

Chinese Postgraduate Students' Intentions and Expectations to Study Abroad

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A Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Art by Dissertation

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January 2017

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Abstract

This is a qualitative research on Chinese postgraduate students' intentions and expectations of studying abroad. Using focus groups and in-depth interviews on Chinese overseas students who were taking master's degrees in the UK, the research analysed the students' motivations of studying abroad in the perspectives of both individual development and their reflections of the globalisation process. Complementary to previous arguments about studying abroad as the acquisition of human capital and enrichment of distinction that the students found helpful for their future career development, results in this research showed that it was the incompatibility between the capital they gained from previous HE experiences in China and their future aspirations that stimulated the students to consider about other HE opportunities, and how their imaginaries of the global HE hierarchy brought them the motivation to study abroad. Another contribution of this research was that it showed how individuals (university students) reflect and react to the influence of globalisation, and how they connect their individual development with the imagined global hierarchy. Their attitude toward China also proved to be influential, as many students planned to study abroad and go back to China for future careers due to the growing globalisation process in China and their anticipation of a rising China. Such was complementary to previous arguments of the admiration for the developed world citizenship (Fong, 2011), as it showed that the students could find their jobs in China without undermining their developed world citizenship as China's increasing level of economic development and globalisation.

Key words: Chinese postgraduate students', imaginary, studying abroad, human capital, cultural capital, globalisation

Acknowledgement

Although this is an independent piece of work, I shall never finish the dissertation without the support of many important people. I shall express my sincere gratitude to those who also contributed to my research.

Foremost, I shall thank my supervisor of the MA programme, Professor Yasemin Soysal. I would be completely lost in sociology (which was completely new to me as I studied mathematics for my bachelor's degree) without her great guidance, warm encouragement and of course, critical comments.

I shall also thank Dr Hu Yang, who worked temporarily for the 'Bright Futures' Project in University of Essex during my MA programme. As a great colleague and tutor, Dr Hu gave me enormous technical guidance and support, which was very helpful for my finishing the dissertation.

I also acknowledge Mr David Jonathan Crane, a PhD student in the Department of Literature, Film and Theatre Studies, who kindly proofread my dissertation.

Many people also gave me amiable support and invaluable advice, especially those from research students in my office including Miss Jessika Eichler, Miss Tatiana Sanchez Parra, Miss Aiko Ikemura Amaral, Miss Stefanie Nitsche, and Miss Zhang Han from Department of Economics.

Finally, I must thank my parents, who have been the patrons of my own higher education, and have always been on my side.

Chapter I Introduction

1.1 Research Question

A vast and increasing number of Chinese students are studying abroad for their higher education (HE) each year, among which the majority have been postgraduates. (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014) Why do so many Chinese students choose to study abroad for their master's degrees? Why do they stress the importance of the master's degrees? Why didn't they study their postgraduate programmes in China? What do they think the benefits are of studying in foreign countries? In this thesis, I will analyse the thinking pattern and decision-making process about studying abroad for master's degrees in order to shed light on what drives the students to study abroad in the broader social and international context.

This research aims to answer the question: What are the motivations for Chinese overseas students to study abroad for master's degrees? As a qualitative research on the individual level, this research aimed to interpret the students' thinking about studying abroad in the broader context of their life course and their interactions with globalisation. To answer this basic research question, it is also important to answer other questions including: how Chinese overseas students reflect on their previous experiences; what they expect for their future life and career; how they reflect on globalisation and the development of China; as well as how other people around them think about studying abroad. Such questions will be taken into consideration in the research design and answered in the following empirical chapters.

One of the most important basic assumption in this research is that the students' motivations for studying abroad is associated with their reflections on their previous experiences as well as their expectations for the future. Such an assumption is in accordance with the arguments of previous research. For example, Findlay et al. (2012) pointed out that the relation between international student mobility and the development of their life-course. Following this line of argumentation, life course interviews were adopted as the main method of generating data for the analysis to show the possible influences of their life course context (in terms of both time and space) on their consideration and decision making of studying abroad.

Collected by focus groups and qualitative interviews, the data was analysed in two different aspects: the perspective of life path and individual development, and the perspective of globalisation and involvement with international interaction. In the former perspective, I discussed the motivation of Chinese postgraduate students regarding their previous experiences with the Chinese HE system as well as their career plans. I also argued the important role studying abroad for master's degrees played in the students' imaginary^[1] of a transformation from students in the Chinese HE system into future careers where they expected great prosperity. In the latter perspective, I analysed the students' experience and expectation of international interaction in the context of globalisation, which was discussed to

^[1] The concept of 'imaginary' was inspired by the literature, and will be discussed in the following part of Theoretical Framework.

uncover its possible influence on the students' motivation for studying abroad at postgraduate level, and their expectation for their future life.

In the remainder of this chapter, I shall first discuss the broader context of the Chinese postgraduate overseas students by introducing the Chinese HE system, its influence on the Chinese students, and the rising of Chinese middle class. This will be followed by the literature review, in which I shall review the previous works and develop the theoretical framework for the research.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The motivation and decision making of international higher education (HE) has drawn many scholars' attention. This is understandable because in many countries, international students make up large proportions of the total number of students in their higher educational systems. The United Kingdom, for example, provided 388,255 full-time higher education positions for international students, taking up 22.9% of its full-time student population in the academic year 2013-14. (Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited, 2015) Although there have been plenty of researches analysing the motivation of transnational HE, not all of them showed great relevance to this research. Many of them were market-oriented, analysing the costs and rewards of studying abroad on a more macro level, rather than researching how the students understand and interpret their decision to study abroad as well as how they were influenced by their social context. To generate more coherent theoretical sources for my research, I started to check the literature on slightly different but relevant topics (such as Fong's works on Chinese

transnational students' experience, see Fong, 2011) with deeper sociological insight in my research. These researches generally adopt theoretical approaches including the arguments of different types of capital, notably the theory of cultural capital and the reproduction of advantage by Bourdieu (1984), the transnational imaginary (Collins, 2013) and identity (Fong, 2004b) as well as the rising of middle class in East Asian countries (Shin, 2013; Kim, 2013). Such arguments were deeply illuminating for my further analysis in the thesis, so I shall discuss this selection of theories in the following text.

I will elaborate the theoretical framework from the literature in two sections. In the first one, I will discuss the theories about the individuals' motivations for studying abroad, and how they make their decisions. In the second part, I will elaborate the broader picture about globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education. Macro as it seems, such trends and international dynamics may have significant influences on students' consideration about studying abroad.

1.2.1 Individual's motivation to study abroad

Although few studies on international students take an analytical approach starting from an individual level, there have been plenty of arguments about the imagined benefits of studying abroad for the students' individual development. The individual development, as argued by many scholars (Collins, 2013; Fong, 2011; Findlay et al., 2012) with various terminologies, had been significantly influential in the students' motivations for studying abroad. Among the studies on students doing master's degrees abroad, very few focused on the specific benefits of

individual development or achievement the students gained from studying abroad. Therefore, I shall review the theories and conclusions of the literature on the general motivation for studying abroad in the individual's level instead, and show their possible theoretical guidance on this research.

To generalise, there are two major approaches about the individual's motivation to study abroad in the literature. There is the human capital approach that regards studying abroad as a means to obtain human capital that could bring them success in their career and achieve their aspirations for upward mobility. There is another approach that stresses more emphasis on cultural and class factors, which I generalise as cultural capital approach. In this approach, studying abroad can be understood as an attempt to accumulate cultural capital and ensure people's status of scarcity, which, as Bourdieu (1984) argued is crucial for their class reproduction. Different as these two approaches are, it is not easy to separate them because both emphasise the '*transnational imaginary*' (Collins, 2013) of studying abroad which the students see as invaluable for the further development of their life and career. Shaped by the students' social interaction and environment as Collins (2013) argued, the students have the '*desire to be mobile*', which eventually developed into the imaginary of the transformative potential of transnational HE. Studying abroad, then, was imagined to be valuable for getting the social and cultural capital that could achieve the students' geographic and upward class mobility. (Brooks & Waters, 2012)

For the human capital approach, such transnational imaginary is based on the imagined '*global circulation of knowledge*' (Collins, 2013) in which overseas

students are enabled to gain more knowledge and abilities that would be their human capital for their future career. From here we can see that under this assumption, studying abroad is driven by the students' hope to get more advanced positions in the job market, and bring themselves more likelihood of career success and upward mobility. Sometimes the upward mobility may also include a geographic one, as Robertson (2013) argued that studying abroad is often a strategy used by the students in an attempt to migrate to the countries that they study in. It is understandable that the students would like to achieve their individual development through their HE, but what is lacking here is that currently few works have attempted to explain how individuals understand about the '*global circulation of knowledge*', and what they consider the meaning of postgraduate education in the context of their own life course instead of the macro image of the international HE industry. Additionally, although there have been many researches on the motivation of studying abroad for postgraduate programmes with the perspective of human capital, very few of them specified on what exact kinds of human capital a student can and would expect to gain in the master's degree abroad.

Studying abroad has also been understood by a lot of researchers as the '*redistribution of cultural capital*' (Findlay et al., 2012), by which the students become simply '*different*' from others and are therefore empowered to achieve '*distinction*'. Those who take the view of cultural capital argued that students study abroad to have educational experiences that is scarce to others. Such educational experience of scarcity is considered as beneficial because it could

bring them the embodied cultural capital that is distinctive from others, which makes them more likely to realise their individual development in the future. (Findlay et al., 2012; Collins, 2013; Waters, 2006) For example, Findlay et al. (2012) argued that many British students chose to study abroad as they would like to enter a '*world class university*', which they considered as important for them to guarantee more likelihood of upward mobility. They also stressed the importance of understanding the students' development in their entire life-course, as studying abroad not only brought the students mobility in the international HE system, but also expectations about their future mobility in their life and careers.

For the overseas student of East Asian origins this point of view is particularly persuasive as there is widespread intense competition in domestic higher education as well as job markets in East Asian countries and regions including China, Japan, Korea and Hong Kong. (Fong, 2011; Collins, 2013; Shin, 2013; Waters, 2006) Although researches reveal that much development and expansion has taken place in HE systems in these regions, students in these areas found that their HE systems were very hierarchical and that only institutions among the highest of the hierarchy could be well-recognised in their own countries. (Fong, 2011; Collins, 2013; Shin, 2013; Waters, 2006) In this context, Waters (2006) argued that Asian students had to seek other educational credentials to secure their educational status, which is essential for them to achieve upward mobility.

It is also shown in the literature that the two different ways of thinking co-exist in a lot of overseas students' consideration about studying abroad. For example, Shin (2013) argued that for Korean students who study abroad at a younger age, the

English language is considered as an important skill which could greatly benefit their future careers when they go back to Korea and join the job market. Proficiency in English is not merely a form of human capital that is useful in their future professional occupations, but also an important symbolic capital that is influential in class reproduction in Korea. In other words, for many Korean students, English proficiency might not be practically beneficial in the productivity of their future occupation per se, but is vitally important to show their educational background and social status. Similarly, Waters (2006) found earlier that students who possess higher educational credentials could have better careers because the recognition of their educational credentials is key in maintaining the social boundaries of class privilege. What they gain alongside the credentials is the cultural capital which includes their embodied traits and geographic mobility. This is the situations when the student can find the combination of the two different considerations, but what is lacking in the literature is the discussion about how the students tend to prioritise these two and how it influences the students' decision-making process of studying abroad.

There are many other influential factors that were discussed in the literature in the formations of the motivations for international study. Such factors are often associated with the socioeconomic situation of a certain region, Asia being a prime example. Many scholars (Collins, 2013; Waters, 2006; Shin, 2013), for example, argued that the motivation for studying abroad is deeply associated with the rising of middle class in Asian countries. What comes alongside the emergence of middle class is their greater aspiration for upward mobility and the urgent need to secure

their own social status. That could explain why so many students in Asia wish to study in foreign countries even with the high cost to their parents, because as I elaborated before, their international education could not only enhance their human capital that could be beneficial for their upward mobility in the future, but also grasp the opportunity to become more distinctive, which is of vital importance for the reproduction of their social status as the emergent middle class.

In studies on Chinese HE student mobility, many scholars (Li & Bray, 2007; Bodycott, 2009) analysed their motivations with the push-pull theory. These works argued that Chinese students were motivated to study abroad because of the push-factors from the Chinese HE system, such as the limited opportunity for HE in China; and the pull-factors from the foreign system, like the imagined more advanced standard in foreign HE system. Li & Bray (2007) developed this theory by pointing out that the push and pull factors can also be understood as negative and positive forces. Such negative and positive forces coexist in both China and the destination countries for studying abroad, and the students' motivation and decision of studying abroad would be a strategy to find the best option for their future development with the consideration of pros and cons on both sides. This modified theory could bring insight into the decision-making process and the arrangement of priorities between human and cultural capital in their studying abroad.

Studying abroad is also associated with the social interactions of the emergent middle class, and such social interaction could lead to a shared ideology among people of similar social status in a certain area. Shin (2013) found in her research

on young Korean students studying abroad that it is mainly the middle-class parents who send their children abroad for early international education, and there are even *gireogi gajok* families 'where the mother and pre-college-aged children migrate to a foreign country for the children's education while the father remains behind to ensure the financial security of the family'. (Shin, 2013: 528) And it is clear in her research that such middle-class families tend to have shared opinions about their children's education, such as the emphasis of the importance of English, and the ideology of a 'single-best' university, which results in the fierce competition for high school students in Korea. She also pointed that it is the school ties system (*hakbeol*) in Korea, i.e. the system in Korea where people build up their social network based on their alma mater, (Kim, 2013) that forms today's Korean people's ideology of a good education being equivalent to having a social network in a higher position of the hierarchy of the *hakbeol* system. (Shin, 2013)

For the Chinese students, the rise of the middle class mingles with the influence of the One-Child Policy and the familial structure. Many researches (Fong, 2011; Liu, 2011; Hu and Scott, 2014) discussed the great pressures and expectations today's Chinese only children endure from their parents. Brought up with the traditional Confucian value of the filial duties to their parents (Liu, 2011), the Chinese only child is always considered as the 'only hope' (Fong, 2011) for the future prosperity of the family. With this level of parental pressure, Chinese students are expected to be winners 'in a pyramidal socioeconomic system that allowed only a small minority to win' (Fong, 2011). These pressures are put on the students' HE as it has always been considered by Chinese parents as one of the

most important ways of securing better opportunities of success in a future career for their children. Other works (Collins, 2013; Shin, 2013) also found that the students' idea and information of studying abroad often come from their parents.

These discussions on the rising middle class could be crucial for my research as it could shed light on the relation between Chinese students' motivation for studying abroad and their sense of social status as well as their wish for upward mobility. What needs to be supplemented in these analyses is how individuals consider the socioeconomic aspect of themselves and how it affects their life path. What is also missing on the micro level is the familial dynamics about the Chinese students' future life and career in the context of Chinese one-child families, which shall be analysed in my research.

1.2.2 Broader picture — globalisation and the internationalisation of HE

The literature also shows a growing emphasis on the internationalisation of HE (Collins, 2012, 2013; Findlay et al., 2012; Waters, 2006; Yoon et al., 2013), which has already become an international business. Collins, for example, adopted what he termed the 'transnational approach' in his research (2013) and argued that the globalised infrastructure of education facilitated and integrated the world's higher educational system into a global educational industry. Findlay et al. (2012), on the other hand, argued that it was the competition among the HE institutions driven by the neo-liberal policies of the states that formed a globalised international HE system, in which students from different countries developed the imaginary of the world HE hierarchy and would like to study abroad in certain destination countries

and institutions. Yoon et al. (2013) agreed with this point of view and added that the international educational system is a result of the unequal development of higher education among different countries (or regions), with developed countries having extra higher educational opportunities, while the underdeveloped ones have shortages. Therefore, there are usually large flows of international students from countries that are underdeveloped in higher education to the developed ones, which is typically Western countries that are usually considered to be more developed. Yoon et al. (2013) pointed out that such constant student flows could lead to either 'brain circulation' or 'brain drain' for the countries with student outflows. A 'brain circulation', meaning the students coming back to their countries after the accumulation of human capital during their studies, could be eventually beneficial for both sides of the flow; but a 'brain drain', which means the emigration of skilled labour to more developed countries, could result in a one-side-win, bringing serious damage to the outflow countries. (Yoon et al. 2013)

Although not directly supportive for a research on the individual level, these analyses could be illuminating for understanding Chinese students' social interactions regarding the internationalisation of HE. For example, it would be enlightening on how Chinese students react to the scarce opportunities for HE in China, as Bodycott (2009) argued, and how they consider studying abroad as an alternative. It would be also inspiring for the enquiry into the individual consideration about the 'brain circulation' or 'brain drain' that might result from studying abroad. Another flaw of the previous works is that few of them intended to compare the postgraduate students with others who sought HE opportunities

abroad. Coming from different age groups and pursuing different qualifications from students who study abroad for undergraduate programmes, postgraduate overseas students might have different views about the global HE industry and therefore different motivations for studying abroad from their undergraduate counterpart, which is seldom discussed in the literature, and will be addressed in this research.

There have also been analyses on the individual level. Fong (2009), for example, argued that Chinese students who wished to study abroad had 'great admiration' for developed countries or *the developed world*, which she termed in the sense of both economic criteria like the per capita GDP, but also on the countries' political as well as cultural powers. She also added in her later research (2011) that while developed countries or sometimes even 'foreign countries' often refers to a set of countries including Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, the United States, and the Western European countries, what Chinese students really admire is the citizenship of their imaginary 'developed world', whose members are not necessarily legal citizens in the developed countries (Fong, 2011). Such eagerness for the citizenship of *the developed world* then became the motivation for the Chinese students to study abroad.

Fong's analyses surely brought great insight for understanding the motivation of Chinese students to study abroad. However, there is something worth noticing in these arguments. By conceptualising the 'general admiration of the developed world', Fong's arguments suggested that there was a tendency to view the world as a system with a stable hierarchy in which there are the developed countries and

the developing ones. Although she stressed the difference between the notion of developed countries and the developed world (i.e. not only about the geographical boundaries of the countries but also the shared wealth, power and values that are attached to these countries), her basic assumption about the world and its HE system was still static rather than a dynamic view based on globalisation, which would possibly bring shifts in power and capacity. Therefore, there is a necessity to look at the influence of globalisation and the uneven development of HE across the globe to understand how individuals make sense about such shifts in the global HE system and how they develop the admiration toward certain destination countries for their further education. Again, since postgraduate students are at different life stages (notably more urgent to join the labour market) than their undergraduate counterparts, they might have different reasons to admire the development world and the HE it could provide, which was not reflected in previous researches.

There were also arguments about a different trend against globalisation. Yoon et al. (2013), for example, noted that the internationalisation of higher education goes side by side with its nationalisation and localisation. They argued that foreign educational systems do not necessarily suit the local people, due to the problem of transferability of the human capital gained through studying in countries with dramatic different social realities. Such was echoed by Akimoto (2008) who argued that teaching models in the US higher educational system did not apply perfectly well in the Japanese context and therefore need modifications. There is, however, little work that addressed the confrontation between the logic of the localisation

of HE and the students' admiration of the developed world as well as its educational system. This shortage of literature surely justified the necessity to do research into the Chinese students' consideration of the value of studying abroad and how they solve the dilemma between their admiration of the developed world HE system and their possible scepticism about the transferable human capital to their future career if they plan to go back to China for future careers.

What is also argued in the literature is that there has been a moral dilemma between starting a career in the destination country and going back to their home country, as Fong (2004b) found that many students and their parents in China would think it is not moral to live in a foreign country and never go back because of their deep-rooted filial nationalism. Contrary to the logic for the aspiration of attaining the '*developed world citizenship*', the argument of *filial nationalism* illuminates the necessity of analysing the Chinese students' choice of future careers. Their choice of these two might reflect their priority between the pursuit for developed world citizenship and their affinity as well as their sense of duty to the Chinese society.

The choice of destination country was deeply associated with the students' motivations for studying abroad as it reflected their imaginary of the global HE hierarchical system. This might suggest that it could be not possible to have the whole picture of Chinese students' motivation for studying abroad by researching on those who take one certain country as their destination, which therefore reminds the issue of generalisability of this research. For instance, the literature reveals that there has been a traditionally favoured group of destination countries

such as the Anglophone developed countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as other Western European countries. (Collins, 2013; Fong, 2011; Waters, 2006) Collins (2013) attributed this to the students' imaginary of the contemporary world system. He argued that, mostly, the United States has been the students' first choice because of its power and prosperity as the world leader. This is in accordance with Shin's (2013) arguments of Korean students' 'single-best' ideology and their wish to obtain English proficiency, which make the US to be perfectly admirable both for its 'authentic English' and global power. Yet Collins (2013) also noted the growing number of Asian international students studying within Asia. He attributed this partly to these students having a different point of view about today's world dynamics, in which they share a brighter anticipation of the imagined potential prosperity of Asia on the future world stage, though there are also other arguments such as cultural proximity and identity, as well as financial considerations. (Collins, 2013) Although all the students in my research chose to study in the UK, the view about the world's changing dynamics might hint at another reason for Chinese students' plans to go back to China for a future career: returning to China might reflect their optimistic anticipation about the future development of China.

1.2.3 Conclusion

To summarise, three main arguments emerged from the literature on transnational HE, which are of great importance to understand today's Chinese students' motivation to study abroad. First, studying abroad has been generally

understood as the accumulation of capital. Many (Waters, 2006; Li & Bray, 2007; Findlay et al., 2012; Robertson, 2013 etc.) have argued that students see transnational experience to gain different forms of capital so that they can reproduce their social privilege and difference (Bourdieu, 1984). Findlay et al. (2012) and Robertson (2013), notably, argued that the reproduction of advantage through capital accumulation is increasing the differentiation of the global HE system, in which the more advantaged can enjoy more transnational mobility. Yet the process can hardly be summarised as simply reproduction, as many researches, including Fong's (2011) work suggest that many students from disadvantaged familial backgrounds also see studying abroad as an invaluable opportunity to achieve upward mobility, and are 'desperate' to seize it. Therefore, the accumulation of capital through studying abroad could be interpreted as the reconfiguration of social advantage, through which many students see great expectation for stepping up. These arguments of capital accumulation are of great significance in researching the expectation of Chinese students who study abroad and how they see the connection between the build-up of different forms of capital and their sense of social identity.

Second, studying abroad has often been understood as a form of migration, or at least part of the attempt to emigrate to the destination countries for better individual development. In this sense, it is important to understand the students' motivation for studying abroad on a broader life-course perspective (Findlay et al., 2012), since in many cases, immigration can be a long-term process in which transnational educational experience could be used as leverage. This is echoed by

Robertson & Runganaikaloo's (2014) research on immigration in Australia, arguing that the prime goal of most students motivated to study in Australia, was to emigrate to that country. These indicate that it is important to understand the life-course context of the transnational students and their motivation to study in a foreign country. The affinity between studying abroad and migration also inspired many scholars (Li & Bray, 2007; Bodycott, 2009, etc.) to adopt push-pull analysis, claiming that students choose to study abroad as they are pushed by unsatisfactory factors from home countries, and pulled by pull factors from the destination countries. Li & Bray (2007) refined this argument by adding the 'reverse push-pull factors' in the model. It is illuminating for my research to discover to what extent today's Chinese transnational students respond to push and pull factors from both home and abroad.

Third, international students have a shared aspiration for the 'transnational identity' (Li & Bray, 2007; Fong, 2011; Findlay et al., 2012; Robertson, 2013; Collins, 2013) fuelled by globalisation and the HE internationalisation. What today's global HE system brings to the students is not only the global circulation of knowledge, but also the internationalisation of individuals (Li & Bray, 2007), which would provide the students 'the access to further international mobility for study and work'. While globalisation, when understood in the macro sense, means both opportunities and challenges, with most students giving more consideration to the former, (Li & Bray, 2007; Fong, 2011), it may also bring the 'internationalisation' of the individuals who take this route. This is followed by the neoliberal point of view that by studying abroad in 'world class' universities, they are more likely to

enjoy the 'world class distinction' themselves (Findlay et al., 2012), or in Fong's (2011) term, the imagined 'developed world citizenship'. Yet the value of this kind of 'transnational imaginary' (Collins, 2013) is sometimes unclear as scholars including Robertson & Runganaikaloo (2014) argued that studying abroad can also bring uncertainty, and the capital accumulated is not often transferrable to different regions. Fong (2004b) further challenged such imaginary by arguing the prevailing 'filial nationalist' sentiments among Chinese young people. Therefore, in my thesis, it remains a significant quest to discover how contemporary Chinese students weigh the balance between the imagined value of the 'transnational identity', their doubts, and nationalism.

1.3 Contextualisation

Studying abroad has seen a rapid growth in China over the past decade. In 2014, more than 450,000 Chinese students chose to study abroad (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015), which was nearly four times more than in 2005 (NBSC, 2015). Among them, an increasing number of postgraduate students have made up a large part of the Chinese overseas student population. To understand this enormous student flow from China, it is necessary to look at the Chinese HE context.

HE development & growing expectation

The statistics show that HE in China has undergone great development and expansion over the past two decades. The total number of undergraduate enrolments reached 7.38 million in 2015, nearly eight times as large as the figure

in 1996, while the Chinese population has merely increased by 12.3% (NBSC, 2015). In the same period, postgraduate admissions surged by more than tenfold from 59,398 to 645,055. (NBSC, 2017) HE institutions more than doubled from 1,032 in 1996 to 2,560 in 2015. (NBSC, 2017) Such enormous expansion is inseparable from the broader context of socioeconomic development in China as well as the rising of Chinese middle class. The average per capita income in China has grown dramatically in the past decade among both urban (¥28,843 [£2,955] in 2014, while ¥10,493 [£1,075] in 2005) and rural (¥10,488 [£1,074] in 2014, while ¥3,254 [£333] in 2005) families. (NBSC, 2015) Although these figures do not seem to be enough for the students to study abroad in some of the Chinese students' favourite destinations, a vast number of Chinese parents (especially of middle class urban families) began to find sending their children abroad economically practical thanks to the high level of social inequality in China (with a Gini Coefficient of 46.2 in 2015, See NBSC, 2015).

The rise of the Chinese middle class is also associated with China's One-Child Policy that had been implemented from 1979 to 2015. Fong (2011) argued that the Policy had ensured that the highly concentrated economic capital and educational resources went to the Chinese only children (or 'singleton' children in Fong's term). Being relatively more economical than undergraduate and doctoral programmes, studying abroad for master's degrees is therefore affordable for a greater variety of Chinese families who would like to consider a different kind of investment in their children's HE.

Another significant development in today's education in China is the rising prominence of English proficiency. Even though English is not a commonly used language in China, it is both an entry requirement for universities and a compulsory course in higher educational institutions, and the proficiency of English is often prioritised (Fong, 2011). There are also plenty of private English teaching services in China. New Oriental Education & Technology Group, one of the most famous of this kind, has enrolled over 22.6 million students, providing courses for English language tests like TOFEL, IELTS, as well as academic qualification examinations like GRE and GMAT (New Oriental E&T Group, 2015). Such an environment also contributes to the idea of studying abroad as an accessible and desirable route for Chinese students.

Discontent with the HE system: shortage for social advantage

Yet the progress of the Chinese HE system often falls short of the students' expectation for future development. Despite the significantly increased opportunities in Chinese HE institutions, many scholars (Fong, 2011; Liu, 2014) challenged the influence of such an increase as there has been a consequent drop of value among the Chinese HE certificates. Liu (2014), for instance, argued that in terms of the acquired cultural capital and social advantage from HE, the defining criteria is no any longer whether the students have graduated from universities, but what level of universities they have graduated from. In other words, today's Chinese HE system has already become a multi-tier (six in Liu's argument) hierarchy so that only universities in the upper tiers are considered more socially recognised.

Such a classification of HE institutions in China is partly because of the HE enrolling process. In China, most university students are admitted through the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE, or commonly known as Gaokao), in which their performance is the only criterion for their admissions. Such a one-test-decide-all process produces fierce competition and serious anxiety among the prospective students (Fong, 2011; Liu, 2011), as in numerous cases a slight difference in the marks could result in significant effects. Since the entry requirements vary among different majors in the same university (Tsinghua University, 2017; Wuhan University, 2017), many students face the dilemma between better-recognised universities and their favourite majors. Since each option may risk sacrificing the other in the application, studies showed many students ended up unsatisfied with either their previous universities (Bodycott, 2009; Fong, 2011) or their majors (Wang & Tong, 2004; Long & Li, 2007).

Although it has been regarded as one of the most important processes to ensure justice and equality in the Chinese educational system, Gaokao has also been criticised for its failure to provide equal opportunities for people of different backgrounds. (Liu, 2014; Xu, 2013; Zheng & Chen, 2010) One of the most significant inequalities lies in the relationship between the students' HE opportunity and their social backgrounds. Liu (2014) argued that although today's Chinese HE distribution reflects the principle of meritocracy, the impact of familial background is also significant, especially for students in top universities. There is also great regional inequality among the Gaokao examinees. Many scholars (Xu, 2013; Wu & Hong, 2013) argued that since most universities congregate in

economically developed urban regions, and all universities have leaning policies for local students, students from developed areas have a significant advantage. For example, in the year 2016, Peking University (a top Chinese university in Beijing) enrolled 186 undergraduates from the city of Beijing, while recruiting merely 88 from the Henan Province, which had a population that was more than five times larger than that in Beijing (Peking University, 2017).

In conclusion, the rapid development and expansion of the Chinese HE system has brought both increased number of HE opportunities and a growing discontent with the HE system. Such discontent is deeply associated with the enrolling process of the Chinese HE system, especially Gaokao, and the highly unequal distribution of better HE opportunities and therefore social advantage. In other words, many students in China are not satisfied with the HE system's promise to promote social justice, equality and meritocracy (Liu, 2014), which pushes them to seek for other destinations to ensure their aspiration for social mobility.

1.4 Structure of Thesis

In the next chapter, I will elaborate the methodology and design of research in my dissertation. This will include an introduction to the choosing of participants, the use of focus groups and interviews, the data collection, and the process and analysis of data in this research. Chapter III and IV will be the two empirical chapters in which I shall develop the analysis of data and the arguments. Specifically, I will discuss the relationship between studying abroad and the students' previous HE experiences in China, and analyse how the students'

previous experiences in the Chinese HE system in terms of the acquisition of human and cultural capital shaped their expectation for further individual development, which motivated them to study abroad. In Chapter IV, I shall analyse the students' previous involvement with globalisation, their reflections on China, and their imaginaries of the world hierarchy and aspirations for further engagement with the world, which brought another motivation for Chinese students to study abroad. Finally, I will give a conclusion in Chapter V on the main arguments and contributions of this dissertation.

Chapter II Methodology

As a qualitative research to interpret how individuals understand their decision to study abroad, this research takes the constructionist position on the relationship between theory and data, so that the theories are partly generated from the data. Adopting the grounded theory approach (Bryman, 2004), I arranged the research design in the following steps:

- a) General research question
- b) Selecting relevant subjects in relevance to the literature
- c) Collection of relevant data (focus groups)
- d) Interpretation of the data and re-conceptualisation
- e) Collection of further data (in-depth interviews)
- f) Further analysis and writing up findings

This data collection — interpretation — another data collection process aimed to uncover the ‘point of view of the participants’ (Bryman, 2004) instead of that of the researcher or the literature. And due to different objectives, I adopted two different data-collecting methods in the two sessions. Focus groups were used in the first data collection as they had the great advantage of generating a wider range of views and reflecting ‘the way in which individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon’ (Bryman, 2004). However, it was not adopted as the method for further data collection because of practical problems like participant recruitment, the time-consuming transcription (Bloor et al., 2001), and technical limitations such as the influence of group interaction, which might result in

overly dominant participants (Krueger, 1998) or the tendency to express culturally expected opinions (Morgan, 2002). Thus, it was considered more proper to conduct focus groups as a pilot study to generate more potential topics and probing questions for further data collection.

Life course in-depth interviewing was chosen as the main data generating process for this research due to its significant advantages over focus groups. Firstly, one-on-one interviewing, with the promise of uncovering 'the point of view of the participants' (Bryman, 2004) is more consistent with the research question of how individuals understand their choice of studying abroad. Secondly, unlike focus groups, there is no participant interaction and less social and cultural restraints during the interviews, so the participants are more likely to express their own views rather than the modified ones. Thirdly, the use of individual interviewing can form triangulation, which could improve the 'confidence of findings' (Webb et al., 1966; Denzin, 1970). Finally, life course interviewing enables the generation of narratives on a wider life context rather than staying focused on the topic of studying abroad for master's degrees.

