Straddling Two Worlds: The Transnational Migration of Chinese *Luoshang* (裸商)

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

The thesis examines a new form of transnationalism increasingly visible since the early 21st century: the family migration of Chinese *luoshang* between mainland China and Canada. *Luoshang* is a popular Chinese term which describes a group of businessmen whose families have emigrated abroad taking with them fluid assets, whilst they themselves stay in mainland China to do business. The research aims to address the following questions: What are the characteristics of the Chinese *luoshang*, and what are the broader socio-economic change in China and Canada that *luoshang*'s transnationalism has reflected? In what ways is their transnational migration a household strategy, as well as a new lifestyle for the Chinese "new rich", that is, the new middle class that have emerged through China's recent development? How are their transnational familial and social lives practised, networks extended or constrained, and identity negotiated and renegotiated in these transnational social processes, spaces and dynamics across the Pacific? What are the consequences and implications of *luoshang*'s transnationalism for the family members involved? These research questions are tackled through applying combined theories of the new economics of migration, Bourdieu's ideas of various "capitals", and theories of transnationalism. Data was gathered through extensive multi-sited fieldwork in China and Canada by means of in-depth interviews and observations.

The study finds that *luoshang* families' transnational practices have led to a spreading of familial assets, a division of the site of production from that of consumption, a split of the family across the transnational social space, as well as a new lifestyle marked by broader choice and greater mobility beyond traditional national boundaries. It argues that although transnationalism is utilised by *luoshang* families as a flexible household and child-rearing arrangement to optimise perceived familial interests, geography and culture still matter in the everyday lives of transnational families. While stretching their social and kinship ties across the two continents and taking advantage of global opportunities, *luoshang* families have also faced huge dilemmas, ambiguities and unexpected risks. These include dislocations of identity and belonging, increases in social and relational distance, and exacerbation of gender and intergenerational inequalities and tensions. The thesis, as one of the first scholarly inquiries on the *luoshang* phenomenon, contributes to Chinese migration studies, shedding light on a new variation of Chinese transnational migration under dramatic socio-economic change both in China and globally. Additionally, uncovering the diversity and dynamics of Chinese *luoshang* families' transnational experiences and linkages, the study enriches and broadens an understanding of an empirical transnationalism practised by global middle class trans-migrants.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Name
ATM	Automatic Teller Machine
BC	British Columbia, Canada
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCG	Centre for China and Globalisation
CCGS	Chinese General Social Survey
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CNY	Chinese Yuan
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DBS	Datong Bureau of Statistics
ESL	English as a Second Language
GBP	British Pound
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IELTS	The International English Language Testing System
IT	Information Technology
LCEEC	Law on the Control of Exit and Entry of Citizens 1985 (PRC)
NBSC	National Bureau of Statistics of China
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PRC	People's Republic of China
SBS	Shijiazhuang Bureau of Statistics
SUCCESS	United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The 21st century is witnessing a new round of emigration in China, in which the "new rich"[1] and intellectual elites have become the main actors. Investment and/or skilled emigration have become the main sources of Chinese international migration (Wang, 2013). Statistics on the emigration of the Chinese "new rich" are astonishing. It is reported that more than 14% of Chinese citizens who own assets worth more than 10 million CNY (approximately 1.13 million GBP[2]) have either emigrated overseas or have already submitted immigration applications, while 46% have planned to do so in the near future (Hurun Report, 2011). According to the 2015 Chinese Mass Affluent Report released by Forbes and CreditEase (2015), among the Chinese (upper) middle class with investable assets of between 600,000 CNY (approximately 67,670 GBP) to 6 million CNY (approximately 676,720 GBP), 2.8% have already emigrated overseas and 16.7% are considering to apply to emigrate; 9.6% have invested in overseas assets and 54.8% have explicitly expressed their intention to send their children abroad for education. The rapid increase in the number of the Chinese "new rich" who intend to emigrate abroad can also be seen from the burgeoning business of immigration intermediaries. Based on the registered list of immigration intermediaries released by the Ministry of Public Security, there were only 485 immigration intermediaries in China in 2006, and this number was nearly doubled in 2011, reaching 730 (Xiao, 2012).

Paradoxically, many of these Chinese "new rich" who are eager to emigrate do not settle down in the receiving countries. Instead, they continue their work and career in China after their emigration. This is termed "*yimin bu yiju*" in Chinese (to emigrate without resettling). It is also regarded as one of the main features of China's recent transnational migration—an increasing number of new Chinese migrants choose to

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[1] Chinese "new rich" is a term refers to the groups who have played an important role and became the main beneficiaries in China's market reforms, including but not limited to private entrepreneurs, senior managers and professionals. See Chapter 2 for more details.
[2] The current exchange rates for Chinese Yuan (CNY) to British Pound (GBP) was £1: ¥8.917 on 21/01/2018.

frequently travel between China and the receiving countries (Wang, 2013). A new social group called *luoshang* (裸商, naked businessperson) has emerged, referred by media as the businessmen whose families have emigrated abroad taking with them fluid assets, whilst they themselves stay in mainland China to do business. The *luoshang* phenomenon has caused some public concern in Chinese society. *"Luo"* in the term *luoshang* literally means *"naked"* and "*shang*" means business people in Chinese[3]. However, *"luo"* used in this popular way implies a lifestyle of these businesspersons who are living and working alone in China, and the state of the well-off migrants separating themselves with their families and much of their fluid assets abroad. This study, differentiated from the Hong Kong "astronauts" research (Ley, 2011; Ong, 1999) (see Chapter 3), focuses on the transnational migration of *luoshang* between mainland China and Canada in three dimensions: the formation of the transnational household migration decisions, transnational linkages, and its impacts on *luoshang* family members and familial relationships.

Luoshang was first used as an ad hoc expression in Chinese media. This phenomenon became an issue of public debate in the 2000s, but rarely attracted scholarly attention. Such analysis on *luoshang* as there was attributed their intention to move abroad to "institutional drawbacks" (Li, et al, 2013; Xiong, 2014), while others question *luoshang's* intensions and criticise them as unpatriotic (Zhao, 2012). Still others worry that *luoshang*'s emigration will pose great challenges to government management, because their overseas assets might involve illegally absorbing public deposits, money laundering and corruption. This may lead to a serious social problem and disturb the financial order (Li, et. al, 2013). It is also argued that their emigration together with the massive outflow of private capital could harm China's national interests, leading to brain drain, capital flight and increased financial risks in China.

Yet, there are also arguments that these concerns might be overstated. Liu Guofu, one of the editors of the Report on Chinese International Emigration 2012, points out that the outflow of capital does not mean its disappearance from China (cited in Jin, 2013). *Luoshang's* investment focus will still be in China, because the Chinese economy is

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[3] *Luoshang* as a term may not only refer to businesspeople, but also include other middle class persons holding capital and managerial or professional jobs in China.

dynamic and grows fast, and investment in China is likely to have better returns (Tan, 2013). If *luoshang* still use their capital to do business in the country, the capital does not actually disappear from the Chinese market (Jin, 2013). Ye (2013) expresses similar views with Liu, that successful business done by *luoshang* in China is win-win, for the overall wealth of the country increases and more employment opportunities are created. Additionally, it is argued that *luoshang's* willingness to return to China to do business, also illustrates that the Chinese market environment is attractive.

The public has varied opinions on the *luoshang* phenomenon. However, in the media, reports tend to discursively construct this group in a homogenous way, focusing on the relatively "super rich". The term *luoshang* also tends to have negative connotations and sometimes is associated with opaque business transactions. Their emigration choice is often considered as made out of a "guilty" conscience. For instance, what is stressed in many media reports is the great wealth that *luoshang* have taken abroad and their auspicious motivation, e.g. legalizing their illegally gained wealth. It cannot be denied that some *luoshang* have emigrated with the purpose of transferring their wealth abroad, planning ahead for the crackdown on corruption, and escaping from possible investigation into how they have made their business deals, for example, by taking advantages of legal loopholes in the early stage of their career. However, such cases cannot be generalised to the whole group.

Whilst the *luoshang* phenomenon has drawn substantial media and public attention, very little research has been conducted to investigate the formation of their transnational household migration arrangements, their transnational trajectories and their everyday experience from the perspective of *luoshang* families. This thesis aims to provide a deeper insight into the *luoshang* phenomenon, especially from the point of view of the *luoshang* families, whose immigration choice and experiences suggest the ambivalence and growing aspirations of the rising Chinese middle class. I will show in this thesis that the *luoshang* group deserves more research, as it has both emerged from, and reflected rapid and wider socio-economic change in contemporary Chinese society.

1.2 Profiles of Chinese *Luoshang* Families

Luoshang, as a part of the new emigrants, are mainly from the Chinese middle class aged between 35 and 55 (Shenzhen Media Group, 2014). Being private entrepreneurs or senior managerial personnel, *luoshang* have accumulated a certain amount of economic and social capital in China before their emigration. They live a lifestyle more like what is depicted in advertisements and other forms of public media in China as the typical middle class, living in big apartments, driving expensive cars, affording goods of luxury brands and taking holidays abroad. As successful entrepreneurs and managers, most of them are well educated who could also be regarded as highly skilled according to Salt's definition—highly-skilled migrants refers to migrants possessing "a tertiary-level education or its equivalent in experience" (1997, p.5).

A typical emigration story of *luoshang* and *luoshang* families may read as follows. A relatively well-off family made a decision to emigrate. Before they landed in the foreign land, they may or may not have made a decision to split the family members into two geographical locations. The couple left but did not close their business in China. The husband stayed in the destination for a short period to help settle the family down and seek other business or employment opportunities. Then, he chose to return to China to continue his career. The wife stayed in the foreign country to establish a new home for the husband and took care of their children. The husband then shuttled between China and the foreign country on a regular basis, trying to juggle career and family life. The wife and children would sometimes visit China, but mainly on holidays.

The migration of Chinese *luoshang* is, in many cases, largely gendered, which means in most cases, it tends to be the husband who travels between China and Canada, rather than the wife. And the wife mainly shoulders the domestic and care responsibilities abroad and sacrifices their career in China. Cases of the wife being *luoshang* are very rare, probably because of the different gendered roles in the family and society—the man is more often the breadwinner and tends to have a more successful career than the woman; the woman is expected to focus more on raising children and caring for the elderly in the family.

Luoshang may share some features identified by Wang et al. (2006, p.296) as *haigui*: "Chinese returnees of those who migrated abroad […] and obtained permanent residence or citizenship of the countries of abode". In other words, whilst living and working in China, they also have permanent residence status or citizenship of another country. In reality, however, since China does not allow dual citizenship, many prefer having their permanent residence status abroad but keeping their Chinese citizenship in order to allow for the flexible mobility between the home and host countries.

The most popular destinations for emigration of Chinese families are Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom (Wang, 2015). An important factor for the popularity of these countries is their immigration policies. Canada could be the most popular destination among the Chinese emigrants due to its attractive investment immigration plan featuring relative simplicity, low cost and low risk. Though after 2014 when Canada closed its most popular Immigrant Investor Program (see Chapter 2 for more details), the United States, Australia and New Zealand took over from Canada to become the most popular destinations, this research will still examine *luoshang*'s transnational migration arrangements and experiences between China and Canada. This is firstly because Canada has a long migration history of Chinese, and therefore has formed relatively mature Chinese communities, especially in large cities, such as Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. Secondly, Canada is one of the earliest countries which relaxed its immigration policy and aimed to attract skilled and capital-abundant immigrants. The Canadian investment immigration programmes and skilled immigration programmes have attracted large numbers of Chinese migrants due to its relative simplicity of application and low risks. For the Chinese *luoshang* families which migrated in the 2000s, Canada, instead of other countries, is often considered to be the first choice.

The association and connotation of *luoshang* with corruption and illegal activities, e.g. money laundering, is, to some extent, related to the phenomenon of *luoguan* (naked government officials). *Luoguan* share the same living style of *"luo"*, though they belong to different groups. According to the Chinese *luoguan* Report (Zhang et al., 2013), the emergence of the *luoguan* phenomenon could be traced back to 1990s, when it was uncovered that some corrupt officials fled the country with a huge amount of money when gained from their illegal acts. Their behaviours might not be defined

as *luoguan* in the strict sense at that time. However, their actions accumulated practical experience for *luoguan*, that their fleeing to other countries could be prepared or premeditated, e.g. sending their wives and children abroad first. In other words, the fleeing of corrupt officials is intersecting with the *luoguan* concept. These cases were just special criminal cases at first, but at the turn of the century, they soon developed from "aimlessly escaping abroad in a hurry" to "making full preparation and planning ahead" (Zhang et al., 2013).

In 2008, Zhou Peng'an, a member of China Democratic League and a member of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and Wuhu Municipal Standing Committee, created the expression "*luoti zuoguan*" (being naked officials), and used it in his blog to refer to the phenomenon of some government officials who are working alone in China due to their civil servants responsibilities, whilst their wife and children have gained permanent residency or foreign nationality (Zhou, 2008). Yet the term did not equate to corrupt officials in an absolute sense. However, the underlying problem is that this identity makes it easier for officials to flee abroad once suspected of corruption (Zhang et al., 2013). Furthermore, this identity involves conflict of interest for those in public office, as well as posing a potential risk to national security. As the cases of *luoguan* escaping punishment by Chinese Law through the split family arrangements are increasing in recent years, those who have sent their families abroad have been banned from taking public official positions (Zhang et al., 2013; Xinhua, 2014). *Luoguan* and *luoshang* are different social groups, though sharing a similar transnational familial arrangement. Such similarity in this case is only on the surface.

1.3 Research Questions and Contributions

This research aims to examine this new form of Chinese transnationalism much understudied in the current literature, i.e. the family migration of Chinese *luoshang* between mainland China and Canada, in terms of the formation of transnational household migration decisions and transnational linkages and its impacts on *luoshang* family members and familial relationships. The thesis will address the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the Chinese *luoshang*, and what are the broader socio-economic change in China and Canada that *luoshang*'s transnationalism has reflected?

2. In what ways is their transnational migration a household strategy, as well as a new lifestyle for the Chinese "new rich", that is, the new middle class that have emerged through China's recent development?

3. How are their transnational familial and social lives practiced, networks extended or constrained, and identity negotiated and renegotiated in these transnational social processes, spaces and dynamics across the Pacific?

4. What are the consequences and implications of *luoshang*'s transnationalism for the family members involved?

These research questions are addressed through extensive multi-sited fieldwork in China and Canada by means of in-depth interviews and observations (see Chapter 4). The *luoshang* phenomenon has attracted little academic attention despite heated debate in the Chinese media. This thesis, as one of the first scholarly inquiries on *luoshang*, will contribute to Chinese migration studies, shedding light on a new variation of Chinese transnational migration in the *xin yimin* (new migrants) context, as a result of the socio-economic changes taking place in China and globally.

Chinese *xin yimin* have maintained frequent cross border exchanges and connections between their home and destination countries, unlike the practices of traditional Chinese migrants which are concluded by Wang (1991) as the model of *luodi shenggen* (strike out new roots in the host country, cutting off completely the original roots) and *shigen lizu* (uprooted, or losing roots). The emergence *of xin yimin* is increasingly catching scholars' attention, but the empirical research focusing on their transnational practices and border crossing activities is not so copious. Much attention has been paid to the earlier immigrants originating from southeast Chinese seaboard region where there is a long migration history. For example, Pieke et al. (2004) document the migration and settlement process, the transnational strategies of recent

flow of international migration from Fujian Province. However, concerning the members of those who are more likely to be "genuine" trans-migrants (Favell, et al., 2006), the literature examining the transnational practices of relatively high-skilled Chinese migrants is sparse or insufficient. Therefore, the research results will add to Chinese migration studies, through offering an in-depth understanding of this new pattern of mobility of *luoshang* and also the challenges faced by *luoshang* families in their everyday lives.

In addition, by uncovering the diversity and dynamics of Chinese *luoshang* families' transnational experiences and linkages, the study will enrich and broaden an understanding of an empirical transnationalism practised by global middle class trans-migrants. *Luoshang* are the new middle class in China and also a part of the "global middle"—belonging to what Favell et al. (2006, p.2) identify as "the skilled and educated among the globally mobile […] mid-level technical and clerical employees, ambitious or adventurous upwardly mobile middle classes […]" This group of middling trans-migrants is largely under researched, compared to the "two stylized images counter-posed at either end of the social spectrum: high-flying corporate elites and desperate, poverty-stricken labour migrants and asylum seekers" (Favell, et al., 2006, p.2). Chinese *luoshang*, as a case of practicing "middling transnationalism" (Conradson and Latham, 2005b), could be a good example revealing that the global economy and mobility is not completely unfettered.

The literature on Chinese transnationalism tends to be dominated by discussions of Hong Kong and Taiwan transnational migrants (Ley, 2011; Ong, 1999) (see Section 3.2), while research focusing on the Chinese new migrants from mainland China is scarce. The transnational migration trajectories of mainland Chinese could not be assumed to be the same as those of Chinese Hong Kongers, though they could both be traced to their Chinese origin. With different historical and structural backgrounds, Hong Kong migrants and migrants from mainland China are not practicing the transnational mobility strategy in the same transnational social field and there are differences in their transnational mobility strategy and experiences. In addition, how the transnational family strategies take shape and are exercised in practice have not been investigated and explained in detail. Thus, the way in which transnational mobility may generate a new dislocation of the source of power and source of risk and

uncertainty in households requires a deeper scholarly inquiry and theoretical articulation.

My research on Chinese *luoshang* will help to fill this gap by bridging the literature in transnational migration and transnational family practices. It not only will help to enrich the literature on Chinese transnationalism, but also draw attention to the largely neglected emerging middle class transnational household arrangements of mainland Chinese migrants. *Luoshang's* migration, as I will show later, is a middle class family arrangement that illustrates how the emerging Chinese middle class have both played a part in and responded to the rapid socio-economic change, industrialisation, urbanisation and globalisation. Their transnational migration experiences, networks and linkages are not only an outcome of globalisation and transnationalisation, but also demonstrate that spatial distance still matters in capital conversion in a transnational social field.

1.4 Thesis Outline

Following the introduction, the next chapter will set out the migratory context of *luoshang* migrants. Chinese mobility to Canada has a long history. With the changes in the political and social context of both China and Canada, Chinese migrants begin to exhibit different migration choices and experiences. Current Chinese *luoshang* migration to Canada also takes place under, and is shaped by, the specific policy context and national space of both China and Canada. Different from other Western countries, the Chinese middle class which Chinese *luoshang* belong to has emerged relatively more recently. Thus, current *luoshang* migration decisions and transnational migration experiences are largely influenced by the specific features demonstrated by the Chinese middle class. Introducing the historical context of Chinese emigration to Canada, and the emergence of a Chinese middle class, will pave the way for locating transnational migration of *luoshang* families in the specific historical and social contexts of China and Canada, providing the background of the research.

Chapter 3 will identify and outline the conceptual framework that the thesis will use in analysing the *luoshang* families' geographical mobility, transnational networks and

transnationalism. The first framework is the new economics of migration (Stark and Bloom, 1985). This perspective, considers larger units of people (family and household) instead of individuals, and provides the theoretical foundation for the logic of shaping the decision of Chinese *luoshang* families to move transnationally. The second is Bourdieu's forms of capital (1986). His conceptualisation of three forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital can help to complement the theory of new economics of migration and act as an effective analytical tool for understanding the dynamics of transnational migration and mobility practices of the *luoshang* families. The third is the theoretical framework of transnationalism (Schiller et al., 1992). Stressing the practices of transnational ties and linkages between the home country and host country, transnationalism and various concepts related to it could help to explain the transnational networks and linkages that the *luoshang* families have formed in their transnational household mobilities. Following the conceptual framework, the literature concerning Chinese transnational migration and transnational family practices is reviewed and the research gaps in the literature on Chinese transnationalism and "global middle" are identified. Research on Hong Kong "astronauts" (Ong, 1999; Ley, 2011) is also emphasised and reviewed, so as to differentiate it from this research on *luoshang* and examine the research gaps in this body of literature. In this process, the originality of this research of *luoshang* is demonstrated.

Chapter 4 will explain the methodology utilised in this research. Based on the main research aim of exploring the transnational trajectories of the *luoshang* families, this research adopts a qualitative research design and selects interviewing and observation as the approaches to obtain research data. I will explain these research approaches in detail, in terms of recruitment of participants, the design of interview questions and form of interview data. I will also provide justifications on the selection of Shijiazhuang and Datong in China, and Edmonton and Vancouver in Canada, as the fieldwork sites. I then will highlight the innovative research methods allowing for the capture of macro and micro dynamics—the combination of actor oriented perspective with a multi-sited, networked approach connecting China and Canada. To obtain a critical understanding of the methodology, I try to explain my positionality in the field. The procedures of data analysis will be presented at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 5 will explore the two-step formation of the transnational migration strategy and the adaptation strategy of the *luoshang* families. I will show and explain how the families process and react to the opportunities and constraints brought by major structural changes in both China and Canada. By locating the *luoshang* families' migration in the context of the rising middle class in China, I will firstly explain how their emigration becomes a middle class education strategy, when they fear that their families might fall off the social ladder. In section 5.3, I will focus on how the return trip of the husband took place, marking the formation of the household strategy of capital maximisation in which the family took advantage of the resources in two localities. Different from the "flexible citizenship" that was raised by Ong (1999), the household strategy of the *luoshang* families could either be a pre-planned strategy, or an adaptive strategy. It shows the geographical stickiness of social capital and the embarrassing middling position of the *luoshang* families in Canadian society.

In Chapter 6, I will explore the transnational connectivity established by the *luoshang* families and its impacts on the individual level, with regards to *luoshang, luoshang* wives and their children respectively. In terms of *luoshang,* the trans-border lives they lived will be stressed and their different views towards China and Canada will be elaborated. In their experience of straddling the two worlds, the *luoshang* families have developed a unique citizenship strategy under the structural contexts. *Luoshang*'s sense of home was changed with their flexible and highly mobile residential practices. For the *luoshang* wives, their choices facing the de-skilling experiences in Canada will be elaborated by interweaving with their family background. In their transnational migration experiences, the female gender role was reinforced and their Chineseness seems to be strengthened. In terms of the children of *luoshang* families, I will explain the different forms of transnational linkages that they formed across the borders and how transnationalism provides a socio-cultural space for child-rearing, especially in the development of their sense of belonging.

Chapter 7 will discuss the effects of geographic distance and transnationalism on the relationship level, specifically on the marital relationships, mother-child relationships and father-child relationships. I will highlight the constraints and tensions in the marital relationships as a result of the long spatial distance. *Luoshang* were powerless in providing emotional support from afar and their wives needed to ease the negative

emotions associated with the long distance relationship, such as boredom and loneliness, by themselves. In addition, the spatial distance also posed uncertainties to the marital relationships. The mother-child relationship could become closer in this process, since the mother-child relationship was prioritised over the marital relationship. However, the families could not be immune from "generational dissonance" (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). In contrast to a closer mother-child relationship, geographical distance is an apparent obstacle, alienating the father and their children. In spite of the efforts of *luoshang* wives trying to reinforce children's memories with their father, the father's role could still be limited to the institutional and financial support to the family. In other relationships, the *luoshang* families might face other forms of feelings of disempowerment resulting from the long distance, especially when critical events took place.

Chapter 8 will conclude the whole thesis with a summary of the key findings surrounding transnational household organisation, transnational ties and transnational familial relationships of Chinese *luoshang* families, and hence, its originality highlights the gaps in the literature the research addresses. The chapter will also identify areas where future research could be directed.

Chapter 2

The Historical, Political and Social Context of *Luoshang* Migration

This chapter sets the migratory context for analysing Chinese *luoshang's* transnational migration. To identify the uniqueness and new features of this new variation of Chinese migrants, it is essential to embed them in the specific historical, political and social contexts of both China and Canada. Migrants' choice is made within the opportunities, and also the restrictions brought by a specific time. It is impossible to understand *luoshang*, their household strategy and their transnational trajectories, without understanding the historical, institutional and cultural context in which they are formed. This chapter encompasses two sections: section 2.1 explains the historical context of Chinese migration to Canada, and section 2.2 discusses the emerging Chinese middle class after the reform and opening up, who form the mainstay of the new migrants to Canada.

2.1 Historical and Political Context of Chinese Emigration to Canada

Chinese international migration has a long history. Centuries before the colonisation of Asia by the European powers, Chinese had already moved across the sea and land, engaging in trade, exporting and importing a variety of commodities, such as silk, ceramics and tea, in order to earn a living and support families (Zhou, 2009). Chinese travelled to more than 130 countries across the globe (Poston Jr et al., 1994). As an old saying goes, "There are Chinese people wherever the ocean waves touch" (Zhou, 2009, p. 24). In the long history of Chinese migration, Chinese diaspora developed broad social networks across continents, dealing with a great number of national and global actors, as well as political, economic and social changes. Before looking at the emergence of *luoshang* in recent decades, it is necessary to locate the contemporary Chinese emigration phenomenon in a specific historical context. This section establishes the historical context for analysing contemporary Chinese emigration to Canada, in which policy changes in both China and Canada are discussed.

2.1.1 Chinese in Canada in the Qing dynasty

Canada has a history of participating in the slave trade from Africa. Later on, the coolie (*kuli*) trade of Chinese indentured labourers marked the 2nd wave of the slave trade in tandem with the discovery of gold placer beds in the Lower Fraser River in British Columbia (BC hereafter) in the late 1850s. Chinese labourers brought into Canada were estimated at 1,900 per annum during 1867-1870. Among these, about 1,000 were forced labour in the gold mining areas in the Lower Fraser River or Cariboo Region (Lai, 2003). In the 1870s, the gold rush was over, and most of these Chinese coolies then laboured on farms, coal mines or salmon-canning industry (Campbell, 2008). The 1881 national census included the Chinese population in BC. It was recorded that there were 4,350 Chinese in the province (Campbell, 2008, p. 37; Lai, 2003, p. 313). In 1882, large labour demands due to the Canadian Pacific Railway construction and the abolishment of the black slave trade made Canadian merchants turn their attention to China once again. Thousands of Chinese coolies were traded from both the United States and Hong Kong to construct the Canadian Pacific Railway. By 1884, the number of Chinese brought to BC reached 15,701 (Campbell, 2008, p. 37).

Chinese coolies were de facto slaves as indentured labour in Canada. They were paid very little and suffered from bad working and living conditions (Yen, 2013). However, despite their great contribution to the development of Canada, they were not welcomed by the federal government. White workers' anxiety and frustration caused by economic distress and market uncertainty in the capitalist world in the 1870s, turned into anti-Chinese sentiment and racist attacks (Zhou, 2009). In 1882, the American Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, and some Chinese labourers were forced to return or travel further to look for alternative means of earning a living. Three years later, in 1885, the same anti-Chinese racism led to the promulgation of the Chinese Immigration Act by the Canada Federal government, which imposed a head tax of Canadian $50 on every Chinese labourer entering Canada. This amount was equal to two-year-income of a Chinese coolie. However, this act failed to curb the trade of Chinese coolies. The Chinese who were annually brought to Canada increased from 211 in 1886 to 4,385 in 1899 (Lai, 2003, p. 315). In 1899, the head tax was increased to Canadian $100 and in 1903, it was raised to Canadian $500. In 1923,

after World War I, the federal government passed another Chinese Immigration Act, which completely barred the entry of Chinese and their families (Lai, 2003).

Figure 2.1 The Monument to Canadian Chinese[4]**, Vancouver**

Source: Author

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[4] The monument is located at the edge of Vancouver's Chinatown. It was constructed in 2002 and is designed like the Chinese *zhong* character (representing Chinese). The Chinese couplet inscribed on the front and back of the column reads *jiahua fenggong guangzhao riyue, xianxian weiye zhizhuang shanhe* ("Rich legacies of Chinese Pioneers shining bright as the sun and moon; Great deeds of noble forbears zeal entrenched as mountains and rivers"). The two bronze statues beside the monument are a railway worker and a World War II soldier, which recognises the Chinese railway workers who died in building the Trans-Canadian railway system and the six hundred Chinese Canadians who enlisted to fight in the war. This monument honours the significant contributions of the Chinese immigrants to the growth and prosperity of BC and Canada and the sacrifices that they made to protect the country which at the same time denied their citizenship rights (City of Vancouver, 2009).

