interviews or observations, in different places. Instead, the authors suggest that by shifting the research focus from a single site to more sites, any links and ruptures between or across places can be unfolded more easily.

This multi-sited ethnographic approach has inspired many transnational researchers in a range of disciplines. Closely related to Chinese migration studies, one example is David Ley and Audrey Kobayashi’s study on returnee Hong Kong immigrants from Canada (Ley and Kobayashi 2005). The authors employed a multi-sited ethnographical approach to conduct
interviews with those returnees and illustrate the back and forth movements between the immigration-receiving and the immigration-sending countries. As the authors recognised, a multi-site ethnographic approach:

… rounded out transnational experiences and strategies across the life cycle … As the participants[they] lived across two territories linked by dense electronic messaging and frequent travel, stretching relationships and resources across space, so our field research needed to range between the two sites that comprised their blended social field”. (Ley and Kobayashi 2005: 123)

Efforts to develop appropriate transnational research strategies have considered focusing more on empirical research on the “local” specificity of various socio-spatial transformations. Guarnizo and Smith suggest that traditional methods for studying migrant populations, such as ethnography, life histories, and historical case studies, must be contextualised into a “transnational socio-economic and political transformation” (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 24). In other words, the authors propose that both macro- and micro-determinants of transnational activities and practices should be integrated into the full analysis.

Such development of new research approaches toward transnational migration studies provided a methodological guide for my own research project. As I will discuss in detail in the next chapter, this research project adopts a multi-sited ethnographic framework for the research topic.

3.2.2 Micro-level empirical studies of the migrant transnational practices

In the recent development of transnational migration studies, there have been a large number of detailed micro-studies of various contemporary manifestations of transnational migration and the associated issues of ethnic identities and conflicting allegiances. These studies provide empirically rich data and evidence of the scale and determinants of transnational activities pursued by many migrants and resulted in an empirical re-grounding and
subsequently, some thoughtful conceptualisation of what transnational migration really means.

There has been a large body of research that tries to explain the variations in transnational practices across migrant groups. Some studies have focused on certain migrant groups’ economic and political engagement with both the sending and the receiving countries (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Portes, Haller and Guarnizo 2002; Smith 1998; Wong 2004). For example, Mexican migrants in the US who keep sending regular remittances back to their villages are a typical example of the transnational economic activities some migrants engage in regularly (Conway and Cohen 1998). Similar transnational economic activity of remitting money back to the homeland also takes place in many Pacific island countries (Brown 1994; Brown 1995; Connell and Brown 1995). Guarnizi and co-workers’ study shows the scope, extent, and social determinants for Colombian, Dominican and Salvadoran migrants’ transnational political engagement between their homelands and the US (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003). There are particular studies too that focus on the actual social organisations built by transnational migrants (Caglar 2006; Goldring 1999; Goldring 2002) and the religious practices among certain transnational migrant groups (Levitt 2003c; Levitt 2004; Levitt 2007).

More recently, research interest in the use of information technologies to communicate both across and within territorial borders is increasingly prevalent. Following the discussion that relatively affordable transportation and communication have facilitated a much greater level of interaction across borders (Levitt 2001; Shield 1996; Vertovec 2004a), further research has focused on the use of advanced technologies, such as the Internet, among transnational migrant groups to establish social networks, sustain ethnic identity, and share common interests (Adams and Ghose 2004; Parham 2004; Zhou, Chen and Cai 2006). Specifically in dealing with Chinese migrants, Zhou and co-authors’ research on Chinese-language media in the US and Canada points out that the transnational identity of the Chinese-language press in those regions is facilitated by advanced technology, such as the Internet. The online Chinese media affects the Chinese transnational migrant community in many ways, not the least of which is creating a transnational public sphere in which Chineseness is constantly reinforced by promoting direct ties with the mainland of China (Zhou, Chen and Cai 2006).
Elsewhere, Vertovec presents statistical information to show the increasing volume of international telephone calls - “from 12.7 billion call minutes in 1982 to 42.7 billion call minutes in 1992 and further to 154 billion by 2001” (Vertovec 2004a: 219). This dramatic increase in telephone communication is discussed by the author as an indicator of the massive expansion of transnational communication across borders which many transnational migrant communities engage in eagerly (Vertovec 2004a). Such discussion highlights the important influence that telecommunication infrastructure has on the lives of transnational migrants, part of which is the frequency and intensity of making international calls to the family in the homeland; thus, connecting transnational family members and non-transnational members across the globe.

More closely relevant to this research project are those studies that have examined the networks that stretch between a sending community and its migrants or between a sending country and immigration destinations. These studies pay particular attention to explaining the conditions under which migrants maintain homeland ties, the network building processes of migrants, and their significant impact on lives, careers, and identities (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 1998; Guarnizo 1997; Kennedy 2004; Levitt 2003a; Sorensen 1998). Vertovec provides a conceptual guideline for clearer understanding of the inherent relations between transnational migration and self-identity:

> The multi-local life-world presents a wider, even more complex set of conditions that affect the construction, negotiation and reproduction of social identities. These identities play out and position individuals in the course of their everyday lives within and across each of their places of attachment or perceived belonging. (Vertovec 2001b: 578)

Reasoning along the same lines, Glick-Schiller and Fouron researched the identity politics of Haitian immigrants in the US and revealed that the identity formation of immigrants from Haiti closely relates to the ties with their homeland and the public identity of Haitian transnational communities in the US (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 1998: 141).

These studies strengthened my own intellectual understanding of the topic of transnational migration in ways of providing empirical evidence for why transnationalism occurs, how
transnational networks are established in certain migrant communities, and what kind of significance transnationalism has for individual migrant’s worldviews and life perspectives. These studies emphasise that the process of globalisation, initially motivated “from above” – that is, by multinational corporations and organisations – now is also pursued “from below”. In particular, some of these studies support the importance of studying transnational migrant identity formation to understand grassroots transnational migratory experiences. Therefore, study of transnational migrant identity is an area identified as well worth further investigation.

In terms of the most relevant research focuses and aspects as both relate to my research, I reviewed five areas of the literature that were particularly informative: 1) studies of transnational migrant transnational movement trajectories and patterns; 2) studies of transnational families; 3) studies that use a transnational approach to re-formulate the meaning of “return migration”; 4) studies of the identity formation of the second-generation migrants; and 5) studies of migrants’ emotional experiences of transnational migration. The following context provides an in-depth discussion of these five areas of study.

Transnational migratory trajectories and patterns of movement

This group examines the transnational trajectories and patterns of particular transnational migrant groups (Biao 2004; Guarnizo 1997; Hugo 2006; Ley and Kobayashi 2005). For example, Biao’s research on Indian information technology (IT) professional transnational migration strategies and trajectories indicates that Singapore and Malaysia serve as a first strategic gateway for many Indian IT professionals to utilise on their route to their preferable destination - the US in terms of obtaining work experience in English-speaking countries. Australia or Canada serves as their second strategic gateway in terms of obtaining permanent residency in those countries. Permanent residential status from Australia or Canada can facilitate their entrance into the USA, and let them accumulate valuable work experience in English-speaking countries. They then move to the US to gain better employment opportunities (Biao 2004). Through such exhibition of these strategic transnational movements, Biao suggests that the transnational characteristics of the migration patterns and career development of Indian IT workers clearly reflects the different positions of numerous
nations in the global economy, “which is largely a legacy of the established relationship between the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery” (Biao 2004: 162).

Hugo’s recent research on young Australian expatriates illustrates their desire to leave Australia and go overseas to find opportunities for further career development. However, as these individuals establish their own immediate families and have children, there is an urge to go back to Australia for their children’s education (Hugo 2006). Ley and Kobayashi’s study on returnee Hong Kong migrants to Canada reveals that the different stages of one’s life cycle will determine the strategic movement trajectories from one site to another across the Pacific (Ley and Kobayashi 2005). These studies show that a switch in migratory strategy from an economic pole to a quality-of-life pole takes place to best suit one’s needs at different life stages. These studies also provide a comprehensive explanation of transnational migratory trajectories that certain migrant groups create.

Focusing on an investigation of PRC migrant transnational mobility patterns, my research and these regional case studies share many similarities. First, the research topic is similar. Secondly, certain research focuses are also common, such as a focus on the investigation into changing strategies for transnational movements. Transnational PRC migrants may indeed share similarities with these investigated migrant groups in terms of movement strategy, patterns, and intention. Therefore, the research discussed here not only informs me on how to conduct research on migrants who are geographically mobile and live across different countries, but it also provides me with an inspiration for how to approach and interpret the empirical data. By viewing transnational movements as a dynamic and continuous process, the research discussed here provides useful frameworks for analysing PRC migrant transnational movements.

Transnational families

The recent emergence of a large body of literature that concentrates on the study of transnational families (Garcia 2006; Ley and Waters 2004; Lima 2001; Waters 2002; Waters 2005; Yeoh, Huang and Lam 2005), is one aspect of the literature most relevant to my own
research project, since my research considers families to be the units of investigation. The work by Lima on Mexican families in the US defines transnational families as:

… dispersed across international borders, and their members tend to spend periods of time in one or the other country and for a variety of reasons … Their geographical location is fluid. They come and go on vacation and may stay for periods that are not previously determined. They may have properties and businesses - sometimes on both sides of the border - and, more important, they develop their work trajectories and projects in each of the two countries. (Lima 2001: 178)

Based on case studies, Lima states that transnational families are a fundamental element of transnational social spaces within which migration and transnational movement decisions on when, where and who within the family should migrate or move are strategically made in a broader family context. In a number of studies, scholars use the term “astronauting” (Hugo 2003; Ip 2006b) or “astronaut”25 (Lam 1994: 177; Skeldon 1994b: 11) to describe the deliberate strategy that some Asian migrant families take to maintain family ties in Asia as well as in their new home on the Pacific Rim. Such a family strategy is the subject of considerable discussion in the contemporary Asian immigration literature. Often, the strategies are perceived as a means deliberately taken by some immigrant families to achieve economic survival during immigration adaptation or to adjust to the different opportunities in their host and former source countries and produce better family outcomes. In the New Zealand context, there are several research efforts that concentrate on examining the characteristics of new Chinese transnational families and the transnational strategies within these households with particular attention given to the Hong Kong and Taiwan immigrant groups (Beal 2001; Ho 2002; Ho, Ip and Bedford 2001). Elsewhere, for example in Australia and Canada, similar studies were also conducted (Chiang, Hibbins and Chui 2006; Pe-Pua et al. 1996; Waters 2002; Waters 2003; Waters 2005).

25 “Astronaut” is a widely used term in any studies on Asian migrant families. It refers to those Asian migrants who commute or circulate over long distances with a place of residence in immigration-receiving countries, but then place their businesses and professional lives in Asian locations, usually their place of origin. They technically “settle” in immigration destination countries, but then continue to work in the Asian region.
Another aspect of research on transnational migration and consideration of family is the effects of family networks on individual migrants. Palloni and co-authors’ study on social capital and international migration emphasises that family networks are an important source of social capital that potentially and powerfully affect migration decision-making (Palloni et al. 2001). Nonini and Ong’s work on Chinese transnationalism, however, takes a quite different point of view and grounds Chinese transnationalism as “a culturally distinctive domain within the strategies of accumulation of the new capitalism” (Nonini and Ong 1997: 4). The authors point out that family networks are often used flexibly as a channel of capital accumulation among Chinese transnationals under the conditions of late capitalism (Nonini and Ong 1997). Research on the Pacific transnational communities shows a similar trend. For example, Marcus’s early research on the Tongan migrant community supports the notion of “transnational corporations of kin” and shows “… [the] international scale of family operations, still tied to kin at home … would equal or exceed in value the Tongan national product” (Marcus 1981: 60). Other research shows that the potential for capital accumulation via migration and the remittances from expatriate Tongans are an important financial resource to Tongan families, and for the greater Tongan polity and economy (Lee 2003, 2004, 2006).

Recently, studies on Asian transnational families have gone further to recognise the impact of the changing dynamics in transnational families on their decisions for further movement. The Journal of International Migration published a special issue in 2008, focusing on examining and illustrating the changing family strategies of Asian transnational families for immigration and re-location. In the introductory article titled “Asian Transnational Families in Transition: The Liminality of Simultaneity”, Huang and co-authors propose that the transnational strategies undertaken by some transnational migrant families may change over time in response to a changing family structure, family life cycle changes, changes in family members’ individual aspirations, or changes in the broader socio-economic and political context (Huang, Yeoh and Lanm 2008). One paper in this special issue focuses on Asian transnational families in the case of New Zealand and in particular reveals that “astronauting” is only a temporary strategy undertaken by some migrant families for their short-term goals. As the young people in these families grow up and the family structure changes, families re-strategise their approaches to best suit the new circumstances. It may be that the younger members re-locate back to their former homeland where the economy is expanding faster.
to seek better career development opportunities, while the “astronaut parents” may re-join their spouses either in the origin country or the destination location. As a whole, the decision-making of different family members is done with an overall consideration of the entire family’s collective well-being (Ho and Bedford 2008).

These solid empirical studies provide thoughtful conceptualisation of transnational migration studies. They recognise the importance of family in migration decision-making, while also valuing the broader geo-political and economic forces that prompt the transnational migration of families. More importantly, these studies take a dynamic view of transnational migration. Early transnational migration studies were often pre-occupied with just snapshots of migrant short-term transnational strategies, but overlooked the full picture of transnational migration. The recent studies on transnational migrant families look at transnational migration as an ongoing and dynamic process in which the migration trajectories are contingent, and often depend on one’s or one’s family’s changing needs at different stages of life.

While these studies reflect the fact that transnationalism is a significant characteristic of many contemporary ethnic migrant families, Ip argues instead that transnationalism is not an ethnic issue, but rather a universal phenomenon that exists among young people who intend to pursue better lives and opportunities (Ip, 2000). This argument can be exemplified by the movement of many New Zealand citizens, including the local born, who left New Zealand for overseas. The movement of Maori, Pakeha and Pacific local-born New Zealanders to other countries, Australia in particular, is not very different from the movement of Chinese migrants, both in their search for better job opportunities or to attain a higher standard of living (Bedford 2001; Bryant and Hamer 2008; Hugo 2004; Law 2004; Lidgard 2001). Ip’s argument is a thoughtful conceptual correction to the conventional thinking that transnationalism is phenomenon that only exists among migrants, as often implied by many transnational migration studies.

Based on the studies on Chinese transnational migrants in the New Zealand context, Ip further argues that the very qualities these Chinese migrants possess make them desirable migrants to New Zealand as “young, high-educated, highly trained professionals, technocrats and business entrepreneurs” (Ip 2000: 8). These same qualities also make them desirable to other countries of immigration, as well as the countries from which they emigrated. She points out in
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particular that other than migrants, people who are middle class and possess great human and financial capital can pursue opportunities across a variety of potential destinations (Ip 2000; Ip 2006b). Such insight has implications for how we approach and conceptualise the insertion of migrants into recipient societies, particularly with regard to any consideration of the commitment that migrants do make within their receiving countries.

While Ip’s point of view is certainly true in the New Zealand context of Chinese transnational migration, other cases, however, provide an interesting contrast with the Chinese. It has been shown that migrant New Zealanders are more likely to be working in medium to lower skilled jobs of the blue collar variety, such as trades, technical and machinery workers, or as labourers in Australia. Moreover, they are under-represented in professional occupations as well as the fast growing service related occupations in sales and retailing (Haig 2010; Hugo 2004). Therefore, transnational mobility not only exists among the middle-class with great financial, social and human capital. For example, the evolution of Pacific and Maori transnational communities was not predicated on people with great financial, social and human capital, and neither is the trans-Tasman mobility of New Zealand citizens as a whole. The fast growing mineral industry in Australia which attracts many low-skilled New Zealand labourers is an excellent example that transnationalism often takes place beyond those well-educated professionals who possess a great deal of human and financial capital.

Return migration within the framework of transnationalism

Recently, studies on return migration have increasingly become framed by the theory of transnational migration (Guarnizo 1997; King and Newbold 2008; Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Moore 2003; Salaff 2008; Tollefsen and Lindgren 2006). This way of looking at return migration as part of the dynamic process of on-going migratory movement offers a distinctive contrast to the previous approaches to return migration that invoke instead a sense of finality that completes the circle movement of ocean crossing. Over the past two decades, return migration, especially voluntary return migration from immigration destination countries to the sending countries, has attracted considerable research interest among those in migration studies. In the context of voluntary return migration, one widely researched topic is the
reasons why immigrants decide to return to their homeland. This topic is especially important among immigration policy makers since return migration may be strongly related to certain unsuccessful aspects of immigration policy. This topic also leads to further categorisation of the different kinds of return movements.

The traditional meaning of return migration emphasises the assimilation narrative and tends to obscure the significance of the return trip “home”. The early work implied that either unsuccessful or successful migrants would be the ones to return to the sending country (Cerase 1974; Wyman 1993). Unsuccessful migrants returned to the homeland because at least their motherland could offer them a comfortable zone with familiar surroundings, language, and social networks when they did not achieve their initial goal for migration in the host society. This return is referred in the field as the “return of failure” in Cerase’s work that categorises the different reasons for return (Cerase 1974: 247). In contrast, successful migrants return with honour after they succeed and obtain considerable economic, social or human capital. This return is referred to as a “return of innovation” (Cerase 1974: 258). Lastly, some studies view return migration as a long-term plan and one that is only undertaken at retirement (Byron and Condon 1996).

There are others who take a more structural approach to categorise the reasons for return. Rogers categorises the reasons of return as both individual and social. Changes in the homeland or in the receiving country and a recruitment project that targets overseas immigrants to draw them back to their countries of origin are seen as social reasons; while patriotism, disappointment over not achieving one’s goals in the host society, and family consideration are accounted as individual reasons (Rogers 1984). King categorises the reasons for return into four categories: social, economic, political, and family oriented (King 2000). More recently, consideration of the wider social meaning for return migration, especially the economic and political effects for the sending countries has emerged as a new research focus (Cassarino 2004; Oxfeld and Long 2004; Wang, Wong and Sun 2006; Zweig 2006).

Another distinctive theoretical approach developed and used widely by return migration scholars is the diaspora approach. This approach reconstructs return migration as a discourse whereby return is driven by a natural homing instinct, that is referred to as an “imagined return” or the “myth of return” (Muggeridge and Dona 2006; Ni Laoire 2008; Oxfeld and
Long 2004: 7-8). It suggests that many migrants spend their whole lives as expatriates of their country of origin, but always imagine returning. Although they may never return, imagining that return to the homeland frames their lives. Ni Laoire argues that the willingness to return is an enduring feature among the diaspora populations and rooted in a romanticisation of that return trip and a romantic view of the homeland (Ni Laoire 2008). More recently, the explanation of return migration has been portrayed as a so-called brain exchange, further complicating the earlier emphasis on a brain drain from developed countries to the countries in the global North. In developing countries like China and India, emergent high-technology industry has led to return migration by those immigrants who moved to Western nations, but who now see career and entrepreneurial opportunities in their countries of origin (Iredale, Guo and Rozario 2002; Wang, Wong and Sun 2006; Zweig 1997).

However, the transnational approach conceptualises return migration quite differently. Researchers who adopt a transnational approach toward studying return migration recognise that traditional explanations of return migration as a linear process in which a temporary sojourning experience is followed by a permanent return “home” is not in many cases the true reality of contemporary returning migration. For many migrants, return is not their final adjustment; rather, it is another temporary stage in their continuing journey with future movements that lie ahead (Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Zulueta 2008). Zulueta refers to return as transitory in which that return is not a one-way process implying a means to an end (Zulueta 2008). Ley and Kobayashi discuss the strategy of “double return” among many Hong Kong immigrants to Canada, first from Canada to Hong Kong for work and career development, and then the prospect of a later return to Canada for their children’s education or retirement. The authors further suggest that “return migration is not a sufficient or the most precise description to use to explain the current hyper-mobility of transnational citizen living” (Ley and Kobayashi 2005: 123).

Applying the framework of transnational migration, now researchers recognise that the great transnational mobility that many migrants possess brings a new twist to the concept of return migration. Return migration is no longer a simple, one-way reverse migration of people who left home countries and now are moving back to their place of birth (Gmelch 1980). Some argue that the term “return migration” is indeed theoretically problematic (Biao 2008; Skeldon 1994a: 39), and others argue that return migration is only a part of the transnational movement.
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circle (King and Newbold 2008; Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Plaza 2008). This transnational approach is particularly informative for this research here, given the fact that many return Chinese migrants are more likely to engage in further movement in their lives. Moreover, to place return migration into a transnational migration framework allows for better understanding of the full, on-going context in which return immigration might typically occur in today’s more global world.

Transnationalism of second-generation migrants

Apart from research that has focused on the transnational engagement of first-generation migrants, certain recent studies have turned their focus on the transnational involvement of the second generation of migrants. These studies particularly investigate how transnational the second generation of migrants actually are and what kinds of activities they do engage in (Alba and Nee 2003; Foner 2002; Fouron and Glick-Schiller 2002; Kasinitz et al. 2002; Lee 2008; Levitt 2002; Levitt 2003a;Perlmann 2002; Portes and Rumbaut 2005; Rumbaut 2002; Smith 2002; Somerville 2008; Waters 2004). Research on these questions, even though not directly relevant to my research on first-generation migrants, as Kivisto pointed out, does enhance the extent to which transnationalism is useful as a theoretical perspective (Kivisto 2001). These detailed empirical studies counter the classic approach toward researching transnational migration, which largely has focused on first-generation migrants. It questions whether transnational migration is an ephemeral first-generation phenomenon or simply an enduring feature that persists across multiple migrant generations. Levitt and Glick-Schiller commented that these studies in many ways are a continuation of the on-going debate on immigrant integration (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2007: 195-197).

Elsewhere, Levitt argues that if transnationalism is defined in a limited way, such as the length of time one spends in the homeland, frequency of taking homeland trips, remittances, engagement with homeland politics, or the use of homeland media, the transnational engagement of the second generation can be viewed as fairly limited (Levitt 2009). She and Glick-Schiller further argue that if transnationalism is defined in such a limited way, many transnational social connections and capabilities that relate to migration and are possible
without geographic and physical movement will be missing from the analysis. These social connections are important to the extent that the new second generation is reared in a transnational social environment. The authors suggest that any exploration of the extent to which the second generation engages in transnational practices can be divided into two levels. One is called the “way of being”, and the other is called the “way of belonging”. The former refers to those actual social relations and practices in which individuals engage, whereas the latter refers more to emotional connections to the homeland through memory, nostalgia, or imagination (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004).

Some studies have attempted to tackle the issues by focusing on a close examination of the second generation’s conceptualisation of “home” in relation to identity formation. The notion of “emotional transnationalism” or “symbolic transnationalism” that addresses life experiences and feelings when moving between places are widely used in these studies (Espiritu 2003; Mitchell 1997; Viruell-Fuentes 2006; Wolf 1997; Wolf 2002). For example, Haller and Landolt’s study on second-generation Miami youth found that those who experienced “selective acculturation” were more likely to be interested in the parental home and its traditions, thus invoking the homeland as a transnational “way of belonging” (Haller and Landolt 2005). Based on a study on Filipino second generation youth, Wolf suggested that immigrant parents are more actively engaged in maintaining relationships with the Philippines than are their children, but their children actually maintain ties “at the level of emotions, ideologies and conflicting cultural codes” (Wolf 1997: 459). More recent studies stress that transnational engagement among the second generation can ebb and flow over the course of life and generations (Espiritu and Tran 2002; Somerville 2008). Whether the second generation ultimately forges a cross-border connection also depends on those individuals’ aspirations at different stages of life, the strength of the transnational family networks to which these young people belong, and the extent to which the youth are brought up in transnational spaces (Levitt 2002; Levitt 2009; Pries 2004; Raj 2000).

As mentioned already, my research topic, addresses first-generation migrants only. However, the studies discussed here were seminal in shaping the theoretical stance of this PhD research. The ways that second-generation migrants form their identities and conceptualise the notion of “home” significantly influence the shaping of the theoretical orientation towards any data interpretation of first-generation migrant identity formation and conceptualisation of “home”.
The way that transnational migrant identity is formed in the context of transnational migration is an important motif in the way that such transnational migratory movement impacts migrant everyday life. The changing emotion and feelings that occur when migrants travel between places and their conceptualisation of “home” are an almost quintessential characteristic of transnational migration.

Studying the emotional experiences of transnationality: “Home”, identity, and belonging

Continuing on with the topic of “emotional transnationalism”, studies on migrant emotions when moving between places is a recently emerging focus within transnational migration research. In the prior section, this topic was slightly touched on in the discussion of identity issues for second-generation transnational migrants. This section provides more detailed articulation of what “emotional transnationalism” is, what kind of research it includes, and how it can be incorporated into transnational migration studies. Wolf uses the term “emotional transnationalism” to explain the negotiation process undertaken by second-generation Filipinos in terms of belonging (Wolf 2002: 285). Skrbis in her discussion on transnational families calls this “bringing emotions in[to]” transnational migration studies, and argues against “sociologies without emotions” (Barbalet 1998: 13), and in particular advocates for the inseparability of emotions from the understanding of transnational families (Skrbis 2008).

With a strong affirmation of the status of emotion in the research on transnational migration, a large amount of research in recent years has particularly dealt with migrant emotions during migratory movements. The works includes an analysis of the feeling of hope in migration (Mar 2005; Wise 2005), a sense of belonging (Nyiri 2001; Westwood and Phizacklea 2000), emotional struggle, emotional longing and missing, emotional journey (Baldassar 2008; Gu 2007; Ryan 2008), feelings associated with migratory return (McKay 2005), and even how emotion can condition the actual timing of emigration (Fitzgerald 2008). Among these works on transnational emotions, explanation of “home” and its relevance to identity formation and a sense of belonging for migrants becomes a central point in the discussion (Ahmed 1999; Ahmed et al. 2003; Basu 2004; Butcher 2002; Butcher 2003; Pratt 2004; Skrbis 2008; Wiles 2008). In these works, the discussion on the notion of “home” is injected into the exploration
of transnational migrant identity and belonging and raises the study of transnational identity and migration to a new level. This aspect of that study is important because identity formation is actually a social indicator that can suggest ways in which people experience their migratory journeys and conceive their future movement intention.

Ahmed uses the notion of what “home” means to discuss the competing emotions that migrants feel as they move between places and illustrates the relationship between transnational journey, identity, belonging and “home”:

The journey between homes provides the subject with the contour of a space of belonging, but a space which expresses the very logic of an interval, the passing through of the subject between apparently fixed moments of departure and arrival. (Ahmed 1999: 330)

Basu agreed, saying that “the notion of ‘home’ is a powerful motif in the contemporary popular and academic project to (re)locate identity in a globalised world of movement” (Basu 2004: 27). Similarly, Rapport and Dawson suggest that “home” is “a useful analytical construct: as a means of encapsulating and linking and also transcending traditional classifications [of identity]” (Rapport and Dawson 1998b: 4).

“Home” is also a slippery concept. Traditionally, “home” is conceptualised as the stable centre of one’s universe, a safe place to leave and return to, a principal focus of control and concern, a pattern of regular doing, furnishing, and appurtenances, indeed a physical space in which certain communitarian practices where realised, or a spiritual and psychological attachment to a place (Berger 1984: 64; Douglas 1991; Tuan 1971). In the realm of everyday understanding, “home” can be a place where children are or will be reared, a place of origin, a place of belonging, a place to relax or anchor one’s fatigued mind, or a place to return to (Bowlby, Gregory and McKie 1997). In the context of transnational migration, the meaning of “home” becomes more complex and multi-dimensional. The traditional conceptualisation of “home” has also been challenged in the transnational era, given that a conventional “home” is disrupted because of transnational movements. Rapport and Dawson point out that any
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traditional conceptualisation of “home” “provides little conceptual purchase on a world of contemporary movement” (Rapport and Dawson 1998b: 7). Basu suggests that in many cases “home” is given substance and materialised in homeland - “a capacious concept and all that it connotes is given material forms” (Basu 2004: 28).

Differing from Basu who conceptualised “home” as a material form, Mallett says that home can also be immaterial. “Home is place but it is also a space inhabited by family, people, things and belongings - a familiar, if not comfortable space where particular activities and relationships are lived” (Mallett 2004: 63). In Ahmed and co-authors’ work, “home” is even conceived as part of the continuous, always changing, practices of “uprooting/regrounding” enacted by migration (Ahmed et al. 2003). Pratt calls the transnational feelings he investigated “gleaning the home” and speaks of the importance of home-making during migratory movements (Pratt 2004: 121). All these works denote a meaning that home is more than just a physical location; it is a place or space full of emotional attachment and feelings. In this sense, “home” gives context to time and space and embodies both anticipation and memory, or as Rapport and Dawson argue, “home” brings together memory and longing, the ideational, the affective and the physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global, the positively evaluated and the negative” (Rapport and Dawson 1998b: 9).

For transnational migrants, the migration journey involves “a splitting of home as place of origin and home as the sensory world of everyday experience” (Ahmed 1999: 341). For some, “home” may evoke an emotional link to where they are originally from or maybe that nostalgia that often relates to a longing for their national home (Hage 1997: 101; Wiles 2008). For others, “home” becomes “a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination” (Brah 1996). The concept has also been associated with ideas of old and traditional or treated as an on-going process in which “human beings continue to make themselves at home” (Rapport and Dawson 1998a: 33).

As people grow up or move between places, their sense of belonging to their initial “home” may change, and they attach new feelings of “home” to different situations and spaces. This description suggests a strong sense that one’s self discovery of “home” relates to personal identity (Valentine 2001: 73; Lewin 2001). Jackson and Penrose insightfully point out that searching for “homeness” and familiar places is much more dominant within immigrant
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societies (Jackson and Penrose 1993). Valentine suggests that “home” can be experienced differently by each individual migrant (Valentine 2001: 76-85). Wiles argues that ideas of home, whether constructed individually or collectively, are the indicators of migrant lives, because “home” embraces socially and culturally constructed meanings that may provide a true sense of belonging, identity and security (Wiles 2008).

Taking all of the ideas discussed here, particularly the suggestion that “home” is an important aspect of understanding the hybrid process of identity formation and sense of belonging that migrants have (Rapport and Dawson 1998b), the examination or analysis of “home” significantly embeds in this PhD research. This approach dwells on the diversity of emotional experiences that occur in the course of migratory movements and focuses on analysing the competing emotions over the notion of “home” that associates with identity and one’s sense of belonging. An investigation of the conceptualisation of “home” may provide a useful entry point for a discussion of sense of belonging, identity and even transnational experiences of the researched cohorts. It is hoped that with a deeper understanding of the conceptualisation of “home” for Chinese transnationals, their transnational journeys and experiences can be unfolded in a fresh way.

3.2.3. Exploring the wider effects of transnational activities

The recent development of transnational migration studies pays more attention to the consideration of the impact and influence that transnational practices and activities have on broader contexts, such as their influence on the reconfiguration of cross-border connections or global influences that increased cross-border activities might have (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 24-29; Vertovec 2004b). Vertovec states that transnational practices of migrants may contribute significantly to the on-going processes of structural transformation. He clarifies that viewpoint by suggesting three different “modes of transformation”:

1) perceptual transformation affecting what can be described as migrants’ orientational “bifocality” in the sociocultural domain; 2) conceptual transformation of meanings within a notional triad of “identities-border-orders”
in the political domain; 3) institutional transformation affecting forms of financial transfer, public-private relationships, and local development in the economic domain. (Vertovec 2004b: 971)

In this regard, Vertovec argues that transnational migration studies should also be concerned about the kinds of societal changes that are stimulated by the cross-border connections that migrants establish and maintain. What are their knock-on effects? To what extent do these changes influence the society and how deep are those changes (Vertovec 2004b)? Drawing ideas from Vertovec and other scholars, the following context provides a brief summary for each category.

First, some studies examine the changing world views of individual migrants. That research suggests that transnational migrants are at the forefront of new global subjectivities because of their association with more than one territorial area. For example, Guarnizo developed the idea of “transnational habitus” - “a particular set of dualistic dispositions … which has spread people’s lives across national borders and becomes a second nature. [It] incorporates the social position of the migrant and the context in which transmigration occurs” (Guarnizo 1997: 311). Mahler discussed the bi-focality of migrants’ daily routines and habits (Mahler 1998). Such an argument highlights a personal transformation of migrants that derives from their transnational migration processes - a dual orientation to “here” and “there” that transnational migrants do experience every day. Such a transformation will become, if it is not the norm of migration narrative, at least “the predominant form of migrant belonging” (Castells 2002: 1158). During this process, migrants are conscious of their world orientation which is in more than one locality. Such consciousness has the potential to influence the migrant family life course, strategies, sense of self, collective belonging, and the approach toward adaptation. Recent studies on the transformation of the migrant interpretation of “home” reflect the changing ways that migrants perceive themselves (Rapport and Dawson 1998a; Rapport and Dawson 1998b).

Transformation that results from migrant transnationalism can also take place in the political domain. There is a large body of recent literature that considers this aspect. Generally, these studies suggest that migrant transnationalism, as one part of the processes and outcomes associated with globalisation that emphasises deterritorialisation, challenges the nation-state
ideals of identities, borders, and order in both the sending and the receiving countries (Fitzgerald 2000; Vertovec 2004b). Vertovec proposed a framework - “identities-borders-orders” for considering the political challenges the nation-state faces that are brought about by transnational migrants (Vertovec 2004b). This framework proposes that these three conceptual domains mutually influence each other, and therefore, they must be assessed in light of the others. Heisler suggests that migration “at least in some host societies … disturbs the sense of boundedness” (Heisler 2001: 229) because it is a process that “…tends to attenuate territorial sovereignty, monolithic order, and identity solidarity” (Heisler 2001: 237). In this way, migration, especially transnational migration, erodes the power of the nation-state “by compounding identities, ignoring borders, and overruling orders” (Vertovec 2004b: 979). Vertovec thus argues:

The political dimensions of migrant transnationalism are deeply embedded in particular kinds of structural change currently underway and which can be seen particularly to put to the test longstanding ideals of identities-borders-orders. These especially involve migrants’ practices around dual citizenship/nationality and homeland political affiliation. (Vertovec 2004b: 980)

Since citizenship and nationality has been historically closely linked with the evolution of politics of nation/state and involves political issues that especially consider the rights of voting and the impact on countries’ politics (Faist 2000a), both become a more sensational issue when considered with migration. From a national perspective, citizenship is a mechanism of immigrant integration because it may mean the embracement by immigrants of domestic political participation. However, when this issue begins to involve a dual orientation, a particular concern and suspicion is raised in both the immigrant sending and immigrant receiving countries. Contemporarily then, although attitudes and policies toward dual citizenship are increasingly liberalising in many immigrant-receiving countries (Joppke 1999), there is still a reluctance to give immigrants’ the entitlement of citizenship in some countries, because dual citizenship institutionalises migrants’ transnational ties, and offers legal status to transnational migrants, so that are able to reside in or be absent from two or more nations and fully enjoy the legal rights of these nations simultaneously (Faist 2000a).
The political rationale behind this issue is that dual citizenship runs counter to the fundamental assimilation theories. In Faist’s words, “dual state membership hinders immigrant adaptation in the country of immigration, encourages populism on the part of the majority groups” (Faist 2000a: 202). Concerns also have been raised regarding immigrant loyalty toward the immigrant-receiving countries, which can potentially be divided or diluted because of immigrants’ political affiliation with their homeland (Brown 2002; Spoonley, Bedford and Macpherson 2003; Werbner 2000). Kastoryano argues that allowing dual citizenship probably presents “a confusion between rights and identity, culture and politics, states and nations” (Kastoryano 2002: 160). Ip and co-authors suggests that legal citizenship does not necessarily mean full incorporation into the host society or cultural identification with the host country (Ip, Inglis and Wu 1997). All these aspects contradict the original expectations of immigrant-receiving countries in terms of allowing citizenship for immigrants as an affirmation of their full sense of commitment and incorporation into the host societies.

For immigrant sending countries, dual citizenship is largely excluded from the national project, because domestic politicians see more disadvantages than advantages in allowing this (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 127). They particularly do not welcome dual citizenship because they recognise that any voting on domestic politics from diasporic communities usually includes too much oppositional influence. Some immigrant-sending countries in the West, such as Italy and Greece have developed policies to grant dual nationality to their expatriates for decades (Brown 2002). However, in many immigrant-sending countries in the Asian region, it is only a comparatively recent development that some have started to introduce certain policies toward their expatriates, including providing special ministries or government offices devoted to overseas nationals, special investment opportunities, privileged professional development opportunities and resettlement offers, special voting rights and even offers of dual citizenship. For example, China used to pursue extremely restricted border control, but then officially started to implement its own "Green Card" system in August 2004. That policy allows foreigners, including Chinese with foreign passport, to apply for permanent residence in China. The Chinese “Green Card” gives its holders Chinese citizen privileges. The Shanghai municipal government is a pioneer in offering this benefit to highly skilled returnee Chinese expats. People who hold the “Green Card” enjoy expatriate expert status in terms of salary and related benefits (Ip 2006b). The Chinese government also has developed several programmes to encourage and support high-level scholars and
professionals to come back to China to work (Wang, Wong and Sun 2006). The effects of such a liberal policy towards expatriates in some immigrant-sending countries, as Levitt believes are the “re-inventing the role of states outside of territorial boundaries and in this way reconfiguring traditional understanding of sovereignty, nation, and citizenship” (Levitt 2003b: 606).

Elsewhere, scholars have developed the idea of citizenship as “a negotiated relationship. Subject to change, it is acted upon collectively, or among individuals existing within social, political, and economic relations of collective conflict” on global as well as national levels (Stasiulis and Bakan 1997: 113). Ong’s early work that proposes the notion of “flexible citizenship” (Ong 1993; Ong 1999) coincides with this idea. In Ong’s study of the construction of what citizenship means for overseas Hong Kong Chinese, she argues that the search for citizenship by overseas Chinese directly links to the diverse strategies in place to accumulate financial capital flexibly and evade political costs as minority entrepreneurs in Western countries. This incident suggests that “the citizenship concept should be examined in the context of the global economy and the range of meanings it can have for different groups of people” (Ong 1993: 771). Her conclusion is that citizenship in the profound sense of having a duty toward, or identification with, a particular nation-state for overseas Chinese is minimal and an obvious subversion of what citizenship means traditionally (Ong 1993).

These diverse forms of research on the political transformation that migrant transnationalism produces remind us that transnational migration studies should consider not only the practices of transnational migrants, but also the impact of their lives on others and their role in changing local, national, and global relations.

The last mode of transformation in Vertovec’s summary examines economic transformation, particularly the re-institutionalising of development through remittances. Vertovec identifies transnational economic activities as transnational ethnic entrepreneurship, facilitation of international trade, and business based in migrant-sending countries but reaching out to customers in the diasporic populations (Vertovec 2004b). In terms of direct economic benefits and value, remittances have the most significant transformational impact, especially on the migrant-sending countries. According to many empirical studies, especially those in Latin America and Pacific the impact of remittances on the migrant-sending countries is generally
positive (Brown 1994; Brown 1995; Collins 2006: 56; Connell and Brown, 1995; Orozco 2000; Orozco 2002; Portes and Landolt 2000; Rogers 2001; Rouse 1992). As Vertovec suggests, it does not matter that the remittances are sent privately or are channelled collectively, they “… can transform the nature and pace of local development in migrant sending areas by, among other things, constructing infrastructures, providing equipment, and offering finance for enterprise” (Vertovec 2004b: 991). Much of the remittance sent serves as basic subsistence for food, or provision of education that would not otherwise be available. This money includes both personal remittance to relatives and families as well as those funds sent by hometown associations or channelled into sending countries by government organisations to support the development of infrastructure in the migrants’ home countries. While such fund transfers can have generally positive effects, it is also suggested that they may also be exacerbating inequalities in immigrant-sending countries (Vertovec 2004b).

However, when emphasising the economic transformation of migrant transnationalism, caution should be given to the impact of regional differences. The research discussed here largely draws from studies conducted in Latin America where social and political crisis and instability have occurred since the 1980s (Korczenwicz and Smith 1996: 7). The regional context of this PhD research, however, is the Asia Pacific Rim, which presents a different picture. Since the economic performance in many East Asian nations over the last two decades appears as success stories, the economic transformation of migrant transnationalism in this region may have a striking divergence when compared with conclusions drawn from research conducted on the economic transformation of migrant transnationalism in Latin America. Through observation, remittances from Western immigration countries to East Asia are not a usual practice among recent Asian migrants, especially Chinese migrants. Sometimes, remittances may even reverse its flow direction as from immigration-receiving countries to immigration-sending countries. This manifestation is one of many caused by the regional differences of migrant transnationalism, and researchers should be cautious about research suggestions abstracted from different studies, especially studies that occur in different regional, national and cultural contexts.

The discussions in this section provide an in-depth review of the recent development of research methodology and empirical research, as well as a further conceptualisation pertaining to transnational migration. This detailed empirical effort manifests where and how
transnationalism occurs, what effects it has on the people situated in the transnational social space, and to what extent transnationalism exists in certain transnational migrant communities. These empirical studies strengthen the field of transnational migration studies by providing empirical evidence of migrant transnational practices and employing creative research methodology to do the research; more importantly, these studies lead to a more thoughtful and reasonable conceptualisations. Unlike the early theoretical conceptualisation of transnationalism as a novel phenomenon, increasingly, transnationalism is recognised as a novel research perspective, a series of grassroots activities adopted by some migrants. More importantly, it has been recognised that transnationalism not only has a significant impact on individual migrants, but also has macro-social consequences.

3.3 Summary: Transnationalism as a framework for this project

This chapter reviewed the theory of transnationalism in migration studies that significantly have contributed to this PhD research. This chapter began with a short discussion of the traditional research perspectives and approaches of migration studies. It provided a contrast to the perspective of transnational migration. The following section considered the developments in transnational migration studies theoretically, methodologically and empirically. These includes a brief discussion of the initial theoretical articulation of the transnational perspective in migration studies and its conceptual refinement and development and then an in-depth analysis of the recent re-grounding and re-framing of transnationalism scholarship within the field of migration studies.

By looking at transnational migration studies chronologically, since the emergence of the concept in the early 1990s, this field has gone through a period of heightened interest, sustained criticism, empirical grounding, and conceptual reformulation. The original theoretical articulation that stemmed from the anthropological point of view sought to establish the presence of a transnational migration phenomenon that was not seriously recognised previously. Attention was largely given to the causes of migrant transnationalism that were especially associated with globalisation, configuration of cross-border relations, increased availability and affordability of international transportation and new
communication technologies like the Internet. This interest was followed by a rush of research that used transnationalism as a framework for research on migration and related activities. On the other hand, this increasing interest resulted in “conceptual muddling” (Vertovec 1999: 448) because of its immaturity in an early phase of development. In a response from academia, this newly emerged perspective attracted a large number of critiques in relation to its vague definition, unclear delimitation of analytic framework, exaggerated conceptualisation, and a lack of empirical grounding.