2.1 Sampling

The five focus groups were conducted as part of a bigger project^[1] on transnational HE mobility. There were both undergraduate and postgraduate students in the focus groups. Recruited and conducted in the same university as the interview participants, the focus groups took place prior to the first two sessions of interviews. Theoretical sampling was adopted in the participant recruitment while snowball sampling was also used as a compromise due to limited number of applications. (The details of the focus groups are shown in Table 2.1.1)

Focus group	Date interviewed	Stage of academic year
I	July 2015	Finishing
II	July 2015	Finishing
III	August 2015	Beginning
IV	August 2015	Beginning
V	October 2015	Beginning

Table 2.1.1 List of focus groups

The participants of focus groups did not fully consist of postgraduate taught students for various reasons including limited numbers of applications by postgraduate students. This, however, was not considered (and did not prove) to be a major restriction on the validity of the research because the aim of the focus groups was mainly to explore the themes in the students' reflection on

[1] The 'Bright Futures' Project was an international research project on student migration conducted by researchers from the UK, Germany and China, lead by Professor Yasemin Soysal from University of Essex.

studying abroad, rather than providing valid data for the research question of this thesis.

In the individual interviews, the participants were Chinese overseas students who studied for postgraduate taught programmes. Due to the limitations of time and research expenditure, most participants in this research were studying in the same university in South-East England when the interviews took place. Most of them were during their 2015-16 academic year (with two exceptions, namely student A and B, who were studying for the 2014-15 academic year).

When the interviews took place, due to the limitations of time and research expenditure, most of these participants were studying in the same university in South-East England for the academic year 2015-16 (with two exceptions, namely student A and B, who were studying for the 2014-15 academic year). Theoretical sampling was adopted for the interviewing, with the consideration of key demographic factors including sex and course titles. As shown in the following table, there were a similar number of students of either sex (6 females in 11 participants). The students were studying their master's programmes in different departments with three of them in the business school, three studying social sciences, two studying computer sciences, two studying translation and interpreting, and another one studying economics. Such a dispersion of course titles was in accordance with the distribution of Chinese students in the university, as about half of them were studying in the business school (this is because the three in the department of sociology were taking joint master's programmes with the business school). However, with a limited number of

participants, it was not possible to cover other influential factors (place of residence in China, for instance) to reach full theoretical saturation (Warren, 2002).

Student	Sex	Department
A	Male	Sociology
B	Female	Business
C	Female	Business
D	Male	Business
E	Female	Sociology
F	Female	Sociology
G	Male	Language & Linguistics
H	Male	Computer Science
I	Male	Computer Science
J	Male	Economics
K	Female	Language & Linguistics

Table 2.1.2 Sex and department of the participants

Another limitation of such a sample was that the participants' current experience of their overseas education might affect both their recollection and consideration of the meaning of studying abroad. In other words, the participants' life story of the past might have been distorted by their new HE experiences abroad (Bryman, 2004). However, since most (all but one) of the students were one-year postgraduate taught students, they were considered likely to have a vivid recollection of their previous thinking and decision making for studying abroad.

To minimise such influence, the participants were interviewed at different stages during their postgraduate programmes. As shown in the following table, students A and B were interviewed at the finishing stage of their master's programmes, C to F were interviewed at the beginning stage, and G to K in the

median stage. Such a dispersion of participants was adopted to detect the possible influences of the experiences of studying abroad on the students' recollections of previous considerations. It was assumed that students who had spent more time studying abroad were less likely to have vivid recollection of their decision-making process for studying abroad and more likely to be influenced by these experiences when they remembered their previous decision-making process.

Student	Date interviewed	Stage of PG programme
A	July 2015	Finishing
B	July 2015	Finishing
C	October 2015	Beginning
D	October 2015	Beginning
E	October 2015	Beginning
F	October 2015	Beginning
G	January 2016	Median
H	January 2016	Median
I	January 2016	Median
J	January 2016	Median
K	January 2016	Median ^[1]

Table 2.1.3 Time of interviews by each participant

2.2 Focus Groups

Smaller group sizes were expected as it had been argued that fewer participants in focus groups could bring more relevant conversations on the research topic (Morgan, 1998). However, due to slight over-recruiting as a strategy to prevent absence (Wilkinson, 1999), the real group sizes ranged from four (Group I) to

[1] Student K was studying for a two-year postgraduate programme, and was on her second year when she was interviewed.

seven (Group IV). There were two moderators for each of the focus groups, in which the first moderator was more involved with the conversation while the second moderator was more involved with note taking. This, however, was not completely solid, as sometimes it took more than one moderator to keep the conversation focused or in control. I conducted the focus groups as either first or second moderator with the collaboration of a colleague who worked in the same project. Five focus groups were conducted in different sessions, and each of them provided at least one participant for the follow-up interviews. All the focus groups except for the second one (by time order) were in Chinese, which was because of the comparison between the first two focus groups (the participants in the first focus group conducted in Chinese being more fluent in expressing their ideas and more likely to be revealing).

2.3 Interviewing

The main research method for data generation, as mentioned before, was life course qualitative interview. Six of the interviews (student A to F) were follow-up interviews from the previous focus group session, while the other five (G to K) were independent from the focus groups. To ensure that the participants could express their own narratives about their consideration and decision to study abroad, there was no set structure to the in-depth interviews.

Yet the interviewers^[1] did probe questions intentionally to cover some basic points, including their previous experiences, future expectations, their communication with parents, friends, etc., and opinions about the idea of studying abroad. Such probing questions were based on the themes which emerged from the focus groups.

There were attempts to draw life course flow charts for the interviewees, i.e. the creation of flow charts by both the interviewer and participants which showed anything that had happened or was expected to happen in the future in the sequence of the participants' life course. This technique was intended to shed light on the logic of the students' decision to study abroad in the broader picture of their life history (Miller, 2000). However, such attempts proved to be unproductive as the participants did not take active part in the creation of the chart, and there was no sign that adding this activity in the interviews would boost the participants' involvement in the interview. Therefore, life course flow charts were abandoned in later interviews after three attempts with students C, D and E.

[1] Student A was interviewed by my colleague who did not speak Chinese and the interview was therefore conducted in English. It was the same for focus group I, with the same researcher working as first moderator.

2.4 Recording & Transcription of the Data

Audio recording was the main means of data collection for the research for both the focus group session and the interviews. Note taking was also used in the research as a supplement to the audio recording, especially in the focus groups, where some non-verbal information might be neglected if only audio recording was used, for example, the participants' special facial expressions. However, it had been much less frequent in the individual interviews due to the greater intensity of interaction between the interviewer and the participant. Any data in the recordings that was related or potentially related to the research questions was transcribed for further analysis.

Since most of the interviews were in Chinese, some of the text data was translated into English for the writing of the dissertation. I did the translation myself due to limited funding for the process of data. There were also indirect citations from the data, usually in the form of narratives to support the arguments in the thesis. Such narratives were entirely based on the transcribed text data, which can be checked through both the transcription files and the original audio recordings.

2.5 Data Analysis

Coding and narrative analysis were adopted as the main data analyses. Coding was mainly adopted in the data analysis of the focus groups, in which the participants were encouraged to discuss specific topics, making the understanding of the context less undermined by the fragmentation (Coffey &

Atkinson, 1996). Since the individual interviews contained much more life-course context, narrative analysis was used in the data analysis to produce more coherent interpretations. One limitation of data analysis is that it is difficult to be critical of the narratives since it is impossible to verify the participants' life stories (Bryman, 2004). This could limit the reliability and transferability of the findings.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research has taken ethical issues into serious consideration, having received approval to use the ethical clearance form from the Department of Sociology in University of Essex. For each focus group and interview in this research, every participant was asked to sign the Ethical Consent Form (in Chinese), and to agree on the instructions of ethical consideration at the very beginning of each session. Every single detail included in the consent form was rigorously implemented during the whole course of the research. The knowledge about the purpose of the research, the consent of collecting data by using audio recorders and the confidentiality of the data collected were main considerations for this research, as can be seen in the sample consent form in the appendix at the end of the thesis.

2.7 Limitations

Apart from the general limitations of qualitative research, including the problems of replication and generalisation (Bryman, 2004), there are a few limitations in this research design that could hinder the reliability and validity of this research.

Firstly, there is a problem about the sample. With a small sample size in the whole research, and therefore a potential lack of theoretical saturation in the sampling in both the focus groups and interviews, the findings of this research might be of very weak transferability. Secondly, since there are interviewees who participated in both focus groups and interviews, it would be difficult to verify the authenticity of the narratives if the two versions contradict each other. This would undermine reliability. Thirdly, the focus group — interpretation — interviewing process might be insufficient for theoretical saturation, which might result in the lack of significant points in the findings of this research.

Chapter III Studying Abroad and Previous HE Experiences in China

Student A found himself both challenged and bored in his job after graduating from university: challenged due to his lack of English proficiency which he found necessary for his job; bored because he was totally uninterested in his work. Things seemed even worse as he found it extremely difficult to improve his English, and even more difficult to change his job into what interested him as he was majoring in communications engineering while his interest was in media. It all started four years ago when he took the Gaokao (formally National College Entrance Examination) for university. He did well enough to get enrolled in a well-known university, but not well enough to secure his favoured major. Then the idea of studying abroad, which was once proposed by his parents, came back to his mind. Hoping to study a postgraduate course in media and change his career direction forever, he made some applications, and got the opportunity to study abroad.

For student A, studying abroad is deeply associated with his previous unsatisfactory experience when he was studying for his undergraduate programme. His lack of English proficiency undermined his confidence in the competitiveness for his previous post, and his previous undergraduate background of communication engineering had proved to be a handicap to his career aspiration of working in the field of media and the internet. Studying abroad for a master's degree thus became a strategy to erase the effects of the unsatisfying experiences from his previous undergraduate study and build up his competitiveness for his future career.

He is not alone. Many other Chinese students in my interviews also had previously unsatisfactory higher educational (HE) experiences that might be associated with their later choice of seeking other HE destinations. In this chapter, I explore such association by analysing their previous HE experiences in five different aspects: the choice of major, the learning of academic/professional knowledge, the value of certificate, and sense of distinction.

3.1 Choice of Major

Let us come back to the case of student **A**. When asked about his motivation to study abroad, he said that one of the main motivations when he made the decision was to change his major:

My previous BA (BSc) degree was engineering, and I wanted to change it (in my postgraduate course). I wanted to learn something different. And in China, it's very difficult to change your major, if you don't have that background. But it is easier to change to another major if you apply for an overseas university.

Student A

Student **A** made it clear that his previous HE experience in China was not a pleasant one, as he would like to study a subject in which he was more interested. He was not the only one who had this kind of unsatisfactory feeling about his previous major. The discontent with undergraduate majors can be seen in other cases (student **D**, for example) in my research. Although those students did have different reasons to worry about their previous majors, there was one significant thing in common among them: they did not believe that their previous majors

could be beneficial enough for them to find jobs that they would like to do in the future. In other words, they did not think that they could get the human and cultural capital that would be required (or at least as they believed) for their future career expectations from their previous undergraduate majors. Why did they choose to study something they felt would be useless or which they had no interest in? Why did they finally make the choice of studying abroad for master's degrees in order to change their subject of study? Did they try other ways such as changing their majors during their undergraduate programmes? How did they think that their master's programmes abroad could help them to fulfil their career expectations? In the following texts of this part, I will answer these questions by analysing the students' previous experiences in the Chinese HE system and their reflections of it.

To answer the first question, it is necessary to look at the recruitment process of the Chinese HE system. Many students in my research described the dilemma between choosing the best university and their favourite major when they were applying for universities. This was because the students' performance in Gaokao was the only criterion for their admissions, and therefore, the students had to perform very well in the exam to secure their entry both to their first-choice institutions and to their preferred majors. However, that was hardly the case for the students in my research, which is not surprising given the severe competition in Gaokao referred to in many previous works (Fong, 2011; Liu, 2011). With such a dilemma, many students in my research chose to prioritise on the prestige of the university rather than the majors that they would like to study, with some of them

ending up studying majors they did not like. Student A, for example, performed well enough to enter a well-known university which is among the '211 Project' ^[1], but not well enough to study media which was his favourite subject. Unable to study his first choice, he found himself studying communication engineering and found no interest at all in the subject.

That is, however, only the start. As student **A** carried on with his undergraduate study, he turned increasingly disappointed with his major as he built up his future expectations, which was inspired by the environment of his former university. Fascinated by the general environment of the university specialising in media, he began to develop a deep interest in the internet, media and popular culture, which prompted him to attend classes in these areas even though they were irrelevant to his then major. He felt frustrated because his undergraduate major could not help him achieve his aspiration of a future career, which, as he revealed in his interview, would be to work in the internet industry. Being a major in engineering did not give him any chance at all. In other words, he sensed that he had failed to accumulate enough capital from his experiences as an undergraduate student to achieve his future aspirations, and would therefore consider the opportunity of

[1] A project of developing more about one hundred top universities and many key academic disciplines to flourish the Chinese HE system and achieve socioeconomic development for the Country. The project was ratified by the State Council of China and initiated by the Ministry of Education in 1995. (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2015)

further education to reverse the disadvantages his previous HE experiences brought him.

The reason why I chose my topic of research, namely mobile application consumption, is that the internet industry in China is so highly increasing (rapidly developing). It's very developed in China. I think it's the first-class (primary) industry in China now. So, I really want to get into this industry in the future. I want to research on the internet industry, so I get this as a key to go into (unlock an entry into) the industry... So, I plan to go back to China, and immediately get a job... (The plan) it has hardly changed. From the very beginning, the plan was like this.

Student A

From his explanation of the change of major for his master's degree, it can be seen clearly that student **A** thought that the change of his subject was the way to overcome the barrier between his previous major and his future expectation. By seeking a postgraduate programme in media and the internet, he attempted to accumulate both the relevant academic qualification (institutionalised cultural capital), and the proficient professional skills and experiences (human capital and embodied cultural capital), which he saw as significant in order to fulfil his career aspirations. This, he understood, was difficult to achieve as he found that there was limited opportunity for him to apply for a master's study in media with his first degree in engineering due to strict admission entry requirements on relevant subjects, which was why he wanted to turn to other options. These unsatisfactory experiences also remind me of the push-pull arguments that have appeared frequently in the literature about Chinese students' motivation to study abroad.

All the unsatisfactory experiences with the Chinese HE system, including the fierce competition in the Gaokao, the lack of choice with undergraduate majors and the restriction in the postgraduate recruitment process can be understood as signifiers of the push factors in the individual level that drove student **A** to seek opportunities outside the Chinese HE system. Although not directly supported by previous works using the push-pull arguments, there was the conclusion that many Chinese students were pushed by the limited opportunities in the Chinese HE system.

Student **A** was not the only one who sought studying abroad as a strategy to change their previous majors. Although different students had various reasons for changing their majors, their decisions were all associated with their previous experiences in the Chinese HE system, which tended to have similar patterns as shown in Figure 1. Data from many interviews indicated that the HE experience when students studied for their undergraduate programmes was like a period of transformation from having no knowledge of academic disciplines or future career into the discovery of an interest as well as the development of future aspirations. During the previous experiences with the Chinese HE system, these students began to realise the gap between their previous majors and their expected careers as their future aspirations were formed. Thus, they felt the necessity to study for postgraduate programmes in their favoured subjects to get enough human and cultural capital.

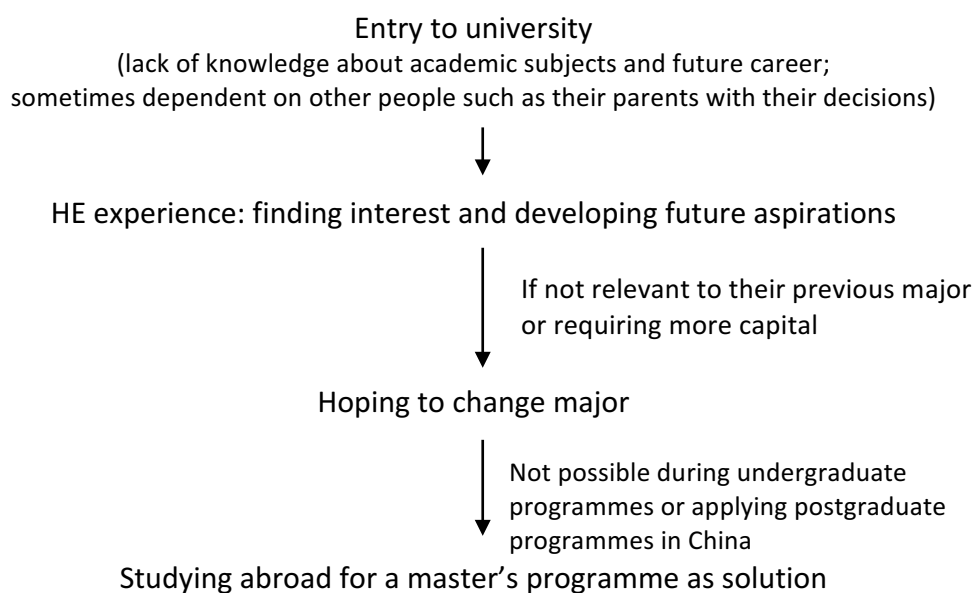


Figure 1

For many students in my research, the decisions about their previous majors could not been considered thoroughly enough. That was because they were not fully informed about the nature of the different academic disciplines that universities could offer, like student **K** who acknowledged that she chose to study English for her undergraduate major only because she ‘had no idea of what other disciplines are about’, and ‘knew at least what English is about’. Many students chose their majors based on other considerations rather than the knowledge of different majors’ content. For example, student **I** and student **J** had chosen their previous majors as they were high-ranking majors in their respective institutions. Student **I** therefore ended up studying a major (environmental engineering) in which he was not interested. It is worth noting that he might have had the opportunity to change his major in his first year at university but did not really investigated it, deciding instead to attempt a transfer to a more prestigious university in the same city. This might be another indication of how some Chinese students would prioritise the

prestige of their undergraduate university over their majors, which is understandable in the context of the severe competition for HE in China.

Parents' attitude might have also been influential in their choice of major as many students ended up studying in majors that were relevant to (one or both of) their parents' occupations. For instance, student **A**'s parents had significant influence on his choice of major as he revealed in his focus group that when choosing the majors for his university application, he only made the first choice on his own, letting his parents decide the second and further choices.^[1] Studying engineering in their previous HE, his parents advised and persuaded him to take engineering as the second choice, which turned out to be his destination as he did not perform well enough in Gaokao for both his first-choice university and his major but did not want to go to universities with lower rankings. It is understandable that parents can have significant influence on their children's choice of undergraduate

[1] In China, normally the students can choose several favoured majors in sequence for each institution they apply for. (Ministry of Education of the PRC, 2016) Since different majors often have different entry requirements on the marks of Gaokao, if the students failed to enter the institution for their first choices, their second, third, and further choices will be taken into consideration. There is a maximum number of majors that one can choose for one institution, whereas the students can choose to apply any number of majors within the limit (at least one). If the students reach the entry requirements of the institution but fail to reach that of their chosen majors, they will either be rejected or be allocated to other majors chosen by the institution. That will depend on the students' consent of the privilege of the institution over the choice of majors if the students do not reach the entry requirements for their chosen majors.

majors because of today's unique Chinese familial structure. Parents' influence on their children's decision of undergraduate major reflects the great pressures and expectations Chinese parents put on their children's HE and careers thereafter, like Collins argued in his work (2013) on Chinese HE migration. With great expectations for their children, the parents would like to influence and, in some instances, intervene in their children's choice of undergraduate major in order to ensure that their children have better development in human as well as social capital and be more competitive in the job market. However, such intervention proved to contribute to some students' discontent with their previous majors, as they might feel that they were forced to study something in which they were not interested.

Students' experiences in the Chinese HE system proved to be of vital importance for them to think about their subjects and careers. Getting more familiar with their courses and feeling increasingly closer to their career, some students began to find an ambivalence between their majors and what they expected to do in the future. Student **D**, for instance, wanted to change his previous major because it could not achieve his aspiration towards a future career. Studying accounting in his undergraduate programme, he found the experience quite unsatisfactory because it could not give him much advantage in getting himself jobs that he saw attractive:

I don't like my previous major very much, which was accounting.

...

When I was good at mathematics, I felt accounting to be something that requires very limited intellectual equipment, merely about making diagrams and calculate

all the time... Then (after undergraduate years) I have not been good at maths any more, and began to realise that now I only know about calculation... I feel obviously that I don't have any advantage after graduating from university, no advantage at all. I don't like my major, and my major being not actually a very specialised one.

Student D

He felt he had 'no advantage' because he had no intention of working as an accountant. As he said in his interview, although he had his undergraduate background in accounting, he would not restrict his future career to being a certified public accountant (CPA), but also saw the possibility of working in a securities company as a certified financial analyst (CFA), which he believed to be promising. Therefore, his previous accounting background could be a potential handicap to his future aspiration, as he said he would not like to be an accountant and was more interested in finance. Student J had similar motivation about changing his major from international trade to economics. For him, economics was more generally applicable, as he said *'(with a certificate in economics) you can try a wide variety of jobs: you can work in a bank, you can work in companies, you can work in multinationals, you can do trading... anything. You can simply try any sort of thing that is relevant to economics.'* Thus, changing majors into what the students regarded as more promising fields can be understood as an attempt to gain different kinds of human capital and therefore more possibilities in a future career.

For the possibility of changing major as an undergraduate in China, there are mixed results. Although student A claimed that it is 'difficult' to change one's

major in China, there is one example, student **G**, who managed to change his major from applied psychology into English as it could be helpful for his future career as an interpreter after graduation. Student **I** also mentioned the opportunity to change his major during his first year of university. He did not take the chance to change his major as he was attempting to transfer himself to a more prestigious university, although it would mean that he would study what he did not like for four years as his undergraduate major. Clearly student **I** is an exception to the pattern shown in Figure 1. The mechanism for such exception will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.2 Learning of Academic/Professional Knowledge

Scenario I

*Studying in a professional college instead of a university, student **D** found the campus environment not friendly enough for him to focus on his studies. Living with his classmates who were paying no attention to studying, he found himself soon converted by such an environment, and became less motivated in performing well in his courses. From his second year in college onwards, he began to indulge in campus sports events, travelling and video games, although he later regretted this and found it 'a waste of time'. Suddenly he found himself about to graduate and became quite worried about his future career, as he did not think he had any advantage in finding a satisfactory job. Feeling inadequate about his limited professional knowledge and abilities learnt through college years, he saw the*

importance of improving his competitiveness in the job market by studying for a master's degree, and began to consider the idea of studying abroad.

Scenario II

Student K studied English during her undergraduate years. Like a lot of other students, she did not focus much on her courses in her first year, which she spent mostly on campus activities. Yet from the second year, she began to sense some 'pressures' and concentrated on her study, which later became enjoyable as she began to show a strong interest in translating and interpreting, which she chose as her specialisation. She also did several internships during her undergraduate years, and it was through such internships that she began to regard interpreting as her future career, and to realise that her professional knowledge and skills learnt from undergraduate programmes might not be enough to realise her future aspiration. During one internship in her third year, she began to think about studying for a master's degree abroad as she thought it would be beneficial for her to improve her English in an English-speaking environment.

The two scenarios seem completely different at first sight, however, both show the deep connection between the idea of studying abroad and the students' previous experience of learning academic and professional knowledge in the Chinese higher education. In the following part of this section, I shall analyse the two individuals' undergraduate experiences in China before shedding light on the more general question of Chinese students' motivation for studying abroad for master's programmes in terms of human capital.

Let us start with the case of student **D**. As he said in his interview, the environment of the institution where he did his previous HE had a negative impact on his motivation to study.

To be honest, I had been quite hard-working in the first year, but was converted in the next year... converted by the general environment... I did feel that 60 (the normal passing grade for a course in most Chinese HE institutions) in an exam is enough, since no one cared about high marks, they just wanted to pass. Perhaps the environment of my previous college wasn't very nice, or perhaps it was the case of my own accommodation.

Student D

For students **D**, the previous HE experience in China was very unsatisfactory because he failed to accumulate enough human capital for his career expectation. Calling his undergraduate experience as '*decadent*' and '*a waste of youth*', he was not putting much effort into his courses at the university as most other students around him were not either. Low motivation eventually led to low achievement in academic performance, which brought student **D** many regrets as he regarded the time of undergraduate study as a period to accumulate professional knowledge and skills which can be useful as human capital for his future career. Unfortunately, the environment of his previous HE institution affected his motivation for such accumulation of human capital during his years as an undergraduate. Therefore, he felt that his previous HE experience failed to fulfil the function of human capital accumulation that was necessary for the future career.

It can be seen clearly that most of the students in my research tended to think of their life in different periods, and their life as a university student was considered a transition period from a student to an employee. Therefore, by achieving more in the period of university study, the students can make better preparation for their career. However, for some students such a transitional period was not a satisfactory one. And with time advancing closer and closer to the end of the period, they began to be increasingly worried about the gap between their achievements in the current period and their expectations for the upcoming one. Student **D** was a typical example for this situation. On the one hand, he began to realise that he had no 'advantage' which could make him more competitive in the job market. This made him confused about his future career as he said 'For a time I was in a state of great confusion, knowing nothing about what I was going to do (as a career). You know, when you have no advantage at all, you will never know what you are capable of, or what you want to do.' On the other hand, he also had pressure to gain more human capital from his future aspiration. Wishing to have a greater variety of options in the financial circle for his future career, he also found that his professional proficiency at the time fell short of his expectations for his career. To solve such tension between the limited acquisition of human capital in previous HE and the expectations for future career, spending another year to cultivate his professional proficiency can be understood as an investment on his human capital in preparation for his future career.

Slightly different from student **D**, student **K** focused more on her studies from her second year at university onwards, as she started to '*calm down*' and concentrated

on her courses, as shown in her remark, *'Because you have already had fun for a whole year, you would sense pressures coming along gradually in the next three years in university.'* Such pressures might be associated with her plan of career, as not only did she spend intensive time on her study, but also participated in many other activities such as summer schools and internships. She graduated from a university, quite different from student **D**'s previous college, which might indicate a different kind of academic environment. She was also happy about her previous major — English, which she was interested in and wanted to start her career with jobs related to it. It appeared that she gained quite a lot of human capital and rich social experiences during her undergraduate period, but still, she did not think that was enough and wanted to accumulate more from further study. In a summer school on interpreting during her third year in university, she realized that it would be very helpful to take a master's programme abroad if she wished to have a prosperous future in interpreting.

In the third year, we had to decide our specialisation, and I chose translating and interpreting rather than business English or normal English. I began to get more and more involved with this area as I would like to know about it as much as possible, and that is why I participated in this summer school... Then I decided to study abroad, and began to study even harder as I would need to improve my academic performance. Therefore, my third and fourth years in university were quite busy.

Student K

The decision to study translation and interpreting reflected her aspiration to become an interpreter, and it was this aspiration that made her consider gaining more specialised knowledge and professional skills in this field; in other words more human capital, that would better prepare her for her preferred job.

The acquisition of academic and professional knowledge has also been an important factor in motivating other students (notably including students G, I and J) to study abroad, and such influence tends to have two different mechanisms. For some students, their previous HE experience in China lacked a great amount of professional proficiency, as they were not motivated enough to concentrate on their courses during their undergraduate years. Therefore, they were faced with great pressures in terms of human capital when they started to think about their future career. Such pressures turned out to be an important factor pushing them to seek opportunities to gain more knowledge and skills which could build up their competitiveness for future job opportunities. For those who did consider their future career and were motivated to focus on their courses during university, their previous HE experience, which usually contained professional practices and internships, made them realise the importance of building up their human capital further in order to gain themselves the leverage to excel in their future career. With the growing future aspirations, studying abroad for a master's degree becomes a suitable option to achieve their expectations. Since many of the students in this research showed both features, the mechanism of the influence of professional knowledge is as follows (Figure 2):

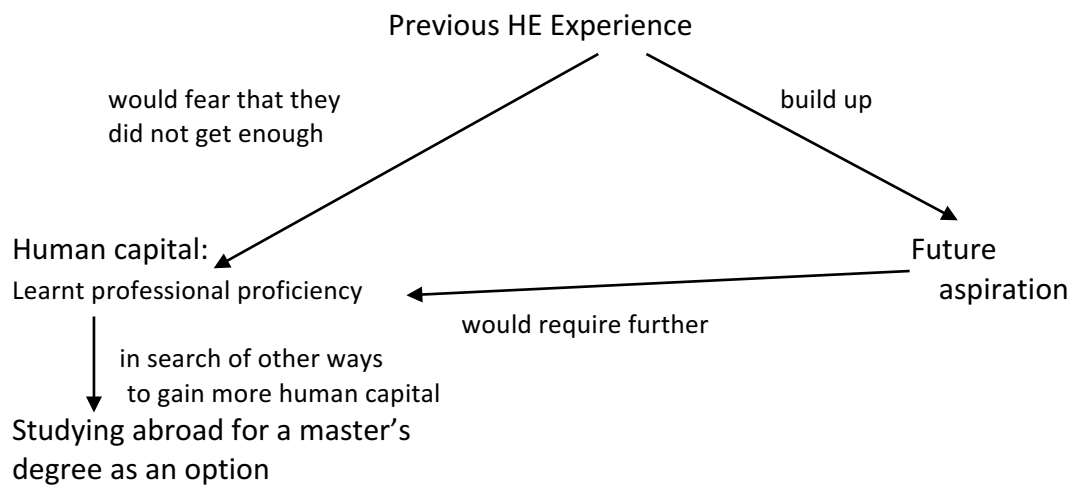


Figure 2

3.3 Value of Certificate

I was in... I have both college and university certificates... I got the undergraduate certificate through an undergraduate diploma programme. As I found it a bit bad since I was studying for my second year in the college, ... I was thinking about the idea of studying abroad. My plan was to take advantage of some short-term plan to get a normal undergraduate degree, that is, to get it through self-studying programme, and then use that as my leverage to apply for a master's degree. After all, the undergraduate certificate I got was useless (for job-finding) ...

...

For me, frankly speaking, my undergraduate certificate was just one that was recognised by the state, which I would use as a springboard. Most companies won't recognise your certificate. Some may think that a proper undergraduate certificate is like a regular army, while mine is like an irregular one.

...

In my college years... I was concentrating on my study in the first year. However, from the second year, I began to feel like... In fact, I hated to be resigned like that.

I didn't perform well in my Gaokao. I failed to enter either the university I desired or any of the other universities that I had applied to. Then I chose to study in a professional college... It would have been worse if I had applied for private institutions, as they would be even less well-recognised. When I was studying my preliminary courses, I happened to know someone who was rejected by some foreign institutions, because they had graduated from private institutions. They just don't recognise you. Although these institutions are recognised by the state, people would think that you come from an institution of a low rank. They won't recognise you even if your institution is a university. I had thought about it quite thoroughly in my high school as I was warned about this...

Student D

One of the most frequently talked themes in virtually all interviews was the value of master's degrees. Yet this was quite a controversial one as different students tended to have different views about what their certificates would mean to them. From the quotation in the beginning of this section, we can see clearly that student **D** was not at all satisfied with his previous certificate. He was unhappy with it because he realised the importance of HE certificates as necessary qualifications for starting his future career and for gaining later promotions, while his own undergraduate certificate was regarded as not very well recognised. To change this disadvantaged position and earn himself a more competitive HE certificate, or in Bourdieu's term, more institutionalised cultural capital, he decided to study abroad for a master's degree. In the following text, I will discuss the students' consideration about the importance of academic certificates for their future

development by analysing their previous experiences in the Chinese HE system and the subsequent future aspirations for their careers.

To understand how they perceived the value of the certificates, it is necessary to know who was motivated to study abroad for the certificate's own sake. From the empirical data, there was one thing in common with these students, i.e. they came from HE institutions that were not so highly-ranked. It is understandable, in terms of Bourdieu's (1984) sense of capital and distinction, that those who graduated from lower-ranked universities might lack the cultural capital, which could be a handicap to their advancement into the job market. Student **C**, for instance, thought the value of a certificate gained studying abroad was important, as she felt inadequate about her previous undergraduate one.

There is another reason, that is, my previous university where I did my undergrad was not very good. It was a Tier-3 university... though it has upgraded into a Tier-2 one. But as you know, even if you could study in a Tier-2 university... you could only be competitive if you graduate from a key (Tier-1) university. In today's situation in China, you have to be a key university graduate. What's more, as one studying in finance, you won't be competitive if you don't have a master's degree, at least in China.

Student C

In this regard, studying abroad became an investment in a student's postgraduate certificate at the cost of the family's economic capital, especially for those who graduated from university with lower rankings. Despite the relatively high financial

cost of studying abroad (compared to postgraduate programmes in China), many students (student **C**, **D**, and **J** for example) would like to make this choice as it could guarantee them certificates that they believe are better recognised in China than those they could get in China. Many students also believed that studying abroad could be less costly because it could save time, as many Chinese postgraduate programmes take three years to complete, while the same programme could be one or two years shorter in a foreign country. Student **D**, for instance, had expressed his consideration about studying abroad in terms of the value of the certificate:

So, after coming here to study a master's degree, I believe I can thus make amendment for my previous disadvantage. At least I should be the same as other postgraduate students once I have graduated. I won't be too smug about my overseas educational background, as I think it would be equal to the master's degrees in China. You may say that I only studied abroad for one year, which is a bit crap, so I don't think I would have much advantage over them. But anyway, we are all postgraduate students...