The high demands of labour in the new land, the high profitability of the trade, and the rapacious character of the coolie recruiters, all contributed to the coolie trade (Yen, 2013). In 1860, some men were kidnapped and forced to be coolies (Yen, 2013). Coolies' condition on the voyage across the Pacific Ocean was terrible. With limited space for movement, limited supply of food and water, and bad ventilation, they faced great problems, frustration and sickness. According to the Qing investigation commission sent to Cuba in 1873, the death toll of Chinese coolies on the voyage was more than 10% (Feng, 2016). Coolies also faced cruel treatment and terrible working conditions in foreign lands: "a young man might never get out of debt and spend a lifetime in the toil of a labourer, growing ever older with an ever decreasing capacity to sell his labour" (Yu, 2013, p. 113). Coolie trade therefore represented a dark page in the human history of migration to North America in relation to the Chinese. Figure 2.1 shows the Monument of Canadian Chinese commemorating and acknowledging the position and contributions of Chinese people in the Canadian history.

2.1.2 Political changes in China after the fall of the Qing government

It was not until near the end of the Qing dynasty that China showed concern and interest towards its overseas population. In 1909, the Nationality Law promulgated by the Qing government officially stipulated that "any person born of a Chinese father or mother (if the father were unknown) was a Chinese citizen regardless of birthplace" (Zhuang, 2013, p. 35). *Huaqiao*[5] (Chinese sojourners) predominated in the Republic of China era after the fall of the Qing and the founding of the Republic of China in 1911 (Poston Jr, Mao and Yu, 1994). The Republican government attached great importance to the education and governance of *huaqiao*. At that time, more than 2,000 overseas Chinese schools helped in strengthening emigrants' cultural, emotional and patriotic ties to China. The efforts of the Republican government showed its effects during Japan's invasion of China. *Huaqiao* showed great concern, patriotism and strong financial and material support for the resistance war against Japan's invasion, and made considerable contributions to China's resistance efforts and eventual victory over Japanese Fascism (Zhuang, 2013).

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[5] *Huaqiao* includes all Chinese citizens born in China and legally residing outside China.

The Communist Party defeated the corrupt and authoritarian Nationalist government, and took national power in 1949 with the broad support of peasants and the working class, establishing the People's Republic of China (the PRC hereafter). The Nationalist government fled to the Chinese island of Taiwan, starting the lengthy standoff and creating the issue of national division or unity. After the PRC was founded in 1949 and during the Cold War, China was considered an enemy by the West. In the Cold War context, border crossing was restricted, and thus, cross-border mobility of mainland Chinese, including migration to Canada, was reduced. However, in Britain-controlled Hong Kong and Nationalist-controlled Taiwan, migration continued (Zhou, 2009).

Southeast Asian countries have a large number of Chinese diaspora and Chinese communities which were established during China's long migration history. In the 1950s, overseas Chinese were estimated to reach 12 million, and most of them were in Southeast Asian countries (Zhuang, 2013). These Chinese *huaqiao* played a vital role in the triumph of the resistance against the Japanese invasion (Zhou, 2009). In the 1950s, the reality of dual citizenship combined with the Chinese emphasis on maintaining cultural tradition and host country anti-Chinese political & socio-economic situations, witnessed increasing racism against Chinese and Chinese communities in Southeast Asian countries (Zhuang, 2013). Chinese settlers in Southeast Asia, according to China's principle of *jus sanguinis* inherited from Qing's Nationality Law, were Chinese citizens. While based on the principle of birthplace which was followed by Southeast Asian countries, they were the citizens of their birth countries. At the first Bandung Conference (in Indonesia) in 1955, in order to show goodwill towards newly independent Asian countries and reduce Asian countries' concern over the loyalty of Chinese sojourners, the Chinese government signed the Sino-Indonesian Dual Nationality Treaty and ceased to recognise dual citizenship (Zhuang, 2013). In 1980, China established the new Nationality Law, which officially stipulated that China did not recognize dual citizenship (Zhuang, 2013). The policy of unrecognition of dual citizenship in China implemented in this specific historical context is still in effect, which partly contributes to the decision-making of the transnational migration of the Chinese *luoshang* families.

In 1970, Canada re-established official diplomatic relations with the PRC. Then in 1973, a new phase of Chinese emigration to Canada was started, as the immigration agreement which was signed between the PRC and Canada allowed mainland Chinese to join their families who migrated before 1949 (Yu, 2008). In the 1970s, though the immigration door was opened, the number of mainland Chinese migrating to Canada was not many, and the majority of them belonged to the family reunification category.
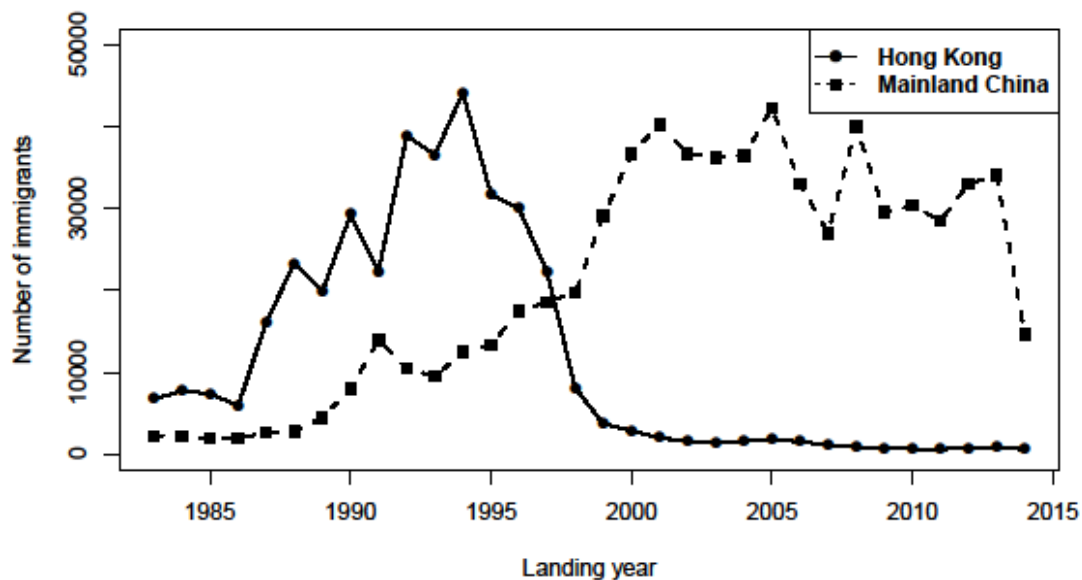
Figure 2.2 Immigrants to Canada by Landing Year, From Hong Kong and Mainland China, 1983-2014

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC hereafter), Canada Facts and Figures: Immigrant Overview, various years.

Note: The statistics include applicants and their dependents.

In the 1980s, after the reform and opening up in 1978, immigrants from mainland China to Canada were below 5,000 a year, and the majority of them were still under the family reunification class (Yu, 2008). Besides immigrants under the family class, a growing number of Chinese students travelled to Canada to attend university, and many of them obtained permanent residence status after graduation. In 1986, the Law on the Control of Exit and Entry of Citizens 1985 (PRC) (LCEEC hereafter) came into force, further relaxing the restrictions on mainland Chinese migration to other

foreign countries. This policy change had a direct impact on Chinese immigration, as demonstrated in Figure 2.2 above. In the late 1980s, the number of Chinese immigrants to Canada was around 4,000, and in early 1990s, this was more than doubled, surpassing 10,000. In July 1994, the Chinese government issued detailed rules for implementing the 1986 Law, which allowed Chinese citizens to migrate abroad for the purpose of work. This further relaxation of the LCEEC triggered a surge of mainland Chinese migrating to foreign countries, including Canada. In 1998, the number of Chinese immigrants to Canada exceeded Hong Kong for the first time, and since then, mainland China has replaced Hong Kong, becoming the major source of immigrants to Canada (Guo and DeVoretz, 2007).

As shown in Figure 2.2, from 1995, immigrants from Hong Kong experienced a great decline. However, the number of arrivals from mainland China started to increase from 1989, and soared after 1999. In 1989, there were 4,415 mainland Chinese emigrants. The number increased to almost 20,000 in 1998, and doubled in 2001. By the early 2000s, immigrants from mainland China accounted for the largest number of new immigrants to Canada from a single country (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, various years).

The policy of the Chinese government towards emigration and overseas Chinese changed dramatically after the reform and opening up. In response to the great economic achievements that some overseas Chinese made, China attempted to attract overseas Chinese investment and reformed its border crossing policies. By the early twenty-first century, the growth of the Chinese economy and the emerging middle class in China has facilitated more emigration of Chinese citizens, especially under the economic category (Yu, 2008). Unlike in the 1980s when Chinese emigrants to Canada were dominated by the family reunion type, in the 1990s and 2000s, the majority of Chinese emigrants migrated to Canada as economic immigrants. They were often known as *xin yimin*, who tended to be better educated professionals and thus more successful than their older counterparts (Zhuang, 2013). Gradually increasing numbers of new Chinese emigrants settled in North America, other developed countries and across the world.

2.1.3 Changes in Canadian immigration policy and immigrant origins

The Chinese Immigration Act passed in Canada in 1923 banned the entry of any person with a Chinese origin or their families. This discrimination act in effect lasted for 24 years, until 1947, when the enactment of the Canadian Citizenship Act which replaced the previous one, allowed Chinese immigrants to naturalise together with their wives and children in Canada (Lai, 2003). However, Asian immigration was still strictly controlled by the state under the name of preserving Caucasian predominance. In 1960, the Bill of Rights was adopted, which legally banned discrimination on the basis of skin colour, origin, race, religion, or sex. In 1962, Canada witnessed a significant change in immigration policy, relaxing its selective admission of migrants based on country of origin (Lai, 2003).

The Immigration Act passed in 1967 introduced a "100 points system" to select immigrants, in which qualifications and skills, such as education level, occupational skills, and knowledge of English or French, were stressed. In addition, family reunion was also facilitated by the Canadian government (Lai, 2003). Unlike their predecessors, under the 1967 Immigration Act, people from different nations, with various skills and aspirations, arrived in Canada to seek job opportunities in big cities, such as Toronto and Vancouver. Canada established official diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1970, and after that, the number of immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China were individually recorded. The number of immigrants from Hong Kong was far exceeding immigrants from Taiwan or mainland China during this period. For instance, from 1971-1977, 66,900 immigrants were from Hong Kong, whilst 7,582 were from Taiwan and only 3,045 were from mainland China (Lai, 2003, p.323).

Nine years later, in the 1976 Immigration Act, the "points system" was revised in response to the more powerful, right-wing white anti-immigration actions against the non-white, attaching more importance to applicants' occupational experience and the ability to create jobs (Lai, 2003). In 1978, a category of 'business immigrants' was first introduced in the border control system, which allowed the admission of entrepreneurs as immigrants not being accessed by occupational demands, but by applicants' competence in the economic marketplace and job-creating business

(DeRosa, 1995; Li, 1993). This was an attempt to attract better-off migrants with wealth.

Table 2.1 Three Tier Investment Structure (in Canadian dollars)

	Provinces eligible	Minimum Net Worth	Investment Amount	Holding Years (Without Interests)
Tier 1	Those with less than 10% of business immigrants arrival	$500,000	$ 250,000	5
Tier 2	Those with more than 10% of business immigrants arrival	$500,000	$350,000	5
Tier 3	All provinces (with a guarantee)	$700,000	$700,000	5

Source: Author's adaption from DeRosa (1995, p. 371).

In 1986, the federal government passed the Investment Canada Act, in which the Immigrant Investor Program was introduced, aiming to attract businesspersons with substantial wealth, who could provide investment capital and create jobs for Canadians. The migration of Hong Kong business people in the late 1980s and 1990s could be attributed to this programme (Mitchell, 2004), which later played a vital role in attracting Chinese *luoshang* in 2000s. In the Investment Canada Act, business immigrants were allowed to apply for any of the three categories, namely: immigrant investors, immigrant entrepreneurs, and self-employed immigrants (DeRosa, 1995). Each category had its own requirements on the applicant's wealth, business ability, investment, etc. To qualify as an investor, a person must have the experience of successfully operating a business (or commercial venture with a successful track record), own minimum net worth of Canadian $500,000, and invest in direct business ventures or government administered venture capital funds worth at least Canadian $250,000 in Canada (DeRosa, 1995; Li, 1993). In the immigrant entrepreneur stream, an entrepreneur must establish or buy a business in Canada, actively participate in

management and create jobs for Canadians. Specifications for the self-employed stream were general, but required applicants to provide employment for themselves and make economic contributions to Canada (Lai, 2003). The federal government implemented a three tiered investment structure in 1988 (see Table 2.1), in which investment in popular immigration destinations, including BC, Ontario and Quebec, was raised from Canadian $250,000 to Canadian $350,000 (DeRosa, 1995). In 1999, the new Immigrant Investor Program raised the minimum investment capital further to Canadian $400,000.
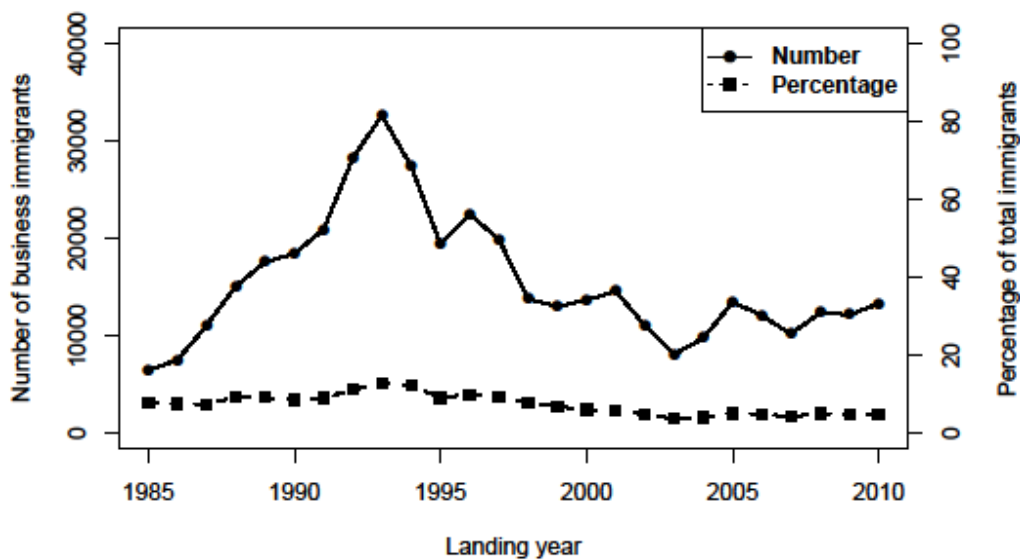
Figure 2.3 Number and Proportion of Business Immigrants of all Immigrants, 1985-2014

Source: CIC, Canada Facts and Figures: Immigrant Overview, various years.

Note: The statistics include applicants and their dependents.

These changes in immigration policy have attracted huge capital flows to Canada. As demonstrated in Figure 2.3, in 1985, the total number of admitted business immigrants (together with their dependents) reached 6,481, accounting for 7.7 percent of all immigrants to Canada. In the following years, this number continued to increase and nearly tripled in 1990, reaching 18,445, making up more than 9 percent of all immigrants. In the following years, the number of admitted business immigrants

continuously grew, peaking in 1993 at around 30,000. In 1998, the number of business immigrants admitted in Canada dropped to 13, 778 and later stabilized around 10,000 (CIC, various years).

Under this Immigrant Investor Program, in the 1980s and the 1990s, Hong Kong and Taiwan were the main suppliers of entrepreneur and investor immigrants to Canada (Li, 1993), as shown in Figure 2.4. These two regions together accounted for more than half of the business immigrants admitted in Canada in a year. From 1992 to 1996, the number of business immigrants from Hong Kong peaked, taking up more than third of all the business immigrants admitted in the relevant year. After 1994, the percentage of Hong Kong business immigrants started declining and reached about 2% in 2002.
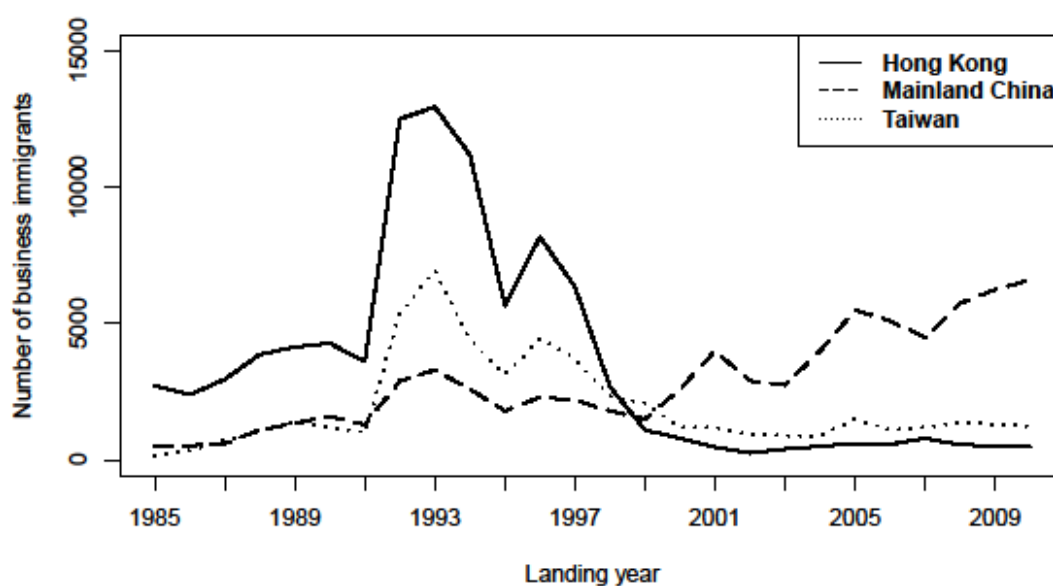
Figure 2.4 Business Immigrants Admitted in Canada, From Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China

Source: CIC, Canada Facts and Figures: Immigrant Overview, various years.

Note: The statistics include applicants and their dependents.

The statistics of immigrants admitted under the business class of Canada could offer a clue about the flow of Hong Kong and Taiwan immigrants to Canada. In fact,

partially as a result of the implementation of the economic class immigration policy in Canada (skilled workers, professionals, self-employed persons, entrepreneurs and investors), a wave of Hong Kong immigrants entered Canada in the 1980s and the 1990s, not only under the entrepreneur and investor immigration category. From Figure 2.2 above, we can see that the number of Hong Kong immigrants to Canada rapidly grew from 7,380 in 1985 to 29,261 in 1990 and continued until peaking at about 44,169 in 1994. After 1994, the number constantly dropped every year, decreasing to about 8,083 in 1998 and about 600 in 2010 (CIC, various years).

Besides implementation of the immigration policy in Canada, the political uncertainty of Hong Kong is often stressed by some scholars as another important reason for emigration of Hong Kong people in this period (Li, 2005). In 1984, the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed, in which the return of Hong Kong to China's sovereignty was scheduled on July 1, 1997. It declared that Hong Kong would enjoy a high degree of autonomy after the "handover" and its current social and economic system, life-style and rights would remain unchanged for 50 years under the "One Country, Two System" Framework (Li, 2005). The Sino-British Joint Declaration stated that China guaranteed Hong Kong's stability and prosperity after regaining sovereignty. However, due to much media propaganda and the lingering cold-war mentality in Hong Kong, some Hong Kong people felt panic and were prepared to emigrate prior to the formal "handover".

In addition, the prosperity of the Hong Kong economy in that period could also help to explain the emigration wave from Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s. The open door policy of mainland China contributed to Hong Kong's economic prosperity, and the growth of the real estate sector in the 1990s, by providing a wider market, cheap labour and low cost land, especially in Guangdong and other coastal areas. Some Hong Kong people, e.g. entrepreneurs, celebrities, etc., accumulated great wealth through mainland China's astonishing economic growth, which enabled them to meet the emigration conditions of certain Western countries (Li, 2005). This context of Hong Kong migrants is different from that of Chinese *luoshang* that are studied in this thesis.

Canada's Immigrant Investor Program, as one of the most popular investment immigration policies in the world, has not only attracted Hong Kong and Taiwan migrants, but also a great number of mainland Chinese applications due to its simplicity, low relative cost and low risk, especially in the 2000s (Wang and Liu, 2014). Figure 2.4 shows that from 2000, the number of business immigrants admitted from mainland China began to soar from about 1,500 in 1999, to 2,845 in 2000 and 4,192 in 2001 (CIC, various years). Mainland China replaced Hong Kong, becoming the main source country of Canadian business immigrants, representing about 30% of business immigrants admitted every year. It was reported that applicants from mainland China accounted for the largest population: 75% of the total number of applicants of Canada's Immigrant Investor Program. And among the 185,000 people who emigrated to Canada through this scheme since its introduction, more than 30,000 were Hong Kongers and about 67,000 were mainland Chinese (Young, 2014). Figure 2.5 shows the popularity of the Canadian Investor Program compared to the equivalent programmes of other countries.

Backlog of applications for Canada's Investor Immigrant programme*

Total **75,651**

Chinese applications** **57,308**

Applications by Chinese to live in BC **45,800**

How other nations compare
Annual immigrant investor applications

US EB-5 visa (2012/13FY) **6,517**

UK Tier 1 investor visa (2011/12FY) **594**

Australian significant investor visa (2012/13FY) **545**

*at January 8. 2013   **lodged in HK and Beijing
Note: 96% of all Chinese applications are eventually approved

Sources: CIC, US Citizenship and Immigration Services, UK Border Agency, Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Figure 2.5 Comparison of the Number of Applications under the Investor Program with the Equivalent Programmes in Other Countries

Source: Author's adaption from Todd (2014).

On 11 Feb, 2014, Canada announced it was closing its 25-year-old Immigrant Investor Program. The termination of this programme left 65,000 backlogs of applications unprocessed and the majority are from mainland China (Beech, 2014). The Canadian government announced that this programme was stopped because immigrants admitted under this programme were scarcely integrated into Canadian society, and it failed to create jobs or economic growth for Canada (at the level that the government expected) (Marlow, 2014). Because mainland China has become the top source country of immigrants of the business class since the 2000s, the Canadian government singled out the "wealthy mainland Chinese" as the target of the allegation (Marlow, 2014). Though the Federal's Immigrant Investor Program was cancelled, the Investor Program in Quebec is not affected by this action. As an immediate response to this policy change in Canada, many wealthy Chinese gave up Canada and turned to Australia, the United States and New Zealand as new target emigration destinations after 2014.

International migration of the Chinese was significantly impacted by the historical Chinese community formation and the geopolitical, economic situation at the international level, for example, colonisation and decolonisation, dynastic and state policy changes both in China and receiving countries (Zhou, 2009). These formed the historical basis for the emergence of Chinese new migrants, which the *luoshang* group belongs to. In the next section, the change of the social structure and the emergence of the middle class as a result of the social and economic reform in mainland China will be elaborated, forming an analytical basis for identifying the mindsets of the *luoshang* group.

2.2 The Rising Middle Class in Mainland China

The Chinese *luoshang* emerged under the context of globalisation, rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of China, and a general improvement of Chinese people's living conditions. In contrast to earlier Chinese migrants, *luoshang,* belonging to *xin yimin*, possess relatively high valued economic, social, cultural capital and social prestige in their home country. They are also part of the "new rich" or the upper and middle class in China. Chinese economic reforms and the concomitant rising prosperity in the 1980s and throughout the 1990s built the material

foundation for the emergence of the "new rich" and the middle class. However, due to the unique historical conditions of China, the "new rich" or the middle class, which *luoshang* belong to, is not maturely developed and could not be regarded as a parallel or the same as the middle class elsewhere (Goodman and Zang, 2008). In this section, the emergence and the development of Chinese middle class will be discussed. It will also examine how the distinct features of the geopolitical, economic and cultural situation in China affect the aspirations of the Chinese middle class, and how the *luoshang*'s emigration strategies could be related to it.

2.2.1 The social structure change in the PRC

In a mature industrial society, the middle class is the majority, which act as the major source of consumption power, the stabiliser of the society and also the buffer zone between the upper class and the lower class (Yang, 2017). The emergence of the concept of the middle class could be traced to the Industrial Revolution in the European context. In the Western world, the middle class mainly refer to two general categories, namely, the bourgeoisie (the old middle class), and the professionals and managers (the new middle class). The former emerged in the process of industrialisation through their control of the means of production. They became the middle class because they were located between the landed aristocracy and the ordinary town people. As industrialisation deepened, and the economic organisations and the modern state became more complex, a professional and managerial class emerged. They were regarded as the new middle class, because they were between economic and political elite and the ordinary people (Chen and Goodman, 2013; Goodman, 2008; Zhou, 2008).

Different from the process of industrialisation in Europe and North America, industrialisation in China has experienced four different stages since the beginning of the twentieth century. Before the establishment of the PRC, the Republican era witnessed attempts at modernisation and according to Chairman Mao Zedong (1926), the Republic of China was composed of five classes: the landlord class and the comprador class, the middle bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the semi-proletariat and the proletariat. The middle bourgeoisie, also referred to as the middle class or the national bourgeoisie, held an inconsistent attitude towards the Chinese revolution.

Under the warlord and colonial oppression, they supported the revolutionary movement, whilst at the same time, they also doubted the proletarian revolutionary movement, because their aspiration to join the ranks of the landlord class and the comprador class was threatened.

After the founding of the PRC in 1949, China witnessed another three major shifts of social class structure: the four-class structure of the new democratic society in 1949-1956, the "two classes and one stratum" structure after the completion of the socialist transformation, and the ten-strata new social class structure gradually formed after the reform and opening up (Hu et al., 2012; Lu, 2004).

After the founding of the PRC, in the transient new democratic society, during 1949 to 1956, four classes could be recognised in China, namely the working class, the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. During this period, the economic and social development level of China was low, and the country was dominated by the agricultural economy. The peasant class was the largest in number, accounting for more than 88% of the total population (Hu et al., 2012). In the 1950s, with the implementation of three major socialist tasks in agriculture, handicraft and capitalist industries, the socialist transformation of the social ownership of the means of production was successfully completed. In 1956, China accomplished the transition from a new democratic society to a socialist society. The bourgeoisie as the owners of private property disappeared with the nationalisation of industry and collectivisation of agriculture. The social class structure in this period consisted of "two classes and one stratum", namely the working class, the peasant class and intellectuals (Lu, 2004). This social class structure was kept until the reform and opening up in 1978.

During the first three decades after 1949, the state took the responsibility not only for economic management, but also for social organisation and provision of welfare (Zang, 2008). The planned economy, or redistributive system, was adopted in mainland China, in which "resource transference and income distribution were realised through a vertical multi-stratum bureaucratic system running from central to local governments" (Zhou and Qin, 2012, p. 52). In terms of economic development, the government led the industrialisation strategy of the country, and directly

controlled the state-owned and collective economy. This economic system helped to effectively allocate the limited resources, e.g. life necessities and consumer goods in the time when materials and goods were in shortage. In other words, during this period, the development of economy and society had little influence on the changes in the social class structure, whereas policy and institutional arrangements strongly affected the social structure (Hu et al., 2012).

Changes in the social class structure during 1956 to 1978 were limited. This is because of the implementation of China's urban-rural management system established in the 1950s (Hu et al., 2012). The division of social class structure during this time was not based on property possession, but on specific social identity criteria, for example: political identity, household registration identity and workers and cadre identity (Li, 2008). The household registration system (or *hukou* in Chinese) restricted the population flow from the rural to the urban, leading to a divide between the rural and urban: those with rural household identity becoming the peasant class and those with urban household identity becoming the working class. The agricultural *hukou* holders were more disadvantaged than urban *hukou* holders in economic opportunities and life chances (Wu et al., 2017). Social mobility was realised through other government public and social policies underpinned by Marxism and an egalitarian ideology. For example, the selection and promotion of government officials from those with a disadvantaged social background (the peasant and working class families), and the alteration of the economic, social and political elite structure through education (e.g. mass education, university recruitment policies etc.) (Liang and Li, 2012; Wu et al., 2017).