In contrast, the recent work has taken a much more measured approach to investigate and present changes in migrant activities. There has been careful consideration and thoughtful conceptualisation of what transnationalism is and where, how, and under what kind of conditions it occurs. Cautions are given to the continued importance of place and locality alongside increased mobility. Considerable attention has been paid to have appropriate research methodology, including conducting of research in multiple sites and clear delimitation of the analytic units, such as individual, family, and community. Discussion has also moved beyond the basic identification of the “who, what, where and how” of transnational practices to consider their wider influence. While the practices of transnational migrants continue to be the primary focus in the field, the methodological focus in recent studies has diversified and extended to emotion, identity, the sense of belonging in transnational lives, the everyday experience of transnationalism, and the transformations that migrant transnationalism produces in social, political, cultural, and economic domains. All show that transnational migration studies has become more mature, as manifested by more reasonable conceptualisation, detailed empirical work, and a much more nuanced manner of conducting research on the transnational migration phenomenon.

There are also distinct “traditions” in transnational migration studies. Research conducted in the United States from an anthropological point of view initiated theories on transnational migration regarding migration processes in the US, Latin America, and the Caribbean. This scholarship in transnational migration studies oriented to critiques of the linear mode of assimilation paradigm in classical migration research and largely rejected the long-standing assimilation theory when explaining immigration adaptation. It puts emphasis on social connections built by transnational migrants between the homeland and the host countries (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1994a; Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1994b; Glick-
Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995). The Oxford Transnational Communities Programme directed by Steven Vertovec (a number of research studies under this programme were cited and discussed in this literature review) considered transnational migration to be a much broader phenomenon. In that project, transnational connections forged by immigrant communities, businesses, the media, politics, or religion were all examined under the single framework of transnationalism. These works provided updated empirical studies and groundbreaking theoretical work on contemporary socio-economic, political, and cultural engagement of migrants that extends beyond national borders. They emphasise the networks that migrants build across borders. Another distinctive scholarship in transnational migration studies used a transnational approach to migration to challenge social theory, especially the “nation-state container” theory that determines the research entity in migration studies, but only within a national border. It posited the continuing dynamics of migratory movements across national borders as a domain of cross-border social relations. Faist refers to this domain as “transnational social spaces” (Faist 2000a; Faist 2004), and Glick-Schiller and co-authors and Levitt refers to it as “transnational social fields” (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1995; Levitt 2001). These works propose that the social connections engendered by transnational migration are unique. All these distinctions in the scholarship on transnational migration studies are crucial to understand the lived experiences of transnationalism that go beyond the boundaries of a single nation-state.

For this PhD research project, the theories on transnational migration studies provide a solid and relevant theoretical underpinning that permits the building of a theoretical framework to conceptualise the transnational activities in which PRC migrants engage. As a theoretical base, transnational migration is useful because it reveals the presence of cross-border activities while still being attendant to the continued significance of the role of the nation-state. The review of the early transnational literature on the articulation of transnational

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26 This series includes a number of edited books, such as *New Transnational Social Spaces*, edited by Ludger Pries; *New Approaches to Migration*, edited by Nadje Al-Ali and Khalid Koser; *Communities Across Borders*, edited by Paul Kennedy and Victor Roudometof; *Transnational Spaces*, edited by Peter Jackson, Phil Crang and Claire Dwyer; *Transnational Politics*, edited by Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen; and *State/nation/Transnation*, edited by Brenda S. A. Yeoh and Katie Wills.
migration and its conceptual refinement allows this project to grasp the basic concepts around the theories of transnational migration and its development systematically.

The in-depth review of recent empirical studies on transnational migration, especially the newly emerged field of study of “emotional transtionalism” deepens and broadens my research perspective. In this regard, I link transnational migration to citizenship, especially dual citizenship, identity formation, perceptions of “home” and identity, and return migration; and all of those are treated as a synthesis in this literature review as well as in my project. The combination of such aspects connects transnational practices with lived experiences of transnational migrants and the role that transnational practices plays in migrants’ personal lives and in economic, cultural, social and political domains of the host society. Moreover, this discussion reveals that the lives of transnational migrants cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader global and regional socio-economic context. Lastly, an understanding of methodological development in relation to transnational migration studies strengthens my confidence in using transnationalism as the theoretical basis for investigating the proposed research topic.

Transnational migration is not a foolproof approach for viewing contemporary international migration. As the critiques of the early work in this field illustrated, too much can be made of the actions of a relatively few individuals, leading to misconstrued predictions of epochal shifts in economic, social, cultural and political relations. To avoid the dangers of overemphasising the scale of transnational migration or migrant transnational mobility, the caution that not all migrants are transnationals should be always kept in mind when using transnational migration as a theoretical basis for migration studies. It should also be noted that transnational migration is not only pursued by those well-educated migrants or those who are financially better-off, those who are economically and socially disadvantaged might also adopt transnationalism as a strategy to improve their lives. Clearly where international migration is constrained by point-selection systems, there will be a much greater selectivity in the migration streams. However in situations where migration is not regulated by selection systems that privilege migrants with certain types of social and financial capital, then transnational mobility is not just for privileged migrants. Overall, transnationalism takes place
due to a combination of macro-level geo-political and economic forces, and micro-level personal and/or family reasons.

The next chapter outlines the methodology used for this project. Drawing on the relevant themes raised above, this chapter sets the stage for an in-depth discussion of why this research needs to be conducted in multiple sites, also detailed in the next chapter.
Chapter Four: Ethnographic Interviews and Online Survey – Multi-method Research

This chapter constructs the methodological basis for research on PRC transnational migrants. It discusses certain methodological issues when researching the topic and provides detailed information on the methods used in this research. In broad terms, this project adopts a multi-method research design\(^2\) that involves using both qualitative and quantitative research components towards a research project. Methods employed in this research are considered orthodox methods, such as in-depth interviews and a questionnaire survey, all widely used in social sciences, anthropology, and human geography (Crang 2002; Crick and Geddes 1998; Flick 2002; Fontana and Frey 1994; Hay 2005; Hughes and Sharrock 2007: 93; Robson 2002: 227-228; Schweizer 1998: 41-49; Trift 2000). Within this general approach, the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods for this research was pre-determined by the research design that allows for multiple data collected using different strategies. This approach is “likely to result in complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses” (Johnson and Onwuegubuzie 2004: 18).

Guided by the multi-method research approach, the whole research process for this project, however, was an on-going critical experiment and reflection on my chosen research practice with methodological adjustments and further development over time. Both refinement and adjustment of the research design was necessary and a result of my recognition of certain methodological limitations in the initial design.

In the following sections, I first provide a textual account of how the research methodology developed over the course of the project. This account is followed by a discussion of the ideas that influenced my decision to include more qualitative components and conduct the

\(^2\) It is a research design for a single research project that attempts to involve both qualitative and quantitative sub-projects each of which is relatively complete on its own. They are then used together towards answering research questions. The results from both qualitative and quantitative sub-projects are used deliberately to triangulate the advantages and disadvantages derived from both methods (Brewer and Hunter, 1989; Morse, 2003).
project in more than a single geographical location. After this methodological discussion, I provide details of each method actually employed, including sampling, recruitment, interview technique, question design and methods used to analyse the different types of data.

4.1 Development of the research framework and methodology

4.1.1 The initial design: Encountering methodological conservatism

Heavily influenced by multi-method research, which advocates a compatibility between qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Howe 1988; Howe 1992; Reichardt and Rallis 1994), I chose a design to conduct this research by using qualitative and quantitative approaches equally to understand all aspects of the research subject (i.e. Chinese transnational migration). Theoretically, the equal use of qualitative and quantitative methods for the same subject may produce a conceptual triangulation strategy with offsetting or counteracting biases generated from each method (Campbell and Fiske 1959; Denzin 1978; Mathison 1988).

In line with the most common approach for researching transnational subjects, like Chinese transnational migrants from the PRC, the qualitative component of this project was initially designed to include in-depth interviews conducted in China with return Chinese migrants who are also New Zealand residents/citizens but currently on a long-term stay in China while still maintaining contact with New Zealand. They were immediately considered as the group of interviewees for this project because of the theoretical considerations regarding return migration and transnational migration studies. First, the theoretical articulation of transnational migration stems from the recognition of migrants’ on-going engagement in more than one society, especially their countries of origin and their countries of adoption (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 1; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1995). Secondly, as mentioned in Chapter Three, studies on return migration are increasingly framed under the theory of transnationalism (King and Newbold 2008). Based on these theoretical considerations, PRC return migrants were conceptualised as part of the Chinese
transnational migration flow, and interviews with PRC return migrants in the initial design was considered the main empirical source of the qualitative data for the project.

Interviews with those returning migrants would be complemented by interviews conducted in Auckland with those Chinese return migrants’ immediate family members who stayed or at least spend the majority of their time in New Zealand. In the initial design, this part of the qualitative interview method was considered complementary to the interviews conducted in China with actual returned Chinese migrants. As I discuss in detail in the following context, the necessity of involving more voices from the return migrants’ family members, who have prolonged residence in New Zealand, in this project appeared more and more important over the course of the project to understand the transnational behaviours of PRC Chinese migrants. The rationale was the current reality of contemporary Chinese migration and the re-location processes of Chinese migrants where the intricate web of family relationships often governs decision-making (See detailed discussion in Chapter Two). Given the fact that many Chinese families may not be able to remain a tight integral unit after transnational movement and individual family members may spatially scatter to different locations, dictated by their individual particular needs at different life stages, the exploration of PRC migrant transnational movement and behaviour, therefore, must consider the family as a primary unit of investigation instead of looking at only individual migrants as a primary unit or main research subject.

The traditional ethnographic and phenomenological approaches were the rationale and philosophical orientation underlying the qualitative part of this research project. It was my hope that the phenomenological research, which centres on uncovering the necessary structural invariants of human experience or certain social phenomenon through efficient understanding of “the inherent logic of that experience or social phenomenon” (Dukes, 1984: 199), can allow me to explore the complexity of the mobility and the decision-making of PRC migrants during transnational movement. The ethnographic approach, especially the “new ethnography” (Agar 1996), employed in this research will enable me to understand

28 Michael Agar used the term “new ethnography” to describe the changing prospects for the old model of ethnography in the chapter, “Ethnography Reconstructed: The Professional Stranger at Fifteen” included in the book, An Informal Introduction to Ethnography (1996). The “new ethnography”, rather than inheriting the old
PRC transnational migrants within their own context; namely, through fieldwork and engagement with the Chinese transnational community in the places they actually live and have activities. Thus the broader economic, political, social, and personal circumstances related to this community would be uncovered.

In the initial design, the qualitative part of this research was guided by phenomenological and ethnographic approaches in parallel with an online questionnaire survey that sought to gather quantitative data to chart the overall movement patterns of PRC Chinese migrants. The quantitative data would make meaningful connections between the transnational behaviours of PRC migrants and some associated forces. Based on the conceptual notion of using both qualitative and quantitative methods on the same given phenomenon or subject for triangulation purpose (Denzin 1978; Mathison 1988; Webb et al. 1966), the research strengths from both methods would be drawn clearly and made evident, and their weaknesses could be minimised.

However, this initial design was rather tentative and built upon some incipient assumptions. The first assumption was that return Chinese migrants are a universal representative cohort of all types of Chinese transnational migrants; therefore, research on return Chinese migrants and their behaviours would adequately explain every facet of Chinese migrant transnational mobility. The second assumption was that conducting research on Chinese transnational migration at a single site might be enough to reveal the nature of the multi-faceted transnational migration phenomenon overall. Over time, it became obvious that these two assumptions presented certain problems and limitations for the project as a whole.

I gradually found that the interviews I conducted with those return Chinese migrants in China, as the main site of ethnographical fieldwork, seemed inadequate for illustrating the full picture of Chinese transnational migration. Return migration is only a part of the model of ethnography that focused on a picture of an isolated group or community, considers the political and personal circumstances of the research and views the local group as a diverse crowd in a world of blurred edges. The old model of ethnography looks away from the personal politics of ethnographer and community and the broader politics of community in the world. This “new ethnography” is committed to the complexity, ambiguity, subversion, and relativity of any given moment. It is about shared knowledge, but also about the practice of everyday life and the way those practices are built from shared knowledge, plus all the other details that are relevant to each moment.
transnational migration cycle, and return migrants are only one type of transnational migrant. Other migrants, such as those who step to a third destination or adopt frequent commuting movements, and even migrants who stay long term in the immigration receiving country, but possess the potential for mobility, can all be counted as transnational migrants. Therefore, the voices from the interviews with those returned Chinese migrants in China only uncovered the perspectives of those returned Chinese migrants and cannot be perceived as the single voice of Chinese transnational migrants. To understand Chinese transnational migration in a comprehensive way, diverse voices from different types of transnational migrants must be included in the research.

As mentioned, many return Chinese migrants have on-going contacts in New Zealand, and in many cases these contacts remain strong because of family linkages and on-going networks. Therefore, the homeland and the immigration destination should be treated as two coherent locations for fieldwork where interviews should be undertaken. In other words, the voices of those return migrant family members still residing in New Zealand should not be neglected. In addition, interviews in China with those return Chinese migrants puts attention to Chinese migrants’ transnational connections between New Zealand and the homeland, which means that other transnational behaviours occurring between New Zealand and other places worldwide are largely missed.

These two assumptions became problematic, not because it halted the research, but because they indicated how the methods I intended to employ were not based on the same theoretical framework of transnational migration I discussed in Chapter Three. The gap between theory and the research methods is not unique to this research either; rather, it is a common issue when undertaking all fieldwork research. Back in the 1950s, American sociologist C. Wright Mills pointed out that there was a persistently problematic relationship between theory and research methodology (Mills 1959). Recently, Pratt discussed methodological conservatism when conducting research in human geography. She pointed out that human geographers have not yet “[to] put much of our theoretical talk into research practice. Our talk may be that of poststructuralists, postcolonialists, or social constructivists, but our practice continues to be that of colonising humanists” (Pratt 2000: 639). In the same manner, as I designed the research, when the conceptual framework related to the theory of “transnationalism” was more well-developed, the practice of transnational research and its associated methods were
far more idealistic and tentative. It became all too apparent that I needed to broaden the scope of the ethnographical fieldwork and expand the research site.

### 4.1.2 Modified research framework: Broadening the research scope

In seeking the best opportunities for answering the research questions for this project, the adjustment of research scope and methods has two main aims. The first aim is to develop a robust methodological base by integrating qualitative fieldwork and the quantitative survey. The second aim is to employ research methods that illustrate the very transnationality of PRC migrants. In this regard, recent discussion on multi-sited ethnographies was particularly informative.

In transnationalism, some discussion has occurred regarding the significance of what George Marcus calls “multi-sited ethnography”. He suggests that researchers need to shift their ethnographic practice from the focus on a single encounter site to research that traces “cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity” (Marcus, 1995: 96). In the study of transnational migration in particular, there has been a tendency to speak of “multi-sited” fieldwork. As Hannerz points out, “the practice of ethnography may have to be distributed over several places” (Hannerz 1998: 247). Hannerz also suggests that:

> When transnational research deals with the fact that states, and passages across borders between states, are involved in a study, an ethnography that disregards tertiary and quaternary relationships may seem quite incomplete … Studies of transmigrants are among those that have recently taken such linkages increasingly into account. (Hannerz 1998: 248)

These points of view all suggest that a shift in focus for any research conducted with transnational actors should interrogate the links and connections between the places where individual people and groups are deeply influenced.

By realising the necessity of involving voices from various types of Chinese transnational migrants and conducting this research at multiple sites, it was decided to conduct more interviews in Auckland. The group of Auckland interviewees is very diverse in their
patterns of transnationality and indeed includes four sub-groups: 1) some return Chinese migrant family members who settle in New Zealand or at least spend the majority of their time in New Zealand; 2) some Chinese who commute between New Zealand and China; 3) some Chinese who had already have concrete plans to go to Australia; and 4) some Chinese whose immediate family member(s) moved to a third destination. Regardless of this diversity, the common nature these four sub-groups share is that all keep on-going contacts across borders, especially contacts with the homeland - China, and their first immigration destination country - New Zealand. As mentioned already, when studying Chinese transnational migration, the homeland and the immigration destination are not isolated sites; rather, they are inter-related locations because many Chinese maintain on-going contacts between the two sites. Therefore, while interviews with returned Chinese migrants conducted in China are one of the central elements of this project, interviews conducted in Auckland with those who are residing in New Zealand are equally important.

The interviews were also expanded to Chinese migrants who have obtained New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship, but currently living in Australia. As discussed in Section 4.1.1, I encountered an epistemological and ontological dilemma during the early fieldwork. The interviews with returned Chinese migrants did not evoke a comprehensive understanding of Chinese migrant transnational mobility. As a way of facing this dilemma, I broadened and expanded my qualitative research scope and the targets that I hoped would provide innovative and feasible solutions to the problems. To illustrate the character of transnationality and multi-locational movement of PRC migrants, Australia was chosen as a third ethnographic fieldwork site. However, it should be noted that in reality, the multi-locational movements of PRC migrants do not just take place between New Zealand and Australia; rather, the movements happen between New Zealand and many other countries. Here in this project, Australia was only taken as one example to show PRC migrant transnational mobility because of its geographic convenience for conducting interviews. The choice of Australia as another research site is also based on the fact that Australia and New Zealand were opened to new Chinese migration around the same time (i.e. 1980s). These two countries also share a long-standing migratory connection historically. In the late 1990s, this long-standing connection intensified with the “back-door” migration discussed in Chapter Two. Many new Chinese migrants actively participated in this significant migration flow.
In practice, these research method adjustments mean the involvement of more diversified research participants and a shift of location from a single site to multi-sites. Trans-locality became a distinctive feature of this research, not only for the qualitative ethnographic fieldwork but also for the quantitative online survey discussed in detail later. This means that a physical and geographic trans-locality was embedded in the ethnographic fieldwork because the fieldwork interviews were re-designed to be multi-sited (i.e. Beijing, Shanghai, Auckland, Melbourne, and Sydney). Meanwhile, this research is virtually trans-locational because the quantitative online survey also targets Chinese with New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship in China, New Zealand, other countries, or commuting between locations.

### 4.2 Methods

In general, the in-depth interviews and online questionnaire survey for this research took place concurrently throughout the discourse on conducting this project. There was no choice in terms of priority between the two methods of data collection in terms of time order. However, in terms of formulation of the online survey questionnaire, the finalisation of the survey questionnaire took place after I completed the interview fieldwork in China. The insights obtained from these interviews contributed significantly to the development and final formulation of a well-structured survey questionnaire. For example, the interviews in China revealed that although the returning Chinese migrants went back to China and had prolonged stays there, there was a continuous transnational intention within this group, as manifested by many who planned to go back to New Zealand or move to a third destination. To test how widespread transnational intention is among PRC migrants, the online survey was set up to clarify and extend the qualitative interview findings. For example, for interviewees who currently reside in New Zealand, even though they now are staying in New Zealand, their transnational intention may still be present. That intention will be particularly informative to indicate the possible future transnational movement of this group.

The online survey was launched in December 2008, after completion of the interviews in China and New Zealand (conducted in late 2007 and the first half of 2008). The interviews in
Chapter Four

Australia were conducted in June of 2009. The entire data collection, including the quantitative online survey and the qualitative interviews, were completed by September 2009.

4.2.1 In-depth interviews: Enriching understanding of the research topic

Research sites and interviewee recruitment

China, New Zealand, and Australia were the three ethnographic interview sites. This multiple-site research aims to target different groups of transnational Chinese migrants who have different transnational trajectories. Interviews in China targeted returned Chinese migrants who used to reside in New Zealand and have since returned to live and work in China. This group of interviewees is termed “returnees” in the research. The interviews conducted in Australia were done with Chinese migrants with New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship who moved across the Tasman Sea and now live and work in Australia for the long-term. Although some of them travel between China and Australia and also frequently travel to other countries, they regard Australia as their “home” base. This group of interviewees is termed “trans-Tasman” interviewees. The interviews in New Zealand collected voices of Chinese migrants currently residing in New Zealand, but keeping constant linkages/contacts with the homeland or other destinations where other family member(s) or other personal ties exist. Their migration trajectory shows no record of prolonged absences from New Zealand. This group of interviewees is called “settlers”. Many of them have family members, who are “returnees”, “trans-Tasman” interviewees or “commuters”, the last reference being to those who commute frequently between New Zealand and China.

It should be noted, however, that the categorisation of the interviewee groups (i.e., “returnees”, “trans-Tasman” interviewees, “settlers” and “commuters”) in this research is based on transnational migration trajectories and is only for labelling purposes and methodological convenience. Theoretically, transnational migrants should not be categorised in such fixed terms because further movement is contingent for these highly mobile migrants. Their transnational trajectories may change when their lives enter another stage. In other
words, they may easily convert from one category to the other, depending on what particular life time they are situated in and what particular needs they have in the different stages of their life cycles.

A total of 47 interviews were conducted, 27 in China, 10 in Auckland, and 10 in Australia. Table 4.1 shows the detailed information about the interviews and profiles of the interviewees. The China fieldwork was conducted first and lasted for four months (from the beginning of November 2007 to the end of February 2008, see Table 4.1). This part of the interview process was intensive because of the time constraint and funding limitations. The New Zealand part of the interview process was conducted after the China interviews and lasted much longer (from the beginning of March 2008 to the end of October 2008), as I am New Zealand-based, so a time constraint was not a big concern. The Australia part of interviews was conducted last (from the middle of May 2009 to the beginning of June 2009) and very intensive.

The field interviews in China were conducted in Beijing and Shanghai, two mega-cities that are the two most preferable return destination cities for many Chinese migrants. A small number of interviews were conducted in the researcher’s hometown of Chengdu, an inland capital city in Sichuan Province where the researcher has good personal contacts with “returnee” friends. The interviews conducted in Australia took place in Melbourne and Sydney. The New Zealand interviews were conducted in Auckland.

The recruitment of interviewees was accomplished mainly via the New Zealand Embassy in Beijing, the New Zealand Consulate-General in Shanghai, Auckland University’s alumni in Beijing, the Kiwi Club²⁹ in Shanghai, Internet³⁰, personal networking and a snowballing.

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²⁹ The Kiwi Clubs in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong hold regular informal gatherings and welcome all Kiwis (New Zealanders). These gatherings are casual events that take place every month and are a good place to make friends or establish networks.

³⁰ Recruitment messages were disseminated to Australian-based Chinese language websites popular among new Chinese immigrants. These websites reveal the irregular gatherings among the Kiwi Chinese (Chinese who once lived in New Zealand, but then moved to Australia). The gatherings are self-initiated, and advertisements of them are usually put on Chinese-language websites in Sydney. Using liaison contact details, the researcher organised a lunch gathering in Sydney and recruited some interviewees on that occasion.
technique. One effective way of recruiting interviewees was to follow up with some interviewee family members and ask them to introduce other family members to participate.

Table 4.1 Interviews conducted at three fieldwork sites and profiles of the three interview cohorts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field work period</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Interview target</th>
<th>Number of interviewees (Gender: Male/Female)</th>
<th>Average age</th>
<th>Number of people with NZ bachelor’s or higher degree</th>
<th>Number of people with NZ citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2007 – February 2008</td>
<td>China (Beijing, Shanghai &amp; Chengdu)</td>
<td>a*</td>
<td>27 (13/14)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2008 – July 2009</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>b, c &amp; d*</td>
<td>10 (3/7)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2009 – June 2009</td>
<td>Australia (Melbourne &amp; Sydney)</td>
<td>e*</td>
<td>10 (8/2)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10 (5 of whom also acquired Australia citizenship)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a, “returnees”; b, immediate family members of “returnees”, “commuters” or “trans-Tasman” interviewees; c, “commuters”; d, Chinese migrants in New Zealand who have concrete plan to go Australia; e, “trans-Tasman” interviewees

In terms of approaching prospective interviewees via formal and informal organisations, such as the New Zealand Embassy in Beijing, New Zealand Consulate-General in Shanghai, Auckland University’s alumni and Kiwi Club, initial contact was made by emails with corresponding or liaison persons; then detailed information about the research project and the criteria for selecting interviewees forwarded. This information was then distributed to potential interviewees by those corresponding and liaison persons on my behalf. This
scenario made the ethical process appropriate and enabled people willing to be interviewed to contact me directly. After I received confirmation of a willingness to be interviewed from potential interviewees, phone contacts were made. This process made the recruitment of interviewees more efficient. More importantly, it is a strategy that makes sure that most interviewees are self-motivated and willing to be interviewed, an aspect that has a significant effect on the validity of the interview data. During the research conducted in Shanghai, I personally attended Kiwi Club monthly gathering where some interviewees were recruited.

Conducting the interviews

In-depth, face-to-face interviews formed the central element of this research project. They were a route to understanding the perspectives and experiences of the interviewees. In general, the interviews conducted were in-depth in nature, but with a structured lead-in. Depending on the personality of each individual, some interviews were more narrative in nature and some were more semi-structured. Every interview was guided by pre-structured interview questions (Appendix 1), but allowed for large freedom and space to let the interviewees say whatever they liked on the guided topics. Interviews had to be face-to-face because such a pattern of communication let the interviews have the possibility of modifying the line of enquiry according to the different circumstances that were encountered. Telephone interviews are not able to offer this option. Face-to-face interviews also provided observational and non-verbal cues and give messages that helped in understanding the verbal response.

Principally, the interviews were conducted with single individuals except on only two occasions where the interviewees wished to be interviewed with their spouses. The language used in the interviews was the interviewee’s choice. In most interviews, Mandarin was used. There were some cases where interviewees replied in English to certain questions. Such manner of responding was respected. I believe that a researcher should respect how interviews proceed because doing so provides opportunities to reveal the personality of interviewees and give authenticity to each interview. As for the interview venue, many interviews were conducted in interviewee households with tea or coffee served, some occurred in interviewee offices, and some happened in cafes, teahouses, and restaurants. The
choice of interview venue was totally up to each interviewee, because I believe that interviewees must feel comfortable at a place where the interview takes place. This will ensure that a high quality interview can be achieved.

Each interview takes about one and half hours to finish. The interview procedure started with a brief introduction of the research project, including the researcher’s background, research purpose, main interview topics, issues associated with audio-recording, and explanation of all participant anonymity. This discussion followed with distribution of the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 4) to get his/her signature on the Consent Form (see Appendix 5). After these standard procedures, the main interview proceeded. During the interview, interviewees were free to interrupt and ask for any rephrasing or clarification of the topics. After all topics were covered, interviewees were given the chance to ask questions of the interviewer and make comments associated with the project and the interview.

In general, the manner of conducting the interview was informal. It was rather an interesting conversation between friends based on mutual trust and took place in a leisurely environment. Interviewees were provided the freedom to ask any questions during the interviews. For instance, several interviewees questioned my own situation and sought opinions from me on certain issues. From my point of view, this interaction between me and interviewees effectively changed the power relations of the interview, whereby the interviewer no longer dominates; however, this change also made the interview relationship closer. I welcomed this interaction to my methodological approach of doing interviews, which emphasised the advantages of the shared experience of being a first generation of overseas Chinese.

Interview validity and reliability is often regarded as a concern in qualitative interview research (Hughes and Sharrock 2007: 96). While I was well aware of the potential sensitive nature of this particular research, as a researcher who had visited the ethnographic fieldwork sites, I trusted and respected my interviewees while still always remaining fully conscious of all validity and reliability issues. The second important detail I paid particular attention was establishing a good relationship with the interviewees. As a researcher who shared the same cultural and immigration background, I was culturally competent to deal with interpersonal relations in a Chinese setting, crucial when conducting fieldwork research productively in China. I believed that the mutual trust between these interviewees and the interviewer could
be established through the contact processes with interviewees as well as the course of the interviews, which would consequently result in an authenticity of what my interviewees have shared with me.

In many cases, the interviews were followed by lunch or dinner with the interviewees, sometimes also including interviewees’ colleagues, family members or close friends in circumstances where both the interviewer and interviewee felt they could relate well with each other. Such social interaction with the interviewees was more beneficial than I expected, not only because of the Chinese culture where meals provide opportunities for social networking and personal interaction, but also because the occasion provided me first-hand experience of the real life of my interviewees in the locations I was researching. It also served a very important complementary and contextualising role in research practice. Even though the observational information derived from this social interaction with the interviewees was not included in the concrete data serving the research objectives, it did explain, confirm, or even contest information gathered through the interviews and provided rich and highly illuminating social evidence of their lived experience as “returnees”. More valuably, the information generated from such social interaction went far beyond the formal verbal data and provided insights regarding later data interpretation. It was common that opinions of the attendees at such social interactions were sometimes quite different from what I predicted, and such troubling thoughts stimulated new interpretations and further thinking and analysis. I wrote up the remarks in the form of a narrative as soon as it was practical to do so during the period of fieldwork. The remarks helped me to gather extra perspectives and experiences from those involved in the study. From one perspective, they aided my experience and feeling towards each interviewee. From another perspective, they were a crucial part of my learning about the research topic. Some of the experiences my interviewees shared with me actually reflected and echoed my own feelings as a short-term “returnee”. Those self-reflections and thoughts contributed significantly and shaped the way I look at and interpret transnational Chinese migration.

Hughes and Sharrock suggest that an interview is a social encounter between an interviewer and an interviewee, and is rightly “governed by the proprieties of interpersonal relationship between people who do not know each other” (Hughes and Sharrock 2007: 99). In the case of this particular ethnographic fieldwork, I would say that the interviews were far beyond a
simple one-off short conversation with interviewees; rather, each was an immersed social
interaction that required active engagement and close involvement with each participant. This
approach is what ethnographic research requires as well as what this particular research
needed.

*Interview schedule*

The Interview Questions (See Appendix 1) were designed to provide deep and rich data to
understand the phenomenon of Chinese transnational migration and the experiences and
expectations of PRC transnational migrants. The design of the interview questions was
guided by traditional phenomenological inquiry, which aims to describe the meaning of the
lived experiences about a concept or a phenomenon and explore the structure of
consciousness in human experiences (Creswell 1998: 51; Polkinghorne 1989). Therefore,
questions are person-centred and focus on asking about behaviour, experiences, thoughts and
feelings. In this way, interviewees are treated as respondents and an object of systematic
study and observation (Levy and Hollan 1998: 334-335). In addition, the design of the
interview questions heavily embeds questions about checking interviewee’s family situation,
issues, arrangement, and input into migration movement decisions. As mentioned, while each
individual interviewee’s decision in migration is important, his/her family situation,
arrangement and input into migration can also be important factors that govern migration
decision-making. Therefore, this project essentially considered families as the main units of
investigation instead of individuals. However, it is impossible to interview every family
member in real research practice, especially for this research which included targeted cohorts
with high transnational mobility and family members scattered across different continents.
One solution was to reveal their family situation and migration arrangement through
individual interviewee lenses and interpretation. This approach remedied the family factors in
migration decision-making processes previously under-studied in a feasible way.

The interview questions were divided into four sections, and each section covered different
topics. The first section (Participant Personal Information) collected basic demographic and
background information of each interviewee, including gender, age, place of birth, residence
status in New Zealand/Australia/China, year of first landing in New Zealand, migration category, geographical movements prior to and subsequent to landing in New Zealand, detailed education and work history, self-assessment of English proficiency, family composition, and locations and movement patterns of immediate family members (i.e. father, mother, wife/husband, child[ren], and siblings). Questions about the family situation were asked to chart the differences between interviewees’ and their family migration movement patterns, if there was any.

The second section (Migration Movements, Decision & Experiences) explored how the initial immigration to New Zealand took place and under what conditions and circumstances further movements happened. The investigation of initial immigration to New Zealand by PRC migrants is a necessary question in this research, because it would be meaningless to try to chart migrants’ further movement patterns without understanding how and why the initial immigration took place. Understanding interviewees’ initial motivation to come to New Zealand makes it possible to associate this motivation with a later decision for further movement. The motivation for further movement might reflect that the ultimate outcome of immigrating to New Zealand did not match the initial goal and expectations. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the nature of such questions heavily involves post-facto rationalisation, a well-known pitfall in migration history construction. Simply, how migrants now justify their reasons for movements in the past is affected by how they wish to rationalise their previous decisions. Therefore, the real triggers for movement may not be necessarily revealed in interviews which involve post-facto rationalisations. This issue does not mean that data drawn from the interviews are invalid, rather, it means the interpretation of the empirical data needs to be treated with caution. Further questions in this section emphasised family members’ migration patterns and their input into the migration to see what different strands were involved in the re-location processes. Specific focuses were also given to actual migration experiences, including opportunities and challenges interviewees or their families faced and personal and family issues affecting trans-migration mobility. Questions on these issues were used to examine to what extent the transnational migration of PRC migrants influenced their family dynamic and sense of belonging.

The third section (Home, Belonging, Identity & Citizenship) turned to questions about the interviewee’s family, social and economic networks, sense of “home”, sense of identity and
belonging, and perceptions of citizenship. These questions are important to ask because they provide greater insight into (Chinese) transnational migration. First, where family, social and economic networks of the interviewees centred possibly determined where they stayed and also where they moved. Secondly, since the meaning of “home”, sense of identity and belonging and conceptualisation of citizenship are issues immediately associated with (transnational) migration and also multi-dimensional in the context of transnational migration, the interviewees’ conceptualisation of these issues are an indicator of their lives and experiences during their transnational movement.

The last section of the interview questionnaire tried to ascertain future movement intentions of PRC transnational migrants, including their short-term plan for the next five years and their long-term perspective for ten years. It also aimed to discover what kind of driving forces could influence their future movements and their rational assessment of these perspectives. The ideal scenario they constructed might differ from the known probabilities, and such divergence could reflect underlying factors that would determine future decision-making.

As mentioned, different types of interviewees were involved in this research, including “returnees”, “settlers”, “commuters” and “trans-Tasman” interviewees. The interview questions were universal to all types of interviewees, but especially tailored to suit the different positions of these participants. For example, if an interviewee was a “returnee”, I would ask why he/she returned to China. If an interviewee was a “trans-Tasman” person, I would ask why he/she moved to Australia.

4.2.2 The online quantitative questionnaire survey: Validating findings from ethnography

The online questionnaire survey sought to gain quantitatively indicative data of transnational intention among PRC migrants and also the factors that determined their transnational movements. The quantitative and qualitative data were thus complementary.
Chapter Four

Sampling, sample frame, and approaches to data collection

The main purpose of the questionnaire survey was to chart movement patterns and future intentions of PRC migrants. It was not my goal to provide statistically representative data on the Chinese transnational migration phenomenon by using an online survey. Rather, the survey gathered explanatory and indicative data on PRC migrant movement patterns and its associated issues, including family arrangements, citizenship identification, sense of belonging, and social and economic networks. In general, this survey targeted all PRC migrants with New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship no matter whether they were in New Zealand or not. Due to the different locations of the potential respondents, this survey was a cohort study in which different cohorts served as the sampling frame. In line with the qualitative interview, the targeted cohorts of the quantitative survey were carefully framed as four groups: “returnees”, “settlers”, “commuters” and “transnationals”31. The sample size depended on to what extent the recruitment approach reached the potential respondents. As long as the criteria for being a respondent were met, a person was accepted to complete the survey. The criteria for being a respondent were: 1) one must be ethnic Chinese originally from the PRC; 2) one must be an adult over 20 years old; 3) one must have either New Zealand permanent residence or New Zealand citizenship.

This survey was a questionnaire designed for web-controlled automated completion. There are several reasons for conducting a survey using the Internet. The first is practicality. It is difficult to reach potential respondents physically because of the nature of the cohorts that this survey targeted, namely, multi-locational. It was impossible to travel around the world to conduct this survey. Therefore, an online approach could overcome this practical difficulty without undue physical limitations. The second reason was methodological. The specific cohorts that this survey targeted were impossible to identify clearly offline. Depending on how well targeted cohorts are framed and set, an online survey provides the most efficient way to identify and enlist potential respondents. Moreover, the online approach lacks face-to-

31 “Returnees” in this study refer to those Chinese who returned to China from New Zealand and now have had a long-term stay in China. “Settlers” refers to those Chinese who have had a prolonged stay in New Zealand. “Commuters” means those Chinese who travel between New Zealand and China frequently (at least twice a year). “Transnationals” refers to those Chinese with New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship who moved to a third destination, i.e., Australia, Canada, US, etc.
face dynamics, which gives it a neutral position in research practice. This approach theoretically eliminates instrumental bias caused by gender, social class, race and power relations (Illingworth 2001). Third, in terms of recruitment of respondents, an online approach offers the best opportunities to reach more respondents because it can engage in worldwide research at a low cost. Even though this survey had no ambition to gather statistically representative data on the research subject, securing a high level of involvement of the respondents was crucial for general quantitative purposes. Lastly, an online survey offers personal anonymity, which eases potential respondents’ concerns and thus may attract more respondents.

Carrying out the survey: Setup, timeline, respondent recruitment

The survey was administered using the “Survey Monkey” service, which provides a template for creating a survey questionnaire, hosting a survey, and receiving and tabulating responses. After completing the setup, the survey was pre-tested with a small group of participants to ensure that the final questionnaire was clear and unambiguous. Any errors and mistakes were identified and corrected. The survey was officially launched on December 1, 2008, and closed on July 15, 2009. It was left open for approximately seven months to recruit more respondents. The most challenging task was recruiting potential respondents, especially “returnee”, “transnational” and “commuter” cohorts who cannot be reached easily because they are scattered around the world. Even though the Internet provided space for potential respondents to participate in the survey around the world, the promotion of the survey was difficult and demanding work. In other words, when the online link and website was already available on the Internet, I still needed to spread the message and let potential respondents know there was such a survey and create interest in it.

My own personal network, the several Chinese community networks in New Zealand, Auckland University Alumni, the New Zealand Embassy in Beijing, the New Zealand Consulate General in Shanghai, and the “Kiwi Club” in Shanghai were used to recruit respondents. The survey link was emailed potential respondents, and hard copies of the survey message were distributed through the New Zealand Embassy in Beijing, the Consulate
General in Shanghai and the “Kiwi Club”. Several Chinese-language newspapers and Internet websites were also used to recruit respondents. With some funding support, survey advertisements and a website link were put on those newspapers and Internet websites. Two Chinese-language newspapers used to advertise the survey were The New Zealand Chinese Herald (先驅報) and Australian Chinese Daily (澳洲新報). One New Zealand-based Chinese-language website (www.skykiwi.com), two Australia-based websites (www.snowpear.com and www.ozchinese.com), and one North American-based website (www.6park.com) were all used to advertise. The choice of these websites was due to their popularity among the overseas Chinese community, especially new Chinese migrants who have Chinese language skills. With all these efforts, of the 1,575 responses, 477 were found to be complete and valid.

**Questionnaire design**

The online survey questionnaire was designed to take approximately 15 minutes to complete (See Appendix 2). It was written in both English and Chinese, and respondents could choose the version they preferred based on language. After making that choice, the web browser then took respondents to the introductory page in their selected language. The introductory page provided a brief introduction of the survey research, including the research purpose, main survey topics, and issues associated with respondent anonymity. This introduction is followed by a checklist for selecting correspondent respondents. Once the respondents’ personal situation satisfied the selection criteria and they clicked “yes”, the web browser would take respondents to the next page automatically and then the survey started.

Most of the questions were closed. A series of alternative answers for each question was offered to respondents. For some, a brief clarification was required and detailed by typing words. The first section of the survey asked questions about a respondent’s basic demographic information, such as gender, age, place of birth, marital status, highest education level, where that highest education level obtained, residence/citizenship status, year of first arrival in New Zealand, type of visa on first arrival in New Zealand, immigration category, relationship with principal applicant (if applicable) and key person(s) who initiated
the immigration plan to come to New Zealand. These details were important variables for data analysis. The last question in the first section asked for the current location of the respondent. Depending on which answer a respondent chose, the web browser would take respondents to a correspondent part of the survey and the whole questionnaire, broken down into four parts in terms of each respondent movement pattern.

The four parts were addressed to four different targeted cohorts (i.e. “returnees”, “settlers”, “commuters” and “transnationals”). Each part included the same question topics, but the detailed questions were tailored to suit different situations and movement patterns. Initial questions asked about respondents’ and their spouses/partners’ (where applicable) personal situations, such as current employment situation, occupation, annual income, last occupation and annual income before coming to New Zealand, and current location, including specific cities and countries. Some questions asked respondent family arrangement, such as family members’ geographic locations, main reasons for being there, and the person responsible for initiating the current family arrangement. Some questions asked about respondent travel patterns and frequency, their underlying reasons, and future movement intentions. Further questions asked about respondents’ economic connection between their country of origin and immigration destinations. More questions asked about respondents’ perceptions toward their immigration experience in New Zealand and their sense of belonging. The final question was an optional and open-ended question that asked respondents to write down either their stories and feelings of migration, or their comments about the survey.

4.3 Interpreting both sets of data

In general, the approach to the data analysis for this project was to work inductively from the research materials to develop broader ideas. Even though there were presuppositions of theory and hypothesis and a deductive reasoning process was involved in the analysis towards the tentative hypotheses based on the results from both interviews and survey, this research was not constrained by the existing theories on transnationalism. Rather, it goes beyond these existing theories and hypotheses to use empirical materials and evidence generated from the two research methods to develop broader ideas and concepts and contribute to the comprehensive understanding of (Chinese) transnational migration. One
main purpose of the research was to enlarge the scope of the existing theories on transnationalism in migration study, based on analytical interpretation of the empirical data generated from the research methods. The approach towards the empirical data was interpretive to produce a clear and comprehensive understanding of the social context of the phenomenon and the process whereby the phenomenon influenced and was influenced by a social context (Rowlands 2005). It is hoped that using this interpretive approach towards data analysis will produce a more comprehensive framework for better understanding Chinese transnational migration.

This approach, which is connected to the traditions of phenomenology (Dukes 1984; Malpas 1999; Merleau-Ponty 1962), ethnography (Herbert 2000; Marcus 2009) and grounded theory (Glaser 2002; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Kelle 2005; Thomas and James 2006), seeks to illustrate the Chinese transnational migration phenomenon and develop broad concepts for better understanding that phenomenon and its associated experiences and perspectives through examination of individual enactment and personal experience. A parallel mixed analysis was employed in which the content of the in-depth interviews were categorised and analysed to form a core for interpretation. The data generated from the online survey were analysed using proper statistical tools to provide a quantitative foundation and enhance overall data interpretation.