*Student **D***

Different students in my study stress various levels of emphasis on the value of a certificate. Some students, for example student **G**, did not prioritise that much about the certificate and said in his interview that he regarded the acquisition of human capital such as professional knowledge as more important than the value of his master's degree.

I think for most of those who study abroad there are two main kinds of people: some came to study abroad in order to get the certificates, so that they could have good certificates when they go back; others may come to really learn something. Of course, I don't see these two as contradictory, but I do think there is sort of a compromise between these two sometimes. As for me, if I had not come here to study such a hard-core subject, I may have been admitted by a better university. But if I choose to learn interpreting, or TESOL, which have higher entry requirements, I would end up studying in a university that is lower in level compared to the situation if I choose to study some more popular courses... such as human resources. Eventually I decided to learn something more practical, which is interpreting, in this university.

...

I think the matter at issue is whether you want the certificate or to learn something. If I were to come and study HR... It is not that I look down upon HR, but I do think some postgrad courses are not very professional. In this case, the only thing that can stand for your year as a postgraduate student is your certificate... But since I have come here to study interpreting, I would have to make a living with interpreting, my certificate won't be that helpful. 'Cos I will be faced with a situation where I have to prove myself with my professional skills, my certificate won't be very important then.

Student G

He claimed that such a dilemma between the learning of professional knowledge and the value of certificates was because of the nature of his major. He considered

the learning of professional knowledge as the main concern rather than the certificate, but it was a bit more complicated than that for him and for other students. Looking back into his previous HE experiences we find that he already had a lot of information about the employment situation in China with his previous internship experiences, and was aware that his undergraduate degree would not be a big obstacle for him to find a job. However, he realised that it would not be so easy for him to find the job that he wished to do when he graduated from his previous university, not because of the value of his certificate, but because of his insufficient English proficiency, which was the main human capital he needed to achieve his career aspiration. Therefore, he would prioritise on the professional knowledge and skills rather than the certificate, as it was further human capital that he needed to accumulate for his career, not the distinction in academic qualification.

But for student **D**, the situation was totally different. Having graduated from a much lower-ranked professional college, he saw his certificate as a great handicap to his future in the first place. Therefore, when making the decision about studying abroad, he found the necessity to put the value of his certificate as a high priority. Yet this did not mean that he did not consider professional proficiency in his further HE investment. On the contrary, he also mentioned that he intended to learn as much professional knowledge as he could during his studying abroad, unlike student **G**'s indifferent attitude towards a certificate. Such a difference may not be merely an isolated example, as many other students in my research shared the same pattern. Students who prioritise the certificate (like student **B**, **C** and **J**)

also expressed the wish to acquire more professional abilities for their careers, while students who were more driven by human capital (like student **K**) did not talk much about the perceived value of the certificate from studying abroad. Such might indicate that the students had a layered imaginary of what was required for their career, with the value of a certificate being imagined as more like a fundamental stepping-stone for their careers and therefore considered prior (in the sense of time) to the academic/professional knowledge, while the latter being considered as more important after they could guarantee their jobs. This imaginary might be associated with Collins' (2013) argument about the transnational imaginary of the global HE system. This layered imaginary could explain why students like **D** tended to care about both, but students like **G** mainly focused on the human capital. There was a hint when student **D** talked about this issue:

After all, you will know what's your aim here as a postgraduate student. Some come to learn something, while some others come mainly for the certificate... My own goal here, in fact, lies somewhere in between. I want my degree to be guaranteed, while at the same time I also wish to learn as much as I can. After all, it is sort of an investment, and your investment should pay off.

Student D

3.4 Sense of Distinction

My parents might have been influenced by their colleagues and former classmates, and thought that sending their children out is something... I mean, my Mom would

always believe that, since she is working in a bank, that since she saw the chief of her bank send their daughter to study abroad, sending her own children out might be beneficial for me to get one step upward. I think it was this that she noticed, rather forward-looking really... They believed that this might be helpful for me, that's it... She didn't research much about it really, just felt it would be helpful.

Student F

From student F's words about her parents' consideration about her studying abroad, there was something different from and more important than the academic qualifications or professional knowledge that they wished her to acquire from studying abroad. It was the experience of studying and living in another country itself that they were primarily concerned about to further their daughter's HE. It is clearly that student F adopted this way of thinking as she believed that studying abroad would be a special experience that could 'broaden her horizon'. Many other students in my research shared this view about the experience of studying abroad, which they believed to be beneficial for their future life and career. Comments like 'studying abroad could broaden my horizon', or 'I would like to experience something different from studying abroad' have been quite pervasive among almost every single interview in my research, although many of them could not explicitly explain why they considered studying abroad in this way. To shed light on their understanding of the experience of studying abroad, I shall analyse their previous HE experiences in China and their future expectations in terms of distinction and cultural capital in the following texts.

As an important form, the institutionalised cultural capital, whose manifestation is the academic qualification, needs a bit more elaboration here as it can also be the source of distinction. For some students in my research, the value of their certificates from studying abroad was not only restricted to the potential for them to find their preferred jobs, but also about being exceptional. For example, neither student **E** nor student **H** agreed that the certificates they would get from studying abroad could be helpful for their future career. Claiming not to be interested in academic background, however, both expressed that they were hoping to go to a higher-ranked university if they could. This showed that they cared a great deal about the value of the academic qualification not because they expected it to be practically useful for their career but because they regarded it as a token of distinction, making them different from their peers.

For most students, the sense of distinction was more associated with scarcity of overseas educational experience. In a qualitative research project, it is, of course, not possible to measure how scarce the number of master's students from the Chinese postgraduate population is. However, the issue here is not the real scarcity of students who have been abroad, but how the students imagined about the scarcity of their experiences, which could be intelligible from a research of the individual level. Paradoxically enough, although many students disagreed that their master's degrees from abroad would be helpful for their future career, as they feared that there were 'too many Chinese overseas students', most had a positive view about the value of their experiences of studying abroad, as such

experiences could make them somewhat different from their peers, and therefore distinctive.

Coming back to the case of student F, we can see the link clearly. As her mother noticed that some of her senior colleagues sent their children to study abroad, she interpreted this as connected with their social status. Studying abroad, therefore, was not only understood to be about the certificate and acquisition of professional knowledge, but was also a life experience that is associated with one's higher socioeconomic background. If people of higher socioeconomic background prefer to send their children to study abroad as a reflection of their social status, then sending her own daughter abroad would be easily understandable as it might bring her more possibility of upward mobility. This accords with the argument (Fong, 2011; Liu, 2011; Collins, 2013) of the rising of the Chinese middle class as well as the growing parental expectation for their children's future development and upward mobility.

Her previous HE experiences strengthened this way of thinking about studying abroad and distinction as she began to think about her future development. As she interned in a foreign company during her third year in university, she *'got to know about a new group of people'*, which, as she said, clearly influenced her thinking about life and career. She began to value her own development much more, and not only wanted to study but also start her career in another country as she began to prefer a different life path and a bit more uncertainty:

And another change was that: since our boss then, our boss in Chongqing, was a man of quite some individuality, even a bit dissolute sometimes... I think he had quite a significant influence on me. My boss had graduated from Tsinghua University, and did his master's in Columbia University before starting his career in The Bank of New York and reached vice president. Yet he quit his job, and started to do his current job. You know, we can always make a change, go to somewhere else, which I think was a totally different point of view. Maybe I was quite influenced in this aspect. I began to ask why I must have a future that I can see through at this moment...

Student F

Her changed preference for difference and uncertainty was a result of her increased aspirations for her future career. As she interned in her previous company, she saw people with different life paths and what she perceived to be more colourful experiences. Fascinated by such life paths and experiences, she also wanted to break the conventional ideas of life and have a different life path of her own. Her previous boss's studying and working experiences in the United States might have been a hint for her about the possible link between living experience abroad and individual development, which for her could mean a more distinctive self-development with more cultural capital. Such might indicate that with the rising of Chinese middle class, Chinese young people are not only seeking upward social mobility, but also an increasing level of individuality, which they consider deeply associated with their sense of distinction.

There has been other evidence suggesting that one's future aspiration can be an important stimulus when considering studying abroad for master's degrees after graduation from university. Student **C**, for instance, decided to study abroad for a master's degree in banking because she wanted to start her future career in a foreign bank, which as she said would have much higher entry requirements as well as standards for its employees, including customer service manager which she had been considering. She also wished to work in what she saw as a more advanced circle so that she would be communicating with people of a higher socioeconomic status.

Another factor that I considered was the customers. If I were to work in X bank, it is a world-famous bank after all, so the people I would be communicating with won't be that bad... how should I put it... petty citizens. Your customers would be slightly more advanced, and therefore your social network would be different. Otherwise, you might be working in a domestic bank, which is in a tiny place, and you might find yourself dealing with those petty citizens... So, your social circle would be completely different. The potential benefits might be that once I decide to create my own business, I would have direct customer information.

Student C

What is interesting here is that student **C** had quite a strong opinion about the labour market she would be joining despite that she had never worked at all before coming to study abroad. This might suggest that she had constructed an image of the job market in China and would therefore make active preparation for it. Such an imaginary had been gradually generated during her years studying at

university. As she said in her interview, she had been thinking about her future life and career since her second year in university, and began to make her career plan step by step in her last two undergraduate years. Apart from an investment to her human capital, she also saw her studying abroad as an important life experience, as she said, *'Youth is but a couple of years... I wish to live a more colourful life. I am truly grateful that my parents provided me with such an opportunity to come here, though only for one year. I will really cherish it, cos it's so precious.'*

Again, parents had been important mediators in the consideration that studying abroad could make their children more distinctive. It is quite clear that parents will have a great influence on their children's thinking about studying abroad as many students' idea of overseas education come from their parents. Student A, for example, mentioned about his parents' attitude toward studying abroad and concluded that it was a general one:

Actually, in China, the previous generation, the majority of them would never have the opportunity to go abroad to study. So, this would be their kind of hole in their experiences... some lack of their personal experiences, so they would think that 'you could achieve this for us', and 'we know how important it is for education, but we didn't have the opportunity'. 'You should cherish this opportunity.'

Student A

Although it may not be the main reason for parents in every family, it is quite interesting to look at the scarcity of study abroad in the students' parents' generation. Among those participants I interviewed in this research, almost none

mentioned that either of their parent had studied abroad. This is not a surprise, surely, as a recent report on overseas education by New Oriental Education & Technology Group Inc. (2015) indicated that only a very small proportion of the overseas students' parents had studied abroad themselves. Therefore, it is not too difficult to understand why many Chinese students still believe that their overseas education is scarce and treasurable even though they believe there are many Chinese overseas students, which lessens the value of their master's certificates. In the case of student H, his father had studied abroad, and encouraged his son to study a master's degree abroad as he thought the experience would be valuable and somewhat distinctive. This is quite in accordance with Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural capital: the parents who had not studied abroad encouraged their children to study abroad for more accumulation of cultural capital, which might build up their children's distinction and bring them upward mobility; while those who had studied abroad also persuaded their children to take this approach for the reproduction of the cultural capital, which could help them maintain their socioeconomic status.

For many students, the benefits of studying abroad in terms of cultural capital could also mean certain improvements. Different from professional knowledge or practical abilities, such improvements, as they understand it, could make them somewhat more mature and sophisticated persons with many plausible qualities that are essential for both their future life and career.

... studying here is very independent. In China, just like I said, it's quite like management. Everything you do has been already arranged by your teachers, by

your tutors. You don't have to care about everything about your study, cos you just follow up your schedule, (then) you will get the mark... But here you have to be very self-motivated.

...

people who study in China are not very self-motivated. Even in my university — it was quite a good university, to me — but everybody who is studying in the library, in the labs, they are always sleeping. But here, I have never seen anyone sleeping in a library... in China the pressure is not from yourself. I just persuade myself to stay here. I cannot study, but I'm here, so I can tell myself 'yes I am studying', so nobody can blame me.

Student A

For student **A**, the most important quality that he learnt from studying abroad was self-motivation, which he concluded to be something that had been lacking among many Chinese students. Since he believed self-motivation was of vital importance for one's career and self-development, studying abroad can thus be an important way for the students to build up this quality and therefore become distinctive among their peers. He began to realise the importance of self-motivation when he was working in China before studying abroad. At that time, some of his friends had already been studying abroad, and when he was communicating with them, he was much impressed by their 'special qualities' gained while studying abroad. These 'special qualities' including self-motivation became one of the main motivations for him to study abroad. For student **A**, the most important quality that he learnt from studying abroad was self-motivation, which he concluded to

be something that had been lacking among many Chinese students. Since he believed self-motivation was of vital importance for one's career and self-development, studying abroad can thus be an important way for the students to build up this quality and therefore become distinctive among their peers. It was not only studying that the students were looking at when talking about the acquired qualities from studying abroad. In fact, the 'self-motivation,' as student A described it, is only one aspect of a more general individual quality that many students expressed their hope of gaining through studying in another country, and I shall term such quality as independence and maturity.

Considering the students' previous experiences in the Chinese HE system, it is not difficult to see why university graduates would need such independence and maturity finding themselves in a disadvantaged position in the job market. Just like other participants in this research, student A said there is a generally believed difference between the Chinese educational system and the Western one. Many students in this research expressed their discontent with the Chinese HE system for its restrictive policy on their freedom of choice over their curricula and the limited student support on their careers. Such policy, they concluded, discouraged them from thinking about future career and building up their independence and sense of responsibility. For example, student C said there was hardly any information about employability when she was studying her undergraduate programme in China, and student E said university students are always treated differently from other members of the society, making them somewhat free from their legal responsibilities. These deficiencies in their previous HE experiences thus

became a handicap for them to adjust themselves to the labour market, as student **E** said:

For example, when senior students in Chinese universities graduate, many of them would complain a lot when they take internships as they feel very adapted. They also complain about the colleagues in the companies, accusing them of being too cold towards them, teaching them nothing. Why do I have to teach you? You come here to do jobs, and I will give you salaries! You're not coming to pay us tuition fees! Some of them cannot even use a printer. I often hear about the complaints from students in China that they can learn nothing from their jobs. They always need others' guidance and teaching. They are already senior students, yet they are still thinking in this way, which made me so speechless. And then they felt that the society was so cold... I do think these are just childish.

Student E

Such a negative attitude to newly-graduated students does show quite a general picture of the scenario when a senior university student starts to work in the labour market. There was supportive data from the other side of the story that confirmed student **E**'s view about the university graduates' lack of important qualities for the job market. Many other students also expressed discontent about their previous HE experience failing to bring them the required qualities for the labour market, and the great challenge when they were just about to do their first internship or formal job. Student **B**, for example, said she felt she was doing nothing serious at all but trivial things all the time, and therefore learned nothing about how to work properly. Many students also admitted that they had been not

independent enough to meet the requirements of the job market, and wished to improve it through studying abroad. Studying abroad, therefore, can be understood as a time of transition from life in the Chinese HE system into the new life in the labour market, since the former in some circumstances fails to provide the students with the necessary individual qualities for their future career, such as independence, self-motivation, and responsibility.

Sometimes such disappointment came from the students' interaction with their parents. One of the most typical examples is student **E**. Although a relatively older student with eight years working experience in the field of public relations, student **E** still cannot feel totally independent as she explained how her life directly transferred from being managed by her parents to one managed by her husband. Born into a well-educated but very conservative family, she grew up in a very tightly-knit family background, following strict traditional values:

Both my parents are doctors; my grandfather is also a doctor. Every family member of mine except me is a doctor, and they cannot be more conservative. They would never ever change their jobs, and they would work in the same hospital for all their life... When I was in high school, no one dared make telephone calls to me, not even girls.

...

(While in university) they telephoned me from time to time in the evening. They only phoned the landline telephone, even if I got a mobile...

Student E

Such was the familial environment that she later found she had no independence in her life. She regarded this to be a disadvantage, which could affect her performance in her career. This might be an extreme example, but many other students also discovered the importance of independence as they thought about the motivation to study abroad. Student **B**, for example said in hindsight that *'I learnt about dealing with a lot of things on my own... Now I feel I am a superwoman, I can do anything on my own.'* Student **G** also concluded studying abroad as a transition from a student to a person more adapted to society.

3.5 Conclusion

In general, it has been clear that the students' motivation to study abroad was associated with their previous experiences in the Chinese HE system. More specifically, the students' studying abroad can be understood as both a reaction to their previous HE experience in China, and a strategy to get themselves more prepared for their future career and human development. There were two ways that their previous HE experience could be the **push-factor** to their motivation for studying abroad. On the one hand, many students were disappointed with their previous HE experiences for various reasons: some disliked their previous major and did not get the chance to change it; some felt they lacked academic/professional knowledge; some were not confident enough about their certificates; and some felt they lacked certain personal qualities and experiences that could make them distinctive. On the other hand, it could sometimes be an indirect push-factor, as many students were inspired to study abroad because of their future expectations formed during their previous HE: some students found

subjects in which they found interested and saw prosperity; some aspired to work in certain fields that required more professional qualifications; some simply expected to have life-paths on their own.

Pushed by the previous HE experience, studying abroad was considered as an investment in the students' future. With the cost of economic capital including time and money, the students expected studying abroad to bring them both human capital and cultural capital. The reward of human capital focused on the acquisition of specialised knowledge and skills, in some cases different from their previous subjects of study, which could be useful for the students to find more skill intensive jobs in their preferred fields. Cultural capital focused more on the value of the certificates and experience of studying in a foreign country. It was generally believed that the experience of studying abroad could bring the students a greater sense of distinction and could enrich them with certain individual qualities that were required but scarce among Chinese university students.

Another thing worth noticing is that female students tended to think about the benefit of studying abroad in a similar way as their male counterpart. In most cases, female students showed comparable aspiration for future career development to male students, and therefore similar motivation for the accumulation of human and cultural capital through studying abroad. Since most of the students were the only children in their families, this phenomenon was in line with Fong's (2002) argument of the empowerment of girls under the Chinese One-Child Policy.

Chapter IV Studying Abroad and Chinese Students' Involvement in Globalisation in the Context of a Rising China

Before coming to study in the UK, student F had been interned in a foreign company in a large Chinese city for a few months. Such internship experience had had a significant influence on her as she began to think about her future life and career in a different way from what she used to do. Instead of living with a foreseeable life path, she began to expect more uncertainty in her future because she felt that she 'could go much further', for example, she would not limit herself to start her career in China as she saw the possibility of working and living in other countries in the future.

She owed this change to the environment in the company where she did the internship, and where she knew a different group of people from her former friends and classmates. She admired her boss a great deal, as he chose to quit his previous job as vice president in a bank in the US in order to develop a business back in China. This way of thinking about career had a great influence on her own career plan, as she started to doubt her previous thoughts about looking for a future career.

Although this experience happened after her decision to study abroad, it managed to change her thinking about the meaning of studying abroad, as she began to consider looking for a job in the UK after graduating from her master's degree. Thus, it seemed that everything that would happen later might change significantly.

The experience of internship in a foreign company had a great influence on student F's thinking about her life, her career and her future expectations. What is worth noticing here is that such an internship experience could not only be understood as a previous working experience, it was also an involvement with the globalisation process which had been taking place in today's China. Student F was not the only one that had been influenced by their involvement with globalisation. There had been plenty of data from my interviews which showed that such an involvement had a significant influence upon the students' understanding about their life as well as the world. Such influence was highly likely to be associated with their motivation to study abroad, for just like student F, it could be something that would bring them different possibilities and more diverse life paths.

It was also shown that many students would expect more involvement in the globalisation process in their future life and career. Not only inspired by their previous experience with the globalisation process, many of the students were also motivated by the reflection of the world dynamics and the global hierarchy of HE. Many students were convinced that by studying abroad in a more prestigious university in the developed world, they could have a more advanced position in the globalisation process, which could increase the involvement with the world in their future career. For example, a lot of students revealed that they would prefer to work in foreign companies after graduating from their master's degrees abroad, with some of them believing that such careers would bring them more opportunities for intercultural communication. Studying abroad could then be

understood as a strategy to achieve their expected involvement in the globalisation process in China.

What was also influencing the students' involvement with the globalisation was their reflection about their country. Although most students would like to get more involved with the globalisation process, and thus have cultural affinity to the Western culture, they also shared an optimistic attitude and expectation for the future development of China. Such confidence about China had also been influential for their thinking about the world as well as their future career, as most of the participants decided to go back to China for their career development since they had great expectations for China's future.

In the following, I shall analyse the students' involvement with the globalisation process in two sections, i.e. their involvement in globalisation prior to studying abroad, and their expectation for such involvement in the future. I will also analyse the possible implications between this involvement and their motivation to study abroad. For each of the two sections, I will discuss two aspects, which are the involvement (or expected involvement) in globalisation, and individual qualities the students gained from (or expected to gain from) globalisation. There will also be a third section about the influence of the students' optimism and expectations for the future development of China. I will discuss how the students think about the future of China and how such thinking influences their own future careers and the globalisation process, which might be closely associated with their decision to study abroad.

4.1 Chinese students' involvement in globalisation prior to their studying abroad

Looking back at the case of student F, her previous internship experience in the foreign company can be understood as a personal involvement with the globalisation process in China. Although this experience did not grant her the direct opportunities to communicate with people from other countries, she was still greatly influenced by the different corporate culture of the Western society, which had a significant effect on her thinking and aspiration for both her life and career. One of the influences of working in a foreign company was that she worked with people who had more association with foreign countries. For example, she was deeply impressed and therefore influenced by his previous boss, who had studied and worked in the United States before going back to China to start a different business. Inspired by her previous boss's different and innovative lifestyle, she began to expect different kinds of opportunity and more uncertainty in her future. It was then that she became more determined about studying abroad and began to think about looking for more possibilities in her future career.

It can be seen in the data that the communication with people who have had more connection with foreign countries also shaped student F's expectation for a different kind of lifestyle that might be related to people's studying or living experiences abroad, and it was such expectation that confirmed and justified her decision of studying in a foreign country. This coincides with Collins' (2012) argument about the '*transnational imaginary*' in the developed world, and may suggest that students' previous working experience in foreign companies serve as

a possible source of such imaginary. Another indication from this was that those who had experience abroad could be the agent for intercultural communication as it could inspire Chinese young people to build up the imaginary of the globalisation and the aspiration to pursue different life-paths.

It is worth noticing that student **F** expressed that she was inspired to have more 'uncertainty' in her future, instead of some foreseeable routine life path like many of her peers. Such a clear emphasis on individuality reflects that her contact with international working environments had not only made her motivated to become more involved with the world, but had also given her with a different way of thinking about her individual value and achievement. Inspired by her former boss, she would also like to live a life that was not restricted by the norms and traditions, but be free to achieve her individual development. In this case, studying abroad can be understood as an opportunity for her to break the limitation of social conventions and pursue her own individual achievement. It is not a surprise to find the influence of globalisation on a Chinese student's aspiration for individuality, as it was in accordance with Yan's (2009) argument regarding the influence of globalisation on rural Chinese young people's individualisation, which often goes side by side with the detraditionalisation of the social conventions and expectation affecting the individual's life.

Clearly student **F** was not an exception among the participants of my interviews. There were other students who were inspired to study abroad by their previous exposure to the globalisation process in China. Student **A**, for example, had previous working experience which included frequent communication with

foreign people. As discussed in the previous chapter, he found that his lack of English proficiency restricted his capability in his position, so he began to look for effective ways to improve his English, which later involved studying abroad. However, it would only be one side of the story to interpret his study abroad as an attempt to enrich his human capital including English because it could not answer the question of why he wished to build up such human capital that would make him suitable for jobs with more intercultural communication. He may, for example, change his job to positions that were less reliant on interaction with foreign people, which was obviously not what he would have liked. The probable reason for not choosing this solution was that he thought positively about intercultural communication. Therefore, although he found his previous working experience unsatisfactory and difficult, it was also inspiring as it built up his positive imaginary of the globalisation and intercultural communication.

Here we can find that the learning of English might have another meaning for some Chinese students, as it reflects the course of globalisation that is taking place in China and how today's Chinese students react to such a process. On the one hand, since China is becoming more and more globalised, there is an increasing number of companies that are recruiting employees with a better English proficiency, which is necessary for the required intercultural communication in these positions. The students, therefore, find English is an important tool which can make them more competitive in the globalised environment. On the other hand, students in China also see jobs associated with other countries as desirable,

and therefore would like to improve their English skills when, in their positions, they find that their international communication skills are inadequate.

The students' previous major might be influential in their attitude toward globalisation. For example, those who had most frequent involvement with the globalisation process before coming to study abroad were previous English majors, and they all appreciated their previous experience of international communication which brought them inspiration for studying abroad in return. Student **K**, for instance, had plenty of international experiences when she was studying her undergraduate programme in China. Her internship experience at a major commerce fair in the south Chinese city of Guangzhou was very important for her as she gained both the professional expertise in interpreting and the opportunity of intercultural communication with people from other countries. She was quite pleased about this piece of experience as she remarked:

Now I think that period was rather interesting, as I got to know many foreign friends. That could be the period of my life in which I had most communication with foreign people...

...

I think this is quite positive. Since China has always been a rather traditional country. Even now there are still a lot of people who think in a very traditional way. People in my parents' and grandparents' generations have difficulty in getting used to new things, and they may be quite unfamiliar with foreign people, well at least in my family...

Student K

It is interesting that she talked here about the difference between her and the previous generations. She seemed aware of the fact that by having much more communication with people from other countries she was heading in a different direction from her parents and grandparents. In this sense, getting more involved with the globalisation process means breaking the tradition, and therefore can be understood as a behaviour that mainly belongs to the young generation, making them different from the previous generations. This reminded me of Yan's (2009) arguments of detraditionalisation and the growing focus on the individual. Again, globalisation was playing a significant role in the individualisation process as many students had very different experiences of intercultural communication from their parents. For example, only one of the participants' parents had ever studied abroad, and many others revealed in their interviews that their parents have never been abroad or never been to any Western country. If these students' generation is having much more intercultural communication than the previous generations, such communication or involvement with the world could become a typical characteristic of the students' generation, and therefore become an important sense of identity for that generation. There was a hint when student F mentioned, with great admiration, that many of her undergraduate classmates had already been to many foreign countries. Therefore, by studying abroad and getting more involved with the world, the students were pursuing their own individual values and achievements and breaking away from the conventional ways of thinking which had been predominant in their parents' generation.

Such cross-generational dynamic can also be found in some other students. For example, student **G** said in his interview that his parents had been quite traditional in his education, an education that placed a great deal of emphasis on Confucian ideas. He also found people in his parents' generation to be generally traditional and many of them held very sceptical views about the Western way of thinking and education. Yet he had much cultural affinity with the Western society and was quite open to becoming more involved with the rest of the world, or at least the Western world. Majoring in English, he Since he was also majoring in English, he participated in a lot of internships and other activities in various international companies and organisations. For instance, he worked as a translator in an international tourist company which inspired his interest in travelling to different places outside China. From student **G**'s case, we can see that the students' previous exposure to the globalisation process might have significant influence on their reflection on globalisation and the developed world, which could develop into a positive imaginary of the developed world. Such an imaginary encouraged the students to break away from the conventional thoughts that were pervasive among their parents and to pursue their individual aspirations. Studying abroad for a master's degree became the method to achieve this individualistic pursuit.

Student **E**, from her high school years onward, had much more severe confrontation with her parents' traditional ways of thinking and behaviour. She found her parents, as well as many other members of her extensive family, to be '*extremely traditional*'. Below is how she described her parents and her familial environment:

Both my parents are doctors, as well as my grandfather. Everyone in my family except for me is a doctor, and they live in an extremely traditional way. If ever anything like smoking, drinking, or falling in love in high school happened to me, they wouldn't accept it and would be furious. No one dared to telephone me when I was in high school, not even girls.

Student E

Yet such a traditional familial background proved not to be the barrier of her getting involved with the world and pursuing her individuality. Despite her conservative parents, she began to have more and more involvement with the globalisation process in China as some of her friends started to work in foreign companies that involved a lot of communications with the outer world. She also found it a common phenomenon that many people of her age already had the idea of studying abroad. Having had frequent communication with some of her friends who were planning to study abroad, she began to think positively about studying abroad, as well as the possibility of getting more understanding about foreign countries, which finally motivated her to take the route herself. From here we can see that the different attitudes between the students and their parents towards globalization might result from their different levels of exposure to intercultural communication. Since many students found themselves more involved with the intercultural communication than their parents, they tended to have a more positive attitude toward the globalisation process. What was also noticeable from the intergenerational gap was the trends of individualisation among some of the students in my research. As previously argued, these students found their previous

experiences of intercultural communication desirable, and therefore found it an important way to break the traditional thinking of their parents' generation and realise their own individual development.

But for many other students, their positive reflection about the globalisation was not that distant from and sometimes even inspired by their parents'. For some students, such imaginary was about the HE system. Student **A**, for instance, said he believed that the Western educational system was 'more advanced' than the Chinese counterpart, and he thought this was a common attitude toward the Western HE system. It is justifiable for him to have such attitude as we can see that many people in his close social network shared the same feeling. His parents had wanted him to study abroad for years as they believed it would be an invaluable experience to learn from the Western HE but were unable to achieve that for themselves. Student **A** also noticed the change in some of his friends who had studied abroad (mostly in Western countries), and he owed such change to the different environment and HE system. He was not alone, as many other students, like student **B**, **D**, and **I** also thought quite highly of the Western HE, and thought they could 'learn a lot' from studying abroad.

But in other cases, there was a general admiration for the Western society. Like Fong's (2011) argument regarding the admiration for *the developed world citizenship*, many students in my research also showed great affinity to their destination country in terms of economy, culture and global power. Student **D**, for instance, kept referring the UK as an 'old capitalist country' in the focus group. He was convinced about that even after he went to study in the UK as he commented

in his interview that the country was much more developed socially and culturally (than China), despite he admitted the fact that the infrastructure in the UK was no better than that in China. Such admiration was not restricted to the students, and there have been examples that parents sharing the same attitude toward the Western society as their children. For example, student **B** mentioned in her interview that her parents thought the UK was 'much better than China', and she concluded that such opinion was a common one among the Chinese people. This might suggest that the admiration was transmissible, with the students' parents being the mediators.

What was also in accordance with Fong's (2011) analysis of Chinese HE migration was that many students in my research had clear focus on a certain set of countries which they believed to be more developed and therefore more attractive. The slight difference was that my participants tended to be only focused on the Western developed countries (or as student **D** put it, the Anglophone as well as Western European countries), while Fong (2011) concluded that the list also included other developed countries such as Japan and Singapore. Such a difference might be related to the sample of my research, which included only students who studied in the UK. The focus on a certain group of countries might reflect the students' imaginary of the world hierarchy. For example, student **A** expressed that he was only informed about the *big* and influential countries such as the US and the UK, while having little knowledge about other *smaller* countries which made him feel 'guilty' when he was communicating with the Romanian interviewer. Clearly the difference between big and small here referred not to

geographical size but the international image, power and influence, and such a differentiation showed his imaginary of the world system consisting of countries with different levels of development and importance. Yet he did not wish to get rid of this way of thinking about the world completely as he mentioned that he preferred the location of the UK to that of China because he was more interested in countries close to the UK (which he found more diverse and attractive) than that surrounding China (which he commented as 'only Japan and Korea around China').

For some students, studying abroad could facilitate them with the qualities that would be more helpful for their development into a more *globalised individual*. As I analysed in the previous chapter, student **A** was also inspired to study abroad because of his former classmates who studied abroad prior to him. He believed that those who had studied abroad had some certain qualities that made them distinctive from the others and therefore more competitive in their future career. But if we look at this in the perspective of globalisation, we can have a different interpretation for such thinking. Since students who had studied abroad are the agents of the globalisation process, what student **A** admired about the overseas students was their experience of studying in other countries and therefore their having had more involvement with the world. The 'distinctive qualities' of those students he talked about can be understood as an embodiment of their experiences with different social and educational systems from the Chinese. Through them student **A** saw what was required of him to be a globalised

individual, a quality he saw as favourable, and how to acquire an advanced position in his imaginary of the globalisation.

One influential factor in a student's involvement with the globalisation process might be personal or familial connection with other countries. Although previous international migration experience could be rare among Chinese overseas student for master's degrees, there is one example in this research which shed light on a different perspective to studying abroad.

Student H found himself rather different from most of the Chinese students in his present university as he had previous experience of living in another country. Having most of his childhood memories in Australia rather than China, he found himself in a very different situation when making the decision to study abroad and what it meant for him to have the experience of overseas education. In fact, he was not that keen on studying abroad since he had already got a stable job with adequate salary and satisfaction, a serious relationship, and even an estate in Beijing. He was not that curious about life in the Western society as he had grown up in Australia. His studying abroad was totally his father's initiative, and student H was against the idea in the beginning, but later gave way to his father's plan as the latter insisted on it. Just like what he said in the interview:

'Can you just imagine it, if you were me, and you already have a decent life in China, with enough salary, a property, a car, and a serious relationship, what sort of motivation could it be that drives you to study for a master's degree in another country at the expense of all these?! Parents' demand! Such a dutiful son I am!