From this stemmed a personnel system with a social classification between the middle level (those with worker identity) and the upper level (those with cadre identity) (Hu, et al., 2012). *Ganbu* (cadres) were managerial and professional personnel and also officials who helped in the state administration and economic management (Goodman, 2008). They were initially hired from the local population with a working class and peasant social background and later supplemented by university graduates (Whyte and Parish, 1985). Workers constituted the middle level of the society, with a finer stratification of workers in state-owned units as the upper layer of the middle level, and workers in collective units as the lower layer of the middle level. *Ganbu*

were in the upper social stratum and the finer stratification of the upper level was based on the detailed administration level (Hu et al., 2012). However, given the socialist redistribution policies and principles, China was quite an equal society.

The intellectuals in this period, including engineers, professors and journalists, etc. were a well-respected group who also had a relatively high salary. However, this group was not politically trusted because a small portion of them had the experience of representing the interests of the big bourgeoisie, imperialism or colonialism and collaborating with the militarism of Japanese invasion. They were often recognized as straddling between Marxism and Capitalism (Wang and Zhang, 2013).

The reform and opening up since 1978 accelerated China's industrialisation and urbanisation, which also speeded up China's transformation from an agricultural society to an industrial society, and the transition from a planned economy to a socialist market economy. As a result of the political, social and market reforms, the egalitarian principle has shifted from an emphasis on equality of outcomes to equality of opportunities, and the ownership structure has transformed from the public ownership to diversified forms of ownership. The private economy is encouraged to develop outside of the public sector (Li, 2008). In consideration of such dramatic changes taking place in China, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP hereafter) made considerable adjustments to their management policies. In 1988, the CCP officially recognised private entrepreneurs (Sheng, 2013), and in 2002, in the 16th Party Congress, the Party member requirements were revised in the Charter of the CCP, in which the private economy owners were included (Li, 2008). Under this context, some new social strata which did not exist before 1978 have emerged. President Jiang Zemin's Report at 16th the Party Congress concluded that such new social strata include "entrepreneurs and technical personnel employed by non-public scientific and technological enterprises, managerial and technical staff employed by overseas-funded enterprises, the self-employed, private entrepreneurs, employees in agencies, free-lance professionals" (CCP, 2002). Meanwhile, this policy change and reform has led to a new focus on social stratification and social mobility (Hu et al., 2012). According to Lu (2004, 2010), China's social structure after 1978 has been transformed, consisting of ten social strata (Table 2.2): 1) the state and social administration personnel, 2) private entrepreneurs, 3) managers, 4) professional and

technical personnel, 5) clerks, 6) individual business owners, 7) employees in the commercial services sector, 8) industrial working class, 9) agricultural labourers and the stratum of the jobless, 10) unemployed and underemployed.

Table 2.2 Changing Class Structure in China, 1949 to Present

	1949-1956	1957-1978	1979 afterwards
Social class structure:	Four classes: 1. The working class 2. The peasants 3. The petty bourgeoisie 4. The national bourgeoisie	"Two classes and one stratum": 1. The working class 2. The peasant class 3. Intellectuals	Ten social strata: 1. The state and social administration class 2. Private entrepreneurs 3. Managers 4. Professional and technical personnel 5. Clerks 6. Individual business owners 7. Employees in commercial services sector 8. Industrial working class 9. Agricultural labourers 10. The stratum of the jobless, unemployed and underemployed

Source: Author

The reforms and opening up in 1978 created the conditions for the rapid expansion of the private sector and the accumulation of private wealth at an astonishing pace. This led to the formation of China's new middle class (Zhang, 2010; Zhou, 2008). It was not until 2000 that the term "middle class" (*zhongchan jieji*), or "middle strata" (*zhongchan jieceng*), started to be used publicly in academic discourse (Zhou, 2005; Zhou and Qin, 2012), when the role of private economy owners, for example, private entrepreneurs were socially and politically recognised as a significant contributor to China's economic and social development.

2.2.2 Locating the middle class

The economic and social reform in China has resulted in profound changes in the economic, cultural and social life of Chinese, creating conditions for the emergence of the new middle class. Different from the Western countries, the middle class in China is not only a product of industrialisation and modernisation, but also a product of institutional and political reforms (Zhou and Qin, 2012). So who are these Chinese new middle class?

There are many controversies over how to define the middle class in China. Until now, there is no consensus over how to define the middle class in China among scholars or social public (Li, 2013a). Zhang (2010, p. 7) argues that the middle class in China is not quite well established and identifiable, and demonstrates "a high degree of flux and fragmentation", due to its unique moment of emergence. This could be reflected in the highly heterogeneous and diverse group of people that the concept "middle class" refers to in China. At this time, different scholars and media propose a variety of definitions of who could be included as the new middle class.

Chinese scholars sometimes use the term "middle stratum" to replace the term "middle class". By using this term, it is indicated that the level of income is used as the main criterion in identifying the middle class in the emerging social stratification. Chen (2002), based on his investigation on the wage schemes and income level in some provinces, suggests that the middle class could refer to households with an annual income between 100,000 and 700,000 CNY (which is equivalent to about 11,280 GBP[6] to 78,950 GBP). However, the approach of using income as the classification measurement is not widely accepted, since there are difficulties in reaching a consensus on the income range of the middle class. On the one hand, with unbalanced development in China, the criterion of measurement could be subject to change with time and space (Rocca, 2012). On the other, it is hard to get the exact income and property data from social investigation: people might under-report their wealth for a variety of reasons in China and elsewhere (Goodman and Zang, 2008).

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[6] The current exchange rates for Chinese Yuan (CNY) to British Pound (GBP) was £1: ¥8.917 on 21/01/2018.

Apart from income, Chinese sociologists also propose to use other criteria to identify the middle class. For instance, Lu Xueyi (2002), professor of sociology at Beijing University of Technology, also uses education as a measurement, arguing that "the middle class members have a 'knowledge capital'. They work with their brain and have expectations concerning job 'qualities'" (cited in Rocca, 2012, p. 32). Consumption and lifestyle are regarded as markers of the middle class by some scholars, such as the acquisition of houses, consumption of relatively expensive goods, etc. (Chen and Goodman, 2013). Rocca (2012) stresses that the middle class tends to live an urbanised life, having big flats, luxury cars and significant money in the bank. Li Chunling (2003), a researcher in the Institute of Sociology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS hereafter), argues that a mixture of measurements should be considered in defining the middle class, as people who fall in the middle stratum might be excluded if using only one criterion. These criteria could include income and properties, level of education, occupation, lifestyles, etc.

Different from the definitions from the sociologists, the Chinese public has a different perception on who could be recognised as middle class, which makes the question of who are the middle class more complicated. Chinese commodity producers, sellers, service providers and relevant media practitioners have played an important role in popularizing the concept of middle class among the general public. At the turn of the 21st century, some advertisements of luxurious goods and expensive properties frequently used the term "middle class" to attract customers. For example, some real estate developers advertised their real estate as "the home of the middle class"; some luxurious car brands advocated them as "specifically designed for the middle class"; some middle and high end furniture sellers claimed that their products reflected "the taste and quality of the middle class" (Li, 2013a). From these advertisements, the social media successfully established the image of the middle class in the public: those who could afford to live in big apartments, driving expensive cars, and travelling abroad on holidays, etc. These images created by the media are consistent with the image of the middle class in Western countries. However, under the current economic development status of China, they are actually not the middle strata defined by sociologists.

There is a mismatch between how the general public recognises the middle class and how sociologists define the middle class. The general public doesn't accept sociologists' classification of the middle class as the middle strata. However, from the perspective of the sociologists, the middle class recognised by the general public is actually the upper middle class in China, which might only account for no more than 10% of the total population. This mismatch leads to a phenomenon that a great proportion of the middle class, recognised by the sociologists, do not actually consider themselves as middle class (Li, 2013a; Yang, 2013).

To solve this mismatch, Li Chunling (2013a) firstly differentiated the concept of middle stratum and the middle class, and adopted three criteria to further define the Chinese middle class. She proposed to use occupation, education and income as three criteria to classify the Chinese middle stratum. According to Li, professional personnel, managers and private entrepreneurs are the upper middle stratum and could also be called the middle class. Other lower "white collar" (also called wage earners), and small individual business owners (*getihu*), should belong to the lower middle stratum. Using the three criteria of occupation, education and income, she further divides the middle class into three kinds: 1) the professional personnel, managers and private entrepreneurs with an education level of middle school and higher; 2) the middle stratum with an annual income of more than 30,000 CNY (3,380 GBP); 3) the professional personnel, managers and private entrepreneurs with an education level of middle school and higher, and with an annual income of more than 30,000 CNY. According to the Chinese General Social Survey (CCGS hereafter) 2011, the third category of the middle class only accounted for 7.7% of the whole population, and in cities the proportion could be higher, reaching about 16.7% (p. 70).

Consistent with the uneven regional development of China, there are more people who reach the middle class in urban areas than those in rural areas, more in the Eastern region than in the Central and Western regions, and more in secondary and tertiary industry than in primary industry (Li and Wang 2017). The *luoshang* group mainly includes private entrepreneurs as well as some senior managers and professionals. According to Li Chunling's (2013a, 2013b) definition, under the current economic and social development status of China, they undoubtedly belong to the upper middle stratum or the middle class. Apart from Li Chunling (2013a, 2013b), Li Qiang (2008),

Zhou Xiaohong (2008) and Yang Jing(2013) also confirm that owners of small to medium-sized enterprises are usually considered as key components of the rising middle class in China. The distribution of the *luoshang* group might follow the distribution features of the middle class in China.

2.2.3 Locating the "new rich" and private entrepreneurs

In the process of market reforms in the post-Mao era, some groups have been the main beneficiaries, and also played vital roles in pushing forward the reforms. These people, ranging from private entrepreneurs, senior managers to professionals, were also known and identified as the "new rich" (Goodman and Zang, 2008). Chinese social scientists sometimes use the term "new rich" as interchangeable with the new middle class, or regard it as a part of the middle class (Guo, 2008). As private entrepreneurs and senior managers, Chinese *luoshang* are also a part of the "new rich" who have benefited from and taken the opportunities in market transition and economic growth. It is necessary to explore how their wealth was accumulated before we can understand their behaviour on emigration and transnationlism.

These private entrepreneurs have emerged from the transition of the formerly centrally planned economy to the socialist market economy. However, it was not until 1992 when Deng Xiaoping delivered his famous speech during the inspection tour to Shenzhen that the private sector of the economy began to experience exceptional expansion due to the stable economic and political environment in China (Pan, 2005). Figure 2.6 shows that in 1989, there were only about 90,000 private enterprises in China. This number increased rapidly after 1992, with an annual increase of about 200,000. By the end of 20th Century, the number of private enterprises in China was 17 times more than that in 1989 (NBSC, various years; Lu, 2012). Since 2000s, especially after China joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO hereafter) in 2001, China has witnessed sustained and rapid economic growth. Globalisation has played an increasingly important role in China's economic development. In the 2000s, the private sector continued to grow, and in 2009, the number of private enterprises reached 7.2 million (NBSC, various years; Lu, 2012).
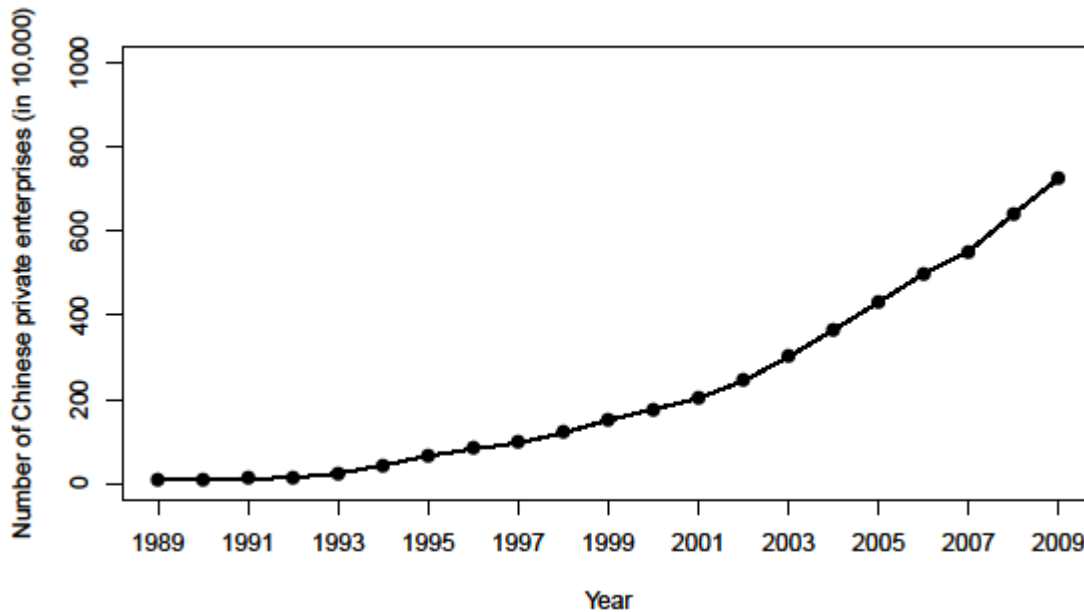
Figure 2.6 Development of Chinese Private Enterprises

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC hereafter) China Statistical Yearbook, various years*; Lu, 2012,* p. 29.

The period since the early 1990s has witnessed rapid and sustained economic growth, to which the contributions from the non-state sector could not be neglected. The emergence and development of private enterprises have brought significant impact on the Chinese economy by introducing competition mechanisms. As a major force in the socialist market economy, private enterprises have made great contributions to the economic development in China, in terms of creation of wealth, tax contribution and job creation, etc. Statistics show that the production value of the non-state sector achieved more than a tenfold increase during the 12 years from 1990, growing from 12 billion CNY (equivalent to approximately 1.35 billion GBP) in 1990 to about 1.2 trillion CNY (equivalent to approximately 135. 35 billion GBP) in 2001. The total retail sales of consumer goods accomplished by the non-state sector grew from just 4.3 billion CNY (equivalent to approximately 0.48 billion GBP) in 1990 to 624.5 billion CNY (equivalent to approximately 70. 44 billion GBP) in 2001 (Pan, 2005, p.3). In 2009, the total number of private enterprises accounted for 70% of total registered enterprises, and the total registered capital of private enterprises grew from 10 billion CNY (equivalent to approximately 1.13 billion GBP) in the early 1990s to

around 13 trillion CNY (equivalent to approximately 1.47 trillion GBP) in 2010 (Yang and Dai, 2013).

In the beginning, private businesspeople were not regarded highly. The first ones in the early 1980s who entered the private economy sector were more likely to be those who were not capable enough to find a position in the state or collective sector (Sheng, 2013). To earn a living, they entered the private business sector because it had low barriers of entry. After the 1990s, an increasing number of people who had secure jobs in the state sector; for example, officials, professionals and state workers, began to enter the private economy sector. Entering private business was increasingly accepted and people viewed it as an alternative career path, which was termed "*xiahai*" (jumping into the commercial sea) at that time. They were the pioneers as risk-taking entrepreneurs out of the public sector of the economy.

In this context, as the new social strata, the majority of private entrepreneurs do not actually inherit any economic capital from their parents, nor do they have other forms of intergenerational capital transmission (social or cultural capital) (Lu, 2004). Based on Lu's (2004) investigation in 2001, about 78.1% of private entrepreneurs came from a peasant background. Because in the beginning, the private entrepreneurs mainly came from the the lower social stratum, their average education level was not high in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. However, after the 1990s, especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with more previous professionals and managers joining the private sector, the private entrepreneurs' education level has been greatly improved (Li, 2008) (See Table 2.3 for more details).

Without the capital transmission and support from the previous generation, the success of Chinese entrepreneurs is more attributable to their personal attributes, such as work ethic, diligence and attention to regulations, sensitivity to business trends and opportunities, and the cultural and social capital brought over from their previous jobs. However, there are also some owners of large private enterprises whose success could be attributed to the political capital transmitted from their parents. They have a privileged position, important connections, as well as extensive networks necessary for greater business success (Lu, 2004).

Table 2.3 The Education Level of the Private Entrepreneurs, a Comparison between 1993 and 2004

Education level of the private entrepreneurs	The percentage of the private entrepreneurs	
	1993	**2004**
Postgraduate	0.6%	5.7%
Undergraduate	5.5%	20.7%
College	1.7%	31.1%
General secondary education and the vocational high school	35.9%	33.6%
Junior high school	36.1%	12.9%
Primary school	9.9%	1.7%
Illiteracy	1.0%	–

Source: Author's adaption from Li (2008, p. 55).

Chinese media has played a vital role in bringing public attention to the "original sin" (Guo, 2008; Pan and Sun, 2006; Zhou, 2008) of private entrepreneurs. In all countries, entrepreneurship is inevitably linked to the advantages associated with particular social networks, for example, to local government officials. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, when China was in the very initial stage of market transition, the market was not properly regulated and there were many institutional loopholes. As a consequence, some private entrepreneurs took advantage of such loopholes and realised their primitive accumulation of capital by turning state assets or the communal property of the people into private wealth. Zang (2008) illustrates some zero-sum game in wealth accumulation of some private entrepreneurs. For instance, in the late 1980s when the real estate market started to develop and commercial housing began to emerge (before there was only welfare housing allocated by the state or state-owned enterprises), some real estate developers utilised their connections with the central or local government, taking land at very low prices and reaping excessive profits. This is an example of how the wealth accumulation of some high-income group could be associated with corruption, bribery, speculation, tax evasion and theft of state assets. However, it by no means represents all the cases. The

existence of these cases impacted public opinions on the "new rich", especially the private entrepreneurs, showing a degree of public contempt and negativity (Hu et al., 2012; Sheng, 2013).

The emergence and development process of these private entrepreneurs, as presented above, indicates the dynamic and complex composition of this group, who might have different backgrounds of family, education and means of wealth accumulation. Thus, the *luoshang* group, many of whom are such private entrepreneurs, could be a highly heterogeneous group.

2.2.4 Fear of falling

Private entrepreneurs become the "new rich" by identifying and grasping the opportunities arising from the changes of policies and institutional structures (Yang and Dai, 2013). However, they are also aware that there are opportunities, risks and uncertainties caused by institutional changes. *Luoshang,* emerging against this backdrop, could be considered as an umbrella term covering a spectrum of wealth possession and migration experience from the super-rich to skilled migrants. The Chinese *luoshang*, as I will show later, are largely not the super-rich. Most of them are the new upper middle class, and thus, have much concern over how to maintain their social status, lifestyle, as well as its reproduction over generations. Also, how to shield themselves from the unknown future, or from their "original sins" of primitive capital accumulation when starting their business ventures. Economically, due to the "original sins", especially at the start of their business ventures and wealth accumulation, some uncertainties and fear over the safety of their wealth and the security of their relatively high position in the social structure arise. However, this perspective of "original sin" can only help to explain the anxieties of a small portion of private entrepreneurs. It is obviously not enough to explain the larger social group of the "new rich", or the upper middle class, which the majority of *luoshang* belong to.

The fear and anxieties of the Chinese middle class are rooted both in the external social and economic environment of China and the middle class's inherent characteristics. As the rising middle class, they have first enjoyed the fruits brought

by institutional reforms and rapid economic development. However, at the same time, the drastic social reform, economic prosperity and unforeseeable future of development of China have brought much pressure and ambivalence to them as well. The fierce competition in the market, the continuous rising of living costs and the first signs of potential economic and social risks have all intensified the feeling of anxieties among the Chinese middle class (Li, 2016).

Though China's socio-economic reforms have achieved great success, there are imbalances and incompatibilities in China's economic and social development. For instance, Lu (2010) points out that the social structure of China lags 15 years behind the economic structure. The development of the social security and social welfare system in China lags behind economic development (Li, 2016). In other words, in China, the old socialist safety nets were gradually abandoned while the new social welfare systems were not maturely established (Zhang, 2010). This directly leads to a fear of falling among the Chinese middle class. Even though they have had relatively high income and good material conditions up to now, they fear that one day, they may experience some misfortune, and may lose their current life style and social status. In addition, in the past several decades, the dramatic changes in the social structure of China were mainly led by the government through institutional reforms (Li, 2008; Lu, 2004). As such, the future of the middle class and other social classes will also be highly dependent on how the government adjusts state policy. For example, since the end of the 1990s, the Chinese state leaders have proposed the policy target of "expanding the size of the middle strata". The Report at the 17th Party Congress points out that one of the main policy focuses is "to reverse the trend of the widening income distribution gaps" (CCP, 2007). China has implemented some important policies to ensure the realisation of such a target, for example, establishment of a new rural cooperative medical system in 2002 (Li, 2008). However, as Hu et al. (2012, p. 430) explain, "from the social policy adjustment point of view, there is serious difficulty in reforming the traditional system, while at the same time, faced with the stratification of interest groups, contending for interests is inevitable between different interest groups when the policy system is adjusted". The current middle class may also worry that their interests might be affected by policy adjustments.

Middle class anxiety is not specific to China or the developing countries. According to Mar (2005, p. 367), "people from [the middling] strata are structurally the most anxious of subjects, insecurely poised between demands of material necessity and aspirations for upward social movement". Barbara Ehrenreich (1990) observes that there is a constant fear of falling down the social and economic ladder amongst the American middle class. Under the American context, the middle class have anxieties over maintaining their consumption levels and lifestyle under global neoliberal marketization. In this sense, the Chinese middle class share a similar mentality to the middle class elsewhere.

What makes the Chinese new middle class different from the middle class in Western countries is a kind of special mentality developed due to its short history of existence. The current Chinese middle class is the newly emerged class after the 1980s, which means that the majority of the social group, including the Chinese *luoshang*, are the first-generation middle class. Most of them gained their current social status and prestige from their own efforts, and their parents might have had only limited ability to help, as explained in the previous section. As a result, they might lack a sense of security and be more vulnerable to future unknown risks. In order to increase the sense of safety, the Chinese middle class might choose to work more diligently and pursue higher social status and wealth. Therefore, as Li Chunling (2016) argues, the Chinese middle class is more active and less satisfied with their current situation, with stronger material desires and more impulsion to pursue higher social status, prestige and wealth than their counterparts in Western countries.

The upper middle class in China, which entrepreneurs and managers belong to, and also the *luoshang* group belongs to, has already formed a "class-consciousness" (Ehrenreich, 1990). Ehrenreich, in her study of the American middle class, identified an emerging awareness of being a class among others, and being elites above others. Driven by this self-image, they are using consumption to establish their status and to demonstrate their tastes, for example dieting for beauty and health, a preference for things "authentic", "natural" and "imported", and more money spent on the visible marks of status, etc. In Ehrenreich's words, "an elite that is conscious of its status will defend that status" (1990, p. 10). Long before Ehrenreich, Mills (1951) observed that among American white collar classes, there is a "status panic" caused by the

ambivalence and instability embedded in their claims for prestige. In this sense, the upper middle class represented by entrepreneurs and managers in China have gradually formed the same class-consciousness as their counterparts in western countries. Section 2.2.2 above explained that there is a mismatch between how the middle class recognizes themselves and how sociologists define them. This might be the case especially for the lower middle strata. However, with relatively high economic capital, the upper level of the middle strata, especially *luoshang*, have generally recognised themselves as the middle class or the upper middle class and formed their own consciousness.

However, the problem is, due to their short history of existence and the history of colonial influence, even though the "new rich" are perceived as economically well-to-do, some of them are not confident in their symbolic capital, for example, education credentials, "manners" and "tastes". This lack of confidence could help to justify why they seek conscious material consumption and excessive investments in children's education (Zhang, 2010). Furthermore, the Chinese middle class also tends to seek Western modernisation as a guiding model from which to learn (Wang, 2006). What the Chinese middle class is inclined to view as status symbols to reflect their wealth and taste, is often associated with foreign influences, or more precisely Western influences (Zhang, 2010). Due to globalisation, the growing access to global media and the development of advanced communication techniques, the West is often taken as the icon of modernity, affluence and status. This inclination could be reflected in Zhang's (2010) research on housing of the middle class in Kunming. She finds that there is a trend in new commodity housing that modernity is often sold "through the construction of properties that claim to adopt authentic foreign architectural motifs and promise to offer an aura with an exotic, modern flavour" (p. 83). This trend of transplanting the modern west, either by adopting western architecture motifs or Western names, could be interpreted as a neo-colonial cultural mentality. In terms of "taste", Kraus (1989) has observed the fever of Chinese urban middle class families for pushing children to learn playing piano, which, in his interpretation, is regarded as an emblem of Western modernity, a source of prestige and a status symbol. Apart from consuming things related to the West, overseas travel is also a powerful means to establish social prestige as it is often perceived as reflecting financial power and the accumulation of social and cultural capital. Liu (1997) in his research on Chinese

scholars overseas, discussed the renegotiation of social power and the social meanings generated by traveling abroad. Traveling abroad and gaining permanent residency are perceived as a form of symbolic capital and an important form of status and prestige in China.

In China, social mobility and income are increasingly associated with personal efforts, for example, the knowledge and skills that individuals acquire (Li, 2003). The Chinese middle class is therefore attaching great importance to their children's education. According to Chen (2006), the Chinese middle class pay more attention to the accumulation of cultural capital than non-middle class members. And they are also more willing to invest in children's education, for example, in the cultivation of artistic abilities, scientific skills and English capacity. In this sense, the ambitions and struggles of the Chinese middle class on child-raising are the same as their Western counterparts. Ehrenreich's (1990) research shows how American middle class parents struggle to push their children to transmit and accumulate certain kinds of cultural and social capital "through careful moulding and psychological pressure" (p. 83). Chinese middle class parents also demonstrate a similar kind of anxiety about social falling. As illustrated in Ciupak and Stich's (2012) research, many educated urban middle class parents expected their children to go to "big cities", study "trendy majors" or "study abroad" (p. 43).

This awareness has brought about a fervent approach to education among the growing middle class in China, which is even more intensified by the implementation of China's one-child policy. This family planning policy has effectively facilitated the formation of a single-child nuclear family form and generally been accepted as a necessary, though not ideal, state mandate for China's development (Crabb, 2010). The only child in the family becomes the "only hope" (Fong, 2006) and for parents, the child's academic success or failure may signify the family's visions of the future, whether it is a dream or a nightmare. Their family strategy often involves a desire for their offspring to accumulate global cultural and social capital, to cultivate the ability to grasp opportunities arising in social change in a hope of exceeding in the fierce competitions of the market, and also to expand their education and occupation choices globally. As a part of the Chinese middle class, Chinese *luoshang* inherit this class habitus and struggle concerning the great importance attached to children's education

and the cultivation of children's cultural capital. Many older *luoshang* families only have one child. They never hesitate to invest in their only child's future no matter how much it may cost, because he/she represents the family's vision of the future.

Luoshang and their families are also greatly impacted by the neo-colonial mind-sets. On one hand, they seek social prestige and social power in their home country through emigration. On the other, they expect that the West, which in their ideology represents modernity and better quality of life, could fulfil their rising expectations and aspirations. Furthermore, *luoshang*'s success is highly dependent upon the state policy reforms. Their transnational migration decisions and household strategies could also be interpreted from the perspective of middle class fears and anxieties. *Luoshang*, as the "new rich", are aware that their successful paths in entrepreneurship, which might be opportunistic and miraculous to some degree, may not be easily reproduced due to changed socio-economic conditions, e.g. gradual maturity of the market economy. Furthermore, the Chinese middle class is anxious about "falling behind" other members of the same class, and thus, consciously or unconsciously compare and compete with others. Under the context of the increasingly fierce competition of Chinese society and the unclear future of the economic reforms, emigration is considered as an alternative way for them to ease their anxieties and seek more opportunities.