Based on all the qualitative materials generated from the multi-sited ethnographies, an independent chapter (Chapter Five: Conceptualising PRC Migrants’ Transnationalism through Multi-sited Ethnographies - Changing Family Strategies, Onward Movements and Narration of “Home”) was compiled to provide ethnographic evidence and insights on PRC transnational migration. Within this chapter, I draw out narratives from the interview materials for illustration, examination, and interpretation. The interview materials from the different ethnographic sites were analysed in terms of the fieldwork locations. Ethnographic fieldwork conducted in China with “returnees” and in Australia with “trans-Tasman” interviewees stood independently as two sub-sections. The fieldwork conducted in Auckland was embedded in those two sub-sections. The material generated from Auckland provides the cohesion that joins the separate fieldworks, because New Zealand is a transnational connection point for PRC migrants.
The online survey results were charted and analysed statistically where appropriate. Based on the results, another independent chapter (Chapter Six: Moving or Staying – Is the “Economic” Still Significant?) provides quantitative indications of PRC migrant transnational mobility. These quantitative findings were then contextualised into the discussion of the qualitative materials from the in-depth interviews.

4.4 Positionality

Critical reflection on my positionality in this research was an important element of the analysis. Following the debate on the impact of the power relationships between researcher and researched on the accuracy of findings for qualitative research that have occurred in feminist and cultural and economic geographies since the early 1990s (Ateljevic et al. 2005; Griffith 1998; Kobayashi 1994; Mullings 1999; Rose 1997), I reflected on the ways in which I was involved in this project and production of its knowledge. Following the suggestions on the self-reflective approach for insider/outsider dichotomy (Dwyer and Buckle 2009; Gallais 2003), my approach to this research does not simply refer to either insider or outsider. My approach regarding the insider/outsider issue was critically self-reflective. I situated my knowledge about the researched through continuous reflective consideration of my own personal positionality in the fieldwork operation and data analysis. In this sense, I become an insider sometimes, but at other time I am an outsider.

As discussed in Chapter One, human factors were heavily involved in this project, so rather than trying to neutralise my identity as an objective academic researcher, the interrogation for how I was involved in this research was a continuous practice. In the fieldwork, the manner in which I approached and interacted with the researched group, their shared ethnicity and immigration experience, and the ways of understanding the characters were inextricably tied to my own personal embodiment in this research, including my perceptions. It is fair to say that my personal embodiment was the entry portal to the researched. This personal embodiment was beneficial, as it reflected on the ways I shared connections with my participants as a Chinese “returnee” who returned to China for research, even if only for a short period of time; as a friend who shared the same cultural heritage and similar migration
experiences as the first generation of migrants in a country dominated by European culture; and as an adventurer who re-stepped into her homeland after a long-term absence. Here, my own biography gave me lived familiarity and tacit knowledge of the group I was researching. To this extent, I was an insider.

Yet, being a complete insider was not the membership role I played in this research. Since I am the one who was summarising findings and producing new knowledge gleaned from the research, I was an outsider as well. I actually tried to be an outsider who had an insider’s insight. Although there were some shared experiences for my return to China and my interviewees’ return journey, the essence of my return and their return was fundamentally different. I returned to China as a PhD candidate to conduct interviews with designated “returnees”, while they returned to China for completely different reasons. This difference in purpose made me an outsider to my interviewees’ world. I could be their friend, but primarily I was a female academic who deliberately chose to meet and conduct research on their experiences. This identification of the differences between my interviewees and me indicated a certain level of detachment from my participants and some uncertainties and gaps in terms of understanding the research subject. The recognition of these differences creates space for on-going negotiation and dialogue between the researcher and the researched; thus, full rigour in the research findings can be enhanced.

When the research reached the analysis and interpretation stages, I retained significant authority over the interpretation of the information I was given, the quotes, and the statistical data used to support my claims, and ultimately the final text presented in this thesis. I also had authority over the theoretical framework used to analyse and make sense of that empirical data. In this endeavour, my knowledge of the researched group and the knowledge I derived from an extensive literature review on theory of transnationalism shaped the interpretation and presentation of the researched results. In this sense, I posited myself in this research as a researcher, easily able to wander between the insider and outsider worlds of the research subject, and with the power to produce the knowledge of Chinese transnational migration. That power was situated between an insider’s point of view and an outsider’s objective findings. When conducting the analysis and the writing, I tried to be cognisant of critical reflection while involved in the production of this thesis; at times this reflection is
explicit in the text, but at other times it is only implicit. Yet overall, it was central and foremost to form my arguments.

4.5 Limitations

In this research, both qualitative and quantitative methods provided great advantages for contributing to the comprehensive understanding and theoretical development of (Chinese) transnational migration. Yet these methods also posed certain methodological pitfalls. The ethnographic approach employed in conducting interviews provided rich and in-depth materials on the research topic. Positively, the personal entanglements involved in the ethnographic fieldwork provided opportunities to establish good relationships with my interviewees and made the conducting of three ethnographic research processes progress smoothly in the field sites. Negatively, such an approach inevitably embodied a certain level of bias that was hard to rule out. Both socially and personally embedded endeavours in research are highly likely to make the intellectual understanding of Chinese transnational migration more subjective than objective, which may influence the final interpretation of the research results. The shared cultural background that existed between my interviewees and me on the one hand gave me the cultural competence to deal with the situation at the field sites; on the other hand, that background ensured that what I brought to this research was coloured as much by emotional as intellectual factors. My emotional biography and the troubling thoughts that crossed my mind during the fieldwork did shape my research agenda, especially in terms of interpretation. Rengert offered a similar critique on the subjectivity issue and interpretative dilemma that can be associated with the ethnographic approach:

Ethnographic research is the least scientific of the research approaches since, by definition, it involves a small sample size, is difficult to replicate, and contains a great deal of subjectivity and interpretation on the part of the researcher. Ethnographic research needs to be supplemented with carefully designed research projects in which the ideas developed are subjected to scientific rigor. (Rengert 1997: 469)
To respond to this methodological issue, one must include self-conscious reflection during the research and practice during the process (Herbert 2000). In the case of this particular research on PRC transnational migrants, an interrogation of my own subjective experience within the research milieu was a continuous practice throughout the whole course of this research. Moreover, as Herbert indicates, an ethnographer’s “subjectivity” is actually an analytic asset (Herbert 2000). In this research, the initial discomfort, confusion, insecurity, and hard-fought confidence I encountered when I stepped into the fieldwork in China were all instructive in filtering out the broader background knowledge and structure of meaning on the research topic.

Another potential pitfall for using the ethnographic approach is as Herbert suggests, the lack of an ability to enable generalisation and representation (Herbert 2000). Because the traditional focus of ethnography is on detailed descriptions of the research subject, ethnography is often criticised for failing to provide solid generalisable propositions. To remedy this limitation, one can utilise comparative research and a combination of qualitative and quantitative research as a possible resolution (Herbert 2000). In this particular research, conducting the ethnographic fieldwork in three different sites with three different transnational cohorts provided a comparative approach that enabled a certain level of generalisation for the qualitative data. By exploring and comparing one PRC transnational cohort against other transnational cohorts, a clearer understanding about what motivates one set of processes or meanings versus others was developed. The conducting of the online survey also reveals indicative patterns about the transnational migration pursued by many PRC migrants. Both deductive and inductive logic were involved in this particular research. In other words, while the empirical materials generated from the fieldwork were evaluated for the hypotheses developed from existing theories of transnationalism, they were also used for further interpretation and expansion of the scope of the same existing theories on transnationalism. By using this approach, I found generalisation could be improved because it was sensible to enter the field with an awareness of what the theory would predict and then evaluate the preliminary results accordingly.

All in all, the context offered opportunities for critiques and adjustment in the ethnographic methodology employed in this research. After all, it is important to point out that no matter how one adjusts the methodological approach to improve generalisation, representation, and
interpretation of the ethnography, it is still primarily a qualitative inquiry, and the ultimate
goal is to improve the theory. Therefore, any critical test of the ethnography cannot be limited
to its ability to outline and represent a given social group; rather, the ethnography should be
judged on whether it provides conceptual tools that allow it to “interrogate the conditions
under which they [researchers] produce ethnographic knowledge” (Herbert 2000: 562).

As for the online questionnaire survey, it offered great advantages in terms of the efficiency
of identifying and recruiting potential respondents and an associated low cost of operation,
but such technique also presents hidden methodological limitations. The initial intention for
using an online survey was to gather general and indicative data to show PRC migrants’
geographic mobility and movement patterns. However, it needs to be pointed out that certain
sample bias exists. The nature of online research means that potential respondents will only
be people with access to the Internet and competent users of the Internet. This online
approach also means that potential respondents will be relatively young because the use of
the Internet is popular among young people. This approach may preclude potential
participants who have only limited access to the Internet. Therefore, the generalisation of the
quantitative findings in Chapters Six and Seven is made with the clear recognition of such
kind of sample bias.

However, even if there is such potential sample bias, it should be noted that the sample bias
may be less methodologically problematic in this specific research project because of the
nature of the researched cohorts. The Chinese are among the most computer-savvy groups in
the New Zealand population, and IT skills for many are essential in their everyday lives and
transnational migration experiences, both as a communicative tool and a factor well
integrates with their offline experiences. Therefore, when the use of the Internet became a
defining parameter to recruit respondents for the survey, this parameter was well suited to
the targeted research cohorts who were highly educated and skilful young migrants. Thus
sample bias was likely of less of a problem for this research method.
4.6 Summary: Multi-method research

This chapter has outlined the methodology employed in this research project, including how that methodology was developed through the course of the research and the detailed tasks and reflection involved in data collection and analysis for the research. I provided a methodological critique for both my initial research design and the specific methods used. My methodological critique centred on issues, ranging from philosophical consideration of the research paradigm to practical concerns regarding the research techniques and their associated advantages and limitations. The approach to the analysis for this project was identified as generally inductive, but with a deductive reasoning phase. I also interrogated the position in which I was involved in producing knowledge and ideas about this project. Critical reflection on my positionality as a personal embodiment determined that the chosen methodological approach emphasised the advantages of shared experience between the research participants and the researcher. In addition, I offered a brief introduction to explain how each chapter was based on a concrete research practice.

The next two chapters start the process of constructing the concrete part of this research narrative. Chapter Five, based on the ethnographic interviews conducted in China, New Zealand, and Australia, focuses on investigating the transnational movement cycle of PRC migrants and their on-going connection with New Zealand. Then Chapter Six illustrates PRC migrants’ geographic mobility and further movement intentions based on the results of the quantitative survey.
Conceiving PRC Chinese transnational migration in multi-sited ethnographies is a central element of this project. By following the migratory trajectories of those transnational PRC migrants, this ethnographic interview study posits a cohesive and interlocked relationship as seen in the first-hand interviews that resulted from investigations carried out in different geographic localities. Such an approach lets this research explore the complex connections these migrant groups have established between New Zealand, their homeland, and third countries.

Based on in-depth interviews conducted in China, New Zealand, and Australia with PRC migrants who are New Zealand permanent residents or citizens, this chapter examines transnational PRC migrant motives for their initial immigration to New Zealand, the determining factors behind their choice of a transnational lifestyle, their future movement intentions, transnational connections between their place of origin and immigration destination, and their conceptualisation of identity and sense of belonging, particularly their idea of “home” and citizenship. These aspects are discussed within a family context and a relevant wider social-economic context. This approach is based on a hypothesis that family consideration among Chinese transnational migrants is a significant influential factor in governing their decision-making regarding immigration and re-location. To facilitate and support my arguments, interviewee narratives are quoted with pseudonyms for the purpose of illustration and preserving anonymity.

This chapter is divided into five sub-sections. The first briefly describes the interviewee profiles. Findings from the ethnographic fieldwork conducted in China and in Australia stands separately in the second and third sub-sections. The fieldwork conducted in Auckland, New Zealand, is embedded in those two sub-sections. There are factual and methodological reasons behind such organisation of the interview research materials. In the context of New Zealand, the great mobility of new Chinese migrants was commonly characterised as a
“returnee” phenomenon to the homeland (Ip 2006b), or a process of step-migration to a third country, more specifically, a “back-door migration” trend using New Zealand as a “revolving door” to Australia (Rapson 1998: 56). Therefore, the fieldwork is centred on the off-shore destinations of PRC migrants’ transnational movements. However, the interviews conducted in Auckland, New Zealand targeted those “returnees” and “trans-Tasman” interviewees’ on-shore family members, which aim to provide a family context to enhance the understanding of the transnational connections that many PRC immigrants established in their initial immigration destination country. It also provides further discussion on why many Chinese migrants returned to China and why many moved to Australia, rather than settling in New Zealand. Within those two sub-sections, a non-linear mode examines the transnational mobility of those interviewees. Each individual transnational trajectory is examined by following the line of departure, arrival, departure again, relocation, and future intention. By using this mode, interviewee motives and reasons for their initial immigration to New Zealand, and later transnational movement are discussed. Extra attention is given to interviewee social networks and their conceptualisation of self-identity, sense of belonging, “home” and citizenship. These issues are immediately associated with migration and could be an indicator to explain transnational experiences. These issues form the fourth sub-section. Findings from different ethnographic sites are compared, and convergences and divergences are addressed. In the last sub-section, significant findings from the ethnographic fieldwork are summarised and highlighted.

5.1 The interviewees

As shown in Table 4.1 (Chapter Four), 47 PRC migrants were interviewed in total. Among these 47 interviewees, at the time of interview, 27 were “returnees”, 10 were “trans-Tasman” interviewees, two were “commuters”, and eight were “settlers” of which two were preparing to move to Australia.

Overall, the 47 interviewees matched the profile of typical transnational migrants, possess great human, social, and financial capital (Ip 2000; Portes 1999; Portes 2001). They were well educated, relatively young, bilingual, highly skilled, in early or mid career, and have
considerable earning capacity. Many hold high-paying professional jobs, while others own their own businesses. They arrived in New Zealand the first time between 1987 and 2005 with the majority arriving between 1996 and 2002. Among the 27 “returnees”, only four had already decided to return to China prior to immigrating to New Zealand. Nearly half have acquired New Zealand citizenship. At the time of the interviews, all had returned and settled in China for at least one year. As for the two “commuters”, both decided to keep their Chinese citizenship while being New Zealand permanent residents. As for the “settlers” and “trans-Tasman” interviewees, all have obtained New Zealand citizenship. Among the 10 “trans-Tasman” interviewees, five had acquired Australian citizenship, and the remainder were either in the process of applying or planning to apply for Australia citizenship. Their time of arrival in Australia was between 2000 and 2009. It needs to be noted that these interviewees constitute a highly selective group among the total PRC Chinese population in New Zealand. The focus of this research project that explores the transnational mobility of PRC migrants determines that one important nature of these selected interviewees is that they are highly mobile or possess great transnational potentials. What should be noted is that those who are not that mobile or have no intention to take on cross-border movements have not been included in these ethnographic interviews.

5.2 A return journey to China

- New Zealand is a beautiful and peaceful country with fresh air and good natural environment. It is a perfect place for living or retirement. Here, Beijing, China, however, is an exciting place - fast development and a quick change of economic environment, as well as cruel competition. I feel that I am an active participant and creator of this city.

- New Zealand is a clean, green, and friendly country, but China is my home, and will always be my home. I love this country because love is what you cannot describe, but what you can feel.
• The thing over there I value the most is the democracy, liberty, freedom, and law-and-order. You can only find them in a Western society like New Zealand. China used to be poor and undeveloped, but now she is rising.

These passages are taken from narratives of three “returnee”, when they replied to my question of describing their impressions of China and New Zealand. Such sentiments were frequently repeated during the fieldwork. These narratives illustrate the attractiveness of New Zealand as a popular immigration destination country for many PRC migrants, as well as the “pull” factors exerted by China where deep emotional roots, a fast-growing economy, and greater opportunities for business and career development now lie. These three narratives are an entry point for understanding “returnees’” immigration and homeward journeys as well as their future intentions. The ways in which “home” and “away”, “here” and “there” are defined in the narratives are likely indications of the decision to return, further movements, or the dilemma of choosing to stay or to return. The peaceful, social, and positive natural environment in New Zealand and the bustling metropolitan atmosphere in urban China are different magnets, each affecting PRC migrant decision-making on movements.

These narratives also explain the important reasons for PRC immigrants to choose New Zealand. Discussing PRC new migrants’ initial motivations and reasons to step into their first immigration destination (i.e. New Zealand) is important to understand their transnational movements, since their initial motivations to immigrate to New Zealand had considerable influence on their immigration outcomes. The field of return migration studies has recognised that return is largely influenced by the initial motivations for migration as well as the duration of the stay abroad, particularly by the conditions under which the return does take place (Cassarino 2008; Ghosh 2000: 185). Without addressing Chinese migrant initial motivations to move to New Zealand, a full understanding of their return to the homeland and their transnational migration cycle cannot be achieved. This research yields findings that are largely in line with the previous findings that few new Chinese migrants immigrated to New Zealand for economic reasons (Ho 2003; Ho, Ip and Bedford 2001; Ip 2000; Ip 2003a; Ip and Friesen 2001). Interview evidence of this research shows that economic well-being was not a major factor for PRC migrants to immigrate to New Zealand; rather, non-economic
reasons appeared to be dominant among this migrant group. As discussed in Chapter Two, the attractions of New Zealand for PRC migrants were mainly a social and natural environment, a democratic political system, and an advanced education system. This finding also coincides with the published data from *Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand* (LisNZ) which shows that the three most important reasons for migrants to choose to immigrate to New Zealand over all others reasons were: relaxed pace of life or lifestyle, the climate or clean green environment and to provide a better future for their children (Department of Labour, 2009: 49-50). From a practical point of view, compared with other immigration countries like Canada and Australia, lower entry criteria and living costs also contribute to choosing New Zealand as an immigration destination country. Many interviewees revealed that New Zealand was not their first choice; instead, preferences were frequently given to US, Canada, or Australia, although their final decision, for a practical consideration of a lower threshold, was New Zealand.

There is another crucial factor that propels PRC immigrants to come to New Zealand. It is New Zealand’s strong historical linkage with Britain, giving the country an image of a Western society. This cultural factor is important to many PRC migrants. Quite often, interviewees stated their main reason for coming to New Zealand as “going to the outside world to have a look”, “eye-opening experiences” or “getting a gilded wrapping to myself (镀金)”. Here, “the outside world” and “eye-opening experiences” usually refer to experiencing life in developed Western countries, and “getting a gilded wrapping” means that an overseas experiences or an overseas degree can give one a valuable overseas credential and an international outlook. These will have considerable value in China’s job market and provide the advantage of embracing a bright future that may not necessarily take place in the destination country.

Based on my observations and knowledge of migrants from the PRC, I strongly agree with what Ong suggested, namely, that there is a cultural notion behind the phenomenon of many Chinese going overseas in the contemporary era (Ong 1999: 1-26). That is a “cultural logic” where the West is often presented as a superior civilisation “in terms of capital development, secularisation of [the] cultural, and democratic state formation” (Ong 1999: 31). This opinion often promotes movement toward the West and constantly invokes a longing for Western experience among many Chinese. Emigrating to a Western country to obtain permanent
residence or citizenship for many prospective PRC migrants means obtaining a safeguard for their future or a stepping ladder to climb to new financial and social heights. This attitude is built on historical and social reasons. China suffered defeats and humiliation from the Western powers during the nineteenth century and twentieth century and was a closed society until the late 1980s with a bleak economy and slow social development. Therefore, it is true to say that up to the beginning of the new millennium, immigrating to developed Western countries was perceived by the Chinese general public as an astute move towards personal advancement that could only be taken by those elites who possessed considerable human and financial capitals. Migration to the West was seen as a courageous step to escape from the bleak situation at home and pursue positive personal goals. These notions appeared pervasive among the “returnees” when they explained their reasons for immigrating to New Zealand initially.

- Michael stated that “immigrating to a developed Western country, like New Zealand, for my generation was a prestigious thing to do, everybody envied me.”

- John revealed that “I have been educated to go overseas to better myself since I was a little boy. At the time when I graduated from university, there was a wave that excellent young graduates all prepared to go the West. I was not qualified to go to US; therefore, I chose New Zealand.”

- Paul explained that “I was not satisfied with the situation in China at that time, and also was not confident about the prospect of China. At that time, it seemed that China’s political system was unstable and the government’s determination to develop the economy was not apparently shown. New Zealand is a Western country and definitely one of my choices at that time.”

However, going to the West for PRC migrants was just an immigration aspiration and a rather ambiguous and intangible one at that. In this sense, PRC new migrants were quite different from Hong Kong and Taiwan new migrants in terms of motivation and reasons for immigrating to New Zealand. The influx of new Chinese migrants from Hong Kong to New Zealand in the mid-1990s was mainly associated with fears of the political uncertainty associated with Hong Kong’s 1997 handover to the Chinese government (Ho 2003). This fear
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intensified with the Tian’anmen Square Incident in 1989, which propelled an exodus of Hong Kong Chinese between the late 1980s and mid-1990s. The results of this exodus have been widely noticed in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Skeldon commented on the exodus of Hong Kong Chinese: “their sojourn overseas was aimed solely at fulfilling the residence requirements for a foreign passport, which was sought as an insurance policy against things going wrong after 1997” (Skeldon 2006: 69). Migrants from Taiwan shared a similar fear of communist China, especially after Chinese missiles were launched across the Taiwan Strait. Some immigrated to New Zealand to protect their male children from compulsory military training (Boyer 1996; Ip 2003b). Apart from the political insecurity, pursuing better education opportunities for children and a relaxed lifestyle also contributed to the arrival of many Hong Kong and Taiwan migrants to New Zealand. It is fair to say then that their immigration goal was more specific and clearer.

In contrast, the goal for PRC new immigrants to New Zealand was generally ambiguous and not as specific as the Hong Kong and Taiwan immigrants. Like Ann said, “it was a little bit aimless for many PRC people to immigrate to New Zealand; it seemed that as long as they could leave China and could enter a Western country, they would make the move.” This trend can be partly verified by cases of “returnees” who landed in New Zealand for the first time as international students and then applied for residency on shore. A number of those interviewed revealed that they did not have a clear purpose for immigration; they came to New Zealand initially for education only. Then when they found they could score quite high in the point-based immigration system, applying for permanent residence became the next logical step in their overseas experience. Taking one interviewee as an example, Sarah explained her arrival in New Zealand “… as purely for postgraduate education and as an investment in self-development”, and her decision for immigration was “a norm of trajectory that many Chinese from the PRC had experienced – studying, working and immigrating.”

While the primary objectives of New Zealand’s immigration policy after 1987 were economic factors, such as covering a labour force shortage and stimulating business, the new PRC migrants’ initial motivation ran in a different direction. This was a topic of much policy and government debate and challenged the usual traditional assumption that migration is generally economically motivated. Of interest here is the issue of limited interest in economic integration into New Zealand among PRC migrants as their primary immigration motivation.
Economic integration into a host society requires patience and time. The underlying rationale is that the more time and effort one spends on obtaining employment in the immigration host society, the more likely it will be that one can gain better labour market performance. A limited economic interest in immigrating to New Zealand among many PRC migrants may have pre-determined that their residence in New Zealand would not be long. The question that needs to be asked here is whether high absenteeism links to or is even caused by limited economic interest. If one’s original intention was largely utilitarian, such as viewing New Zealand as a place for advanced education opportunities, eye-opening experiences, or collecting useful personal credentials, an immigrant might pack up and leave once he/she achieved those original goals. This is one indication that further movement of PRC migrants is highly possible and contingent. This aspect is further discussed in the summary of this chapter.

5.2.1 Returning to China: A calling from “home”?

The return journey taken by “returnees” involves a long-range geographic move and a costly air journey of 11 hours from Oceania to East Asia. It is also emotionally costly and involves critical decision-making and uproots a person once again to re-enter the homeland, and facing inevitable re-adjustments and re-integration issues. This research found that the factors behind PRC migrants’ return to the homeland are multi-layered; there is no single reason for the decision to make that return journey. The factors that motivate returning are interwoven with macro forces and also personal and family reasons.

**Macro-factors: The economic pull of China**

The strength of the Chinese economy and the huge Chinese market were undoubtedly important factors that propelled some movement homeward. For example, Jeff, an insurance claim broker based in Shanghai, whose wife and children still live in Christchurch, mentioned:
I really dislike being separated from my wife and children geographically, but if I drop my business in Shanghai and stay in New Zealand permanently, the quality of my family’s lives would decline dramatically because of the lower income over there. Here in Shanghai, the bigger population means more clients and more money.

Even though Jeff was once employed by a New Zealand electronics company and had a stable income, it was not enough to sustain the lifestyle he wanted for his family.

The impact of China’s booming economy adds more force to motives related to career-development opportunities and higher professional satisfaction. Given that many “returnees” received re-training and re-education in New Zealand, their overseas qualifications, work experience, and English language proficiency equipped them with the special skills and knowledge they needed to take on the opportunities and challenges offered by China’s rapidly growing economy. When they competed in the China job market, they had an advantage over the locals. Almost all “returnees” emphasised that the immigration experience and their study in New Zealand gave them additional strength and advantage when embracing their current life and work in China. In this sense, the experience of immigrating to New Zealand was generally perceived as positive among those “returnees”. Susan, a young mother who is currently working in an international-management-system corporation in Beijing highlighted the immediate advantages of her New Zealand experience:

If I didn’t have my New Zealand qualification, I wouldn’t have my current job. This is a multinational corporation which requires professionals to have specific skills. For example, I am a HR person. Theoretically, there are heaps of HR available, and it is easy to recruit them. However, it is difficult to find a HR person who specialises in accounting and also speaks fluent English.

Equipped with such human and cultural capital, as well as creative ideas gleaned from overseas, many of the “returnees” found it impossible to resist the higher professional satisfaction and career development opportunities now available in China. Michael, who returned to China in 2008 and is working as a finance analyst specialising in adventure
investment analysis, mentioned that, compared with China, the job and entrepreneurial opportunities in New Zealand were relatively limited. When he immigrated to New Zealand in the mid-1990s, he had never expected China to become an economic giant within such a short period of time. Seeing China’s booming economy, which provides more scope for his career development, he gave up his middle-income effort in Auckland and took a position in a newly established local share company in China. He left his wife, who was doing her PhD, in New Zealand, so she could complete her studies. The decision was risky because the company he joined was a newly established one, but he has no regrets. He expressed his satisfaction over his current work situation in Beijing:

The job is a more interesting and exciting job than I ever had in New Zealand. My specialised field is finance. Even though I was lucky compared with many Chinese immigrants because my last job in New Zealand was closely related to my special training, it was not challenging enough.

The decision to return was not easy for him or for his wife. It took him many years to make up his mind. As a finance analyst, he finally rationalised his decision of returning by using what he called a personal “cost-and-benefit analysis”:

… immigration to New Zealand cost us a lot. I’d like to use a ‘cost-and-benefit analysis’ to answer your question about my returning decision. Yes, we have benefited from immigrating to New Zealand, such as the eye-opening experience, being in a country with a good natural environment and peaceful social environment, and gaining New Zealand qualifications. However, what we lost was much more than what we gained. If I did not immigrate to New Zealand, I believe that my career would be on another completely different trajectory. I would be a very successful entrepreneur in China, and I would have more money than what I have now. In New Zealand, what I have achieved is only an ordinary middle-class lifestyle. That is not what I want. You may say I am ambitious. To be honest, I am ambitious. Now my opportunity is coming, I have to return to China to take it and get back what I have lost … My New Zealand boss was very
reluctant to let me go, but he was not able to offer me what my current employer could offer.

While Michael’s return was mainly driven by his career ambition, it was not only a monetary matter; it was also one of self-esteem:

In relation to career development …, if I had stayed in New Zealand, I would be a person who gives up all my dreams and just lived ordinary life …. I am a person who always has dreams and wants a successful career.

Personal and family reasons

The interviews conducted in China revealed a complex set of personal and family trajectories. For many of these “returnees”, family responsibility, such as taking care of their aging parents, played an important role in their decision to return. A couple who had stayed in New Zealand for more than ten years suddenly decided to return to China, not only because of a great job offer for the husband from a multi-national company, but also because of his aging parents. Jack, the husband explained his return in a very touching way:

Of course, the company I am now working for offers me a lot, not only the high salaries. I also have many opportunities to go overseas. I now travel between many European countries and China every week. I am sure that I have already achieved a very high economic and social status. But this is not all. The primary reason for us to return to Beijing was because my parents are aging. They really need me to be close to them, and I am truly happy to return for them. As their only son, what I really want to do for them is to take care of them on a daily basis when they are ill. When their time runs out, I can be with them at the end.
Jack’s wife, Tina, made clear that this consideration for Jack’s parents was actually incorporated into the whole family’s movement plans. Tina’s parents are still in Auckland with Tina’s younger sister, so the younger sister can take care of them in Tina’s absence.

My parents immigrated to New Zealand under the family (parents) reunion category. They stayed with us in Auckland for several years. Later on, my younger sister came as well. She is working there now. It is fortunate that my sister is in Auckland. If she were not, I really could not have left my parents and come back to Beijing with my husband. My husband is the only son of his parents - you know, the one-child policy in China. My parents are lucky that they have two girls. My sister now takes the main responsibility for taking care of my parents in New Zealand, so I can be away.

Given the “one-child policy” in China that was introduced in 1978 and initially applied to first-born children in 1979, many PRC migrants are the only children of their parents. Jack’s case is one example and shows that return homeward movements are often necessitated by the fact that aging parents require long-term care for declining health. Filial piety could be an important pull factor in the decision to make the return journey. In Chinese culture, to provide physical and daily care for aging parents is considered a key practice of filial piety, the one important Confucian ethic that defines a hierarchical and respectful relationship shown towards one’s parents. For many adult Chinese migrants, if their parents choose not to migrate to New Zealand to reunite with them, or if they are not able to follow their migrant children to the immigration destination, care provision for aging parents becomes a problematic issue. In many cases, those adult migrants are willing to, and some feel obliged to, return to the homeland to take care of their parents. Reunion with family back in China is also an important reason that draws many PRC migrants home. For example, there was Sandy, whose husband and son are all New Zealand permanent residents, but her husband and son have not been in New Zealand for very long. Sandy stayed in New Zealand for six years, so the whole family could qualify as permanent residents. In the meantime, her husband and son and she travelled between New Zealand and Beijing three or four times annually for family reunions in either Beijing or New Zealand. She also studied and obtained her MBA from a New Zealand university. After graduation, she found a job in a government organisation.
and worked there for more than a year. She returned to Beijing in 2008 because her family needed her:

It is not good to be separated from my husband and son for a long time … Now all of us have secured New Zealand residency as our back-up in the future, and I got my MBA as well as work experience from a Western society. That is more than enough. It is time to be back.

As some other transnational Chinese migrants also did, an arrangement where some family members were located in China and others in New Zealand, was put in place deliberately prior to immigration. Long-distance family separation was also dictated by the needs of different family members, needs that could not be accommodated within the same geographical space or abode. For her husband, a lawyer who can earn a very high income in Beijing, giving up his job to move to New Zealand with Sandy would not be a wise choice because his Chinese salary is the financial backbone of their family. Their son would receive a full Chinese education based on the plan and desire of his parents, so the task to fulfil the immigration requirement fell on Sandy’s shoulders; in addition, she had better English language skills and did not need to work intensively to sustain the family’s financial needs. They deliberately maintained family ties in both China and New Zealand via the strategy of “astronauting”. During the period of family separation, the family ties were not disrupted; instead, they were sustained by frequent commuting of all family members between the homeland and the immigration destination country. Moreover, there was likely a clear plan of reunion for a time in the near future. When the immediate goal of obtaining a New Zealand permanent Returning Resident’s Visa (RRV)\(^{32}\) was achieved, the family moved on to the next

\(^{32}\) The first Returning Resident’s Visa of New Zealand is issued to one at the time he/she is issued a residence visa or permit. It is valid for two years from the date the first residence permit is granted. After the first Returning Resident’s Visa expires, one must apply for a second Returning Resident’s Visa. The second or subsequent visa may be valid indefinitely (enabling multiple trips in and out of New Zealand indefinitely, commonly referred as permanent Returning Resident Visa) or may be valid for 12 months or 14 days. An indefinite visa is granted provided one was the principal applicant in the original residence application, or is included in the RRV application lodged by the original principal applicant, and one is able to meet the requirements that show commitment to New Zealand, e.g. spent most of your time in New Zealand. If one is unable to meet those requirements, he/she may be eligible for a 12 month or 14 day Returning Resident’s Visa (for more details, please visit this official website: http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/alreadyinnz/residents/returningresidents/).
stage of their lives. Assessment of where they would spend the next stage of their lives was then made rationally and based on the different needs of each family member. Returning to China was definitely one among many choices.

In the case of Sandy, her return to China was solely family-driven. Her son still needed a few years to complete secondary school in China, and her husband had good earning power, with his career reaching its peak in China. For Sandy, her New Zealand qualification and work experience were useful by-products of the immigration process and definitely gave her advantages when competing in China’s labour market. These reasons, coupled with the attraction of China’s booming economy and the associated huge demand for skilled professionals made them decide that “it is the right time to be back”.

Unlike Sandy’s choice, many families with school-age children still choose family separation, where the husband remains in China to work and the children and mother stay in New Zealand. This choice is mainly made because the children have become accustomed to New Zealand’s educational system, and many are not willing to go back to schools in China, where the education system is rigidly restricted and involves tremendous stress and competition. Most Chinese parents also believe that the New Zealand education system is better than the one in China. For example, Stella, whose husband commutes between China and New Zealand at least three times a year, compromised her aspiration to return based on consideration for her two school-age children:

Once [my 14-year-old daughter] got into the school here, she never wanted to go back to school in China. Children are very sensible, and they can compare which one is better for them and which is not. Now it is impossible to take her back even if I wanted to return China with my husband. Her English is much better than her Chinese and, more importantly, she has her own friends in the school, church group, and music team. How can I take these things away from her?

Sometimes the decision to continue with a family situation of separation was deliberately made before applying for immigration just as Sandy’s family did. However, in many cases, decisions were made after a difficult attempt to establish a business or find employment in
New Zealand. Even though many PRC migrants’ main reason for coming New Zealand was not economic well-being, the basic economic factor of a stable job with reasonable income to sustain the family was clearly an important consideration. When seeing that it is much harder to generate high income in New Zealand, many family members, usually the men, went back to China to pick up their previous businesses, but travel frequently between China and New Zealand for family reunions.

The early literature on transnational migrant families often used the word “astronauting” to describe the frequent commuting behaviour of some Asian immigrants, especially the husband/father of the family (Ho, Bedford and Goodwin 1997; Pe-Pua et al. 1996; Skeldon 1994b: 11; Waters 2002). This phenomenon has been widely seen in media reports as an aberration of the traditional expectations of immigrants. However, the reality of transnational migration shows that in many cases “astronauting” is only part of a family’s transnational trajectory and only denotes a strategy used to satisfy a migrant family’s short-term needs. When the goal of a life stage is achieved, the strategy may change; re-arrangement or re-location may take place, and the re-location destination for the next stage of life will be assessed and determined based on the needs of the changing family structure. This pattern is discussed further in a later section.

For some nuclear families with single working adult and aging parents, their choice may be that the working adult goes back to China to enjoy the benefits provided by China’s fast-growing economy, while the aging parents stay in New Zealand to enjoy their retirement in a natural and peaceful environment. Within the family context, the decision to return or stay involves an overall consideration of how to balance the different needs of all the family members and how to achieve overall family well-being.

Other non-economic reasons: Chinese cultural milieu and emotional links to the homeland

For many “returnees”, the desire to go back to old, comfortable surroundings also contributes to their return decision. Sandy elaborated on her reasons for return as follows: “To be honest, we can have more in China than in New Zealand, both materially and spiritually. But for me,
the spiritual gain was more important. I have many friends in China, and my family and my parents.” China’s cultural milieu was comfortable, familiar, and highly reassuring, offering a familiar language and social environment, which produced a high sense of security and belonging. Paired with the Chinese cultural milieu, there is a feeling of alienation from the Kiwi circle and culture that underlies the final decision to return. Nichole expressed her sense of frustration about trying to integrate into the Kiwi culture:

I am sure that I am a person who has integrated into the mainstream relatively well, at least compared with most new Chinese. My English is good enough to communicate at both social and professional levels. I can use a lot of slang and make jokes when I speak in English. My boss, my colleagues, and my previous supervisors in university all like to talk to me. I also like the café and picnic culture. I truly appreciate and accept the Kiwi values. But are these all enough? This is a serious problem. As an immigrant, you are just another bloody Asian newcomer for the locals anyway.

Sunny referred to one of the reasons for her returning as “New Zealand is not international enough”. When the interviewer asked her to explain further, she said:

I mean that New Zealand is not tolerant enough toward foreigners. On the institutional level, New Zealand does very well. There is almost no policy or regulation that imposes racial segregation and division. It is a country that is inclusive and open to minority immigrants. However, the locals here are another matter, especially the Maori. They feel that there are too many new immigrants. We Chinese are very sensitive to these issues. We can feel the suspiciousness some locals hold toward us.

Thus, while many PRC “returnees” are motivated primarily by China’s economic success, by the energetic pursuit of career development, and by personal and family reasons, race relations in the host country also partially and significantly contributed to the decision to return. When the macro- and micro-factors that contribute to the cross-border movements of
transnational migrants are considered all together, the social relationships and structure of the destination country cannot be underestimated or discarded.

For some “returnees”, the emotional link to China as their “home” also contributed to their return. Some interviews revealed how the emotional link with China conditioned their decision to return. Sophia, who quit her job as a programme manager at a New Zealand university and is now working as a trade development executive in Shanghai, mentioned that her emotional link with her birthplace, Shanghai, was an important factor in her return. While the interview with her reinforced the attractiveness of China as an economic powerhouse, she particularly emphasised that “home is calling. Here is my home. Hamilton is my home away from home. My real home is in Shanghai, China”. For her, the idea of returning to her hometown filled her with nostalgia. The interview with Lucy revealed a similar tendency to perceive China as the home to which she can and should return: “I am a Chinese, and China is my country. My home is here. Here is a place where I feel I belong. In New Zealand, even though they offered me citizenship, I could not find the feeling of being home”. These interview results also show that the emotional link to China as the “home” relates to the promotion of patriotism among many young Chinese migrants, and this patriotism is immediately related to China’s rising international status and its growing profile as an emerging world power. As George explained, “China, my home, still has many things that are not very good, but I love her as I love my mother. I cannot refuse to go back to my mother. Now China is rising, I am really proud of it, and I hope that it will become stronger and stronger”.

In summary, the majority of these “returnees” are highly educated, and a sizeable number have already obtained New Zealand qualifications and work experience. This research strongly suggests that when those immigrants made the move back to China, many did so not because of their failure to settle down in New Zealand; rather they moved because there are better opportunities in China. Equipped with English proficiency, New Zealand qualifications and professional skills, they are able to take advantage of those opportunities. The opportunity for professional advancement and to “play a bigger role” in China’s market and economic development is the most important factor for many return migration decisions. Other factors beyond economic reasons, such as family consideration, patriotic pride, cultural alienation with the host society, and an emotional linkage with China, are equally important.
The interviews conducted in China also found that the consideration of family members’ different needs at their different life stages played a significant role in weighing returning to China and staying there.

5.2.2 Future movement intentions: A permanent settling back?

Given the pulling power exerted on the PRC migrants by the bigger China market, one important question related to return migration was whether there is an expiry date in their plan to make a return journey. To determine the motives and implications of return migration in a transnational context, these interviews asked about future movement plans of those “returnees”.

Back to New Zealand for sure

Some “returnees” have definite plans to go back to New Zealand for their children’s education. For example, Sandy explained her future plan, “I’ll be with my son in Auckland for his high school education after he finishes his intermediate school in Beijing. Bilingualism is an advantage for his future. New Zealand’s education will benefit him as well”. Thus Sandy will renew the trans-Pacific migration cycle and register her son and herself for a return journey to their immigration destination country in the near future. The driving force behind this decision is education. As a young family with a school-age child, Sandy’s family focus is on the child. Giving children a relatively liberal educational environment is often a priority in a family’s future plans. This is not, however, the end of that journey. The subsequent movement plan in the future goes along with the nature of this migrant’s shifting motivations at different stages of life. As Sandy explained:

Once my son enters university, I can be free. I can totally focus on my own career. As a mother, my task has been accomplished. I want to go to Australia afterwards, and my husband can go there with me if he wants. My best friend owns a big trading company in Sydney, and he always asks me
to go there to help with his business. I can also have the option of going back to China again.

This is a family whose social habitat is definitely transnational. Its remarkable family trajectory once again confirms the point that changing family structure and family dynamics underpins a family’s transnational strategy, which in turn significantly influences the next location of each family member. The negotiation of any transnational trajectory is a skilful balancing act and dictated by the consideration of the needs of different family members at different life stages. In doing so, the needs of some family members can be accommodated within the same geographical locality, but some cannot. This results in various special arrangements like temporary split, dispersal, translocality, and convergence. Although the patterns are varied, in the end, only choices that maximise the benefits for a collective family well-being will be made.

While the education-driven return to New Zealand for children is pervasive, retirement is another significant event frequently associated with the decision to return to New Zealand. For many, retirement is that time when one moves away from bustling metropolitan urban centres to live in a quieter environment. Working in China will give retirees enough savings to sustain a comfortable lifestyle back in New Zealand. For example, Andrew saw his immediate future in China because his career is in China. However, his future plan for settlement is still in New Zealand: “New Zealand is good for long-term settlement. People enjoy the natural environment there, and so do I. I’ll go back to New Zealand after retirement for sure”. Retirement is a significant stage of one’s life course that is often associated with the context of one’s migration narrative. In Andrew’s case, there is a direct link between retirement and returning to the immigration destination. Indeed, his current “settling back” to the homeland is a preparation stage for embarking on another return journey back to the immigration destination he left. Returning to the homeland where there is a fast-growing economy can maximise his earning power and let him realise the eventual circulatory route back to the immigration country, where the lifestyle and environment are what he really longs for.

This research also found that “returnees” further migration movement plans are usually based on a shift in their life stage, especially when life moves to the stage of having one’s
own family. Continuing with the case of Andrew, he is currently a single man, but his construction of his future movement plans goes hand in hand with the possibility of having his own family in the near future: “If I get married and have children, perhaps I’ll send my children to New Zealand when they reach school age. In that case, my wife-to-be will have to go to New Zealand with the children”. Here “astronauting” is very likely to happen to meet the family’s shifting needs during different life stages. Hugo’s study of the “Australian Diaspora” highlights the tension between the Australian expatriates’ desire to further their careers and maximise income overseas and the attractions of lifestyle advantages for the family in the homeland, Australia (Hugo 2006). He finds that many migrants decide to return to Australia when they enter the early family formation stages of their life cycle, because it is important for many that their children spend part of their childhood in Australia. In the case of those “returnees”, a similar decision-making process takes place. Like what Andrew planned, the wife and children of a family will return to the immigration destination country, or even the whole family might return. Young families prefer to have their children educated in New Zealand where a carefree and less pressurised childhood exists. This will define where these transnational actors will be for another period of time.