What can I get from studying abroad? I don't expect it to be helpful for my job at all, nor for others stuffs as well.'

It all started a few months before he went to study abroad, when he was at a dinner party with his father and some of his relatives including his uncle, who, during the party had been very proud of his son as he was studying for a master's degree in Australia. Student H's father suddenly became bit agitated and soon determined to send his own son to study abroad.

Coincidental as it seemed, the motivation for student H to study abroad was far more than the mere agitation of his father during a family dinner party. The case of student H was very different from the rest of the participants in this research for many reasons. For example, if we look at the family situation of student H, we can easily find that he came from a family that have frequent interaction with other countries in the world, which made him an exception since most other participants revealed that their parents had rather limited first-hand information about foreign countries. Having grown up in Australia, he had a very different kind of childhood and had begun to realise the differences between China and Western countries when he was a schoolboy. His father had much involvement with the world, too. As a PhD in economics from a top Chinese university, he once studied in Ukraine and thus had plenty of knowledge about different social and educational systems in the world. There were also plenty of international migration experiences in his extensive family. His aunt (i.e. father's sister), for instance, was an immigrant in Australia and later got married to a local man. The existence of a relative in Australia had proved to be a driving force for many of his

cousins to study there, as he recalled in his interview: *'many of the children in my extensive family, just like this cousin, they had been really crazy about going to Australia (to study). Just because my aunt has settled down there, they have been charging like a flock of birds, as if they have a base in Australia or something.'*

It is important to understand student **H**'s international migration experience in the context of the international communication in his family. In student **H**'s case for example, although he concluded that he had already a satisfactory life and could get nothing that was beneficial for his future from studying abroad, he still found himself studying for a master's degree in another country because his father requested him to do so. His father wanted him to study abroad not only because he thought it would be beneficial for his son in terms of life experience and cultural capital, but also because his family generally had relatively frequent intercultural communication, and he would like his son to carry on with it. Therefore, for student **H**, the opportunity for intercultural communication was an important form of acquisition of cultural capital, because his parents and other family members had a lot of previous involvement with the globalisation and saw such experiences as valuable for the reproduction of cultural capital and distinction. Thus, although it was not student **H**'s own desire to study for a master's degree in another country, he was finally persuaded by his father to take that approach.

In many other cases, there was also the influence of familial connections with foreign countries that inspired the students to study abroad. Typically, a family's international connection tended to be relevant to the students' choice of destination for studying abroad. For example, student **B** had relatives who studied

abroad in the UK, which became their destination for overseas education. Student C also came to study in the UK because of her familial connection with the country. Her aunt (i.e. mother's sister) had married a British man and become an immigrant in the UK, which motivated her to choose it as her destination. What is worth noticing here is that she was not only influenced by her aunt's experiences of international communication, but also by her British uncle's personality. As a senior man whom she described as someone who kept pursuing his dream, she was much impressed by his story and thus inspired to realise her own individual achievements. This might also have had something to do with her motivation to study abroad as she said that she would greatly appreciate the experience of studying in another country, and that she had been thinking a lot about the meaning of her life and what she would wish to achieve in the future.

4.2 Chinese students' expectation for involvement in globalisation in their future life and careers after studying abroad

As analysed in the previous chapter, studying abroad had often been regarded as a kind of transitional period for the students to transform themselves from students into future employees who would compete in the job market. Empirical data from their interviews indicated that many students expected to have more involvement in the globalisation process in their future life and career. Some students preferred to find jobs abroad, which they considered beneficial for keeping themselves in the advanced positions of their imagined world system. For those who planned to go back to China, most were also concerned about their involvement with globalisation. They hoped to work in either foreign companies

or those with frequent intercultural communication. Studying abroad became the important way to promote the students' ability and opportunity to communicate with people of other countries, and were thus considered as beneficial for their future involvement with globalisation no matter whether they chose to start their careers abroad or back in China. In this section, I shall analyse the students' future expectations in the context of globalisation and their reflections on it.

Student J had a rather clear career plan after graduating from his current master's programme in the UK. Instead of going back to his hometown in the province of Hubei, he planned to find a job in Shenzhen, a major city in south China. There was even a certain destination that he had been looking at in that city, as he wanted to work in an online shopping company specialising in selling Chinese products to people in other countries, especially Chinese students who study abroad. He was informed about this company because his cousin had been working there as a legal consultant, and, as he said, had 'a lot of connections'. He was also a shareholder in that company. Considering a job that would include communication with foreign countries, student J had been advised by some people including his parents that a master's degree and better English proficiency might be helpful for guaranteeing the job and for future advancement in the company. In this situation, studying abroad for a master's programme seemed perfectly suitable for his future aspiration.

From the case of student J, we can see that the motivation for him to study abroad was in accordance with his expectation of becoming involved with the globalisation process in China. If the job requires the employees to be able to work

in a more international context, then students who have the most previous contact with other countries would be more qualified for the job. Therefore, students who have studied abroad become the ideal candidates for these jobs as they are supposed to have both more international communication experiences and better English proficiency. In this sense, studying abroad can be understood as adapting oneself to the increasingly globalised labour market in China. Attracted by the opportunities of jobs associated with more international communication, student J chose to study abroad to acquire the necessary human capital that would make him competitive for his preferred job. In other words, it was getting himself more prepared for the increasingly globalised labour market in China that drove student J to study abroad for a master's degree.

This way of thinking about studying abroad and the expectation of involvement with globalisation were based on two assumptions: firstly, Chinese students believed that the labour market in China is becoming more and more globalised; and secondly, they thought positively about jobs that were associated with international communication. Despite being impossible to verify the first assumption due to the nature of this research, it can be seen from the empirical data that many students (including student A, F and G) had had international experiences in their previous works or internships and many of them were in foreign companies, which might indicate that there might have been a variety of opportunities for Chinese students to seek jobs that involve active communications with people of other countries.

There were also hints from the empirical data that might support the second assumption. For example, many other students including student **B** and **C** also revealed that they wished to work in foreign companies after their master's programmes, hoping to have more opportunities to communicate with foreign people in their future career. As analysed in the previous chapter, student **C** believed that working in a foreign bank could bring her more opportunities for upward mobility as she would be in contact with clients from higher social backgrounds. Also, from the perspective of globalization, there was an added logic in her preference for a foreign bank. Students chose to study abroad because they wanted to become more involved with the increasing globalisation process in the Chinese labour market, which required them to be more prepared for that change. This gives an illuminating picture of the influence of globalisation on Chinese students' motivation to study abroad on an individual level. Since the availability of jobs in foreign companies or with more international communication reflects the economic globalisation process in China, Chinese students' motivation to study abroad can be understood as the aspiration to get more engaged in the globalisation. This coincides with the pervasive argument about the close connection between HE internationalisation and economic globalisation.

What was also shown in my research was that the influence of globalisation on the students' motivation of studying abroad was mediated by '*the imaginary of the developed world*', through which Fong (2011) argued in her research on transnational Chinese students that many Chinese students would like to gain the '*developed world citizenship*'. Such *citizenship*, as she argued, could bring them

great advantage in their geographic mobility in the global context. The students in my research showed a similar thinking pattern. Looking back into the cases of student **C** and **J**, we can see that their motivation to study abroad can also be understood as the acquisition of *developed world citizenship*. The career plan of working in foreign companies with adequate involvement with the world could mean that they would like to have global citizenship. To gain such global citizenship, they found it necessary to study abroad for master's programmes which they believed would enrich their global experiences and enhance their important abilities including English proficiency and intercultural communication skills. This was in accordance with Fong's argument that the students could still belong to the *developed world* if they were to live and work in China while having plenty of association with other people from the *developed world*.

Chinese students in this research tended to understand globalisation as an ability to be more capable in their future careers and more likely to get themselves the advanced position in their imagined global hierarchy. Such was rather different from the conventional idea about globalisation in which the world merges into a whole and therefore generates a globalised culture in which people from different countries or regions have a shared sense of global cultural identity. Many students in this research had a very clear economic orientation when they considered their future and therefore globalisation. For example, student **E** concluded in the focus group that globalisation was '*basically a matter of improving working capabilities and earning more money*'.

The students' expectation for further involvement with the globalisation process was not merely restricted to working in foreign companies in China, some students also planned to find working opportunities abroad. Student **I**, for instance, said he would like to find a job abroad:

In the first place, I don't think I should just go back to China after graduation. Both (looking for jobs in the UK or other places) could be possible, yet I haven't thought about going back... Why should I go back just after graduation? You should go around the world more often while you're young, to look around... I will also consider other places, like the United States where I have a lot of former classmates, or perhaps Australia. I don't know many people in the UK.

Student I

The plan of looking for jobs abroad was quite common among the students, with students **F** and **K** also having that idea with regard to their future. Many other students who planned to go back to China for future careers also considered the option of working outside China, but eventually gave up the idea as they did not consider it as their most suitable choice. Some students like student **G** choose to go back to China since he was not optimistic about job-finding opportunities abroad, while others including student **B** chose to go back to China as she was more optimistic about the future development in China. There will be further analysis on this in the next section.

Another significant phenomenon was that a lot of students had previous studying and living experiences in Chinese major cities before they came up with the idea

of studying abroad. If we list the information about the cities in which the students in this research did their undergraduate study (as shown below in Table 1), we can see many things in common about these cities.

Student	City	Population (2014)	City Description
A	Beijing	13,334,000	Capital; Municipality; National Central City
B	Dalian	5,942,900	Sub-Provincial City
C	Guangzhou	8,424,200	Sub-Provincial City; Province Capital
D	Chengdu	12,107,400	Sub-Provincial City; Province Capital
E	Beijing	13,334,000	Capital; Municipality; National Central City
F	Chongqing	17,830,000	Municipality; National Central City
G	Shanghai	14,386,900	Municipality; National Central City
H	Beijing	13,334,000	Capital; Municipality; National Central City
I	Shanghai	14,386,900	Municipality; National Central City
J	Wuhan	8,273,100	Sub-Provincial City; Province Capital
K	Guangzhou	8,424,200	Sub-Provincial City; Province Capital

Table 4.2.1 Information about the cities where the students studied undergraduate programmes

It is clear from table 4.2.1 that every single participant in this research was studying their undergraduate programme in megalopolises with a population of at least more than five million people. And if we look carefully at these cities, it is not difficult to see that all of them were not only populous cities but also of great economic and political importance in China. As shown in the table, three of the eleven students studied in the capital Beijing, while another three students studied in two other municipalities, Shanghai and Chongqing. The remaining five students studied in sub-provincial cities in which four of them were studying in

province capitals. Apart from indicating the centralisation of HE institutions in Chinese major cities, such a phenomenon might also suggest the possibility that the experience of studying and living in major cities might have had a significant influence on the students' motivation to study abroad, which could be supported by the fact that many students built up high expectations for future involvement with globalisation following their experiences in the major cities.

Some students had grown up in the major cities, and all of them had studied their undergraduate programmes in the cities where they had been living in China, which might suggest that students from big cities in China tended to attend universities in their hometown cities. Student K was the most typical example in this category. As introduced in the previous section, student K had grown up in the Southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, where she later studied English in a local university for her undergraduate programme. Influenced by the relatively globalised environment of the city, she also began to expect further exposure to international communication. There was a hint as she talked about her expectation for life studying abroad, *'then I thought I would have a great number of foreign friends around me (when I study abroad), and I would be staying with them all the time.'* Such an expectation for life studying abroad reflected her wish to have more interaction with foreign people in her future, and it also turned out to be consistent with her expectation of finding jobs in the UK after graduating from her master's programme.

We can also see from the data that such expectation for more involvement with the world might also come from the students' important others, like their parents.

For example, if we look back at student **C**'s remark about her father's thinking regarding her future: *'since my father had already settled down in a big city – Guangzhou, they would wish their children, which is me, to get one step ahead, that is, to go abroad.'*, it would be clear that there might be an association between the living experience in a major city and the expectation for more involvement with the globalisation process. What is also clear is that the living, studying and possibly working experience in foreign countries (if not Western developed countries) was considered as more advanced compared to that in the city of Guangzhou, as she described such movement as 'one step forward'. We can also find that her parents thought about regions in terms of distinction, as they would prefer their daughter to stay in Guangzhou or places that they regarded as more advanced, rather than moving to a smaller and less developed city, which they feared might result in the loss of cultural capital. And for student **C**, her parents' imaginary about the global hierarchy and expectation for the children's future involvement with globalisation proved to have significant influence on her, as she shared such imaginary which made her interested in looking for a career with more interaction with other countries, such as working in foreign companies.

Not all the students in this research were from big cities, many of them came from smaller cities, and had later studying, living, and in some circumstances, working experiences in the major cities. These domestic migration experiences had been significantly influential for the students' thinking about their future life and career, and most importantly, about globalisation, the world hierarchy and the expectation of geographic mobility.

Student J had several domestic migrations prior to his studying abroad for the master's degree, and those migrations had significant influence on the whole course of his growing up, as well as the thinking and expectations for his future. He had rather miserable memories about his years in junior high school as he found himself a recognisable immigrant from a small town into a city. With a rather rustic accent and not-that-sophisticated clothing, he found himself much looked down upon and therefore frequently bullied in the school. Yet the situation changed greatly with the improvement of his family's economic background, and he began to fit in and become much more sociable when he entered senior high school.

Things changed even further as he entered university in the big city of Wuhan, where he started to think more about his future and to be more aware of the geographic hierarchy in a bigger picture. Not following many of his former classmates' example of settling down in their hometown, he became more ambitious and wanted to realise more individual achievements on the bigger stage. Doing part-time jobs around his campus, he learnt many different things and started to know a lot of people doing free-lance jobs, which deeply impressed him and inspired him to 'plan my life at my own will, doing exactly what I would like to'. Yet suddenly, he was facing his last year in university and therefore had to consider his career plan, when his parents started to advise him about a new educational migration with a destination beyond the border of his country.

What the two domestic migrations brought him was not only the understanding of the new environment and to which he had to adapt, but also the realisation of geographic hierarchy between different places, first between his hometown and

the more advanced small city, then the small city and the big city of Wuhan. With each new migration destination, he found the different environment, adapted himself to fit in, and then began to build up further expectations for more advanced destinations in a broader perspective. Studying abroad and getting himself the 'developed world citizenship' therefore became his next goal in terms of geographic mobility. There is also a strong link between his motivation for studying abroad and his career plan afterwards. Hoping to manage another migration to the South Chinese city of Shenzhen and work in an international online shopping business, student J found it necessary to study in a foreign country to get more involved in the globalisation process.

This reminded me of Yan's (2009) analysis on the individualisation of Chinese city immigrants from rural areas. Just like those immigrants, the students in my research who went to big cities for undergraduate study were significantly influenced by the environment of the big cities and began to have future aspirations with a greater focus on individualisation and globalisation. What also impressed me with student J's previous migration experiences was his attitude towards free-lancers. The encounter with the free-lancers hinted that he began to appreciate jobs that could reflect individuality. Such an emphasis on individuality, just like student F's preference for uncertainty in her future life and career, might also inspire student J to pursue more individual development, and was therefore more likely to develop individual qualities that were relevant to the imagined Western developed world.

4.3 Reflection about China

It was also shown in my research that the students' reflection about and anticipation of the development of China had been influential for their motivation to study abroad and their future career plan thereafter. Many students in this research expressed a strong sense of optimism and great expectation for their country's future, both about the economic and social development of the nation and their own future career prospective. Such an imaginary of China's future development was influential in the students' reflections of the world hierarchy and therefore their attitudes toward globalisation. On the one hand, many students saw a rising China and felt quite positive about China's future, therefore possessing a strong sense of Chinese identity, as we can find comments like, 'I think China will become better and better in the future' very frequently in the interviews. On the other hand, however, we can also see the impact of globalisation and the students' imaginary of the Western developed world, which encouraged them to seek for more 'advanced position' in the global geographic hierarchy, as many students planned to seek working opportunities abroad after graduating from their master's degrees. In this section I shall discuss this question, and analyse the influence of Chinese students' thinking about their own country on their motivations for studying abroad.

To begin with, we can find a clear emphasis on the Chinese cultural traditions, which many Chinese students found essential to define themselves as Chinese. Student G, for instance, talked about how traditional Chinese values influenced him through the course of his familial education:

It has been traditional education (in my family), quite traditional sort of education without much Westernisation. It has been mainly the Chinese Confucian education. Learning 'The Analects', is that specific enough? I had been learning The Analects with my mother until the day came here for my master's programme. My parents have stressed the importance of Chinese traditional culture... My mother had always educated me with the Chinese traditional way, yet she was not against the Western. Unlike some of my former classmates, whose parents think that the Western education is problematic. They are not against it. It's just that they stick to the Chinese traditional way of teaching.

Student G

Such traditional Chinese education proved to be influential for him, as he had developed a strong affinity to the Chinese traditional culture and a firm sense of Chinese identity. There was a hint when he talked about his expectation regarding his future family, as he expressed that he would prefer traditional Chinese girls with clear '*oriental features*'. With such a cultural preference, it is not difficult to understand his choice of going back to China for a future career. Although he concluded that such a decision was because of better opportunities in China, it is still very likely that there were cultural concerns in the decision, as he would prefer working and living in the Chinese cultural environment.

There were other students who had cultural concerns when they were considering their future. For example, student **A** had also hesitated about whether to look for work opportunities in the UK or to go back to China for future career. He found

arguments on both sides, but his cultural affinity to the Chinese society played a big part in his final decision to go back to China:

I hesitated as I was considering about whether or not to find a job in the UK for several years, two or three, but I gave up later on. One reason is that my girlfriend, who has been studying in Canada, just graduated and went back to China. We discussed this and we thought China is better for us. Because we love (the) food there, we love people there, we love to go outside and eat at midnight with a lot of people there and a lot of food on the street... We like the social life in China. I think it is better for us.

Student A

The preference for the Chinese social and cultural environment had been one of the most important reasons that contributed to the students' decision to start their careers back in China. Student **B**, for example, also intended to go back to China after graduation because of her cultural affinity to the Chinese society. She mentioned in her interview that she planned to find a job in Beijing after returning to China since she liked the stimulating atmosphere in Beijing, as well as the busy and industrious lifestyle. Another example that showed her clear cultural preference to the Chinese was when she talked about the pubs in the interview:

I never go to pubs, since I don't go to that sort of places when I'm in China. I don't think those places could be attractive to me. I prefer drinking at home, or with some friends, which is quite good.

Student B

Such a remark showed both her indifference towards the British pub culture, and reflected her stronger cultural affinity for the Chinese culture and lifestyles. What underlies this is her attitude towards globalisation, as discussed in the previous section. For her, being globalised does not necessarily mean understanding and accepting elements from other cultures and developing a shared new culture that is adaptable to people from other cultural backgrounds. Instead, she prefers to stick to her own Chinese cultural codes, and being globalised is more about the ability to communicate with those of different cultural backgrounds, and this, therefore is her strategy for dealing with the globalisation process. What was also implied was that this way of thinking about globalisation might be based on the clear cultural preference of the Chinese society and the strong sense of Chinese identity.

Studying abroad, therefore, can be understood as a practical strategy to enact their imaginaries such as the developed world citizenship and individuality, which are transmitted to them through their interaction with the increasingly international environment, as well as their families and friends' relative experiences. Although such imaginaries are in contrast with the more traditional imaginaries which place more emphasis on the Confucian ideology, this contrast does not dissolve the students' sense of Chinese national identity. On the contrary, the students have a strong sense of cultural identity, with a strong affinity to the Chinese culture and society. Like Yoon et al.'s (2013) argument regarding the nationalisation and localisation of HE, data in this research also shows the trend of nationalisation among Chinese overseas students when they consider a future

career after graduation. Coming alongside the cultural affinity to Chinese society was the sense of Chinese nationalism, which can be seen from some participants in my research. For example, student **B** said the following about her conversations with foreign people concerning some Chinese issues:

I shall defend my sense of pride in being a Chinese person. (For foreign people's views about China) I admit that there are some problems in China, but I reiterate repeatedly that our country will become better and better in the future... Being Chinese, I do think we need to have some sense of pride. Just don't degrade ourselves all the time.

...

Why do people from all over the world pay close attention to China? I think it's because China has been developing so fast. All the (other) countries regard China as a hypothetical enemy.

Student B

This '*pride*' in China apparently had significant influence on her thinking about both China and the world, and might also be one of the main reasons that made her decided to go back to China for future development. Such sense of pride reminded me of Fong's (2004) notion of *filial nationalism* among the Chinese youth generation, who felt they had the duty to contribute and serve the nation just like their filial duties for their parents in the traditional Confucian ideology. Such *filial nationalist* sentiments can also be found in other students, too. For instance, even student **I**, who planned to find jobs abroad, found it a dilemma as he thought about staying in another country without going back to China. When

talking about the plan of working and living in a foreign country for a couple of years, he sighed and said slowly: *'Choosing to live abroad... Such a heavy topic...'* One possible interpretation might be that for him, the Chinese society was one with which he had cultural affinity, a sense of belonging, and filial nationalist duties towards.

What was also found among many of the students was a shared optimism and expectation for China's future. Confident about the future development of China, many students believed that they could have better opportunities for their own future development if they go back to China for jobs. Looking back at student **A**'s choice of major for his postgraduate programme, it is easy to see his optimistic anticipation about the future development of the internet industry in China:

The reason why I chose my topic of research, namely mobile application consumption, is that the internet industry in China is so highly increasing. It's very developed in China. I think it's the first-class industry in China now. So, I really want to get into this industry in the future. I want to research the internet industry, so I get this as a key to go into the industry... (The plan) it has never changed. From the very beginning, the plan was like this.

Student A

It was clear that student **A** associated his career plan with his optimistic expectation for the Chinese internet industry. The fact that he had this plan 'from the very beginning' showed that it was his wish to better equip himself for a career in the Chinese internet industry that motivated him to study abroad. We can see

here how his aspiration for developed world citizenship combined with his positive reflection for China's future development: by working in an industry that he believed to be '*first-class*' on the world stage, he would have both the opportunity to work in an environment to which he had more cultural affinity, and the more advanced social status in the global hierarchy. Many other students, including students **B**, **D** and **F**, also expressed similar optimistic expectations about the future of China, which encouraged them to go back to China for future careers. Unlike student **A**, many of those expectations were not restricted to one certain industry, but were about the general situation in China. Student **D**, for instance, said in the focus group that he was optimistic about the future development of China as he believed that '*China would become a central figure on the world stage in the future*'. Again, it was the combination between their Chinese identity and the imaginary for developed world citizenship. As China becomes more and more globalised, the students see both signs of China being on the rise, which means the potential for a more advanced position in the global hierarchy, and the increasing opportunities for having more involvement with the world if they choose to stay in China. Therefore, these students are convinced that they could gain the developed world citizenship in China instead of finding jobs abroad, as China has already been part of the globalisation process.

It is thus not a surprise that many of the students in my research would like to go back to China for their future careers, as it could be understood as a compromise between their aspirations for developed world citizenship, the Chinese cultural identity, and the feasibility of other choices. Although staying abroad could mean

more involvement with globalisation, it might not necessarily bring them the developed world citizenship they desire because of the difficulty for them to find jobs of their expected social status that they might otherwise succeed in finding back in China. On the other hand, going back to China for a future career could be more favourable because the students would be more likely to have prosperous futures in promising industries in China, which could also guarantee considerable opportunities for interaction with the world. The students' imaginary of a prosperous and rising China and the cultural affinity to the Chinese society also contributed to their decision of going back, as they could combine their developed world citizenship with their sense of Chinese cultural identity. This trend of Chinese students planning to go back to China for a future career in search of the developed world citizenship in the context of a rising China is clearly a complement to Fong's (2011) argument of the imaginary for developed world citizenship.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it was shown in the data that the students had a strong aspiration for more personal involvement with the globalisation process, which was a significant motivation for them to study abroad. What underlay the aspiration was the students' consideration about the world and the globalisation process, which included a transnational imaginary. The admiration for the *developed world citizenship*, along with the imagined individual qualities associated with it, proved to be the central figure of the imaginary, coinciding with Fong's (2011) work. The transnational imaginary came either directly from their previous exposure to the

globalisation process (mostly in China) or indirectly from their close social network (most significantly their parents). It was also shown that the students' previous migration experiences in major Chinese cities might also have significant influence on the students' expectation for future involvement in intercultural communication. Like the previous chapter, students of both sexes tended to have equivalent expectation for the developed world citizenship, which was another indication of the empowerment of female students among Chinese overseas students.

The imaginary for developed world citizenship brought the students great aspirations for more advanced positions in the imagined global hierarchy and more access to the world outside China. Yet such an expectation was also influenced by their imaginary of China's future development, in which most students saw a bright image and therefore developed a sense of Chinese identity. Therefore, although some students planned to work abroad for better opportunities for developed world citizenship, most of the students in my research chose to take the path back to China. Such a trend showed that the students saw a better chance for developed world citizenship if they were to go back to China for a future career due to the context of a rising and increasingly globalised China. By going back to China for careers, the students could compromise their aspiration for developed world citizenship with their cultural affinity to the Chinese society.

Chapter V Conclusion

5.1 Summary of the Research Findings

In conclusion, this research addresses Chinese postgraduate students' motivation and expectation of studying abroad in two main arguments: studying abroad as investment for accumulation of capital, and studying abroad as a strategy for more engagement with globalisation.

At an individual level, the students see studying abroad as an investment to accumulate various forms of capital, which is believed to be beneficial for the students' individual development in the future. While the participants in this research thought differently about the benefits in terms of professional knowledge and abilities, most of them agreed that studying abroad is somehow associated with people of higher social backgrounds. Such motivation to accumulate more capital through studying abroad is associated with their (usually unsatisfactory) previous experiences with the Chinese HE system, in which they fail to accumulate enough capital to meet their future aspirations. Another significant finding was that the participants tended to believe that their life and future career would be completely different from their life as students. As a result, they saw studying abroad as a turning point which would enable them to transform themselves from university students into capable future employees. In other words, there is an imagined gap between the Chinese HE system and future careers, which require certain qualities that the students were not confident about. Therefore, studying abroad for master's degrees can be understood as a

reaction to their previous experiences in the Chinese HE system and a strategy to achieve their future expectations.

Studying abroad was also closely associated with the students' reflection on the globalisation process (mostly in China) based on personal experiences or imaginaries. Empirical data (as showed in chapter IV) indicates that such a way of thinking might be associated with the growing level of globalisation in China. Previous international exposures such as working experiences in foreign companies and intercultural communications in campus had significant influence upon many students in this research, shaping their transnational imaginary about the world and globalisation, and making them open to other similar experiences and greater individuality in their future life and career. What was also shaping the students' thinking about the future was their reflection on the development of China. There was a trend for the students to consider going back to China for a future career due to their optimistic anticipation of China's future development, its role in globalisation and their cultural affinity to the Chinese society.

5.2 Theoretical Contribution

This research contributes to the literature in three arguments: the supplement to Bourdieu's theory of capital and class reproduction, the influence of globalisation among Chinese university students, and a challenge to the previous argument about the relationship between studying abroad and migration.

5.2.1 To Bourdieu's theory of capital and class reproduction

The research shows mixed results regarding Bourdieu's (1984) arguments about capital and distinction. In some cases, the students' understanding of studying abroad does reflect the preservation of social advantage. For example, many students expressed the idea, either directly or indirectly, that studying abroad is somewhat associated with people of higher social status. Most students revealed in their interviews that they know some people in their close social network (and in some cases many people) who had already studied abroad. Studying abroad, which is not achievable for all Chinese students, can therefore be understood as a social advantage based on inclusion (among those who can study abroad) and exclusion (to those who cannot). To understand it on a collective perspective, the 'advantage' of studying abroad might be associated with the emergent Chinese middle class (Collins, 2013; Waters, 2006; Shin, 2013).

Another thing that supports the argument is that all the students had previous studying/ living experiences in Chinese major cities, which might suggest that studying abroad remains exclusive for students from the developed urban areas, rather than those from under-developed regions. Notably, some participants in this research were from migration families, who saw the logic of studying abroad similar to that of their migration to big cities in China. For them, studying abroad can be interpreted as inheriting and enriching the social advantage gained by the students' parents' generation.

On the other hand, for other students in this research, the capital accumulation of studying abroad can hardly be defined as the 'preserving' or social advantage.

Many students in this research sought to get rid of their disadvantaged HE background by investing in overseas postgraduate education. The motivation for the investment is by no means to protect their social advantage but to overcome disadvantages and achieve upward mobility. This might challenge Bourdieu's theory, as studying abroad can be understood as a process of the 'reconfiguration of social advantage'. Yet the challenge is not an explicit one as all the participants were self-funded students, which suggests that they did not come from economically disadvantaged families.

5.2.2 Globalisation as an individual-level influential factor for Chinese students' motivation of studying abroad

On an individual level, despite its seemingly macroscopic meaning, globalisation is having a significant influence on Chinese postgraduate students' motivation for studying abroad. Empirical data shows that the globalisation process is perceivable for Chinese university students in various ways. Firstly, many students have social interaction with other countries. For example, many participants in this research have relatives or friends who are studying or living abroad, and some even have relatives married to foreign people. Secondly, globalisation influences Chinese students' aspiration for career development, as many students are interested in working in foreign companies in China. Thirdly, many students have had previous intercultural communication experiences before studying abroad for their master's programmes. Such experiences within an increasingly globalised social context in China inspired the Chinese students to become more engaged with the globalisation process. This made them interested in studying abroad,

especially because as university students, they have more exposure to both information about career development and intercultural communication.

The expectation for more engagement with globalisation is sometimes not based on the students' relevant experiences, but a 'transnational imaginary' (Collins, 2013). Like Fong's (2011) argument regarding the admiration for 'developed world citizenship', many students in this research showed a similar admiration for a certain list of countries that were usually expressed as the foreign countries. For example, when asked about their motivation for studying abroad, sometimes the participants' first response was because the destination country is more developed. Other students saw 'foreign countries' attractive because they are associated with certain values or individual qualities they admire, such as individualism and less conformity to traditional values. Studying abroad can thus be understood as a strategy to be more associated with the imagined developed world, and in some cases the sense of cosmopolitan citizenship.

Such transnational imaginary has limitations. Firstly, the imaginary seems to be more about the socioeconomic advantages of 'the developed world' rather than about culture. Some students even revealed indifference to intercultural communication on rare occasions. Secondly, there was a shared strong cultural affiliation to the Chinese society among the participants, which shows great resemblance to Fong's (2004b) argument of 'filial nationalism'. Strong evidence for this was that most students decided to go back to China for future development rather than staying abroad. The almost unanimous decision to go back to China might be associated with the economic development in China over

the decades and therefore the increasing optimism and confidence on China's future. Yet some students were swaying between the two ways of thinking, as they would like to stick both to the 'cosmopolitan citizenship' and the sense of Chinese identity.

5.2.3 On the relationship between studying abroad and migration

Although some students considered living abroad after graduating from their postgraduate programmes, most of them decided to go back to China. Many participants even added that their original plan was to go back to China after graduating from their university abroad, which challenges the argument of the education-migration nexus (Robertson, 2013), i.e. that the students take studying abroad as a strategy for emigration to the destination countries. Such a contrast might be associated with the changing push-pull factors in the context of a rising China: as China advances in economic and social development, Chinese students are becoming increasingly pulled by the attracting factors from China rather than those from abroad, which is supportive for Li & Bray's (2007) refined push-pull model. Yet it is unclear whether this was because of the attracting factors or that it is easier for Chinese students to go back to China, due to the restrictive immigration policy in the UK.

5.3 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

There are some recommendations for policy and practice in relevant authorities and HE institutions in China due to the findings of this research.

For the college entrance examination (Gaokao), reform is needed to make the exams more sensitive to the students' choice of majors. Since many students in this research expressed unsatisfactory experiences with their previous majors in the Chinese HE system, I would recommend that the Ministry of Education of China provides different exams for different subjects of study. Provide numerous different subjects of exams rather than merely two options (science and liberal arts), each of which includes too many disciplines that are hardly related to each other. By reforming the Gaokao into various choices, it could not only avoid the situation of unwanted majors, but also alleviate the pressures of the preparation for the exams.

For the HE institutions in China, I would argue that it should be the universities' responsibility to inform prospective students of detailed information about the numerous undergraduate majors. Many students in this research revealed that they had no idea about the academic disciplines prior to their entry to universities. Therefore, some of them were totally uninterested in their previous majors. Since current secondary education in China has been very much Gaokao-oriented, which many argued was impossible to change (Wang & Tong, 2004), colleges and universities should provide more information before the students take the Gaokao. For example, they could hold more seminars or workshops to help high school students better understand what university majors are about, so that they could make more satisfactory applications. HE institutions should also change their entry requirements for different majors to reach a compromise between the overall

Gaokao scores and the scores of most relevant disciplines, since the rest of the scoresheet might be totally unrelated to the majors.

5.4 Limitations & Recommendations for Future Research

There are a few limitations in this research which would need further research.