2.3 Summary

To sum up, this chapter presents and elaborates on the research background of Chinese *luoshang* families' emigration through delineating the historical and political context of Chinese emigration to Canada and the emergence of the middle class in mainland China. Chinese in Canada have a long history which could be traced back to the coolie trade in the Qing dynasty. Afterwards, the movement of Chinese people to Canada is greatly associated with the immigration policy change in both China and Canada. The "100 point system" skilled immigration scheme adopted after 1967, and the Immigrant Investor Program introduced in 1986, have made the migration of skilled and capital-rich immigrants to Canada possible. It was not until the 1990s that China began to witness an increase in the number of people choosing to emigrate overseas, due to the implementation of the LCEEC in 1986, and further relaxation of the

migration law afterwards. Before 1998, Hong Kong migrants dominated the immigrants arriving in Canada, and afterwards, mainland China became the top source country of Canadian immigrants. This is a result of Chinese economic development, the change of government's policy towards emigration, and also the rising Chinese middle class.

After the reform and opening up in 1978, China started the transition from a planned economy to a socialist market economy. Chinese middle class emerged under this context. The Chinese *luoshang,* who are mainly composed of private entrepreneurs and managers, should be regarded as a part of the Chinese (upper) middle class and the "new rich", forming their class consciousness in society. Similar to the middle class in other countries, there is a fear of falling down the social ladder amongst them. However, due to the specific external social and economic environment where the Chinese middle class emerge, the Chinese middle class are aware of their vulnerability and they also show some special characteristics such as viewing the Western modernisation as their learning model and arbiter of taste, and paying great attention to children's education.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to identify the analytical frameworks, concepts and key literature related to this thesis, and to establish the originality of the research of *luoshang,* as well as situating my research within the wider literature on transnational migration. The main theoretical analytical frameworks that the thesis adopts encompass new economics of migration, Bourdieu's forms of capital and the theory of transnationalism. The new economics of labour migration puts the household, instead of the individual, at the centre of analysis. To compensate for its economic driven logic, this thesis adopts Bourdieu's forms of capital as an analytical tool, to explain their transnational migration decisions. Transnationalism theory emphasizes uprooted cross border mobility features, thus is useful to understand the transnational mobility and linkages of the *luoshang* families. The concept of home and belonging is also mentioned, which could be used in understanding the consequences of transnationalism. In section 3.2, by reviewing the literature of Chinese transnational migration, transnational family practices and "astronauts"-related research, aims to establish the originality of the research of *luoshang*. The gaps in the "middling transnationalism" and the interpretation of transnational family practices are identified. The research into *luoshang* will fulfil these research gaps. Through a thorough review of the literature on "astronauts", how the research on *luoshang* is differentiated from the Hong Kong "astronauts" and how it could further develop this body of literature is identified.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical framework that the thesis adopts, as well as the related concepts and terms. Section 3.1.1 demonstrates the new economics of labour migration, providing the theoretical foundations for the logic of shaping the *luoshang* families' transnational household migration decision. Section 3.1.2 centres on Bourdieu's forms of capital, which is an effective analytical tool for understanding the dynamics of transnational migration practices of the *luoshang* families. Section 3.1.3 concerns the theoretical framework of transnationalism, which is fundamental

in explaining transnational networks, linkages and connections of the *luoshang* family members. The last section explains the notion of home and belonging, which is helpful to reveal the consequences of geographical mobility and the family splitting arrangements of the *luoshang* families.

3.1.1 New economics of labour migration

In the international migration literature, a variety of theoretical models and schools of thought, with different concepts, assumptions and emphases, have been proposed to explain the causal processes of migration (Arango, 2000; Ma, 2003; Massey et al., 1993; Massey et al., 1994). Among these international migration theories, scholars of the new economics of migration consider a movement decision as a household strategy, instead of an individual decision, coping with market failures and limitations in economic advancement (Stark, 1991). Considering larger units of people (family and household), this approach emphasises more on diversifying sources of income, minimizing risks to household and loosening constraints of market failures in sending countries than on income maximisation. Apart from these, this theory also emphasises the household desires to alleviate their sense of relative deprivation in their community through international migration (Stark and Yitzhaki, 1988; Stark, 1991).

The migration of the *luoshang* families is closely related to the new economics of migration. The migration strategy and family splitting arrangements that they have adopted, are better interpreted as a household strategy expecting to maximise family benefits instead of optimising individual benefits. This perspective is more closely related to the new economics of migration due to its central idea on the household as a unit of migration decision making, and its emphasis on risk diversification in response to market incompleteness. However, this single approach of migration theory is not enough in explaining the complexities and dynamism of *luoshang*'s migration. We need to be aware that the spatial migration strategy of Chinese *luoshang* families is made under the specific historical, economic and institutional context of both China and Canada. For example, China's economic growth and policy reform has enabled the accumulation of private capital and the emergence of the new middle class. Meanwhile, Canada has implemented more liberalised immigration policies and is willing to admit skilled and capital-abundant immigrants. Without

these preconditions, there will not be *luoshang* families existing in mainland China. In other words, the *luoshang* families' mobility decision could not be isolated from a wider social context which both provides opportunities and constrains their choices. However, the new economics of labour migration theory could not be fully applied to the *luoshang* phenomenon, because its traditional explanation mainly focuses on the non-skilled labour migrants rather than the high skilled. The middle class status, and the middle class mentality of the *luoshang* families, might give rise to different considerations impacting their household migration arrangement. Therefore, adopting this perspective of new economics of migration to explain the *luoshang* phenomenon requires a new interpretation corresponding to the specific social and institutional context.

The new economics of labour migration, emphasises five major components (Abreu, 2012, p.1; Stark and Bloom, 1985, p.173-176): 1) relative deprivation as a determinant of migration; 2) household as unit of decision making; 3) migration as a strategy to diversify risks and overcome market incompleteness; 4) information-theoretical considerations; 5) migration as a process of innovation adoption and diffusion. The relative deprivation rests on the hypothesis that potential migrants will compare their income with other people in their community context, and their wish to improve their relative status which originates from these comparisons, might be a reason of migration (Abreu, 2012; Stark, 1991; Stark and Taylor, 1989; Stark and Yitzhaki, 1988). This is largely observed in villages with a migration history, and in this observation, imbalance of income earned by the households in the community is emphasised. In the case of the *luoshang*, the incentive of family migration is no longer to pursue higher income. As such, when economic reasons are no longer the main logic of migration, do they have a sense of "relative deprivation"? My answer to this question is yes. But this sense of "relative deprivation" does not come from the unequal distribution of income, but from the unequal distribution of opportunities under the social context of China. A different interpretation of the sense of "relative deprivation" is required.

As mentioned in 2.2, the middle class in China is a newly emerged social class and has a short history of existence and development. Considering these social contexts, the middle class in China shares some similar mentalities with their counterparts in

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other countries, for example: fear and anxieties of falling down the social status ladder and concerns of the transmission of their wealth and social status to the second generation. Meanwhile, they have also formed special mentalities, for example, viewing Western modernity as their learning model. As a result, they are more inclined to compare the resources and opportunities that they could provide to their children with other members of the Chinese middle class, and they wish that they could provide their children more opportunities of choice, more possibilities of success, and more insurance on the reproduction of their social status through international migration. Their sense of "relative deprivation" might arise when they find that their friends, through transnational migration, could get access to more such opportunities than them.

The household as unit of migration decision-making is the central idea of the new economics of migration. In contrast to the neoclassical economics which places individuals at the centre of analysis, the new economics of migration emphasises household optimisation. In this approach, it is assumed that there is uncertainty and risks to future income as a result of incomplete market systems, thus, sending a household member to other locations could spread these risks by involving other sources of income (Massey et al., 1993). In other words, from the perspective of the new economics of migration, migration is interpreted as a form of self-insurance against income risks (Abreu, 2012). Elements of the new economics of migration, for example, the household as a unit optimizing and diversifying risks, could help to explain the multi-local transnational migration strategy of the *luoshang* families. However, we need also to be aware that the core concern lying in the centre of the *luoshang* family arrangements is not as simple as what the new economics of migration implies. Firstly, from the form of migration, in typical cases of the new economics of migration, a household member leaves his hometown and family to migrate and work in other places whilst other household members stay at home. However, it is different in the *luoshang* families in that the whole family migrate to another country while one family member (usually the husband) returns home to work, and other family members remain in the foreign country. Secondly, the main concern of new economics of migration is still the risks concerning incomes as a result of an incomplete market system in the origin country. As Massey et al. (1993) have exemplified, through migration, migrants could hedge against the risks, for example:

crop failure, falling prices and unemployment etc., which could actually be insured by insurance and unemployment benefits in a more developed market. In contrast, for the *luoshang* families, such risks related to the agricultural economy are not their main concern. As a member of the middle or upper middle class in China, the *luoshang* families expect to mitigate potential future risks of social downward mobility and maximise the capital of the entire household. Their fear of falling is closely related to the historical and institutional context of the modernisation and industrialisation process of China.

As Abreu (2012) has pointed out, except for market incompleteness, the new economics of migration fails to explain structural constraints which shape migration dynamics, nor does it demonstrate the interrelationship and interactions between individual migrant agency and structural constraints. Furthermore, the theory does not take into consideration any elements of capital accumulation. In other words, the current new economics of migration is unable to interpret the *luoshang* phenomenon from both the macro structural level and the micro agency level. Therefore, in order to explain the causation of this phenomenon, an innovative interpretation of the new economics of migration should be developed, in which Bourdieu's theory of capital will be borrowed to demonstrate the dynamics of *luoshang's* middle class transnational family arrangement.

In addition, as the information-theoretic character of new economics of migration implies, information plays a vital role in migration decision making. From the perspective of network theory and world systems theory, information flows from various sources, ranging from network ties to telecommunication and media. The information is even more fluid and easier to access owing to the rapid development of technology and the process of globalisation. However, it doesn't mean that it has no limitations. The importance of information and the imaginary formed on its basis will also be emphasised in shaping *luoshang* family migration strategy.

3.1.2 Forms of capital

In the new economics of migration theory, explanations of migration and mobility practices attach much importance to income, market and other economic aspects, but

rarely involve elements of capital accumulation and capital transformation in different social contexts apart from the economic capital. Capital, in Bourdieu's interpretation, is "a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible" (1986, p.241). For Bourdieu, capital is not solely in one economic form, but could be represented in accumulated labour in various forms. In addition, the accumulation, distribution and valuation of capital is not objectively recognised, but assessed under specific social contexts. In other words, social practices of individuals which involve exchange of capital are not following a unified conversion rate, but largely depend on rules and recognition in different social contexts.

Bourdieu (1986) introduces three kinds of manifestation of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital.

Economic capital refers to the capital that could be "immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the forms of property rights" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.243). This is the basis of analysis for most of the international migration theories, which is closely associated with maximisation of economic profits. For Bourdieu, reducing the universe of exchanges to mercantile exchange is not desirable and also powerless in explaining complicated social practices.

Cultural capital could be represented in three forms, according to Bourdieu, "which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.243). This could be in the form of embodied state as an integral part of the person, i.e. in the form of culture, cultivation; objectified state, for example, material objects such as paintings, writings, instruments; and institutionalised state, for example, educational qualifications. In contrast to economic capital which could be transmitted immediately (by gift, purchase or exchange), cultural capital is an integral part of a person whose acquisition is actually a process of self-improvement and investment. In its institutionalised form, cultural capital could be transmitted from and converted to economic capital. However, it doesn't mean that cultural capital could only be acquired with a deliberate effort. In fact, depending on the society, social class and the time period, cultural capital, to some extent, could be acquired and accumulated unconsciously (Bourdieu, 1984). According to Bourdieu, the transmission of cultural

capital, which could be implicit, starts from families endowed with strong cultural capital, and the appropriation of objectified cultural capital depends on the cultural capital embodied by the whole family. As the distribution of resources to agents is uneven, in the competition between agents who are competing for the same resources, scarcity plays an important role through which social value is generated (Bourdieu, 1986).

Social capital is "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.249). The volume of social capital depends on the size of networks and connections that an individual could effectively utilise and the volume of capital that each member possesses in the individual's networks. Networks and connections are not naturally given, but a product of endless personal or collective efforts of investment, which aims at establishing and reproducing social relationships for use, whether consciously or unconsciously. This process presupposes an "unceasing effort of sociability" (p.251) and exchanges where recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed. Similar to cultural capital, social capital could also be convertible from, and transformed to, economic capital in certain conditions.

All the three forms of capital could function as symbolic capital, which is largely affected by social recognition. In other words, the valuation is highly dependent upon how the particular society evaluates it. Therefore, it is likely that capital recognised in one society or context is unrecognised in another and vice versa. Another important feature of Bourdieu's theory of capital is that different forms of capital are convertible, which acts as the basis of the strategies of capital reproduction (Bourdieu, 1986). However, it doesn't mean that capital conversion is costless. There is an exchange rate when capital exchanges and transmits in different societies and contexts. For example, purchase power of the same amount of money could be different in different countries. My own research suggests that academic credentials and working experience in China are often devalued or even considered worthless in Canada.

Bourdieu's theory of capital from the perspective of capital transformation is a useful tool to analyse mobility strategies and movement experiences of migrants. It helps to

identify from the social and cultural aspects which have been largely neglected in the new economics of migration theory. An example of adopting Bourdieu's ideas in migration studies is the work of Karen O' Reilly (2012), who framed migration within a theory of practice to study British migration to Spain, Mexican labour migration to the US, Filipina domestic labour migration to Hong Kong, and refugee children in the UK. To avoid one-dimensional, static and narrow explanations, she understood migration trends and phenomena as a process by linking a series of events as coherent practice stories. In my research of *luoshang*, Bourdieu's ideas could help me structure the social class positions and conflicts of domination between different kinds of upper and middle class Chinese, which gives the edge for some people in terms of their ability to thrive transnationally.

However, as Beck (2004) has commented, Bourdieu's theory of capital is mainly embedded in the container of nation-state and thus inevitably reproduces a kind of methodological nationalism. The fact that globalisation has changed the forms of social mobility and social reproduction is neglected in this conceptual framework (Carlson et al., 2016). Literature tells us that changes and progress in technology has facilitated ties and networks across borders. With declines in transport costs and improvement in transport speed, it becomes easier to move back and forth between borders at will for people who are equipped with enough material resources. Instead of using letters as the means to knit distant transoceanic contacts, nowadays, people are able to communicate with speed and immediacy in a number of ways. The revolutionary advent of the Internet allows instant and almost costless communication "with a spontaneity approaching the conditions of face-to-face contact" (Waldinger, 2013, p.9). Therefore, there is a call for further developing Bourdieu's theory of capital to explain the social phenomenon in a transnational context. There are various concepts of the capital generated with spatial mobility involved, such as "mobility capital" (Murphy-Lejeune, 2003), "cosmopolitan capital" (Weenink, 2008), "transnational human capital" (Gerhards and Hans, 2013), and "transnational cultural capital" (Carlson et al., 2016). For example, according to Carlson et al. (2016, p.4), "transnational cultural capital" not only refers to "foreign language skills, intercultural competence, knowledge of other cultures and countries, but also to specific attitudes and dispositions (e.g. an interest in or 'taste' for going abroad, an openness towards others, and an appreciation of other cultures)".

Luoshang families' transnational mobility and household arrangements involve more than rational economic calculation. A process of valuation and exchange of different forms of capital across borders could better explain their family decision making. Therefore, Bourdieu's theory on different forms of capital will be a useful tool to explain the *luoshang* phenomenon. However, due to the new transnational features demonstrated by *luoshang's* migration, it is also important to examine it in a transnational social space instead of a nation-state container. In the next section, I will introduce the perspective of transnationalism and explain how it can help to gain an understanding of *luoshang* families' transnational lives, linkages and networks.

3.1.3 Transmigration, transmigrants and transnationalism

In the age of globalisation with its unprecedented extensiveness, profoundness and intensiveness, new migration phenomena are emerging continuously, featuring greater spatial mobility, new settlement patterns and more frequent and intensive spatial communications and connections between home country and host land (Vertovec, 1999). Under this context, old international migration concepts, for example, assimilation and multiculturalism could no longer explain the complexities of international migration. In order to explain social behaviour and transnational migration of the new migrants, a new analytical framework, which is more dynamic, flexible, and inclusive than the old international migration concepts, should be adopted to understand the new development.

Conceptualised in the 1990s, transnationalism is a concept describing the experience of some new migrants who reflect significantly different characteristics from the classical depiction of the "uprooted". Glick Schiller and her colleagues (1992) conceptualise transnationalism as "the process by which migrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement". Those who build up such social fields are called transmigrants. Instead of abandoning their own language, culture, and behaviour patterns and uprooting from their home country, they live their lives across borders, maintain continuing ties to their home country and are engaged in activities both in the home and host countries (Schiller et al., 1992; Schiller et al., 2005). For transmigrants, their daily lives "depend on multiple and constant

interconnections across international borders and [their] public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state." (Schiller et al., 1994, p.27; Schiller et al., 1995, p.48). In this sense, *luoshang* are transmigrants who successfully "forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations" (Schiller et al., 1995, p.48) that link together China and Canada through regular travelling and communicating with their families through the Internet and telephone. In other words, the view of transnationalism emphasises the 'multiple ties and interactions [linking] people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (Vertovec, 1999, p.447).

Applying Pierre Bourdieu's theory of field, scholars proposed a concept of transnational social field, as a key concept in the transnationalism theory. This field is composed of "a growing number of persons who live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders" (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999, p.221). In this field, traditional space and time concepts are changed. Since the interactions between two countries become increasingly frequent and close, the spatial distance is greatly reduced and the physical geographical distance begins to change into mobile network distance (Ding, 2012). In other words, the social field is no longer confined by nation-states, denoting dynamic process, rather than static positions (Faist, 2000). Cultural, political, and economic processes in it, could affect the accumulation, use, volume and convertibility of various sorts of capital.

An important idea indicated by transnational social space is that migration and re-migration are not "definite, irrevocable, and irreversible decisions" (Faist, 2000, p.200). This space, which is built beyond (national) social borders, has changed the migrating explanations based on nation-states. According to Pries (1999), for a long time, migration was viewed as primarily one-time, unidirectional, and permanent changing of location from one nation (society) to another. The movements of migrants are interpreted by effects of push and pull factors. Therefore, primary attention was paid to the social problems, process of integration into the new society, consequences and significance to the origin society. However, international migration from the end of 20th century has increasingly displayed new features like multidirectional and incremental migrations between borders. Transnationalism, and the formation of

transnational social space then, could help to break the perception of political control of single nation.

Transnationalism requires locating migrants within a transnational social field. This will be a powerful tool for "conceptualizing the potential array of social relations linking those who move and those who stay behind" (Levitt and Schiller, 2004, p.9). In other words, not only the persons who move, but also those who stay behind are involved in transnational practices. Even though they are not as transnationally active as the persons who move, they are exposed to a constant flow of information, resources and identities imported across borders.

Transnationalism as a perspective emerges with the concept of globalisation. As we are aware of the process of globalisation which features liberalisation of world trade and massive movement of information, goods, capital and services across borders, there is also a liberalisation of free movement of people (Favell et al., 2006). The literature stresses the role of the development of communication technologies in facilitating home-place attachments, as they make instant communication from distance become possible (Waldinger, 2008). However, as Portes (2003, p. 887) warns, it does not mean that transnationalism is a normative pattern shared by all migrants, instead, it might better describe a distinctive immigrant minority who are "educated, well-connected and firmly established in the host country". In addition, transnationalism also does not mean that people could be completely free in mobility. As a political phenomenon, international migration is subject to state control and multiple political constraints, which means that migrants can only move and do what states and their people allow (Waldinger, 2008; Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004).

"Middling transnationalism" (Conradson and Latham, 2005b, p. 229) is a new term added to the field of transnational migration. The proposition of this concept is based on the belief that transnationalism research has focused too much on the two extremes of "high-flying corporate elites and desperate, poverty-stricken labour migrants and asylum-seekers" (Favell et al., 2006, p.2). Middling transnationalism thus centres on:

> *The transnational practices of social actors occupying more or less*
> *middle class or status positions in the national class structures of their*

countries of origin, like skilled workers or working holiday-makers who spend extended periods abroad living transnational everyday lives (Smith, 2005, p.242)

Favell et al. (2006), emphasizing the group of the highly skilled, propose that we could move our research focus from the emergence of "global elites" and a "transnational capitalist class" (Sklair, 2012), who are living "unprecedented mobile and cosmopolitan lifestyles" (p. 15), to the transnational experiences of the highly skilled and educated. This group of migrants might include "students, nurses, mid-level and clerical employees, ambitious or adventurous upwardly mobile middle classes, migrants from a range of intermediate developing states, and many more it would be hard to describe as 'elites'"(p. 2).

Luoshang undoubtedly fall in this middling transnationalism category, who are neither the global elites, nor the category of "transnationalism from below" as suggested by Smith and Guarnizo (1998). Comparing to them, the experience of *luoshang* might be able to demonstrate a more typical and ordinary transnationalism experience. *Luoshang*, as "the better established and more secure immigrants" (Portes, 2003, p.887), who are engaged in transnational activities, might be able to utilise transnationalism as a method to bypass labour market constraints and discrimination in the host country (Portes, 2001). In addition, the business success and economic capital achieved in their home country and the strong social networks cultivated across national borders might help quickly propel them and their families into the middle-class in the host society (Portes, 2001).

The theoretical framework of transnationalism and various concepts related to the term, could help to conceptualise and explain the transnational family arrangements, transnational ties and exchanges that *luoshang* families have formed in their mobility. The perspective of transnationalism will also be fundamental in understanding the complex issues of immigrants' sense of home and belonging.

3.1.4 Home and belonging

Home is an important and interesting notion, especially in the case of the migrants who are always in movement, embedded in ever changing social relations stretching across geographical and cultural borders, and identified with multiple places (Leung, 2003). To some, home might simply refer to their hometown; to others, home might be the new places they settle themselves. Home could only represent one place for some, whilst, it also might be identified by others as multiple homes.

Home is a problematic notion with great multiplicity and fluidity. It could be identified in various geographical scales, ranging from household to the world scale. Wherever one feels safe and feels a sense of belonging could be identified as his/her home. Home might be as large as the world, the country, the city, the town, and also could be restricted to the neighbourhood or the house (Leung, 2003). Home might not just be identified as a specific place. It could involve two conceptualisations. One is an "actual space or nodal point of social relations and lived experience" and the other is a "metaphorical or discursive space of belonging and identification" (Brickell, 2011, p.27). The home-making process is dynamic rather than steady and involves "acts of imagining, creating, unmaking, changing, losing and moving 'homes'" (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002, p.6). As Blunt and Dowling (2006) point out,

> *Home does not simply exist, but is made. Home is a process of creating and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging. This process has both material and imaginative elements. Thus people create home through social and emotional relationships. Home is also materially created—new structures formed, objects used and placed.*

These views imply that home might not move simultaneously with places and bodies. Even though a subject lives and resides in a place, they could also belong to anywhere else. Home and place then become ambiguous and shifting notions. Their roots to a single locality are multiplied to a network of localities (Oaks and Schein, 2006). Usher (2002, p.50) describes this experience as "the experience of feeling neither here nor there yet also here and there".

As the ambiguity of home suggests, the relationship between spatial mobility and belonging could be highly controversial, especially under the context of globalisation and transnationalism. Increasing spatial mobility, which greatly facilitates transnational connections and linkages, not only reduces the attachment between places and belonging, but also results in the emergence of multiple and flexible identities which are subject to changes with places (Ma, 2003). This understanding is consistent with the literature on transnationalism. For example, Waldinger (2013) states that the connection to people and home nation after migration has demonstrated that social relations are not inevitably contained within states, and the territory and identity could be separated.

Transmigrants might employ different strategies to keep their social networks and negotiate with different cultures to cope with uncertainties and social alienation (Conradson and Latham, 2005a; Ma, 2003). They might develop multiple senses of belonging which are socially constructed and not fixed. One example is the "flexible citizenship" held by the Chinese Hong Kong migrants, as argued by Aihwa Ong (1999). The idea of "flexible citizenship" raised by Ong (1999, p.6), refers to "the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions". She argues that in the era of globalisation, individuals and governments might develop flexible notions of citizenship and emphasise practices of mobility in order to accumulate capital and maintain social prestige in the global arena.

Individuals might disconnect psycho-social security with a particular geographical locality and develop a sense of "being at home" in the world (Conradson and Latham, 2005a). This sense of belonging could be related to the term "cosmopolitanism" (Cheah, 2006). Cosmopolitanism is a new type of identity closely related to transnationalism on the basis of mass migration and population transfers, due to the rise of global cities and formation of transnational networks. It is suggested in cosmopolitanism that cultural and political solidarity and political agency is no longer restricted in a nation-state container as before due to globalisation. The increasingly intensive and dense transnational connections and networks in various forms, not only give rise to political institutions and non-governmental organisations which have a global reach, but also result in a political consciousness and popular feelings of

belonging to a shared world (Cheah, 2006). Chan (2013, p.33) equals Chinese cosmopolitanism with the emergent Chinese identity of *zhonggen* (multiple rootedness or consciousness) to describe those transient Chinese cosmopolitans who have "thrust into and later chosen provisionality and multiplicity as a mode of existence". To them, home doesn't have to be here or there, but potentially everywhere.

These important concepts and an understandings on home and belonging could help to further explain and analyse whether and how the sense of belongings of the *luoshang* families might change as a result of transnational migration. This is potentially related to the outcomes, results and consequences of the transnational mobility and household arrangements of the *luoshang* families.

3.2 Literature Review

This section will draw on insights from the literature of Chinese transnational migration and the literature of transnational family practices to illustrate how the research of Chinese *luoshang* could help to fill the gaps identified in the literature. The research of Chinese *luoshang*, exemplifying a new variation of Chinese migrants, also fits into the research on the global middle class transmigrants. After a detailed review of Hong Kong "astronauts" family strategy, how Chinese *luoshang* family strategy is differentiated from that of the Hong Kong families' will be illustrated, and the gaps in research on the spatial arrangements of *luoshang* family strategy will be identified.

3.2.1 Chinese transnational migration

Chinese diaspora has long been an important subject in migration studies. There is abundant literature concerning mobility and adaptations of Chinese migrants and migrant families in different destination countries. The earlier model of Chinese emmigration, raised by Wang (1991), suggests that there are four kinds of diasporic migrant relationship: *yeluo guigen* (the falling leaves settling on the roots, or migrants' desire to return to and be buried in China when they die), *luodi shenggen* and *zhancao*

chugen (strike out new roots in the host country, cutting off completely the original roots), *xungen wenzu* (trace origins, or search for one's roots), and *shigen lizu* (uprooted, or losing roots). *Luodi shenggen* and *zhancao chugen*, implying the final result of total elimination of identity and cultural heritage, interpret the adaptation experience of Chinese migrants as a process of assimilation (Wang and Wang, 1998). Following this perspective, many scholars contributed their research on Chinese migrants abroad, focusing on different aspects, for example, assimilation patterns and processes (Glick, 1942), adjustment indicators (Wong, 1986) and the adaptation of Chinese migrant children (Sung, 1987), etc.

Zhou (1997a; 1997b; 2009) generates a segmented assimilation theory to explain especially the divergent incorporation process of children of immigrants into American social structure and their final outcomes. Conceptualizing the American society as shaped by a class and racial stratification system instead of a unified white middle class mainstream that traditional assimilation theory tends to imply, this theory suggests that immigrants assimilate in different segments of society and emphasises the interaction between class and race and between ethnic communities. Zhou identifies the interaction of "context of exit", such as pre-migration resources, former social class status, means of migration, etc. and "context of reception", such as the position, strength and power of the ethnic group in the destination nation, public opinion, labour market conditions, etc. (2009, p. 7), to explain and predict different adaptive strategies and ethnocultural patterns of earlier Chinese immigrants in the United States who were largely from a less privileged social class.

Zhou's segmented assimilation theory, bringing the influence of ethnic and social structures into analysis and explanation of immigrant adaptation processes, is effective in her analysis of adaptation process and outcomes of immigrant children and children of immigrants. In her research on second generation immigrants' adaptation, applying segmented assimilation theory, Zhou (1997b) reveals the uneven possibilities for immigrant children which are provided by American society and problematises their assimilation process and strategy of becoming American. In other research, Zhou and Kim (2006), by comparing the ethnic system of supplementary education developed by Chinese and Korean in the United States, provides another explanation for the educational achievement of children of immigrants— a result of

the interaction of immigration selectivity and ethnic social structures—instead of the traditional explanation attributing their educational achievement to the cultural influence of Confucianism.