For some, returning to New Zealand means to go back “home” after their life savings have been secured by working in China. In Jeff’s words, “I’ll go back to New Zealand maybe after ten years. I’ll give myself ten more years to make money in China. I hope that after ten years I have enough money to go back to my children and my wife. My home is in Christchurch because my wife and two children are there”. In his statement, “going back home” means returning to the immigration destination where his family still is. Here the term “home” is once again incorporated into his immigration narrative, but it conveys markedly different meanings than the conventional meaning of “home” as immigrants’ places of origin. Jeff’s conceptualisation of “home” is a typical example of the way that many migrants conceive “home” to be where their families are.

Double-return journey and transnational family strategies

The education-led and retirement-led return to New Zealand is a strategy of double return, first from New Zealand to China for work and career development and then back to New
Zealand for the children’s education or their own retirement. Such findings echo the results of international research. Ley and Kobayashi’s research on returnee Hong Kong immigrants who immigrated to Canada reveals the same trend of double-return (Ley and Kobayashi 2005). They found that the transnational longing of skilled Hong Kong returnees led to a novel trajectory through a seamless social space that crosses oceans and national borders, passing from the native homeland as a workplace to their adopted residence for rest and retirement. During this transnational process, people will take different return trajectories. In the case of this research, some people regard returning to China as a completion of their immigration narrative, some regard returning to New Zealand as a final adjustment upon retirement, and some see returning to New Zealand as yet another temporary move with possible further movement still possible in the future. Indeed, among the different interview groups for this research, the intention to pursue further movement was the strongest among the “returnees”. In addition, their intention to return to and to keep a close contact with New Zealand was also strong (see next Section 5.3 for details). The interview results show that the mobility patterns of those “returnees” were far more complex and dynamic, and their choice of location or re-location was both wide and diverse. On the one hand, China rising was a strong pull factor that attracted many PRC migrants to return to China to live or work. On the other hand, the attraction of New Zealand, such as its peaceful social climate, good natural environment, and advanced education, will repeatedly draw some of these “returnees” back, leading a family to stretch across borders and scatter in different continents to be able to achieve different personal goals and their family’s collective well-being.

Attraction may also be from a third country where better life and opportunities might lie, leading people to end up somewhere else that are other than one’s place of origin and first immigration destination. These findings mean that the return to China for many “returnees” may not be permanent. Returning for many does not mean permanent re-settlement in the homeland; rather, it is only a part of their multiple and evolving transnational trajectories. Quite often, returning to China is a transitional stage where they can work on the eventual route back to New Zealand or step up to a third destination where their ultimate goal lies.

For many “returnees”, the transnational migration trajectories are open-ended. They may have forward planning in mind that may not necessarily involve returning to New Zealand. The choice of their future workplace very much depends on the global job market and its
demand. However, like many new Chinese migrants, considerations related to the different, changing needs of their family members during their life stages play an equally important part in their decisions regarding further movement. There are two crucial considerations that influence one’s decision for re-location and family arrangement. The first is the consideration of school-age children as discussed, and the second is aging parents.

Veronica, who is now working in a branch office of an international non-government organisation in Beijing, revealed her personal immigration narrative within her own family context where special consideration was given to how to arrange for her parents when she does take on a transnational lifestyle.

I am an energetic young woman. After I have accumulated some work experience from this organisation in Beijing, I’ll go to another country, maybe the US. The headquarters of this organisation is located in Washington. My next step really depends on where I will be needed, where I can earn more, and where I can have a better life.

She then immediately turned to a discussion about how to balance her transnational aspirations and her responsibility to take care of her parents who are now in New Zealand:

At my age, I need a place full of excitement and energy. I enjoy the feeling of professional satisfaction and self-esteem. Natural environment is a minor thing at my age. But for my parents, what they need is a safe, clean, and quiet place where they can enjoy the rest of their lives. Therefore, it’s better for them to stay in New Zealand now.

Taking care of aging parents is not only a moral responsibility, but also a Chinese cultural tradition. Filial piety prescribes children’s co-residing with their parents as a proof for demonstrating their commitment to provide care and support to their aging parents (Whyte, 2004). This has played an important role in many cases where Chinese migrants brought their parent(s) to New Zealand under New Zealand’s family reunion policy. Veronica is one of such example.
It is fair to say that New Zealand’s family reunion policy is comparatively generous for migrants to bring their parents to this country. Basically, if a migrant who is 18 years of age or over, a New Zealand citizen or residents or Australian citizen, can provide evidences to show his/her capability of providing financial support (minimum income figure is NZ$31,202.08 per annum) and accommodation to his/her parents, and can demonstrate that the family’s “centre of gravity” is in New Zealand, he/she can sponsor his/her parent(s) to come to New Zealand as permanent resident(s). The current waiting time for those sponsored parents to be granted permanent residence in New Zealand is reasonable, about 18 to 24 months. In comparison, to sponsor parents to obtain Australian Parent Visa is much harder. Under Australia’s Family Stream migration program, higher priority is given to child and partner applications. Parent applications are given a lower processing priority. Based on current planning, Australia’s parent category visa applicants can expect an approximate 20-year wait before the application is considered.

Moreover, New Zealand’s family Reunion policy to sponsor parents’ residency in this country is especially Chinese-friendly by default because the one-child policy in China means that many new residents from China are able to sponsor his/her parents to live in New Zealand as permanent residents. While to bring parents to New Zealand is comparatively easy, what is not easy however for Chinese migrants, is to find a realistic and feasible way to solve the conflict between their responsibility of co-residence with parents in terms of care provision and the pursuit of their transnational ambitions. As shown in the case of Veronica and her family, when Veronica took into account being separated from her parents in New Zealand, her balancing skill was tested and contested. She actually employed a space-time assessment approach to try to solve the conflict between her own transnational ambition and the care giving for her parents. There were two evaluations that can take place within the family context. The first is that the younger generation needs to be in a place where economic opportunities are, and the second is that the older generation should stay in the immigration

33 Detailed information about New Zealand’s family reunion policy can be found on the website of New Zealand Immigration Services: http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/live/parent.
destination country to enjoy a relaxing and peaceful retirement lifestyle. Apart from these two considerations, another dilemma that many other Chinese migrant families face is that when those adult migrant children are on their move to leave New Zealand towards homeland or a third destination, where their parents should go is a difficult decision to make.

Ideally for many parents, they want to be with their children. If their children go back to China, it is a relatively easy scenario for adult migrant children to deal with because there would be no significant re-settlement issues in the homeland where the surroundings and language are highly familiar. For some parents who are still not qualified for the 2-year residence condition to be issued permanent Returning Resident’s Visa, they have to stay in New Zealand and are not able to follow their children to go back to China. They have to face many difficulties when they try to settle in a new and unfamiliar environment without the assistance of their children. They have to face problems of housing, language barriers, access to health care and access to social services. Even everyday tasks, such as banking, transportation and shopping, can be formidable ordeals (Li, 2011: 233-235). If their children head to another destination, arrangement for the parents becomes intractable. Migration requirements for parents’ entry into a third destination make their co-residence with their children in a third destination highly impossible. Thus, family separation and disruptive family life become inevitable. If the parents stay in New Zealand and their children move to another country, they can benefit from this country’s lifestyle and good natural environment. However, the cost has been mentioned above, including the stress from family separation, disruptive family lifestyle, and many other problems associated with elderly people’s adaptation of a new environment.

As Veronica continued the discussion of her family plan for the near future, the family arrangement for her parents was clearly a very challenging task. Veronica stated:

… as a family, we should be together in the end, especially when my parents are more aging. Now they are okay to manage themselves, but how about 10 years later if their health situation deteriorates? This is a big problem for a family like mine. I am the only child. I must finally figure out a way to be together with my parents. I guess that I have to compromise my own aspirations on a certain level for them. Where I will go will be restricted somehow to those places where immigration law
would allow the entry of my parents. I must find a way to bring them with me. We also have the option of having me return to New Zealand.

As can be seen here, transnationalism creates a travel plan for back and forth between each single social field. When one’s social field enlarges, there is a dispersal of family members on different continents with parents, siblings, and children scattered in different places that best suit their present life stage. This movement in the transnational framework is definitely not a one-way movement, but neither is it two-way movement. For many, it is only a step within a circular cycle that follows its own logic of arrival, departure, and further movement. These transnational trajectories are thus defined by different family structures and changing dynamics. Sometimes they can intersect, and sometimes they can converge; but in essence, they do remain temporary and divergent.

5.3 A voyage to Australia

The great transnational mobility of PRC migrants has been seen clearly through interviews conducted in China with “returnees” and their related family members. The trend in mobility of PRC migrants is also characterised by re-location to a third country. Possibly motivated by similar economic and career-advancement pulls, there is no fundamental difference between “step-migration” to a third destination and returning to the homeland. Both stem from migrants’ aspiration to seek better opportunities to maximise their social, human and financial capital on a full scale to achieve a better long-term migration outcome. The difference is that this mobility can manifest in various forms. Apart from “return migration”, in which those migrants choose to re-locate to the homeland, the mobility of re-locating to a third destination often takes place across the Tasman Sea in the case of New Zealand, often termed “back-door migration”, referring to migrants who use New Zealand as a “revolving door” to enter Australia (Rapson 1998: 56). In this sense, I posit that Australia is only one of many examples of PRC migrants’ diverse choices to re-locate to a third destination. This section focuses on the interviews conducted in Australia with those “trans-Tasman” interviewees and illustrates the on-going migratory mobility that many PRC immigrants possess.
In terms of their initial motivation to immigrate to New Zealand, the “trans-Tasman” interviewees share some similarities with “returnees”, that is, they had no strong economic incentive to just settle down in New Zealand. Even though their motives for immigrating to New Zealand were primarily not economic, to secure employment with reasonable income in the new land they chose was their preferable status. When they could not meet their basic economic needs, they would choose to leave and head somewhere else where the employment and business opportunities were more abundant. Stepping into Australia is a typical example of those transnational PRC migrants’ decision to further move and pursue economic and social goals. Indeed, the onward movements of highly mobile PRC migrants do take place worldwide, depending on where opportunities are and how social networks are stretched.

Local-born New Zealanders are actually taking part in similar movements across the Tasman Sea. There is a net migration flow from New Zealand to Australia every year since many local-born New Zealanders move to Australia for better job prospects and income, a process termed as the “brain drain” by the New Zealand news media. This movement is associated with the desire of young people to gain overseas experience (termed OE in New Zealand society). The PRC migrant group is no exception; many of them move to Australia like local-born New Zealanders, taking advantage of the convenient travel between these two countries in terms of the short geographical distance, existence of a long-standing agreement on free bilateral international migration, strong historical, cultural and contemporary economic and social linkages; and perhaps a similar social structure and integrated labour market.

5.3.1 Moving to Australia: The final destination?

Economic attractions of Australia

In addition to the economic factors that “returnees” consider in their decision to return to China, the interviews conducted in Australia found that concerns about employment and career development opportunities played a vital role in the decision to move to Australia. Some interviewees revealed their concerns about a sense of uncertainty and insecurity for
their future employment prospects in New Zealand, views that directly contributed to their
decision to move to Australia. In the words of Joe:

There was no other reason for me to come to Australia except for employment opportunity. I couldn’t find a job in New Zealand that matched my expectations, education, and academic background. I got my Master’s degree in Food Science from the University of Auckland. I hoped that at least I could find a position like lab technician. I got a contract job from New Zealand Crown Research Institute, but they asked me to wash glass test tubes and bottles in the lab. For me, it was a joke and a waste of my time and talent. Australia is much better. At least I can find real work and do things that match my professional training. I always work as a lab technician or analyst, and my income increased significantly, as well as our quality of life. We could afford a house and cars. This is obvious evidence that the decision to move to Australia was right.

The problem of employment and New Zealand’s weak job market is a clear contrast to the Australian situation. For many, the pursuit of career development opportunities and higher income motivated crossing the Tasman Sea. For example, Lawrence, a branch manager at an immigration agency, moved to Australia in 2004 after he worked at an immigration consultancy agency in Auckland for about 2 years. His departure was almost accidental when he found that expanding that immigration consultancy service to Australia was highly feasible and profitable:

The market in Australia is bigger, which is good for business development. Comparatively, New Zealand is a small country, and its market is small. Information circulated there is not the most up-to-date. I didn’t plan to move to Australia when I landed in New Zealand. Later on, I started to work in that immigration consultation company and gradually found that the market for immigration consultation business in Australia was much bigger than that in New Zealand. That is why I left. It is my
idea to set up a branch office in Sydney, and my business partner in New Zealand fully supports me.

In this sense, the trans-Tasman movement for many PRC migrants is essentially no different from that of local-born New Zealanders who seek better employment opportunities across the ocean. For many young New Zealanders, Australia remains a favourable destination in terms of advancing a career. For those who are struggling to find employment at home, the Australian labour market is an alternative well worth exploring. Such a pursuit of economic advancement is also markedly similar to the aspirations of some “returnees” who are pursuing economic benefits in China’s booming economy. The similarities found in the two sets of interviews show one trend. Those new Chinese migrants who are young, well educated, bilingual, and in the early stage of their careers, and who have a high earning potential are very likely to engage in transnational migration. They undertake it strategically to capitalise on their assets and maximise their opportunities for economic and social advancement.

_Pursuing education opportunities for children_

Another key driver of trans-Tasman movement is education for children. Since the Chinese tradition believes that the higher the education, the better the job opportunities and the future, Chinese parents place great importance and attention on their children’s education. To ensure that their children will have a good future, many Chinese migrants from the PRC went to New Zealand to take advantage of its advanced educational system. Driven by that same motivation, many PRC migrants moved on to Australia from New Zealand because they believed that the educational system in Australia was even better than that in New Zealand. For example, James emphasised that his move to Australia was made solely for his children’s education:

_I am a freelance translator, and my professional networks are mainly in Europe and North America. The contacts between me and my clients are_
on-line, actually the physical location is not a problem for myself, but it does matter for my daughters. We came to Australia only because of the education for our children. I always felt that the education perspective in New Zealand is over-relaxed, just like its lifestyle. Kiwi parents sit back and never push their children to learn more. There is no academic pressure on children. It is not good. Sometimes children need pressure to become better. We compared the curriculum of New Zealand and Australia, as well as the course books for the same degree, and the difference is obvious. The New Zealand course book is much simpler than the Australian one. If children are educated like this, they won’t be competitive enough when they face their future. For example, in New Zealand, the teacher said to my older daughter: “it would be enough for you to read these two books for today, and you don’t need more”. In Australia, the teacher said to her: “I’ll give you the sixth book if you can finish reading these five”. This is very encouraging, and I believe that it is good. New Zealand’s education does not encourage young children to climb higher.

Pitt, another interviewee, repeated a similar point of view and mentioned in particular that the tertiary education in Australia can provide wider opportunities than that in New Zealand: “In general, I don’t think that New Zealand’s education is worse than that of Australia, but in terms of the scholarship opportunity, Australia is definitely superior and can offer more”.

**The logic of trans-Tasman movement**

Apart from the reasons cited above, there is another interesting reason behind trans-Tasman re-location. The interviews conducted in Australia provided no strong evidence that, for many PRC migrants, moving to Australia was something they deliberately decided on prior to immigrating to New Zealand; but it is true that, after settling down in New Zealand for a while, many did move to Australia. In the words of David, “Many people moved to Australia, and my family is just one part of that flow. We were heavily influenced by others. After my
best friend in New Zealand headed up there, we finally made the decision to leave”. Some interviewees referred to their move to Australia simply as “for the better”:

I believe that immigration is all about getting better and going to a better place to work or live. People immigrate to places where there are more opportunities or places where there are more benefit to their families. It is basic human nature that people want to get better.

Regardless of whether it is true that Australia is superior to New Zealand in terms of job opportunities or education, it is quite understandable that migrants re-emigrate to a third destination in pursuit of the better collective welfare of their families. However, what has not been addressed sufficiently is whether “step-migration” from New Zealand to Australia is an enduring feature and whether it is driven by deliberate strategic planning or by a pervasively perceived image that moving to Australia is simply the preferable thing to do.

It should be noted that New Zealand and Australia have enjoyed a special close relationship for a long time in terms of bilateral international migration, similar cultural values derived from similar colonial roots, close economic ties, and a high degree of labour market integration (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2000: 10-15). Trans-Tasman migration is a prominent phenomenon that occurs between these two countries, but it is also a common action often taken by citizens of both countries. Even though this movement is essentially international, in another sense it is more likely to be regarded by most as internal migration. Based on the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement, New Zealand and Australia have pursued less restrictive immigration controls between each other, and migration flows between the two countries has been less regulated for a long time. It is not until recent years that control of migration has become more restrictive, especially on the Australia side.

The debate over trans-Tasman migration has suggested that far more New Zealanders are choosing to move across the Tasman Sea to live in Australia than Australians moving in the opposite direction. Additionally, a sizeable number of those New Zealanders are non-New Zealand-born (Bedford, Ho and Hugo 2003; Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2000: 11; Hugo 2004). Australia, as a much bigger country than New Zealand, has a more vibrant market and better employment and business opportunities. Apart from these economic attractions, a similar
social structure and cultural values of the two countries might also make re-settlement much easier than in other destinations. All of these elements propel local-born young New Zealanders to move to Australia and attracting New Zealand citizens who are recent immigrants and born overseas. In this regard, it is fair to say that there is no difference in the trans-Tasman movement between local-born New Zealanders and new immigrants born outside of New Zealand. The macro-eco-political factors within New Zealand and Australia actually encourage both local-born New Zealanders and new migrants to undertake similar mobility patterns.

However, the trans-Tasman movement of New Zealand citizens born outside of New Zealand, especially those born in Asia, has attracted criticism and suspicion in both New Zealand and Australia. In New Zealand, this movement has been criticised as disloyal (Spoonley, Bedford and Macpherson 2003); and in Australia, it has been mentioned that new Asian migrants use New Zealand as a “revolving door” to step into Australia (Rapson 1998: 56). Their presence in Australia also has attracted much more media hype and a policy debate as it is regarded as “back-door migration” (Bedford, Ho and Hugo 2003). The 2001 immigration policy change in Australia introduced stricter controls over access to welfare provisions by New Zealand citizens who arrived in Australia under policies other than Australia’s own immigration programme. This policy change made New Zealand citizens who arrived in Australia, but not under Australia’s immigration programme, ineligible for most social security support for a period of time and effectively reduced the influx of New Zealand citizens into Australia, including those born in Asia (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2005: 15-16).

The interviews for this research project conducted in Australia revealed that many PRC migrants moved to Australia simply because “Australia would soon close its door” to New Zealand citizens. Several “trans-Tasman” interviewees moved to Australia just before enforcement of the new policy. They realised they had to rush into Australia before the policy came into force, as in Peter’s words:

One of my friends told me that Australia would close its door to migrants from New Zealand; therefore, we arrived at Australia in a hurry. I had to apply for a New Zealand passport before I came here as well because it is
a necessary landing condition to reside in Australia. We thought that we wouldn’t have another chance to come here so easily.

Indeed, statistics show that the number of New Zealanders who entered Australia in 2000, when there was advanced warning of a possible policy change, was particularly high. Bedford and co-authors point out that this influx of New Zealanders into Australia represents a response to advanced warning of the policy change. Although the policy change cannot stop the migration flow into Australia from New Zealand, before the enforcement of the new policy in Australia, there was, however, a rush to enter this preferable immigration destination (Bedford, Ho and Hugo 2003). Otherwise, latter acquisition of Australian permanent residence or citizenship would become a much longer and more complex application process. Seeing opportunities in their closest neighbour country, Australia, many PRC migrants made another migratory trip to that destination. However, this trip may not be the final one of their on-going migration journey. As I illustrate in the next section, their re-location to Australia is essentially a continuation or extension of their first migratory step from China to New Zealand.

5.3.2 Mobility patterns of “trans-Tasman” interviewees

Compared to the complex dynamics of “returnee” personal and family trajectories, the “trans-Tasman” interviewees in Australia revealed a much simpler and more stable mobility pattern. First, unlike the “returnee” group, whose migration narrative is much more open-ended, the migration narrative of many “trans-Tasman” interviewees included a sense of finality about their ocean crossing. Many “trans-Tasman” interviewees revealed that long-term residence in Australia was the most realistic choice for them at this stage of their lives, especially for the whole family. As many interviewees revealed, better employment prospects, a more stable income, and successful settlement of the whole family are the main reasons they stay in Australia and do not undertake further movements. Nick questioned the plan of further movement: “Why would we move again? We have already settled here pretty well. We purchased a house and have a stable income to pay the mortgage, so why not stay? Our life here is damn good. There is no need to move”. Nick’s perspective illustrates how the
immigrant intention to take up long-term residence in an immigration destination largely depends on how well immigrant families do settle in. If an immigration destination cannot address their economic well-being, they will consider other options, whether it is to return to the homeland or step further on to a third destination.

Even though the “trans-Tasman” interviewees generally showed the intention of long-term settlement in Australia, this finding does not mean that the group is no longer mobile. They still have great flexibility in terms of visa-free international travel because of their legal status as holders of Australian or New Zealand passports. As a result, temporary and short-term re-location among “trans-Tasman” interviewees can take place frequently. Very often, a temporary re-location or frequent commuting between countries is work related, and the whole family is not involved. For them, Australia is still the “home” base where those family members who do take short-term re-location out of Australia eventually come back to enjoy. For example, Tony, as one person at the top management level in an Australia-based multinational company, is currently travelling to Asia frequently and is highly likely to be transferred to China in the near future for work, but he still firmly sees the long-term residence base for his family still in Australia:

As the only person who has a Chinese background and is on the top management level in the company, I’ll definitely be the director of the Chinese branch office if this company will set up an office in China. If this happens, I’ll go back to China to work, but my family will stay. Now I am the director who is in charge of the Asian market for this company. I am always out of Australia and travelling between here and Asia. But my life focus is still here because my family is here.

As can be seen, the possibility for Tony to return China to work temporarily in the next five years is considered likely, within which a bi-national residence of the family could take place and family members could be separated physically as a result of his career path. In this sense, where one’s life focus and residential base are contributes directly to the fact that moving to Australia in the migration narrative of many “trans-Tasman” interviewees is more likely to be a finished set. The interviews conducted in Australia revealed that the current location of
the family and successful settlement of the whole family is the core consideration for not having further family movement.

Secondly, the “trans-Tasman” interviewees are different from the “returnees” to China who have a great interest in returning to and/or keeping close connections with New Zealand. They were less enthusiastic about doing so. The “trans-Tasman” interviewee connection with their first immigration destination country is rather loose, and returning to New Zealand is less likely in the future. Most of the 10 “trans-Tasman” interviewees explicitly said they would not go back to New Zealand, other than for a holiday, and only one interviewee thought there was a possibility of returning to New Zealand for retirement. The underlying reasons for the difference between these two interviewee groups in terms of their willingness to return to New Zealand suggest that the settlement outcome is better in Australia than in New Zealand and a strong homeland attraction may be a distraction that makes the desire to maintain contact with the first immigration destination less intense.

In contrast to the lower interest in keeping close contact with New Zealand, the “trans-Tasman” interviewees show much more interest in connections with their homeland, China. The strong attraction to the homeland is largely economic, but it can also be emotional and/or family-related. The potential for business success in China adds one more layer to the mobility patterns of “trans-Tasman” interviewees that could result in another re-location or more frequent travel between Oceania and East Asia. Interviews with many young “trans-Tasman” interviewees in their thirties revealed that they are highly interested in developing close ties with China for future business development. Lawrence, an owner of an immigration consultation agency, was very optimistic about the possibility of expanding his business to China:

The market there is very big. For business people like me, China is definitely a good place to expand business. I am now working towards setting up a branch office in Beijing in the next two years. If this plan goes smoothly, I’ll travel between China and Australia frequently. If the business in China is really profitable, I’ll probably hand the Australian part of my business to someone I trust, while I will go back to China for a while to take care of that part of the business.
The business connections with China for some “trans-Tasman” interviewees can take various forms. Some run business importing goods from China, some possess shares in Chinese companies they previously ran before immigration, some operate their businesses in Australia, using profits generated from the Chinese share market, and some juggle between their Australian full-time jobs and their own companies in China jointly owned by trustful business partners. Such business connections with China potentially contribute to the complexity of the contemporary transnational migration circulation. Again, for many, returning to the homeland is temporary. It’s only for accumulating sufficient financial capital and is followed by a return to Australia for longer-term residence. Bi-national residence is also an option for some if it is economically viable.

Apart from those with concrete business connections with China, these interviews reveal that there is a generally positive perspective towards China’s potential employment market, which would be a potential driving force for some “trans-Tasman” interviewees to relocate to the homeland temporarily. Joe, a lab technician and analyst who has a middle-class job and income in Australia, still expects that better opportunities exist in China. In his words, “if better opportunities occur, I’ll go back to China for a while just for my economic well-being”. Unlike those who proactively engage in transnational business activities and their associated cross-border movements, Joe’s prospects for going back to China are more like a longing to be transferred to the homeland to work where the booming economy is.

Indeed, such a desire to relocate to the homeland for a while was pervasive among the “trans-Tasman” interviewees. In some cases, it is not driven by just an economic perspective; instead, it is an intertwining of factors and forces that relate to each individual and each family. Similar to the “returnees”, some “trans-Tasman” interviewees intend to return to China to take care of their aging parents. Sometimes it is an imagined return, which is then driven by an emotional longing for the homeland as one’s “home”. For example, Frances revealed his deep desire to return to China as a returning to his “home”:

I really feel that I belong to China, although I have been overseas for more than 13 years. China is my home, and I really miss her. I miss her not because I miss someone or certain places there. It is perhaps a
nostalgic feeling about the country of my birth. It is a place I truly want to return to in my dreams.

5.4 “Returnees” and “trans-Tasman” interviewees: Convergences and divergences

5.4.1 Mobility patterns, citizenship, and identity

The interviews conducted in Australia and in China revealed that different decisions on citizenship between these two cohorts were associated with their transnational mobility patterns. Compared to the “returnees”, half of whom intend to keep their Chinese citizenship to facilitate their travel to and within China, most of the “trans-Tasman” interviewees have given up their Chinese citizenship and obtained citizenship in their settlement countries of New Zealand and Australia. Of the ten “trans-Tasman” interviewees, all had obtained New Zealand citizenship. Five who moved to Australia before 2001 had already obtained Australian passports. The other five were recent arrivals and were either in the process of applying for Australian citizenship or waiting through the two-year-residence requirement to meet their eligibility to apply for citizenship. The reason for this decision on citizenship is institutional as well as pragmatic. In China, dual citizenship is not allowed, so for many “returnees”, applying for a foreign passport means relinquishing their Chinese citizenship and compromising their convenient, visa-free travel between New Zealand and China. Pragmatically, many “returnees” do have an interest in re-entering New Zealand for future retirement or their children’s education, and New Zealand permanent residence will enable them to do so while still keeping their ability to travel freely between New Zealand and China. With legal status as both Chinese citizens and New Zealand permanent residents, they can also be entitled to social welfare in both countries.

As many “returnees” mentioned, if their transnational activities took place only between China and New Zealand, there is little need for them to replace their Chinese citizenship with New Zealand citizenship, because with a New Zealand permanent Returning Resident’s Visa, they can enter New Zealand as a resident at any time, and with a Chinese passport, they can
avoid the hassle of applying for a visa to enter China. More importantly, to keep their Chinese citizenship means they can still enjoy many state welfare, privileged policies regarding buying houses, and their child(ren) can also enjoy state-funded compulsory education. Furthermore, it is almost impossible for one to re-apply for Chinese citizenship, if one regrets forfeiting his/her Chinese passport to become a citizen of another country. For those “returnees” who have obtained New Zealand citizenship, their willingness to seek a New Zealand passport is mainly driven by the need for convenient visa-waiver international travel. This reason echoes the finding from the research by Ip and co-authors on the concept of citizenship among recent Asian immigrants in Australia. It found that a considerable number of new Asian immigrants take an instrumental or practical approach toward acquiring Australia citizenship, namely, for convenient visa-waiver international travel, for accessing social welfare, for political protection, or for educational benefits (Ip, Inglis and Wu 1997).

Similarly, the decision of “trans-Tasman” interviewees who took New Zealand and Australian passports was also largely an instrumental one. Since New Zealand and Australian citizens have free entry into either country and can visit, reside, work, and live in either place for an indefinite period, “trans-Tasman” interviewees’ eligibility to enter Australia from New Zealand was conditioned on whether they had New Zealand citizenship. As Peter revealed:

> We arrived in Australia in a hurry. I remember that Australia’s new policy came into effect in March 2001, and we arrived at Australia in January. We had to apply for New Zealand citizenship before departure because it is a necessary landing condition to reside in Australia. Otherwise, I wouldn’t give up my Chinese passport.

When interviewees were asked what an Australian/New Zealand passport meant to them, almost everyone emphasised that the passport meant “convenience for international visa-waiver travel”. Other general interests that associated with citizenship, such as voting and

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35 Before 26 February 2001, most New Zealanders were automatically granted a Special Category Visa (SCV), which allowed the holders to be eligible for Australian citizenship, access certain social welfare, or sponsor their family members for permanent residence. However, after the policy change in 2001, if a New Zealander wants to have the status of permanent residents in Australia, he/she must apply for it under the same terms as other immigrants who are not New Zealand citizens.
legal rights, were rarely mentioned. This conceptualisation of citizenship has little correlation with the perception of their identity and sense of belonging or with the concept of “home”. For many, their newly acquired legal status as citizens of New Zealand or Australia did not lead to a sense of full commitment and incorporation into either host society; neither do these individuals identify themselves as “New Zealanders” or “Australians”. In fact, a sense of being Chinese and emotionally belonging to the Chinese homeland appears dominant among these interviewees.

Such identification is partly rooted in an acknowledgement of one’s overseas orientation. In the case of PRC migrants, one important overseas orientation that influences their identity and sense of belonging is the deep and wide effects of Chinese culture and tradition in their lives that formulated their values and shaped their aspirations. For example, Lawrence had no doubt that he saw himself as Chinese:

I may say I am a New Zealander only because I hold the New Zealand passport. If you ask me what I feel I am, there is no doubt that I am Chinese - definitely not New Zealander. I am Chinese because of my life experience of the previous 26 years and background of growing up in China. I know that I am quite different from the Kiwis in terms of my personal networks and lifestyle. My interactions with Kiwi or European people are only because of the need to do business and work, but it does not mean that I integrate into the mainstream well. Actually, it is hard to integrate, and also there is no need to fully integrate.

Lawrence’s conscious and firm identification of himself as Chinese and his comment that “there is no need to fully integrate” provide clear evidence that contemporary transnationalism provides an alternative strategy for migrants who want to adapt and survive in a new environment (Faist 2000a; Portes 1999; Portes 2001; Portes 2003; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999). While the traditional assimilation narrative of immigration that advocates full assimilation into a host society is the orthodox way for immigrants to survive migration is still present in certain immigration cases, contemporary transnationalism provides no real need for migrants to fully integrate into their mainstream society.
While comments like Lawrence’s were pervasive during the interviews, other sophisticated insights also appeared. For many, their identification with being Chinese stemmed from the perceptions of how others perceived them. Joe identified himself as Chinese because he perceived that being Chinese is a perpetual status and where other people perceive him:

Other people always see me as Chinese. This is the fact that cannot be changed. For example, if I go to Hong Kong, the locals see me as Chinese. When I am in Australia, others see me as Chinese as well. If I go back to China and tell people there that “I am an Australian”, people will think that I am out of my mind.

The popular identification with being Chinese is a way of self-conscious identification as being different from others and also a way of interacting with significant others. It may be the close connection with the homeland, or it may be come from a sense of exclusion from the host society that drives this identification, or it may be a combination of both. In general, the findings here show that a large number of interviewees identified themselves strongly as “Chinese” even though a small number picked up a hybrid identity. The citizenship they hold, either New Zealand or Australia, has nothing to do with their strong identification as Chinese. As Sandy said, “If one day I obtain New Zealand citizenship, it does not mean that I will betray China.” Meanwhile, their strong identification as Chinese and their legal status as New Zealand or Australia citizens are not conflicting. As Mary states, “My identification as Chinese does not mean that I lack loyalty toward the immigration host country. As a New Zealand citizen, I will never say something negative about New Zealand”. The strong identification as Chinese among those PRC migrants is not political; rather, it is only evidence of the deep emotional attachment of first-generation migrants to their country of birth and their strong ties to their homeland.

5.4.2 A conceptualisation of “home”

Most studies have found that migrants employ the word “home” to refer to their immigration destination or to their place of birth or origin (Christou and King 2006; Lewin 2001; Muggeridge and Dona 2006; Wiles 2008). While this physical place dimension to migrants’ identification with home is important, it should be noted that “home” is more than just a
geographic location; it is a place where people feel they belong. The interviews showed some interesting results for the concept of “home”.

First, many interviewees spontaneously expressed their conceptualisation of “home” when talking about their transnational migration processes and movement plans for the future. Even though there were several questions that related to the concept of “home” in the interview process, most interviewees brought up the issue of “home” by themselves before the interview reached the questions about it, indicating that some theoretical issues were already probably at play. As mentioned in Chapter Three, there is an inter-relationship between migrants’ identity and their sense of belonging and their sense of “home”. Given that the conventional concept of “home” is disrupted during transnational movements, the examination of transnational migrants’ sense of “home” may serve be a useful angle to understand transnational migratory experience because a migrants’ sense of home closely relates to his/her emotional journey or the emotional conflict when travelling between places. In the interviews conducted for this research, some interviewees spontaneously raised the discussion of “home” in their discussion of their transnational trajectories, and some interviewees used the term “home” when they were explaining the ways they identified themselves and their sense of belonging. All these comments confirm the theoretical potential of using the concept of “home” to investigate a transnational topic.

Secondly, compared with a strong sense of identity as Chinese, the sense of “home” among the interviewees was more flexible and also more ambiguous, as “home” was conceptualised by these PRC migrants in a variety of ways. As illustrated in Chapter One, in Chinese terms, the character home (家) can be used in combination with other characters in different ways and as phrases that connote different meanings. This view complicates the ways in which Chinese migrants actually conceptualise their notion of “home”. Some interviewees referred to their idea of “home” as the immigration destination country, some referred to their idea of “home” as their national home (家国) - China, and some preferred to conceptualise their “home” as a single geographic locality in their places of birth and origin (家乡), a specific locality in China where their deep emotional attachments lay. For example, Sophia revealed firmly that “my home is Shanghai, China. I was born there and I feel my roots are
there”. Some referred to their “home” as a dual choice of two geographic localities, their immigration destination of New Zealand/Australia and their place of origin, China:

It’s hard to answer this question. On the one hand, China is definitely my home because I grew up here and I am deeply influenced by the Chinese culture, especially now that I am here and my whole family is here. On the other hand, I also feel that New Zealand is my home too. I got married there, had my daughter there, and established my own family there. The time I spent in New Zealand means so much to me. It was a process for me to become a woman from a young girl, to become married from a single woman, to become a mother from a daughter, to become a New Zealand permanent resident from a visitor. It is a process involving the changing of many roles I played in my life course. I believe that the most wonderful things happened to me in my life during the years I stayed in New Zealand. Based on this point, New Zealand is my home too, for sure.

While many interviewees had very firm conceptualisations of “home”, some interviewees expressed confusion over the issue. Rose, who is working for a French cosmetics retail company, expressed her puzzled feelings about “home”:

When I left China for New Zealand, I left my home. Now my only emotional link with China is my parents. However, I don’t feel that the 3-bedroom apartment owned by my parents in China is my home, even though they always tell me that that is. In Shanghai, I don’t feel that I am at home either. Shanghai is a place for work. I don’t really have a home to go back to there.

In this case, the sense of no “home” presents an emotional insecurity, but also facilitates free movement in Rose’s future. Indeed, since many Chinese migrants still keep close ties with their homeland, they never quite “arrive” at their destinations because they never quite “left” the homeland. Some interviewees constructed their idea of “home” by comparing and differentiating the concepts of “home”, “hometown” and workplace and still used the
geographic localities to define these terms. For example, Paul conceived his “home” to be in New Zealand, where he will definitely go back to enjoy his life after retirement: “New Zealand is my home and I will finally return there and die there. Beijing is not my home; it is my workplace, and Haerbin [a provincial capital city in the far north of China] is the place where I was born. It is my hometown”.

However, “home” can also refer to the immaterial - the feeling or sense of home that may have no spatial correlation and simply “connotes an emotional place, somewhere you truly belong” (Pollock and Reken 1999: 124). Richard, another interviewee, declared, “Where I’ll go depends on where my home is. Home for me is not a geographic or physical concept, but where my family is and where my heart belongs”. He was not the only one to convey that definition of home as a place of safety, love, familiarity, belonging and where certain dear people are located. Mike referred to his “home” as “a place I feel really comfortable and relaxed, and a place I can turn to. ‘Home’, in my concept, is not a house in a certain place; it is more about people who are around me and about family”.

In examining the concept of migration, “home” is hard to define or redefine if it is perceived as a physical place, bound by geographical territory. Migration essentially means a disruption of the physical “home”, given the fact that migrants do leave their old “home” and build a new “home” in the destination country. In transnational migration, however, “home” is even more problematic because transnational migration simply denotes deterritorialisation, which overrides the basis of the physical “home”. However, as these interviews show, if “home” is conceptualised in an immaterial way, it can be an important indicator of what the transnational migration experience is and means. “Home” can be a place where certain cultural assumptions and expectations are met as well as a place where there are emotional links and attachments. These emotional links could have to do with where the person originally comes from and the feelings as that individual moves between places. In this sense, immigrants’ sense of “home” may change, and the individuals may attach new feelings of “home” to different places as they move. Doing so involves a strong sense of self-discovery and reflection during each of the transnational movements that happen.

Lastly, the findings from the interviews show that there is a clear trend in the sense that the identity of those PRC migrants is not linked to their conceptualised “home”. Very often, the
interviewees felt strongly Chinese, but they did not necessarily see their “home” as being in China. Instead, many often referred to their “home” as the place where they currently reside. For example, the “returnees” often saw their “home” as in China, while the “trans-Tasman” interviewees often saw their “home” as in Australia. When they de-linked their sense of identity and “home”, more links between the sense of “home” and the sense of belonging were revealed. When the interviewer asked where they felt they belonged, the voices were polarised, depending on the way each interviewee treated the term “belong”. Some treated the term “belong” in a cultural sense, so their answers linked to their sense of identity as Chinese. For example, Neil said, “I belong to China because I am a Chinese”. Some treated the term “belong” from a geographic sense, so their answers were connected to where they currently resided. Like Joe said, “I belong to Australia. My family and my life are here, and I am working here as well”.

5.4.3 The importance of social networks

Another significant finding from the interviews was that the interviewees’ social networks have an important influence on their decisions on re-location. In many cases for “returnees”, whether they re-settle in their homeland successfully and achieve their expectations is not based only on their human and financial capital, but also on how well they maintained their social and professional networks when absent from China. This aspect of Chinese return migration appears to be especially important. Social networks or relationships in the Chinese language are usually called Guanxi关系, although recently a more fashionable name is renmai人脉. The concept is embedded in every aspect of every Chinese person’s daily life and influenced the “returnees” decisions to return and re-settle in many ways.

Many interviewees indicated that their decision to re-locate was partly based on what was appropriate within the context of maintaining and developing their social networks in the homeland or in a third destination. For example, Andrew revealed:

To be honest, I returned to China because of my current business partner. He is my former university classmate, and we kept contact with each other through the years. He called me one day and told me that opportunities in
China now are enormous and to please come back and take the opportunity. Our business will go very well if we can work shoulder-by-shoulder. When I did some homework on his business proposal, I felt that it was feasible, so I bought the air ticket and thought ‘no matter what this business is like, I’ll go back to have a look anyway’. I didn’t go back to New Zealand because his proposal worked.

This was not the only example that showed the importance of maintaining social networks across borders to facilitate successful re-location. Amy said:

For immigrants like my age, it would be a rare case that people return to China with absolute uncertainty. I mean if there is no job for me or no likelihood of being employed, I wouldn’t go back. Some people did return without any job offer. But from what I know, most of these people are young graduates. That’s okay for them because they are young. But for people like me who are over 30 years, most already located a job or a business proposal before returning. This is the way we go.

When the interviewer suggested that it was difficult to locate a job in China without physical presence, her answer reflected how important it is to keep social networks in the homeland:

My way is to contact my friends and people who I know in China and ask them to help me pay attention to job advertisements relevant to my profession or ask them to use their networks to recommend me to potential employers. They also helped me to distribute my CV to some head-hunting companies. They know what kind of position suits my profession as well as my expectation for salary.

Many studies have emphasised the importance of transnational social networks in understanding the patterns of interpersonal relationships during the transnational process and the specific context of transnational migrant experiences (Garcia 2006; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992; Salaff 2008). Glick-Schiller and co-authors posited that migration provides a channel for the bi-directional flow and circulation of material goods and ideas
where social relations are embedded (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 9-11). Faist paid particular attention to explaining the importance of transnational business networks established on condition of reciprocity, exchange, and mutual benefits when investing economic capital across borders. In his view, transnational business networks can stimulate and solidify sustainable transnational links across borders; simultaneously, any obstacles to economic integration encountered by many transnational migrants during immigration and re-locating movements can be overcome or eased through their social and business networks. These can help facilitate the establishment of a successful business (Faist 2000a). The comments made by Nonini and Ong were more relevant to the context of Chinese transnational migration, “… Guanxi relations [networking] among diaspora Chinese present a long-standing habitus whose very flexibilities have now been placed in the services of accumulation strategies under the novel conditions of late capitalism, and in the process are thereby being reworked themselves” (Nonini and Ong 1997: 21). Results from the qualitative interviews in this project show that all the established theories around transnational migration were indeed relevant.

The interviews revealed that the extent of PRC transnational migrant social and business networks as spread across borders was one of the key factors in successfully re-starting or developing a career, establishing a business, and re-settling a family in a re-located place. They also showed that transnational migratory movements occur not only because the transnational actors possess great human and financial capital that can forge transnational mobility, but also because these transnational movements are sustained and supported by social capital, namely the personal, social and business networks existing across borders as well as transnational communication. This soft and social capital appears especially important for return migration to China, where “returnees” are already familiar with the homeland culture and have sufficient support from their personal social networks.