Firstly, there is a limitation in the sampling as the participants in this research had already been studying abroad when they were interviewed. Since students might have different understandings of studying abroad once they have been to the destination country, I would recommend a comparative study interviewing both overseas Chinese students and prospective students (or a longitudinal study interviewing the students twice, one during the application process and other after their entry to the university) to find out the contrast between the two cohorts.

Another limitation is that although the research was designed to find out the difference between students with different subjects of study, no significant difference was found from the data since the sample size was not big enough. I would suggest a further study on (or including) the same research topic with a larger sample size that compares students with different sexes, subjects of study, familial background, place of residence in China, etc.

A comparative study on Chinese overseas students in different destination countries is also recommended as some of the findings in this research might not be transferable to other countries due to different policies, the location of the country, etc. For example, the fact that most students in this research planned to

go back to China for a future career might be associated with the immigration policy in the UK, while the situation might be completely different in other destination countries.

Finally, I would also recommend a longitudinal study on Chinese students' experience of studying abroad and whether their expectations of an overseas education would come true after they graduate from their study abroad.

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Appendix A Consent Form for Focus Group/Interview in English

Study of Chinese Postgraduate Students' Intentions and Expectations to Study Abroad

Information Sheet for Interviewees

Dear _____,

I am most grateful you have expressed a willingness to participate in an interview for my research on Chinese overseas students' intentions and expectations to study abroad, as part of my dissertation. Xia Qian, a master's research student in the Department of Sociology of University of Essex is the principal researcher under the supervision of Professor Yasemin Soysal (Department of Sociology, University of Essex).

This research project aims to investigate how Chinese students make their decisions of studying in the UK, and what they experience during their study there. In-depth interviewing is the main source of data in this research, and some of the interviewees will be interviewed for more than one time. Our questions focus on why Chinese students choose the certain destination country, institution and major for higher education, and what kinds of experiences will they encounter in such a new environment. This research is expected to provide useful information to improve the experience of Chinese international students in the UK and to be helpful for future students to further understand the meaning of studying abroad.

This interview will take about one to two hours of your time. The interview will be conducted in Chinese, and if you agree, the interview will be recorded. The content of the interview, if necessary, will be transcribed into English texts.

In accordance with ethics procedures at University of Essex, your name or any other information about identity will not be public. Only the researchers involved in this project will have access to the complete recording and transcript of the interview you give. If I use anything you have told me in my writing, I will not use your real name or identifying details.

All interview data (including recordings, transcripts, correspondence with interviewees etc.) will be kept in secure data storage locations accessible only to the project researchers. In the future, some of the data collected may be public, but all material that could potentially identify you or others you mention will be removed prior to this.

Should you agree to participate in an interview, this will not obligate you to participate in any future research relating to this or other projects. During the interview, you may choose not to answer any questions I ask, and you should feel free to terminate the interview at any time. If you have any questions later about the project, or how the material from this interview will be used, please contact me at qxiaa@essex.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Xia Qian
Department of Sociology
University of Essex
E-mail: qxiaa@essex.ac.uk

Study of Chinese Postgraduate Students' Intentions and Expectations to Study Abroad

Information Sheet for Focus Groups

Dear _____,

I am most grateful you have expressed a willingness to participate in a focus group for my research on Chinese overseas students' intentions and expectations to study abroad as part of my dissertation. Xia Qian, a master's research student in the Department of Sociology of University of Essex is the principal researcher under the supervision of Professor Yasemin Soysal (Department of Sociology, University of Essex).

This research project aims to investigate how Chinese students make their decisions of studying in the UK, and what they experience during their study there. The focus groups are important sources of qualitative data in my research. My questions focus on why Chinese students choose the certain destination country, institution and major for higher education, and what kinds of experiences will they encounter in such a new environment. This research is expected to provide useful information to improve the experience of Chinese international students in the UK and to be helpful for future students to further understand the meaning of studying abroad.

This focus group will take about 45 minutes to 1 hour of your time. The focus group will be conducted in Chinese, and if you agree, it will be recorded.

In accordance with ethics procedures at University of Essex, your name or any other information about identity will not be public. Only the researchers involved in this project will have access to the complete recording of the focus group. If I use anything you have told me in my writing, I will not use your real name or identifying details.

All data from the focus groups (including recordings, correspondence with interviewees etc.) will be kept in secure data storage locations accessible only to the project researchers. In the future, some of the data collected may be public, but all material that could potentially identify you or others you mention will be removed prior to this.

Should you agree to participate in a focus group, this will not obligate you to participate in any future research relating to this or other projects. During the interview, you may choose not to answer any questions I ask, and you should feel free to terminate the focus group at any time. If you have any questions later about the research, or how the material from this focus group will be used, please contact me at qxiaa@essex.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Xia Qian
Department of Sociology
University of Essex
E-mail: qxiaa@essex.ac.uk

Written Consent Form of Focus Groups

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the background information above about the research.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

I agree to participate in a focus group for the research (tick which is applicable).

Yes: _____ No: _____

I agree that the conversation in the focus group will be recorded (tick which is applicable):

Yes: _____ No: _____

I agree that material from this focus group may be used by the research, provided any details that could identify me or others have been removed (tick which is applicable):

Yes: _____ No: _____

Written Consent Form of Interviews

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the background information above about the research.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

I agree to participate in an interview for the research (tick which is applicable).

Yes: _____ No: _____

I agree that the interview will be recorded (tick which is applicable):

Yes: _____ No: _____

I agree that material from this interview may be used by the research, provided any details that could identify me or others have been removed (tick which is applicable):

Yes: _____ No: _____

Oral Consent Script

Name of interviewee: _____

Before we continue, can I ask you to confirm each of the following things [consent to be recorded and transcribed, interviewers to check agreement to each of the statements below]

1. That you have read and understood the background information for the interview.
2. That you have had the opportunity to ask any questions you have about the interview or the project
3. That you agree to participate in the interview
4. That you understand you're free to drop out at any stage or to decide not to answer particular questions
5. That you understand that taking part in this interview doesn't imply your agreement to take part in any subsequent part of this or other research projects
6. That you are happy for me to record the interview
7. That you understand that what you tell us in interviews may be used in reports and publications arising from the study but not in a form that will allow you or anyone else to be identified

**“Bright Futures”: A Comparative Study of Internal and International Mobility of
Chinese Higher Education Students**

Information sheet for participant observation

Dear _____,

We are conducting ethnographic observation for our project on migration for education of Chinese students. This research is being conducted by a team of researchers in the sociology departments at four universities: The University of Essex (UK), The University of Edinburgh (UK), Bielefeld University (Germany) and Tsinghua University (China). Yasemin Soysal at the University of Essex is the principal investigator for this project.

Our research project aims to investigate how students and their families make decisions about migrating for education within China and to the UK and Germany. We explore this phenomenon in two related aspects: the migration of students from the People's Republic of China to the UK and Germany for higher education, and internal migration for studies within China. Our questions focus on why students and their parents choose certain options for higher education, and what their expectations are about these choices. As well as providing information useful for improving the experience of Chinese international students in the UK and Germany, we hope that our research will be helpful for future students and their parents in understanding more about the context for decision-making on migration for education.

For the initial phase of this project, we are conducting ethnographic observation in contexts relevant to the experience of migration of Chinese students for study within China and in the UK and Germany. This is important for us in understanding the context in which students and their parents make decisions about migration for education.

In our future publications for this project, we will not identify individuals we talk to or observe during this phase of data gathering. All data that contains real names or identifying details of individuals will be kept in secure data storage locations accessible only to project researchers.

If you have any questions later about the project, or how the material from our observations will be used, please contact the project coordinator at: (name and contact information)

Yours sincerely,

Principal investigator: Yasemin Soysal
Professor of Sociology
University of Essex
e-mail: soysal@essex.ac.uk

Researcher conducting observations: (Name, affiliation and contact information)

Appendix B Consent Form in Chinese

“光明的前途”： 中国高等教育阶段学生国内及跨国流动比较研究

受访者须知

尊敬的_____，

我们获悉您表示愿意接受采访，以协助我们研究中国学生教育移居情况的项目，对此我们表示非常感谢。该研究项目由埃塞克斯大学的雅塞明·索伊塞尔教授（Yasemin Soysal）领导，项目团队来自四所大学的社会学系：埃塞克斯大学（英国）、爱丁堡大学（英国）、比勒费尔德大学（德国）和清华大学（中国）。

我们的项目旨在探索学生及其家人如何做出为教育而移居到国内其他城市或到英国及德国留学的决定。我们将就两个方向进行探究：中国学生为接受高等教育而移居英国或德国，以及中国学生在国内的教育移居。我们的研究关注学生及家长就高等教育所做选择背后的考虑，以及对这些选择所抱有的期望。此外，我们也希望搜集相关信息，以改善中国留学生在英国和德国的留学体验。我们希望本研究能为学生和家长提供相关背景，以帮助他们更好地做出教育移居的决策。

本采访将占用您 1 至 2 小时的时间。采访将用中文进行。在征得您同意的前提下，采访会被录音。

根据《中华人民共和国统计法》和《英国经济社科研究学会道德规范》要求，我们将对您的姓名或身份予以严格保密。只有本项目的核心研究人员才能获取您所做采访的录音及文字记录。如果我们要在书面材料中使用您告诉我们的内容，我们将对内容进行匿名处理，不会使用您本人或您在采访中提到的任何人的真实姓名及个人信息。

一切与采访有关的数据（包括录音、文字记录、与采访对象的通信记录等）将会储存在安全地点，只有本项目的核心研究人员才能够获取。未来我们会公开部分数据，但在这之前，所有可能指向您或您提到过的任何人的材料都会被去除。

如果您同意接受采访，这并不代表您有义务参与未来任何与本项目或其它项目有关的研究。在采访中，对于我们提出的任何问题，您都有权选择不予回答，且您可以在任何时候终止采访。如果您有任何问题，请联系英国埃塞克斯大学社会学高级研究员：胡扬 博士，联系邮箱：yhun@essex.ac.uk。

祝好！

雅塞明·索伊塞尔教授（Yasemin Soysal）
社会学教授（Professor of Sociology）
英国埃塞克斯大学（University of Essex）
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电话：+44 (0)1206 873572

**“光明的前途”
书面同意书**

本人已在下方签字，已阅读并理解上述关于“光明未来”项目的背景信息。

姓名：_____ 签名：_____

我同意接受“光明未来”项目的一次采访（在合适的选项后打钩）：

是 ☐

否 ☐

我同意该采访被录音（在合适的选项后打钩）：

是 ☐

否 ☐

我同意“光明未来”项目使用从该采访中获取的信息，但必须去除任何可能让人识别出我或其他人的细节（在合适的选项后打钩）：

是 ☐

否 ☐

“光明的前途”
口头同意文本

受访者姓名：_____

在我们继续之前，我想请您确认下面的每一条声明【口头同意应被录音并转成文字记录，采访者应确认受访者同意以下每一条声明】。

1. 您已阅读并理解本次采访的背景信息。
2. 您已获得机会就本次采访或本项目提出任何问题。
3. 您同意参与本次采访。
4. 您知道自己有权在任何时候终止采访或不回答某些问题。
5. 您知道参与本次采访并不意味着您同意参与本项目的后续工作或其它研究项目。
6. 您同意我对本次采访进行录音。
7. 您知道您在采访中告诉我们的信息可能会被用在本研究的报告或出版物中，但这并不会导致您或其他任何人被识别。

Appendix C Transcriptions of the Interviews

Student A

... What's the difference between UK education and Chinese education, which really influenced my motivation to come to study here.

Our opinion, I mean, common opinion, among Chinese people, we think of course, Western education is advanced compared to ours. So it is very good to receive an education from outside of China, that would be more effective... and also to broaden your horizon... that is the basic reason.

My personal motivation is that... I want to improve my English, in an English environment. And then I want to turn my major into another. My previous BA (BSc) degree was engineering, and I wanted to change it. I want to learn something different. And in China it's very difficult to change your major, if you don't have that background. But it is quite easier to change to another major if you apply for an overseas university.

When I was a sophomore, my high school classmate asked me 'Are you interested in studying abroad?' I hadn't thought about it before, and I just checked information about how is the experience of studying abroad, and how it would pay off, and something like that. I just showed my interest in studying abroad. But I gave up later on because my GPA was not high enough to apply for a US

university... But after I graduated from university, and have been working for about two years, I was thinking 'yeah, I need to improve further', and I need to change my job from this kind to another. I wanted to do this kind of jobs (probably media?), so maybe I need another background.

[Previous job about marketing]

It was marketing, because marketing has been my interest, instead of engineering. So when I graduated, I just go to work in the field of marketing. Although I still hold the idea that I would go abroad someday to study more. I think the working experience might be the way that I can use to apply for a university with this major... yeah, it's an experience on my CV, instead of just engineering student.

I found nobody around me had the experience of studying abroad at that time.

[Had a lot of contact with an educational agency]

I think the information source (of studying abroad) is mainly from agency.

When I was just a second year student in university, my parents, they just sometimes gave me the information that they wanted me to go abroad, cos they saw somebody, some parents, they have child who are already going outside to study, and they have a very good future, and something like that. Before my classmate told me about the idea of studying abroad, my parents have already

told me about it. My parents' and my friend's recommendation, these are the sources that I mainly think if I should go abroad.

After I graduated, I have been working for long, and I felt my English was so bad. Like some Italian colleague in my company, they sent me long emails. I just felt too struggling to read it. I know they are quite easy to read but it was too hard for me to concentrate on reading it. So I felt I really need an English environment. Maybe to go abroad studying is a good way. So I talked to my parents, asking 'do you still support me to go abroad?', and they just showed their support...

I didn't tell a lot of friends when I first thought about going abroad to study. But for the second time I had asked a lot of my friend, who had already been graduated from UK universities, Hong Kong universities or something. We chat each other in person, and I found they look really different, I can see that. And they could share their personal experience with me, about how did they feel about overseas study. Most of them really recommend me to go abroad to study, it is the experience. And I told more friends this time about my decision. The purpose of why I chat with my friends was that I wanted to get more supportive opinions for that.

There is always somebody who don't support. For example, some of my relatives, they would think how would it be worth if you would go abroad spending so much money, when someday you come back and find you can only earn about \$100 more than you could (without studying abroad). How would that be worth? That was the main opinion that they hold. But they don't reject the higher education of

some Western countries they must be more advanced. They don't disagree with this, but they just think how would it pay off.

But my mother thinks horizon is more important than money. Even (if) this is not little money for my family, they still think it is worth to invest more in education.

Actually in China the previous generation, the majority of them would never have the opportunity to go abroad to study. So this would be their kind of hole in their experiences... some lack of their personal experiences, so they would think that 'you could achieve this for us', and 'we know how important it is for education, but we didn't have the opportunity'. 'You should cherish this opportunity'.

Some of the parents in China, they would think education is very important, for example, my parents, all (both) of them have received higher education, and my mother used to be a high school teacher. My father is an engineer. They really stressed the importance of education. But I know there are still a lot of parents in China, they don't think education is a long-standing stuff. They just think, okay you have finished your university, or even your high school education is enough. Just go to work. I think the latter is the mainstream, but there are still a lot of parents who have already their higher education, that would support their children to get more education.

I think the environment is another very important factor. If you have seen somebody who has been very successful from overseas study, you might think,

even though you might hold another view, my neighbour's child has got a good job because of the international study, and they would think my child would also have if they receive the same level of education.

And also it's about the cost. If a family can afford the cost, they might think more about this possibility. But if they cannot, they may never think about it. Unless their children got scholarship from a university.

I know one example. When I was in my university, one of the most well-being (well-performing, perhaps?) student in my class, he really wanted to go abroad to study, but his family was too poor. Like every month his living cost was less than £50, can you imagine that? Just fifty pounds for one month. So the only way that he can study abroad is to get a full scholarship, including everything, living costs and the study fee. But he failed. He applied for a lot of very good universities and got offers, but without so much scholarship, so he gave up, as he didn't have that much support from his family. Cos his parents really wants him to earn money and support his own family, just after graduation.

I don't mention them (future plans) to my parents. But sometimes I mention these things to some of my friends, who can understand (me), who have already master's degrees or are doing master's. They might understand.

The reason why I chose my topic of research, namely mobile application consumption, is that the Internet industry in China is so highly increasing. It's very

developed in China. I think it's the first class industry in China now. So I really want to get into this industry in the future. I want to research on the Internet industry, so I get this as a key to go into the industry... So I plan to go back to China, and immediately get a job... (The plan) it has hardly changed. From the very beginning, the plan was like this.

I hesitated as I was considering about whether or not to find a job in the UK for several years, two or three, but I gave up later on. One reason is that my girlfriend who has been studying in Canada, just graduated and went back to China. ('Because I regard her as my future family' as he said later) We discussed about this and we thought China is better for us. Because we love food there, we love people there, we love to go outside and eat at midnight with a lot of people there and a lot of food on street. We don't like Western countries... yes we like Western culture, but we don't like this part, that every time we go outside at night there is nobody on street. The only people on street are alcoholics... We like the social life in China. I think it is better for us. Another thing I found here is that seeking jobs in the UK is not an easy thing. It is not a thinkable thing.

Here in the UK, it is very easy to go abroad to a European country to see how different another nation could be. Cos I love travel. But in China... around China, there is only Japan, or Korea to see, no anything else. Not that diversity. I love very different culture. European culture is very different from Asian culture.

Everything that I have expected came true. For example, my English.

I really have learnt a lot from education here. I know how people conduct education, and how different the university here is from Chinese universities. You know, in China university is much like a government office. The teacher is under the management of the chancellors. The students are managed by the teachers, it's like that kind of relations. But here everybody is equal. And you can always express your opinion.

Also, studying here is very independent. In China, just like I said, it's quite like management. Everything you do has been already arranged by your teachers, by your tutors. You don't have to care about everything about your study, cos you just follow up your schedule, (then) you will get the mark... But here you have to be very self-motivated.

People who study in China are not very self-motivated. Even in my university — it was quite a good university, to me — but everybody who are studying in the library, in the labs, they are always sleeping. But here, I have never seen anyone sleeping in a library... in China the pressure is not from myself. I just persuade myself to stay here. I cannot study, but I'm here, so I can tell myself 'yes I am studying', so nobody can blame me.

I had another expectation that I wanted to know how people from other cultures would think about everything, about the world, about their own cultures, about China, ... about everything that might potentially be discussed.

In China, everybody wants to go to Beijing University, but you know, just very few can go there.

I expected that I could be very close to the local here, but actually I didn't make it.

Student B

那就是换专业，因为大学本科我是读英语专业的。其实在考雅思的时候我还是打算读翻译的。但是考雅思的时候就怎么也考不到很高的分数，所以我想那就算了。.....就是我的总分够，但是小分不够。然后怎么也达不到，然后就算了吧，可能自己也不适合学翻译。

因为我是学英语专业的，能换的专业范围就很窄。估计也就能换商科，法律都不行。而商科里面带点儿数学的都不行。所以我只能学管理。就是由不得我选择，是专业选择我。

【有找中介】

（对于出国留学的决定）没有什么影响，但是我觉得中介特别坑。

我那个中介吧，其实是我一个大学老师推荐的。他有一个朋友，他那个朋友就在英国这边当教授，就是赚点闲钱。就是这边的教授，可能为了赚一点外块吧，就为学生做一点这些东西。

【本科在大连外国语大学】

首先我觉得我的本科学校应该能申请到一些稍微好一点的大学。

其实还有一个原因就是因为我换专业，所以没办法申请特别好的学校。

不管办什么事儿，我觉得，还是得靠自己。

【父母对其出国留学没有建议】

因为我学英语专业，然后大一的时候，就觉得学英语吧，就应该去说英语国家去体验一下。当时还是打算继续学英语的。其实从大一大二就开始有这个打算。因为我学英国的历史嘛，然后美国、新加坡、澳大利亚，那些地理历史那些。感觉还是比较喜欢英国吧，当时选择了。

【选择英国就是比较喜欢英国】

A: 来这边以后呢？

坑爹，什么玩儿！就是村子，除了伦敦其他地方都是村子。我最受不了的就是晚上六点多，街上没人。

A: 有没有去过 pub 啊什么的呢？

这个我不去，因为在中国就不去那些地方嘛，就觉得这些地方对我没有什么吸引力。觉得自己在家里喝，跟朋友一起喝挺好的。

我会捍卫我作为中国人的这种自豪感的。（对于外国人对中国人的看法）我承认中国是有一些问题的，但我反复强调，我相信中国会越来越好。……作为中国人吧，还是要有一定的自豪感，不要老自黑。

我觉得为什么所有国家都在关注中国，就是因为中国发展得太快了。所有国家把她当成假想敌。

国内没怎么写过论文。包括国内本科论文也就是粘贴复制写出来的。

A: 你想学到什么样的知识呢？

虽然我换专业吧，我希望能够对商科这方面有一个很基本的理解吧。现在我也没有什么理解，也没有在专业的领域有所提高。

因为就是一年啊，我不想花两三年的时间读一个硕士，那跟国内的没有什么区别。

（没有选择）国内，是因为国内至少是两年。而我本科读的是双语，又是五年，我不想再浪费时间了。

（回国以后）我想要做 HR。（因为）我现在也就只能做 HR 了。我有不想做销售，太累。公关我也不太想，就做 HR 吧。

我大学来这儿之前我在北京做过一段时间的 HR 实习。（当时感觉）不怎么样，因为实习生就是干杂活儿的啊。我的工作就是把面试者收集，然后领着面试者去见面试官。每天做重复的事情。

最起码知道 HR 分基本分。有一个大致的很模糊的了解吧。我觉得 HR 应该会比较有趣，因为我是一个坐不住的人。我觉得 HR 可以每天面对不同的人，觉得挺有意思的。不是每天都在办公室里。.....我会觉得这样会比较有趣吧，但我也觉得我其实不是很擅长跟别人打交道。.....因为从小到大都是一个比较内向的人吧。

（未来工作）首选地是北京。因为.....当时上大学的时候就很像去北京的大学。后来每个假期会学英语，去北京的新东方，也会找我同学玩一玩儿，玩儿一两个月那样的。就觉得北京最起码熟悉。.....北京熟悉，好多朋友在那儿。还是比较喜欢北京那个氛围吧。就觉得在那边，（晚上）十一点，地铁上还是有很多下班的人，觉得那样的生活，虽然在小城市看来会觉得很累，但在那边工作生活就觉得很自然而然就是这样的生活，就觉得也没有很累，然后每天都很充实啊。

成本没有想过，最起码我能养活自己就还好。我觉得我应该能养活自己吧。

（爸妈对以后的工作）没有什么想法。我家就是尊重我的选择。

【爸妈都是会计】

应该多多少少受到一些影响吧，因为上大学的时候如果没考到这个学校（大连外国语大学）应该会学经济类的。

我想过很平淡的生活。就是挣最有幸福感的工资，不用挣得很多。当你挣很多钱的时候你的付出就会翻倍，而我也不想那么累。赚的钱基本够我用的，就还好。然后很平淡，很平淡的生活。

我当然想把我的子女再送到国外去（留学）。

我觉得综合素质上提高了很多，然后就是开阔了眼界。

自己处理自己的一些事情.....我现在觉得我自己是超人，什么事情都可以自己办。

在国内就因为父母啊，父母可以帮忙。（申请）出国也有中介帮忙。完全不需要你自己考虑很多问题。

我之前还打听过留学对回国找工作会不会有优势，我打听的是美国留学会有很大的优势，因为中国的很多企业会比较认美国的教育吧。英国毕竟因为时间短，而且已经成了程序化的一些东西了吧，所以不是特别认。我不指望留学会给我以后找工作有很大的优势，但是我相信会有一定的优势。包括我怎么跟外国人交流，我的英语的能力。我的英语能力最起码是比很多在国内读本科和研究生的人好很多。

【觉得文凭没什么用】

【家里第一个出国留学或生活的】

我爸我妈比较理智吧，我们之前也考虑过这个问题，会不会留学文凭的含金量会很大。他们也知道不会很大，但是他们也觉得出来应该开阔眼界。

他们（同学）会觉得出国留学回去就一定会发展比他们好。就像咱们在这边看到，包括旅游，他们还是很羡慕的。

最起码我这一年过得很充实吧，大学五年过得浑浑噩噩的。我大学志愿没报好，考得也不是很理想，结果只能去这个学校。而我又不想复读一年，所以我只能读这个系，因为这个系在大外是比较好的系。

（对未来子女教育）

我不会逼迫 TA 考多少分，但是尽自己最大的努力就好。我希望 TA 是一个快乐的平凡人。

我觉得我父母在同龄的父母中还是比较开放的嘛，他们很最终我的选择。但是他们和同龄的父母一个共性就是，总是希望你考多少多少分。但是我有觉得分数跟你的综合能力不是很挂钩啊，很多人分数很高，但能力很差。我首先关注的是我子女的综合素质，人际关系，待人处事，有自信，在公共场合很自信、大方地讲话，这些我会比较注意。

（父母）也就出过国旅过游。

他们也是出过国发现中国也挺好的，没有想象的那么差。

觉得国外很好，我觉得百分之九十，九十五吧，都会觉得国外很好。我觉得国内很多人觉得国外好是觉得国外的福利真的很好，不用干活就可以过得很好。

Student C

大二下学期，我爸问我要不要出国。当时我没这想法。大三的时候我爸就跟我讲：要不你试一下出国吧。你要出国家里砸锅卖铁都给你出国。.....家里

不是很有钱，真的。不是很有钱。可以说的是，我爸我妈把家里所有钱都给我出国了。

因为.....我爸比较好面子的嘛。男人比较好面子。他身边有朋友出国了以后，整个人成熟了，回来以后找工作也能找到比较好的工作。还有一个原因，就是我本科学校不好。三本.....虽然今年升了二本。可是你知道，就算哪怕你考到了二本.....只有你考到了重本（一本）才有竞争力。在国内的那种状况，除非你是重本。还有一个就是学金融的，你不读个研究生没用，在国内。然后他就觉得，要不就出国吧。

选英国因为有亲戚在。还有一个就是女生的青春有限，读研究生能花一年的时间拿到就不要花两三年。

（未来在哪里发展）二线城市吧.....因为一线城市太饱和了.....但要看发展吧。我是有想过很多条将来的发展路线。要是创业的话在二线城市。要是自己找工作，比如说我是学 **banking** 嘛，如果说是进银行的话就肯定是一线城市。要是当个老师，大学老师——这个我有想过——或者当一个培训机构的老师，就是教育那方面的话，也可能会找.....培训老师会在大城市，大学老师会在二线城市。

我想过（具体的操作），我也跟我爸聊过，我爸说：你现在想太早了。

我是这样想的，我毕业回去先去汇丰银行。因为我自己开过汇丰银行的账户，我会觉得汇丰银行这个平台跟四大行比起来，它会更专业一点，更能锻炼人，更能锻炼人的潜力，能激发出来。因为汇丰毕竟是一个外资银行嘛，它会对他们客户经理的那些职员的要求非常高。还有一个就是他们客户群体的问题。就是，你好歹是汇丰吧，你身边不会总是一些很差很差的，那些叫：小市民。你的客户就会稍微高端一点点。这样你的圈子就不一样了。这样你不像比如工商银行的，它开在一个很小的地方，然后你接触的是一些小市民.....你的圈子就已经不一样了。这一个有什么好处，就是将来，我万一要做生意的话，那这就是一手的客户资料。

小市民嘛，就是素质比较低的。（M：所以你还是希望跟一些）素质比较高一些的，言谈举止。不要是那种暴发户啊.....他们可能会有一些陋习，可能有些人会受不了。

我爸爸是一个邮政公司的一个职员。以前是做设计，现在是做销售类的一个经理吧。然后妈妈是幼儿园老师。所以他们赚钱特别不容易，就是他们都是打工一族。

父母会有一种望子成龙，望女成凤的（的想法）。我爸已经在一个大城市——广州生活了嘛，那要想让他的孩子——就是我——更上一层楼的话，那就是出国。

（考虑）二线城市是因为我觉得广州的生活压力很大。买房子生么的.....其实这个道理就是你要做鸡头还是要做凤尾。可能对于我来说，我宁愿做鸡头不愿做凤尾。.....尽管这个城市特别精彩，特别方便，特别吸引人生么的，但是我觉得生活应该是那种开开心心，然后很幸福，很安逸的那种。我的天哪，我怎么又这样的想法！.....但是我觉得在一个二线城市你也可以活得特别好啊。而且你想大城市的话空气污染对你身体也不好，还有就是二线城市也会发展得很快啊。中国的经济发展不是也挺快的嘛。你在一个二线城市，可能摸爬滚打个五六年，可能它也差不多发展成一个一线城市了，最重要就是买房子。二线城市的房子不会那么贵。我就不想蜗居那种感觉。

（父母）他们肯定希望我就一直留在广州啊，在身边陪他们啊。这个我没有跟他们聊过，这个比较敏感，怕他们生气.....先避开呗，就是走一步算一步。想想我父母花了这么多钱给我，我竟说出这么没出息的话，他不得气死。

我觉得应该（找中介），省事儿。

（M： 你希望出国留学给你带来什么呢？）

不一样的人生经历吧.....就是整个人会变得成熟，会跟以前不一样，会没有那么小孩子。

因为你自己一个人待在外面，所以事情你都得自己去面对，去处理，就肯定会变得独立很多。而且你会面临着怎么去相处，跟朋友相处；怎么去学习；

怎么去接受一样新鲜事物.....很多很多不一样的困难都会接踵而来。在这个过程中很自然而然的你整个人都会成长。

（学业方面）也挺重要的，最起码要毕业吧。还有就是我想在这边找个短期的实习，所以成绩很重要，因为这边挺看重学位的等级的。因为我现在读完书就会跟很多出国的留学生一样，也是一张白纸，什么都不懂。哪怕你跟用人单位说，我有很强的交际能力，我接受事物很快，但是你没有东西去证明你，人家凭什么在半个小时或一个小时的面试时间里别人就相信你有这种能力呢？你必须有一种工作经验，特别是海外的工作经验，这个是很好的说服力。

还有就是出国是一个契机，说的冠冕堂皇一点就是是一个人生的跳板。你出去了以后就会所有东西都会不一样。

我会对自己每个阶段想要得到的什么小愿望啊，希望自己能慢慢一点一点去实现。

我大四的时候就已经把以后（的规划）想完了，我现在的的话就把我现在的小目标做完就好了。

（就业方面的信息）呵呵，根本没有。压根儿就没有，有也就是那么一两场，然后就没了。比如说招聘会啊。但是招聘会就只是找工作啊（而并没有实习机会）。

我一直很相信一句话就是：You make your own life. 你得到的所有好运啊，或者你得到的一些东西，其实都是你自己努力得到的。

【更看重的还是经历】

因为读书的话我觉得一辈子都可以读，但是你青春这几年你能够在二十几岁的时候把所有的事儿都想明白了那可不容易。

包括我在大二的时候我就已经在思考人生的意义在哪里，就是人活着是为了什么。我大二的时候就慢慢慢慢自己想明白了。大三大四就开始有自己的规划，自己的想法。我觉得能把东西想明白了。然后现在的话，想明白了以后就是要做，就是要坚持，把你自己想的东西都把它完成了，做好了。这样才有意义，有价值。青春就这么几年嘛.....我就是想活的丰富多彩一点。我其实挺感谢我父母能够给我这个机会去出国留学，哪怕只是一年。所以我特别特别珍惜，机会特别宝贵。

我是那种乖乖女啊，就是父母说什么我会听的那种。不会逆着他们的意思，因为我爸身体也不好，我不想气他。反正我爸我妈也没有那种很大原则性的那种错误，我就顺着他们的意思咯。顺着老人家的意思咯，就觉得无所谓了。他们不想（我）谈（恋爱），那我就瞒着呗，就不要正面的交锋.....就老人家，哄一下就好了，说几句好听的话这就过去了。

我靠，（补习课）真是上的超多啊.....我从小到大就一直在上。

是我跟同一辈的孩子差太多了。我学习不好，我就是怎么补课，我也就是个中等水平，要是不补课我可能就是中下吧.....只是跟班里的（同学）比，还没有跟那些省市啊，那些好学校比的，还是跟班里人比的。不然我也不会考到一个三本了，对吧？还花了这么多的钱。

不过我也不明白，干嘛我的成绩就是不好呢？我也不觉得我特别笨啊，可能我是有点笨吧，但是我也不至于这么笨吧？学东西怎么学了这么半天就是学不会呢？我也不知道，就是必须得补课。没办法，这是一个国情吧，就是大家都在学习，你又不在学习；大家成绩都好，你就肯定是不行啊。我爸妈就觉得说，虽然不一定要当最好，但是起码不要差太多.....每个寒暑假我都在补课，都在上课。

（上大学的经历）

呵呵，补英语。补英语那就是雅思咯。学英语的过程也是慢慢慢慢开窍，可能到了大三的时候才知道怎么去学习，找到了自己的学习方法。可能我以前补课的时候真的没找到自己的方法吧，不知道要怎么学.....（学英语的时候）觉得很难很难。

【报了朗格的学英语班】

（雅思）考了四次。

我姨妈嫁给了一个英国人。然后我跟他（姨夫）聊的时候我就发现，挺有想法的一个老头。他 20 多岁的时候去过中国，在一所高校里面教英语，然后认识了我姨妈，然后就结婚了。

（他的事情）对我也是有一些启发。

我想创业、我也想当大学老师。创业需要看市场，而大学老师需要看学历，还有人脉关系。找什么工作都需要人脉。所以我不知道我最终会走向那条路，不过这两条是我最想做的工作。

我不想读博，读博太累了，真的好累啊。

创业的话可能我爸我妈不太喜欢。他们可能认为有社保、医保的那些才好。他们就觉得那些东西特别特别好。但我觉得社保医保自个儿买了呗。反正他们老人家是这么想的。

他们（父母）可能希望稳定的工作，安安稳稳的，没有任何风浪，就这么过一辈子了。然后好好嫁人，然后结婚，然后就这样平平安安地过下去。

真的，我觉得，读了这么多书，经历过这么多，总得有一点不一样的东西出来吧。

创业你必须要有有人脉啊，你必须要有有一些硬本领在身上，你肯定得在社会上先经历一段时间再去创业，这样会比较好。

我也有认识很多在微信上面做微商的，真的是做发了。从知道这个人开始，我就一直一步一步看着他走上去，知道走到成功，现在超成功的那种。

Student D

毕竟上了研究生过来，你明白自己的目的是什么。有些人目的是学点东西，有些人目的是那个学位.....我的目标的话，说实在的在于两者之间。我想保证我的学位，同时能多学东西多学东西。毕竟这也算是一项投资，你的投资总要出些结果。

我预期的结果就是，平均分能往高拿，能往高拿吧。也为以后做个铺垫。所以我没选太难的专业。我当时看了一下能选的专业，比如说，我大学学的会计，数学学的不深，后面学金融、建模这些东西，我估计，说实话，会有问题.....我一想，我大学说实话学得很水，数学学得很水，大学各项科目学得都很水。

说实话，第一年的情况下确实是比较努力的。第二年就被同化了.....被环境同化了.....就是感觉考试真的就是 60 分万岁，没人要高分，过了就行。可能就是我们学校的环境不是很好，或者就是我们宿舍的环境不好。

我在.....我是专本，两个都有。我专科是四川财经职业学院，就以前的财政干校，本科的话是西南财经.....（本科）我是考自考。因为我上到专科第二年的时候就觉得有点儿水了.....当时我就在想出国的想法。当时我就想，借助个短的时间吧，短时间的就先读个本吧，就是考个大自考，把它考出来。然后做个跳板去跳。因为毕竟你空拿的那个证是没用的.....然后我考了西南财经的自考，在我本科毕业一年以后拿到了西南财经的文凭。

我们这个（自考）就是要跟高考一样科科都去考，你考过十几门了以后再去过一个学位方面的，比如说学位英语。考过了以后，你的平均分.....比如说之前 75 的平均分，然后加学位过了以后，论文答辩，经过一个评定以后，就会给你发证。

后来我又参加了一个 TFC 的项目，是国家留学基金委的项目。对于像我这些补了个本科的，以我的专科基础去那里学习国内的硕士预科，这样结业了以后给你发个结业证。这是为了接硕士的。用的这个申请的，但是我当时挂了相关的证明。

因为我觉得，说实话，自考毕业是国家承认你的效率，做跳板用的。企业大部分不会认你。有些人会觉得，相当于一个是正规军，一个是非正规军。

我的专科，说实话第一年我还认真学了一下。第二年的时候我就有一种.....其实我心里有一点儿不甘，因为我当时是考完了以后，没考到好学校，但是

报的其他的本科给我刷了，分儿够，但是把我刷了。（高考志愿）滑档了，然后我就选了专科。我们专科要求的分 400 多分吧，跟我们三本的分一样高.....当然你要报一些民用院校的话更没用，因为更不被承认。因为我上预科的时候遇到过一些同学，他们有一些申请学校的时候被外国学校拒绝了。

（因为）他们是民办院校，别人不太承认你。虽然国家承认你，但是别人觉得你就是一个比较 Low 的一个学校。就是你是一个本，人家也不认你。当时我也考虑过这些，因为我在高中的时候就有人跟我说过这个.....