This series of research, as illustrated by Wang's (1991) and Zhou's (1997a; 1997b; 2009) research, focuses on the traditional Chinese immigrant family, with an important feature of emphasizing unilocal families, conflating families and households, and implying unidirectional movement. Their research is embedded in a single state and society and thus constrained by the perspective of the nation-state as a container of culture and social norms. Immigrants are viewed as permanently settled in the host society and existence, and the possibilities and effects of transnational linkages and networks are often neglected.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the rise of globalisation has increasingly made us aware that boundaries are transcended and borders are transgressed (Ley and Waters, 2004). The global movement of goods, capital and information, and the global network of communication and interactions have formed the transnational context, increased the possibilities and inspired more transnational practices (Zhou and Tseng, 2001). The traditional conceptualisation of international migration is often from a static manner, emphasizing "simultaneity of economic, social and political connections that bind immigrants to two or more nation-states" (Mitchell, 2004, p.125). It is stressed in transnationalism that the transnational activities by transmigrants are operated in a social field with networks of social relations stretching across borders, instead of a simple movement from the home country to the host country (Mitchell, 1997).

In the context of Chinese migration, due to the trend of globalisation and the changing social environment and policies in both China and foreign countries, *xin yimin* (new migrants) began to dominate the Chinese emigration context. Such new migrants could be divided into two categories: the highly skilled, for example, students-turned migrants and emigrating professionals, and unskilled labourers for the majority of those involved in chain migration (those joining their families and relatives who have already obtained foreign citizenship or permanent residency) and almost all illegal immigrants (Liu, 2005). The former, who grew rapidly after the 1990s, carry more

economic, social and cultural capital and also communication skills, while the latter, with limited access to economic resources, are less privileged and more vulnerable (Liu, 2005). When talking about *xin yimin*, people often refer to the former group. These new migrants, especially the high skilled, become the main actors in transnational communities who maintain frequent cross-border connections in various forms.

Chinese *xin yimin* are increasingly catching scholars' attention, but literature focusing on their transnational practices and border crossing activities is limited. The majority of this literature discusses the transnational migration practices and trajectories with regards to Hong Kong and Taiwan migrants, because these two regions were the main sources of skilled and capital-abundant immigrants arriving in developed countries in the 1980s and the 1990s. It was not until the 2000s that immigrants from China became dominant. Though migrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China all belong to the Chinese diaspora, with different historical, institutional and social contexts under which the migration phenomenon arises, mainland Chinese migrants have their specific characteristics.

In response to the trend of globalisation and transnationalism, some literature on transnational migration of mainland Chinese is policy related. Thunø (2001) explores the change of China's state policy and political discourse after 1978. She argues that in the 1980s, the PRC primarily focuses on the protection of *qiaojuan* (the relatives of migrants living in China) and solicited investment and donations for *qiaoxiang* areas (particular areas with high out-migration). In the 1990s, China's policy focus turns to strategically appealing to the ethnic Chinese around the world via calling upon their cultural and national loyalties to China and constructing the *xin yimin* culture in China. It demonstrates that the PRC has increasingly realised the new potential for investments and resources among the *xin yimin* and their powerful forces. And the PRC aims to reconfigure the Chinese state's relationship to Chinese that are overseas through appealing to its belonging and incorporation with the Chinese who are living beyond the borders. Liu (2005) and Nyíri (2001) attempt to analyse the imagining of the transnational community of *xin yimin*, show how the new migrants, scholars and media construct and reinforce the homogenisation and hegemonisation of the

imaginary of the new migrants, and the tensions between the reviving overseas Chinese nationalism and transnationalism (see also Nyíri, 2005).

Apart from the analysis on implications of the *xin yimin* discourse, some researchers focus on the transnational activities which are channelled by immigrant organisations. For example, Portes and Zhou (2012), in their research on Mexican and Chinese immigrant organisations, including hometown associations and branches of home-country political parties, explain the types and scale of transnational activities initiated by immigrant organisations, comparing the attitude of Chinese and Mexican government agencies towards their nationals abroad, and revealing the relationship between migration and development. They argue that migration could no longer be described as a result of underdevelopment, or be reduced to the role of remittances in the development theory perspective, given the increasing role that transnational organisations and expatriate communities play in their interactions with the governments in the sending countries.

In terms of empirical studies, much attention has been paid to the earlier immigrants originating from the southeast China seaboard region where there is a long spatial mobility history. For example, Pieke et al. (2004) document the migration and settlement process and transnational strategies of the recent flow of international migration from Fujian Province, China. These Fujianese, located in a transnational social space spanning from Fujian to countries and cities in Southeast Asia, North America (New York, Vancouver, etc.) and Europe (London, Prato, etc.), are mainly relatively lower-end labour and asylum-seeking migrants. They migrate to such countries through a diversity of migratory avenues, serve in a Chinese segment of the local economy, which is largely separated from the local non-Chinese economy, and embed themselves into a transnational Chinese labour market. The book depicts how these underprivileged migrants survive despite state control powers by utilising dense ethnic networks and institutions, and how these institutions and networks shape their transnational migration trajectories. Rich case studies illustrate that those who are in relatively privileged positions among these Fujianese migrants are more free to move, easy to exploit the transnational geography and living in a denser transnational social space. Others, though less privileged, also demonstrate physical mobility and transnational linkages and connections to China.

However, as argued by Portes and Zhou (2012), those more established and more financially and legally secure are more inclined to engage in transnational exchanges and transnational activities. Mau and Mewes (2010) confirm that mobility and transnationalism in a European context are more likely to involve the middle class, and thus it is a middle class phenomenon. These transmigrants, located in the middle of the social class, are not the "transnational capitalist class" (Sklair, 2012), nor the "unskilled", but might confront difficult experiences of marginalisation and detachment in their host country which are significantly different from either of the other groups experiences. However, concerning the members of those who are more likely to be "genuine" trans-migrants (Favell, et al., 2006), the literature examining the transnational practices of the relatively high-skilled Chinese migrants is insufficient. This phenomenon corresponds to the call made by Favell et al. (2006) for more research with regards to the middle-class transnational experiences and the middling transnationalism. Based on the European context, Favell (2008) stresses that middle classes in Europe have a very particular kind of opportunity to develop transnational lifestyles (see also Benson and O'Reilly, 2009), because of the legal possibility of freedom of movement.

The transnational experiences of the middle classes from the global south are rarely studied in this group of middling transmigrants. In a Chinese context, some have explored the transnationalism practiced by Chinese international students. For example, Li and Stodolska (2006), taking Chinese international students in American universities as research samples, identify how the transnational status factors affect the leisure of American international graduates and how transnational circumstances influence the emotional well-being of those students. They find that Chinese students were work oriented, maintained transnational networks with their country of origin, suffered from certain degrees of isolation and other emotional problems, and at the same time tried to maximise the outcomes of their study within their temporary stay in the US. Situating the Chinese students under their (families') socio-economic position in China (middle class) and their legal stay status in the United States, they stress that the sojourns of the Chinese students were largely driven by the desire for accumulation of human capital. In addition, related to their transnational status, they also identify the unique characteristics of their leisure behaviour, for instance,

sacrificing their leisure time for study and preferring social activities with students who come from the same ethnic group.

Apart from international students, some scholars are interested in the highly skilled immigrants in terms of their migration motivation and their living and working experience in the host country. For instance, based on the case study of the migration of professional migrants from mainland China to Hong Kong, Wang (2013) highlights the issue of "desire", instead of the traditional economic calculations, to explain the dynamics of the migration motivations and plans of skilled migrants. He argues that skilled migrants, as illustrated by mainland Chinese migrants, are "desiring subjects" whose migration aspirations and decisions are largely affected by their age, class, gender, as well as previous migration experiences. Meanwhile, their "sense of place", which is formed under the broader geo-politics and geo-economics context, also plays an important role in their migration decision-making process. However, he notices that their perceptions of their migration trips tended to be largely romanticised in the beginning and most of them encountered unexpected difficulties of adapting themselves in Hong Kong afterwards. In another paper, Wang (2012) explores the unexpected cultural barriers, social isolation and discrimination that mainland Chinese professionals have experienced when they work and live in Hong Kong. Embedding in the Hong Kong *xin yimin* discourse, he moves away from the traditional assumption that the skilled migrants tend to be painless in mobility and transnationality, and stresses the reinforcement of "border" in the "continuous negotiation of sameness and difference in their everyday encountering localities and making place" (p. 565).

Man (2004) explores the deskilling experience of middle-class Chinese immigrant women from Hong Kong and mainland China in Canada. His research reveals that many of the Chinese immigrant women who were highly educated and skilled professionals in China were unable to find positions that are commensurate with their qualifications in Canada and thus had to accept menial, low-skilled, low-paid and part-time jobs or even became unemployed. They were marginalised in the Canadian employment market as a result of "the contradictory processes of globalisation and economic restructuring and its polarizing effects along axis of gender, race, ethnicity, class and citizenship" (p.146). The gendered and racialized institutional processes

encompass state policies, lack of recognition of their education credentials and working experiences obtained in China and their motherhood and domestic responsibilities.

Through an investigation of the entrepreneurs from the PRC with a middle-class background who emigrated to Australia, Ip (2007) observes the obstacles for them to find employment in Australia and their turning to establishing their own business. Therefore, to them, the business they set up in Australia is more regarded as a means of economic and social survival, rather than the opportunity of expanding their business internationally. He stresses that compared to their Hong Kong and Taiwan counterparts, immigrants from the PRC were "separated from the capital-linked migration" (p.121) and less ready to enter the transnational business enclave and become involved in the global economy. To achieve business success, some mainland Chinese immigrants might utilise their home ties and social networks from ethnic community. However, though some of them have resorted to international and transnational resources to achieve economic, social and cultural capital, he argues that the business orientation of mainland Chinese immigrants still remained largely localised rather than transnationalised.

Focusing more on the establishment of transnational entrepreneurial social networks, Salaff et al. (2007) also identify the aspirations of highly skilled mainland Chinese immigrants to start businesses in Toronto, as they met the dilemmas in the job market. Echoing Ip (2007), they pay special attention to how the Chinese immigrants draw on social networks from the Chinese ethnic community, and transnational connections from the home country, in order to get resources to establish their business in Canada. Facing a new business setting, it is difficult for newcomers to start their business and they have to find a niche in the Canadian market. Salaff et al. finally outline four ways with the support of rich case studies: sole proprietors engaging in marketing and sales ventures affiliated with larger companies, proprietors including property and equipment, entrepreneurship starting from transnational contacts or professional background, and entrepreneurship in the ethnic communities.

Starting from the perspective of business sectors, Zhou and Tseng (2001) try to find the features of the business that Chinese highly skilled immigrants are engaged in. By

examining two business sectors that Chinese immigrants are engaged in in Los Angeles: high-tech firms and accounting firms, they suggest that migrants become active agents to initiate transnational interactions. In contrast to the traditional interpretation of transnationalism as deterritorialised practices, they find that transnational practices in the form of ethnic businesses are largely localised because they are embedded in the territorial division of labour and community networks.

Instead of focusing on the strategies adopted by the mainland Chinese settling in their host society, Ho and Ley (2014) draw their attention to mainland Chinese returnees from Canada, especially those who obtained Canadian citizenship. These Chinese returnees are grouped as middling migrants, and they unexpectedly encountered "class fluidities" (p.5) in which their citizenship vulnerabilities were strengthened. Though they culturally identified themselves as Chinese, they were largely marginalised in Chinese society because of the dissonance between their Chineseness and their new legal status. Meanwhile, these mainland Chinese returnees developed a secondary diaspora belonging to Canada. However, tensions still arose during the interaction between them and other Canadians in China. With the case of the middling experience of the mainland Chinese returnees, Ho and Ley argue that geographical contexts are sticky and the institutional structures of nation-states continuously produce and reproduce power asymmetries which affect migrants' family life and livelihood.

As identified, the group of the middle class migrants has great research potential to generate dynamic research results. However, research concentrating on this group is currently relatively limited. Also, much of the research, although recognising their middle class background, failed to conceptualise them as a part of middling (trans)migrants. And it also demonstrates little endeavour to embed the migration decisions and migration trajectories of such migrants under their specific socioeconomic context—middle class social status. Additionally, research has been carried out on the locality of the highly skilled mainland Chinese, for example, their establishment of business in the host country through utilising the transnational connections and ethnic social networks. However, the moving phenomenon of those who are frequently involved in geographical mobility across borders like *luoshang* has not been fully explored. My research on *luoshang*, who are a type of middling

mainland Chinese migrants, could then help to draw the emphasis of transnationalism research to the more *ordinary* transmigrants and fulfil this identified gap in the literature on transnationalism. As Favell et al. (2006) emphasise, the liberalisation of human mobility is better tested by migration strategies and experiences of international, professional and the highly skilled who face less barriers of exclusion and whose migration decision is more associated with their choice, career and educational opportunities.

3.2.2 Transnational family practices

Migration in essence is a family affair. In other words, family plays a vital role in each stage of migration. Though on a superficial level, it is the migrant who moves, in essence it is the family which articulates and negotiates both with the micro-domestic individuals and with the macro-structural forces, and links the forces of country of origin and receiving country (Chan, 2013). During migration, the established codes and demands of family and the accustomed material and discursive arrangements are challenged by both displacement and physical relocation. As a result, new strategies are emerging to deal with these challenges and disruptions (Landolt and Da, 2005). The literature on transnational family practices of Chinese migrants generally focuses on transnational and mobile livelihood arrangements of immigrant families, and how split-household transnational families negotiate the webs of relations: gender relations and intergenerational relations, and how to maintain intimacies of family members in the context of transnational configuration (Yeoh et al., 2005). Researchers have developed many terms to explain their observations of the transnational families who practice transnational familial strategies, for example "transnational grandparenting" Da (2003), "transnational fathering" (Parreñas, 2008) and "transnational mothering" (Zontini, 2004), etc.

Da (2003) probes into the pattern of child care arrangements in the form of "transnational grandparenting" among a group of PRC emigrants to Australia who are professionals before emigration. She observes the phenomenon that grandmothers would assist with child care in a transnational context and how the role of elders, especially grandmothers, changes in Chinese transnational families, arguing that the phenomenon of transnational grandparenting is a result of "migration status, cultural

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differences, family values and gender role practices brought from the home country, as well as individual circumstances" (p.100). This phenomenon provides evidence that Chinese family patterns and gender role performance might be flexibly and strategically changed based on family needs in a certain time period.

Apart from the phenomenon of "transnational transparenting" that Da (2003) observes, some researchers pay special attention to the spatial ruptured families—the family splitting arrangements resulting from migration. For example, Huang and Yeoh (2005) investigate the strategic transnational relocation of the middle-income Chinese families inspired by the consideration of education. By exploring the case of mainland China "study mothers" who accompany their children to study in Singapore while they leave their husbands at home, they observe how the transnational project of education is a key factor that shapes the transnational family strategies and shapes their identities as "sacrificial mothers", i.e. those who sacrifice their individual interests for the sake of their children's education. Comparing these "study mothers" with Hong Kong "astronaut" families, they argue that their transient status limited their choices and increased their problems and challenges.

The aspiration of searching for Western education not only leads to the emergence of "study mothers", but also links to the phenomenon of "parachute kids". Zhou (2009) explores the separate living arrangements of children and parents among Chinese migrants in the United States, especially the phenomenon of "parachute kids". She examines the adaptation experience of these immigrant children and highlights the risks of this transnational practice. She argues that cultural value is not the only factor affecting educational achievement and children's educational outcomes are closely related to the interaction of three important determinants, namely "individual motivation, involvement in parental social networks, and peer group association" (p. 218).

Rather than focusing on the phenomenon of the on-going family education strategies leading to family ruptures, Tu (2016) explores the transnational parent-child relations of the mainland Chinese only-child transnational families, in the cases where the only child, after receiving western education, permanently settles abroad. She illustrates how the only child developed coping strategies to balance the opportunities in the

West with the filial responsibilities to their aging parents in China. She stresses that though the only child might be able to provide long-distance emotional care to substitute their physical absence, both the child and their parents felt ambivalence towards this transnational family arrangements. She argues that filial piety is not eroded in transnational separation because practices and perceptions of filial piety have changed among these families.

As demonstrated in the literature review on transnational family practices, international migration has brought changes to family lives and challenges to the transnational spousal and intergenerational relationships. Researchers are increasingly realizing the importance of embedding the migrant agency under the specific socio-economic context where the migration takes place. However, the emphasis on the connections between the middle-class status of migrant households and their transnational family lives, their transnational family adaptive strategies, is still not sufficient. Additionally, the research on the spatial arrangement of transnational families peculiarly concentrates on the experience and role of the female, but consciously or unconsciously neglects the role which the male plays in the transnational social space. How transnationalism may affect intergenerational and gender relationships, and how the understanding of presence and absence of family members may transform in dense transnational connections (Landolt and Da, 2005) needs further investigation. Furthermore, rarely does the literature on transnational family practices touch on how such familial arrangements affect the sense of belonging and the sense of home of the family members involved. This also calls for more academic attention. The phenomenon that transnational mobility generates a new dislocation of source of power, source of risk and uncertainty in households needs more elaboration. My research on *luoshang* could help to fulfil these identified gaps in the area of transnational family practices by elucidating how their transnational family arrangements takes shape and is practiced in the transnational social space. My research also shows how transnationalism affects the sense of belonging from the perspective of individuals and how it affects the gender and intergenerational relationships from a familial point of view.

3.2.3 "Astronauts" vs. *luoshang*

In the two sections above, the research gaps in the studies of transnational migration and transnational family practices are identified. The research on *luoshang* could help to supplement and bridge these two areas of study. An important part of the literature that documents and explores transnational trajectories of a particular group— "astronauts"— should be mentioned, as it is related to Chinese transnationalism and family practices of the highly skilled and elites. In this section, literature regarding "astronauts" will be thoroughly reviewed and how the research on *luoshang* is differentiated will be highlighted.

The word "astronaut" in Chinese is "*taikongren*". "*Tai*" literally means "the wife"; "*kong*" literally means "absent"; "*ren*" literally refers to "person". "*Taikong*", as a single term, also means "space" and thus a "spaceman"— "astronaut" explains the nuanced double meaning of the words, word combination, term and metaphor. By recombining these characters, Hong Kong media highlights the feature of this group of people as the man with an absent wife. In this context, the word "*taikongren*" is used not to mean the person who is trained to travel in outer space, but to refer to emigrants who return to their origin country to work alone and not live with their wife and children after emigration.

The emergence of this type of transnational migration is closely associated with the specific historical, structural and political changes in the world in the 1990s. Since the 1980s, with the end of the Cold War, the international situation became more relaxed. Accompanied by international peace and security, the globalisation of the world economy, trade and investment liberalisation have become the new world trend. Apart from liberalisation of capital, there is increasingly free movement of goods, information and people across borders. Hong Kong took this golden chance of development and became one of the "Asian Tigers" due to its rapid development speed and economic prosperity. In the meantime, Canada and many other Western countries loosened their immigration policy to attract human capital and economic capital from the world. In this context, triggered by the handover of Hong Kong sovereignty, some Hong Kong entrepreneurs who have accumulated great wealth practiced an "astronaut" strategy, living and working across borders.

"Flexible citizenship"

During the 1980s and the 1990s, there was an influx of Chinese migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan, bringing huge human and economic capital to the developed countries including the United States and Canada (Skeldon, 1995). Aihwa Ong (1999), from an anthropological perspective, is one of the researchers who pay special attention to this modern Chinese transnationalism, centring on the strategies that individuals developed to accumulate capital and power, as well as the flexible notion of citizenship and sovereignty in the era of globalisation. The idea of "flexible citizenship" raised by Ong (1999), refers to "the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions" (p. 6). In her work, trans-Pacific migration activities are interpreted in terms of agents' pursuit to accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena, with practices strongly emphasizing flexibility and mobility (Ong, 1999).

In the centuries-long migration histories from ancient times, it is not rare to see families of ethnic Chinese, especially in Southeast China, adopt strategies of time and space to organise family members, thus the family members in a family might be distributed over a long distance, across oceans. For instance, *huashang* (Chinese merchants) in the maritime trade era moved seasonally or permanently to Southeast Asia in order to make a living or support their families. Ong (1999) notices flexible strategies of accumulation in both economic and cultural capital of Hong Kong people, as reflected in their dispersal and relocation decisions amongst "astronaut" families. She identifies their dual purposes of escaping political uncertainty and pursuing livelihoods, and analyses their Chinese transnational strategies. Adopting Bourdieu's theory of capital, her work illustrates the effects of cultural accumulation in a cross-cultural and transnational context where different sets of cultural criteria are cherished in the symbolic value system; and suggests structural limits to the accumulation, difficulties in conversion of economic capital to cultural capital due to the mismatch between their symbolic capital and racial identity in transnational movements.

According to Ong (1999), the household strategy that Hong Kong "astronauts" adopted involved their pursuit of three things: 1) encompassing Western education and degrees, 2) property, and 3) obtaining foreign passports. Emigrant families relied on their economic capital to convert to cultural capital and the "strategies of accumulation began with the acquisition of a Western education" (p. 95) to enable their children to acquire cultural competence and skills to manoeuvre in global settings. At the same time, the Hong Kong families who own a great deal of economic capital focused on buying commercial and residential property as a means to diversify their portfolios and investment for the family. Acquiring green cards, and even passports of a western country, was another pursuit which acted as both the insurance for more future choices and convenient traveling tools.

In Ong's (1999) analysis on the flexibility strategy that many elite Hong Kong families were caught in, she raises concerns over limits and costs of choosing "flexible citizenship". While Hong Kong emigration families tried to settle and adapt themselves in the receiving country, despite acquisition of economic capital, there were problems in conversion of economic capital into symbolic capital and reproduction of their power in their destination country. They found themselves in a constant fight with the historically constructed "Asian others" as subordinate subjects and were not quite welcomed by the local upper class. This could be reflected in the complaints about immigrants raising real estate prices, calling into question Asian culture and taste in real estate, and strong class resentment in the changes that immigrants bring to the neighbourhood, which has challenged the existing ethnic configuration of downtown property. Hong Kong migrants were forced to gain a cultural citizenship in Canada. Mitchell (1997) has also discussed this issue, taking the case of real estate in Canada to illustrate how cross-Pacific capital articulation has impacted the meaning of Chineseness and Canadianness by both the state and business leaders. In addition, Ong (1999) mentions the challenges that Hong Kong "astronaut" families met, especially the displacement of family members across the Pacific as the cost of flexibility.

One thing that needs to be noted is that even located abroad, Hong Kong migrants have successfully built concrete forms of ethnic social life, such as the establishment of Asian communities in the former white suburbs and the launching of services in

which Chinese language could be used, for example, news and programmes in Chinese language through electronic media and the connections to Chinese diaspora. For them, their cultural sensitivity was still Chinese, which grew from the communities of migratory Chinese elites instead of the host country's politics and economy (Ong, 1999).

Ong (1999) documents the "astronaut" arrangement in the strategies of utilising flexible citizenship among Hong Kong emigrants. She not only places much emphasis on the functional and flexible nature of the arrangement, but also depicts the conflicts and controversy between the state and migrants. In terms of transnational families, Ong (1999) describes "astronaut families" as those featuring mobilised men and immobile, localised women to manage their new homes and children alone in foreign countries, to adapt to foreign life without the presence of the husband. However, she fails to document how the "astronaut" household arrangement has taken its shape, by interweaving a micro agency level and a macro structural level. In addition, she doesn't utilise rich empirical data to support and elaborate her stands and conceptualisation. Nor does she analyse how the experience of individuals themselves might undermine this flexibility strategy or discuss the issue in detail of the challenges in sustaining their families transnationally by adopting such flexibility strategy. The transnational household arrangement of Hong Kong migrants seems to be strategic and flexible, but also involves difficulties and costs due to family fragmentation. My research will provide some detailed illustrations on how the *luoshang* families form their transnational family strategy and how this strategy is practiced and challenged in the transnational social space.

Other research on "astronauts"

In David Ley's *Millionaire Migrants: Trans-Pacific Life Lines* (2011), with the support of empirical data and from an urban human geography perspective, he explains the motivations of Hong Kong millionaire migrants choosing transnational movement strategies as a calculation of benefits. According to him, the most common responses for emigration motivations were the quality of life, education of children and an insurance against political uncertainties. Return migration among these Hong Kong migrants was planned at the very beginning. The percentage of Hong Kong

migrants adopting transnational family arrangements was relatively large. According to a survey conducted by SUCCESS (United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society) in 1991 in Richmond, Vancouver, 40% of Hong Kong Chinese were living in transnational family arrangements. Ley explains the logics and motivations of emigration in a brief way and conceptualises the mobility of Hong Kong "astronauts" as a rational choice, but overlooks the influence of structural determinants and cultural aspects. In the research of *luoshang*, I argue that their transnational family strategy should be analysed by interweaving their choices and decisions with the structural and socio-economic elements, particularly their imaginaries formed in the Chinese context. There is a need to interpret *luoshang's* transnational migration strategies more critically and in-depth, to see how the experience and imaginaries of individuals which are associated with their middle class or upper middle class status in China, might impact their migration strategies.

In Ley's interpretation, the transnational family arrangements that Hong Kong migrants adopted reflects the "geographical conundrum" (2011, p. 82) that they witnessed, namely the conflicts between economic and social wellbeing, and their solution to the problem which is to "incorporate the capital-generating station of East Asia with the family-nurturing station of Canada into a single life-world" (p. 82). It is also noticed that different from the conventional use of return migration which suggests finality and completion of the migration tale, the return migration of "astronauts" is continuous and not finite (King and Newbold, 2008; Ley and Kobayashi, 2005), involving a life cycle timing strategy closely related to the time for children to move to Western education, the time for their career development and the time of retirement (Ley, 2011).

Ley and Kobayashi's (2005) research on the return migration of Hong Kong migrants from Canada explains the undertaking of this kind of migration strategies, including "astronauts" migration, at different stages of the life cycle in response to family needs. Empirical results demonstrate a conception held by Hong Kong migrants: "Hong Kong for making money, Vancouver for quality of life" (p. 121). They mention that due to the limited job and entrepreneurial opportunities in Canada, return migration to Hong Kong tended to happen in early or middle career when making money is the first priority. In some families, family members moved back together as a whole,

while in many other cases, the husband in the family lived as "astronaut" and "commuted" across the continent. When facing retirement, migrants were more likely to go to Canada for a high quality life and better social welfare. Based on focus groups held in Hong Kong with middle-class returnees from Canada, Ley and Kobayashi (2005) unfold the life stories of Hong Kong return migrants from the perspective of all members of households including the wives and grown-up children. Gender differences are also stressed in prioritizing the economic factor. Ley and Kobayashi's practice of redefining concepts of time in the transnational social field and incorporating time into transnational household strategy also makes sense in analysing *luoshang's* transnational household arrangements. However, apart from time, meaning of place is also undertaking continuous changes in the transnational social field and thus needs to be taken into consideration in the spatial mobility strategy of the *luoshang* families.

Focusing on the rich Hong Kong migrants who migrated to Canada through the business immigration programmes, Ley (2011) explains the view of the common difficulty faced by Hong Kong business emigrants in achieving business success in Canada. Unwelcoming Canadian business culture, which is characterised by high tax and low returns, unfamiliar language and culture, lack of recognition of working experience in Hong Kong, etc., have all become barriers that hinder entrepreneurs from starting their new business in Canada. Therefore, in contrast to the state's wish to attract business elites to open new businesses in Canada and create more jobs for Canadians, the rich Hong Kong immigrants began to view Canada as a place for rest, relaxation and consumption, rather than a place for work. Ley also reveals the conflicts as a result of the double discipline of the market and the state, the strategies of business immigrants to deal with these conflicts, and evaluates the shortcomings and failure of the business investor programmes.