5.5 Summary: Challenges to the classical migration theories

The multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork for this research project revealed three striking findings. The first is that the transnational trajectories many PRC migrants pursue are endless and have no closure or finality. The research also revealed a dynamic and unfinished set
of personal and family trajectories, offering evidence that return migration or re-emigration to a third destination is not the end of the migration narrative for many PRC migrants, but rather an itinerary where further movement is possible or even already planned. Many PRC migrant families are very mobile, and many families extend their residence bases to a third country where family members may bi- or tri-nationally locate as best suits their needs. This transnational mobility is characterised by long-term or short-term re-location, frequent commuting, sojourns of various family members in both the home and host countries, and sometimes relocation to a third destination. This mobility, as Hugo argues, “… is associated with a desire of young people to gain experience. In some nations such mobility has become almost a ‘rite of passage’ for young adults” (Hugo 2006: 112). In this regard, it is thus fair to say that migration transnationalism is more linked to migrant aspiration than to ethnicity. It is not an ethnicity issue; rather, it is a matter of age, social class, and human and financial capital that can potentially and significantly influence mobility patterns. Since the empirical basis of many transnational migration studies largely relies on case studies within certain migrant populations of certain immigration host countries, often transnational migration as a widespread phenomenon is overlooked. That migration might happen either in migrant minority populations or mainstream populations where people are relatively young, well-educated, and possess considerable human, social, and financial capital they can use.

In this sense, terms such as “return migration”, “step-migration” or “astronauting” that are pervasively used in migration studies are problematic because those “returnees” and “trans-Tasman” interviewees will likely keep on moving and re-locating, either for long-term or short-term benefits. For “returnees”, returning to the homeland does not mean settling back into the homeland as the way that earlier “returnees” traditionally did. Many of them return to their homeland only for a short period of time, so their professional and language skills and social networks can be used to maximise their earning power. They will continue to move, either to a third destination, or back to New Zealand. Their return to the homeland can thus be seen as a life stage related to capital accumulation. Once these “returnees” have accumulated enough financial capital, they may move somewhere else that they long for or that best suits their own and/or their family members’ aspirations. For the “trans-Tasman” interviewees, leaving New Zealand for Australia is propelled by the same economic and career-development goals just like many of the “returnees”. They are a typical example of highly mobile PRC migrants who have made a journey from the first immigration country.
to a more preferable third destination. Even though many of them regard Australia as their home base, short-term departure and re-location may still happen frequently in the future. The fast-growing economy in China, however, remains an irresistible attraction.

The researcher kept on-going contacts with some of the interviewees, so it is known now that several “returnees” have come back to New Zealand and indicated that their residence in New Zealand this time will be long-term. There were also two interviewees interviewed as “settlers” who have made trips to Australia and the US. Based on all of this evidence, it is apparent that such terms as “return migration” and “step-migration” are only parts or stages of a continued transnational journey for PRC transnational migrants. As mentioned earlier, labels such as “settlers”, “returnees”, “trans-Tasman” interviewees and “commuters” do not capture the continuing and changeable features of the transnational migration in which PRC migrants are engaged. Now the inadequacy of such set categories as “settlers”, “returnees”, “trans-Tasman” interviewees, or “commuters” for framing qualitative research can be used to advance my argument regarding the reality of PRC migrant transnational movements. Since those PRC migrants who are “settlers” once may well become “returnees” or “trans-Tasman” migrants at a different time, the labels used to categorise these interviewees actually denote aspects of a progressive transnational movement process and different stages in the continuing movement cycle of PRC migrants.

A second important finding is that the factors and motivations that lie behind new PRC migrants’ transnational movements are multi-dimensional; that is, more than one factor can lead to cross-border movements. In addition to economic reasons, negative interactions with the wider society and relationships with family members or close friends can affect the decision to move. Motivations for PRC migrants to undertake transnational movements are in fact interwoven with individual, family, and nation-state factors, as well as the dynamic geo-economic conditions that define globalisation.

Thirdly, considerations of family members’ needs at different life stages are at the core of the decision for movement. The location of family members, especially older parents and school-age children, strongly affect this decision-making. Often, homeward movements are decided because aging parents require long-term attention or day-to-day care. Strategic family dispersal and onward movements are based on considerations of career developments,
educational needs, or childcare support. For example, family separation can be the result of consideration of school-age children who enjoy schooling in New Zealand with the mother’s supervision while the husband of the family works in the country of origin to earn more money. Also, adult children may go back to the country of origin to start their professional careers where they can find a fast-growing economy that is more stimulating, while the aging parents stay in the host country where they can enjoy a relaxed lifestyle in retirement. The transnational migration strategies that many PRC migrants have adopted also can shift with the changing circumstances of family members. For example, once children have completed their high-school education and entered university, the mother can go back to the country of origin and reunite with the husband. It also can be the husband to come to the host country to reunite with the children and wife once the family has accumulated enough life savings. In this case, transnational movements are often undertaken as a collective family choice to maximise opportunities and the family’s collective well-being. The decision to undertake further movements and re-location can often be made deliberately, but quite often, it takes place contingent to meeting emerging family needs when the family situation changes.

The dynamic strategies behind transnational movement by PRC migrants, as well as the movements themselves, do challenge the traditional way of seeing immigration as an activity of permanent uprooting and seeking residence away from the place of origin. In the current transnational era, immigration has become more difficult to define. Immigration now tends to be an on-going process, as Huang and co-authors suggest: “… there is no predetermined script for migration. Migration trajectories are always contingent, often precarious, and sometimes even volatile” (Huang, Yeoh and Lanm 2008: 9).

Such transnational manoeuvrings also challenge issues related to citizenship, identity formation, and the conceptualisation of “home”. The dominant conceptualisation of citizenship in political theory as an institutionalised form of solidarity and in cultural studies as membership in a country that usually requires moral commitment (Faist 2000a) appears insufficient to explain the multiple attachments of PRC transnational migrants. Given the exclusionary and political feature of citizenship, a request for immigrants’ full commitment and total loyalty to the immigration destiny country is problematic. As shown in these interviews, being a New Zealand or Australian citizen does not result in full incorporation with or a sense of belonging to the host society for many PRC migrants, nor does it deter the
pervasive identification of being “Chinese” or the conceptualisation of “home” as an emotional longing for the place of origin or the deep appreciation of the host country they chose for their destination.

In summary, this chapter illustrates the transnational mobility of the PRC migrant group through taking of qualitative interviews. The most striking feature of the PRC migrant group’s transnationality is the continuation of their transnational intention. Their migratory discourse cannot be defined by their current residing status; rather, their migration discourse is far more dynamic. Further re-location, both long-term and short-term, are highly likely. Quite often, transnationality associates with the desire to maximise human, social and financial assets in more than one site to achieve the collective family well-being. Findings in this chapter offer a useful bridge to the next chapter which discusses the online quantitative survey results and shows how widespread transnational intention is in this migrant group and what kind of variations control their decision to take on further movement. With the qualitative findings from interviews framing and grounding this argument, an analysis of the quantitative findings when combined with these qualitative results can more precisely explore the transnational experiences and strategies of the research cohort.
Chapter Six: Moving or Staying – Is the “Economic” Still Significant?

This chapter will deliver the research findings from an online survey to provide explanatory and indicative quantified information on PRC migrant mobility patterns, their further transnational intention, and associated factors and issues. The online survey questionnaire (Appendix 2) was designed to provide evidence of PRC migrants’ transnationalism and examine the relationships between transnational mobility patterns and their associated determinants. As presented in the last chapter, the materials generated from the in-depth interviews were content analysed to form the core for interpretation, and it is hoped that the results drawn from the online survey will provide quantitative support that enhances the overall data interpretation. To understand the scope and scale of cross-border movements and PRC migrant future transnational intentions is fundamentally important, because this information has implications regarding the relative position of New Zealand as an immigration destination country for the global pattern of ethnic Chinese who are on the move.

Trans-locality is a distinctive feature of the research for this project. The last chapter (Chapter Five) discussed the ethnographical fieldwork conducted in multiple sites. This chapter will show that the research continued to be virtually trans-location, as the online quantitative survey was designed to target Chinese with New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship, irrespective of their location.

Following the same line of categorising participants in interviews, the targeted population for this survey was categorised into four groups: “settlers” “returnees”, “commuters”, and “transnationals”. “Settlers” refers to individuals whose migration trajectory shows no record of prolonged absences from New Zealand. “Returnees” refer to people who were once immigrants to New Zealand and have since returned to China to live and/or work. “Transnationals” refer to migrants with New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship who then moved to a third destination and now stay there to live and work. “Commuters” refer to people who have frequent multi-location movement between China and their host countries.
The survey did not limit the sample size. Anyone who met the criteria and was willing to complete the questionnaire was accepted. The criteria for being respondents to this survey were as follows: 1) They must be ethnic Chinese people originally from the PRC; 2) They must be adults over 20; and 3) They must have either New Zealand permanent residency or New Zealand citizenship.

This survey was conducted online between December 2008 and July 2009. The decision to conduct this survey online was prompted by the fact that new Chinese are among the most computer-savvy groups. Also, a survey online is an efficient way to reach unknown respondents, irrespective of their location. The survey portal was left open for approximately seven months to recruit the most respondents. In total, 1,575 respondents attempted the survey, of which 477 respondents completed all the questions in the survey that included 393 “settlers”, 26 “returnees”, 45 “transnationals” and 13 “commuters”. It needs to be pointed out that the large number of incomplete questionnaires was probably caused by two factors. The first is that this questionnaire survey takes about 15-20 minutes to complete, which is relatively long for an online survey. The second, which is a more important factor, is that the survey contains some highly sensitive questions, such as respondents’ income, financial and property investment, and the directions of their remittance flow. These two factors may explain why only around a third of the questionnaires were completed. In order to compare the full profile of the respondents, only completed surveys were used in the analysis.

The moderate sample size of “returnee”, “transnational” and “commuter” prevented this survey from providing statistical data that represented the overall PRC migrant population. Also, the “settler” respondents were age-biased and mainly young adults. However, the survey could still provide indicative and illustrative data and analysis, and enhance the overall interpretation of PRC migrant transnational trajectories and movement patterns.

Comparisons were done between the response profiles of four targeted groups. It is hoped that through such between-group comparisons, the different dimensions of each surveyed group’s transnational mobility patterns were revealed. These between-group differences may indicate important determinants that influence the decision-making of many PRC migrants to go transnational. Comparisons were also made within the “returnee” and “transnational” groups to compare the situations of these two groups of respondents before and after moving.
from New Zealand. Those comparisons may reveal further reasons why Chinese migrants to leave New Zealand.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides the demographic profiles of the respondents. The next section provides detailed survey results as well as within-group and between-group comparisons of the four surveyed groups. The third section offers an overall discussion of the important findings of this survey.

6.1 Profile of respondents and implications

6.1.1 Personal profile

Choice of language to complete the survey

Respondents could choose to use either the English version or the Chinese version. Eighty percent of the respondents chose to use the Chinese language. Apparently, as first generation migrants, most were more comfortable reading and writing in their native language.

Age and gender distribution

About 63% of respondents were males, and 37% were females. Nearly 50% of respondents were between the age of 25 and 29 (47%, see Table 6.1). In general, most respondents were below the age of 50; only 3% of respondents age 50 or over (Table 6.1). This age bias was likely caused by three factors, a) Chinese immigrants to New Zealand are mainly young adults, b) young people were more likely to use a computer and access the online survey, and c) young people are more interested in browsing Internet communities, forums, and bulletin board systems (BBS), and therefore, more likely to encounter the survey advertisement placed in those systems.
Table 6.1 Age distribution of the online survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Overall (%)</th>
<th>“Settler” group (%)</th>
<th>“Transnational” group (%)</th>
<th>“Returnee” group (%)</th>
<th>“Commuter” group (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was also a difference in age distribution between “settlers” and “transnationals”, and between “settlers” and “returnees”. The percentage of respondents under the age of 30 for “settlers” (65%) was significantly higher than that for “transnationals” (29%) or “returnees” (27%) (z values were 4.757 and 3.927, respectively). This fact may be because most “transnationals” and many “returnees” have already gained New Zealand citizenships, which requires 3-year residence in New Zealand according to the regulation before 21 April 2005 and 5-year residence in New Zealand according to the regulation after 21 April 2005. To obtain a permanent Returning Resident Visa (RRV), the “returnees” who were not New Zealand citizens, needed 2-year residence in New Zealand. This fact made them relatively “old” by the time they moved to a third country. Both of these groups may have stayed in New Zealand for a while to gain a higher education before they return or moved to a third

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36 The significance was determined by a z-test for proportions. Z value > 2.576 indicates a significant difference at a 99% level of confidence. Z value > 1.960 indicates a significant difference at a 95% level of confidence. Details about the z-test for proportions are listed in Appendix 6.
country, which would also make this group relatively “old”. For the “settlers”, many were still studying or had just gained permanent residency recently (see results presented later in this chapter). Therefore, they were relatively younger than the other two groups. There was no significant age difference between “settlers” and “commuters”.

Place of birth and marital status

In terms of the place of birth, most of the respondents were born in urban cities in China. In Table 6.2, it can be seen that half of the respondents were married (48% married + 2% civil union), and another half (50%) were single (never married 45% + divorced/separated 5%). However, the percentages of married “transnationals” (67%) and “returnees” (69%) were significantly higher than that of married total respondents (z values were 2.384 and 2.046, respectively) and “settler” respondents (47%, z values were 2.544 and 2.235, respectively).

Table 6.2 Marital status of online survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Overall (%</th>
<th>“Settler” group (%)</th>
<th>“Transnational” group (%)</th>
<th>“Returnee” group (%)</th>
<th>“Commuter” group (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow or Widower</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Union</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Six

Highest education

In terms of highest education, 75% of the respondents had bachelor or higher degrees. Almost 32% of them had postgraduate or higher degrees (Table 6.3). This finding is in line with the 2006 Census which shows that ethnic Chinese born in China are one of the best-educated groups in New Zealand (see Section 2.2.2). Tellingly, the percentage of postgraduate or higher degree holders in the “transnational” and “returnee” groups was significantly higher than that for the “settler” group (z values were 3.625 and 3.722, respectively). It seems that “transnationals” and “returnees” were the more mature and better educated groups. This age-education pattern has significant implications for their relocation and further movement, a point discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

Table 6.3 Highest education level of online survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Degree Obtained</th>
<th>Overall (%) (n=477)</th>
<th>“Settler” group (%) (n =393)</th>
<th>“Transnational” group (%) (n=45)</th>
<th>“Returnee” group (%) (n=26)</th>
<th>“Commuter” group (%) (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower than Bachelor Degree or New Zealand Level 7</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree or New Zealand Level 7</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate / Honours Degree</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD or equivalent or higher</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms where respondents obtained their highest degree, about 70% obtained their highest degrees in New Zealand. This finding confirms the interview findings in Chapter Five, indicating that many Chinese intend to spend a period of time to pursue a New Zealand education after they immigrate to New Zealand. Obtaining a higher degree in a Western country like New Zealand is a way for many Chinese migrants to accumulate personal human capital and improve their performance in the job market or facilitate future movements. The percentage of respondents getting their highest education degree in New Zealand was quite different for different respondent groups. The “Settler” group had the highest percentage (76%), followed by the “returnee” group (62%), then the “transnational” group (40%), and finally the “commuter” group (31%) (Table 6.4). The percentages for the “transnational” and “commuter” groups were significantly lower than for the “settler” group. However, 22% of “transnationals” gained their highest degree in a third country (likely to be the country where they currently resided), which almost accounts for the percentage difference. For the “commuters”, most never stayed in New Zealand for any prolonged period; therefore, it is not surprising that only a small percentage of them gained their highest degrees in New Zealand.

Table 6.4  Location where online survey respondents gained their highest degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Places Highest Degree Obtained</th>
<th>Overall (%) (n=477)</th>
<th>“Settler” group (%) (n=393)</th>
<th>“Transnational” group (%) (n=45)</th>
<th>“Returnee” group (%) (n=26)</th>
<th>“Commuter” group (%) (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Locations</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Citizenship status*

About two-thirds of the online survey respondents were New Zealand permanent residents (66%) and one-third of them were New Zealand citizens (Table 6.5). For those holding
permanent residency, two-thirds (67%) wanted to apply for a New Zealand passport in the future. Not surprisingly, most “transnationals” hold New Zealand passports (84%), which is significantly higher than the overall average (33%), as well as higher than all three of the other groups (“settlers” 26%, “returnees” 50% and “commuters” 23%). This finding is due to the fact that a New Zealand passport permits international visa-free travel to many countries. Therefore, most “transnationals” obtained New Zealand passports before they left New Zealand for a third country.

For those “transnationals” who enter Australia in particular, New Zealand citizenship is a necessary condition for them to move to Australia and reside or work indefinitely without the hassle of a visa application. Moreover, New Zealand citizens had the same rights as Australian citizens to access social welfare prior to 2001 according to the Tans-Tasman Travel Agreement. However, New Zealand residents holding Chinese passports cannot enjoy that benefit. “Returnees” had an equal split between New Zealand citizenship and residency holders (50% each). There were also some practical considerations involved. For those who kept their Chinese passports, it might be that their Chinese passports enabled them to stay in China long term without worrying about applying for a visa. This passport also allows their children to enjoy state-funded education, if desired. Therefore, quite a number of Chinese only hold New Zealand permanent residency instead of New Zealand citizenship.

For those who have obtained New Zealand passports, the reason may be that many have either taken on or want to take on jobs in international companies. Some international companies pay a higher salary to New Zealand citizens than to Chinese nationals, and some jobs in international companies require candidates to have Western passports to facilitate frequent international travel. Therefore, a number of the “returnees” prefer to have New Zealand citizenship. For “commuters”, frequent travel between New Zealand and China ensures that most of them keep their Chinese passports and avoid the trouble of having to apply for a visa every time they enter China. For “settlers” in New Zealand, are still young and likely have obtained their residency less than 5 years ago. Therefore, most of this group are likely not qualified to apply for New Zealand citizenship, which requires 5 years of residence in New Zealand according to the policy implemented after 20 April 2005. It is possible then that the citizenship percentage may increase after a few years, because as
mentioned, two-thirds of the permanent residency holders will want to apply for citizenship sometime in the future.

Table 6.5 Citizenship status of online survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship Status</th>
<th>Overall Response (%) (n=477)</th>
<th>“Settler” group (%) (n=393)</th>
<th>“Transnational” group (%) (n=45)</th>
<th>“Returnee” group (%) (n=26)</th>
<th>“Commuter” group (%) (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand permanent resident</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand citizen</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.2 Migration history and trajectories

Time of first arrival in New Zealand

In terms of the time of first arrival of the respondents in New Zealand, that timeframe varied from 1981 to 2009; however, the majority of them landed in New Zealand after 1997. The average time of residence in New Zealand following first landing was 8.5 years for all respondents. However, the “transnational” group had a significantly higher average number (11.6) than the overall average (student’s t-test, \( p < 0.001 \))\(^{37}\), as well as higher than average numbers (8.1 for “settlers”, 8.4 for “returnees” and 6.8 for “commuters”) of the other three

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\(^{37}\) A two-tailed t-test is a statistical method used to compare the two means of the two sets of numbers to determine whether the two means are significantly different from each other.
groups (One-way ANOVA, all $p < 0.01$)\textsuperscript{38}. This result appears to be in accordance with the relatively older age profile of “transnationals” (see Section 6.1.2).

Also, as discussed in Bedford et al., when there was advanced warning of a possible policy change in Australia which might make many New Zealand citizens’ ineligible to access social security support, the number of New Zealanders who entered Australia in 2000 surged very significantly (Bedford, Ho and Hugo 2003). Therefore, it can be assumed that many of the “transnationals” moved to Australia before the 2001 change in the law, which means they likely received New Zealand passports 8 years ago. At that time, it required only 3 years’ residence in New Zealand to get citizenship. Therefore, all the respondents who rushed into Australia before 2001 likely first arrived in New Zealand 11 years ago. This assumption was confirmed by the survey where the average number of years since the transnational group first landed in New Zealand was 11.6 years.

*First arrival category*

Upon arriving first time in New Zealand, 68.1% of respondents were holding Student Visas, 21% of them were on Permanent Residence Visas, 5.5% of them were on Visitor Visas, 2.3% of them used Work Visas, and 1.9% of them used the Family Reunion Visa (Table 6.6). The survey found that there was a high percentage of Student Visa entry which confirms what has been suggested in previous research findings, namely, that PRC migrants intend to apply for permanent residency on-shore rather than off-shore (Ip 2006b). This finding also reflects that the current main route of immigration for PRC migrants moves from study to getting a degree, finding work, and gaining residency.

\textsuperscript{38} One-way ANOVA means one-way analysis of variance. ANOVA provides a statistical test for whether or not the means of several groups are equal, and therefore, generalizes a $t$-test to more than two groups. ANOVAs are helpful because they have an advantage over a two-sample $t$-test. ANOVAs are particularly useful when comparing three or more means.
Table 6.6 Visa type on first arrival in New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa Type</th>
<th>Overall Response (%) (n = 477)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Visa</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR Visa</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Visa</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Visa</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Reunion Visa</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (i.e. refugee etc)</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As discussed in detail in Chapter Two, the stricter entry criteria now requires a definite job offer, which has contributed directly to the fact that many Chinese migrants chose to apply for immigration on-shore since being on-shore gave those applicants more time, space, and opportunity to obtain a job offer. Moreover, the high percentage of respondents who applied for immigration on-shore also reflects that the introduction of the Job Search Visa (JSV) in 2002 works relatively well for Chinese international students, of whom most obtained Job Search Visas after finishing their studies in New Zealand and subsequently were approved for residence (Ho 2005).

**Immigration category and immigration decision-making**

Most respondents obtained permanent residency under the Skilled Migrant category (77%, see Table 6.7). That category was followed by the Family category (spouse, parents or children, 14%). Work to Residence category totalled 4.8%, and Business/Investment category totalled 3.1%, statistics consistent with the reviews and discussions offered in Chapter Two, indicating that most PRC migrants come to New Zealand under the Skilled Migrant category (Ho 2003: 169). Of the respondents, 76% were the principal applicants when they applied for residency, while the remaining respondents were mainly co-applicants and family members.
Of the respondents, 54% indicated that the decision to immigrate to New Zealand was made by themselves (Table 6.8). This percentage was only 9% higher than the percentage of respondents who never married (45%). Additionally, 32% of respondents suggested the decision was a common one made by all the family members. The remaining 14% of respondents indicated that the decision was made by other family member(s). Overall, family influence on immigration decision totalled about 46% (plus options of “my spouse’s”, “me and my spouse together”, “my parents’” and “common decision by all family members” all together), which was very close to the percentage of married respondents (i.e. 53% from Table 6.2). This is not a surprise as family influence on the immigration decision is important for married respondents.

Table 6.7 Immigration category for online respondents immigrating to New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration Category</th>
<th>Overall Response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to Residence</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment/Business</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family: Parents/Children</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family: Spouse</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (i.e. refugee etc)</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.8 Person(s) who made the initial immigration decision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whose decision was it to immigrate to New Zealand?</th>
<th>Overall Response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mine</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My spouse’s</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me and my spouse together</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents’</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My spouse’s parents’</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common decision by all family members</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (people other than those mentioned above)</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents’ current living locations

Of the 477 respondents who completed the survey, 393 (82%) were living in New Zealand (“settlers”); 45 (9.4%) were living in a third country (“transnationals”); 26 (5.5%) were living in China (“returnees”); and 13 (2.7%) were commuting between China and New Zealand (“commuters”). For those living in a third country, the majority were now in Australia (82%, 37), and the remaining group were located in the USA (8.9%, 4), Canada (4.4%, 2) and Taiwan (4.4%, 2) (see Figure 6.1).

6.1.3 Summary of respondents’ profiles

This profile of the respondents reflects a group of new migrants who possess rich human capital, as evidenced by their very young age and high education qualifications. Most of them were able to meet the entry criteria as skilled immigrants. Such positive human capital is necessary for them to become transnational migrants. “Transnational” and “returnee” groups seemed to possess greater human capital compared with the “settler” and “commuter” groups,
as the respondents in both two groups had a higher percentage of postgraduate or higher educational degrees, which may have allowed them a better chance to be employed in the global labour market and thus a greater mobility.

Figure 6.1 Current living locations of online survey respondents.
6.2 General findings: Overarching themes from survey

6.2.1 Economic factors

_Employment status_

The employment statuses of the study respondents are listed in Table 6.9 below. For “returnees” and “transnationals”, their employment statuses before moving away from New Zealand and afterwards are both listed.

Table 6.9 Employment status of respondents at different times and locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>“Settlers” in NZ ((n = 393))</th>
<th>“Returnees” in NZ before return ((n = 26))</th>
<th>“Returnees” in China after return ((n = 26))</th>
<th>“Transnationals” in NZ before moving away ((n = 45))</th>
<th>“Transnationals” in third country after moving ((n = 45))</th>
<th>“Commuters” ((n = 13))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed without employees</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family worker</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-employed</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in labour force (housewife or retired person etc)</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In examining the table, it appears that if PRC migrants in New Zealand are not working, a large proportion are in training/studying, trying to acquire a local degree to facilitate future job searches. This finding is in accordance with the recent 2006 census data, indicating that many overseas born Chinese are in either full-time or part-time study (Ip and Liu, 2008). The employment situation for “transnationals” improved greatly after they moved away from New Zealand, and there was a significant difference in unemployment rate when comparing “transnationals” before and after leaving New Zealand (z value 2.76). Significant differences (z values were 2.77 and 2.12, respectively) in unemployment rates also existed when comparing “transnationals” before leaving New Zealand (15.6%) to “settlers” (5.1%) and “returnees” (0.0%) also before leaving New Zealand. This comparison indicates that employment appears to be a main determinant for why many “transnationals” moved away from New Zealand.

**Occupations**

The occupations held by respondents were roughly divided into four categories: 1) student; 2) low-level professional (i.e. technician, baker, salesperson, office clerk, consultant, and teacher, etc.) or management position (i.e. team manager, duty manager, project manager, and personal banker, etc); 3) high-level or senior professional (i.e. lawyer, university lecturer/professor, senior consultant, senior accountant, senior engineer, architect, and doctor, etc) or management position (i.e. general manager, businessman, share broker, chief executive officer (CEO), business owner and property developer, etc); and 4) others not included in the above (i.e. retired, housewife and unrecognisable answers, etc). These categories were roughly separated by estimated income levels.

The dominant occupation of “settlers” before immigrating to New Zealand was student (54%) in accordance to age and entry visa category profiles. Many of these came to New Zealand as young students. Before they came, they were also students, either still studying or just finishing their secondary or tertiary educations. Apart from being students, 27% of “settlers” were in low-level professional or managerial positions, while 11% of them were in high-level occupations. The current occupations of “settlers” in New Zealand include mainly low-level professionals or managers (60%). Student percentage was much lower (5%) than before
immigration to New Zealand (54%). High-level occupations were rare (5%), even lower than the 11% rate before immigration to New Zealand.

The “returnees” and “transnationals” profiles before moving away from New Zealand were similar to the profile of the “settlers”. For example, 15% of “returnees” and 7% of “transnationals” were students; 69% of “returnees” and 67% of “transnationals” held low-level professional or managerial positions; and only 8% of “returnees” and 16% of “transnationals” were in high-level professional or managerial positions. However, after moving back to China or moving to a third country, many of these “returnees” and “transnationals” became high-level professionals or managers. For example, student percentage was down to 4% for both “returnees” and “transnationals”; the percentages of low-level positions fell to 35% and 44% for “returnees” and “transnationals”, respectively; while the percentages of high-level occupations rose to 42% for both “returnees” and “transnationals”.

For “commuters”, most (62%) were high-level managers, CEOs, and businessmen, while the rest were “others”, a finding that may indicate they did not want to reveal their true occupation. However, the sample size of “commuter” group was small, and therefore, these results need to be treated as indicative only. Apparently, adopting a commuting life-style enabled “commuters” to keep their occupations. All in all, it seems that settling down in New Zealand caused a “down-grade” in occupation if one already held a high-level occupation; while moving away from New Zealand resulted in an “up-grade” in occupation for most of the PRC migrants.

**Income profile**

The annual income profiles of the respondents are listed in Table 6.10. For “settlers”, their situations before and after immigrating to New Zealand are listed. For “returnees” and “transnationals”, their situations before and after leaving New Zealand are both listed.
Table 6.10 Annual income profile for online survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Income</th>
<th>Below NZ$10,000</th>
<th>NZ$10,001–25,000</th>
<th>NZ$25,001–70,000</th>
<th>Over NZ$70,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Settlers” in China before going to NZ (n = 393)</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Settlers” in NZ (n = 393)</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Returnees” in NZ before the return (n = 26)</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Returnees” in China after the return (n = 26)</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Transnationals” in NZ before moving away (n = 45)</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Transnationals” in the third country (n = 45)</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Commuters” (n = 13)</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A significant proportion (about 19%) of the “settlers” had an annual income of NZ$10,000 or lower, which may be a reflection of those who are unemployed and not in the labour-force (about 18% and 21%, respectively, see Table 6.9). About 59% of the respondents had an annual income between $25,000 and $70,000. Only around 8% were earning over $70,000 per year, a finding that may match their occupation profile wherein high level employers (with employees) and higher managerial personnel were relatively rare (see previous section and table).

For the “returnees”, about 23% had an annual income below $10,000 in New Zealand, which corresponded to the 23% of this group who were studying as shown. Two (7.7%) had an
annual income over $70,000, and more than half (62%) had incomes between $25,000 and $70,000. The pattern of income was not very different from that for the “settler” respondents. It seems that the majority of the “returnees” were living a reasonably comfortable life in New Zealand. Most were working and holding respectable technical professions, and some even had their own business. This finding also echoes the findings from the qualitative interviews where most “returnees” indicated they chose to go back to China not because they failed to find employment in New Zealand. They simply wanted to pursue better career development opportunities in China.

After returning to China, the “returnees” mainly lived in urban mega cities. Shanghai and Beijing were two of the most popular destinations. There was no significant statistical difference between the levels of income in New Zealand and in China, even though the number and percentage of respondents earning more than $70,000 per year did increase in China (Table 6.10). It should be noted, however, that the living cost in China is lower than that in New Zealand; therefore, although the earning level was similar in both instances, people living in China were actually better off. This increase in net-earnings may indicate one important driving force for those “returnees” to return to China to work and live.

As for the “transnational” respondents, before they left New Zealand, about 9% had an annual income below $10,000, which was close to the 11% of this group who were studying or not in the labour force as shown in Table 6.9. About 9% of had an annual income over $70,000, and more than half (53%) had incomes between $25,000 and $70,000. The pattern of income was not very different from the pattern for “settler” and “returnee” respondents’ earning income in New Zealand.

After leaving New Zealand, the majority of “transnationals” (82%) were living in the big cities of Australia, such as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, and the rest live in USA, Canada and Taiwan. The percentage of respondents earning more than $70,000 per year significantly increased from 8.8% to 37.7% after they left New Zealand for a third destination (z value 3.24). As living costs in Australia, USA, and Canada are not very different from New Zealand, such increased net-earnings may have been a reason for those “transnationals” to move to the current country to work and live. All of these factors correlate well with the argument made in the last section that employment is an important factor and contributes to
the decision to move to another country. The finding also echoes the qualitative findings where many “trans-Tasman” interviewees revealed that life quality and family income significantly improved after they moved from New Zealand to a third country.

For the “commuters” group, it seems they did not want to reveal their true income, as their income profile does not match their professions and frequent commuting behaviour. Moreover, there were only 13 “commuter” respondents, a small sampling pool. Therefore, all findings for this group need to be interpreted with some caution.

6.2.2 Main reasons for current location choice

Reasons for “settlers” to stay in New Zealand

The reasons for “settlers” and their families to stay in New Zealand was an important question in the survey. The results can be used as an indicative comparative parameter against the reasons given by the other three surveyed groups who embraced different transnational trajectories. The important factors that contributed to those respondents’ transnational dimension were deduced. The two major reasons were: a) “I feel more comfortable in NZ” (57%), and/or b) “I like NZ’s social and natural environment” (58%) (Figure 6.2). While the economic factor (“I can earn more in NZ”) was ranked third at 21%, of the 70 people who chose “other” and gave specific reasons, 21 of the answers, including “lifestyle”, “children’s education”, “safer”, “give parents a good living environment” and “NZ is beautiful”, can be categorised and placed within reasons a) or b) above.

Other major reasons given by those 70 people who chose “other” included “waiting for permanent Returning Resident’s visa”, “waiting for passport to go to Australia or other places”, “further education”, “gain experience to facilitate future movement” and “scared of returning to China where competition is fierce”. These answers indicate that the “settlers” current stay in New Zealand is largely utilitarian and temporary. Once they reach these utilitarian goals, they might leave New Zealand. Apparently, such reasons as “waiting for passport to go Australia”, “further education” and “gain experience to facilitate future
“movement” indicate that staying in New Zealand may only be a transitional stage to be well prepared to leave and re-locate somewhere else.

Figure 6.2 Main reasons for “settlers” and/or their families to stay in New Zealand.

These results echo the qualitative findings where economic consideration is not the most important reason for PRC migrants to stay in New Zealand. They place lifestyle choice high, but economic and career development factors are still important considerations. Interestingly, almost 13% of the respondents picked “I have more familiar and wider social and professional networks in NZ”. This result may be because quite a large proportion of
respondents came to New Zealand as students when they were young and then developed their social and professional networks in New Zealand. This focus is obviously different than that of those older and mature migrants who came to New Zealand in their late twenties, whose main social and professional networks remained still in China. This finding may also explain why some of the respondents indicated they were “scared of returning to China where competition is fierce” and “I have no idea what I can do back in China”, because they have little network of their own in China. Owning a business and/or having family/relatives in New Zealand were also reasons for some respondents to stay in New Zealand, but that reason was only important to a small proportion (about 8% and 6%, respectively, see Figure 6.2).

There were also a number of respondents who stated that their decision to stay or not depended on their children’s education and/or the comfortable living condition of their elderly parents, whether in New Zealand or in China. This dependency was a key indicator that their residence in New Zealand might not be permanent. For example, if their parents decided that China was a more suitable place to stay, they were likely to leave New Zealand and return to China to take care of their aging parents.

Reasons for “returnees” to return to China

The highest rated reason for “returnees” to return to China was “there are more and better opportunities for my career development in China” (69%, Figure 6.3). Another major reason with more than a 50% selection rate was “I have more familiar and wider social and professional networks in China” (58%). The third major reason was “my parents and many relatives are in China” (42%).

When comparing Figure 6.2 with Figure 6.3, it is clear that economic consideration is not a major reason for immigrants to stay in New Zealand, as the two most popular selections by respondents for staying in New Zealand were social and natural environments and lifestyle. However, the economic reason (i.e. career development) did matter when one considered whether to return or stay. As Figure 6.3 shows, economic-related motivation rested on the top of the reasons “returnees” gave to leave New Zealand and return to China. Moreover, nearly 27% “returnee” respondents indicated that the reason for them to go back to China was
that they could not find a satisfactory job in New Zealand. This response, together with about 21% of the “settlers” who indicated that the reason they stayed in New Zealand was they could earn more in New Zealand than in China, reflects the fact that PRC migrants who can secure satisfactory jobs and have good career development opportunities in New Zealand are more likely to settle down in this country. Those who cannot are more likely to leave, even though the original reason they had for choosing New Zealand as an immigration destination was not based on economic considerations.

Figure 6.3 Main reasons for “returnees” to return to China

A comparison of Figures 6.2 and 6.3 also shows that environment and social issues were other important determinant factors for choosing to return or stay. Those immigrants who
liked the social and natural environment of New Zealand were likely to stay in New Zealand, while those immigrants who were more comfortable with China’s social environment and culture were more likely to return to China.

Lastly, parents’ location was a major consideration in the decision to return. As shown in Figure 6.3, returning to live close to parents was a main reason for around 42% of such “returnees”. This result echoes the findings from the interviews wherein many PRC migrants wanted to be geographically with their parents and undertake care-giving responsibilities. As discussed in Chapter five, New Zealand’s family reunion policy is relatively lenient. What hindered the parents’ decision of coming to New Zealand was largely about the loss of familiar surroundings, language barriers and difficulties associated with adaptation to a new environment (Li, 2011: 233-235). Therefore, many parents did not accompany their children to come to New Zealand even though they did have the option of immigrating to New Zealand. This was a pertinent issue in Chinese migrant families where filial obligation plays an important role and is primary in the decision to return to China. For “returnee” respondents, the average time to their return settlement in China was 2.5 years, which means the majority returned around 2006-2007. The decision to return was made by about 42% of respondents after obtaining New Zealand permanent residency, about 27% of respondents after obtaining New Zealand citizenship, and about 19% of respondents after first arrival in New Zealand. Two respondents (7.7%) actually made their decision to return to China prior to their immigration to New Zealand. One respondent selected the “other time” option, and explained that the return decision was made after he/she had completed a Master’s degree and gained work experience in New Zealand.

It seems that there is a specific time frame or timing element for returning to China. Some timed their return after obtaining New Zealand permanent residential status or New Zealand citizenship, and some timed their return after completing their degrees or having New Zealand work experience. Once they reached these goals, they started to consider further movement, in this case, returning to China. Gaining residential status or citizenship from a Western country is often considered an indicator of one’s higher social status. Western educational qualifications and work experience are all valuable credentials for “returnees” to have to compete with Chinese nationals in the China job market. The better job prospects in China and their advantage in that competition prompted their return journey. Moreover, to
secure a permanent Returning Resident’s Visa before returning to China is especially important for those who intend to return to New Zealand in the future for whatever reasons because a permanent Returning Resident’s Visa allows the holders to enter New Zealand at any time.

*Reasons for “transnationals” to move to a third country*

The highest rated reason for “transnationals” to leave New Zealand was “there are more and better opportunities for my career development there” (69%, Figure 6.4). The percentage was almost identical to those “returnees” who chose the same reason (see Figure 6.3). It seems that even though the destinations for re-location are different for “transnationals” and “returnees”, the reason both groups leave New Zealand and/or the goal they want to achieve is exactly the same, namely to advance career development where their human and financial capitals can be maximised.

Another major reason with a 38% selection rate was “I can earn more here than in New Zealand”. The third major reason was “I could not find a satisfactory job in New Zealand” (27%). Other reasons were relatively minor, all having less than 20% selection. Also, six respondents gave different reasons, such as “close to USA”, “for study”, “better weather here than in New Zealand”, “for children’s education”, “reunion with family” and “self-expatriation because of separation (broken marriage)”. Overall, these results from “returnees” and “transnationals” firmly point to the reason for many PRC migrants to leave New Zealand being largely economically related.

As shown in Figure 6.1, most “transnationals” are now in Australia. The average time for “transnational” respondents living in a third country was 4.7 years. The decision to move away was made by 49% of respondents after obtaining New Zealand citizenship, by 9% respondents after obtaining New Zealand permanent residency, by 9% of respondents after arriving in New Zealand, by 11% of respondents before they immigrated to New Zealand, and 22% who picked the choice of “other time”. Those who selected “other time” gave detailed reasons. Many indicated they moved away after securing a job offer in the third country or after gaining an educational qualification in New Zealand.
Chapter Six

Figure 6.4 Main reasons for “transnationals” to leave New Zealand

Similar to “returnees”, it seems that there is specific timing for “transnationals” who decide to move to a third destination. Nearly half (48.9%) of “transnational” respondents made up their mind to leave New Zealand and head to a third country after they obtained New Zealand citizenship. However, the difference was that many “transnationals” left New Zealand for a third country after gaining citizenship, while many “returnees” returned to China after gaining only New Zealand permanent residency. This phenomenon was determined by basic practical reasons described in Section 6.1.5 as well as in Section 5.4.1 of Chapter 5.

This set of information also shows that pre-meditated step-migration is not prevalent for PRC migrants to New Zealand, as only 11% of “transnationals” pre-determined that they would move to a third country prior to immigrating to New Zealand. It is a finding consistent with the research results generated from the qualitative interviews with the “trans-Tasman” interviewees (See Chapter Five). Gaining a New Zealand passport gives PRC migrants
greater geographic mobility for international visa-free travel, and obtaining a New Zealand qualification equips them with the necessary human capital to compete with others in the global labour market. Both factors help PRC migrants to start planning their transnational movement. It is likely to be a clear plan where further movement of PRC migrants is strategically arranged and executed based on a rationale time-space assessment, within which any leaving must be executed. Moving occurred within a specific time once they accumulated enough necessary social, human or financial capital to allow them to forge a successful transnational migratory life.

Reasons for “commuters” to choose the commuting life-style

Again, it should be noted that the number of “commuter” respondents was relatively small. All comments with regards to this group are thus indicative only. The most important reason for “commuters” to choose the commuting lifestyle was they had a business to run in China (Figure 6.5). This rationale matches their occupation profile of being high-level managers or businessmen. The other reasons included children’s education, preparing a future entire family settlement in New Zealand, and/or to allow other family members to enjoy staying in New Zealand while the “commuter” runs a business in China and maintains a high income for the family. All these reasons actually work together to produce the final decision for a migrant family member’s commuting behaviour. For the children’s education, one parent has to stay in New Zealand for supervision while another then works in China to provide financial support to the family members still in New Zealand.

In terms of a whole family’s future settlement in New Zealand, certain family members must work in China to maximise earnings. Therefore, life savings are accumulated quickly to allow the future ultimate settling of the whole family in New Zealand. Clearly, commuting seems to be a strategy that enabled “commuters” and their family members to enjoy the good living conditions and education in New Zealand, and also take advantage of China’s booming economic status and maintain both high income and high living standards.

The average time for “commuters” having commuted between China and New Zealand was 4.1 years. The decision to start commuting was made by 15% of respondents after
obtaining New Zealand citizenship, 62% respondents after obtaining of New Zealand permanent residency, 7.7% of respondents after their first arrival in New Zealand, and by 15% of respondents before they immigrated to New Zealand. This information also confirms that commuting is often strategically taken by many PRC migrant families at a specific “right time” but without influencing the acquiring of permanent residence status in New Zealand.

![Figure 6.5 Main reasons for “commuters” to choose a commuting lifestyle](image)

**The family factor in decision-making**

In all three groups who experienced transnational movement (“returnee”, “transnational” and “commuter”), the influence of the family on decision-making was quite significant. Family involvement in the decision-making was close to 50% for all three groups, which suggests
that family input is important to the eventual move. The remaining respondents made the decision to move by themselves.

6.2.3 Linkages with the homeland and/or New Zealand

Respondent linkages with China and/or New Zealand were detected by addressing several aspects. The first was to look at the location of their close family relatives, including spouses, children, parents, and siblings, since where the family networks of Chinese transnational migrants stretch or reach (family relations and networks of Chinese transnational migrants across continents) will link transnational migrants to the places they are attached to in their lives. The second aspect was investigating the frequency of revisiting trips to China and/or New Zealand. The third was to examine the patterns of financial transactions between countries migrated/returned/resided in and the locations of financial and property investments. The direction and intensity of their financial transactions between countries indicated the degree of linkage to different places and the locations where they put investments were important orientation when determining the next transnational destination. The last aspect to review was the emotional link to China and/or New Zealand.