当时考虑了一下，因为我英语比较差，我上学的时候一直是不太喜欢英语，所以我，包括高考，也是短在英语。

说实话，当时我选择出国的时候，挺搞笑的这种感觉，感觉欠的早晚要还，我觉得我欠了这么多年英语，我该还了。然后就抽出了一年的时间学。

自己学的话，说实话我觉得我的自制力比较差，学一个东西如果不成体系的话我就不想做下去了。还是自主学习性在大学没有锻炼出来。还是需要一个体系，跟着体系走。

（父母）一开始管的比较严.....高中之前。高中进了重点高中以后就管得送了。因为我在底下租了个房子，自己住.....高三的时候进了平行班，因为（成绩）一直掉下去嘛，然后整个就比较废了。你知道，我们班最后上课能只坐一排人，后面没人了.....考完了以后我记得我们班考得最好的的是一个二本吧。所以我觉得还是氛围占了很大的比例。

后来，基本上就是哪边学得好就想往那边靠去了。跟着带呗。因为让这帮人带着带着你才能养成自己的习惯，习惯是需要养成的。可能一段时间你习惯不好了，你就需要改习惯，跟着好的走。这样习惯才能改，改了以后才能不需要跟着节奏走，不需要跟大家氛围，自己就能.....说实话的话应该是大学上了一半的时候（开始这样的意识）。上了一半的时候，那时候就已经心不在焉了，就开始想出国这方面应该怎么安排了。但当时我一直在忽略英语，因为我一直在逃避英语。

后来我想，别的东西学得好有什么用啊？英语学得好才是最有用的。

说实话，（父母）不算支持吧，算是礼物吧，离开校园的礼物。最后的一次支持。离开校园以后，毕竟你工作一段时间你是挣不到这么多钱的，那这个钱只能从屋里面拿。父母也就是给这一次机会吧，就是你自己生活，工作的最后一次帮助了。就是，我可以拿这个钱去付房子首付，我也可以买车，我也可以做别的。但是我觉得，投资自己，投资教育是最好的选择。最后那着钱出来了。

说实话我妈，因为女性，在这方面看东西不是很理性。我妈老觉得我能学很多东西，达到一个质变。我爸看得比较清楚，我爸就是，这一年一是见见世面，而是感受一下别的这种方式，学习学习一些差异性，第三就是把语言强化上去。专业学到的东西，他觉得是比较次要的。培养一点语言能力。第三

是学一些新鲜的东西，国内没有的东西，这就是它的优势性。回国就是这些东西占些优势。

说实话因为中国很多大学在世界排名并不低，虽然进不了前 200，但是前 500 还是很多。

我更赞同（父亲的想法），但是我的期望跟我妈比较像。我是有很大的期望，因为我一直在改。感觉我上本科专科期间的习惯已经改了很多。

在国内确实.....玩疯了说实话。换了花样儿玩儿。举个例子吧，也就是报社团，天天打比赛，排球赛打完打篮球赛。打比赛完了以后组织出去玩，跟别人出去玩。玩儿了以后有买了个 X 跟人出去刷城市。不是刷街，是我有同学在周围别的城市上学，我就骑车找他玩儿去。骑一百多公里.....就感觉人生过得挺无聊的，然后又开始打游戏，不是英雄联盟出来了么。就是过得挺颓废的，真是感觉，可能我们学校氛围不太好，所以感觉上下去真是浪费生命，浪费青春。

毕业那段时间，本科毕业的时间，也算是，因为我那时就差学位英语没过，英语一直很差，当我考过雅思的时候我才把学位英语考过.....不算正式工作，不算正式工作，就是很事务性的工作，说难听了就是打杂.....因为毕竟不是很热爱我的原专业，会计。

以前学数学学得好的时候就感觉会计这种无脑的东西，弄个表格跟着算算算算.....后来数学又不好了，又只会算了.....就明显觉得大学上完了以后没强项了，没强项了，学的专业也不喜欢，专业也不转。以前的强项，数学那些，会计不需要这么多东西。就学一点线性代数、经济数学这种很基础的东西。学完了发现，数学也不行了。就感觉大学上完了没强项了。我记得又一次我跟我妈聊的时候我妈就问我：你以后想做什么，我说我也不知道.....有段时间就是这种游离的状态，就是不知道自己想干什么。当你妹强项的时候你就不知道自己能干什么，想干什么。但是你有不想干什么。

我有考虑（未来就业）。我之前申的专业有金融，会计和金融，还有金融管理，还有会计与金融管理。所以我现在进的是会计与金融管理。因为我觉得带一点原专业的东西会帮我听懂这边上课的东西.....相当于降了一点难度。然后如果降一点难度的情况下能把这些东西学好，我可以去蹭课。

说白了就是刚从学校毕业就是个刺儿头，被削圆了。不知道咋回事，感觉干啥都是，温和了。不吐槽了，不抱怨了。以前有段时间，你知道，微博，大V很红，我也觉得好玩，天天跟着大V走。现在看来，真是一天闲着没事儿干，自己的事儿没干完跟着人家喊那玩意儿。所以现在就全部都取消关注了。现在是自己该关注什么就关注什么，别在那儿好高骛远。自己事儿没解决你还跟着关心国家政策呢，真闲得蛋疼，说的难听点儿。

务实了，更该干什么干什么了。考虑东西也不那么理想化了。比如说现在有三个选择，一个更好，一个次好，一个普通的话，那肯定是站着普通的角度往次好走。不会先瞄这么高。

我考虑这个专业就是在我的所有专业中挑了一个适中的，不是最水的，也不是专业性最强的。

英国时间短。就是因为时间短。而且我觉得，你说你要去英联邦的话，还不如去英国。我去欧洲我又不移民，因为我又没移民这个素养。然后，澳洲要呆两年，要考虑一下家里的经济，不想给家里造成太大的负担。英国待一年的话其实也是可以的。

想想现在世界，像之前看过一篇文章，现在世界比较发达的国家是什么国家？英语系国家。美国、英国、澳洲，还有一些欧洲一些国家。起源都是英国。我觉得，可能我的理解比较片面，我觉得这些文化方面都是从英国传出来的，这些英联邦国家。所以我觉得还不如去英国学。而且我觉得英国是一个比较发达的国家。与其相比美国更贵，（因为）英国时间短。然后费用先对便宜一点的话，那我还不如选英国，最佳选择。

你可能单看建设，英国有些地方还不如中国。但实际我感觉，我虽然说不上来是什么东西，感觉一个国家真正的发达并不是看建设.....比如说现在中国到处高楼，我去伦敦看了没有多少。没有中国那么夸张。但是就是比中国发达，比中国先进。一个可能是一个积累，人家已经发达很长一段时间了。第

二个可能是各方面的，文化方面的，意识方面的，比国内先进很多.....比如说文明程度，礼貌.....而且感觉这边人的诚信要比国内高。可能有一些更高的约束条件什么的，我不太清楚，我只是感觉这边诚信要高。比方说，这边，买酒，我基本上买不到假酒吧？在国内买的，包括在酒吧，很多很贵，都是假酒。

而且比如说人家说好的，定好的是一定做到的，一定去做的。不像有些中国说着说着就没有了。可能咱们就是意思一下了。

我感觉这种诚信建立在两个方向吧，一个是更高的法律约束；第二个是一个长期形成的习惯吧。

像中国很多人读研是因为本科生竞争比较激烈，就往高走呗。你走得越高，竞争强度就会降低，因为同类别的人群越来越少.....趁着年轻把学位弄高。因为你年轻，你真的不知道要干什么。你真不知道你以后会干什么。我感觉很不理智啊。想在我想想有一点不理智吧，因为你盲目地走得更高，钱也花了，时间也花了。

或者是他们觉得现在做的工作起点低，薪酬低。

现在研究生一抓一把了。

国内读研，感觉，看你上什么学校了。国内读研肯定很多人奔的是一本，或者是重本的研究生；有些人奔的是二本的研究生。我二本碰到的同学大部分的话，是靠进去以后混个硕士学位，一本的话有可能是进去学的。我同学说他们三年的研究生也就是上一年半的课，实习一年半。这么算，咱们在英国的话学的东西不比他们少，一样多。只不过我们用更短的时间去学，没有实习期而已。所以这么说英国和中国的教育差距应该不大。好多人说英国只学一年，水，其实我觉得不水。大家学的东西一样多，我比你更多的是语言方面的东西，我比你欠的就是研究生时候的实习。

有些时候课本上学到的东西和实际情况不同吧。

大学的时候一直在跟同学出去玩，忙着打游戏。真不知道咋着突然就毕业了，还没干啥呢就毕业了。

我妈退休了，我爸还在工作。我毕业了其实也能进（我爸的）企业，内部工作。但是有点儿进后门的感觉，我还是想自己找工作。

所以出来读研的话，正好我相信原来的劣势就会补上去了。研究生毕业最起码大家都一样了。且不说我是什么海归背景，我海归背景就跟你们说国内读研平了。因为你们说我们在国外读研只读了一年，水。所以我觉得是平了，没有什么过大的优势。至少咱们大家都是研究生。我们也都是统招出来的，原来我不是正规军，现在是正规军了，平了。

如果我是一个专科背景而不是一个本科背景进去的话，周围全是本科背景的人，那么我们做的同样好的情况下，提干提哪一个？肯定提学历高的，这是一个优势.....当然企业会更务实，谁做得好，提拔谁。因为企业毕竟不是学校，企业要的是实际。但是如果你带着一个硕士学位进去的话，一是你获得的机会会更多，企业更多会考虑你。因为你像，现在的国企，你想走到局长以上的职位，必须是研究生。局长不是研究生的话可能当不了了。很多人就是受限于学历。

但是国企属于‘体制内’，体制内我感觉就是，挣不多也饿不死。还是想出去，看看能不能再别的方面有些发展。因为你进了国企以后，比如说我毕业以后，金融或者是会计方面，那我进去的话就搞的是这个企业的财务方面的东西。其实我并不是很热衷于去搞财务，我可能现在学的是带金融方面的，我想往金融方面偏。那么我爸他们企业就没有金融这方面。你要是搞金融的话就要到最终的总公司，才会有融资啊这些方面的东西，财务用不上这种人才，要求的人也很少。所以我感觉要是从这里往上走，走到内部的话，走十年？二十年？能走到那儿。

回国的话有可能先进国企工作一段时间，考证吧，证考完了以后就打算自己往外跑。或者回去如果政策变的话，进不了的话，那就自己试试找一些事务所，如果往 CPA 方向发展的话就进事务所。如果是往 CFA 方向发展的话，就往证券方面进。但是我现在也不知道要往哪方面走。

像我那帮同学，出去做生意的那些的，你得有家里面有雄厚的背景，还得有人际关系。而且没有人带的情况下，刚开始出去做肯定是交学费.....不打算创业，首先创业需要积累一定的人脉，和一定经验方面的积累，而且你还得懂这玩意儿.....说白了说啥不能说大话，都没那么容易。你从事什么工作做都很难。所以就是，先不往这方面想了。

学校培养两个方面，一个是能力，一个是知识。（从事别的工作）你学校学的知识就没用了。

踏踏实实的该学点什么学点什么，你先学好你的东西你才能做别的东西。你自己学的东西都没学好，你去创业。我想的是你是个学生，你书都没读好，你创业怎么能创好。这都一样的，都是相当于一个任务.....我觉得这就是一个能力问题。你读书读不好的话，创业也创不好。

所以我觉得出来读书，把书读好了，也算给自己一个交代，学生时代就算结束了。

毕业以后我打算去以下几个地方工作，都是我熟悉的地方：一个是成都，一个是西安，一个是昆明.....我在昆明工作过一段时间，我每年假期去那儿找我爸，我爸在那儿工作。.....我们家，我从小是我妈带，我爸在外面工作，我们是工程局，这种家庭非常多。所以很多孩子都是走到最后就读废了，学习。.....还有青岛，我姐在那边。

我有好多同学打算毕业以后去北漂，我不打算。我不看好，我感觉在那儿消耗青春，而且做不出什么东西。因为你自己能力有限，除非你很强。.....我觉得我比较务实。正确定位吧，先对自己正确定位，再去考虑自己追求的东西。好多人都喜欢最好的东西，首先要定位你有没有这个能力。你没有这个能力得到我就不会去追求。

我们家庭非常开放。包括我在这边好多同学都不知道我是回族。我比较看得开，所以我什么都不信。我觉得信什么不如信自己。所以我比较看得开，我跟朋友交往的时候我不介意吃什么。就是没有有些人那么作，我感觉那就是作，或者说信教信的比较深。我感觉只要能跟更多的朋友接触，我的意思是，我想发展比较好的朋友。没有人知道我是回民，因为我从来不说这个。说这个我感觉会造成一些不必要的东西，别人会考虑一些什么。所以你们吃什么，我跟着一块儿吃，我根本不介意这些。但是我父母可能会介意，但我不介意这些。

我父母可能会知道，但我父母也比较务实，因为都是文化人。就是啥，你出去不要把身子亏了就行。所以我觉得我们家看得非常开，我父母全是回民。.....我跟父母长大的，我不是跟老一辈长大的。像我哥他们就是跟老一辈长大的，他们对这玩儿非常忌讳。我还有一次被我哥警告了。

我觉得你在这儿不管学到各方面的东西，对你以后人生的态度，人生观，还有一些就业方面的影响，都会有帮助。因为你一直在学东西，而你学的东西

是有选择性的。那么你学的这些东西肯定是你需要的。你会变得越来越全，肯定对你未来会有更大的帮助，但具体是什么帮助我现在也不知道。

我觉得投资教育，投资自己，我觉得没一点儿错。要是能投资我就投资。因为这玩儿是投在你自己身上的，谁都拿不走的，而且你永远丢不掉的。

Student E

会更独立啊。会更自信啊。

我可能跟别人不太一样，一般，可能我岁数年龄比较大了，可能会比年轻人要独立，但其实不是的。我从来这儿之前我从来没有跟家人分开过。.....就是从我父母手里直接移交到我老公手里。主要其实还是生活方面，几乎就是没有独立过。但是这个我觉得不仅仅是生活方面，更是人格方面的一个体现。这样好像生活上不独立，其实你性格上有一定的缺陷。这个很容易的就会反映到你的工作和学习中.....你的接人待物，处理工作上的难题，学习上的难题，跟同学去合作去研究也好，还是说你平时的接人待物其实都受到影响。

很简单的就是我从小到大都没交过电费，没交过水费，所有跟费相关的我都没交过。这就导致什么，比如说，它是琐碎的事情，导致不管是工作中还是学习中，稍稍遇到一些琐碎的事情我就变得很烦躁.....我根本静不下心来做。会有这样的事情，这个其实到工作中也是。

我在公关传播这个行业做了八年。.....那个是我的职业。钱，成就感，事业方面的成就感。就是一个职业能给人带来的价值，它都有带来。你的事业方面，你价值的体现。包括社会上，你会有一定的地位，一定的生活圈。你会有认同感，你会有成就感。然后你也有经济上的独立。就是所有一个工作，一个事业能给普通人带来的价值很普遍，就都是这样的。

中间停过两年，就边照顾小孩，边学习英语。中间我就辞了两年。我是小孩四个月的时候辞的职，但之前有半年在修产假的。可能就是有小孩儿，那你就照顾小孩儿，然后你的事业就是照顾小孩儿嘛，其实是一样的。

就觉得没意思，干点儿什么呢？那就看小说吧。看小说觉得翻译的不好看，那就看原版的吧。看原版的话那就学学英语吧。然后朋友考雅思，我就跟着考了一个。然后中介找我，非忽悠我说能申出来，然后我就申着试试吧，然后我就出来了。

我周围朋友出国的特别多。尤其是最近这几年。其实我的朋友岁数都不小了，一般都二十七到三十.....这个上下年龄的人了。基本上都是工作蛮久的了。但是这两年出去的很多，我啊，我身边的同事啊，我同事包括去美国的啊，都好像还蛮多的。.....读硕士。有的都不是读硕士，有的在国内都已经读过硕士了。就像是进修半年多或者是一年，或者是在国内读在职博士，然后可以交换一年，这样的项目。

我有一个朋友，其实我出国留学完全是从她那儿得到的信息。.....她现在在美国，也在读书。我是因为，我这样做的时候我发现朋友圈很多人也都在这样做，我也不知道为什么。可能就是到了这个年龄，所有没有出国的，在国内这个年龄都在读 MBA。所有没有出国的，基本上 29，30 岁我们这一波人，我们没有出国的同事都在国内修 MBA 了。

因为工作到我的这个年龄层的话，基本上要不然就是中层管理人员的高级，要不然就是高管的低级，就是刚入高管管理层的，但是是最低级。这个时候可能会觉得，执行层面的事情基本上已经没有了，突然一下子你执行层面的事情卸掉了，你有空闲时间了，但是空的时间你想的东西也多了。公司对你的要求也一下子从业务层面一下子进入管理层了。所以这个时候好多人有这么一段空的时间可以允许他不那么做执行的业务，然后去学一点什么新的东西。那这个时候很多人就想去国外学，或者在国内暂时读个 MBA。因为大多数年轻人一直工作啊，跑跑跑一直要跑到二十八九岁就一定会停一停，会有一个平台期，或者瓶颈期。他已经冲到了这个程度，需要缓一缓。所以这个其实蛮普遍的。

一定会是对未来的投资，因为这个成本，金钱成本和时间成本都蛮大的。因为这个成本不能按刚毕业的学生来算。刚毕业的学生出来一年，花销就是他的成本。但是作为中层人员的话他这一年出来的成本还要想，要是留在国内，这一年可以做到什么样的高度。拿年薪 50 万来讲的话，这一年除了出国的花销，还有这 50 万的损失的 salary 在这里。

我在河北大学毕业，本科学广告学，在新闻传播学院。

除了现在的学科以外，之前的专业和我从事的行业是一个领域。但是目前我来读的不不认为它和我未来的工作或者说是过去从事的工作有什么太大的关联。

首先是广告这个行业我太了解了。不是说在学术方面我都了解，没得学。不是这样的。是如果仅仅是工作方面来讲的话我不需要广告方面的学术知识了。因为学术的知识你要不就搞学术研究，一直留在大学，要不然的话你去一个调研机构。但是如果单纯是就执行来讲，在一个 agency 公司的话，广告方面我觉得我没什么想学的了。但是申的时候因为中介帮我申，这个我把握最大，然后又是相关学科，又有工作经验，于是就申了这个。

然后社会学为啥想学，首先它是一个新的东西，对于我了解知识的角度它是一个新的东西。另外，我是一个兼职小说家，就可能对这方面更感兴趣一点。平时想的会比较多一点.....因为我不断地写小说，对于社会的思考和想法会多一点。可能学这个学科不是为了以后我去公关公司工作，可能对我个人的一些心中的疑惑啊，想法啊会更有帮助。可能它会给我一些我的一些问题的答案。另外我可以在这里至少会学到一些，因为西方社会不同嘛，分析这些问题的一些 method。

工作也会有。因为公关传播这个方面属于边缘学科，基本上什么人都能干，但最好还是文科学生干得会比较多。所以你在文科这一领域学点儿什么对你以后都会有点儿用。

我主要的目的就是因为我有很多问题。当你去观察这个社会的时候，那你会有很多不明白的事情。那为什么会产生，为什么会这样。

那很多人，比方说西方社会说：中国没有人权，中国政府很糟糕，中国政府不给中国人人权。那现在中国人很多人也在抱怨，说我们没有人权。那请问抱怨的这帮人你们知道什么叫人权么？那如果你不知道什么叫人权，那你怎么知道你没有人权呢？.....说以这就跟我工作没有什么大的关系了，可能跟我的一些想法有关系。所以我会选择学这个。

出国留学是主要目的。但既然出来了，就顺带学一个自己喜欢，想要学的专业吧。我只是想出来待一年。

我能跟你说度假么？我当时没敢跟我的导师说这个概念，但其实是有一点的就是，它很像度假，只是时间长一点。它可以让我工作这么多年以后缓一缓。然后我觉得反正已经辞职了，那再开始是重新开始，不管是去原先公司还是别的地方。那不如重新开始之前拿出一年的时间读个书吧。其实有点工作时间长了，想换个环境歇一歇。

因为没出来过嘛，想了解一下国外的生活到底是什么样子的，国外的大学到底是什么样子的。另外还可以练练英文啊。至少这个对我以后工作是会有很大帮助的。

出来是主要目的。只要出来了，只要有这个经历，不管是对我小说创作，还是对我个人性格啊，能力的锻炼都是有好处的。至于学什么，只要不是让我太痛苦的专业我都可以接受。然后我想到这儿，我既然已经来了，反正我要学点什么的，那就尽量学我最想学的那个。

（出国留学的信息）完全通过网上查。

是我在家带孩子，看英语书。然后她呢，它是真的很想出国。因为我在蓝色光标，是中国很本土的一个公司。她一开始的 **global agency** 公司名字我忘了，但她后来在福莱灵克（**Fleishman-Hillard**），两个都是属于外企的公司，所以对于语言要求特别高。她英语每天就很痛苦，很痛苦，很痛苦。然后她就来我这儿诉苦来，那我就跟她俩人一起学学英语嘛。我英语可能比她稍稍好那么一点点。然后之后我就辞职了么。之后她专门辞了职，花了半年的时间在家学英语，然后只考雅思，还请了外教教的口语。她就住在我家对面，特别近。然后我就特别希望能有人找我说说话。然后他来了有什么话题，说的无外就是雅思，雅思，雅思。.....说来说去，把我自己说动了。然后我就想，不就是考雅思嘛，怎么这么费劲呢？考了四次。来，咱么一起考一下。然后我就跟她一起考了一下，考了个 5.5。然后有中介的老师过来找我。

伦敦的（大学）除外。因为我不太喜欢大城市。在北京待了这么久，我 07 年就在北京了。这么久时间了，高楼，然后车，然后人，我有点儿呆够了。然后本身就是想脱离那个环境，想找个安安静静地方就像度假一年的话，那么我一定会选择除了伦敦之外的小城市。

（丈夫）他大学学的是中文系。他是其他学校的，我们不是同学。他学到一半就退学了，因为他不是学术型人才。然后就开始工作了几年，后来自己开始创业。然后开始做公司，做的领域都跟互联网相关，也会跟传媒相关的一点东西。

我爸我妈都是医生，我爷爷也是医生。我家除了我所有人都是医生。然后他们保守得不得了。他们一辈子都不会换一个工作，他们一辈子都守着那一家医院。然后他们活的特别传统。什么抽烟、喝酒、早恋这些事情如果在我身上发生，他们就想要死了一样，简直接受不了。我上高中、上初中的时候，没有人敢往我家里打电话，女生都不敢。

没办法。我永远都斗不过我妈的。然后上大学的时候想考一个离家远的吧，我第一天进大学宿舍，我们家七个人陪着我进去。（我是黑龙江的，哈尔滨人）七个人陪我进去的。就是以当时那个年龄，真的，我会心里面觉得很丢脸。因为宿舍还有其他同学，没有人那样，真的会觉得特别丢脸。我都不好意思说话，直躲.....我一句话都不敢说，就这样藏着。

时不时晚上打电话查岗。有手机都不打，专门打宿舍座机。（上大学的时候一直如此）

结婚之后，就好了。因为我那个时候有工作了——对啊，我工作的公司他们都去参观过，然后还跟我的 leader 聊天，认识一下什么的。我父母就能做到这个地步。但是结婚之后一个是我工作忙了，然后他们也慢慢的不打电话了。

有很大的区别，举个很简单的例子：中国的学生一直认为自己是学生，学生有自己的特权，有优待，旁人应该照顾着你。我打架了我可能只是打架，我并不是犯罪，我挂科了我可能求求老师就过了，我并不会被开除。但是在这里不可能。.....他把学生的身份架在自己身上太多了。我是学生，那我是学生，我是区别于社会上的成年人的。我是弱势群体也好，我是强势的也好，反正我是区别于社会上的成年人的，一定是区别于社会上工作的人的。但是这边可能要好一点。你除了学生之外，最起码你成年了，你是个成年人，那你的行为你自己需要负责。

国内的大学学生打架，会找老师。警察局把他们带走了之后一定也会联系老师的，联系校方嘛。有事情跟校方协调。在这儿的话因为你是成年人，你的其中一个身份是学生，那你其他方面待人待物你都是一个成年人。包括你要守时，你要守法，你要尊敬别人。你要懂得做事情有后果。我觉得在中国大学里面这些会少一点。

比如说大四刚毕业出去实习的时候，可能国内的实习生会诸多地抱怨，然后会觉得很不适应。包括公司的人，会说公司的人太冷漠了，什么事情不教他。我凭什么教你啊？你是来工作的，我给你开薪水的，你有不是来交学费的好吗！有的学生打印机都不会用。我很多时候听到国内学生跟我抱怨就说我在这儿工作学不到什么。然后要有人带，要有人教。都已经大四了，来接触的学生都还是这样的想法，我就是很无语的事情。然后（他们）会觉得这个社会好冷漠啊，你们都是从新人过来的，为什么你们要这么对待新人，就不能给我们新人机会么？我听完这样的话我觉得好幼稚。

我当年还好，我当年招我的那个老板对我还不错。.....因为我那个时候学广告学的学生少，我一到公司的时候属于科班毕业，所以稍稍地有一点优越感。.....我们那一届，刚毕业的学生学广告的几乎没有，科班出身的人才特别少，于是就还蛮吃香的。

（和父母的关系）这样的影响有一个特别显著的结果就是，我在处理事情的时候特别喜欢用迂回政策。不管是跟客户也好，还是跟朋友交流，凡是在有矛盾冲突的时候我可能会.....很难让我去做正面上的直接冲突。我会选择表面上的屈服，为自己换来更多自由的空间，但是我绝对不会完全听话。我知道正面冲突可能不会有什么作用，因为一辈子我也斗不过我妈。

【毕业之后打算回到之前的岗位】

唯一的影响就是英文好了一点。对工作方面，如果还去公关公司上班的话。

那么唯一用得着的可能就是英语。

文凭.....没啥用。但是就是没有工作经历，应届毕业生的话，我们这行业的话也不大看文凭。

再找工作靠的是这八年的口碑。因为那个圈子太小了，北京可能公关公司是个手指头都能数的过来，可能也就七八家。如果不回原来公司，再往上走，再有的选择也就有那么两三家。那，圈子太小，看口碑。

（其他的作用）有啊，比如说老了，写自传的时候，会回忆一段说我在英国读元就剩的那一年，多牛啊！还有就是当别人跟你探讨，说西方国家是什么样子的的时候，那你的经历不仅仅是旅游我看到的事情，可能更深入一点。然后，国外的留学生是什么样子的，英国人到底是什么样子的，这可能就不是想象了，真的见到了对吧？

这些经历都比为我以后的工作加分要来得宝贵。.....因为这一年你不花在这儿，那也就花在北京了。北京我已经花了七八年了，多一年少一年能有多少变化呢？但是你在这儿一年就不一样了。因为这一年不管花不花都会过去啊。

我希望它让我成熟一点，独立一点，坚强一点。可以更包容，更宽容一点。

我觉得这是一种境界，没有人可以谈得上够或不够。比如说包容这个事情，

每个人都有一定的限度，你可以让自己变得更包容一点，然后可以心也更宽广一点。

如果你二十年都重复着一样的经历，日复一日，年复一年，它也可以改变一个人，我不知道会改变成什么样子。但是我想然我人生经历更丰富一点。.....让我接受到新鲜事物，没有见过的，没有听到过的，没有感受过的东西，我就会觉得，蛮好的。

Student F

国内很多人一提到英国留学，就会对酒吧文化这些会有一些偏见。可能会觉得会不会很乱什么的，但其实不是这样的。

我还好，我就属于没有事情找事情的人。

最早是我父母给我提议的，大一的寒假的时候。

我父母可能受到身边的同学和同事的影响，觉得把孩子送出去.....就是，妈妈总觉得，因为她自己在银行工作嘛，可能看到自己的行长把自己女儿送出去了，就会觉得留学是不是会让我自己家里的孩子能在往上走一步。我觉得她看到了这个，相对来说看到的比较远.....可能会对我有很大的帮助，就这个意思。.....她真的没有详细的了解，她只是觉得会有帮助。

父亲没有想法，对我的培养一支没有太多的想法。从小的教育主要是妈妈。

妈妈一直在这方面——可能跟家庭有关系，她是做财务的嘛——可能觉得不管是对我的教育的准备的资金也好，从小一直在准备。反正我高中就了解到她一直想把我送出去，因为我考了两年高考，我复读过一年。第一年我考得真的特别不好——虽然第二年也没有考好——当时我有个特别好的朋友，她现在在美国，她是高中之后，大学就被送出去了。当时我妈妈也有想过那个时候把我送出去。主要是我外公外婆那一辈人说孩子太小了，还是读完大学再去吧。我自己也想复读，但我知道我妈妈想把我送出去的想法因该是很早就有的。

我爸爸做公务员，在一个地方小局子当局长，八个人的一个前年刚成立的一个局，邮政管理局.....他也不是特别忙吧，他对我的教育一直不是很上心，真的不是很上心。觉得我妈管着就可以了。

小学一年级就有英语课，就发现自己不听课也能考一百分。然后就开始在这个学科上有了成就感。.....小学就开始已经学到了人家初中、高中的水平了嘛，然后初中高中也是不怎么用心也可以考很高的分数。我确定我英语就是建立在自信心上面的，没有别的。因为其他的成绩都不好，尤其是数学。

大一的寒假（开始确定要出国留学）。我们这个项目是大一上学期给我们介绍了的，我们这个项目就是要那么早就定。当时我一直知道我妈妈想把我送

出去，所以我身边有这样的资源我都会告诉她。当时我就告诉她，我说妈妈我们学校有个这个项目，我觉得这个项目好水的样子，我觉得我要申学校我能申到更好的学校。

我妈妈会一直想这个事情嘛，就觉得自己找学校的项目还是更放心一点。毕竟父母的心也没有那么的大，就是也没有一定要死要活的找中介给你申一个特别好的学校。就觉得走最安全，最顺利，一定会有保障的路是最好的。

最早的考虑是觉得可以省一年的时间，很划得来啊。当时同意也是抱着省时间的想法。就算到时候如果真的不喜欢这个学校的话，还有时间可以再读嘛。

第一个就是省时间，我觉得时间还挺重要的。除了省时间第二个就是来英国长见识嘛，第三个就是可能会对就业有帮助，那个时候也只是觉得可能，也不是很确定。看吧，我觉得都是看自己，哪里找不找得到工作都是看自己。我现在觉得跟个人性格会占更大的关系。

最早，当时还在知青下乡的时候，我们那边的钢铁厂——新钢企业很多技术工人从上海过来，从沿海地区过来给一些技术支持，所以我们那边有很多上海人。.....会影响我们这个城市的人。.....会有很大的影响，像给孩子报学校，我有很多高中同学在上海。报学校也有关系，之后的就业方向也会有影响。会有家里面提前在上海备房子的。

有挺多的（新余出国留学的）.....有，我们还有群。

（重庆）我很喜欢这个地方啊。

可能我们在一个外国语学校，所以出国的人我觉得算比较多的。可能因为学语言嘛，你不出国总觉得学语言缺了点什么东西嘛。.....尽管项目并不多，身边出国的人真的挺多的。我的朋友基本上，朋友圈已经环游世界了。尤其是一些更大点城市来重庆读书的，基本上都会想出去。.....（想不想出国）跟城市有关，跟家庭有关。我觉得这是两个比较大的因素，个人也是受这两个因素影响的。.....到了重庆真的觉得会有变化，觉得身边认识的人哇你们都好厉害啊，你们在上大学之前就已经去过好多国家的感受。会有这样的影响。身边认识的人，不管是家里的条件，重庆人很愿意花钱嘛.....