Ley (2011)'s research describes the dilemma that business elites were experiencing in Canada. However, comparing to his research, *luoshang* from mainland China could be a more typical example under the category of "middling transnationalism" (Conradson and Latham, 2005b, p. 229). Deskilling could be considered as a symptom of middling transnationalism. Economic migrants to Canada, as skilled workers, have to fulfil many requirements through a point-based system, including tertiary

qualifications, professional experience and English language proficiency, etc. However, when they arrived in Canada, they might find it quite difficult to find employment that is commensurate with their education and qualifications and work experience since these jobs often required a local degree, local experience and high English language proficiency (Teo, 2007). It is not rare to see a migrant who used to be a boss or manager in China delivering newspapers or working as a waiter (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005). The economic underperformance also led to psychological depression because their social class lowered greatly (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005). In some migrant families, this deskilling experience might directly lead to a coping strategy to fulfil the residential requirements and development in career together (Ho and Ley, 2014). *Luoshang* also share a similar deskilling experience with their Hong Kong brethren to some extent, which directly results in the formation of the splitting household arrangements. However, in the case of *luoshang* who come from mainland China, it remains unresolved to what extent they are prepared to be involved in a transnational business, to what extent they suffer the deskilling experience in Canada and whether the transnational household strategy is a result of the deskilling experience or is a strategy planned ahead, in case such circumstances might take place.

Gender issues in the research on "astronauts"

Apart from the research on Hong Kong "astronauts" in terms of household strategies, a series of literature has turned its focus to the women's experience in "astronaut" households. Waters (2002; 2003), taking a gendered perspective, analyses the daily life of the wife in "astronaut" families. She elaborates the various challenges that they were meeting in their transnational migration trajectories with the support of rich empirical data from "astronaut" wives and children. She finds that in "astronaut" households, children were greatly emphasised and women were the ones who sacrificed and shouldered the parenting responsibilities for the sake of the whole family. And after migration, even though they were career women in Hong Kong before, most of them chose not to work and became financially dependent on their husbands. Due to the absence of the husband, and lack of support from friends and relatives, "astronaut" wives felt they were struggling and suffered from boredom and loneliness. Extra-marital affairs were also noted as an issue in these households, which then negatively impacted on sustaining the transnational family. However, she also

finds that as time goes by, many interviewees successfully established new social networks and child-care responsibilities became a joy. The absence of husbands in households also enabled the wife to become more independent and have more time for leisure activities. It is interesting to note that wives once longed for family reunion but could not adapt when the husband returned as they had grown accustomed to their absence. Waters states that the absence of the husband would influence family relationships, but she also stresses that that negative experiences mainly happened in the first year and "women's sense of oppression was gradually transformed over time" (2002, p. 130).

Challenging Waters' view (2002; 2003), Chiang (2008), by interviewing Taiwan "astronaut" wives in Canada, highlights the strategies that they adopted to cope with their lives, and challenges the traditional view that women often play passive roles in migration. She insists that the "astronaut" strategy did not negatively affect family relations between wife, husband and children. In most cases she found that "absence makes the heart feel fonder" (p. 511), rather than sad stories of betrayal and divorce. She also finds that "astronaut" wives often performed better and adjusted to complex situations in Canada better than their spouses. They were more prepared for the difficulties which they were going to face. It is highlighted that Taiwanese "astronaut" wives, not having to worry about financial problems, were keen on social activities, such as volunteering. In terms of employment, she mentions that many Taiwanese did not look for employment when they first arrived, whilst the mainland Chinese were eager to look for jobs immediately after they arrived.

There are mainly two contrasting ideas on how transnational household strategy would impact the family relationship. The more traditional one is that "transnationalism multiplies the unease of life as an immigrant stranger" (Ley, 2011, p. 198), in which anxieties and depression resulted especially for the female who needs to adapt without the presence of her husband in a foreign country. While some others emphasise that transnationalism provides the opportunity for the female to fully participate in the growth of children and obtain more freedom than in their home country. Ley (2011) mentions both aspects and places emphasis on how time impacts the adjustment of "astronaut" wives. He stresses that after 12-24 months of adjustment, as they acquired more problem-solving skills and established social

networks, they could become more confident and independent, and enjoy their life more in Canada.

For the future of the "astronaut" households, both Ley and Kobayashi (2005) and Yeoh et al. (2002) emphasise the flexibility of the "astronaut" strategy and suggest a tendency of reunion afterwards either in the origin country or in the receiving country. Accepting the hardship, loneliness and pressure generated in transnational migration as the inevitable costs, "astronaut" families were considering new plans usually after the citizenship of the receiving country is obtained (Teo, 2007). Using data of Hong Kong emigrants to New Zealand in a period of 8 years, Yeoh et al. (2002, p.7) summarises four kinds of reconfiguration of "astronaut" families: "reunion of the whole family in New Zealand; reverse relocation of the whole family back to Hong Kong; continuation of the strategy of having members spanning both countries; an extension of their transnational networks beyond the source and destination to include other countries". But unfortunately, because of the highly fluid nature of transnational families, it is not possible to explain the percentage of migrants choosing each option, or the outcome of the chosen "strategy" and the degree of satisfaction with regards to how the problems and dilemmas are settled.

As represented in Waters (2002; 2003), Chiang (2008) and Ley (2011)'s research, much literature on "astronaut" families centres on the experience and the role of the female, but consciously or unconsciously neglects the performance of the male in the transnational social space. In addition, in order to emphasise the adaptation of women in the "astronaut" families in the host country, the wife is often seen as taking the immobile position whilst the husband takes the position of mobility. However, transnational activities of women and their position in cross Pacific transnational networks are rarely emphasised, as if they are fully attached to the alien land and never move, whether it to be the United States or Canada. Their studies fall into the category of gender studies, so women's opinions and experiences are of more concern than men. This could reflect why only the wives were interviewed. As a result, the adaptation of men in the receiving country is not mentioned and fully analysed. My research on *luoshang* could help to fill this gap by involving the transnational activities, networks and linkages of both the husband and the wife in Canada and how transnationalism affects the familial relationships.

In addition, in the literature concerning "astronauts" migration, there are limited discussions on how the transnational mobility influences the sense of home and belonging. The fact that transnational mobility generates a new dislocation of source of power and source of risk and uncertainty in households needs more detailed elaboration. My research of *luoshang* could help to fill these identified gaps by elucidating how their transnational family arrangement strategy is practiced in the transnational social space, and the transnational mobility's influences on the individual's sense of home and belonging.

3.3 Summary

To summarise, in the first half of this chapter, the theoretical framework, concepts and terms that this thesis adopts are presented, including the new economics of labour migration, Bourdieu's forms of capital and transnationalism. The new economics of labour migration stresses viewing household optimisation instead of individuals as the unit of analysis. However, this theoretical framework focuses more on the economic motivated migrants, which might not be applied to the case of *luoshang*'s migration. Therefore, this thesis also adopts Bourdieu's forms of capital as an analytical tool, taking into consideration the existence and the conversion of economic capital, cultural capital and social capital to compensate for the single analysis perspective of the new economics of migration. Transnationalism describes the uprooted cross border mobility features and the transnational ties established by the trans-migrants. This theoretical framework could help to explain the transnational mobility, networks and linkages demonstrated by the *luoshang* families in their transnational household adaptation strategy. The notion of home and belonging could help to reveal the consequences of the *luoshang* families' migration.

In the second section, a critical review of literature helps to locate the research of *luoshang* under a broader literature of Chinese transnational migration and transnational family's practices, and identify a few gaps in the existing research. The research on *luoshang* could bridge the scholarship and enrich the literature of both Chinese transnational migration and transnational family practices. It also draws

attention to the largely neglected "middling transnationalism" phenomenon. *Luoshang's* transnational household strategy and spatial migration practices will be differentiated from the former research concerning "astronauts" from Hong Kong and Taiwan which emerged during the 1980s and the 1990s. In the "astronauts" research literature, there are also research gaps concerning the need to explore the transnational mobility of *luoshang* families under specific socio-economic and institutional contexts of both China and Canada, how their middle class position affects their migration plans and transnational lives, and the consequences of transnationalism from both an individual perspective and a familial relationship perspective.

Chapter 4
Methodology

This chapter aims to introduce the methodology adopted in this research and present the rationale for the choice made. The selection of research methods and approaches is based on the main research aim which is to fully account for the transnational household migration of the Chinese *luoshang* families. To reach this research aim, three research themes are developed to guide the study design: namely factors and considerations contributing to *luoshang*'s transnational migration decision, transnational connections and networks between China and Canada made by the mobility of *luoshang,* and the consequences of transnationalism on their familial relationships. In this chapter, the research design will be depicted in detail, including the rationale for the selection of the qualitative research strategy, the selection of the fieldwork sites, and the selection of research approaches, i.e. interviewing and observations. I then highlight the innovative research methods which allow for the capture of macro and micro dynamics—an actor-oriented perspective combined with a multi-sited networked approach connecting China and Canada. The third section tries to explain the positionality of the researcher, and at the end of the chapter, the procedures of data analysis are briefly presented.

4.1 The Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative approach, attempting to explore the full range of the transnational mobility experiences of the *luoshang* households. In the following sections, I will provide a detailed justification on the qualitative research design, the selection of the fieldwork sites, and the selection of research approaches which include interviews and observations. I will explain in detail the approach of interviews that I adopted in the research, including the recruitment of interviewees, the design of interview questions, and the form of interview data.

4.1.1 Qualitative research design

A range of qualitative research methods are adopted in this study, i.e. extended fieldwork, in-depth interviews and observations. Qualitative research is characterised by the richness and fullness of descriptions and details, providing the opportunity to explore a complex and diverse subject area in the real world in greater depth (Saunders et al., 2009). Exploring the detailed transnational trajectories of *luoshang* requires us to understand the social world from their perspective and interpretation. This corresponds to the main focus of qualitative research, which is to "understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of a group of people" (Kumar, 2014).

Qualitative research has been proved to be quite useful in migration research. Among the literature which is reviewed in the literature review section (section 3.2), the majority adopts a qualitative research methodology. For example, to shed light on the leisure experience of international students from China, Li and Stodolska (2006) adopt a qualitative research design and derive the data from in-depth interviews with 16 international graduates. To investigate the working and living experience of mainland Chinese professionals in Hong Kong, Wang (2012) selects 19 interviewees to conduct in-depth interviews and explore their experience of negotiation of cultural differences, social isolation and discrimination in Hong Kong, instead of using the data from 3,000 questionnaires from a research project originally conducted to study the skilled migrants. In Da's (2003) research on "transnational grandparenting", she identifies her study as a qualitative study of the family practices of recent migrants from mainland China and collects data from the interviews with 21 women and 19 men. To investigate the deskilling experience of Chinese immigrant women in Canada, Man (2004) also qualitatively designs his research and interviews 20 women who have migrated to Canada between 1994 and 1999.

This research on Chinese *luoshang* and their families chooses qualitative methodology due to the research aim, which is to understand the mechanisms leading to transnational household arrangements and the impacts of transnationalism. This aim is to be achieved by collecting and analysing empirical data from the perspectives of *luoshang* and their families with regards to their transnational migration

experiences and trajectories. It focuses on questions of processes, situation and contents, feelings, emotions and experiences of *luoshang* and their families. The qualitative research methods could help to further interrogate and problematize, rather than uncritically accept at the face value the narratives of the *luoshang* interviewees.

Qualitative methodology is quite flexible in gaining access to the field, which means that it could be more easily adapted to unexpected irritations or changes during the research process (Sarantakos, 2005). The researcher remains flexible in a way that best solves the research questions. This advantage of a qualitative research design could enable me to freely modify the research design for the sake of gaining better access to the fieldwork sites. For example, in contrast to quantitative research design where questions are mostly fixed in the form of standardised and structured questionnaires, in my qualitative research design, I was able to change the sequences of questions being asked during interviews, eliminate questions that are not applicable and add new questions to clarify participants' narratives depending on the context.

4.1.2 Selection of the fieldwork sites

This research adopts a binational multi-sited approach. The fieldwork was conducted from April to November, 2015. The destination country of Canada is purposively selected to thoroughly explore the formation and adaptation of the *luoshang* families' transnational household strategy, the gender and generational dynamics, and their transnational experiences and networks on an everyday basis. The sites for the fieldwork in China include Shijiazhuang in Hebei Province and Datong in Shanxi Province, and both are in the northern part of the country. The selection of the two cities was based on practical considerations, as some participants had already been identified through personal networks.

Additionally, Shijiazhuang and Datong are not first-tier cities [7], and both are medium-sized cities in China. Shijiazhuang is the capital city of Hebei Province, with an annual GDP of about 544.06 billion CNY (equivalent to approximately 61.03 billion GBP), covering an area of 15,848 square kilometres and has about 10.66 million inhabitants

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[7] The first-tier cities in China consist of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Tianjin.

as of 2015 (SBS[8], 2016). Datong is the second largest city in Shanxi Province, with an annual GDP of about 105.29 billion CNY (equivalent to approximately 11.80 billion GBP), having about 3.42 million inhabitants in 2015, covering an area of 14,102 square kilometres (DBS[9], 2016). Neither of these two cities are among the most developed cities in China. In the *Annual Report on China's Urban Competitiveness No. 15* (Ni, 2017), which was issued by the National Academy of Economic Strategy and CASS in 2017, Shijiazhuang ranked 46 and Datong ranked 232 in terms of the urban comprehensive competitiveness among the 294 cities under investigation. Therefore, investigating the *luoshang* phenomenon in the context of Shijiazhuang and Datong would be a better fit into the general literature with regards to the "global middles" and the phenomenon of "middling transnationalism".

Many countries have implemented immigration policies to attract capital-abundant immigrants since the 1980s. However, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and the UK are the most popular emigration destinations, especially for Chinese migrants (Wang, et.al, 2015). Only Canada is selected in this study as the fieldwork site at the destination end. This is because firstly, Canada has a popular Immigrant Investor Program, featuring simplicity, low cost and low risk, which has attracted a number of Chinese *luoshang* families to emigrate there (See Chapter 2 for details). Secondly, Canada is a preferred emigration destination of many *luoshang* families because it is a traditional immigration country. Cherishing multiculturalism, it is viewed as more attractive than other developed countries for its relative acceptance and less discrimination towards ethnic minorities. Thirdly, with a long immigration history, Canada has a large and mature Chinese Canadian community. This Chinese community could provide convenience to the everyday lives of Chinese *xin yimin*, i.e. job opportunities, entertainment facilities, media and TV channels and more importantly, the services of Chinese supermarkets, Chinese restaurants, etc. Therefore, even without good English language skills, Chinese people might be able to live a comfortable life there with the support of these conveniences. Last but not least, the researcher had already established some connections with this site through personal networks, which helped establish the initial contacts with *luoshang* families.

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[8] SBS is short for Shijiazhuang Bureau of Statistics.
[9] DBS is short for Datong Bureau of Statistics.

The selected localities for fieldwork in Canada are Vancouver along the Pacific, and Edmonton in the petroleum resource-rich northern part of the country. Vancouver is chosen because it is one of the most popular destination cities for Chinese immigrants in Canada. With a large Chinese Canadian community of over 437,505 people (Statistics Canada, 2011), Vancouver has also accepted an increasing number of mainland Chinese, including *luoshang* families. Many *luoshang* families I traced from China are located here. Edmonton was also visited because, comparing to Vancouver, it is less economically developed and might be a good alternative to explore the "middling transnationalism" phenomenon. Additionally, I have established some personal networks in both cities, which also affects the selection of the locations.

In China, I spent much of the time between May and October, 2015, in Shijiazhuang to conduct interviews or to make connections with potential interviewees. With the preference of face-to-face in-depth interviews, I travelled to the city that the interviewee lived in if the qualified participant was not living in Shijiazhuang. So I also visited Zhengzhou in Henan and Datong in Shanxi to carry out interviews. However, some identified interviewees lived too far away. For example, one interviewee was working in Shenzhen at the time I interviewed him, and in this case, I conducted a telephone interview in order to save costs. Some interviewees preferred to do a telephone/WeChat interview instead of a face-to-face one, because they thought it would be more time-saving, convenient and private. My experience proved that doing telephone/WeChat interviews could be productive, even though conducting interviews through phone calls makes it impossible to observe the interviewee's body language and to see how they physically react to the question. It is a much cheaper and more efficient method especially when the target groups are dispersed (Bryman, 2012). According to Sturges and Hanrahan (2004), telephone and face-to face interviews do not show much difference in the response of interviewees, in terms of quantity, nature and depth (See section 4.1.3 for the criteria and the process of selecting interviewees).

In contrast to my fieldwork in China, subsequent fieldwork in Canada during October to November, 2015, only focused on *luoshang* interviewees in two cities, Edmonton and Vancouver. I initially landed in Edmonton, an oil city, and lived in Mrs. Tian's home. Mrs. Tian was my father's friend and thus kindly offered for me to stay in her

house and to live with her and her family. However, *luoshang* participants were quite hard to identify here, because this city is an inland petroleum industrial city. According to Mrs. Tian, Edmonton might not be a popular destination for *luoshang*, because the weather there is not very attractive. New immigrants target this city due to job opportunities, low living costs and good education resources (the University of Alberta). *Luoshang* might prefer big commercial cities, like Vancouver and Toronto. Other people I met in Edmonton in my fieldwork also suggested to me to go to Vancouver, because large numbers of Chinese new immigrants flow into the city and it has acquired the nickname *danaicun* (fist/big wife village) as a result (see section 4.1.4 for details). What I experienced in Edmonton strengthened my idea of continuing my fieldwork in Vancouver, although I had already planned to do so, as many *luoshang* I interviewed in China were living in Vancouver. I planned to interview their wives. During my visit in Vancouver, I lived in Mr. and Mrs. Cao's house, who kindly agreed to offer accommodation due to the rapport we established when I was in China. Mr. Cao's wife is the member of a hometown association in Vancouver. Through Mr. and Mrs. Cao, I was able to identify more participants. Mrs. Cao acted as an informant and broker, introducing some of her friends in Vancouver as my interviewees.
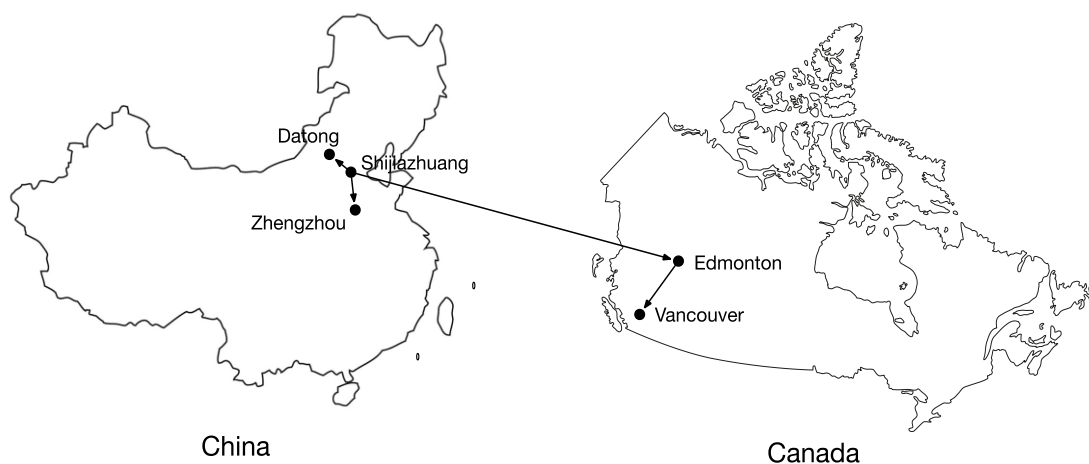
Figure 4.1 Countries and Sites of the Fieldwork

Source: Author

4.1.3 Selection and conduct of interviews

Since the investigation on the transnational migration experiences of *luoshang* is greatly based on the migrants' individual stories of life and interactions, this study uses in-depth interviewing as the main research method to collect data. In order to help the communication flow smoothly, the interviews conducted for this research were semi-structured. The research objectives are to understand the decision-making process of *luoshang* families' transnational migration strategy, their transnational migration experiences on an everyday basis, and the maintenance of *luoshang*'s transnational family ties. According to Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 465), interviewing is "the most widely employed method in qualitative research". In interviews, interviewees can freely express their own opinions on the issue, rather than be constrained by certain answers. So by taking this approach, I hoped to get more new ideas and details on the lives of *luoshang* families.

Recruitment of Interviewees

The recruitment of interviewees was not based on the criteria of whether the interviewees themselves identify themselves as *luoshang*. Firstly, this is due to the fact that the term *luoshang* has not gained any official recognition in official documents, thus could only be viewed as a popular word used in social media. As a result of this, many people didn't know this word before they were involved in this research. Secondly, as it is not an officially recognised term, there is widespread confusion over its definition. From the Internet, people could easily find several definitions stressing different aspects and features of the group. Without a unified definition, it is not realistic to set it as a selection criteria. Thirdly, the public media tends to stigmatise the group of *luoshang* as people who are not patriotic, or people who are preparing to escape from the law in China. The *luoshang* group thus would not like to define themselves as *luoshang*.

Facing this dilemma, I used four criteria to select eligible participants. The criteria are as follows:

1) If his/her family has immigrated to Canada and obtained permanent residency status or citizenship;

2) If his/her family is adopting or has the experience of adopting a family splitting arrangement (one of the couple is living in China and one is living in Canada);

3) If his/her spouse mainly works as business people or senior managers or senior directors in China;

4) If his/her family has a relatively high family income and belonged to the middle class before emigration.

The first criterion is that participants are Chinese emigrants to Canada, because *luoshang* in Canada is the targeted group for the research. However, which immigration application route they took was not considered in the stage of participant selection, because I believe it is their family income and their lifestyle that determines whether they belong to the group, rather than whether they arrived in Canada as skilled immigrants or investor immigrants. Emigrants might have many practical considerations with regards to the category under which to make an emigration application, i.e. low risk, low cost, low capital investment, etc.

The second criterion stresses that the eligible participants should have the experience of family splitting in the two countries. This is the main feature of *luoshang's* lifestyle. Therefore, I selected families who either were taking this family splitting arrangement, or had such experience before. Though families that are planning a family splitting arrangements were not preferred, they might be included and only their migration decision-making process would be considered. The third and fourth criteria emphasise the economic background of the family. Only those relatively rich and the middle class families would be considered.

In order to gain access to the potential participants from the *luoshang* group, I tried to use a combination of snowball sampling and opportunistic sampling techniques. According to Kumar (2014), snowball sampling is a technique to recruit study subjects

from the acquaintances of the existing study subjects. It could be very useful when the researcher knows little about the group he/she wants to research, and it is also suitable for studying decision-making processes within a group (Kumar, 2014). *Luoshang* are quite hard to identify and access amongst Canadian immigrants, because they are less organised in Canada. It is almost impossible to get access to them through a specific organisation or community. Fortunately, I developed some useful contacts during my fieldwork in China before coming to Canada, including, for example, a *luoshang* who headed up a pharmaceutical company and the manager in a trading corporation. They both had some connections to *luoshang*. Therefore, it became possible and easier to initially investigate a small group of *luoshang* and then get in touch with other *luoshang* they proposed in a snowballing manner. However, I found that this technique sometimes did not work very well in practice, whilst participants agreed to introduce to me their *luoshang* friends during interviews, they failed to fulfil their promises afterwards.

Therefore, I also adopted another technique to supplement this method—opportunistic sampling—in an attempt to identify more *luoshang* through different sources in both China and Canada. For example, I took advantage of all the networking and social contacts that my family and I have. In fact, I spent a great amount of time on making connections with potential participants via various means, most of which relied heavily on personal and social resources (*guanxi*). In Canada, I not only focused on the family members of the identified *luoshang* in China, and tried to meet others in his/her social circles in order to identify potential participants, but also visited local cultural associations and institutions, e.g. churches and events, such as reading party etc. to seek eligible interviewees. For example, in Edmonton, I tried to find interviewees by visiting the church and taking part in church activities which many new Chinese immigrant families were involved in. After getting familiar with people in the church, I asked them whether they knew people living such a transnational life. In this way, some participants were successfully recruited and interviewed.

A total of 25 people who were identified by my criteria as *luoshang* or their wives were interviewed, among which 13 were in China and 12 were in Canada; 13 *luoshang* wives, 9 husbands and 3 couples. Couples were interviewed together, not individually, thus, were counted as one group. Each interview lasted for one to two hours. As

demonstrated in Table 4.1, 15 of the interviewees belonged to the investment immigrant group and the rest to the skilled migrant group. However, the 10 skilled migrants could also be defined as *luoshang*, because in their family, the husband is running their own business in China, even though the family as a whole originally took the skilled migration route to emigrate to Canada. All these families had a relatively good economic status before their emigration, with the husband being a businessman, senior manager or senior director.

Table 4.1 An Alphabetical List of the Interviewees Recruited

No.	Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Age (at the time of interview)	Place of Interview	Year of Landing	Immigration Route
1	Mrs. An	Female	45	Vancouver	2007	Skilled Immigration
2	Mrs. Ba	Female	48	Edmonton	2001	Skilled Immigration
3	Mr. Bin	Male	50	Shijiazhuang	1999	Skilled Immigration
4	Mr. & Mrs. Cao	Couple	51	Shijiazhuang	2005	Investment Immigration
5	Mrs. Fan	Female	52	Vancouver	2000	Investment Immigration
6	Mr. Fu	Male	52	Zhengzhou	2008	Investment Immigration
7	Mr. Guo	Male	40	Datong	2016	Investment Immigration
8	Mrs. Hong	Female	47	Edmonton	2009	Investment Immigration
9	Mrs. Hou	Female	38	Edmonton	2009	Skilled Immigration
10	Mrs. Hua	Female	53	Vancouver	1999	Skilled Immigration
11	Mrs. Li	Female	38	Vancouver	2008	Investment Immigration
12	Mr. Liu	Male	41	Shijiazhuang	2010	Investment Immigration
13	Mrs. Lu	Female	46	Vancouver	2000	Skilled Immigration

14	Mr. Ma	Male	46	Shijiazhuang	1998	Investment Immigration
15	Mr. & Mrs. Miao	Couple	40	Shijiazhuang	2002	Skilled Immigration
16	Mr. Qian	Male	50	Datong	2012	Investment Immigration
17	Mr. Qiao	Male	52	Edmonton	2007	Skilled Immigration
18	Mrs. Sai	Female	46	Vancouver	2006	Investment Immigration
19	Mrs. Shen	Female	45	Vancouver	2005	Investment Immigration
20	Mr. & Mrs. Wan	Couple	60	Shijiazhuang	2002	Skilled Immigration
21	Mrs. Wen	Female	38	Shijiazhuang	N/A	Investment Immigration
22	Mr. Xie	Male	50	Shijiazhuang	2012	Investment Immigration
23	Mr. Zhang	Male	46	Datong	2009	Skilled Immigration
24	Mrs. Zhao	Female	43	Shijiazhuang	2013	Investment Immigration
25	Mrs. Zhou	Female	52	Vancouver	2011	Investment Immigration

Source: Author

Design of Interview Questions

Open questions (which are structured beforehand) were adopted in the interviews to encourage meaningful responses (Patton, 1990). The questions to *luoshang* included, but were not limited to: What were their motivations when they decided to emigrate to Canada? Where did the idea of emigration come from? Why did they choose Canada? How did they evaluate their immigration life in Canada upon arrival? What were the considerations when they decided to return? How did the family decide who should return? How did they negotiate identity and belongings in their transnational migration experiences? How did they feel and evaluate their transnational lifestyle? And what were their family plans for the future? I explored the daily life and experiences in Canada of the family members of *luoshang*, and the meanings of such experiences. Based on the previously mentioned list of questions, some sufficiently

open questions were asked so as to allow for alternative avenues of enquiry which arose during the interviews. I was also prepared to change the order of questions and to re-organise them during the interviews in accordance with the received answers.

Biggam (2011) suggests that in practice, a quick answer from respondents might be inadequate and even not reflect what they want to convey. This problem could be improved by sending questions to participants before interviews, because it could provide an opportunity for them to acknowledge my research purpose and think about the issue of transnational migration. Then, in the interviews later carried out, it would be more likely to get some comprehensive answers. In practice, only a few participants were interested in knowing the interview questions in advance, but I gave them the information sheet and the question list even though they didn't ask for them. They felt relieved when they found out that there were not private and personal questions, but I doubted whether all the participants took a careful look at them, whether they prepared their answers carefully and thought about them thoroughly before interviews.