Transnational linkages via family networks

Nearly half of the “settler” respondents (49%) were living in New Zealand without close relatives. This factor closely related to the age-marital status profile of “settlers”, where 59% were under 30 and 45% were single (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2). The other half of the respondents had close family members living in New Zealand, including spouses, child(ren), parent(s), parent(s)-in-law, and/or sibling(s). With half of “settlers” not having close relatives in New Zealand, it was assumed that this group’s linkages to their relatives in China, such as their parents, must be very strong. Through this strong family linkage, they kept constant contact with their homeland, either by physical home visits or virtual information exchanges using Internet communication highway.
Most of the “returnees” (77%) and “transnationals” (69%) also did not have close relatives in New Zealand. Both “returnee” and “transnational” groups intend to take their entire family when relocating. Thus, the percentage without close relatives in New Zealand was quite high compared with the “settler” cohort. With the low percentage of respondents who had close relatives in New Zealand, it is suggested that both “returnees” and “transnationals” maintained relatively limited linkages to New Zealand after they left this country.

Frequency of revisiting China and/or New Zealand

Survey respondent ties with China were much stronger than with New Zealand, reflected by the frequency of visiting China and/or New Zealand. After immigrating to New Zealand, most “settler” respondents had visited China (Table 6.11). Only 8% of respondents had not visited China since immigration. The most common visit frequency was between once a year and once every two years (60%). For “returnees”, 69% of them had not visited New Zealand since returning to China. It seems that after returning, most “returnees” focus on their work and lives in China with but rare visits to New Zealand. However, it should be noted too that since the average time of re-settlement in China was only 2.5 years, it is possible that they could visit New Zealand after they firmly re-settled in China. About 47% of “transnationals” visited New Zealand after their step-migration, slightly higher than the percentage of “returnees” (31%) who visited New Zealand after returning China. This result may be because most “transnationals” went to Australia and travel between Australia and New Zealand is far easier than travel between China and New Zealand. There are less restricted immigration controls, lower airfares, and shorter travel time.

However, the percentage of “transnationals” who have visited China since leaving China for immigration was about 91%, significantly higher than the percentage of who had visited New Zealand since leaving New Zealand to settle in the country they currently live in (z value 4.55). The percentage of respondents who had visited China since migration was very close to that of “settlers” (92%). This information coincides with the theories on transnational migration, saying that most first-generation migrants would like to keep strong ties with their homeland regardless of time-space factors (Alba and Nee 2003: 150-151; Kasinitz et al. 2002:
This finding also indicates that for those PRC migrants who stepped into a third destination, their connections with New Zealand remained rather loose. This trend indicates a transitional status of New Zealand in the migratory trajectories of many PRC migrants.

Table 6.11 Respondents’ interconnection with China and New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of visits</th>
<th>“Settlers” (n=393)</th>
<th>“Returnees” (n=26)</th>
<th>“Transnational” (n=45)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit to China after immigrating to New Zealand</td>
<td>Visit to New Zealand after returning to China</td>
<td>Visit to China after settling in a third country</td>
<td>Visit to New Zealand after settling in a third country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never been back</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once every 3 years</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every 3 years</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every 2 years</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a year</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times a year</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More frequently than 3 times a year</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From this data, it can be seen that even for “settlers”, the ties to the homeland are very strong. This tight connection is manifested in frequent physical movements between the homeland and the immigration country, a common theme among first-generation migrants. It should not be forgotten, however, that beneath this physical connection with the homeland, there may be many social, cultural and business connections that exist and are beneficial if one ever decides to return to China to live and work. Also, frequent commuting activity of “settlers” is surely beneficial to New Zealand’s aviation industry and can strengthen commercial, social, and cultural ties between China and New Zealand.

Also, if a migrant’s transnational linkage is defined in a limited way, such as the frequency of physical travel between countries or interconnections between family members across continents, PRC “returnees” and “transnationals”’ cross-border engagement with their first immigration-receiving country, New Zealand, is limited once they return to China or move to a third country. However, as I will discuss in the next section, if PRC migrant transnational linkage is defined in a broad way, irrespective of geographic and physical movements, and the intentions of “returnees” and “transnationals” to maintain contact with New Zealand are apparent. In Section 6.2.4, I will show the further movement and final settlement intentions of respondents. By examining the further movement and settlement intentions, “returnees” and “transnationals”’ cross-border linkages with New Zealand are confirmed.

Transnational linkages built by financial transactions and/or cross-border investment

The tangible linkages of the study respondents with China and/or New Zealand were investigated in terms of flow of their money transactions and location of their property and financial investments. As shown in Table 6.12, for those respondents with money transactions between China and New Zealand, the money flow runs mainly from China to New Zealand. The percentage of people who have a money flow from China to New Zealand was greater than those with money flow from New Zealand to China across all four groups. “Settler” and “commuter” groups had particularly higher percentages (41% and 69%, respectively) of people who send money from China to New Zealand.
For all respondents with money transactions between China and New Zealand, most have occasional transactions, and very few has regular transactions. The reasons for these transactions are mainly family related, and business reasons are rare. For the “commuters”, the high percentage who sends money from China to New Zealand closely relates to the “commuting” transnational strategy in which they engaged in, which is one family member works in China to provide financial support to other family member(s) in New Zealand. Since “commuters” are mostly the main money-earners, for example, high-level managers or businessmen, their family members in New Zealand will get a living allowance to sustain a high living standard in New Zealand.

Table 6.12 Money flow between countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Money Flow</th>
<th>“Settlers” (n=393)</th>
<th>“Returnees” (n=26)</th>
<th>“Transnationals” (n=45)</th>
<th>“Commuters” (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainly from China (or the third country) to New Zealand</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No money flow between countries</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly from New Zealand to China (or the third country)</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The location of study respondent financial and property investments is another important parameter that can reflect their transnational linkage with different places. Table 6.13 offers such information.
As shown in the table, the percentage of “returnees” (23%) and “transnationals” (22%) who own property in New Zealand was significantly lower than for the “settlers” (43%, z value 2.00 and 2.72, respectively), which correlates with their current residence locations. For “returnees”, “transnationals” and “commuters”, the percentage who owned real estate properties in China was higher than the percentage having property in New Zealand (Table 6.13). Overall, the percentage of respondents having properties in China was higher than for those in New Zealand, irrespective of their current locations.

Table 6.13 Financial involvement of respondents in different countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Involvement</th>
<th>“Settlers” (n=393) (%, and average value in NZ$)</th>
<th>“Returnees” (n=26) (%, and average value in NZ$)</th>
<th>“Transnationals” (n=45) (%, and average value in NZ$)</th>
<th>“Commuters” (n=13) (%, and average value in NZ$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real estate property in NZ</td>
<td>43%, $512,000</td>
<td>23%, $306,000</td>
<td>22%, $687,000</td>
<td>46%, $725,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate property in China</td>
<td>46%, $582,000</td>
<td>69%, $1,795,000</td>
<td>36%, $501,000</td>
<td>77%, $300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate property in 3rd country*</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>47%, $669,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other forms of investment in NZ</td>
<td>15%, $348,000</td>
<td>19%, $600,000</td>
<td>11%, $288,000</td>
<td>15%, $500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other forms of investment in China</td>
<td>24%, $366,000</td>
<td>65%, $494,000</td>
<td>31%, $274,000</td>
<td>46%, $467,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other forms of investment in the 3rd country*</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20%, $518,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Valid for “transnational” respondents only.
As for other forms of investment, such as stocks and bonds, the percentage of respondents in all groups with investment in China was higher than in New Zealand, indicating a stronger financial interest in and connection with China than with New Zealand.

“Transnationals” are a unique group. Since they are in a third country, their transnational linkages spread across three countries, China – the homeland, New Zealand – the first immigration country, and the third country where they currently reside. The percentage of involvement in real estate investment for this group occurred in the order of: the country of current residence > China > New Zealand. For other forms of financial investment, however, the order becomes China > the country of current residence > New Zealand. Obviously, financial involvement with New Zealand is the lowest among these three countries, and the financial linkage with China and current country of residence are stronger.

From this information, it is clear that PRC immigrants are bringing money and investment into New Zealand. The majority transact money from China to New Zealand instead of remitting money back to China. This trend of the money flow contrasts with that to immigrants of other developing countries. For example, Philippines and Caribbean nations are regarded as classic examples of a “remittance society” (Barber 2000; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 5-6; Wood and McCoy 1985). Mexican migrants in the US keeping sending regular remittances back to their villages is a well-known practice (Conway and Cohen 1998; Durand et al. 1996; Massey et al. 1994). Closer to the New Zealand context is the example of the remittance flow of Pacific Islanders - another major transnational population in New Zealand. Their remittance flow pattern is similar to that of migrant groups from the Philippines and Latin American countries. The remittance flow is usually from the migrant receiving countries to their homelands where the economies are less developed. Relatives in their homelands depend on the remittances to improve their living standard (Brown 1994; Brown 1995; Connell and Brown, 1995). However, the new PRC migrants show a difference pattern to this more conventional trend.

This scenario conforms to the middle-class status of many new PRC migrants and their families. Instead of remitting money back to China, the contemporary situation shows a reverse remittance transaction channel, from China to New Zealand to support migrant family members settling down in New Zealand. Such reverse remittance from China to New Zealand
also testifies to the economic take-off of China in the last decade. Overseas remittances supported the backbone of the economy of many coastal home villages in the early twentieth century (Ip, 2006a), but that is no longer the case in contemporary PRC Chinese migration in the twenty-first century.

On the other hand, many PRC migrants are still keeping a relatively strong financial interest in China, in the form of real estate properties or financial investment, such as the China’s stock market. This strong economic tie to China has the potential to draw more immigrants back to China to pursue their own economic welfare, whether long-term or short-term. The assets they keep in China also may make their homewards movement much easier as well. After all, this strong tie to the homeland is an important orientation and directs their decision-making regarding any future movement.

*Emotional link to China and New Zealand*

Respondents were also asked in the survey to rank their feelings toward China and New Zealand with five selections, namely, “love absolutely” (5 points), “like” (4 points), “neutral” (3 points), “dislike” (2 points), and “resentful” (1 point). The average scores for feeling about China were 4.07, 3.92, 3.93 and 4.46 from “settlers”, “returnees”, “transnationals”, and “commuters”, respectively. The average scores for feelings toward New Zealand were 4.00, 3.88, 4.07 and 4.08 from “settlers”, “returnees”, “transnationals” and “commuters”, respectively. There was virtually no difference. This result shows that PRC immigrants’ appreciation and praise of New Zealand was strong and sincere, even though they were not strongly involved with New Zealand financially.

*6.2.4 Possible future movement and settlement of PRC migrants*

To chart the further movement pattern of the four studied groups, the questionnaire also asked respondents about their further movement plans and future settlement plan. In the survey, a further movement plan was considered a short-term plan. The question asked
was “Do you plan to go to another country to live or work”? The future settlement plan refers to a more long-term plan, which was presented as “where will you settle down eventually”?

Further intention to move

A comparison between the four surveyed groups showed some interesting patterns for respondent further movement intentions. The “settler” group had greater further movement (going to a third country) intention than that for the “returnee”, “transnational” and “commuter” groups (Table 6.14). However, the lower percentage of “returnees”, “transnationals” and “commuters” who have no plans to move to another country in the immediate future to work or live does not mean that these three respondent groups are less mobile than the “settlers”. As a matter of fact, these three groups are already on track for transnational movement. The “returnees” and “transnationals” have already moved out of New Zealand and re-located in either China or a third country. The “commuters” are a group of transnational migrants who constantly move between China and New Zealand.

Table 6.14 Short-term future movement intention of respondents (Question: Do you plan to go to another country to live or work?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Further/Future Movement Intention</th>
<th>“Settlers” (n=393)</th>
<th>“Returnees” (n=26)</th>
<th>“Transnationals” (n=45)</th>
<th>“Commuters” (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents who do not have plans to go to another country to live and work.</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents who do have plans to go to another country to live and work.</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>26.9%*</td>
<td>31.1%**</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top destinations for those who plan to go to a third country (country with highest picks is first)</td>
<td>Australia, USA, China</td>
<td>Australia, USA, Canada/UK</td>
<td>USA, China</td>
<td>Australia, China, UK/USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significantly lower compared with the “settler” group, z value 2.41.

**Significantly lower compared with the “settler” group, z value 2.54.
Also, as will be discussed in the next section, the final settlement location of a significant number of “returnees” and “transnationals” is not where they currently reside, a situation that warrants further movement for those same migrants in the future. As for the “commuters”, many would finally settle in New Zealand. This trend of returning to the first immigration destination, New Zealand, is clear evidence that “returnee”, “transnational” and “commuter” respondents possess great transnational mobility just as the “settler” respondents do. However, their mobility manifests differently from that for the “settler” groups. The great mobility of the “settlers” is manifested by a widespread desire to leave New Zealand, while the mobility of the “returnee”, “transnational” and “commuter” respondents is partly manifested by their willingness to re-settle in New Zealand sometime in the future.

In addition, using a between-group comparison, this survey found that the greater immediate future movement intention of the “settler” group within the short-term strongly correlated to this group’s education level and reasons for current residential status in New Zealand. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, “settler” group had the highest percentage of respondents who hold bachelor or equivalent degrees; however, the percentage who had a post-graduate or higher degree is much lower than the percentage for the “transnational” and “returnee” groups. The higher educational level of “returnee” and “transnational” respondents could facilitate their re-location to China or a third country. Higher education means more human capital, which consequently means a greater possibility of being employed in a third country or back to the homeland where the economy is booming.

As some of the “settlers” indicated, they currently settle in New Zealand for utilitarian reasons, such as waiting for a permanent Returning Resident’s Visa or New Zealand citizenship, or obtaining New Zealand degrees and work experience. These utilitarian reasons suggest a time-consuming process of capital accumulation, which is necessary and prepares them to pursue further movement. Therefore, for some “settlers”, settling down in New Zealand is not their ultimate goal; rather, it is their temporary strategy. Once they obtain enough human capital, they will be on the move. This finding confirms certain points suggested by other scholars that New Zealand is more likely a destination for short-term or mid-term immigration settlement than it is for long-term settlement (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2000: 29).
The final destination

Although many respondents already had a plan for future movement or settlement, the final destination did not appear to be easily decided. When the responses from these four respondent groups were compared, the patterns of their further movement intention were remarkably similar (see Table 6.15).

First, it seems that the pulling effect of New Zealand’s natural and social environment and lifestyle is relatively strong. Nearly half of the “returnees” and 22% of the “transnationals” intended to go back to New Zealand to settle down in the future. More than 35% of “settlers” indicated they would stay in New Zealand, while 38.5% “commuters” wanted to settle down in New Zealand, either after a few years or after their retirement. Even though Australia, the USA, and Canada have generally been considered preferred immigration destination countries, the large number of respondents across all the groups who indicated they would like to settle in New Zealand in the future is clear evidence that New Zealand’s environment and lifestyle is a significant attraction and draws many PRC migrants to settle in this country permanently. Especially for the “returnee” and “transnational” respondents, even though they did leave New Zealand to relocate to another country, a significant proportion still intended to return to New Zealand and settle down. This view may be due to the fact that they can compare countries in terms of living experiences. That opportunity may strengthen the attractiveness of New Zealand’s natural living environment in their minds. The high percentage of “returnee” and “transnational” respondents who indicated that they would like to return to New Zealand to settle was also strong evidence of their geographical mobility.

In contrast, not a lot of respondents wanted to settle down in China for good, as only 7.7% of “returnees”, 2.5% of “settlers”, 6.7% of “transnationals” and no “commuters” wanted to settle down in China either after a few years or after retirement. Lastly, the percentages for “unknown” selection were relatively high for “settlers”, “returnees” and “transnational” groups at 38%, 31%, and 29%, respectively.
Table 6.15 The intended place and time-frame for respondent long-term settlement in the future. *(Question: Where and when will you settle down permanently eventually?)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Destination and Time-frame</th>
<th>“Settlers” (n=393)</th>
<th>“Returnees” (n=26)</th>
<th>“Transnationals” (n=45)</th>
<th>“Commuters” (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ll always stay in New Zealand</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll always stay in China</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll settle down here (the third country)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll keep commuting, I don’t want to settle down anywhere</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China, after a few years</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll stay in China for a few years, but will return to New Zealand to live then</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand, after a few years</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China, after my retirement</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand, after my retirement</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhere else, after a few years</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhere else, after my retirement</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other plan (please specify):</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N/A or not applicable, which means the choice was not available for the group surveyed.*
These relatively high percentages of respondents who were uncertain about their future movement reflected the existence of a strong transnational dimension within these three groups. Especially for the “settler” group, about 38% of respondents selected “unknown” as their highest selected option (Table 6.15). The answer to this question in fact lowered the percentage of those respondents who planned to stay in New Zealand from the previous question, i.e., 48.6% (Table 6.14). It shows that only 28% really wanted to settle in New Zealand permanently. The rest (over 20%, or the difference between 48.6% and 28%) of respondents who selected “plan to stay in New Zealand” were actually still undecided. Therefore, more than 70% of the “settler” respondents (apart from the 28% who definitely will settle down in New Zealand from now on) had transnational movement potential. The large proportion of “unknown” as a response indicates the variety of transnational options that PRC migrants have and that their transnational movements are not highly planned ahead of time but highly contingent on migrants’ changing situation.

6.2.5 Immigration experience

Whether migrants are willing to reside in a host society closely related to their experience as migrants in the country of immigration. The social attitude toward immigrants, the inclusion or exclusion of immigrants into or from the host society, or whether migrants can access settlement assistance from the government are all important factors that contribute to migrant decision-making regarding staying or leaving. Positive experience in the immigration country can generate a prolonged residence in the immigration destination; negative experience may result in feelings of exclusion and in some cases result in departure (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995). Many PRC migrants placed great importance on pursuing further education in New Zealand when they made their immigration decisions. New Zealand education may add value to their life experiences. Therefore, this online survey contained a set of questions about respondent access to student loans and their personal feelings about their overall immigration experience.
Access to government assistance/welfare - student loans

Nearly half of “returnees” (46%), 30% of the “settlers”, 36% of the “transnationalism” and 15% of the “commuters” used student loans. Of those who did use student loans, 15% of “settlers”, 17% of “returnees” and 47% of “transnationals” have repaid their loans in full, while 38% of “settlers”, 33% of “returnees” and 27% of “transnationals” are still in the process of repaying their loans. Further, 43% of the “settlers”, 50% of the “returnees”, 20% of the “transnationals” and 100% of the “commuters” have not repaid their loans, but will repay them in the near future. Only 3% of the “settlers” (4 respondents) and 6% of the “transnationals” (one respondent) indicated they had no intention of repaying their loans.

There is no doubt that a certain proportion of PRC migrants were able to access government support to further their education in New Zealand. That chance provided them an opportunity to add credentials to their human capital, which contributed significantly in their forge of transnational social space. Most appreciated such assistance and will repay their loans in full, and few intended to take advantage of New Zealand’s welfare system by not repaying their loans.

Perceptions about the immigration experience

This survey considered that the immigration experience may be an important variant when determining whether PRC migrants would like to stay in New Zealand or not stay. Respondent feelings toward their immigration process are grouped and listed in Table 6.16 below to show whether the respondents believed that their immigration experience added intrinsic value to their on-going life journey.

As shown in the table, positive experiences were prevalent in the “settler”, “returnee” and “transnational” groups, as around two-thirds of each of those groups regarded their immigration process as “pleasant and valuable”. There was also another feeling, and it considered the immigration experience as “unpleasant but valuable”. It existed in 20% of the “settlers”, 23% of “returnees”, 18% of “transnationals” and 31% of “commuters”. Obviously,
most of the respondents (83% of “settlers”, 89% of “returnees”, 86% of “transnationals” and 62% of “commuters”) regarded their experience in New Zealand as valuable, whether pleasant or not. As mentioned in previous chapters (Chapters 2 and 5), most PRC migrants value their immigration experience in New Zealand, and that viewpoint echoes the interview results offered in Chapter Five, which showed that most interviewees believed that New Zealand provided them great opportunities to obtain Western qualifications and social lives and work experiences, and indeed equipped them with useful human capital to facilitate their successful job hunt and settlement in either China, New Zealand, or a third country.

Table 6.16 Immigration experience described by respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration Experience</th>
<th>“Settlers” (n=393)</th>
<th>“Returnees” (n=26)</th>
<th>“Transnationals” (n=45)</th>
<th>“Commuters” (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant and valuable</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpleasant but valuable</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant but not valuable</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A waste of time</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, while immigrating to New Zealand provided PRC migrants broader opportunities, it also involved considerable longing for home and an estrangement during such migratory movements. For example, the percentage of “commuters” selecting “a waste of time” was significantly higher than for the other three cohorts. This result may be an important
indicator of the disrupted lifestyle that frequent long-distance commuting between China and New Zealand can cause. Commuting between New Zealand and China lets the “commuter” family enjoy the benefits of both China’s growing economy and New Zealand’s good environment and education; however, the resulting constant family separation can also cause considerable emotional, physical and financial discomfort for the person who is commuting.

6.2.6 Identity, sense of belonging, and perceptions of citizenship

Identity

It is not surprising that for first generation migrants, identification as being Chinese is very strong among all respondents (Table 6.17). The ways that “settlers” and “transnationals” identified themselves were different from the ways that “returnees” and “commuters” identified themselves. Lower percentages of the “returnees” and “commuters” regard themselves as Chinese only compared with “settlers” and “transnationals”.

Table 6.17 Respondents’ self-identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>“Settlers” (n=393)</th>
<th>“Returnees” (n=26)</th>
<th>“Transnationals” (n=45)</th>
<th>“Commuters” (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealander</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both New Zealander and Chinese</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The strong identification as Chinese among respondents coincided with the qualitative findings in that there was a strong sense of being Chinese among those interview participants. Compared with the “settler” and “transnational” groups, the identical percentages from “returnee” and “commuter” respondents who identified themselves only as Chinese was much lower, while the identical percentage of “returnees” and “commuters” who chose a hybrid identity was higher than that for the “settlers” and “transnationals”. This difference indicates that the interplay of ethnic, societal, and social-psychological factors is crucial to influence the way the same migrant groups envisage their migrant and ethnic identities in different social settings.

For “settlers” and “transnationals”, their social status as an immigrant minority group in a country dominated by European culture and their visibility as Asian somehow intensified their identification as strongly Chinese. This identification was based on a conscious awareness of their minority status and ethnic difference in a society where European culture is so strong. In contrast, “returnees” and “commuters” do not have to face the issue of ethnicity and minority social status, because they are situated in a Chinese world. As ethnic Chinese, they are the mainstream of the Chinese society; thus, their identification as Chinese may be not as strong as for “settlers” and “transnationals”. Moreover, immigrant identification as a New Zealander as one part of one’s identity is a kind of manifestation of a newly gained credential and advantageous social status from overseas, which has considerable value in Chinese society. That is why the divergence in the different manner in which “settler” and “transnational” groups and “returnee” and “commuter” groups identify themselves will occur.

A few additional questions were included in the survey to explore respondent sense of identity further. These questions and answers are summarised in Tables 6.18 and 6.19 below. The percentages of respondents who were proud to be Chinese were higher than the percentages who felt proud to be New Zealanders. When placing China and New Zealand on the international stage, more respondents were proud when China was performing well. This finding confirms the findings above, namely that Chinese identity remains strong in first-generation PRC migrants.
Table 6.18 A Comparison of respondent feelings of pride in being Chinese and pride in being a New Zealander

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Are you proud to be a Chinese?</th>
<th>Are you proud to be a New Zealander?</th>
<th>Are you proud to be a citizen of your current country of residence?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Settlers” (n=393)</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Returnees” (n=26)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Transnationals” (n=45)</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Commuters” (n=13)</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.19 Respondents’ feelings toward China and New Zealand’s performance on the international stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>When China is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:</th>
<th>When New Zealand is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>Don’t Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Settlers” (n=393)</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Returnees” (n=26)</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Transnationals” (n=45)</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Commuters” (n=13)</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A sense of belonging and conceptualisation of citizenship

The sense of belonging for the four surveyed groups is listed in Table 6.20 below. Comparing Table 6.20 to Table 6.17, there was a clear divorce between identity and sense of belonging in the “settler” and “transnational” groups, but agreement between identity and a sense of belonging among the “returnee” and “commuter” groups. About 34% of “settlers” and 9% of “transnationals” believed they belong to China, significantly lower than the percentages (59% and 51%, respectively) who regarded themselves as Chinese. This result is a clear case of a separation of the sense of identity from a sense of belonging. Many “settlers” and “transnationals” felt strongly Chinese but did not necessarily see themselves as “belonging” to China. This may be because being Chinese is related to ethnicity, which is an unambiguous answer; while a sense of belonging is more flexible and ambiguous and can relate to several other influential factors, such as nationality, citizenship, or sense of security in and loyalty toward the country where one is living. It also seems that there is a cosmopolitan dimension for those two groups of respondents, given that a certain proportion does not think that they should belong to any country.

This cosmopolitan dimension for sense of belonging was further revealed in the question on respondents’ conceptualisation of citizenship (Table 6.21). More than half of the “settler”, “returnee” and “transnational” respondents agreed with the statement (combination of “agree” and “somewhat agree”). This result indicates that citizenship plays little role in defining Chinese migrant identity and commitment with either the immigrant receiving or the sending countries. Instead, many PRC migrations take on an instrumental consideration when conceiving of citizenship. That is, wherever a country can provide them with benefits of high living standard and social status, these immigrants will take the citizenship of that country. They view citizenship as playing a service role and facilitating one’s efforts toward gaining a higher living standard and greater social status.
Table 6.20 Respondent sense of belonging to a country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Belonging</th>
<th>“Settlers” (n=393)</th>
<th>“Returnees” (n=26)</th>
<th>“Transnationals” (n=45)</th>
<th>“Commuters” (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both New Zealand and China</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not any country in particular</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The country I am living in now*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All countries (NZ, China &amp; country I)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't want to deal with this question</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please)</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Selection meant for the “transnational” group only.

Table 6.21 Respondent Conceptualisation of Citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Do you agree with the statement, ‘It does not matter to me which country I am a citizen of, as long as I can maintain a high standard of living’?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Settlers” (n=393)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Returnees” (n=26)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Transnationals” (n=45)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Commuters” (n=13)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3. Overall discussion

Through a between-group comparison, it was learned there are indeed discernible differences and similarities between each group surveyed in this research effort in terms of the motivation for engaging in transnational movements, future movement intentions, transnational connections with China and/or New Zealand, and identity and a sense of belonging.

First, this online survey found that the most powerful factor in determining whether PRC migrants go transnational was economic. By comparing respondents’ employment status, occupations and income in New Zealand and after leaving New Zealand of transnational groups, as well as economic situations between all surveyed groups, it was clearly shown that for people who moved away from New Zealand and entered into a third destination or returned to China, employment level and economic situation improved significantly. These findings suggest that the change in economic situation was the fundamental reason for those respondents to leave New Zealand. This finding is further supported by actual reasons for every surveyed group’s current residence trajectories.

The “settler” group revealed that economic consideration was not the primary reason for them to stay in New Zealand. Instead, some non-economic reasons, especially New Zealand’s good social and natural environment, appeared to be the dominant reasons for their decisions to reside in New Zealand. While for “returnees” and “transnationals”, economic-related factors, such as employment and business development opportunities, were the major consideration behind re-locating to China or a third country, the “commuter” group also demonstrated that economic considerations, such as doing business in China to earn money, was one of the most important reasons for them to choose to sacrifice family unity and take on a lifestyle of travelling frequently between China and New Zealand. All of these elements strongly suggest that the primary reason for many PRC migrants to leave New Zealand was economically driven.

Secondly, this survey reveals that all four surveyed groups possess great transnational mobility, but their mobility was manifested in different ways. The transnational tendency of the “settler” group was manifested by their intention to leave New Zealand and pursue further
movements, as more than half did indicate that they had plans to go to another country to live and work. Compared with this finding, the other three groups had less of an intention to pursue further immediate movement. However, lower intention does not mean that they possessed less mobility. In fact, they had already been on the move. Further investigation into their intentions regarding final settlement revealed that a large proportion intended to move back to New Zealand and settle down in the future.

The significant proportion who intended to settle back in New Zealand was evidence of New Zealand’s attractiveness, as these immigrants orientated their personal choice regarding future transnational movements. Economically, New Zealand may not be the ideal destination for migrants when trying to fulfil their economic ambitions. However, in terms of lifestyle and its natural and social environment, New Zealand is indeed a desirable place for many migrants.

Third, this survey found that respondents’ transnational movements were both well planned and undertaken strategically. Although leaving New Zealand for another country was rarely pre-meditated before actual immigration to New Zealand, that movement was executed at a specific time to suit either personal and/or the family’s needs. Some reasons for “settlers” to choose to stay in New Zealand indeed illustrate this point. The specific time for some “settlers” to leave New Zealand was probably after they accumulated necessary social and human capital, such as educational qualifications, work experience, and New Zealand residence or citizenship status. These social and human capital potentially allowed them to forge a transnational migratory life. As for “returnees”, “transnationals” and “commuters”, many of these immigrants clocked their time to start transnational movements after obtaining New Zealand permanent residence or citizenship or after obtaining a higher education degree and some New Zealand work experience. All of the above indicate that strategic onward movements that many PRC migrants engaged in were often based on a rational assessment of whether their personal and family situation allowed them to proceed. More specifically, the kind of residential and citizenship status they held did determine the scope of their mobility in terms of cross-border travel and what kind of skills they had that could facilitate cross-border engagement easily.
Fourth, this survey found that transnational connections that respondents built up with their homeland – China, remained extremely strong. For example, nearly half of the “settlers” did not have close relatives in New Zealand. With this lack of close family members living in New Zealand, it was assumed that they had close relatives in China, producing a strong linkage with China. This tight connection with China was also reflected by the respondents’ frequent home visits. Almost all “settlers” and “transnationals” have visited China after they immigrated to New Zealand with the average frequency being greater than once a year.

As Levitt argues, if a transnational connection established by migrants is defined in terms of the frequency of taking cross-border travel, remittances, engagement with homeland politics, or use of homeland media, migrant transnational engagement can be fairly limited (Levitt 2009). In this research, if respondents’ transnational connection was only counted based on a consideration of cross-border family networks or physical travel between countries, their connection with their first immigration destination country – New Zealand, apparently was much looser than their connection with China.

When looking at respondents’ cross-border financial activities, such as financial and property investment, their tighter connections with China became even more obvious. Even though the residential base for these “settlers” was in New Zealand, nearly half (46%) still had properties in China, which is a statistic that is even slightly higher than the percentage who own real estate property in New Zealand (43%). Even when comparing the percentages of “settlers” and “returnees” who own properties in their country of residence, the percentage of property ownership of “returnees” in China remained still significantly higher (z value 2.58) than the percentage of property ownership of “settlers” in New Zealand. Furthermore, 36% of “transnationals”, who are now residing in countries other than New Zealand and China, owned properties in China (36%), while only 22% owned properties in New Zealand. In terms of other forms of investment, the percentages of respondents across all four surveyed groups who had financial investment (i.e. stock in a shared market) in China was also significantly higher than that held in New Zealand.

It is clear then that the economic ties of respondents to China were stronger than with New Zealand. Such strong economic ties with the homeland may mean on-going strong personal, social, and cultural connections with China. These strong connections with the homeland
commonly existed among first generation migrants and may be significant when orientating their personal future movement intention. On the one hand, new PRC migrants kept strong ties with China, which is part of the manifestation of China’s economic revitalisation in recent years. On the other hand, this economic revitalisation also will benefit New Zealand if this country continues to engage with the Asian region through a proactive immigration policy to attract more skilful immigrants. The reverse direction of remittance transactions from China to New Zealand that many PRC migrants engaged in was discussed early in this chapter and is evidence that New Zealand can enjoy the economy of China via the PRC migrants who bring money from China into New Zealand’s economy. PRC migrants can bring economic benefits either through their commitment to settle down in New Zealand or through a more unconventional path, which is namely to cultivate strong transnational ties and on-going cultural and business networking between China and New Zealand.

The last significant finding of this survey relates to respondents’ sense of identity and belonging and their conceptualisation of citizenship. In general, there was a strong sense of being Chinese among the survey respondents. However, such identification as Chinese varied with different social settings. This variation can be seen when comparing the percentages of the different groups of respondents who claimed a hybrid identity (both Chinese and New Zealander). Both “settler” and “transnational” groups showed a similar pattern of identity claim, which was a strong identification as being solely Chinese (both more than 50%). The percentages were higher than both “returnees” and “commuters” (38.5% for both cohorts). The percentages of “returnees” and “commuters” who claimed a hybrid identity were much higher (more than half for both groups). This interesting pattern indicates the complex way in which migrants construct their identity where an interactive process of boundary maintenance and interaction with different social settings and institutions plays an important role. As can be seen from this survey, being Chinese was central to identity formation among all respondent groups. However, other factors, especially the way in which different groups positioned themselves according to specific social settings also played a significant role in carving-out of the respondents’ Chinese identities.

Gilroy posits the idea of “double consciousness”, through which the multiple identities that individual migrants develop can oscillate between one and the other in different social contexts. Through this process, migrants often maintain a social and cultural foothold in two
or more distinct ethnic environments and are well aware of their situation. They can identify either with their original culture or the culture of their adopted country, depending largely on the ways in which they do interact with the immigration country (Gilroy 1994). This idea of “double consciousness” is particularly informative when used in this research to explain the varied degree of hybrid self-identification of PRC migrants. Both “settlers” and “transnationals” in this survey shared the status of immigrant minority in a Western country. Their stronger identification as being Chinese is only a reflection of an awareness of distinct ethnic difference in a society where European culture dominates. This awareness may have accentuated their sense of being Chinese. However, for both “returnees” and “commuters”, their residential base remained in China, and they intended more to identify themselves as both Chinese and New Zealanders, partly because that they were well aware of their advantageous social status as both Chinese and New Zealanders in the Chinese society.

Although this survey found that the respondents’ sense of being Chinese was strong, that result does not mean there was a diminished attachment to New Zealand among the surveyed respondents. “Settler” and “transnational” groups’ answers to the question about their sense of belonging showed a clear divorce from their presumed sense of identity. For example, although there was a very strong sense of being Chinese only in the “settler” and “transnational” groups, “settlers” and “transnationals” did not necessarily see themselves as belonging to China only. Instead, more than half of the “settlers” felt that they belonged to both China and New Zealand, while about 72% of the “transnationals” felt that they belonged to more than one country. This clear separation between identity and the sense of belonging indicates that a strong sense of being Chinese for many PRC migrants and their enjoyment of being integrated in their immigrant host country was not mutually exclusive. The strong identification with being Chinese among many PRC migrants does not necessarily mean that they were less willing to integrate into New Zealand.

The theoretical implication behind this separation of identity and sense of belonging is that different factors are at play and do contribute to PRC migrants’ identity formation and sense of belonging. The strong identification of Chinese among many PRC migrants is mainly driven by a conscious awareness of their ethnic difference in the immigration host country and also strong connections with the homeland. On the other hand, their strong sense of belonging to more than their homeland might be driven by the interplay of factors mentioned
in this chapter and certain other factors, such as length of settlement period or actual settlement experience in the immigration country.

However, the most interesting finding from this research study is that the citizenship that respondents hold had no direct effect on how they identified themselves or how they perceived their sense of belonging. Many respondents took an instrumental consideration toward the issue by conceiving citizenship no matter how attached they were to China or New Zealand. This attitude is evidenced by the fact that more than half of the respondents for each surveyed group agreed with the statement that “it does not matter to me which country I am a citizen of, as long as I can maintain a high standard of living”. It can be seen clearly then that for many PRC migrants, citizenship only serves as a tool to help them attain a high living standard or social status and has no implications in terms of their sense of belonging or self-identity.

### 6.4 Summary: The mobility potential of PRC migrants

The most important message that emerged from this online survey was that PRC migrants do have great transnational mobility. The diverse residential basis of the surveyed respondents, their intention toward further movement and settlement, their strategic arrangement when taking on actual transnational movements, and the different ways they identify themselves and perceive their sense of belonging and citizenship are all manifestations of the mobility they embrace. Underneath this mobility, it was found that immigrant connections with China remain very strong, evidenced by a large intention towards homeward movement, frequent physical commuting and travelling between New Zealand or the country in which they reside and China, and substantial economic ties with the homeland. This strong connection to China reflects China’s powerful economic position in the world economy and the common phenomenon that exists among first generation migrants. More importantly, this suggests that transnationalism may be an alternative way for some migrants to adapt to immigration life, where immigration adaptation largely depends on the maintenance of transnational connections between the homeland and a networking establishment across national borders,
rather than these immigrants’ fully integrating into the host society (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995).

The above finding can be partially confirmed by using the respondents’ final remarks in the online survey. Unlike other questions in the survey, the last question was open ended and asked respondents to write down their comments freely. Many respondents seem to genuinely like living in New Zealand, but expressed their despair regarding this country’s small economy which constrains opportunities for career and business development. One particular respondent wrote, “New Zealand is a great country, but it is far away from the rest of the world. Most people I know left after living there for a few years; all of those people are smart people with a good income. It is sad for New Zealand to lose those people, but what can you do with such a small market”? One respondent who is obviously now living in the USA commented, “I had my own reason to leave New Zealand. In general, I like New Zealand, especially Kiwi-New Zealanders. They are much nicer than Americans. However, it was too hard for me to find a professional job when I was in New Zealand”. These are not cynical words, but rather words of deep frustration and profound powerlessness. Even though not every respondent thought like these two respondents, the findings we have detailed in this chapter all illustrate that economic factors indeed play a vital role in PRC migrants’ consideration of becoming transnational.

Parallel to the respondents’ tight connections with China, respondents’ connections with New Zealand and countries they currently reside in were also strong, as reflected in their plan for final settlement and sense of belonging. A large proportion of respondents felt that they belong to New Zealand and the countries where they reside, and a considerable proportion of the respondents do intend to choose New Zealand as their final settlement country, a land in which they used to reside and desire to make their home in the future. The next chapter, which concludes this thesis, will examine and draw together the divergent themes that have emerged from this PhD research and put both qualitative and quantitative findings together to offer a precise discussion of the implications this research might have for a better understanding of the contemporary international migration of PRC migrants.
Chapter Seven: Home on the Move - Discussion and Conclusions

This thesis has concentrated on exploring transnational migratory movements of New Zealand’s new Chinese migrants who originally emigrated from the People’s Republic of China (PRC). More precisely, I have focused on this group’s cross-border movements and intentions after immigrating to New Zealand. I have examined this migrant group’s initial motivations for immigrating to New Zealand as a reference to understand the personal reasons and macro-driving forces behind their re-location, their further movement intentions, and decision regarding final settlement. I have particularly considered the family context of this group of migrants, which was hypothesised as an influential factor in the decision-making for transnational movements. One of the key aims of this research has been to frame a “non-linear model” to examine PRC migrant migratory mobility and transnational movements. Traditionally, the migration process has been expected to be largely single-directional movement of people from homeland to host country, followed by a full integration into the host society and permanent settlement (“the linear model”).

Recent transnational migration studies tend to present a snapshot of the frequent commuting behaviours of some migrants between their countries of origin and adopted countries, but pay little attention to developing the full picture of what transnational migration actually looks like. This research project, however, has challenged both the traditional “linear model” and the “snapshot approach” for studying migrant transnational mobility. The non-linear model proposed in this research argues that the behaviour of many PRC migrants who leave New Zealand to return to China or re-locate to a third destination may be only a part of their ongoing transnational trajectories. These onward movements, such as “return migration”, “step-migration,” or frequent commuting between different countries are not the end of their migratory journey; rather, they are essentially a continuation of their initial emigration from China to New Zealand. This research has also focused on other important issues that closely relate to transnational migration, such as the identity formation of PRC migrants, their sense of belonging, and their conceptualisation of “home” and citizenship. To establish a clearer understanding of these aspects is fundamentally important, because how the migration cohort
conceptualises these issues holds the entry point for a deeper understanding of life and experience during these transnational movements.

In exploring the transnational movements of the targeted migrant group, I have identified the research limitations of previous research on Chinese transnational migration, especially research within the New Zealand context. I also provided information about the trend of Chinese migration to New Zealand from the early 1990s onwards with a particular emphasis on migration from the PRC and the general demographic profile of new PRC migrants. This information serves as a precise backdrop to understanding the research topic. Taking shape within the growing body of literature on transnational migration, a literature review also helped pave the way for how this project was constructed theoretically. Guided by “multi-sited ethnography” and mixed methods/model research, this research was conducted at multiple sites and included both in-depth qualitative interviews and a quantitative online survey to collect empirical data. The qualitative and quantitative findings were revealed and discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Six, respectively. The interviews discussed/presented in Chapter Five approached the research topic through an examination of the subjective living experiences of these migrants. The online survey in Chapter Six approached the research topic through a systematic analysis of quantitative data from the survey responses.

In this final chapter, I first pull the qualitative and quantitative research together to draw major research findings. I then discuss the implications those findings might have for any study of contemporary international migration, especially Chinese migration in an era of transnationalism and globalisation. Finally, I will identify specific directions for further research in Chinese transnational migration. To summarise the major findings of this research, I offer four themes that have emerged within and across the different chapters from the compilation of the research effort: 1) the reasons and driving forces for PRC migrants to engage in transnational movements and cross-border migratory activities; 2) further movement intentions and plans for final settlement of PRC migrants; 3) transnational linkages and connections that PRC migrants build with China, New Zealand and/or other countries they move to; and 4) the interplay for how PRC migrants self-identify and conceptualise of the full notion of “home” and citizenship, and a sense of belonging.
7.1 Summary of major research findings: Comparing the qualitative and quantitative research

7.1.1 Why “transnationals”? Situating PRC transnational migration in the world migration system

This research shows that the transnational movements that many PRC migrants engage in are the result of a combination of personal/family-related reasons and macro-level economic-political driving forces. Both the qualitative interviews and the quantitative online survey reveal that even though many PRC migrants originally immigrated to New Zealand for non-economic considerations, economic-related reasons contributed significantly to the decision to engage in later cross-border movements. The patterns of PRC migrant transnational movements are varied and diverse, but the primary reason for such transnational movement is essentially economic. For example, “returnees” and “transnationals” both left New Zealand because of more and better career and business development opportunities in the homeland or a third country where the market was bigger, and the economy thriving. “Commuters” chose to work in China, but still made periodic visits to New Zealand where their families remained to enjoy New Zealand’s lifestyle or advanced educational system and thus not compromising the family’s overall economic well-being.