我们学院只有这一个项目，这是唯一一个选择。

我们是大二下学期，快上大三的时候选专业。因为那时候也都是收 offer 的时候了嘛。最早大一大家可能会知道有什么专业，但是具体要学什么其实你还是不是很清楚的。其实我最早选的不是这个专业。我最早想学的是一个商学院的关于企业社会责任，当时我很想做这个领域，可能跟 social responsibility 有关系的一个专业，但是那个专业被 cancel 掉了。好像因为商学院里面有特别多，虽然名字叫的不一样，但是里面很多课程都是重合的。可能这几年开了这个专业发现招生都不是很理想。

我之前大学的时候做校媒，作为一个校媒的负责人，所以对媒体和广告这一块还是有一定的接触的，相当于有一点自己的认识。然后来学这个专业之后，更理论的方面就是帮我这些认识的东西上升一个台阶，我觉得还挺有意思的。

身边如果想去（出国留学）的话会有这样的交流。首先先交流的可能就是我们自己这个班。学校没什么可交流的，但是专业会交流，大家还是要去想自己要学什么专业。然后最后的结果就是大部分人都对这个没什么概念。……这些人真的好捉急啊，我看着都好难过。尤其是这些人反而会有惰性，就是从头开始就已经定好了学校，他们觉得可能也不会像那些要申学校的人，有很强的目标要有去筛选的这个过程，选择自己的意愿。这些人就是没有。他们就觉得报了这个项目，反正就是去这个学校了呀，然后学什么啊其实也都无所谓啊。最多可能会牵扯到一些自己的兴趣，但我觉得对于未来的衔接缺少自己的思考。我是这样想的。我肯定思考了，人和人还是有区别的。

【没找中介】

（对于未来）之前迷茫过。我对未来想法今年经过了几次转变：一开始的时候，在我来这边之前，尤其是六月份，我在川外相当于毕业了嘛，我当时对自己的计划都很明确，就是我来这边之后我就回国，找工作，可能上海，或者可能重庆，城市我都可能缩小到这两个地方，然后行业我也可能基本上有一个大概的想法。就是觉得路就是这样走的。当时我觉得对于形势看得还是挺清楚的。

后来我去优步（Uber）实习。差不多四月份开始实习，但是完整的实习就是在七八月份嘛。就认识了一群人。然后这个环节对我造成了一些影响。个人的影响吧，我跟我前男友分手了，因为觉得我可以走得更远，有这样的想法。因为他就在国内，我觉得我可以走得更远。.....我总觉得有一个人在国内我就要回去，也许说不定我可以不回去呢。

第二方面的改变就是，因为我们的老板，重庆那边的总经理，也是一个特别能浪的起来的人。.....我觉得受我老板的影响还挺大的。我老板他自己是清华的本科毕业，哥伦比亚大学的研究生毕业，然后自己在美国纽约银行还做到了 Vice President。但是毅然决然辞了工作回来做 Uber 了。就觉得可以转换，人可以走的，看得不一样。可能受到了这方面的影响，就觉得我为什么一定要有一眼就能看得到的未来，就会这样想了嘛。当然跟前男友分手不全是因为这样的原因，但会有这方面的影响。

当时实习之后可能就开始对未来有更多的想法。就不仅仅说我毕业了之后就会回国找工作，找到的工作都是我之前设定好了的那几个方面。当然，我实习完了还是有一段时间回家的放空期，来这边之前的一个多月的时间，那时候就最迷茫了。那个时候因为你静下来了，闲下来了，突然之间会想，以后要做什么？然后就开始网上拼命地找，英国能找什么工作。.....我会考虑在英国找工作，我已经在考虑这件事情了，要不我也不会拼了命在改简历。当时听迷茫的，主要是你不知道这是什么样的环境，你能想象的东西太多了，所以反而会很迷茫。

男朋友现在在美国，史蒂文森理工学院（Stevens Institute of Technology）。学通信工程，硕士。他自己还说他要在这儿开公司，我说你开吧……出国前认识了一个半月，真的是实习才认识的。

出国之前我真的就是想把这个当经历，就是像上次 focus group 我也讲到了，它对我来说是一个很重要的经历。它跟我的成长有很大的关系。我觉得不管出国遇到了好的事情，或者不好的事情，肯定会跟之前的经历是很不一样的。它都会对我造成一些影响，可能会对我有一些改变。

【觉得中国的机会会比较多】

而且确实你对中国的行情是更了解的。

（在英国找工作）有这样的机会还是要尽量抓住这样的机会。

Student G

口译。

最早大学的话，我是转过专业。我第一年是 applied psychology，就是心理学，然后后面转的是教育，因为我们是师范学校嘛，所以读的是英语师范。我当时是想出国选心理学这个专业的。因为读了第一年之后发现心理学挺感兴趣的。……但是我觉得本科毕业在中国的话，很难从事跟心理学有关的，专业

性比较强的东西。可能要读到研究生，或者是博士。那么如果要升学的话我觉得国外的心理学可能要更好一点。所以我的想法是先从心理学转到——我们学校那时候最好的是英语师范嘛。如果到时候我不想留学的话我就以英语师范的本科毕业也能找到工作。

转的话还有一个考虑就是如果我最后选择留学的话，我肯定选的是心理学，而不是教育，不是师范专业。但是我学的是英语师范的话，我的英语水平可以帮助我以后学心理学。但是最后的话我是发现自己的兴趣太广泛了，明显比较好一点的就是英语嘛。我知道口译这个专业需要广泛的知识面，正好跟我现实生活中关注的东西比较一致嘛，再加上我英语比较好，所以最后选的是口译这个专业。

因为最后我学了三年教育发现我并不喜欢教书。说英语师范的话有两个部分，一个是教育一个是英语对不对？我发现我英语那部分的喜欢更加大于（教育）。然后我又决定了留学。同时又发现如果本科不是心理学专业的国外心理学专业是不要的。当时我大一的时候做这样的想法是没有做过一些调查，结果到了想申的时候发现是不可以的。

我想出国留学大部分人的话无非就是两种想法啦，一个就是文凭类的吧，回去之后能有一个好的文凭；第二种可能就是真的出来学东西的。当然我觉得这两个东西不矛盾嘛。但是有的时候是要做取舍的。就像我出来的时候如果我不是选这么 **hard-core** 的专业可能我的学校会好一点。但是如果我去选口译，或者说 TESOL，他们对语言的要求会比较高，所以说如果我要选这样的

专业和相比一些比较.....比如说 HR 啊，比如说一些比较大众的专业，可能学校的 level 会往下低。最后我还是决定学实用性偏强的专业，所以最后选了口译，还是 Essex 的口译。

我觉得这还是上一个问题，就是你出来是要文凭还是要学的东西。如果说我出来读的是 HR，我不是看不起 HR，我是觉得有的专业是比较水的。也就是说真正能学到的东西不能保证的情况下唯一可以代表你这一年的就是你的文凭。那如果你拿的是利兹、曼大、纽卡这些的，那你可能从文凭上来看要领先于 30 几名或是 40 几名的学校。虽然说你可能在这一年当中学的东西差不多，但是这一纸文凭就很能说明问题。所以说在这方面大学文凭就很重要了。但是如果说我学的是口译的话，你以后靠口译吃饭，你的文凭并不能带来什么帮助。因为你之后要面对的就是拿你的技能和技术说话嘛，所以说你的文凭就显得不那么重要了。

（出国留学的同学）不是很多，因为我最后毕业的那个专业，我最后不是英语师范那个专业吗？因为这个专业的专业对口性很强，就业率非常高，以至于连读研的人都很少，因为他们就业性很强，几乎就没有人。

因为上海师范嘛，上海那边地方保护主义还是比较明显的，在师范这个方面比较倾向于，就是上海现在有一个不成文的规则，就是招生的时候招沪籍男。已经到了你哪怕水平不好，你只要满足沪籍男，很多好的学校都愿意收的地步。所以我们这个学校想要工作都是比较那个的，所以大家都不会多想。

（父母）还是比较支持吧，他们不太支持我是混文凭这样的。其实混文凭说起来不好听，但是有些专业文凭很重要的，其实也不是说混这个事情。……可能每个专业比例考量不同吧。

中介吧，还是。可能跟大多数人看法挺像的吧，就是没出来之前觉得没有中介自己是搞不定这个事情的，来了这儿发现其实都可以搞定，但是你没有第二次机会了对吧？除非你以后做中介。……中介应该是跟我说我可以去哪里看，之后上英国学校的官网都可以自己看。

因为学英语的觉得英语比较本格，比较纯的就是英国嘛，因为我的口音在大学的时候就有意识地往英国这边练习，我希望能够适应这边的环境。……我觉得从学英语的角度，英国还是比较有权威性的吧。

这个专业应该还是挺具体的吧，做口译呗。一种是纯口译嘛，纯自由的，或者是加入一个翻译公司的那种。还有一种，我个人比较倾向的一种，因为我关注的东西还比较多嘛，包括三年教育也不是白读的，心理学的话到现在都有关注，包括商科我自己也有兴趣。我比较倾向于最后我挂在某一个公司或企业里面，在一个企业内部，如果有翻译啊，口译啊我就管，平时我就做一个企业的员工，并不是我纯粹的附属属于一个翻译公司这样的。因为这样的话，这么说呢，总觉得翻译这个东西，技术在发展，总觉得机器哪一天可能会（代替人）。所以觉得学英语的话，还是要有一个自己的专业吧。

有（危机感）。因为我以前学过心理学嘛，知道计算机永远不可能代替大脑。但是我觉得如果说能够有一个专业的话会更好。

【之前有亲戚出国留学】

大学第一年纯混，然后二三四五年还是挺紧张，比较充实吧。不管是学啊，还是社会上的一些参与都会比较多一点。

例如有去译制片厂配过音啊，有帮一些旅游公司——他们属于全球范围的旅游公司嘛，总部在德国，他们每次出一些宣传资料都会先德国的那个资料翻译成英文，然后英文在发到某个分部，然后要翻译成（中文），我帮他们做这个。帮他们做旅游的那个还蛮有意思的嘛，因为不像很多材料很枯燥，旅游的你看到诶这个地方没去过啊，好像蛮好玩的样子。然后还可以，各种各样都有做过一点。

也有跟商有关的，因为我们那个时候有一个社团叫 Enactus，我在里面也做过好几个项目。就是在这个时间里——因为我们的队长其实挺牛的，他来我们这个学校我觉得也不太正常。.....然后我们跟着他做的话也是学到了很多。我对商的兴趣也是从那个时候培养出来的。但是那个时候因为这个关系生活习惯会很差，因为经常会晚上熬夜搞这种项目什么的。我身体那个时候也不太好，胃也不太好，因为那个时候吃饭也不太好，睡觉也不太规律.....但就是觉得还挺充实的吧。

也没有经常，就是有（实习）就做。因为实习是一种产出，但是我觉得积累是比较重要的。你有了积累实习才能锦上添花嘛。你一直实习，一直实习，其实这个钱也不会很多，也就是实习嘛，所以也不会一直去做。所以我一直是学一会儿，然后最近想去实习我就去实习一下。因为上海的话比较国际一点嘛，想要找英语类的话都能找，如果你不 care pay 的话还是挺容易找到的。

正式工作的话，三个月在学校教书，我觉得这个模式挺正式的了。我们那边的一个重点初中吧，去交了三个月的初三。就那个时候我发现我靠，这个东西我不想玩了。.....因为老师这个，我不知道国内国外一样不一样，就是国内的这个老师的氛围不太好。每天老师们都在讨论，这个学生好烦啊，什么时候才能放假啊。然后我发现他们英语水平其实已经差的可以了，因为他们的 pay 和他们的 performance 是完全脱离的，因为对老师来说没有太多的升职，根本就没有升职这个说法对不对。

（所谓‘高级教师’、‘特级教师’）对他们的 pay 是没有影响的。只是说在某些方面会让你优先这样。而且很多老师都不肯考，因为，我们那边有一个高级教师嘛，他周一到周五上课，高级教师现在是每周天的上午，基本上占掉周日的一天是要培训的，然后周六周日又有在线课程。所以说你要保持住你的职称是很累的。

其实从收入上来说，如果你是要收入的话很少有人去做，因为太累了。

所以在这种情况下有多少心思在学生身上呢？其实也不能怪老师吧。但是这不是我喜欢的一种工作的氛围嘛。就是感觉氛围会比较低一点，比较消极一点。我不太想这样，我想我这个职业能越做越好，而这些老师的话他们毕业的时候都是华师大、上外这种，我觉得他们的水平绝对没有现在的这种地步，但现在为什么会水平这样呢？我觉得可能就是一个环境吧。所以我不想我在一个地方越工作越差对不对？水平一天不如一天，这种感觉很怪的对吧？

虽然说做口译的话，中英是双向的，但是我觉得明显是在中国会更需要这个。而且英国的话前年好像改了一个，对于工作签证的话改过了。之前的话好像留学生自带毕业以后能在这边待几个月的.....所以说从想法上和现实上，会不太现实吧，在这边留下来。而且我觉得这个工作在国内做也会好一点。国内可能需求量更大一些。

传统教育吧，比较传统的那种，西化度不高。是中国的那种儒家思想的教育。学论语呗，你觉得具体吗？就是到我出国之前我每天还要跟我妈一起学习论语的。对于中国的国学，我爸妈比较看重一点。（尤其）我妈比较看重一点。我爸的话也不可能反对。教育这个东西，一般来说在中国的话，母亲抓的会多一点吧。基本上是这个样子吧，而且男的一般来说被认为交流能力不太行的嘛，所以你说让老爸来搞教育不太有的。我妈从小就管我管得多一点。就是用中国的这一套传统的方法吧，但是她也不排外。像我们学校有些家长他们就觉得西方的那一套有问题啊，什么的。他们不至于这样。但是教育还是以中国的这一套为主。

还行。因为我妈她算是 70 后，所以她不是特别古板的那种。我在小学的时候嘛，她是听周杰伦这种东西的。初中的时候，她是听周杰伦的，我是不知道的。所以还是比较接拍。我爸原来是挺（传统）的，因为我爸比我妈大了七八岁的样子。现在微信这个东西一有，瞬间就不存在交流上的问题了，就能接得上了。除非他抵触新的交流工具，那就会有代沟这样。不然的话你像每天微信啊，朋友圈啊，他不可能跟我们生活在一个社会里还差距很大的。.....（跟父母）基本上没有什么问题过，还是很融洽的。

我跟台湾交流也比较多，以前因为台湾有个慈善机构叫慈济嘛，它在中国的时候我在那边做过一点时间。觉得那边人素质还比较好一点。

我觉得三方面吧：一个是生活上，一个人际上，一个是学术上。学术上就不需要多说了嘛，你出国是来学东西的。你可能不学这段东西，以我毕业去工作，可能我一生的轨迹都会不一样对不对？因为起点很重要嘛。如果说我是一个老师的身份毕业，没有这段留学经历，那我 99%可能是老师一辈子干到死对吧？很少有老师还跳槽的，跳槽也是去别的学校对吧？.....

还有一个是人际上，独生子女的话生活能力我觉得很重要.....还有很多事情思想形态上也会有变化。以前有什么事情，发生什么事情先跟爸妈讲，现在的话肯定是自己思考了。更加独立、自主一点。应该是我和我爸妈都预期的。他们觉得这方面——他们这么跟我说的：他们说你出去的话，父母不在乎你学到多少东西，你学到的是一个独立生活的技巧和独立思考的一个能力。我觉得这肯定，无论我这一年是混或是学，这个上面都会有很大的帮助。.....

第三个就是人际关系嘛。在大学或者说在高中中的一个很长的时间，我一直是一个学生，也就是说你在班级里评判一个人的时候会用成绩说：哦，这个人成绩不好，你跟他没什么好多说话的。那是第一想法，对吧？当然大家如果相处时间长了以后肯定是不一样的。但是你到了这里以后，你应该接触一个人的话应该是作为一个社会人，用多种考量去评判一个人，会想的更多一点。尤其是在陌生的环境里面，这样的生活方式可能会更加深刻一点。像我有很多同学，原来教师专业的同学，他们从学生的身份进入了老师之后会发现他们其实还是像是一个学生一样，并不像一个社会人。因为我觉得他们少了我刚刚说的一些，比如他们还是跟父母生活在一起，还是有父母做菜，很多事情还是由父母做。我觉得他们的独立思考能力啊，单独解决问题的能力啊，都会有问题。

（出国留学是一个从学生到社会人的转变）而且是一个比较效率的转变。

Student H

就感觉这边可以不去，你不去的话，只要你的报告啊还有作业过了就可以了，他毕竟没有 **Attending mark**，就是只要去就可以了。这个比较好，不想是国内的一些学校会强制你到，你不到呢，老师还会使坏，让你不过，是吧？这是一个中国很普遍的现象吧。

我这个比较逗。我本来大学毕业就在北京工作。我工作了一年，本来工作的挺好的，我年薪大概是 30 多万，就感觉还可以，在北京。因为有房子嘛，在家里，就感觉还行。后来我弟弟（姑姑的儿子）去澳大利亚了，因为我姑姑在澳大利亚。我小时候在澳洲，然后我八岁回来的。我弟弟和我姑姑去澳大利亚。然后我伯伯就在过年跟家里人吃饭的时候装逼，说：“我儿子在澳洲读硕士，牛逼！”那逼装的，我老爹听不下去了，跟我说：“你别上班了，给你一任务，你得去澳洲的.....怎么说呢，澳洲不是英国殖民地吗？你得去比他的高端，就去英国。”然后就这么就决定了。

主要原因是这个。家里给我派了个任务。我爹跟我长谈了一个小时，我爹从来没跟我谈过这么长时间。它的意思就是，老爹这辈子没跟你说什么重大的决定，你是不是想干嘛干嘛啊？我说是。他说：这事儿你给我办完了你再想干嘛干嘛。.....哎，说多了都是泪啊。

我爹刚跟我说这个的时候我就感觉，很多人比方说我的老板，包括我的同事，都跟我说，你出国留学干嘛？他们既定的印象可能是很多人在中国找不到工作，或者想去出国镀个金，回来之后找到更好的工作，他才去留学。但是你知道，中国计算机其实相对是好找工作的。计算机的起薪相对也是比较高的。.....我老板就觉得不可思议，你学那玩儿干嘛？因为建构师在计算机行业中属于中高端职位了，就是你学完了之后可能刚毕业回来之后是个给建构师打杂的，相当于你学的等于白学。你学的东西没什么用啊，你有了工作经验以后学位就不那么重要了。其实学位就是个敲门砖嘛，进去公司之后就没有人再问你学历了。

他们也不太理解，我也不理解。我爹说，你这么去看问题：你如果说你今年四十岁，再回顾你的一生的话，你不但有了一段海外留学经历，还拿到了一个硕士学位，你只牺牲的代价是少赚了一年钱，不就是三十多万么？可是我说，你不能这么算啊！我少赚了这些钱，再加上画的钱，那就不止三十万啦。然后我爹说，哪又不是你花的钱。我说：嗨！.....就是这样啦。

当你职位越高的时候，你的工作就不是靠编码了，你脱离码了，你就更是搞架构那些东西了。架构是什么？就是告诉刚毕业的孩子该怎么做，能避免弯路，使公司能节约更多的时间成本。那么你就不需要太多编码，那你的其他地方就有点儿生了。那你心理就会有几点懒得学新的技术。来了之后因为有 **deadline**，所以你要逼着自己去学更多的东西。然后可能就是英语好了点儿。别的也没有。

这可能也解释了为什么大多数学生来英国他不会选择读工科，而是选择读商科，因为你商科写报告我即使什么都没看懂我写字了我有码字的分，努力分是不是？我写了多少多少字，即使我错了，我有对的部分。我对的部分可能已经够 50 分了，就及格了。可程序要是没做出来那就真是没做出来。你可能从一开始思路就错了，连设计的分都没有。所以我觉得如果没有工作经验，直接读英国的硕士还是偏那种 **hand-on** 的那种还是比较难的。如果你要读理论的话可能相对容易一点，我是这么觉得的。

我北京语言大学的，我平均分 80 多，我有工作经验。

我跟我爹说：我要学什么啊？我爹说：什么高大上学什么。我说，那什么高大上啊？我爹说你甭管了。他就去查杂志去了。然后他就告诉我：云计算、大数据高端。我说这俩东西是高端，但它是什么？他说：就是因为你不知道你才要去学。你要是知道你学它干嘛？哎呦，我就说，你真是我的爹啊。

你想象一下，如果你是我，你在中国过得好好的，挣得薪水够花了，后方有车，固定的女朋友，什么样的动力能够让你放弃这一切去读个硕士再回去呢？父母之命！哎，我觉得.....孝子啊！不然我图什么啊？我又不指望它找工作，我又不指望它干别的。

我老爹啊，他学历比较高，它是清华的经济学博士。他就挺会说服人的。.....他跟我说你老点儿不怕，你觉得你在这儿（指英国）待了一年，可能岁数又比别人大了嘛。他说，男人的年龄不重要，重要的经历。.....你有了这么一个海外留学的经历对你未来的发展，无论是在哪儿都是比较好的。如果你以后想读博的话，有这个学校有海外留学的经历等等加在一起，可能还能申到更好的学校。我说，我并没有想读博。他说，未来的事儿你能预料么？你不能吧。然后我说，哎，行，你是我爹，好。

（我弟弟）从高中就开始准备去澳洲去读本科，一直没申上，然后他就去了厦门大学。当时在厦门大学的时候就一直准备去出国。.....移民倾向太严重.....没有办法，他会调查你家里啊，然后发现，哦你姑姑在这儿，你姑姑

跟一个当地的外国人结婚了。哦，你的小姑姑也在这儿，你哥哥已经在这儿上学了。你移民倾向太严重。

我家里，好像就因为我弟弟，因为我姑姑在澳洲，所以这帮孩子就跟疯了似的，好像去了那儿以后有根据地似的。因为我姑姑在那儿开连锁酒店，叫那种 Motel，还不是那种特别纯的酒店。然后她去的时候，刚开始.....我记得我想的时候挺苦的。

我是小的时候我姑姑要去澳洲，我不知道为什么，把我给带过去了。（跟姑姑在澳洲生活了六年）然后又回来了，回来之后再这边（中国）上的是初中，高中，然后大学。

其实挺两极化的。一部分是觉得出国不好，然后就一直在北京待着。还有一部分就是觉得国外好，就是一直出不去。其中有一个中间档的就是去了之后又回来的。我还真很少认识在英国能找到工作的人。我只认识一个，因为我知道英国一年只发两千个工作签证，对吧？.....因为我有一个朋友，一女孩儿，她今年刚毕业，在英国找到了工作。她是约克大学毕业的。读的是本科，本科应该好找工作吧，毕竟是四年。所以我就没太认识这么多人。

本来工作的时候认识的全都是一群工程师，或者一些想当工程师的人。一般做工程师的人，如果不是纯走学术的话不是特想去读书的，因为如果你去工程学院去看一下那里的学长长什么样子的话，你就不会想象当你读到博士的时候你会是一个什么样的风采。所以大部分到了本科就终止了自己的学术生

涯。因为我去了一下当时本科的研究学院，我看了一下，各位学长的头发都有那种秃顶的倾向，可能是用脑过度，因为确实比较费脑子，可以理解。所以我就不想我的身体上变成那样。

我觉得，因为我工作过嘛，我觉得工作比学习有乐趣一些。以为大部分学的东西，你学的时候你并不知道是干嘛用的。当你工作的时候你会发现原来我学的这个东西是干这个用的，那个东西是干那个用的，你会把以前学过的东西都编起来，行程一个整个的网络。.....这样一点点你就有兴趣了。而且还有一点就是我上学的时候，因为在中国大学不是属于义务教育嘛，我是花钱去买知识，可以这么理解吧？.....相当于是用钱去换知识。工作的时候相反是用知识去换钱。就是你终于把你学过的知识换成钱了。不然我就不知道我学这个东西是干嘛用的。

但是不不觉得大部分工作的专业跟自己的专业是不一样的。所以学计算机这个专业找工作还能用到自己的专业，还是挺高兴的。.....不仅开心，而且省了很多时间啊。

不怎么管。我老爹觉得学习不那么重要。因为我老爹在乌克兰留过学。他的意思就是说，国外的教育方式，比如他又一次考试没过，教授把他叫到办公室，说没过，你这么做，自己做一遍。昨晚之后，好你走吧。我老爹说，什么意思？他说，你过了。他说国外的教学方式是为了让你会，中国的教育方式是为了考倒你。没发现这儿的 **demonstration** 也好，**assessment** 也好都是为了让你自己找到一个答案，让你自己亲自动手做一遍。中国的老师有一个

习惯就是一定要考倒我的学生，让我的学生认为我比他屌。然后他出的题都是那种教什么不考什么，教什么不考什么。而且等到你实际工作的时候，你发现他教你的那些东西，他考你的那些点都特偏。偏到什么地步呢？偏到你一辈子都用不上。.....其实我也这么觉得。他这么一说之后我再回忆以前学的那些东西，我就觉得，诶你说的有道理啊！好像就是这样的。

是以前小的时候学那些东西觉得可能老师就是想刺激一下我们的发散性思维。所以从高中开始基本上讲什么不考什么了，对吧？到了大学的时候呢，那画范围就是一章一章给你画了，让你自己去总结。其实这么做的好处就在于让你所有东西都会了，但是呢，具体到某一个点的时候就不是那么能找到问题了。而且中国老师有一个好的特点是什么呢，他自己走过的弯路他会告诉学生不要那么干。这个好处好在哪呢，就是省的学生走很多弯路；坏处在于你走的弯路可能是通的，只是你没坚持走下去。这就是为什么中国大学没有诺贝尔奖，就是可能是因为这个，我不太确定。

我老爹是做金融的，风投，股票，类似这玩儿的。我妈是护士。.....我跟我爹的关系比较好，跟我妈的关系，不是太常联系。

我跟朋友经常聊，因为我朋友思路都比我高端。.....我最好一朋友叫糖果，他刚开始干编剧，写剧本的。我刚开始工作的时候他就当编剧什么的，后来他升执行制片了，后来又升副导演了，升的好快啊。他拍的那个戏叫“歌海情天”，在中央八播的，CCTV，去年博的吧。他经常跟一些成年的叔叔们在一起讨论一些东西，所以他的思路比我高端好多。经常请教他这方面的观点，

怎么去看问题啊，怎么解决问题啊，怎么跟人聊天啊，怎么交往啊之类的，多跟人学学。

我跟他聊过，我说我要出国，他说去呗。我说，可是我这一年就赚不到钱。我那朋友说，赚钱着什么急啊，钱什么时候不能赚啊，可是工科这个东西必须趁着年轻的时候学。因为物理学教授可以 28 岁就当物理学教授，你得个诺贝尔奖，你马上就教授了，马上就导师了。可是你见过 50 岁以下的历史学家吗？没有吧？为什么？所有那些历史书你看一遍就得二三十年。所以你没有见过 50 岁以下的历史学家。而且文科你什么时候都能学，不就是比谁看书多吗？他是这么跟我说的。.....你看书多，你也可以当文科教授，因为你就是知识比较多嘛。你老了你也可以看书啊，可是工科你老了就没有办法学啦。我一想，说的有道理啊。

他说去呗，不然你不就是工作了一年嘛，不就工作了一年嘛，可能升职，也可能加薪，无非就是这点儿事儿。

我一直觉得这不是什么大事儿。因为我看有的朋友们可能，尤其是女孩儿啊，早早就结婚了，然后可能都有孩子了。她们就不理解我出国，觉得你折腾什么玩儿，找个工作，结婚不得了么？我心想，我也想啊，父母之命难违啊。你得了解我的家庭是什么样子的组织结构。

不是，我从小就叛逆。他从小培养我学长号，我长号八级。他以前是——过去没有乐队，那叫文工团，你知道吧——他文工团的，也不知道什么的，搞

什么乐器都会，他就让我学，我就学长号。加了乐队，我家里长号的奖杯有一大堆。.....当时他大学就让我考中央艺院、美院、音乐学院之类的。我当时跟系里面的主任教授——你知道每个月都是有特招的，就是老师愿意带你，你不需要高考就能去，因为艺术生考几百分就能去。当时我就吃饱撑的，不行，我得高考，然后就高考去了。然后考了一个非艺术类学校，我很骄傲。然后就选了计算机。为什么选了计算机呢？因为我以前特喜欢玩电脑，我妈就有一天说我，你天天玩这玩儿有什么出息啊？你能玩这个赚钱吗？我现在就玩这个赚钱怎么着吧？

我朋友糖果说他唯一佩服我的一点就是我大学四年把图书馆里所有的书都看了一遍。所有计算机的书我都看了一遍。他就跟我说，你知道你为什么一年之内升职这么快么？就是因为——因为我经常问他一些处理同事间关系的问题，处理关系真的是能让你升职，但是我从来没有问过他一个技术问题，比如这个东西我不会做怎么办——他说我发现问的都是人际关系的问题，你技术上没有被卡着，说明你以前读的书对你有帮助。.....我觉得他说的有道理。

我的人生充满了笑点。别人问题，你哪个大学的啊？我说语言大学的。那你英语雅思多少分？我说，六分。别人问，你语言大学，雅思 6.0，你挂科了吧？我说，没有啊，挺好的。那你，英语几级啊？我说六级。你怎么六级，人家都专业八级啊。然后我说，我计算机系的。人家说，**wow**，你这相当于去哥伦比亚大学学中文系啊。

因为如果你没有任何经验的话，你凭着学校去找工作，当然是学校越好越好。但是一旦你有工作经验之后学术背景就没那么重要了。我们换位思考一下，你是个老板，连个人来这儿找你，找工作。第一个人，名校的。第二个人，学校一般，但也不是很差，我们没有一个人学校是很差的。但人家有工作经验，这意味着这个人很快能融入你们工作团队，为你创造价值。当然了，那些国企喜欢招这些名校的孩子的原因，就是因为他们认为这些孩子的弹性发展，就是 **potential** 比较大，培养他们更有价值。但是大部分情况下，这帮孩子也只是比一般人听话一点，尤其是中国 985 的孩子，他们最大的特点就是听话。我招过 985 的孩子，他跟一般学校的孩子的特点是什么，超级听话。听话到什么程度呢？让干嘛干嘛，多一点儿都不给你干。你交给他的事儿他绝对给你完成，但是绝对不会给你 **surprise**。特别规矩，就是那种你觉得非常重要的东西你就给他好了，他就按部就班给你弄。但是你要想给你有所启发的东西的话就别指望他了。.....不是我觉得，我还把这些问题跟一些哥哥们——因为我父亲，他那个圈子比较高端，我有幸跟那帮银行的行长们聊了一下。因为我知道银行专门招 985。我问那帮学生怎么样，他们说：什么怎么样？就是听话呗。我说那他们是不是比我们一般人要聪明好多？然后他说：聪明什么啊？人家就是听话，老师让干嘛干嘛。你回忆一下你高考那前儿，你听话吗？我心想对，他说的有道理。.....这得听过来人跟你讲，不能听同龄人跟你讲。

你知道北京以前小时候住四合院，没拆迁的时候。那时候我们就认识，拆迁之后还保持联系了。然后长大之后就在一起了。

主要原因是因为颜值不够，进不去。谁不想当明星啊，是吧？那些说不想当明星的人吧，有一部分我承认你们是高尚，看不起这些卖艺的臭戏子，但有一部分确实是因为颜值不够。我就属于颜值不够那圈的。

我刚去的时候因为是家里人刚过去嘛，就比较苦。我倒霉啊，我弟弟去的时候我姑姑先给买个车。.....是因为什么呢，我姑姑和我姑父离婚，我姑父好像劈腿了。我姑姑超级漂亮——因为我爷爷是将军嘛，所以他的老婆肯定很漂亮，所以我姑姑很漂亮——去了那儿之后先是跟一个上海的男人结婚了，但是那个男人打她。然后又跟一个澳大利亚男人结婚了。我现在明白她为什么带我去，因为家里人全都反对她去的。然后她带我去只是为了让我爹给他汇钱。人质啊.....没什么记忆，就是感觉好苦啊，小孩儿都欺负你，所有人都比你高比你壮，人家也不乐意理你。然后还有往你鞋里放一个死青蛙.....