The Form of Interviewing Data

I audio-recorded the interviews conducted in the fieldwork with the permission of participants, and as all the interviews were conducted in mandarin Chinese, the interview material was then transcribed in Chinese. When I decided to cite a piece of quotation, I would translate it into English. According to Heritage (1991), recording and transcribing interviews have many advantages. It allows repeated examinations and thus more thorough enquiry of the material. It helps to counter accusations that the research is influenced by biases, and permits the data to be used by other researchers in the same field or in other ways by the original researcher. In practice, audio-recording the interviews with the participants' consent allowed me to concentrate on the interviewees' answers, better understand the meanings of their narratives, develop further our communication and even observe their expressions and body language. Additionally, this allowed the interviews to be conducted more efficiently because ambiguities would be clarified; inconsistencies in the answer would be identified promptly and then clarified by follow-up questions.

Therefore, before doing interviews, I sought the oral consent from participants as to whether I could record the interview or not. Most of the participants understood the

necessity to record the interviews for further data analysis. However, some participants refused to allow their answers to be recorded, as they were uncomfortable with the prospect of their words being kept. Blommaert and Dong (2010) refer to the problem that recordings are often viewed as sensitive material that people might regard as a threat. In these cases, I explained why I needed to record the conversations and I promised I would assure the confidentiality of the recorded materials. One interviewee insisted not to be recorded, even though I explained the research ethics to him. Instead of recording the interview, I then took notes after obtaining consent from the interviewee and I wrote an interview report soon afterwards so that I could catch all the detailed data.

Sometimes recording was not practical in the field. For example, some interesting conversations took place during meals. It is very common for Chinese to share their experiences when having meals together. When recording was not suitable, I took notes and also kept the information in mind as much as I could. If taking notes was not applicable, I typed some keywords in my mobile to remind myself. Then I wrote a report recalling as much as I could immediately after the "meal interview" as my memory was still fresh.

4.1.4 Observations

Observation, with its roots in social anthropology, mainly concerns the attempts to take part in the daily life and activities of participants as a member of their group, observe and feel what's happening (Grill and Johnson, 2002). According to Delbridge and Kirkpatrick (1994, p. 37), participant observation implies "immersion in the research setting, with the objective of sharing in people's lives while attempting to learn their symbolic world". In this research, observation is used as a supplement to interviewing, because *luoshang* are geographically dispersed and mobile, and the chance to be involved in their every-day life is limited.

Luoshang are a kind of transnational migrant that have some shared special characteristics, but they are hardly a concentrated community in China. In other words, they are dispersed in every corner of society and almost invisible to outsiders. It is almost impossible to find them in a particular location or activity. Therefore, in

China, getting access to this group mainly relies on personal social networks (*guanxi).* However, in Canada, the context changes, as I might be able to identify the group more easily in Chinese community and organisations. Furthermore, I lived in the home of transnational families when I was in Canada, which means that I could touch and feel the daily life of transnational migrants. These experiences enriched my research data in many ways.

I observed how *luoshang* and their families were perceived by other Chinese migrants in Canada when I was taking part in activities held by churches in Edmonton. I found that almost every time I mentioned the kind of migrants I would like to talk with, they suggested to me to go to Vancouver. "*You should go to Vancouver. There will be many Chinese migrants, especially in Richmond. Probably, if you pick up one Chinese on the street, she is the kind of migrant you are looking for.*" These depictions might be exaggerated. However, it implies the popularity of the *luoshang* phenomenon. They mentioned that there is a nickname for Vancouver and Toronto, which is *danaicun* (first/big wife village/大奶村). *Danai* (the first wife) means the official wife in a family. In Chinese, this word implies the existence of *ernai* (the second wife), or lover. The reason why *cun* (village) is used is that there are many low-rise houses in western cities, which look like villages in China that have witnessed drastic urbanisation, urban regeneration and gentrification with high-rise buildings and featuring metropolitans more prominently. This word not only suggests the large numbers of Chinese transnational families, especially women in Vancouver, but also vividly depicts their living conditions and emotional life. Additionally, it is widely understood that the husband in China might have lovers.

There is a great contrast between how *luoshang* families think about themselves and how other Chinese migrant families perceive *luoshang* families. People in the church could tell hundreds of sad stories of these *luoshang* families. The most frequently mentioned problem was the marriage problem. They considered *luoshang*'s marriage unhappy and existing in name only, even though some of the non-*luoshang* families were also split apart in different cities in Canada. In some of the non-*luoshang* families, the husband was working in another city and could only reunite with the wife and children once a month. Even though these families shared some similar features and familial arrangements with *luoshang* families, their members did not consider

their domestic translocal livelihoods as a threat to their marital relationships. However, they stressed *luoshang* families were problematic, probably due to the much longer distance, time lag and the transnational lifestyle that splits up *luoshang* families. Interestingly, interviews with *luoshang* families showed that the perceptions of those outsiders towards the transnational household of *luoshang* families might be overly simplified. They did have a period of hard time in managing the transnational lifestyle, and some even gave up their immigration journey because of this. Some of those who have persisted seemed to develop new relationship models in the process of constant negotiations of their relationships (see Chapter 7 for detailed findings and analysis).

4.2 Actor-oriented Perspective & the Multi-sited Networking Approach

This methodology is designed for the purpose of capturing the complexity and dynamics of transnational migration trajectories of *luoshang* and their families. This requires an understanding of the institutional and socio-cultural context where the phenomenon of *luoshang* appears and an exploration of the local and transnational social networks which constituted their mobilised livelihood based on their everyday life. However, it should also be noticed that migrants are humans with agency who make choices and decisions under the opportunities and constraints of institutional contexts. This section highlights the innovative methodology that this study adopted—combining the actor-oriented perspective with the multi-sited approaches by tracing the social networks of *luoshang* and their families, visiting multiple geographical localities in two countries, China and Canada, where *luoshang* and their families resided, and collecting their life experiences through in-depth interviews. Corresponding to the spatially dispersed and constantly changing nature of the transnational migration phenomenon, my work contributes to examining the full range of *luoshang*'s transnational experiences, networks and linkages. The methodology combining actor-oriented perspective with multi-sited approach is innovative in that it demonstrates a simultaneous combination of the dimension of micro individual agents and the dimension of macro socio-economic context in the study to investigate and unravel the full range of *luoshang*'s transnational processes and experiences.

4.2.1 Actor-oriented perspective

Though we recognise the *luoshang* phenomenon is affected by the broader context of institutional and societal change, it is theoretically unsatisfactory to solely attribute their choice to the determination force and impact from external fields (i.e. state or international bodies). This is because *luoshang* and their families, as social actors, are "not disembodied social categories or passive recipients of intervention, but active participants who process information and strategies in their dealings with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel" (Long, 2001, p. 13). I have thus applied a theoretical and methodological framework of "actor-oriented perspective" developed by Long (2001) to guide my understanding towards the life world of migration of *luoshang* and their families.

This perspective attaches great importance to the central role played by social actors involved in social situations that not only experience, but also transform the details of social landscape. Various forms of external intervention, for example state institutions, markets and technology, necessarily enter the lifeworld of the individuals, but at the same time, the social world is also mediated and transformed by these same actors in their battles over and negotiation of resources and meanings (Long, 2001). In other words, the structural forces are not only constraints and contexts, but also constantly reshaped by social actors who act in accordance with their own knowledge and understanding of the situation, their reflection and perspectives of the change, and their strategies developed to deal with these challenges (Long, 2001; Tamagno, 2002; Zhang, 2013).

According to Long (2001), the principle of this approach is "to stress the interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships and recognise the central role played by human action and consciousness" (p.13). In this way, the complexity and dynamism of social action arises. Even though it is bound by certain social conventions, values and similar structural circumstances, the responses and strategies adopted by social actors could be diverse (Ye, Wang and Long, 2009). It would be useful in analysing collective social action, since heterogeneity of practices is emphasised with dynamic coping strategies selected through negotiation with social networks and resources and at the same time,

individualistic interpretations are avoided due to the awareness of the influence and interaction of various human and non-human components (Long, 2001).

The actor-oriented approach thus allows the exploration of livelihoods of *luoshang* migrants, including how their lifestyle is shaped by institutional and social factors, how to interpret the strategies they adopt to deal with the challenges that they met in the migration process, and how their transnational social relations and networks are established, and how these affect their migration experiences and familial relationships. The flow of people, money, goods, information and imagination carry specific meanings and values, by which transnational social spaces are formed. It highlights the heterogeneous social and discursive practices enacted by *luoshang* and their families, and the process by which the arrangements are consolidated and reinvented in their everyday lives. In this way, the micro-level social relationships and interactions are interlocked with macro-level frameworks of historical and institutional dynamics.

Tamagno (2002) has adopted this actor-oriented approach in her research on transnational social networks of family members spanning Huancayo, Peru, and Italy. She carefully depicted the networks that are developed and sustained at both ends of the origin and destination by exploring the livelihoods of Camila's family. In this research, the strategic cultural practice employed by Camila and her daughters, "winning somebody's affection", is highlighted to establish and maintain social relations and networks in the contexts of mobility, poverty and violence. She delineated various forms of connectivity, including the flow of goods and letters, which are established to strengthen the kinship relationships in transnational cultural spaces. In this way, though the daughters are not living with the family physically, they continue to be present in the life and livelihood of the family.

Tamagno's (2002) research illustrates that this actor-oriented perspective could be a powerful tool in understanding and analysing social networks, relationships and social strategies adopted by social actors. Networks become key elements in migration trajectories for "gathering information, forming opinions, legitimizing one's standpoint, mobilizing resources and for bridging, defending or creating social and political space within or transcending specific institutional domains" (Long, 2001,

p.89). Networks, whether pre-selected by family and community background or developed from friendships or workplace, are significant in influencing migration decisions of social actors, because they may enable access to various forms of capital, information and support. However, they might become constraints to the mobility of individuals if they depend too much on specific relationships and networks (Long, 2001).

Social networks play an important role in both the migration decision-making process of *luoshang* families and their transnational life after emigration. Their friends who have emigrated before them become the main source of information on the prospects of transnational life. And after emigration, their wife and children in Canada become crucial nodes in social networks spanning China and Canada. In order to take into account the livelihood of social actors involved in both ends of the transnational migration continuum, I find it necessary to trace the social networks of *luoshang* from China to Canada and explore the social worlds of *luoshang* families.

4.2.2 A multi-sited approach combined with the actor-oriented perspective

The previous section has delineated that an actor-oriented perspective could add a micro-agency dimension by stressing an interweaving between individual agents and socio-economic context. My special interest in *luoshang's* transnational migration emphasises simultaneous situations within two nation state frames, China and Canada, and the social networks spanning the two countries. Therefore, it would be better if I adopted methodological techniques which "consider the complex quality of the socio-spatial dimension" (Amelina, 2010, p.2). So I chose to conduct fieldwork in both China and Canada and visited many localities in both countries by tracing the social networks of *luoshang* and their families to enhance the understanding of the migrants' transnational experiences and their interaction with two or more localities. In this process, I linked the macro socio-spatial dimension to the micro agency dimension in researching *luoshang's* transnational trajectories with a multi-sited approach. The combination of these methodological approaches is a novel contribution of my transnational research to the existing body of literature on transnational migration, especially to research methodology in migration studies.

Previous studies of migration tend to pay much attention to stability, and mobility is often considered as an interrupting period that contradicts individuals' settlement in physically bounded residence. This is reflected in the literature that migrants are expected to permanently resettle in their new home by "assimilating" and "adapting" to the host society, and mobility is often seen as an irreversible change of settlement (Römhild, 2002). This view of mobility as a disturbance and irritation to cultural identities implies the perception of the nation state as being a "container" of culture, and there is a group of people representing it with spatial limits (Römhild, 2002). Under this theoretical stance, traditional fieldwork practice tends to focus on a certain community in one field, either in the home country or in the host country in accordance with different research themes (Dietz, 2011). However, this view is no longer satisfactory in understanding the social life of international migrants because in their process of mediating between spaces, their networks have already extended the physical places to wider transnational spaces, linking their places of origin to other localities in the world (Long, 2001; Wulff, 2002). In order to grasp the theoretical essence of a more mobile world under transnationalism with translocal connections, the moves of the transnational migrants of *luoshang*, should be followed.

My research on *luoshang*'s transnational migration not only emphasises the mobility of migrants across borders, but also stresses their continuous involvement in cross-border networks with a transnational social field created and spanning between the sending and receiving country. A single-sited approach would not be enough to locate this phenomenon in a world system, because its limitation under the frame of nation-state is apparent, being fragmented and "local" at its very core (Marcus, 1995). By contrast, with the movement of people, goods, ideas, and shifting meanings of places being considered, adopting a multi-sited approach to inquire into the transnational experience of *luoshang* is more suitable (Mand, 2012).

Roger Rouse (1991) could be considered a pioneer adopting this multi-sited approach to research Mexican migrants in the US, but he failed to conceptualise the approach he used. The seminal texts on multi-sited approach were produced by George Marcus (1995), in which he proposed seven modes of construction on the basis of different objects to follow. In my research, the multi-sited approach I adopted features the mode of "follow the people" (Marcus, 1995, p. 105), as I followed the cross-border mobility

and movements of *luoshang* and stayed with them in various localities in both China and Canada (See Figure 4.1). In this way, the movement that constitutes their migratory process is traced and observed first-hand. According to Fitzgerald (2006), it is productive in understanding migrant's experiences. In my research, in order to understand the transnational trajectories of *luoshang*, I traced national and global connections that *luoshang* made with their geographical mobility and it became one of my strategies to interpret their transnational interaction, networks and linkages.

Moving from one geographical location to another following the flow of people, goods, information and capital, means multi-sited research is demanding not only to the researcher's health (Hage, 2005), but also at great cost of money and time (Kurotani, 2004). But its advantages are apparent. Marcus (1995) has noticed the necessity to move from conventional single-sited ethnography to multiple sites of observation and participation, as merely contextualizing macro social order is far from satisfactory to the research needs of examining the "circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space" (p. 96). It not only helps to construct the lifeworld of various situated subjects, but also builds up the system by introducing the associations and connections among sites. Wulff (2002) adopts this multi-local and mobile fieldwork approach in her research on Irish dancing as a new theoretical practice following the mobility of modern social life. She constantly visited different localities around Ireland from Sweden for a week every other month in order to follow the footsteps of Irish dance people who move around the island to participate in different dance events. She called this multi-local and mobile fieldwork practice yo-yo fieldwork, in which different localities are related to form one field.

A multi-sited approach enables access to multi-perspective constructed societal realities by focusing on actors adopting multiple locality strategies and by referring to multiple ways of observation (Amelina, 2010). Adopting a multi-sited approach implies that data is collected simultaneously in different geographic locations across different countries. Therefore, it not only offers the opportunity to gain access to members of multi-sited networks (Fitzgerald, 2006), but also introduces an examination of the phenomenon from different analytical angles (Amelina, 2010). What is stressed by a multi-sited approach in the binational dimension, is the concept of relations, linkages and networks. In other words, the localities that transnational

migrants are located in, though geographically dispersed in different countries and seemingly non-contiguous, are socially connected and coherent with the construction of social field. The mobility of *luoshang* exemplifies the complex transnational ties that they maintain simultaneously with China and Canada, not only in the sphere of family, but also in the sphere of business. Not limited in the actual travel between places, the fluidity between here and there takes many shapes, such as the mobility of goods, capital and even in the realm of the imagination (Mand, 2012).

Binational multi-sited fieldwork also helps to remove the nation-state blinder, because under the transnational orientation, geographic and virtual mobility can be viewed as an empirical field (Amelina and Faist, 2012). It allows consideration of multiple places at various spatial levels, local, regional and global by involving transnational networks, relationships and links. This translocal methodology solves the dilemma of methodological approaches remaining bound to the national perspective (Dietz, 2011). This de-nationalised empirical field could provide insights into the complexity of transnational phenomena. However, despite its stress on transnationalism, this approach does not assume that the nation-state is unimportant in imagination of space or in the situated practices of migrants, returnees and villages (Long, 2001). On the contrary, nation states are active actors in both transnationalism from below or from above. What is highlighted in this approach is the availability of multi-level analysis on transnational migration process.

The multi-sited methodology enables me to take mobility into consideration, whilst not neglecting the stability or settledness in transnational migration. Even though *luoshang* constantly travel between China and Canada, they are not entirely mobile and their stability in the transnational space should not be overlooked. Using this methodological approach, by investigating the social networks and relations maintained across two countries, or two localities, we could explain the meanings attached to mobility and stability under one analytical framework. What's more, it also "acknowledges a dialectical relationship between mobility and immobility, offering a chance to analyse even practices of immobility from a transnational perspective" (Amelina and Faist, 2012, p. 1716). For example, I have met wives of *luoshang* and migrants who are relatively more settled in the new host country, and they are all taken into consideration in the building of transnational social space.

Multi-sited methodological approaches allow a multi-level analysis of transnational trajectories of Chinese *luoshang* and their families, focusing on the continuum of stability and mobility. However, this needs to be achieved and understood from the perspective of agency in a structural context. The methodology combining an actor-oriented perspective with a multi-sited approach is innovative in that it demonstrates a simultaneous combination of the micro dimension of individuals and the macro dimension of space in the study to examine the full range of *luoshang's* transnational processes and experiences, and reveal the meanings as understood by the social actors involved. The approach is distinct and also a new contribution of this research to the current methodology literature on transnational migration.

4.3 Situating the Researcher

Playing an intimate role in both the data collection and analysis, a qualitative researcher should be aware that the research is never completely objective and neutral. In many ways, the researcher and participants' identity and preconceptions, namely how the researcher represents himself/herself, and how the participants perceive the researcher, are influencing the research process and product (Arendell, 1997; Bott, 2010; Cui, 2015; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Mullings, 1999; Rose, 1997). In my research on *luoshang*'s transnational migration, the possibility to gain access to *luoshang* families, what *luoshang* themselves and their families chose to share with me, and how they presented their migration experience, were unavoidably associated with my personal social attributes and their identities alike. Self-reflexivity becomes a useful approach to reflect upon how I experience the field, more specifically, how I describe the challenges encountered in the field and explain the tactics used in the process of research.

The researcher's position is often divided into insider or outsider. As such, it seemingly assumes that there is a simple and clearly discernible dichotomy on the positionality of a researcher, which is restrictive and locks the researcher into being either an insider or an outsider. Based on my experience of interviewing *luoshang* and their families, I find that the issue of positionality is much more complex than this

dualistic manner suggests. In my research, I was neither a complete insider, nor a pure outsider, but located in the space between. This positional space was constantly negotiated in the interview process and subject to change depending on which social attributes were stressed (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Herod, 1999; Mullings, 1999; Rose, 1997).

My insider identity was obvious when I was recruiting participants through my father's networking in China. During the initial stage, he contacted his *luoshang* friends and expressed my intention to learn their migration experience for doctoral research. They all accepted my father's invitation without any hesitation and promised to help with my research, by saying words like "*No problem. I will do my best to help with our daughter's study.*" The words they used, such as *"our daughter",* implied that I was regarded as an insider and the easy access to them should be attributed to this insider position I naturally gained as the daughter of my father. Cui (2015) also had the same experience with me in her research on the influence of parental educational expectations on children's social mobility, where she recruited participants through her own personal and her mother's networks. Being perceived as an insider, she easily gained the trust and consent, because in the relationship-oriented Chinese culture, offering help to an insider is an unalterable obligation (Chen, 1997).

There was another group of informants recruited under the help of my father's friends who are not *luoshang* themselves, but know some. So they played the role of gatekeepers. I found that being able to use their names and their introduction were highly effective and efficient to get access to *luoshang* families, who otherwise might ignore my requests of interview. This experience has reinforced the opinion of Herod (1999) that access would be eased through networking, as a degree of credibility is established. By pulling us into their direct relationships, my position has been changed from outsider to insider. For example, an interviewee told me he accepted my requests for an interview because he gave the *mianzi* (face) to his friend who referred me. "Face value" is important in Chinese social interactions, because it involves exchanges of resources. It requires them to honour the social debts when reciprocity (*bao)* is needed (Cui, 2015).

Using networks to recruit participants is also the inner logic of snowballing techniques, in which rapport has been initially established. However, from my experience, this technique did not always generate satisfying results. I asked each of my interviewees if they could introduce their *luoshang* friends to me to take part in my research. Even though they said they would help me to make contact, most of them would not give any further reply. This might be because they thought it not worth it if they had to use their own *mianzi* to ask their friends to participate in my research. In this sense, though I became an insider through contacts, this insider position was partial and not stable.

In China I relied more on *guanxi* to discover potential participants. Located in the same *guanxi* network, I was naturally viewed as an insider, and thus given the opportunity of an interview. However, when I was in Canada trying to find potential participants by attending activities held by churches, I lost such insiderness and encountered many rejections, even though I had provided a lot of details of my research; for instance, what my research is about, what questions I would ask, etc. I found that the potential participants often became nervous and sensitive when I used the word *caifang* (interviewing) when contacting them, because this term in Chinese is closely related to the media, and they were afraid that what they said would be published in newspapers, websites or in a public space, and his/her personal life would be exposed to everyone via the Internet. So I used the word *liao* (to chat) and *liaojie* (to understand) instead. I stressed that my intention was to talk with and to learn from them. I also informed them the information of the research before interviewing, e.g. the research topic, aims and objectives, processes, and the rights of the participants, and stressed that I would use aliases rather than real names in my thesis writing. This approach sometimes helped remove the doubt and hesitancy of the potential participants and resulted in better cooperation.

The differences between the participants and I, which are related to class, age, gender, as well as living experience, coupled with my academic researcher's status, decided how my research identity was perceived during interviews. I was aware that my perceived position would often be as an outsider during interviews. For example, when I was interviewing a couple who had been living a transnational life with their family split in two countries for more than 10 years, I led our conversation to the topic

of how their living style influenced their family. The lady said, *"We were separated for many years. There were so many conflicts (between us). Some words…I feel embarrassed to say…We had even come close to divorce."* Then she refused to provide more details on this issue. I could think of three reasons for this. Firstly, this experience might not be pleasant, so she did not feel comfortable to recall it. Secondly, this issue is not appropriate to talk about in front of her husband, as she might complain to him and wake up the conflicts between them. Thirdly, due to the fact that I did not have the same life experience with her and had a researcher's hat on, I was perceived as an outsider. And this experience might be too sensitive to be released to an outsider.

My strategy to cope with the challenges arising from this feeling of outsiderness was to build up a rapport in interviews by sharing some personal experiences and stories with them and emphasizing commonalities. For instance, as I also have the experience of living and studying abroad, I would refer to my transnational experience and share some interesting stories with them to become closer. The fact that many of the interviewees have children of my age was a clear advantage to me, because it increased their empathy (Ganga and Scott, 2006). When I was in Canada, it was common for me to start conversations by talking about my hometown. If we found we came from the same region, the geographical connections, even loose, would give us a sense of insiderness. What's more, I also tried to make an interview more like a conversation, rather than a question-and-answer sequence. Like Blommaert and Dong (2010, p. 47) mentioned, crucial information is easier to release when one is involved in "an ordinary conversation than in a question-and-answer sequence where one very often feels put on the spot by direct questions".

I also noticed gender differences when interviewing *luoshang* families. I felt that women (*luoshang*'s wife) were more willing to share their emotions, thinking and experiences of their transnational trajectories than men (*luoshang*). This might be because I was perceived as an insider in terms of gender, and therefore they assumed I had an understanding of the uneasiness of their transnational life. This is not rare to see in female researchers. For example, in Bott's (2010) research on British migration to Tenerife, she encountered relative warmth and inclusion from the female migrants, but hostility and exclusion from the male.

Though being a member of a group means acceptance, trust and openness on many occasions, I also realised that the perception of being an insider might raise challenges that would be easily neglected. Sometimes I was required to distance myself from the participants. For instance, as a cultural insider, because my participants and I were from the same cultural background, I found that they sometimes took it for granted that I understood their unspoken words, thus failed to explain their thinking and experience fully (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Herod, 1999). They would respond to my question of why did you emigrate as briefly as *"for children's education"*. In this case, I chose to emphasise my "outsiderness" as a researcher to create a critical distance between us by asking them to explain in detail why they thought receiving education from abroad would be better for their children.

4.4 Data Analysis

During my fieldwork, I collected rich data of the migration experience of *luoshang* families from 25 interviewees. The data I collected includes both interviews and observation notes. Once the data was collected, I transcribed each interview at a general level of detail, including "identification of long pauses" and "bracketed indications of obvious emotional content, such as laughing, crying or sighing" (Darlington and Scott, 2002, p. 143). However, I eliminated some redundant utterances, and also conversations that are not related to the research. These included greetings and words for the purpose of rapport-building, because only the experience is my focus of analysis, not the peripheral dialogue. Out of the 25 individual interviews, only one participant was not voice recorded. In this instance, I made an interview report instead.

Before data analysis, I coded and categorized the interview data in order to become familiar with it, and identify the themes of analysis based on the research objectives. Codes were extracted from the transcribed texts and "sorted with similar content into separate categories for a final dissolution in to major themes" (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006, p 318). Quotes and data were sorted out into groups for further comparisons between interviewees. Nvivo software was used to manage the

qualitative data, e.g. codes and categories in this stage, but it did not help in generating the analysis. The codes and categories identified from the interviews and observations were then used to develop arguments and answers to research questions.

4.5 Summary

To summarise, for the purpose of addressing the research aim, which is to discover the dynamics of the transnational geographical mobility of *luoshang*, this thesis adopted a qualitative research design and used interviews and observations as the research approaches. The fieldwork sites include Shijiazhuang and Datong, China, and Vancouver and Edmonton, Canada. The identification of eligible participants was based on the criteria of the emigration destination country, the history of the transnational familial arrangements, and the occupation and family background in China. The sampling techniques which were used included a combination of snowballing techniques and opportunistic techniques, and there were a total of 25 interviews (25 families; 22 individuals and 3 couples) involved in the research. The research interweaved the actor-oriented perspective with the multi-sited fieldwork approach, so as to combine the micro level of agency with the macro level of space, which could be considered as an innovation in the methodology. It should be noted that during the research, the researcher was constantly finding herself shifting between an insider and an outsider in the field, which had its advantages but also presented challenges.

Chapter 5
Household Emigration of *Luoshang*: Structures and Strategies

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to examine the migration decision-making and the adaptive strategies developed by the *luoshang* families. This aim will be realised through an analysis intersecting the perspectives of micro individual agents and the macro structural context. The specific mode of transnational household migration and family splitting arrangements, mostly practiced in the 2000s by *luoshang* families from mainland China, became possible owing to the structural transformations in both mainland China and the world. As the new middle class emerged in the industrialisation and modernisation of China, the *luoshang* families have strategically taken transnational mobility as a tactic in response to the risks and fear generated from the rapid structural transformations, the change of requirements in the globalisation era and their unsatisfied desires in their home country. Their transnational migration strongly illustrates the "middling transnationalism" practiced by the Chinese middle class.

The transnational mobility and the adaptive strategies that the *luoshang* families adopt involve the spatial arrangement of family members, which in practice consists of two phases. In the first stage, the family as a whole makes their migration decision, processes emigration applications and lands at the foreign destination country. Then, after some time of settling, which could be as short as several weeks or as long as several years, one of the couple (normally the husband) returns to China to work. They either continue their former businesses or seek to start a new business in order to earn money to cover the expenses for the family members remaining in Canada, so that the family can still maintain their consumption at a middle class level in the host country. The husband frequently shuttles across the Pacific, closely connecting to both China and Canada, whilst the wife and their children remain in Canada and form another family foothold there. This household arrangement, in their view, could maximise the accumulation of different forms of capital for the family and minimise the risks of downward social mobility.