Behind these personal economic-related motivations were the dynamic geo-economic conditions of globalisation, which now places China and New Zealand in different quite positions in the world migration system. Beginning in the 1970s, the PRC government made a strategic decision to send Chinese scholars overseas for academic and scientific training with the expectation they would eventually return to China and make positive contributions to the homeland. This was also the period when the PRC started to loosen its restrictive border control over its nationals. Attracted by Western freedom, better work conditions and higher income, the liberation of the PRC’s policy on travel overseas led to a massive increase in the number of people going overseas, and indeed many did return to China after their foreign training.

By the early 1990s, the PRC was an immigrant sending country in the world migration system, characterised by large emigration flows of students or young professionals to the
developed West (Skeldon 1996; Skeldon 2004; Zweig 1997). This large outflow of Chinese nationals to the developed West was often described as “brain drain” (Zweig 1997) that let the developed countries rob valuable human talent and the best and brightest people from China. This large flow of Chinese to the West engendered both a counter flow of return migration to China and a large settlement of permanent residents in Western countries. The military assault in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, increased the desire of overseas Chinese to stay in the West. However, from the mid- to late-1990s, the number of returnees started to increase; and since 2000, that rate of increase has risen sharply (Zweig 1997; Zweig 2006). The recent fast-growing economy in China re-defines the country’s position in the world migration system as a desired return destination for Chinese expatriates (Iredale, Guo and Rozario 2002; Luo, Guo and Huang 2003). This trend toward return migration flow has recently reversed the “brain drain” to a “brain gain” or even a “reverse brain drain” (Zweig 1997; Zweig 2006).

The defining factor behind this position of the PRC in the world immigration system is mainly economic, but it is also political. Adding to a booming economic pull factor is the PRC central government’s pro-active policies toward returning expatriates. Following the successful paths of the Republic of Korea and Taiwan where both thriving economies and liberalised polices turned “brain drains” into “brain gains”, the Chinese government recognised that overseas PRC migrants did have the potential to contribute to their domestic economy, and introduced a series of policies and programmes to attract skilful Chinese expatriates and persuade them to return to the homeland (Zweig 1997; Zweig 2006). In the context of PRC migrants to New Zealand, leaving New Zealand after several years of residence to return to China simply was a case of immigrants choosing to ride the tide of China’s growing home economy.

As for New Zealand, an immigrant receiving country, the factors that attract immigrants are often not economic, but rather environmental, educational, and social. Especially for skilled migrants with economic ambitions, New Zealand might not be an immigration destination to pursue economic and career advancement. However, in terms of seeking a desirable place for retirement or enjoyment of lifestyle, New Zealand is the ideal destination for many migrants. The Integration of Immigrants Programme 2007-2012 conducted through collaboration of three New Zealand universities proposed the idea of “lifestyle migrants” in relation to
migrants’ basic motivations for immigrating to New Zealand, and indicated that the most positive aspects of immigrating to New Zealand remain lifestyle, climate, environment, education for children, and personal safety. However, one negative aspect is a clearly perceived lack of opportunity for career development (Spoonley et al. 2009). That point of view supports the argument made above for New Zealand’s unique positioning in the world migration system.

The different positions of China and New Zealand in the world migration system then indicate that the residence of many PRC migrants in both countries is not permanent. Both the interviews and the survey results show that immigrating to New Zealand is a transitional stage for many PRC migrants in order to improve their social and economic situation and then move to a more preferable destination. Often, residing in New Zealand for a specific length of time to study or work is also a capital accumulation process for many PRC migrants who do desire to pursue their further economic well-being. Once they have completed their human capital accumulation, they leave New Zealand to return to China or move to a third country with a larger economy that then enables them to make full use of their human capital and secure life savings quickly. In this sense, returning to China may not be a permanent settling back to the homeland, and moving to a third country may not be the end point either for those PRC migrants to New Zealand. For many of them, after their life savings are secured, they may move back to New Zealand for retirement or final settlement.

Apart from the economic factors that are motivating PRC migrants to engage in transnational movements, non-economic factors, such as family considerations, patriotic pride, cultural alienation from the host society, and emotional linkages to China are also important motivating factors for returning or onward migration to another country. Both the interviews and the online survey conducted within the “returnee” group showed that family factors, especially the location of parents, do play a significant role in many PRC migrants’ decision to return to China. This finding will be further elaborated on in the next section.
7.1.2 Mobility potential, further movements and settlement intention and family influence/considerations

Another finding of this research is that PRC migrants possess great transnational mobility potential. Apart from an examination of PRC transnational migrant motivations behind the existing mobility patterns, this research particularly focused on investigating the long-term transnational intentions of PRC migrants. Both the qualitative interviews and the quantitative survey found strong evidence to indicate further movement for many PRC migrants are contingent on various factors. For example, a large number of “settlers” intend to leave New Zealand and return to China or go to a third destination. For “returnees” or people who have moved to a third destination, return migration and step-migration does not mean permanent re-location in the homeland or even in a third country. Rather, many migrants continue to show their intention to undertake further movement.

Examining this general trend of on-going movement, this research found that the transnational mobility of PRC migrants is actually nuanced and often characterised by different patterns of movement, such as frequent commuting between the homeland and host countries, returning to the homeland, and relocating to a third country. The strong intention to return to New Zealand among “returnees” was seen in both the interviews and the online survey and was particularly referred to and discussed the so-called “double return” (Ley and Kobayashi 2005) in Chapter Five, revealing a circular migratory movement across the ocean, first from New Zealand to China for economic advancement, and then back to New Zealand for children’s education or retirement. In the case of the “trans-Tasman” interviewees, although many of them regard the country they currently reside in (i.e. Australia) as their residential “home” base, their intentions for either temporary and short-term re-location to China or another destination are also strong. Similar to the “returnees”, some even plan to return to New Zealand in later years for retirement as shown in the online survey.

This research also found that family factors play a significant role in motivating PRC migrant transnational movements. The online survey revealed a significant trend, namely, that a large number of respondents intend to engage in cross-border movements with their immediate family members. The qualitative interviews particularly demonstrated that, when necessary, many PRC migrant families are willing to take on family separation and multi-locational
residences to satisfy and meet each family member’s different needs as well as the general economic well-being of the entire family. A strong sense of family unity during these transnational movements, as engendered from the online survey responses and the courage and/or willingness to take on strategic family dispersal revealed in the in-depth interviews, are not mutually exclusive for understanding PRC migrant transnational movements within the family context. Both trends did show that family consideration is often the number one priority by PRC migrants in the decision-making process regarding transnational moves. The qualitative interviews in particular showed that their mobility patterns and transnational intentions for further movement are significantly affected by individual’s family circumstances as well as specific socio-economic forces affecting the place of residence at any given time.

Different family structures and dynamics and individual family members’ different needs at different life stages indeed do determine the particular strategic transnational arrangement of many migrant families. Consideration of certain family members, especially older parents and school-age children holds the key to such decision-making. Incorporated into an overall consideration of each family’s collective well-being, family members will pursue divergent trajectories and locate in different countries as a “home” base to best suit personal circumstances. Decisions on re-location are often based on consideration of career development, maintenance of a family’s financial well-being, children’s educational needs, childcare support, and provision for aging parents. Therefore, strategic family separation, multi-locational residences and onward movement can take place. In any negotiation of family transnational plans, a balanced decision is made based on individual family members’ personal needs and the family’s overall well-being.

Such strategic plans for onward movement or multi-locational residence can also be seen from the survey results. There were two different trends regarding PRC migrant timing of re-location. The first follows obtaining New Zealand qualifications or professional work experience, and the second follows securing a New Zealand permanent Returning Resident’s Visa or citizenship. Both findings do indicate that strategic onward movement that many PRC migrants engage in is often taken based on a rational assessment of whether their own human and social capital is sufficient and will facilitate that smooth relocation.
Since every individual family’s circumstance and structure does change constantly, the transnational migratory strategies that many PRC migrants have adopted also change based on circumstances. This finding means that what PRC transnational families seem to constantly undergo is an incessant cycle of family dispersal, trans-locality and reunion. This cycle results in a constant change of “home” base for many PRC migrants. Sometimes the “home” base is the homeland, China, and sometimes the “home” base is in New Zealand or a third country. This is one of the reasons why this thesis is entitled “Home on the Move”. As argued before, since PRC migrants may have different “home” bases, “home” for them may be an emotional sense of longing for “home” or a sense of family unity that these migrants just carry with them when they move between their many different “home” bases.

7.1.3 Transnational linkages across borders

Both the interviews and the survey found that if the transnational connections of PRC migrants are based on just the physical linkages that migrants build up across borders, such as family networks, cross-border physical travel, or economic linkage, the transnational connection that PRC migrants establish with their homeland – China is extremely strong. However, their connection with New Zealand appears to be relatively weak compared with their connection to China. For example, the interviews showed that less “trans-Tasman” interviewees intended to re-locate to New Zealand for short-term purposes, while more of the group did intend to make a temporary re-location to China. Such an intention of re-locating to China is clear evidence of their strong interest in building a close connection with the homeland, particularly a common phenomenon that exists pervasively in first-generation migrants. This strong connection to China is also evidenced by the substantial business connections that “returnees”, “commuters”, and some “trans-Tasman” interviewees established with China and their strong attachment to China as an emotional “home”.

The online survey provides further evidence of the strong connection that many PRC migrants have with their country of origin. Many PRC migrants have close relatives in China, which provides them with a family network there. For “settlers” and “transnationals”, their close ties with China are manifested by their frequent physical revisits to the homeland.
Based on the frequency of visit to New Zealand or China and the extent of the cross-border financial activities, such as financial and property investment, it can be seen that many PRC migrants have built much tighter connections with China than with New Zealand. The online survey showed that all migrant groups have greater financial interest and/or stake in China than in New Zealand or a third country, in the form of property or other financial investments.

As discussed in Chapter Three, many kinds of transnational social connections that migrants established, such as emotional connections to certain places through memory, nostalgia or imagination, may possibly exist without geographic movements and physical engagement (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). This research found that the scenario of transnational connections of PRC migrants with New Zealand becomes stronger if the above is taken into consideration. As I have pointed out in the last section a large number of respondents across all four groups plan to return to New Zealand for retirement or final settlement. This intention of returning to New Zealand indirectly suggests that while PRC migrants keep a strong tie with China, their connections with New Zealand cannot be under-estimated. Interview findings particularly show that consideration of children’s education and lifestyle are important driving forces for many PRC migrants to plan to come back to New Zealand. Based on such considerations, it can be said that many PRC migrants would like to or need to keep connections with New Zealand in order to secure a life-style option for the future.

7.1.4 Identity, sense of belonging, “home” and citizenship

In general, there is a strong sense of “being Chinese” among PRC transnational migrants. Regardless of whether they hold a New Zealand passport or not, the qualitative interviewees reveal that the claim of “being Chinese” is prevalent. Such strong identification derives from the strength of Chinese cultural influences, since most first-generation PRC adult migrants have grown up in China and been educated under the Chinese system. Other factors, such as the way migrants interact with the host society, China’s rising international status and its growing profile as an emergent economic power, and the resurgence of overseas Chinese nationalism in recent years intensifies the sense of being Chinese.
The quantitative survey results generally echo the qualitative findings. However, the online survey reveals an intriguing dynamic about the ways different respondent groups identify themselves. The survey found that the degree of the strong identification as being Chinese among different respondent groups varies. Fewer “returnees” and “commuters” identify themselves as being Chinese compared with “settlers” in New Zealand and “transnationals” in a third immigration country. As well, more “returnees” and “commuters” claimed a hybrid identity (being both Chinese and New Zealander) compared with “settlers” and “transnationals”. This interesting pattern suggests that external social factors, especially the way in which people envisage their social status in different social settings, play a decisive role in the self identification as Chinese. The strong identification as being Chinese among “settler” and “transnational” groups correlates to their awareness of being ethnic immigrant minorities in a Western country. As this has been referred to in the interviews, the way that many mainstream New Zealanders perceived migrants as “different others” has significant impact on how Chinese migrants identify themselves. For “returnees” and “commuters”, a hybrid identity involving being a New Zealander may provide social privileges in Chinese society; therefore, most of them intend to identify themselves as both Chinese and New Zealanders.

One salient part of this research also found that the strong identification as being Chinese among PRC migrants does not mean that they would strongly identify themselves as belonging to China. In many cases, research participants see themselves as Chinese, but perceive that they belong to their host countries, or to both the host countries and China. In many such cases, belonging to the host countries refers to migrants’ physical presence and daily engagement in the country they reside in, while belonging to China refers more to their emotional belonging to their country of origin. In the interviews, this clear separation from interviewees’ sense of identity and sense of belonging has been reflected by the way the interviewees conceptualised the notion of “home”. Very often, interviewees could feel strongly Chinese but not necessarily see their “homes” as being in China. However, the interviews show that how PRC migrants perceive their sense of belonging to some extent is in line with the ways that they conceptualise the notion of “home” or the immediate communities around “home”. Although many interviewees conceptualised their “home” as an emotional terrain, irrespective of where they physically live, some of them strongly felt that
they belong to where their physical “homes” are or where their families’ residential bases are. In many such cases, the family residential base was often referred to as their “home”.

Another notable finding is that the citizenship that PRC migrants hold has no direct effect on how they identify themselves or their sense of belonging. For many of their newly acquired legal status as citizens of New Zealand or a third country is a means to use to engage in convenient, visa-free international travel and simply is social capital to help them reach a higher living standard or greater social status. This finding seriously challenges the dominant expectations of the immigrant-receiving country toward offering citizenship to immigrants. From the point of view of the government of an immigrant-receiving country, immigrants are expected to make a full commitment to the immigrant-receiving country. What this research shows, however, is that there can be a sense of belonging to New Zealand among many PRC migrants, but that sense of belonging does not originate from the legal status they gain from being New Zealand citizens or permanent residents; instead this sense of belonging to New Zealand relates more to social factors, such as how long they have settled in New Zealand, whether their immigration experience in New Zealand has been positive or negative, and even more importantly, how the New Zealand mainstream population/society perceives and interacts with them.

7.2 Implications of researching Chinese transnational migration

At the outset of this thesis, I identified a research gap that exists in the research on Chinese transnational migration. Very often, studies of Chinese migrant’s transnational mobility has been limited to detailed micro-studies of various contemporary manifestations of transnational migration and its associated issues related to ethnic identity and conflicting allegiances. This PhD research on PRC migrant transnationalism, however, took a longitudinal approach to study Chinese transnational migration and looked at Chinese transnational migration as a progressive and dynamic process strategically undertaken by migrants and their families. This research in particular further incorporated the idea of “home on the move” to symbolise the migratory experience and practice. It says that PRC migrants can and do live simultaneously in more than one country. By making the move between
different countries, their strength and flexibility of “home” was tested and contested. PRC migrant transnational practice was thus viewed from a long-term perspective and understood as an unfinished set of circulatory movements between the homeland and the immigration host countries. To this extent, this study is the first of its kind to make a theoretical contribution to the understanding of contemporary Chinese transnational migration by completing a case study of the specific transnational migratory movement of New Zealand’s PRC migrants.

The first implication of this research is theoretical. As I argue in previous chapters, the transnational migration trend of PRC migrants has placed the classic categorisation of migration into question. As shown here, “return migration” is simply not a permanent re-settlement into a homeland, and “step-migration” to a third destination is not the end of many PRC migrants’ transnational journeys. What can be seen from this study is that the use of the classic categorisation of migration is problematic, since categories such as “return migration”, “step-migration” or “astronauting” used more recently do not fully capture the complexity of actual migration flow. Before embarking on migration research then, we need to recognise more clearly that migratory movement is increasingly transnational in its definition and nature in the new century and in a time of globalisation. This trend challenges the classic perspective, namely of looking at migration as a linear or single-directional movement of people from home to host country followed by permanent settlement and ultimate assimilation to that new country. The findings also challenge the usual approach of studying migration that is too often limited to the particular national borders of the home country and the host country. We need to move away from these classic perspectives and their related methodology, and communicate a change of focus when looking at migration and the research on migration. What I am proposing here is that migration studies should take a long-term look at migration as an on-going process and/or a continuation of the initial moving away from the homeland. Based on this changing view, a flexible and more inclusive research framework can be formed to improve the understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding contemporary migration. Using this framework, the classic categorisation of migrations that include “return migration”, “step-migration” or “astronauting” can still be used, but within a dynamic, holistic life course framework, within which migrants are situated continuously in their changing family context.
This research also found that there are certain theoretical issues at stake, which have potential of furthering transnational migration studies in the future. There is a critical relation between PRC migrant identity, sense of belonging, and conceptualisation of “home” and citizenship. An important aspect of such a relationship is the ways in which migrants construct their notion of “home”, whereby a sense of identity and belonging is actually shaped in an ongoing fashion and also negotiated. Traditionally, “home” in the sense of migration, has commonly referred to a migrant’s country of origin, or a concrete place that migrants would like to call “home”. However, because of intensified interconnectedness across national and cultural borders today, individual migrants can now apply different meanings to their notion of the meaning of “home”. Thus, “home” no longer must be tied to boundaries of a physical territory and conceived as geographies of dwelling in very concrete places. It is instead now often closely linked to multiple places and different migrant feelings and emotions when migrants do move between places. These moves will impact the ways in which migrants feel about “belonging” to places and also how they identify themselves. Given such a fluid and unfixed nature of “home”, the exploration of migrant conceptualisation of “home” will provide valuable theoretical grounding and help further the understanding of the dynamic process of transnational migration. It is open up a more unconventional way of exploring how migrant identity is actually constructed over time.

The second implication to draw from this research is more methodologically related. As mentioned in Chapter Three, migrant mobility has been often exaggerated or oversimplified within the traditional research method. This methodological bias has created some neglect among those not actively engaged in transnational geographical movements, but still influencing the transnational dimension of migration within a particular migrant group. To avoid this methodological problem, this research deliberately included those PRC migrants who are not geographically mobile in the investigation, namely, those who live in New Zealand without having had any prolonged absence from this country. As this research has shown, although those “settler” PRC migrants have lived in New Zealand without significant movement, they still possess great transnational potential. The research also demonstrates that transnational mobility does not exist in all PRC migrants; rather, it mainly exists among those migrants whose skills and qualifications are internationally recognised and easily transferable. The argument of research says then that when researchers passionately focus on research into migrant mobility, they should always remain aware that the transnational
migratory phenomenon exists largely in only a limited group of migrants, those who possess considerable social, human and financial capital which in effect allows them the freedom and desire to forge such transnational engagement.

An implication can also be drawn from this research that says transnational perspectives have stemmed largely from studying migrant groups, but this perhaps is a false assumption that transnationalism is a phenomenon that exists among the migrant population only. Regardless of one’s social status as a migrant or mainstream member of the host society, migratory transnationalism is universally applicable to all young people whose qualifications, professional skills and work experience make them sought after as valued employees in the global labour market and thus highly likely as well to pursue opportunities across borders.

Another methodological implication I am going to draw from this study is about the use of a transnational perspective to research migration. As a common currency in migration studies, the transnational perspective has impressed many migration researchers to believe that this perspective is “cutting-edge”. To some extent, certain important “old-line” migration theories are thus overlooked and simply regarded as out of date. This viewpoint also happened to me at the outset of this research. Throughout the course of this research, I gradually discovered that the “old” migration theories actually provide many rich and powerful insights when explaining some of the aspects of PRC migrant transnational migratory movement. For example, neoclassical economics are still useful to delineate the economic reasons that do motivate many PRC migrants to choose to return to China or move to a third country. The new economics of migration also provide a powerful impetus for interpreting PRC migrant families’ transnational movements and arrangements as a household decision made to minimise the economic cost of immigration and as a temporary strategy useful for overcoming the difficulty of economic integration into an immigration host country. An assimilation perspective in terms of understanding the PRC migrant choice of alternative ways to adapt to migration life provides a baseline to use to identify more clearly the meanings of what is new in immigration practice today. The implications I’ve gained from my personal experience doing this research is that the methodological challenge many researchers in the field of migration studies now face is how to tease out the most useful theoretical elements from the “old” and “new” theories to use towards the research topic.
Chapter Seven

The last implication from this research is more practical. On the policy level, this research has produced a knowledge base about contemporary Chinese migration to New Zealand, which may over time facilitate more positive policy adjustment. Despite decades of Chinese immigration to New Zealand, this country’s awareness of Chinese immigration remains inadequate. Like other immigrant-receiving countries where much policy making is formed based on the philosophy of promoting permanent settlement of migrants and by the model of calculative rationality which simply weighs up various factors and chooses the best and most efficient means to attain a preset policy goal (Van Dalen and Henkens 2005), New Zealand’s post-1987 immigration policy has not yet adequately accommodated the ongoing migration needs of many migrants including Chinese migrants. Firstly, there is an incomplete understanding among policy-makers to issues associated with migrants’ potential to engage in transnational movements. It is not well appreciated that under the skilled and business immigration categories, the targeted immigrants with professional skills, high educational levels, and considerable investment capital are naturally the most mobile immigrant group whose very financial and human capital can make their settlement both fluid and dynamic.

Secondly, the precise position of New Zealand in the world migration system as an immigration destination for short- or medium-term residence rather than long-term residence (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2000: 29) is yet to be fully addressed by the immigration policy. Recently, there has been a progressive shift in immigration policy to accommodate temporary migration of skilled migrants (Bedford, Ho and Bedford 2010). Furthermore, considerable attention on the subsequent mobility of immigrants has been reflected by some reports produced by the Department of Labour (Shorland 2006; Merwood 2008). This present research can hopefully further facilitate a fuller understanding of the transnational dimension of immigration by highlighting the data derived from this country’s second largest immigrant group. Based on a comprehensive understanding, this research further suggests a need for policy makers to incorporate the transnational aspect of immigration in future policy development, and then to ensure future policy can reflect the transnational realities of immigration. More importantly, when formulating policies, the New Zealand government and its policymakers must shift their thinking away from focussing only the traditional model of permanent migration settlement. Only when the view towards this widely-accepted but increasingly problematic traditional model is widened and updated, the country’s immigration policy can become beneficial for all parties. What should be kept in mind is
that migration is ultimately a flow of people who carry with them to a location all their aspirations for life and family. Migrants should not be treated as economic chips in any government’s policy agenda. Before making such policies, full understanding of migration and empathy toward migrants should be cultivated and used as an ethics and moral compass. It should be remembered as well that migrants are far easier to be legislated out of the country than legislated in. In this free-choice age we live in, immigration policy should focus on considerations of how best to accommodate migrants during their period of residence in New Zealand and seek better ways to maximise and utilise the resources of migrants, so they do make positive contributions to this country.

7.3 Further research

Building on the groundwork of this study, some possible directions for future research which can make further contribution to the field of transnational migration studies have emerged. I would like to highlight these possibilities here.

This current research has explored transnational movements of the first generation of PRC adult migrants and especially investigated how family factors do influence transnational mobility patterns and intentions. There is a shortage of literature regarding the next migrant generation’s transnational potential and their actual transnational engagement. This is especially true for Chinese second generation migrants. Some of the work on transnationalism had included the children of migrants by default and family transnational discussion centres only addressing adult migrants (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). Guarnizo and Smith briefly raise the question whether transnational relations are actually confined to the first generation in the introduction to the book Transnationalism From Below (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 24-29). However, limited research has investigated the actual forms and extent of second-generation transnationalism. This lack of attention to the second generation of immigrants in transnational studies suggests that how they engage in transnational activities and their attitudes towards such activities is not fully understood. The publication of the edited volumes, “The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation” (Levitt and Waters 2002), and “Ties to the Homeland: Second Generation
Transnationalism” (Lee 2008), was an important step in opening up this field of research. Levitt and Waters offer a North American focus, while Lee has an Australian focus. Both of them are an early foray into the topic of second-generation transnationalism, particularly seeking answers to the question of how widespread or how long-lasting migratory transnational practices among the second generation are likely to be.

In the New Zealand context, some strong research has been done on the transnationalism of the second generation of Pacific Islander migrants (Anae 2001; Brown-Pulu 2001). For Asian migrants in New Zealand, Allen Bartley studied the transnationalism of 1.5 generation Asian migrant adolescents (Bartley 2003). However, the transnationalism of the next migrant generation including this 1.5 generation and the second generation with a PRC background has yet to be fully explored. Since a large number of PRC migrant families arrived in New Zealand with young children, the extent to which these 1.5 generation PRC migrants engage in transnational practices has significant theoretic implications for future transnational migration studies. There are also many first-generation PRC migrants who have New Zealand-born children. How this second generation connects with their cultural origin and what kind of factors contribute to the degree of their homeland engagement will be an interesting research area that waits to be explored. Once the members of the next generation become independent, they will likely have their own ideas and aspirations for their future. Will their transnational engagement with China be as strong as their parents, what kinds of factors will affect their degree of involvement in transnational activities, and how will they negotiate their identity and sense of belonging pose critical questions in understanding complicated issues regarding transnational migration. Studies that expand the range of transnational groups to subsequent generations that previously were not uncovered fully will undoubtedly advance both theoretical development and the debate on transnational migration.

Currently, the issue about Chinese migrants remains an immigration issue only. However, the issues related to subsequent generations of new Chinese migrants are long-term social issues of New Zealand. This research argues that PRC migrants bring benefits to New Zealand in terms of the direction of cross-border financial transactions. There are other recent works that also suggest that transnational movements and migration have a beneficial impact on migrants, migrants’ country of origin, and country of immigration in terms of facilitating international trade and tourism (Newland and Taylor 2010; Portes and Landolt 2000;
Vertovec 2004b). I believe these benefits from contemporary migration are not yet fully experienced and realised in the context of New Zealand. Therefore, increasing the understanding of transnational migration as a long-term issue across future generations is necessary for New Zealand to take the fullest advantage of the positive benefits of transnational migration. Such research will propel the realisation that New Zealand needs to reposition itself from being on the Pacific fringe to being a more active participant in an increasingly globalised world.

In particular, the issue of identity and the sense of belonging for the 1.5 and second generations of PRC migrants present very challenging questions to New Zealand society in terms of how this country conceptualises the notion of citizenship and envisages its own national identity. Recently, the research has started to focus on the transnational impact of second generation identity and sense of belonging. The general finding so far tends to conclude that children of immigrants are socialised predominantly by the influences they experience within their host country adapted by the influence of transnational forces (Jones-Correa 2002; Levitt 2001). Research on subsequent generations of migrants, especially their identity formation and senses of belonging as associated with transnationalism will be important for New Zealand to undertake to face the challenges of the dramatic transformation of its demography by Chinese immigration, so as to reshape its own national identity and localised definition of belonging.

Since subsequent Chinese migrant generations are part of a complicated social situation that lies between the mainstream in New Zealand and their own ethnic community, between their cultural origin and a host society, and between competing demands on both their loyalty and attachment to different societies, the way they formulate their identities and the way they perceive their senses of belonging is an important indicator to reveal how New Zealand society will interact with subsequent generations of migrants, and how New Zealand public perceives migration. The future of subsequent generations of new Chinese migrants is closely tied with the on-going reshaping of the country’s national identity. Historically, as demonstrated in this thesis, New Zealand was a British colony and culturally largely European. This country has been extremely slow in waking up to its geo-political position as an Asian-Pacific country. Whether Chinese migrants and their subsequent generations do play a more positive role in this country’s development largely depends on whether New
Zealand embraces its own diversity and regards non-European nationals as also equal New Zealanders.
Bibliography


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context of 'home' for second-generation Geek-American return migrants."


Kong University Press.


McNally.


Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Interviewee:
Code:
Interviewer:
Interview date:
Interview Place:
Remarks:

SECTION I: PARTICIPANT PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender ______________________

2. Age group:  
   - 15 – 19 □
   - 20 – 24 □
   - 25 – 29 □
   - 30 – 34 □
   - 35 – 44 □
   - 45 – 54 □
   - 55 – 64 □
   - 65 plus □

3. Place of birth:  
   - Hong Kong □
   - Taiwan □
   - PRC □
   - Others (please specify) ______

4. Citizenship:  
   A. Which citizenship(s) do you hold?  
      - Australia □
      - New Zealand □
      - Taiwan □
      - Hong Kong □
      - PRC □
   - Others (please specify) ____________

   B. If you have not taken Australia or New Zealand citizenship, do you intend to take it in the future?  
      □ Yes  □ No

   C. Why?
5. Year of first landing Australia or New Zealand as permanent resident: ____

6. Migration category: Skilled □
   Business □
   Family spouse □
   Family parent □
   Others (please specify): ___________________

7. Personal geographical movements prior and subsequent to landing Australia or New Zealand:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movements prior to landing Australia or New Zealand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movements subsequent to landing Australia or New Zealand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When did you move to your current location?</td>
<td>What is your current location?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 A. Education Background:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest education qualification before arrival (including the major)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current education qualification (including the major)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 B. Detailed education history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Where did you get this qualification?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### 9 A. Profession & work history (ask income level to ascertain possible economic factors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last occupation before arrival (income level?)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First occupation in Australia or New Zealand (income level?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current occupation (income level?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9 B. Detailed work history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Employment situation</th>
<th>Where?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10. English proficiency (ask if participant has not mentioned it)

### 11 A. Family composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status: single ☐ married ☐ divorced ☐ widowed ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 B. Overview of movement pattern of family members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Family member</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section II: MIGRATION MOVEMENTS, DECISION & EXPERIENCES

1. Initial immigration to Australia or New Zealand

Please elaborate on the reasons of immigrating to Australia or New Zealand

A. Why did you choose Australia or New Zealand as your first immigration destination country?
B. Who initiated the immigration idea?
C. Tell us more about other family members’ input in the migration decision.

2. Pattern of further movements (opportunities & challenges)

Now we are talking about the further movement that you and your family pursuit. For example, now you/your family have returned to your original place/commute between Australia/New Zealand and your original place,

A. Why did you decide to return to your original place?/ Why did you decide to move to Australia?
B. Why did you pursue the regular commuting between Australia/New Zealand and your original place?
C. Is the plan of further movement deliberately chosen before immigration or decided after your arrival?
D. What is the opportunity? What is the challenge?
E. How has immigration experience in Australia/New Zealand affect you so far (e.g. strength to cope with challenges, different life perspectives…)
F. Your movement differs from your family, can you elaborate on the decision making processes?
Section III: HOME, BELONGING, IDENTITY & CITIZENSHIP

1. Family network (to explore pattern of interaction)

   A. How do you keep contact with your family?
   B. How often do you contact with your family?
   C. How often do you and your family reunite together?
   D. Are you happy with this kind of contact?
   E. Do you feel you need more?
   F. Do you feel you are close with your family?

2. Social network

   A. Whom do you intend to turn to when you need help or you want to share a happy moment?
   B. Do you have close friends who are not where you are?
   C. Are you happy with such situations?
   D. Is your professional network mainly in
      - Australia □  NZ □  Hong Kong □  Taiwan □  PRC □
      - others (please specify)?
      Elaborate if necessary…
   E. Who and where do you socialize after work?

3. Economic networks

   A. You are now in location A, do you and/or your family still have economic links with location B?
   B. Please specify (e.g. owning property, owning other investments etc.)
   C. Do you still keep the business network back there (PRC, Taiwan, HK, NZ, Australia)?
4. Sense of home

A. Where is your home? Give 3 images of the place you call ‘home’.
B. In your everyday conversation, when you say “home”, which place are you referring to?
C. If you regard your home is in AUS/NZ/HK/TW/PRC, do you feel [another place e.g. AUS/NZ/HK/TW/PRC is your home too?
D. Is your ‘home’ different from that of your family’s?

5. Sense of belonging

A. What do you think you are? Why?
B. Where do you feel you belong to?
C. When you say you belong to AUS/NZ/HK/TW/PRC, do you feel you belong to [another place] AUS/NZ/HK/TW/PRC as well?
D. When you say you are Chinese/Taiwanese/NZer/Australian…, do you consider yourself as (CH, TA, NZer…) as well?
E. Do you consider yourself ‘Chinese’? What does Chinese … mean to you?

6. Citizenship

What does citizenship mean to you?

Section IV: THE FUTURE

1. Your plan for the next 5 years?

A. Where will you and your family members be for the next 5 years?
B. What is the ideal scenario? Why?
C. What is the most likely scenario? Why?
D. Do you have plans to re-enter New Zealand/AUS and settle down for the long term? Why?

2. Your plan after 10 years?

A. Where will you and your family members be after 10 years?
B. What is your ideal scenario? Why?
C. What is the most likely scenario? Why?
D. Do you have plan to re-enter New Zealand/AUS and settle down for long time? Why?
Appendix 2: Online Survey Questionnaire

Page 1

Language Selection （语言选择）

1. Please select a language （请先选择问卷语言）
   - □ English （英语）
   - □ Chinese （中文）

Page 2

This survey is a part of my PhD study (entitled “Homeland on the Move - New Chinese Immigrants to New Zealand as Transnationals”), which will explore your experience, feelings and opinions as a migrant to New Zealand. This research only relates to migrants who immigrated to New Zealand after 1987 from the People’s Republic of China. Your contribution will help my studies greatly. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. It will take you about 15 minutes to complete this survey. If you have any question about this research, please contact me, the principal investigator. For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, the University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.

Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830.
Investigator: Ms. Liangni Liu
PhD candidate
School of Asian Studies
The University of Auckland.
Email: laingni.liu@auckland.ac.nz

Before you start the survey, please answer the following question. If your answer is "yes", the web browser will take you into the survey when you click "next". If your answer is "no" to any part of the question, please click "exit this survey" link at the top-right corner of this webpage.

1. I am over 20 years old, I am originally from People's Republic of China, and I have either Permanent Residency or Citizenship of New Zealand. (If you are not, please click top right link of this page to exit this survey, thanks!)
   * □ Yes

Page 3
Now I'll start by asking you some questions about yourself. Those questions are based on Census questions. Again, your participation is anonymous and none of the information you provide here will be used to trace back to you.

1. Please select your gender:
   - Male
   - Female

2. Please select your age range:
   - 20-24
   - 25-29
   - 30-34
   - 35-39
   - 40-44
   - 45-49
   - 50-54
   - 55-59
   - 60 and over

3. Your place of birth?

4. What is your marital status?
   - Single
   - Married / De facto
   - Separated
   - Divorced
   - Widow/widower
   - Civil union

5. What is the highest education level that you have completed?
   - None
   - New Zealand Level 1 Certificate
   - New Zealand Level 2 Certificate
   - New Zealand Level 3 Certificate
   - New Zealand Level 4 Certificate
   - New Zealand Level 5 Diploma
   - New Zealand Level 6 Diploma
   - Overseas secondary school qualification
   - Bachelor degree or New Zealand Level 7 qualification
   - Postgraduate/Honour degree
   - Masters degree
   - Doctorate degree

6. Where did you gain your highest degree/your highest education?
   - China
   - New Zealand
   - Somewhere else (please specify):
*7. Are you a citizen or permanent resident (PR) of New Zealand?

☐ Citizen
☐ Permanent Resident (PR)

1. If you are not a New Zealand citizen, do you intend to apply for New Zealand passport in future?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe
☐ Don't know

2. What passport do you hold currently?

1. When did you first arrive in New Zealand (Please use the format DD/MM/YYYY, for example 21/11/2002. If you cannot remember the exact date, please give a roughly close date)?

DD MM YYYY Date //

2. Under what type of visa did you first arrive at New Zealand?

☐ Student Visa
☐ Permanent Resident Visa
☐ Visitor
☐ Working
☐ Family Reunion
☐ Other (please specify):

3. Under which immigration category did you immigrate to New Zealand?

☐ General Skills
☐ Work to Residence
☐ Business/Investment
☐ Family (parent)
☐ Family (spouse)
☐ Other (please specify):

4. Were you the principal applicant?

☐ Yes ☐ No
Page 7
1. What is your relationship with the principal applicant?

Page 8
1. Whose decision was it for you (and/or your family) to immigrate to New Zealand?
   - Mine
   - My spouse’s/partner’s
   - Both of mine and my spouse’s/partner’s
   - My parents
   - My spouse’s parents
   - Joint family decision
   - Someone else (please specify):

2. Which country are you living in now?
   - New Zealand
   - China
   - Commuting between New Zealand and China
   - A third country (please specify which country):

Page 9
1. Which area are you living in now?
   - Northland Region
   - Auckland Region
   - Waikato Region (Hamilton)
   - Bay of Plenty Region
   - Gisborne Region
   - Hawke's Bay Region
   - Taranaki Region
   - Manawatu-Wanganui Region
   - Wellington Region
   - West Coast Region
   - Canterbury Region (Christchurch)
   - Otago Region
   - Southland Region
   - Tasman Region
   - Nelson Region
Marlborough Region
Area outside Region (Such as Chatham Islands etc)

2. What is your current status in labour force?
   - Employed full time
   - Employed part time
   - Unemployed
   - Not in Labour force (e.g. retired or studying or staying at home; for example, housewife)

1. What is your current status in employment?
   - Paid employee
   - Employer
   - Self-employed without employees
   - Unpaid family worker

2. How many hours do you work per week (Please enter a number only)?

1. What is your current study participation?
   - Full time study
   - Part-time study
   - Not studying (e.g. retired or staying at home; for example, housewife)

1. What is your current occupation?

2. What is your estimated personal annual income now (all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?
   - Below NZ$5,000
   - NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000
   - NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
   - NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
   - NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
   - NZ$25,001 – NZ$30,000
   - NZ$30,001 – NZ$35,000
   - NZ$35,001 – NZ$40,000
   - NZ$40,001 – NZ$50,000
3. Do you have a spouse/partner?

☐ Yes ☐ No

1. What is your spouse's/partner's current status in labour force?

☐ Employed full time
☐ Employed part time
☐ Unemployed
☐ Not in Labour force (e.g. retired or studying or staying at home; for example, housewife)

2. How many hours does your spouse/partner work per week (Please enter a number only)?

1. What is your spouse's/partner's current study participation?

☐ Full time study
☐ Part-time study
☐ Not studying (e.g. retired or staying at home; for example, housewife)

2. What is your spouse’s/partner’s estimated personal annual income now (all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?

☐ Below NZ$5,000
☐ NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000

☐ NZ$100,001 – NZ$150,000
☐ Over NZ$150,000
Appendices

- NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
- NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
- NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
- NZ$25,001 – NZ$30,000
- NZ$30,001 – NZ$35,000
- NZ$35,001 – NZ$40,000
- NZ$40,001 – NZ$50,000
- NZ$50,001 – NZ$70,000
- NZ$70,001 – NZ$100,000
- NZ$100,001 – NZ$150,000
- Over NZ$150,000

3. Where is your spouse/partner now?
- New Zealand
- China
- Commuting between New Zealand and China
- A third country (please specify which country):

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1. When did your spouse/partner start to commute between New Zealand and China (Please use the format DD/MM/YY, for example, 25/10/2003, if you cannot remember the exact date, please give a roughly close date)?