（在澳大利亚）读小学。然后我刚回来的时候我不会九九乘法表，别人都觉得我是弱智。废话，我哪会那玩儿，我觉得中国人数学好好。然后就开始学学学.....现在数学还好离散型数学会一些。

在澳洲人挺少的，比这儿人还少呢。可能就是因为它国土面积比较辽阔，所以人就更少了。难得看见人，就得跟你聊半天。

刚回来的时候先学中文呗。那个时候用的少，但是我会说，我肯定会说。但是有一些词我不知道，比如一些成语啊，不怎么用的东西我就知道了，那

我就开始学。.....就刚开始数学比较难，其他的東西还行。就觉得挺没意思的，刚开始。.....我在中国上学的时候，就觉得考试特重要。而且我父母跟我所有的，跟我姑姑都坚信中国的初中跟高中时全世界最好的，因为它比较严嘛，我也觉得学的东西确实比较多，比较杂。课余时间比较少，没有什么时间去社交，也没有什么时间去练习那种社交的生活啊，没有。也没有那种团队合作的项目。男孩儿女孩儿不能过亲密的接触啊，是吧？中国的基础教育就是这样的。而且一到，初中可能还好吧，一到高中男的女的还不能坐在一座。为了保持什么.....现在可能俩男的都不能坐在一座了吧？得隔开，是吧？都单行坐是吧？可能学生少了才单行坐的，我也不清楚。

我这么讲吧，如果我有一个孩子，我想让他上学的话，我会让他快乐地长大，在中国学初中，学高中，学完之后他想去哪个国家我给他送到哪个国家，拉倒。你是在学习很烂的话，你去乌克兰行吧？那肯定能去啊。你只需要学一年的语言课，就行了对吧？.....你要是考上北大你就去吧。你要是考上北大，清华啊，复旦啊，浙江大学啊之类的，你就去呗，good luck。但是你要没有考上，不要着急，你想去哪儿告诉我，毕竟你喊我爹，是吧？我会帮你的。就像你爷爷帮我一样。

换个角度来看的话，其实还真是只是少赚了一年钱。（生活成本）都得花。差不多，跟这儿差不多，我感觉。我在北京一个月至少得花 8,000 块钱。

很多人都觉得吧，出国之后可能会最起码英语好一点儿，这肯定会好一点儿；独立生活的能力要好一点儿。其实我在北京也是自己住的，所以我独立生活

能力跟这儿没差。.....我都是自己住的，不想住在家，因为我老爹特别喜欢给我上课。我不想白天在学校上课，晚上回家也上课。所以我十八岁的时候就跟我几个朋友一起搬出去合租。然后上班之后自己付首付还贷款买房。

我大二的时候做了一个 Shopping delivery 的网站。我们的老师有一个访问学者来这儿，跟我们一起做这个。他把做的这个东西买到了自己的国家了，然后给我们分钱。那个时候我们一个人分了好几万。.....我们那个东西真的很大，我们做了将近一年半啊，十个人做，一年半，得多大啊。然后我就用这些东西跟朋友租房子。.....（朋友剧本的回报）然后后来就有了几十万，就跟着一块儿买假啤酒。不是假啤酒，相对比较便宜的啤酒。不是买到后海的酒吧里去，相对比较便宜的啤酒。.....然后有了首付，在郊区的郊区买了套房。

相对于同龄人思想上比较独立。因为你要想独立的话，第一步你得做到经济上独立。你经济上不独立，思想永远独立不了。为什么？你得听给你钱的那个人的话。我经济独立了之后我思想自然就独立了。我想干嘛干嘛。就像我大学的时候跟同学出去打工——计算机专业真挺好赚钱的，随便给一个小公司，它需要一个网站，你给它写一个，它至少给你几千块钱吧。就这么一点一点干.....你没钱了，就出去接个私活，肯定比去麦当劳打工给的多。时间是一样的，你看你去麦当劳打工也是这个时间，有这个时间，你就能做出一个网站了。而且还有一点，以前那些公司，就是找我做过小私活网站的公司，都超过一百多个了。而且做这些东西都是小公司啊，几天就能搞一个

啊。.....我女朋友得感谢这些小公司。她那些饭费啊什么的都是从这儿来的。这些小公司呢，你做完了以后他会定期找你维护，那又是一笔费用啊。

我觉得从思维模式上，会有影响吗？可能会。但是不大会。大部分出国留学的经历无非就是两个，一个是生活上的经历，一个是学习中的经历。这得跟国内的经历做对比。生活上跟国内的对比，对大部分不独立的孩子来说，会让他们变得更独立。可我在中国就很独立，所以对我没太大影响。学习上的影响，如果大部分中国学生都是那种填鸭式的培养的话，到这儿之后需要自己去学的话，对他们来说会有很大的帮助。可是我工作过，工作的时候是没有人教你该怎么做的。当你遇到麻烦，遇到新的技术上的问题时，你是自己去找答案的。所以这个对我来说也没有太大的帮助。所以基本上来讲，跟我在北京的生活方式基本类似。只不过是换了一种语言去说。你想，工作的时候，老师交给你的这些工作像不像是领导发给你的任务啊？.....和我平时工作一样。只不过他给了我 mark，工作的时候不给我 mark。

诶，对。这儿的老师跟中国的老师的区别就是：在这儿你问他一个问题，他不知道他就会告诉你，我不知道。可能你自己要去找。在中国你要是问他一个问题他不知道的话，我靠，他就开始跟你诌啦，扯啦。.....我在中国问问题，我发现中国老师知道一切问题。所有的问题他都得知道。他不能不知道，问他什么他都知道。但是他那答案不一定对啊。他会讲一个模棱两可的答案，说了一大堆，然后等于没说。问你懂了吗？如果你没懂，他再给你诌一段，你更听不懂的时候，问你懂了吗的时候，你最好说懂了，不然他还有下一段。

Student I

爸妈有不是我有。.....他们希望我出国留学。他们觉得节约了时间成本。相比国内（读研究生）节约了时间成本。

（本来打算在国内读研究生）

也没有很早，到大二，大三的时候吧。

（身边出国留学的人）不算少。

【上海师范】

大学不是很多。但是跟我关系比较好的是我的初中同学，我初中同学非常多。

我觉得我出来念不出来。.....就觉得因为我不是很喜欢这个专业，（但不考虑换专业），因为我学这个我只会这个。我换别的专业觉得没有什么大的竞争力，然后就两个不相干的东西夹在一起，最后出去找工作也没有什么竞争力。所以就一条道走到黑了。

高考分到那儿了。.....这个学校的这个专业录取了，然后我就去了。

（转专业的机会）当时错过了。因为上海的高校你去念的话，大一结束的时候你可以参加一场考试，可以转到其他学校去。然后我想转到复旦去，然后最后又没有考上。.....然后那两个时间.....也没有太冲突，但就那段时间有点重叠。然后就这样了。因为考其他的专业也需要准备考试嘛，要准备他们的专业课考试，然后我就没有去了。

然后还有一个就是我们大一进去的时候是个大类，到了大二的时候就帮你分成不同的小方向。当时我选的方向是当时那个阶段我们学院最好的专业，然后也被录取了。然后我想说，那就念吧。

时间短是一个重要的原因吧。还有就多出去走走，多看看。.....后来我觉得出来看看也不错。就想通了而已。其实也没有太纠结的过程，慢慢顺其自然地就觉得出来也不错。

除开专业知识以外，那就是见了更多的人，了解了更多的事儿。

（专业知识）来之前我以为能。.....这边的研究生本来就是学不到什么。它设置的体系就是没打算让你学到什么。

中介。还行。就是我给它我的专业和我要读的方向，然后它给我学校，学校的选择方向。然后我来选，选择了之后他们操作。

因为我妈有一个朋友的孩子在英国念书，然后那天到他们家了解了一下情况，然后他们家的孩子就顺便把他的中介告诉了我。然后当时就（决定了），也是蛮草率的哈。然后就决定去英国了。

【选学校按照排名，综合排名】

认可度比较高。.....听说过，没有切实的经历。就大环境都是这么讲的吧。出国读书至少要念一个学校人家知道的吧。人家不知道你念和没念有什么区别呢？

（爸妈）都管。我从小到大的教育环境一直是经过他们筛选之后的。就是在他们的能力范围下，我从受教育开始就受到的是（父母筛选的最好的教育）。

（在意成绩）会啊，没有人不在意啊。他们会，也不会 push 你太厉害，但是他们是关注的。他们是关心你的成绩的。关心你学到了什么，那种。

（与父母的关系）挺好的。（父母分别是）会计，公务员。

（身边的朋友）大家都积极向上啊。因为我的环境是被筛选过的，所以我身边的人都是积极向上的。.....在不同的领域，大家都是追求向上的。比如说，你成绩好的，大伙儿就想着以后要念个研究生，一定要取得更高的学历，一部分人在国内念，一部分人在国外念。这是读书的，然后工作的一部分呢，也有不少人他们倾向于去更好的地方，更大的城市去发展。依然有一些留在

原来的城市，但是他们无论是凭借各种资源或者什么，他们的工作也是在当地那个小环境下认为是很好的工作。没有那种特别落后到怎么样怎么样的那种。

因为教育筛选之后，我身边的这些人本身就是各方面条件都很不错的。

他们（父母）权重比较大。

只有学校的实习，也没学到什么东西，打打杂什么的。

（对上海印象）挺好的。就是各种设施应有尽有。我觉得对于人的成长是各方面条件都很成熟的一个城市。.....（在上海）性格外向了很多。然后做事情更果断了。就比如我很少有所谓的选择恐惧症。.....就很少有那种拖泥带水，犹犹豫豫的状态。

我是一个不追求稳定的人.....我不想被一些条条框框给框住。

‘挺好的，先出去帮我们探探路，之后我们再去找你。’.....有个别人想要读博什么的。还有一部分就是觉得多读书很好。

没有人反对吧，这种事儿？这种事儿也不应该有人反对吧？.....我没有对什么人说我不想，大家都觉得挺好的。

首先我并没有想我毕业就要回去。（在英国或其他地方找工作）都有可能，但没有想过要回去。.....为什么要回去呢？你刚毕业之后为什么要回去呢？趁你年轻的时候就应该多走走，多看看。.....其他地方也会考虑。好多地方啊，像美国，好多同学在那儿啊，澳洲也有很多同学啊。英国认识的人不是很多。

选择在国外生活.....这个话题好沉重啊。

我原本以为的都破灭了啊。我原本以为能学到很多东西啊，专业方面的什么的。但是并没有觉得。.....（主要预期）就是学术方面和人文交际方面嘛。跟外国人打交道，大概就是这方面吧。我觉得这两者都要有个很长足的进步，然后后来并没有觉得。

（未来）就是找工作啊。看了一些招聘（的信息）。来了这里以后才开始看的。准备把简历弄一弄，然后先投几个试一下，看有什么反馈之类的。再不投有点儿来不及了啊。

独立性啊，什么的。.....我觉得这是必然趋势。

Student J

大四吧。大四刚开始，我爸妈想让我出国。他们就跟我说：你出国啊，你出国啊。我当时觉得，我自己在国内是二本嘛，二本的文凭好像不够用，将来。然后再加上家里有这个条件。然后我自身英语一直属于我所有学科里算是最好的了，所以我觉得有这个优势的话，就尝试一下。

按照我爸的说话，就是，他不希望这个学历会成为我晋升或者我发展的一个瓶颈。对啊，你就像说，国内一个名牌大学和一个二本三本毕业的，那肯定不一样。一个同样的位置，人家要提升，人家要给他升职。一个硕士和一个本科，一个重本和一个二本，这个就比较显而易见了。

我觉得家里有这个条件我就出来见一下世面，就是有这个机会对我来说也很好啊。而且我这个人也比较向往，因为我这个人是比较喜欢到处玩儿的。然后能出来有这样的机会就抓紧呗。

以前国内的朋友，应该有五六个吧，两三个去美国，然后两三个来英国，就这样。.....有同学有朋友吧。有些是高中同学，有些是大学同学。像我们大学班上，一个班四十个人，可能有个四五个（出国的）。

来之前有这样的心态，就是反正大家都是过来读研的。然后自己又不算最差的那一批。然后大部分都能毕业，那我肯定也可以。.....在国内的想法就是先出国再说。肯定不会想过来以后怎么样，也不知道这边情况怎么样。

中介。我朋友也出国，中介是他爸的一个朋友。然后就可以打折嘛，虽然没有什么名气，但确实是认真负责。.....对，很靠谱。

我在大学，大一就学街舞，大二就去那个话剧社当会长，然后主要大二的活动多一点吧。.....大三就开始迷茫了，就不知道干什么了。然后你也知道玩也玩到很无聊了，大学能玩的东西就那样。吃饭、唱歌、跳舞、喝酒，然后泡妹子，然后什么乱七八糟的，就这些。到大三就开始迷茫，就不知道我下一步要干什么了。不知道干什么就打游戏咯，就完完全全每天泡网吧.....

到了大四的时候，过完年的时候就觉得不能这么过了。爸妈也说想让我出国。我想确实是，有这样的机会，能提高一下文凭，出去见一下世面，也就拼了一下。

他们（父母）蛮尊重我的意见的，因为我们家三个孩子，我还有个姐姐，有个弟弟。

他们就是希望我稳一点，稳步前进。在每个阶段做什么事情。现在该学习学习。拿了文凭回去，好好找份工作，比方说去亲戚的公司那边慢慢干，之类的。

我和我爸就是朋友的关系，很平等地交流。他说的话我也听，我说的话他也听。我妈就是比较典型的家庭主妇，就管得很多，喜欢唠叨。（学习）我爸爸管吧，我爸会稍微督促一点。

（父母对学习）在乎。因为我从小到大在外面住读，一个月可能才回一次家，然后就经常打电话联系。.....我那个时候就是班上中等二十来名吧.....我爸就会说：二十几名，那你往前冲一下啊。往前冲一下，考个十几名，十来名的，那多好啊。他会这样鼓励我，也不会严格要求我一定要怎么样。

初中、高中、大学是完全不一样的。初中是从小县城到市里面去读最好的初中，那个荆门外校可以说是湖北最好的初中了，排名第一，可以说。然后去了之后，特别受欺负。因为你想，那时候还不会说普通话，然后穿得很土气，然后什么都不知道。然后班上就经常有人欺负我。.....让我比较气愤的是，又一次我不在寝室，他们在我的床上穿着鞋子踩。我都不知道，回去之后我看我床单有鞋印。然后我问了一下室友，有一个室友偷偷告诉了我。.....你就感觉你没有人权。像校园暴力，那个时候我是感触最深的。他就任意欺负你，感觉你就不能被称之为人了，你知道么？没有这个平等的东西在里面。

后来上了高中之后，家庭条件慢慢变好。然后自己慢慢感觉，诶，你活跃一点，你稍微幽默，搞笑一点，你就会有一些朋友。所以那个时候我的性格就开始慢慢往这个方向转变本来说初中经历了这个经历会很阴郁，可能会有阴影，会不健康。但是我就想把自己往好的方向改。你看那些人特别活跃，特别惹老师喜欢。成绩好一点，活泼一点。然后那个时候性格就变得有一点喜欢哗众取宠，说话喜欢让大家都开心，结果我现在都有一点。性格可能就是从那个时候养成的。.....我高中相对更受欢迎一点，就没有人欺负我了。我那个时候就跟同学之间关系都处的挺好的了。

高中的时候因为在唯一的一个快班，学习压力还是比较大的。大家其实大部分时间都是闷头搞学习。像我这种喜欢玩的可能就是有一点受到排斥的。他们就会觉得我要是跟你一起玩的话，我的学习成绩就会下降，当时那个学习是很畸形的。所以我就可能只有几个玩得还可以的（朋友），然后毕业之后就我们几个联系得多一点。然后他们现在就是都毕业了，然后参加工作啦。大部分都是工作的，读研的都很少。

因为荆门是个小城市，他们有一个很比较笼统，比较紧密的人脉网。因为可能就七八十万人，你各个职能部门的.....会相对封闭一点。他们家庭条件都可以的，就更愿意在荆门这个小城市待着。就我爸妈给我找了个工作，就可能去政府部门。然后我就在那儿，安安静静地，拿着死工资，然后家里给你买车买房或者怎么样，然后结婚。就一下很快就活下来。很多就这样了。可能我今年毕业回去，他们很多人就要准备结婚了。

我是想先毕业了，拿到文凭之后回国去深圳。因为我表哥在那边弄了一个，他在公司里有股份，一个叫 **Dot Dot Buy**，点点淘吧？就是大学生逆向代沟，就是说海外留学生想买国内的东西。.....就是海外留学生需要什么，他们就用集装箱给你批发之后全部运过来，然后发到每个站点，就这样。然后我准备毕业了之后去他那儿帮忙。

是我表哥以技术入股，他是一个法律顾问，他在那边待了那么久也有了一些人脉资源。可能公司有个 3%左右的股份吧。所以他现在也算是一个投资人

之一。然后我去的话就先从底层做起呗。（我）作为亲属嘛，他肯定会偏向提拔我，作为他的派系。因为在一个公司里面，尤其是一个特别大的公司，你肯定要有亲信啊。信别人不如新亲人啊。

我对自己的要求就是，回去之后一到两年之内能把自己的工资提到一万，然后越往后提的越多。

地方就是深圳，或是广州。可能到时候如果他派我往海外，我觉得也是可以的。可能我爸妈也是希望.....因为他们以前就是在广州做生意嘛，就希望我在广州和深圳落脚。

【来之前就已经有了未来计划】

来这边就是为了这个文凭。最主要就是为了这个文凭。.....对以后的晋升会有帮助。本科生和硕士，这肯定是两个不同的概念。而且海外研究生，跟国内的研究生，那肯定概念也是不一样。这一点我是想得很清楚才过来的。

他们的态度可能就是，哦，有钱，家里有钱就出国，或者说好好努力啊。有一部分可能是觉得你有一个很好的未来，我愿意祝福你；有的就觉得，不就是家里有点钱么，会有一个嫉妒的心态。就是有点说话带刺儿。.....我的反应可能就是，你行你也上啊。（后话：你自己不行你为什么要妒忌我呢？）他以为你只要有钱就能出国，但其实你要准备材料，你要考雅思，大学的成績也是有一定之后你才能出国的。他们就觉得你出国很轻松。

实习有，去那种信贷公司，当类似于销售的。就是我爸当时想弄一个新的行业，信贷嘛，那种小额借贷公司，然后我就给他过去帮一下忙，然后就让我吃一下苦。他本来是做服装批发，他就是有一定资本的累计之后，钱生钱肯定比你没钱生钱快啊。.....大三的时候去那儿实习了一个月。大二的时候在轻吧做兼职，晚上去那儿上上班。一是喜欢泡轻吧，觉得那里很舒服。第二是学一下一些，比方说调喝的啊。然后可以结识一些人。当时老板娘挺好的，她就给我介绍了很多朋友，就是我从来不知道居然有这么多的自由职业者，什么根雕艺术家、什么话剧导演、什么小剧场的演员，就是很丰富。当时我感觉我的生活好像打开了另外一扇门。我从来不知道除了正常的那些什么上班、坐办公室、当老师啊什么，还有其他这些职业的。

对，挺有意思的，你可以去自由地规划自己的人生，你可以去做你喜欢的事情，有人为他们付酬。

我妈就跟我爸一起做生意啊。我爸做生意，我妈就是帮忙。两个人一起经营。现在已经退休了，事业那边已经不管了，准备回家安安心心养老了。

【过去爸妈工作很忙，每年就过年和暑假能在一起】

在国外留学的经历，你得学会一个人生活。（在国内）那个时候不需要关心柴米油盐酱醋茶，还有水电这些东西。.....又比方说，我有这样出国留学的经历之后，到时候我自己休假，那我就更愿意出国玩儿，去各个国家周游世

界。.....因为你有了海外留学经历了，你语言上面就不会像那些不懂英语的，就很困难。

而且你回国之后，英语就算是你的一个优点了。你比方说，有些老外，要跟老外交流的时候，那别人就会更期待你与老外交流，因为你留过学。

我本科读国贸，现在读经济，纯经济。国贸是当时那个分数，我们的国贸算是那个学校比较好的专业。因为我当时分数差一本线十来分，基本上二本的专业随便选了。然后就觉得国贸这个专业还可以。.....然后来这边就想跟国贸相关，但是这边没有国际贸易，只有经济以及金融以及那种商学院（的专业）。我对这些是分不清的，我就觉得反正我跟经济相关，就选个经济咯。.....一是跟本科专业相关，而是学经济很万金油啊，很多职业你都可以去尝试啊，你可以去银行，你可以去公司，你可以去跨国企业，做贸易，什么都可以，跟经济相关的你都可以去尝试。

但是经济学这个东西还是偏空泛，不够实际。不像你像学计算机，电子，或是学设计类，其实当你毕业了，你就具备一定的技能了，但是真正说到经济学，给你这么多理论，你有不能做到想一个经济学家，拿这些理论去分析一个什么东西。它只能说你对经济这个东西有一个更具体，更清楚一点的认识。但事实上运用到你实际上面，感觉也没有太大的用。

Student K

大三的时候。是我自己想的。因为我大三升大四的那个暑假，我参加了一个口译的培训班，在广州。我是广州人，大学在广州大学。我当时上完了以后就觉得好像口笔译在国外会比较好。而且在国内要上三年的研究生，然后在外国就一年，两年这样的。主要还是因为这个专业啦，我才选择到外国读。因为读语言的话，还是去一个英语的环境会比较好。

算是吧，因为他们不怎么管我的学习，都是我自己选择，跟他们商量一下。.....（从小一直这样吗？）对！爸妈不太管我学习。

我当时是通过中介申请的。然后虽然我大三就决定了要过来，但是其实还是挺懵的，不知道要怎么样入手。.....其实一开始我还选择了其他的专业，什么市场营销啊。

我本科读的是英语。我本来是已经拿到了好几个学校的市场营销的 offer，但是最终我还是比较喜欢读翻译这块.....因为兴趣。

没有（考虑再等一年）。时间不等人。因为已经读了好多年书了，但还没有社会那方面的经验，就想说趁着自己现在还有想要学习的冲劲，先把这个书读完了，再出去。但是不想再拖了。

如果我当时没有来出国的话我应该就是直接找工作了，不会考虑在国内考研了。因为时间太长。其次就是我不喜欢那个制度，我不喜欢考政治。

我是这样的，我大一的时候参加了很多社团的活动。非常非常多，感觉已经是忙不过来课程了。课程真的是忙不过来，因为每天都扑在社团活动上。然后上了大二之后我就发现好像，其实参加那些社团没有什么意义。因为我也不想说要做到大学的学生会主席那样，我也不想做这方面的。如果说你只是要混一下社团的经验我觉得大一的那些就已经够了。然后大二的一年我就开始会静下心来，学习。但是因为你大一玩了一年嘛，大二、大三、大四就会觉得压力渐渐地来了。我觉得大二是我用来过渡的。

然后到了大三的时候就分了方向，我就学了翻译。我们有翻译，商务和师范。我当时就选的是翻译。然后就接触的越来越多嘛，就想让自己更多地接触这个领域的东西。所以我当时才报了夏令营，类似夏令营的东西。下定决心要留学，当时我就开始更认真地学习，因为要提高平均分。所以大三大四过得还是比较充实。生活上也很充实啊，因为虽然我只是顾着学习，但是基本上也是一个很爱玩的人，很爱交朋友的人。所以两方面都有兼顾啦。大学生活还过得挺不错的。

也是很懵地就选择了这个（英语）专业。因为首先我是学文科的，高中的时候。当时就觉得我理科不行，我数学学不好，对语言这方面还是挺感兴趣的。当时选来选去，而且也不了解其他的那些领域的发展情况。我当时也不知道我自己的职业规划是什么样的，就觉得说好像对英语还是挺感兴趣的。……对，至少我知道英语是什么。

（父母）都不管。他们会说一下，诶，你以后要干什么啊？那我就觉得，我学的是英语，然后又学的是翻译方向，以后可能就是做翻译家吧。在他们看来，学翻译就是要做翻译家。但是，我觉得因为语言是一门技能嘛，我觉得你学好这个英语之后，以后想拓展到其他领域都可以。

（跟父母关系）还可以啊。但是他们都比较忙.....而且他们学历也都没有那么高，他们也管不来。像我妈就是小学学历，我爸就是初一初二，他们都是做生意的。然后就是，想帮我也帮不上忙。因为他们只能说通过自己的社会经历可以教我一些做人方面的东西，但是学习上面他们是真的帮不来。

我初中有几个同学（出国留学）。有在美国的，有在英国的。有一个现在在英国还读了博士。他以前就是学习成绩还不是很好，但是他因为家里的情况吧。因为他家可能比较有钱，然后他家就觉得这导致他游手好闲，不喜欢读书，就把他送过来，但是没想到他过来之后，我记得他为了留下来——他本来英语很烂很烂，他用一个月的时间让自己雅思考到了 6.5 分，然后就留在了这边，继续读研究生。就是想留在这边，然后他现在还申了博士。我就觉得他特别牛逼。

我当时过来的时候有问。我初中有两个同学在这边，在英国。有一个读本科，几年刚刚毕业，也是刚刚申请了硕士，继续读。然后另外一个就是读博士。我去年有去看那个读博士的同学.....了解过情况。他们也有给我一定的帮助。

我当时就觉得我身边会有一堆外国朋友，然后我就一直混在他们中间才对。但是，没想到因为我自己选的这个专业嘛，本身是中英翻译，我全班都是中国人。

【不倾向去中国人多的地方留学】

需要还是因为英语。因为能说自己母语的人扎堆在一起肯定是说母语啊，是一定不会讲英语的。但是我又是学语言的，要有那种意识，要逼自己讲。

（朋友们）还是支持的比较多吧。因为很多人都觉得说去国外发展会比较好。他们都会觉得你在国外读书了，就有很大的机会留在国外。.....我也想留在这边。对，也不是说要在这边定居或者怎么样，我是说好不容易出来一趟，要在.....因为学校的环境跟社会的环境是不一样的。我还是想说如果有机会的话，想在这边工作个一两年，积攒一下工作经验。我来之前就是这样想的。

学的东西越来越多，我会觉得自己的发展很重要。如果我以后跟他（男朋友）结婚了，我觉得自己的工作或者哪一方面不如他的话我就会产生一些家庭矛盾。因为我自己性格就是我比较好强。

其实我爸我妈离婚了（都没有再婚），我是在离异家庭，但是我是跟着我爸长大的。男孩子嘛，我爸的性格影响了我很多。.....对啊，有时候会用一些男孩子的思维去想东西。

我当时实习是在广交会，你知道吗？.....它是进出口贸易那方面，有很多国际友人过来参加的那种。然后就展出全国各地的东西，对，各类各类的商品。它算是中国南部最大型的交易展览会。然后我（实习）的公司是那个时候刚开始弄的一个电商的公司，是跟我们学校有合作。.....（实习）好像有一个月吧。然后后来我自己，因为学了翻译之后嘛，就对翻译这方面比较感兴趣，然后自己平时会接一些笔译，通过上网找一些翻译公司，接一些笔译的活。接一些展会的翻译的活，就是摊翻译啊，或者是他们公司弄展览的话公司可能会请翻译（口译），就有过这方面的经历。

还是学习幸福啊，真的！.....就是身体会比较累，主要是这个。其他的都没什么，因为我做的那些工作都是跟别人交流嘛，你不会觉得困或者乏味，但是就是身体受不了。因为当时广交会早上八九点就要开始，你六点多，七点就要起床，坐地铁去。然后一直站，一直站到下午五点半到六点才下班。每天都是这样。一个月每天都是这样，我不记得当时有没有休假，好像一个星期休息一天吧。

还有就是当时那个点上处于推广阶段，就有一点点像营销类的那种。他们在那些展会中就拉那些客人过来，让他们上网注册账号啊，什么的。但你要说服对方。.....

我现在想一想觉得那段时间还是挺有趣的，就是认识了很多外国朋友。那时候应该是我长这么大以来接触的外国人最多的一段时期。.....因为做翻译嘛，那个推广也是一个很大型的一个展会，也是跟外国人接触。

首先，我对事情的接受能力真是越来越强了，接受新的事物的能力真的越来越强了。

我觉得这是积极的。因为中国本来就是一个很传统的国家，现在还有许许多多很传统的人。想我们的上一辈，和爷爷那一辈，他们就很难接受新鲜的东西，他们对外国人就会觉得很稀奇。我们家吧.....广州市区应该不会，因为我们家不是住在市区，所以没那么多机会。我住在增城，荔枝之乡。

我也不知道诶，但是我还是觉得这是有用的，这段经历是有用的。

知识吧，学习吧，还是有一点点不一样的。.....在国内就好像理论比较多吧，讲一些比较死板的东西，一直讲一直讲，然后下面的人就开始睡觉。.....

（在国内）我，也有睡觉。大一大二的时候有，后来就是要提高绩点，就很努力地学习。不过后来很努力地学习之后发现很多老师讲还是挺有趣的。但是如果那些老师真的就是就着教材上面的东西来讲，那就真的不那么有趣了。我喜欢上商业这方面的东西是因为我觉得他们讲了很多例子，很有趣。就是外面市场上的一些例子。

做翻译。（笔译、口译）都做吧，但是我会比较倾向于做口译。笔译钱太少了。钱真的太少了！.....中国翻译公司的市场真的很乱。没有规定价格吧。每个公司的规定都不一样。而且有一些公司大，有一些公司小。然后有一些读大学，甚至读高中.....现在的中国人有一些人英语就是很好啊，很牛逼啊，

就从小上各种补习班。导致他们高中的时候英语水平就已经非常非常棒了。

然后这些人想要挣一些外块，会去做翻译。然后有一些大学的，可能四六级过了，觉得对这方面感兴趣，我也想实践一下。他们也会去接翻译的活。.....翻译公司不管啊！他们就是给你一篇文章你翻，有些人中文就是很好啊，他只要稍微理解一下意思，就可以把那个中文什么的写的很溜。我现在很怕那些，虽然我以前自己也经历过，那些本科的学生。就是他们多少钱的翻译都接。他们学翻译，他们多少钱的翻译都接。特别是广州，重点学校，比方说广外.....对，因为他们是为了挣经验.....真的很烦，一千字能压到四五十（人民币），你知道国外的价格。.....我真的很难去跟一个真正完整翻译过一篇文章的人去解释，这样一篇文章我要花多少时间去查它的背景，然后话多少时间去整理各种资料什么的。但是他们可能就觉得，既然你有这个能力，那你就翻呗。这个价格是我们定的，你爱接受不接受，不接受我们可以找一些挣经验的那些人。我现在接过的市场上面的，最高也就 80 块钱，一千字。然后你要是能找到直接客户，最高的可以一千字两百块钱，还有 130 块一千字。

这边高，这边是按照一个字来算，英国这边是£0.06 一个字，所以一千字就是六十镑。所以我就很想留在这边。你看，这就是人家的文化，人家社会就已经是定在那里了，什么东西都是定在那里了。你看中国就是很多市场还很混乱。就是人太多了.....我都很担心我回国，如果靠笔译的话我都养不活自己。