DD MM YYYY Date / /

2. When was the decision made for your spouse/partner to commute between New Zealand and China while you stay in New Zealand?
- Before I/we/she/he applied for NZ residency
- After I/we/she/he arrived in NZ
- After I/we/she/he obtained NZ residency
- After I/we/she/he obtained NZ citizenship
- Other time (please specify):

3. How often does your spouse/partner commute between China and New Zealand?
- less than once a year
- once a year
- twice a year
- three times a year
- more frequently
4. Who made the commuting decision?
   - Me
   - My spouse/partner
   - Both mine and my spouse's/partner's decision
   - Joint family decision
   - Someone else (please specify):

Page 18

1. What was your last occupation in China before you immigrated to New Zealand?

2. What was your estimated personal annual income in China before you immigrated to New Zealand (please use a rough conversion: NZ$1 = RMB 4 & all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?
   - Below NZ$5,000
   - NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000
   - NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
   - NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
   - NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
   - NZ$25,001 – NZ$30,000
   - NZ$30,001 – NZ$35,000
   - NZ$35,001 – NZ$40,000
   - NZ$40,001 – NZ$50,000
   - NZ$50,001 – NZ$70,000
   - NZ$70,001 – NZ$100,000
   - NZ$100,001 – NZ$150,000
   - Over NZ$150,000

3. Is any of your family member(s) in New Zealand to be with you (You can choose more than one answer)?
   - My spouse/partner
   - My child(ren) My own parents
   - My parents-in-law
   - My sibling(s)
   - None

4. What is the main reason that you (and your family) are now in New Zealand (You can choose more than one answer)?
   - I can earn more in New Zealand
   - The cost of living here is lower than in China
Appendices

- I have business in New Zealand to run
- I just feel more comfortable in New Zealand
- I like the social and natural environment of New Zealand
- My parents and relatives are in New Zealand
- I feel New Zealand is where I belong to
- There are more & better opportunities for my career development in New Zealand
- I have more familiar and wider social and professional networks in New Zealand
- Other reasons (please specify):

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5. How often do you visit China?
   - Never been back to China since immigration
   - Less than once every 3 years
   - Once every 3 years
   - Once every 2 years
   - Once a year
   - Twice a year
   - Three times a year
   - More frequently

6. Have you had a student loan in New Zealand?
   - Yes
   - No

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1. Please select the following statement about student loan which fits you:
   - I have repaid my loan
   - I am in the process of repaying my loan
   - I have not repaid my loan but I intend to do so later on
   - I have not repaid my loan and I do not intend to repay it anyway

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1. Do you have any plan to go to another country to work or live?
   - No, I plan to stay in New Zealand
   - Yes, I have plan to go to another country (please specify which country):

2. Where do you intend to settle down ultimately to work or live for long term in the future and when?
I'll always stay in New Zealand
China, after a few years
China, after my retirement
New Zealand, after my retirement
Somewhere else, after a few years
Somewhere else, after my retirement
Don’t know
Other plan (please specify):

1. My/Our family money flow situation:
   - Money remittance is mainly from China to New Zealand
   - We/I do not have any significant money transaction between places
   - Money remittance is mainly from New Zealand to China

1. My/Our family money remittance situation:
   - Money remittance is frequent
   - Money remittance is occasional
   - Other patterns of money remittance (please specify):

2. What are the reasons for the money transaction?
   - Regular business/investment transactions
   - Regular family/personal transactions
   - Occasional business/investment transactions
   - Occasional family/personal transactions
   - Other reasons (please specify):

1. Do/does you/your spouse have/has property in New Zealand?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

2. If you/your spouse have/has property in New Zealand now, what is its current value (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (optional question) NZ$

3. Do you/your spouse have/has any other investment in New Zealand (for example, investment in share market)?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on
4. If you/your spouse have/has other investment in New Zealand now, how much is it (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question) NZ$ 

5. Do you/your spouse have/has property in China?
   □ Yes  □ No  □ I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on 

6. If you/your spouse have/has property in China now, what is its current value (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question) NZ$ 

7. Do you/your spouse have/has any other investment in China (for example, investment in share market)?
   □ Yes  □ No  □ I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on 

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8. If you/your spouse have/has other investment in China now, how much is it (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question) NZ$ 

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1. In general, your experience in New Zealand is:
   □ Pleasant and valuable 
   □ Unpleasant but valuable 
   □ Pleasant but not valuable 
   □ A waste of time 

2. Do you consider yourself as a:
   □ Chinese  □ New Zealander  □ Both  □ Other (please specify): 

3. Are you proud to be a Chinese?
   □ Yes  □ No 

4. Are you proud to be a New Zealander?
   □ Yes  □ No 

5. When China is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:
   □ Proud  □ Jealous  □ Envious  □ Resentful  □ Don’t care 

6. When New Zealand is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:
   □ Proud  □ Jealous  □ Envious  □ Resentful  □ Don’t care 

7. I feel a sense of belonging to:
   □ New Zealand 
   □ China 
   □ Both New Zealand and China
8. Do you agree with the statement, “It does not matter to me which country I am a citizen of, as long as I can maintain a high standard of living”?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. Please rate your feeling towards the below countries:
   - New Zealand: Love absolutely, Like, Neutral, Dislike, Resentful
   - China: Love absolutely, Like, Neutral, Dislike, Resentful

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1. When did you return to China to live or work for long-term (Please use the format DD/MM/YYYY, for example, 23/10/2003. If you can't remember the exact date, please give a roughly close date)?
   DD MM YYYY Date / /

2. When did you make the decision to return to China?
   - Before I/we/he/she applied for NZ residency
   - After I/we/he/she arrived in NZ
   - After I/we/he/she obtained NZ residency
   - After I/we/he/she obtained NZ citizenship
   - Other time (please specify):

3. Who made the return decision?
   - Me
   - My spouse/partner
   - Both mine and my spouse's/partner’s decision
   - My parents
   - My spouse's/partner/s parents
   - Joint family decision
   - Someone else (please specify):

4. What was your last occupation in New Zealand before you returned to China?

5. What was your estimated personal annual income immediately before you returned to China (all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?
   - Below NZ$5,000
Appendices

- NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000
- NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
- NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
- NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
- NZ$25,001 – NZ$30,000
- NZ$30,001 – NZ$35,000
- NZ$35,001 – NZ$40,000
- NZ$40,001 – NZ$50,000
- NZ$50,001 – NZ$70,000
- NZ$70,001 – NZ$100,000
- NZ$100,001 – NZ$150,000
- Over NZ$150,000

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6. What was your status in labour force immediately before you returned to China?
- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployed
- Not in Labour force (e.g. retired or studying or staying at home; for example, housewife)

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1. What was your status in employment immediately before you returned to China?
- Paid employee
- Employer
- Self-employed without employees
- Unpaid family worker

2. How many hours did you work per week for your last job in New Zealand (Please enter a number only)?

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1. What was your study participation?
- Full time study
- Part-time study
- Not studying (e.g. retired or staying at home; for example, housewife)
1. Which city/area are you living in now in China?
2. What is your current occupation?
3. What is your current employment status?
   - Paid employee
   - Employer
   - Self-employed without employees
   - Unpaid family worker
   - Unemployed
   - Not in labour force (studying)
   - Not in labour force (retired or staying in home; for example: housewife)
4. How many hours do you work per week (Please enter a number only)?
5. What is your estimated personal annual income now (please use a rough conversion: NZ$1 = RMB 4 & all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?
   - Below NZ$5,000
   - NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000
   - NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
   - NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
   - NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
   - NZ$25,001 – NZ$30,000
   - NZ$30,001 – NZ$35,000
   - NZ$35,001 – NZ$40,000
   - NZ$40,001 – NZ$50,000
   - NZ$50,001 – NZ$70,000
   - NZ$70,001 – NZ$100,000
   - NZ$100,001 – NZ$150,000
   - Over NZ$150,000
6. Do you have a spouse/partner?
   - Yes
   - No

1. What is your spouse's/partner's current status in labour force?
   - Employed full time
   - Employed part time
   - Unemployed
   - Not in Labour force (e.g. retired or studying or stay at home; for example, housewife)
1. What is your spouse/partner's current status in employment?
- Paid employee
- Employer
- Self-employed without employees
- Unpaid family worker

2. How many hours does your spouse/partner work per week (Please enter a number only)?

1. What is your spouse/partner's current study participation?
- Full time study
- Part-time study
- Not studying (e.g. retired or staying at home; for example, housewife)

1. What is your spouse/partner's current occupation?

2. What is your spouse/partner’s estimated personal annual income now (all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?
- Below NZ$5,000
- NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000
- NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
- NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
- NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
- NZ$25,001 – NZ$30,000
- NZ$30,001 – NZ$35,000
- NZ$35,001 – NZ$40,000
- NZ$40,001 – NZ$50,000
- NZ$50,001 – NZ$70,000
- NZ$70,001 – NZ$100,000
- NZ$100,001 – NZ$150,000
- Over NZ$150,000

3. Where is your spouse/partner?
- New Zealand
- China
Commuting between New Zealand and China
A third country (please specify which country):

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1. When did your spouse/partner start to commute between New Zealand and China (Please use the format DD/MM/YY, for example, 23/10/2003. If you cannot remember the exact date, please give a roughly close date)?

DD MM YYYY Date //

2. When was the decision made for your spouse/partner to commute between New Zealand and China while you stay in New Zealand?

☐ Before I/we/he/she applied for NZ residency
☐ After I/we/he/she arrived in NZ
☐ After I/we/he/she obtained NZ residency
☐ After I/we/he/she obtained NZ citizenship
☐ Other time (please specify):

3. How often does your spouse/partner commute between China and New Zealand?

☐ Less than once a year
☐ once a year
☐ twice a year
☐ three times a year
☐ more frequently

4. Who made the commuting decision?

☐ Me
☐ My spouse/partner
☐ Both mine and my spouse's/partner’s decision
☐ Joint family decision
☐ Someone else (please specify):

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1. Is any of your immediate family member(s) still in New Zealand (you can choose more than one answer)?

○ My spouse/partner ○ My child(ren) ○ My parents ○ My parents in-law
○ My sibling(s) ○ None

2. What is the main reason that you (and your family) returned to China (You can choose more than one answer)?

○ I can earn more and the cost of living is low in China
Appendices

- I cannot find a satisfactory job in New Zealand
- I have business in China to run
- There are more and better opportunities for my career development in China
- I have more familiar and wider social and professional networks in China
- I just feel more comfortable in China
- My parents and many relatives are in China
- I feel China is where I belong to
- Other reasons (please specify):

3. Have you visited New Zealand since you left?
   - Yes  □  No  □

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1. How many times have you visited New Zealand since you left (Please enter a number only)?
2. How often did you visit New Zealand since you left?
   - Less than once every 3 years  □  Once every 3 years  □
   - Once every 2 years  □  Once a year  □
   - Twice a year  □  Three times a year  □
   - More frequently  □

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1. Have you had a student loan in New Zealand?
   - Yes  □  No  □

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1. Please select the following statement which fits you:
   - I have repaid my loan  □
   - I am in the process of repaying my loan  □
   - I have not repaid my loan but I intend to do so later on  □
   - I have not repaid my loan and I do not intend to repay it anyway  □

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1. Do you have any plan to go to another country to work or live?
   - No  □  Yes (please specify which country):  □
2. Where do you intend to settle down ultimately to live or work for long term and when?

- [□] I’ll always stay in China
- [□] I’ll stay in China for the next few years, but go back to New Zealand to live afterwards
- [□] China, after my retirement
- [□] New Zealand, after my retirement
- [□] Somewhere else, after a few years
- [□] Somewhere else, after my retirement
- [□] Don’t know
- [□] Other plan (please specify):

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1. **My/Our family money flow situation:**

- [□] Money remittance is mainly from China to New Zealand
- [□] We/I do not have any significant money transaction between places
- [□] Money remittance is mainly from New Zealand to China

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1. **My/Our family money remittance situation:**

- [□] Money remittance is frequent
- [□] Money remittance is occasional
- [□] Other patterns of money remittance (please specify):

2. **Reasons for money transaction:**

- [□] Regular business/investment transactions
- [□] Regular family/personal transactions
- [□] Occasional business/investment transactions
- [□] Occasional family/personal transactions
- [□] Other reasons (please specify):

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1. Do/does you/your spouse have/has property in New Zealand?

- [□] Yes  [□] No  [□] I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

2. If you/your spouse have/has property in New Zealand now, what is its current value (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question)  
NZ$  

3. Do you/your spouse have/has any other investment in New Zealand (for example, investment in share market)?
3. Are you proud to be a Chinese?
   □ Yes □ No

4. Are you proud to be a New Zealander?
   □ Yes □ No

5. When China is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:
   □ Proud □ Jealous □ Envious □ Resentful □ Don’t care

6. When New Zealand is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:
   □ Proud □ Jealous □ Envious □ Resentful □ Don’t care

7. I feel a sense of belonging to:
   □ New Zealand
   □ China
Do you agree with the statement, “It does not matter to me which country I am a citizen of, as long as I can maintain a high standard of living”? 
- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. Please rate your feeling towards the below countries:
New Zealand: Love absolutely, Like, Neutral, Dislike, Resentful
China: Love absolutely, Like, Neutral, Dislike, Resentful

1. When did you start to commute between New Zealand and China (Please use the format DD/MM/YY, for example, 23/10/2003. If you cannot remember the exact date, please give a roughly close date)?
DD MM YYYY Date /

2. When did you make the decision to commute between the two countries?
- Before I/we/he/she applied for NZ residency
- After I/we/he/she arrived in NZ
- After I/we/he/she obtained NZ residency
- After I/we/he/she obtained NZ citizenship
- Other time (please specify):

3. Who made the commuting decision?
- Me
- My spouse/partner
- Both of mine and my spouse's/partner's decision
- My parents
- My spouse's/partner's parents
- Joint family decision
- Someone else (please specify):

4. How often do you commute between China and New Zealand?
Less than once a year
Once a year  
Twice a year  
Three times a year  
More frequently  

5. What is your current status in labour force?
   □ Employed full time  
   □ Employed part time  
   □ Unemployed  
   □ Not in Labour force (e.g. retired or studying or staying at home; for example, housewife)

1. What is your current status in employment?
   □ Paid employee  
   □ Employer  
   □ Self-employed without employees  
   □ Unpaid family worker  

2. How many hours do you work per week (Please enter a number only)?

1. What is your current study participation?
   □ Full time study  
   □ Part-time study  
   □ Not studying (e.g. retired or staying at home; for example, housewife)

1. What is your current occupation?

2. What is your estimated personal annual income now (all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?
   □ Below NZ$5,000  
   □ NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000  
   □ NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000  
   □ NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000  
   □ NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000  
   □ NZ$25,001 – NZ$30,000  
   □ NZ$30,001 – NZ$35,000  
   □ NZ$35,001 – NZ$40,000
1. Which city/area are you living in when you are in China?
2. Which area are you living in when you are in New Zealand?

☐ Northland Region
☐ Auckland Region
☐ Waikato Region (Hamilton)
☐ Bay of Plenty Region
☐ Gisborne Region
☐ Hawke's Bay Region
☐ Taranaki Region
☐ Manawatu-Wanganui Region
☐ Wellington Region
☐ West Coast Region
☐ Canterbury Region (Christchurch)
☐ Otago Region
☐ Southland Region
☐ Tasman Region
☐ Nelson Region
☐ Marlborough Region
☐ Area outside Region (Such as Chatham Islands etc)

3. Have you had a student loan in New Zealand?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

1. Please select the following statement which fits you:

☐ I have repaid my loan
☐ I am in the process of repaying my loan
☐ I have not repaid my loan but I intend to do so later on
☐ I have not repaid my loan and I do not intend to repay it anyway
1. Do you have a spouse/partner?
- Yes
- No

1. What is your spouse's/partner's current status in labour force?
- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployed
- Not in Labour force (e.g. retired or studying or staying at home; for example, housewife)

1. What is your spouse's/partner's status in employment?
- Paid employee
- Employer
- Self-employed without employees
- Unpaid family worker

2. How many hours does your spouse/partner work per week (Please enter a number only)?

1. What is your spouse's/partner's current study participation?
- Full time study
- Part-time study
- Not studying (e.g. retired or staying at home; for example, housewife)

1. What is your spouse's/partner's current occupation?

2. What is your spouse’s/partner’s estimated personal annual income now (all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?
- Below NZ$5,000
- NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000
- NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
- NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
- NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
3. Where is your spouse/partner?
- New Zealand
- China
- Commuting between New Zealand and China with me
- A third country (please specify which country):

1. Is any of your family member(s) in New Zealand (You can choose more than one answer)?
- My spouse/partner
- My child(ren)
- My parents
- My parents-in-law
- My sibling(s)
- None

2. What is the main reason that you are commuting between China and New Zealand (You can have more than one answer)?
- I have business to run in China
- I want my child(ren) to grow up and be educated in New Zealand
- I want my partner or other family members to stay in New Zealand
- I want to settle down with my family in New Zealand in the future
- I can benefit more financially while keeping in contact with my family in New Zealand
- Other reasons (please specify):

3. Do you have any plan to go to another country to live or work?
- No
- Yes (please specify which country):

4. Where do you intend to settle down ultimately to live or work for long term and when?
- China, after a few years
- New Zealand, after a few years
□ China, after my retirement
□ New Zealand, after my retirement
□ Somewhere else, after a few years
□ Somewhere else, after my retirement
□ I enjoy commuting and will not settle down
□ Don’t know
□ Other plan (please specify):

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1. My/Our family money flow situation:
□ Money remittance is mainly from China to New Zealand
□ We/I do not have any significant money transaction between places
□ Money remittance is mainly from New Zealand to China

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1. My/Our family money remittance situation:
□ Money remittance is frequent
□ Money remittance is occasional
□ Other patterns of money remittance (please specify):

2. Reasons for money transaction:
○ Regular business/investment transactions
○ Regular family/personal transactions
○ Occasional business/investment transactions
○ Occasional family/personal transactions
○ Other reasons (please specify):

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1. Do/does you/your spouse have/has property in New Zealand?
□ Yes □ No □ I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

2. If you/your spouse have/has property in New Zealand now, what is its current value (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question) NZ$

3. Do you/your spouse have/has any other investment in New Zealand (for example, investment in share market)?
□ Yes □ No □ I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

4. If you/your spouse have/has other investment in New Zealand now, how much is it
5. Do you/your spouse/partner have property in China?

- Yes
- No
- I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

6. If you/your spouse have/has property in China now, what is its current value (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question)  NZ$

7. Do you/your spouse have/has any other investment in China (for example, investment in share market)?

- Yes
- No
- I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

8. If you/your spouse have/has other investment in China now, how much is it (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question)  NZ$

1. In general, your experience in New Zealand is/was:

- Pleasant and valuable
- Unpleasant but valuable
- Pleasant but not valuable
- A waste of time

2. Do you consider yourself as a:

- Chinese
- New Zealander
- Both
- Other (please specify):

3. Are you proud to be a Chinese?

- Yes
- No

4. Are you proud to be a New Zealander?

- Yes
- No

5. When China is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:

- Proud
- Jealous
- Envious
- Resentful
- Don’t care

6. When New Zealand is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:

- Proud
- Jealous
- Envious
- Resentful
- Don’t care

7. I feel a sense of belonging to:

- New Zealand
- China
- Both New Zealand and China
- Not any country in particular
8. Do you agree with the statement, “It does not matter to me which country I am a citizen of, as long as I can maintain a high standard of living”?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. Please rate your feeling towards the below countries:
New Zealand: Love absolutely, Like, Neutral, Dislike, Resentful
China: Love absolutely, Like, Neutral, Dislike, Resentful

1. When did you go to the place you currently settle to live (Please use format DD/MM/YYYY, for example, 21/10/2003. If you can't remember the exact date, please just give a roughly close date)?

DD MM YYYY Date //

2. When did you make the decision to leave New Zealand and step into the country you currently live in?

- Before I/we/he/she applied for NZ residency
- After I/we/he/she arrived in NZ
- After I/we/he/she obtained NZ residency
- After I/we/he/she obtained NZ citizenship
- Other time (please specify):

3. Who made the decision to move to the country you are currently in?

- Me
- My spouse/partner
- Both of mine and my spouse's/partner's decision
- My parents
- My spouse's/partner's
- Joint family decision
- Someone else (please specify):

4. Which area had you been living in when you were in New Zealand (you can choose more than one answer)?

- Northland Region
- Auckland Region
5. What was your employment status in New Zealand immediately before you stepped into the country you are currently living in?

- Paid employee
- Employer
- Self-employed without employees
- Unpaid family worker
- Unemployed
- Not in labour force (studying)
- Not in labour force (retired or staying at home; for example, housewife)

6. What was your last occupation in New Zealand before you stepped into the country you currently live in?

7. What was your estimated personal annual income in New Zealand immediately before you stepped into the country you currently live in (all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?

- Below NZ$5,000
- NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000
- NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
- NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
- NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
Appendices

1. Where are you living now?
2. What is the main reason that you (and your family) left New Zealand and stepped into the country you currently live in (you can choose more than one answer)?
   - I can earn more here than in New Zealand
   - The cost of living is lower here than in New Zealand
   - I could not find a satisfactory job in New Zealand
   - I found a better job with higher income here
   - I have business to run here
   - I just feel more comfortable here
   - My parents and many relatives are here
   - There are more and better opportunities for my career development here
   - Other reasons (please specify):
3. Is any of your immediate family member(s) still in New Zealand (You can choose more than one answer)?
   - My spouse/partner
   - My child(ren)
   - My parents
   - My parents-in-law
   - My sibling(s)
   - None
4. What is your current status in labour force?
   - Employed full time
   - Employed part time
   - Unemployed
   - Not in Labour force (e.g. retired or studying or staying at home; for example, housewife)
1. What is your current status in employment?
   □ Paid employee
   □ Employer
   □ Self-employed without employees
   □ Unpaid family worker

2. How many hours do you work per week (Please enter a number only)?

1. What is your current study participation?
   □ Full time study □ Part-time study
   □ Not studying (e.g. retired or staying at home; for example, housewife)

1. What is your current occupation?

2. What is your estimated personal annual income now (all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?
   □ Below NZ$5,000
   □ NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000
   □ NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
   □ NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
   □ NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
   □ NZ$25,001 – NZ$30,000
   □ NZ$30,001 – NZ$35,000
   □ NZ$35,001 – NZ$40,000
   □ NZ$40,001 – NZ$50,000
   □ NZ$50,001 – NZ$70,000
   □ NZ$70,001 – NZ$100,000
   □ NZ$100,001 – NZ$150,000
   □ Over NZ$150,000

3. Have you had a student loan in New Zealand?
   □ Yes □ No
1. Please select the following statement which fits you:
   - I have repaid my loan
   - I am in the process of repaying my loan
   - I have not repaid my loan but I intend to do so later on
   - I have not repaid my loan and I do not intend to repay it anyway

1. Have you visited New Zealand since you left?
   - Yes
   - No

1. On average, how often do you travel back to New Zealand?
   - Less frequent than once every 3 years
   - Once every 3 years
   - Once every 2 years
   - Once a year
   - Twice a year
   - Three times a year
   - More frequently

1. Have you travelled back to China since you immigrated?
   - Yes
   - No

1. On average, how often do you travel back to China?
   - Less frequent than once every 3 years
   - Once every 3 years
   - Once every 2 years
   - Once a year
   - Twice a year
   - Three times a year
   - More frequently

1. Do you have a spouse/partner?
   - Yes
   - No
1. Where is your spouse/partner?
☐ New Zealand ☐ China
☐ Commuting between New Zealand and China
☐ A third country (please specify which country):

2. What is your spouse's/partner's current employment status?
☐ Paid employee
☐ Employer
☐ Self-employed without employees
☐ Unpaid family worker
☐ Unemployed
☐ Not in labour force (studying)
☐ Not in labour force (retired or staying at home; for example, housewife)

3. What is your spouse's/partner's current occupation?

4. What is your spouse’s/partner’s estimated personal annual income now (all ranges shown below are in NZ$)?
☐ Below NZ$5,000
☐ NZ$5,001 – NZ$10,000
☐ NZ$10,001 – NZ$15,000
☐ NZ$15,001 – NZ$20,000
☐ NZ$20,001 – NZ$25,000
☐ NZ$25,001 – NZ$30,000
☐ NZ$30,001 – NZ$35,000
☐ NZ$35,001 – NZ$40,000
☐ NZ$40,001 – NZ$50,000
☐ NZ$50,001 – NZ$70,000
☐ NZ$70,001 – NZ$100,000
☐ NZ$100,001 – NZ$150,000
☐ Over NZ$150,000

1. Do you have any plan to go to another country to live or work?
☐ No ☐ Yes (please specify which country):
2. Where do you intend to settle down ultimately to live or work for long term and when?

- I'll settle down here
- China, after a few years
- New Zealand, after a few years
- China, after my retirement
- New Zealand, after my retirement
- Somewhere else, after a few years
- Somewhere else, after my retirement
- Don’t know
- Other plan (please specify):

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1. My/Our family money flow situation:

- Money remittance is mainly from where I/we am/are to New Zealand
- I/we do not have any significant money transaction between where I/we am/are and New Zealand
- Money remittance is mainly from New Zealand to where I/we am/are
- Other money transaction pattern (please specify):

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1. My/Our family money remittance situation:

- Money remittance is frequent
- Money remittance is occasional
- Other patterns of money remittance (please specify):

2. Reasons for money transaction:

- Regular business/investment transactions
- Regular family/personal transactions
- Occasional business/investment transactions
- Occasional family/personal transactions
- Other reasons (please specify):

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1. Do/does you/your spouse have/has property in New Zealand?

- Yes
- No
- I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on
2. If you/your spouse have/has property in New Zealand now, what is its current value (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question) NZ$

3. Do you/your spouse/partner have any other investment in New Zealand (for example, investment in share market)?
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

4. If you/your spouse have/has other investment in New Zealand now, how much is it (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question) NZ$

5. Do you/your spouse have/has property in China?
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

6. If you/your spouse have/has property in China now, what is its current value (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question) NZ$

7. Do you/your spouse/partner have any other investment in China (for example, investment in share market)?
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

8. If you/your spouse have/has other investment in China now, how much is it (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question)
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

9. Do you/your spouse have/has property in the place you are currently in?
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

10. If you/your spouse have/has property in the place you are currently in, what is its current value (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question) NZ$

11. Do you/your spouse have/has any other investment in the place you are currently in (for example, investment in share market)?
   - Yes  
   - No  
   - I/we/she/he used to have, but sold it out later on

12. If you/your spouse have/has other investment in the place you are currently in, how much is it (Please provide NZ$ number only)? (Optional question) NZ$

1. In general, your experience in New Zealand is/was:
   - Pleasant and valuable
   - Unpleasant but valuable
   - Pleasant but not valuable
   - A waste of time
2. Do you consider yourself as a:
- Chinese
- New Zealander
- Both
- Other (please specify):

3. Are you proud to be a Chinese?
- Yes
- No

4. Are you proud to be a New Zealander?
- Yes
- No

5. Are you proud to be a resident of the country you are currently in?
- Yes
- No
- I am not a resident/citizen of the country I am in

6. When China is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:
- Proud
- Jealous
- Envious
- Resentful
- Don’t care

7. When New Zealand is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:
- Proud
- Jealous
- Envious
- Resentful
- Don’t care

8. When the country you are living in is doing well on the international stage (in economic, political, or major sporting fields), do you feel:
- Proud
- Jealous
- Envious
- Resentful
- Don’t care

9. I feel a sense of belonging to:
- New Zealand
- China
- Both New Zealand and China
- The country I am living in now
- All countries (NZ, China and current country I am living in)
- Not any country in particular
- I don't want to deal with this question
- Other (please specify):

10. Do you agree with the statement, “It does not matter to me which country I am a citizen of, as long as I can maintain a high standard of living”?
- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
11. Please rate your feeling towards the below countries:

New Zealand: □ Love absolutely □ Like □ Neutral □ Dislike □ Resentful
China: □ Love absolutely □ Like □ Neutral □ Dislike □ Resentful
The country I am living in now: □ Love absolutely □ Like □ Neutral □ Dislike □ Resentful

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We'd love to hear your story or comment about your immigration experience. Comments about this survey are also welcome.

1. If you like, please enter your comment below (or you can skip this page by clicking "next").
Appendices

Appendix 3: New Zealand Immigration Policies with Special Relevance to Chinese


The results of the 1986 policy review were published in a report entitled “Review of Immigration Policy August 1986” by K. Burke. The prime objective of this policy review was to propose a programme of occupational immigration that would be responsive to skill shortages arising in particular sectors and under certain conditions. In Burke’s words, it would function “as an instrument of labour market policy”. One of the most important underlying principles in pursuit of the policy objectives was that “… the selection of new immigrants will be based on criteria of personal merit without discrimination on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin”. In terms of channelling skilled/business immigrants, there were two significant policy changes initiated in the 1987 Immigration Act:

1. Changes in the selection criteria for entry on occupational grounds:

Prior to 1986, the preference of immigrant selection based on occupational grounds (i.e. the Occupational Priority List) was given to persons from “traditional source countries” (i.e. those of Northern and Western Europe and North America) who had qualifications and skills relevant to New Zealand’s labour market shortage. The August 1986 policy review declared that the new policy would abolish the selection criteria of “national origin” as a factor in selection, and its replacement would conduct assessment with criteria evaluating “personal

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41 Ibid., p4.
42 Ibid., p11.
qualities, skills, qualifications, potential contribution to … New Zealand … and capacity to settle well”. \textsuperscript{43}

2. \textit{Changes in business immigration scheme:}

The Business Immigration Policy (BIP) replaced the relatively unsuccessful earlier scheme, the Entrepreneur Immigration Policy (EIP). Compared with the earlier EIP which sought to channel investments into certain preferred sectors and over-emphasised the investment proposal, the BIP operated on a much wider scale. The priority of selection criteria was given to individual applicant’s personal merits including managerial and entrepreneurial experience, technical/professional skills and investment capital resources. It was seen as a “less restrictive and thus more attractive”\textsuperscript{44} scheme.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p4.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p50.
Appendix 3B: Point-based System 1991

Policy changes in 1991 primarily featured the introduction of a revised Business Investment Category (BIC) to replace the previous BIP and the encouragement of skilled immigration via a General Category (GC) involving a point-based selection system.

1. The General Category:

The General Category was based on a point-based selection system. Points were awarded based on age, qualifications, work experience, sponsorship by family members or community groups, a job offer, and settlement and investment funds. Those who could obtain points around the upper 20s qualified for automatic permanent residency. Whether the applicant had a definite job offer or a plausible business development plan no longer counted. This system favourably targeted people who are young and have tertiary education and a track record of gainful employment. Settlement funds of $100,000 also carried an extra point. This General Category is divided into two sub-categories – “General Skilled Category” (GSC) and “General Investment Category” (GIC).

- **“General Skilled Category” (GSC):**

  Applicants are assessed on employability, age, and settlement factors. People who have a tertiary education, preferably with a science, technical or engineering degree can have a maximum of 15 points. Those who are between 25 and 29 can have a maximum of 10 points. Those who have 20 years of working experience relevant to their qualifications can have 10 points.

- **“General Investment Category” (GIC):**

  Applicants score points on the basis of capital (NZ $100,000 – NZ $ 300,000) to be invested for at least two years.

2. The Business Investment Category (BIC):

BIC replaced the previous BIP in order to deal with shortcomings of BIP. It was introduced as one of the “economic building blocks put in place … to provide a strong foundation for
sustained economic growth”45. Three different types of investment were specified under which people could qualify for residence:

- *A passive investment of $750,000* (e.g. in a bank account, trust fund, listed stocks);

- *An active investment of 625,000* in either Auckland or Wellington urban areas;

- *An active investment of $500,000* elsewhere in New Zealand.

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45 Birch, B. *General Category 'the Key Instrument'* Wellington: Office of the Minister of Immigration, 1991 (Media release).
Appendix 3C: Tightening-up of Immigration Policy in 1995

The major components of the 1995 policy change included: 1) the replacement of the Business Investment Category (BIC) with the Business Investor Category (BIC) under which a full point-based ranking system was introduced; 2) an amended point system for the General Skilled Category (GSC); 3) the addition of the requirement of a statutory registration before points awarded for professional qualifications and; 4) the removal of points for investment funds from the GIC; and 5) a minimum overall Band score of 5 in General Module of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) for applicants from non-English-speaking background, and 6) stricter taxation provisions.

1. The separated full point-based ranking system for BIC:

It aims to solve the shortcomings of previous BIC, such as the tendency of passive investment and lack of qualifications. Human capital factors remained dominant in this point-based ranking system, which aims to attract higher quality applicants with younger age, rich business experience and those who are more likely to invest actively and participate in the management of a New Zealand enterprise.  

2. The amended point system for the GSC:

It redressed the bias towards academic qualifications and professional skills, and allowed applicants with trades or technical qualifications to score higher than before; thus, facilitated a broader skills mix.

3. The requirement of a statutory registration before points awarded for professional qualifications:


It dealt with the problem posed by well-qualified professionals (e.g. doctors) who gained residence but were unable to practice. The points awarded from a validated job offer could be seen as an indicator of the serious consideration of employment issue in resettlement and integration as factors influencing social cohesion. 48

4. The removal of points for investment funds from the GIC:

It suggested a deliberate shift of attention to other kind of human capital rather than purely financial contribution 49.

5. A minimum Band score of 5 in General Training Models of the International English Language Test System (IELTS) for applicants from non-English-speaking background:

- All adult applicants (over 16 years old) under both BIC and GC categories should achieve a minimum Band score of 5 in the General Training Modules of the IELTS.

- The principal applicant must pass the test pre-application, while the spouse and dependants 16 years and over (non-principal applicants) might meet the requirement pre-departure or take the test post-arrival with the forfeiture of part or all of a NZ$20,000 fee upon failure to meet the standard within a specified time.

- Applicants will have full refund if the prescribed level is reached within 3 months, get $6,000 refund if the level is reached within 4-12 months, and no refund if the level is not reached within12 months. 50

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48 Ibid., p20-22.
49 Ibid., p20-22.
Appendix 3D: Relaxation of Immigration Policy in 1998

In order to remedy the net migration lose, the 1998 policy package has been seen as a relaxation of policy. The most significant changes included:

1. *Relaxation in the English language requirement for applicants under the business migration scheme:*

   The requirement for principal applicants and non-principal applicants under the BIC category would be relaxed “to a basic level (IELTS Band 4)”\(^{51}\).

2. *Changes for the English language bond for non-principal residence applicants:*

   It was abolished; and was replaced with pre-paid English language training in an approved course.

3. *Introduction of some new categories of entrepreneur investor migrants and long-term visas for business people:*

   - *Introduction of a new category for entrepreneur/investor migrants:*
     
     It is called the Entrepreneur Category. It is for entrepreneurs who have successfully established businesses in New Zealand, especially a business which is benefiting New Zealand in some way by creating jobs, providing a new type of goods or services, or revitalising an existing business.

   - *The Long-Term Business Visa:*
     
     It is designed particularly for those who may wish eventually to apply for residence under the new Entrepreneur Category. It is hoped that such visas will give investors time to make sound commercial decisions about their business investment in New Zealand.

4. *Significant changes to the GS category, including:*

   - Recognising overseas students’ previous work experience;

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• Allowing them who complete a recognised general skills qualification in New Zealand to be exempted from the requirement to have two years of work experience;

• Aligning the qualifications recognised for immigration purposes more closely with those recognised by the National Qualifications Framework in New Zealand.
Appendix 3E: Further Policy Relaxation between 2000 and 2002

A series of further policy relaxation took place between 2000 and 2002. It can be summarised as 4 important changes.

1. The approval target: It was raised from 38,000 to 48,000.

2. Introduction of a managed entry regime:

Within this managed entry regime, “skilled/business” stream was allocated 60 per cent of the Government’s total target for residence approvals, while “family sponsored” stream was allocated 30 per cent and “international/Humanitarian” was 10 per cent. This managed entry regime aimed to regulate the “economic” and “social” streams of immigrants to be balanced.52

3. A series of relaxation of immigration policy under the General Skills Category:

- Those who are within 5 points of the pass mark could apply for an open work permit, thus making it easier for them to accumulate the point necessary for residence while meeting a demand for labour.

- Applicants’ skills and qualifications did not need to have any direct link with the work they were seeking.

- In July 2001, the language requirements for principal applicants reduced from a minimum of 5 in each of the 4 IELTS modules to an average of 5 across all 4 modules.

4 “Work to residence”:

Apart from the October 2001 package, there were some side-stream immigration channels promoted by the government. The enforcement of Government’s initiative of “work to residence” in April 2002 was significant during this period of time in terms of its high

potential to attract highly employable people to become permanent residents. There are two components of this initiative: “talent visa” and “POL (Priority Occupation List) work permit”. Both of them aimed to attract high-skilled people to this country and to “generate value-creating ideas and knowledge in an economy placing increasing emphasis on innovation and technological change in the drive for improved productivity and higher incomes”\(^\text{53}\). Later on, the Job Search Visa (JSV) was introduced in November 2002. As what Bedford and co-authors discussed, all of these showed the willingness of the government to facilitate a transition for people who had the status of temporary work permits and student visa/permit but wished to obtain residence. \(^\text{54}\)

- **“Talent visa”:**

There are two types of talent visa introduced in April 2002. The first was for skilled workers in demand by accredited employers who were prepared to pay a minimum base salary of $45,000 for at least two years. The second was for applicants deemed to have exceptional talent in a declared field of art, culture or sport, who were being sponsored by reputable New Zealand organisations. In both cases, the visa was issued for two years with the provision that after this period the applicant could apply for residence while still in New Zealand.

- **“POL (Priority Occupation List) work permit”:**

It came into effect in April 2002, specifying occupations in which there was an absolute shortage of labour. This was a refined version of the Occupation Priority List (OPL) that had been a key component of immigration policy during the 1980s. POL work permits could be issued for two years to people meeting pressing labour shortages, and at the end of this period they also could apply for permanent residence.

- **Job Search Visa (JSV):**

It offered to an applicant where their qualifications are relevant to occupations on the Occupation Shortage List. This policy also applied to those who lodged their

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p20.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., p20.
application for residence prior to November 2002 and were waiting to have their application processed at the time the changes came in.
Appendix 3F: Fluctuation of Entry Criteria in 2002

Some significant changes were made to tighten up the entry criteria within 2002:

1. *Tightening-up of the General Skilled Category:*

   The GSC pass mark increased from 28 to 29 in September 2002, then to 30 in October.

2. *Raising English language requirement level:*

   In November 2002, the minimum IELTS score for GSC category increased from an average of 5 to 6.5 across all 4 modules while the score for business categories increased from an average of 4 to 5. All applicants, including those who were already under consideration when the policy changes were announced, were required to meet the new criteria.

3. *Restriction of issuing the Job Search Visas (JSV):*

   It was only offered to applicants whose qualifications were relevant to the occupations on the Occupation Shortage List. This also applied to those who lodged their application for residence prior to November 2002 and were waiting to have their application processed at the time the changes came in.

4. *Restriction of issuing the Long Term Business Visa (LTBA):*

   It was issued only for an initial nine-month period instead of three years. As for Investor Category, there was a tighter operational requirement regarding the source of funds for the Investor Category.
Appendix 3G: New Selection System in 2003: Expression of Interests (EOI)

In July 2003, the Minister of Immigration suddenly announced that a new Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) would come into force in December 2003 to replace the General Skills Category (GSC). The Immigration Minister Dalziel’s 2003 package of press releases, as cited below reflects the essence of the new selection system:

Instead of lodging applications for residence, potential migrants will, in future, register an expression of interest, based on the existing pre-requisites of health, character and English language. In order to register, a minimum number of points will be required. The current points system will be expanded to include bonus points, for example, by meeting a specific skill shortage or having a skilled job offer in a region outside Auckland. …Those who register their interest will be pooled, and those achieving the highest level of points will be invited to apply for residence. Where no invitation to apply has been issued by the end of the registration period, the registration will lapse. This will probably occur quarterly. Once an application for residence is lodged, two streams will emerge. The first stream will consist of those who have already demonstrated that they can settle and do well here. For example, they may have successfully studied or worked in New Zealand, or they have a killed job offer, which demonstrates that a New Zealand employer has made that assessment. People in this stream will follow through to residence. The second stream will consist of those who have not yet demonstrated their ability to settle in New Zealand … The majority of these will be managed through a two year work-to-residence programme, rather than gaining residence outright. This will enable them to demonstrate their ability to settle and gain relevant employment. This essentially means that they carry the risk of
not achieving this outcome rather than the New Zealand welfare system that has to meet the cost of failure until now”\textsuperscript{55}.

Overall, this new selection system replaced the pass mark system with a process whereby people qualify above a level of points (at least 100 points) can submit an expression of interest (EOI) into a selection pool, from which they were invited to apply for residence. Points were allocated on the basis of age, qualifications, a skilled job or offer, the regional location of the job offer, work experience and identified skills shortage. Bonus points are granted in certain circumstances and recognise partners’ employment and experience, New Zealand qualifications and employment outside of Auckland.

\textsuperscript{55} Dalziel, L. Skilled Immigration Policy Announcements. Media Statements and Briefing Notes. 1 July 2003, Office of Minister of Immigration, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.
Appendix 3H: Settlement Strategies Initiated by Government before and after the 1999 National Election

1. Between 1997 and 1999, several initiatives undertaken by the NZIS’s Settlement Information Programme between 1997 and 1999 included:

- The publication of a regular newsletter sent to all new immigrants (*Linkz. Making Your Way in New Zealand*, first issue, spring 1997) with a range of stories about immigrant experiences and advice about negotiating work, business, education, accommodation and access to public services.

- In 1998, the *Settlement Kit* – a package covering issues such as finding a home, working in New Zealand, education system, government and judicial systems and laws, and the taxation system was launched by Bradford. Special booklets providing guides for teenagers and older people were also released along with a guide to migrant services provided at the local government level.

- An ambitious longitudinal survey of immigrants, modelled on the Longitudinal Survey of Immigration in Australia (LSIA), had been scoped and approved by the National government in 1999 for piloting in 2000^56^ (Bedford et al., 2005: 13).

2. In 1999, the settlement pilots developed by NZIS after the Labour Government came into power involved:

- Collaborations between communities groups delivering services to refugees and migrants, and the Government;

- A NZIS-commissioned research on migrant settlement.

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3. In May 2000, Cabinet approved four pilots with varying levels of funding for asylum seekers and refugees, the families of refugees and migrants. Three pilots, each including several projects, ranging from providing emergency assistance for asylum seekers to catering for the employment needs of highly skilled migrants and the business development requirement needs of entrepreneurs, were funded during 2001.
Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Home on the Move - New Chinese Immigrants to New Zealand as Transnationals

Researcher: Liangni Liu
School of Asian Studies
University of Auckland

Dear participant:

I am a PhD student in the School of Asian Studies of the University of Auckland and I would like to invite you to participate in my thesis research, which is partially funded by ASIA:NZ and NZASIA postgraduate research award. My PhD research title is “Home on the Move - New Chinese Immigrants to New Zealand as Transnationals”. This research focuses on New Zealand’s new Chinese immigrants’ transnationalism both as individuals and as members of a family unit. This research aims at exploring the migration decision-making processes in migrants’ households, their settlement strategies, their mobility patterns and motivations. It will also investigate their family dynamics, engagement with the wider community, and what factors influence their sense of belonging. The key questions to be addressed are: 1) the motivation behind immigration; 2) the decision-making for further movement; 3) their perceptions of “home” and how do their mobility influence their sense of belonging and ethnic identity; and 4) how transnational lifestyle impact on their family dynamics. This survey/interview is a part of my thesis study which will explore your experience, feelings and opinions as a transnational migrant of New Zealand.

We will approach individuals who are New Zealand citizens or permanent residents with either of the three types of characteristics: 1) they have returned to China to live and work; 2) they travel extensively between China and New Zealand; or 3) they settle in New Zealand but their spouses travel frequently between China and New Zealand. Your participation would involve an interview in which I will ask you about your experience as a migrant of New Zealand.
Zealand. The interview will be tape recorded and will take about 45 minutes. You are free to elaborate on any of your answers within the course on the interview. You will not be offered a copy of the tape. However, you will be shown a copy of the transcript of the tape transcribed by me and you can make amendment of the transcript. You can withdraw from the project anytime before the data collection process is finalized (before the end of July 2008), and your data will not be used. All materials will be stored in a secured place in the School of Asian Studies for six years for future study and will be destroyed after that period of time.

The results of this research will be used in my PhD thesis entitled “Home on the Move - New Chinese Immigrants to New Zealand as Transnationals”; however, your identity and personal information will not be revealed in these summaries and no third party has access to your information.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you have any further questions about this research, please contact my supervisor or me, or the head of my school.

Contact details:

Liangni Liu
Address: No. 58 Symonds St.
          School of Asian Studies
          University of Auckland
Phone: 09 3737599x87884
Email: sallyliu@xtra.co.nz

My supervisor:
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 87830.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE for ...(3).......years on 13 September 2007, Reference Number 2007/298
Appendix 5: Consent Form

Home on the Move - New Chinese Immigrants to New Zealand as Transnationals

Consent Form

This consent form will be held for a period of six years

Principal Investigator: Ms. Liangni Sally Liu

☐ I have read and understood the Participation Information Sheet and I understand that participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. I understand that I can withdraw from the project anytime before the data collection process is finalized (before the end of July 2008).

☐ I understand and agree that this interview will be tape recorded.

☐ I understand that the data may be retained for future publication.

☐ I understand that my participation in this research will be kept confidential and the information I provide will be reported or published in a way that will not identify me as the source.

☐ I consent to participating in this interview survey.
Appendix 6: Statistical Analysis

Z-test for proportions is a statistical test used to detect differences between two proportions (or means) or one proportion (mean) and a norm. The z-test used in this research is for large populations; therefore, following formula was used:

Test statistic:  \[ z = \frac{|p_1 - p_2|}{s} \]

where:

\[ p_1 = \text{proportion 1} \]
\[ p_2 = \text{proportion 2} \]
\[ s = \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n_1} + \frac{p(1-p)}{n_2}} \]
\[ p = \frac{(p_1 n_1 + p_2 n_2)}{(n_1 + n_2)} \]
\[ n_1 = \text{sample size 1} \]
\[ n_2 = \text{sample size 2} \]

Significance test:
\[ z > \]
2.576 for 99% level of confidence
1.96 for 95% level of confidence
1.645 for 90% level of confidence