Due to the relatively privileged social class that the *luoshang* families are embedded in, and the relatively richer capital that these families possess, the emigration decision-making of the *luoshang* families and their adaptation strategies afterwards, though emphasising household profit optimisation, is very different from the traditional cases in the new economics of labour migration. Firstly, the inner driving force for the migration plan has been changed. In the traditional cases, economic profits and risk diversification in familial income are stressed whilst for Chinese *luoshang* families, culture exceeding economy plays a more important role in driving emigration. Secondly, what are considered as risks is changing. In contrast to the economic pressure and the economic profit and loss stressed by the traditional cases, Chinese *luoshang* families try to minimise the risks of falling off the social ladder and seek to maximise the possibility of social reproduction over generations. Thirdly, the following adaptation strategy of the *luoshang* families reverses the remittances flow direction.

In this chapter, I will first focus particularly on the external structures shaping the opportunities of the geographical mobility in section 5.2.1. Following this, I will then explore how the *luoshang* families, as human agents, construct the transnational household migration strategy as an education strategy, interweaving with the external socio-economic context in section 5.2.2. Section 5.2.3 considers other elements driving their transnational trajectories. In section 5.3, I will examine the adaptive strategy developed by the *luoshang* families—the family splitting arrangement—and their middling position in the Canadian business and employment market.

5.2 Structures and Migration

Migration has been conceived as a product of material forces, for example, a response to economic signals of the job markets, while its cultural aspects are less emphasised (Halfacree, 2004). Guided by this conception, geographical mobility is often investigated in a sense of calculation and depicted as a rational choice after weighing up advantages and disadvantages. This representation is inevitable because when we ask people why they did something, they tend to rationalise their actions in a causality

manner and "quasi-theoretical posture" (O' Reilly, 2012). The problem is that they "leave unsaid all that goes without saying" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.91). Therefore, to understand the transnational migration of *luoshang* families, I will try to embed their stories of mobility in the structural conditions and the cultural shifts, in order to understand how their mobility decisions are mediated by these structural transformations.

5.2.1 External structural conditions and *luoshang's* migration

The *luoshang* group in mainland China emerged under the context of globalisation, great economic advancement and social development of China and the general improvement in Chinese people's living conditions. The rapid economic growth in China has resulted in significant social transformations, and the old social class categories have been replaced by new diversified social groups in the process of redistribution of resources and social wealth (Lin, 2006). This economic reform and opening up since 1978 has brought about the growth of private businesses and accumulation of private wealth (Zhang, 2010). With the growth of family wealth and the increase of available opportunities, the expectations and desires of the Chinese new middle class have greatly grown. The *luoshang* group studied in this research, possessing highly valued economic, social, cultural capital, social privilege and prestige is a part of the "new rich" or the middle class in China (see Chapter 2 for more details).

Living in large cities, running their own small companies and being senior managers, *luoshang* possess relatively richer economic, cultural and social capital than the more general working class and peasantry, which enables them to enjoy a relatively high living standard in cities. Meanwhile, however, they are not the most privileged class in China, because they do not control great socio-economic capital as the super elites. Being the middle class and the relatively privileged, the *luoshang* families have access to the resources facilitating their migration desires and trajectories. As they are becoming increasingly affluent, under the context that China has increasingly been incorporated into globalisation trends, they have the ability, opportunities and desires to buy a foreign property, to pursue another way of life and foreign education experiences for their children, which they could hardly afford in the past.

Apart from the private wealth accumulation resulting from the economic and social reform which enables emigration to be considered as a possible strategy for the middle class, a *xin yimin* (new migrants) discourse is constructed and promoted by the Chinese state. This discourse constructs the political context in which *luoshang* families make migration decisions.

Since 1978, regulations over emigration and overseas travel have been increasingly relaxed. Chinese citizens find it increasingly easy to travel abroad with fewer documents, fewer application procedures, and for less economic expenditure. For instance, from February 2002, it was no longer required to provide foreign invitations or to obtain a *chujingka* (a form of prior approval) from the local Public Security Bureau before applying for visas going abroad (Liu, 2005). With the relaxed policy, the source of *xin yimin* has expanded to all parts of China, instead of being restricted to traditional *qiaoxiang* (hometowns of overseas Chinese) in South China (Liu, 2005).

The Chinese government has implemented policies aimed at overseas Chinese, to bring the transnational Chinese migrants into the domestic economic development of the nation-state, as exemplified in the policy of *zhichi liuxue*, *guli huiguo*, *laiqu ziyou* (supporting overseas studies, encouraging the return of Chinese students, and upholding the freedom of their movement) and *weiguo fuwu* (the overseas Chinese talent is encouraged to serve the country) (Liu, 2005, p.302). Within the 40 years after the reform and opening up, the discourse of *xin yimin* has gradually changed from unpatriotic criticism to more justified recognition of migrants' position as "people who remain part of the Chinese economy and polity" (Nyíri, 2001, p.638). The political discourse accepts that the ties of overseas Chinese to China, for example, the highly skilled professionals and successful business people, are not only bound to China by ties of blood and culture, but also by the shared state modernisation goal (Nyíri, 2001). Under this political context, the middle class migrants, for example Chinese *luoshang*, who are resourceful in geographical mobility, could consider emigration as an available family strategy. Although it doesn't mean that the political discourse encourages Chinese citizens to emigrate, people might feel more flexible to move, because under this context, mobility does not necessarily imply severance with the home country.

The policy change of the destination nations towards immigrant recruitment, which is a result of the growing domestic demand for capital and labour, has made emigration become a practical option for the *luoshang* families. As explained in section 2.1.3, in Canada, from 1962, the restrictive immigration policies based on country of origin were eliminated, followed by point-based immigrant selective policies and the Immigrant Investor Program aiming to attract high skilled workers to satisfy the labour market demand, and the capital-rich businesspersons who could provide investment capital and create jobs for Canadians. In addition, the number of foreign students admitted is also increasing, making it a lucrative business in developed countries (Liu, 2005).

Given these immigration policies, *luoshang* families could take three immigration routes. The first, and also the most commonly adopted route by the relatively capital-rich emigrant families, is through the Immigrant Investor Program. This route is generally believed by some *luoshang* families to be quite simple as its main concern is only money and business experiences, and the program sets no requirements on education credentials or English skills. Some families might not be as rich as the families who choose the first emigration route. Or some families, although they could afford the capital required in the Immigrant Investor Program, do not wish to invest huge amounts of money. These two groups of families might then choose to apply under the category of skilled emigrants. Apart from these two types of *luoshang*, it is interesting to notice that there is another group who applied for emigration after they graduated from Canadian universities. They worked in Canada for some years. Not satisfied with their work in Canada, they left their wives and children in Canada and returned to China for a broader market and more prosperous career prospects.

The process of globalisation, strengthening the connectivity between here and there and making the world easily accessible, might increase *luoshang* families' desire to move and to pursue another way of life. Technological advancement has greatly loosened the constraints of geography and the bounding of locality. With modern technologies, it is well accepted in people's mind that it is quite easy to keep in contact using telecommunication technologies wherever one goes. With reasonable and affordable price, one could easily go back home or receive visitors in Canada.

Compared to the past, space has shrunk and the barriers of space for mobility have been lowered (Williams and Hall, 2000). The growing desires to move and to pursue another way of life arisen in this context could be reflected in Mr. Cao's words.

Mr. Cao (No.4) was 52 when I spoke to him. He is a private entrepreneur of a software company in China. He and his family emigrated to Canada about 10 years ago in 2005, under the investor stream. It was not long before he decided to return to China and left his family in Canada because he never thought of resettling in Canada. According to him, he chose to migrate because he appreciated freedom and he wanted to see a broader world. Mr. Cao expressed his clear cosmopolitan desire in his emigration decision making, *"I feel I should.. I don't want to be restricted here. I belong to a wider world."* He considered migrating to Canada as his first step out into the world and his next plan, if possible, is to move to Africa. *"I think I should take a look at this world. How does Kenya's savanna look like? How spectacular the wild animal migration can be! I want to live there and feel those for several years, instead of a quick tourism."*

As geographical mobility becomes increasingly easier, ordinary people could have the opportunity to physically visit a place which might be thousands of miles away, to taste local food, to see local scenery and to feel local culture. This is what we call tourism. Though what people could gain through travelling is mainly an experience of exotic otherness, imagination of place might be reinforced in this process and later trigger a migration desire. As O'Reilly (2012, p.70) points out, "tourism provided a material, legal, practical and cultural infrastructure that later supported more permanent settlement".

In China, with the loosening of government control on overseas travel and the increasing affluence of Chinese citizens, international tourism has become increasingly popular amongst Chinese since the 2000s. According to *the Report on Chinese Globalisation on the Perspective of Exit-Entry Travelling* by the Centre for China and Globalisation (CCG hereafter) and Ctrip.com, in 2015, the number of overseas tourist trips increased to 1,280 million (CCG, 2017, p. 14). Compared with 310 million overseas tourist trips in 2005, the statistics in 2015 are nearly quadruple (p.14). Now Chinese tourists occupy about 10% of the registered overseas tourist trips

in the globe. With the growth of Chinese people's overseas travel, people become less satisfied with the traditional way of hurrying through tourist attractions and desire a freer, more in-depth travel experience abroad.

Many *luoshang* families, especially those who emigrated after 2005, admitted that they were impressed by the exotic culture, life and the environment in transnational tourism. These imaginaries have cultivated their desire to move and facilitated their transnational migration decision, though it is often ignored that a several-day or a month stay is too short to know another country and understand every aspects of life.

Mr. Liu (No. 12) mentioned his visit to Canada. What he saw and experienced in his 20-day-trip alone, had a significant impact on his decision to relocate the family in Canada in 2010. Mr. Liu is a young entrepreneur in the field of IT who just entered his 40s. Mr. Liu's wife used to be an international student in Canada, then managed to obtain permanent residency status in 2005. After they gave birth to a "Canadian baby" in 2008, Mr. Liu applied and got the permanent residency of Canada. However, because his career development in China was quite good, Mr. Liu did not consider resettling in Canada until he got the opportunity to travel there and feel the local life for about a month. This experience, according to him, *"greatly impacts the family's resettlement decision"*.

> *I sit at one of the most famous beaches all the afternoon. […] There were a lot of youngsters and children playing in the sea and on the beach. You could not see parents following them. Holding their surfboards, they went back home alone by bus. […] I felt that I hope my children could grow up in this kind of environment.*

Echoing Mr. Liu's experience, Mr. Qiao (No.17) also mentioned his similar experience of getting an impression of Canada from travelling. Mr. Qiao was over 50 when I interviewed him. His family applied for emigration to Canada under the skilled emigration programme in 2004. As a senior director in a state-owned enterprise, he was qualified to apply under the skilled migrant class. However, the family did not decide to leave China and move to Canada at that time. In 2007, after three years, the

family decided to resettle in Canada, which according to him was because of their visit to Canada: the city they visited (Vancouver) had attracted them too much.

> *We landed in Canada and travelled to everywhere we could in 8 days. Before that, I had no idea of overseas. But after that, I felt it so good living in Canada. [...] The season we arrived there was the best season for traveling. The parks in Victoria Island were so beautiful like a heaven on earth. [...] But I had no idea of what emigration means to a family. [...] My son fell in love with Canada. He did not want to leave and wanted to live here.*

Mrs. Wen's (No.21) family is a potential *luoshang* family. The family's emigration application was still being processed when I conducted the interview. They first applied to Canada's Investor Immigration Program, but this program was closed in 2014. So later they turned to America's investment immigration programmes. They had already planned their transnational trajectories. Once it is approved, Mrs. Wen and her daughter will go to the United States, whilst her husband will stay in China. Mrs. Wen felt that she was prepared to move and looking forward to living and working in the U.S., due to her rich experience visiting abroad.

Mr. Liu, Mr. Qiao and Mrs. Wen's opinions illustrate how the cultural experience of tourism might lead to a migration decision. Their family migration decision is actually based on their imaginaries of the place, which were gained from their short experience through tourism. It is often ignored that these imaginaries are very subjective and hardly accurate due to the limited time they stayed in the new country. To promote the tourist industry, the culture of a place tends to be presented in an exotic way, which makes the cultural experience deceptive. As Salazar (2011) investigates in the case study of Java tourism, the imaginaries of transnational mobility could be quite subjective, and due to the complicated process of the making of images and ideas, there could be great discrepancy between the tourism imaginaries and the reality. Mr. Liu, Mr. Qiao and Mrs. Wen's perspectives of the place are more from a tourist's view than from a resident's view, and the complexities of residing in a different society are often overlooked.

Besides tourism, the mass media also greatly facilitates the mobility of ideas across places around the globe (Dietz, 2011). According to Teo (2003), media shapes the imagination of other places, which enables them to change as potential migration destinations. Some *luoshang* families reported their reliance on mass media and the Internet to gain an understanding of emigration. For example, Mrs. Wen stressed,

> *The information (about emigration) is not hard to get access to. These things are transparent and everyone could know if they want….*

Due to the free flow of information in cyber space, *luoshang* families could possess some knowledge, at least some rumours, of western countries, for example, Canada in this case. In this globalisation era, people would choose destinations that they have already known through widely diffused images. These imaginaries of western culture and society have greatly impacted their positionality and also their migration aspirations (Salazar, 2011).

While mass media helps to generate images that contributes to the establishment of a social discourse beyond physical distance, such images also travel with people and thus contribute to building up transnational relations (Römhild, 2002). Television, Internet, newspapers and radio are important and influential sources of the images of developed countries and the ideas of migration (Salazar, 2011). Some *luoshang* participants repeatedly mentioned that they knew about life in western countries, for instance, Canada and the United States, from movies, TV series, news and blogs. Images depicted in these sources, for example, luxury cars, houses and big gardens, free and easy life of children, relaxed atmosphere of the workplace, etc., have turned the developed countries into a virtual reality for Chinese people.

Mr. Ma (No. 14) described how his wife tried to persuade him to agree with her migration ideas, because at first, as he stressed, he was not keen on living abroad as it might affect the development of his career. Mr. Ma was 46 when he was interviewed. His family emigrated to Canada before the 2000s under the skilled immigration category. At that time, he was a middle-level manager in a state-owned enterprise. In their original plan, he would continue his work in China, whilst his wife would first do an MBA in Canada and then find a job. After his wife graduated and found a job

in Canada, he then could give up his job in China and joined the family in Canada. However, after he landed in Canada, he found his original plan was naive and not realistic. In addition, he found it increasingly difficult to apply for holidays every year to visit Canada, so he quit his job in the state-owned enterprise and started his own business in China in 2004. Suffering from family separation, he regretted the family's migration decision to some degree. According to Mr. Ma,

My wife was more longing for that thing [living in abroad]. It might be because women are more easily impacted by movies and TV shows from abroad. She gave me numerous examples, like American movies she had seen. She told me about many Oscar award-winning movies to persuade me [how good it would be if they could live in the Western countries]…

Mrs. Hou (No. 9) had similar experiences of being driven by the reinforced imaginaries of Western countries in advertisements. In her case, immigration agents acted as pushing hands generating, spreading and reinforcing the imaginaries of abroad. Mrs. Hou's family emigrated to Canada in 2009 as skilled migrants. Her husband is a PhD in computer science, working as a senior manager in a private company before their emigration. After emigration, she received some training provided by a Canadian organisation and successfully found a job in a Chinese company in Canada. However, her husband did not want to resettle and work in Canada, because he thought he could not gain good career prospects there. Mrs. Hou mentioned the original motivation for the family making the emigration decision was for their children's education. She found that immigration agents constructed the Western countries as "a heaven for children", featuring quality education, a free and relaxed teaching style, easier entrance to top universities, etc., while the procedures to achieve these were simple and riskless.

In our residential sub-districts, as you go in, you could find advertisements saying "Do you want your children to get warm? If you meet these requirements, you could emigrate Canada." And then we found that we met all these requirements.

Mr. Ma and Mrs. Hou's story illustrate that *luoshang* families are strongly influenced by the images diffused and reinforced through the mass media and Internet when they are making emigration decision. The possibility of another way of life could be revealed to local people (Römhild, 2002) via Internet and many other sources, such as TV commercials, soap operas. People could gain huge amounts of information without the need to physically travel there. Meanwhile, the accuracy of these images might greatly decline in the complex process of being utilised and interpreted for various reasons. For example, immigration agents, for the purpose of making profits, might produce and reinforce the images of "the West" as socially, culturally and economically appealing and fascinating, but understate the disadvantages, potential problems and risks which might arise in living abroad and in the process of emigration. This image challenging the given repertoire of lived lives, however, meets the middle class aspiration of upward social mobility. In this process, the *luoshang* families' emigration desire might emerge and grow, believing in the "utopia" and the "product of fantasy" (Salazar, 2011, p. 588) depicted in the mass media.

5.2.2 *Luoshang's* migration as an education strategy

As analysed in the previous chapter, a combination of structural transformations and developments, including but not limited to, the increased affluence of the new middle class, the reform of immigration policies of host countries, the improved convenience of travel and means of communication and globalisation, tourism and the information flow via various sources, has led to a desire and feeling that one can move and be free from the constraints of place. However, though these are necessary conditions, they are not sufficient to explain the individual agent. When these external structures coincide with the internal desire and the feeling that mobility is a necessity, the *luoshang* families might decide to emigrate. As noted by Mrs. Hou, the *luoshang* families' desire to emigrate is often associated with the education needs of their children. In this section, I argue that the *luoshang* families' migration strategy could be regarded as an education strategy under the specific institutional context, diversifying the household risks on social status reproduction.

In the process of reform and opening up, emerging structures of social inequality and prevailing consumer culture arise together with the miracle of China's economic

growth. This economic restructuring displaces the state provision with market scheme, making people understand themselves as responsible for their own successes or failures in life (Crabb, 2010). The family, as a basic unit, has to absorb the anxiety of the possibility of having the only child fail (Anagnost, 2004). Under this context, the fear and anxieties of Chinese middle class emerge, over the maintenance and generational transmission of their relatively high social status, as delineated in section 2.2.4. Consequently, the Chinese middle class are increasingly anxious about their children's education choices, with strategic efforts and increasing expenditure on children's education to secure a middle class status and lifestyle. For example, in Crabb's (2010) research on the education choice of Chinese urban middle class families, they carefully selected schools for their children in every step in order to increase the possibility of being enrolled in top universities. These strategies are conceptualised by Bourdieu (1984, p.133) as the middle class concerns of "step[ping] up their investments so as to maintain the relative scarcity of their qualifications".

The *luoshang* families, as a member of the Chinese new middle class, also have concerns over social reproduction and fears of downward social mobility. As Bourdieu (1988, p.163) argues, "a generalised downclassing is particularly intolerable for the more privileged". With their control over economic resources, the *luoshang* families are willing to invest heavily in children's education not only to equip them with valuable knowledge and skills to compete in the employment market, but also to maintain the relative scarcity of the qualifications.

Their struggles over child-raising and children's education choices might even be intensified as a result of the expansion of higher education participation in China in 1990s. The admission of university students has witnessed a sustained and rapid increase from 1.08 million in 1998, to 3.2 million in 2002 and in 2016, the enrolment of university students reached 7 million (EOL.com, 2016). The expansion of higher education offers more opportunities for education and social mobility, especially to the children of the under privileged class. However, from the perspective of the relatively privileged class, their children might face fiercer competition in the job market (Xiang and Shen, 2009). In order to gain competitive edges and exceed others in the job market, children of middle class families are expected to be enrolled in the top universities, which is extremely difficult and demanding in China. This concern

is stressed by Mrs. Wan (No. 20), who insisted that the main achievement of the family in the transnational migration trajectory was her only daughter's educational achievement. Mrs. Wan's family emigrated to Canada in 2002 as skilled emigrants. Before emigration, Mr. Wan was a senior director while Mrs. Wan was a doctor in China. At the time of the interview, both of them were about 60 years old and retired. They finally reunited and lived in China after over 10 years of the family being split across the Pacific. Their daughter was now doing a Masters in one of the top universities in the United States. According to Mrs. Wan, their daughter used to be an ordinary student in Shijiazhuang before they emigrated and would hardly be able to be enrolled in the top universities in China. However, after emigration, she was able to be enrolled in one of the top three universities in Canada, and later managed to enter one of the top universities in the United States.

> *The competition in China is too fierce. The high school entrance exam is too demanding. You have to go to a very good middle school so that you might be able to be enrolled by a good university. How many children could go to Tsinghua University and Peking University? Very few. So we common family, common child with common IQ is so difficult (to go to a top university). We are expecting our children could have a higher start point and a better life in the future.*

From the quotation of Mrs. Wan, we could see that they greatly valued the acquisition of cultural capital of their children. More specifically, what they valued most is the institutionalised cultural capital. They viewed this form of cultural capital, with hierarchies of scarcity, equal to the opportunities and competitiveness in the employment market, and even the probability of career success in future. As such, the concern of investment in education is also an investment in the future.

Similar to other countries, in China, the function of knowledge and skills in social mobility is increasingly prominent (Li, 2008; Liang and Li, 2012). It is not because education could bring economic profits directly but because there is an institution helping to convert the cultural capital to economic and social capital. Therefore, the view of education values held by Mrs. Wan's family reflects how the Chinese middle class recognise the inner mechanism of social mobility in terms of diploma. In their

view, China is a "diploma society" where the diploma often equals the acquisition of relevant skills and (not considering other capital, e.g. social capital) the intellectual elites are largely selected based on the diploma they hold. The level of the degree attained, the prestige of the university and the major that they graduate from are all very important in the employment market (Zhou, 2001). This recognition also reflects the social position of the Chinese middle class. Though they possess a certain amount of economic capital and social capital which enable them to live a comfortable life, they are not the most privileged group in society. This status increases their fear of falling off the social ladder and thus they greatly depend upon education to maintain the reproduction of social status of the household.

Meanwhile, the impacts of the *hukou* registration system on higher education could also be a factor influencing *luoshang* families' education strategies. Compared to 40 years ago, the zone of advantages which is marked by *hukou* shrunk greatly. However, in the higher education system, to deal with the imbalances of education development across regions and provinces, there are differences of university admission scores and received rate between districts (provinces) (Li, 2008). The students of some less developed provinces may require a lower score to be enrolled in universities. To expand the diversity of top university students, and to offer more education opportunities for children from the underprivileged class, the allocation of admission plans of the top universities to each province demonstrates a trend of localisation (Liang and Li, 2012). This is relatively prominent in provinces and districts which have rich higher education resources, for example, Beijing and Shanghai. In this case, students in Beijing and Shanghai may have a higher chance of being enrolled in the top universities located in these two regions. Meanwhile, *hukou* registration in these areas could be relatively closed, which means that getting their *hukou* registered in these areas could be very difficult. In addition, in some cases, even though students might receive their high school education in these provinces, they could not attend the college entrance examination there, but have to go back to their registered permanent residence.

Luoshang families recognise this *hukou* based college entrance examination system as a source of inequality which might bring potential risks to the family's social reproduction of their relatively privileged status. For example, Mr. Zhang (No.23)

expressed his concern over his daughter's college entrance examination, which directly linked to the school selection for his daughter and later the initiation of a household emigration plan. Mr. Zhang is a senior manager in a private company and a private entrepreneur in Datong. When I talked to him, he was 46 and the couple had reunited in China, giving up the permanent residence status in Canada. The family could not stand the lifestyle of long-time family split across the Pacific. With an annual income of several million CNY, Mr. Zhang was actually the first to consider emigration among his entrepreneur friends.

Before coming to Datong, Mr. Zhang had the experience of temporarily working in Beijing. Since then, his daughter studied in Beijing from the third grade of primary school. His family did not have a Beijing *hukou*, which means that it was impossible for his daughter to attend the college entrance examination in Beijing, which compared to Shanxi Province, enjoyed relatively lower entrance requirements. Since the high school education in Shanxi Province was highly demanding and competitive, without years of academic training in this region his daughter would be greatly disadvantaged if she went back to Datong to attend the college entrance examination. So he decided to give up this traditional path of higher education recruitment. After careful consideration, he thought it would be better to send his daughter to an international school in Beijing, to prepare for her future study abroad, though more money was needed to be paid every year. In 2009, Mr. Zhang's family emigrated to Canada, expecting his daughter could study and enter a university in Canada.

The stories of Mrs. Wan and Mr. Zhang's family demonstrate that their emigration plan could be interpreted as how the human agent reacts to the conflicts between their desire to send children to elite universities and the institutional constraints. With society increasingly emphasizing the links of knowledge and skills to career success, they make strategic plans and efforts in cultural investment in their children, e.g. achievement of good academic results, cultivation of artistic abilities, scientific skills and the capacity to compete in a global market, expecting the children's education to secure the transmission of middle class status and lifestyle. They perceived the Chinese education system to be highly competitive, and were not confident that children could stand out in such a system. Thus, they wished that spatial mobility and emigration could offer them alternative educational opportunities to increase

competitiveness in the employment market. Meanwhile, they were willing to increase the investment in education, expecting it to convert to economic and social capital later.

This finding is mirrored in Waters' (2006) research in the case of Hong Kong migrants to Canada, in which the education incentive plays an important role in their emigration decision-making. Holding the same academic position with Brown et al. (1997, p.15) that the middle-class, in response to competition with the working class, will either "seek to change the class mechanism of exclusion and selection in education, or […] secede from state education", Waters argues that Hong Kong families chose to secede from state education by accessing educational opportunities abroad through emigration, and also tried to change the mechanism of exclusion and selection by accessing occupations that prefer foreign credentials in Hong Kong. Waters (2006) stresses that in the specific social field of Hong Kong, the skills associated with the Canadian education system are more attractive to employers in Hong Kong. For example, as observed in many local and regional media reports, foreign educational credentials are "open doors" to the "top jobs". In the case of China, such phenomena might be changed especially after the 2010s. Chinese employers have increasingly realised the harm of blindly trusting foreign educational credentials, as the acquisition of these sometimes is more related to money than to academic excellence. In this case, choosing overseas education is more regarded as a method to avoid potential educational failure, and to escape the institutional constraints and the fierce competition within China's education system.

Luoshang families' will to pursue foreign education is also reinforced by the imaginaries of Western education as "pressureless" and "quality" (*suzhi*) education instilled by popular media. They tend to believe that Western countries could provide a relatively relaxed environment to learning, thus children can enjoy a better learning environment, which is particularly beneficial to the development of innovative ability and the cultivation of hobbies. In the pursuit of "modernity" and advantages, the West is considered by the Chinese *luoshang* families as the icon of "modern", "superior" and "elite". As reflected in their pursuit of overseas education, they showed greater preference for higher education abroad. Meanwhile, they were increasingly not satisfied with just sending their children to elite universities abroad after high school,

because they wished that their children could study abroad as early as possible. For instance, Mrs. Wen expressed her strong disagreement with the Chinese education system and her preference for Western education.

> *I don't like education in China, which exerts too much pressure on children. And there are a lot of problems in cultivating children's hobbies. […] The education and environment abroad allows children to study and grow up in a relaxed atmosphere. […]Overseas, every child's strengths could be discovered, thus, every child is unique, but in China, if you cannot get high marks, no matter how good you are in other aspects, you could still be rejected (by top universities).*

Mrs. Wen considered emigration as the solution for the education problems she realised in China, for example, "exam-oriented", "grade oriented" and high learning pressure. The western education system in her imagination is an alternative, and a solution. However, she might have exaggerated the problems in Chinese education and romanticised Western education. As explained in Chapter 2, due to the specific historical and social context under which the Chinese middle class emerges, they might seek Western modernisation as a guiding model from which to learn (Wang, 2006). Their neo-colonial mentality makes them blind, and unable to see both two sides with regards to the education system in two countries. "Exam-oriented" learning could help children build up solid basic knowledge, which can be beneficial to their future studies, and children living in China can have their hobbies developed as well. Especially now in the national discourse of emphasizing the development of *suzhi* (quality) (explained in detail below), the government encourages schools to raise the comprehensive quality of students, and broaden their hobbies and horizons by organizing various extracurricular interest classes. Mrs. Wen did not realise that western education, which is perceived by her as more open and relaxed, might not be a solution. Firstly, western education could hardly be generalised as "playlike". Children also need to work hard in order to enter elite schools and universities. Access to such elite education could be exclusive to children of the privileged and elite class (Xu, 2018). Secondly, transnational migration might cause problems to immigrant children's adaptation in the host society. The potential problems and psychological costs that engaging with overseas education might create has often been overlooked

upon their arrival in Canada. For example, the question as to whether children could psychologically adjust to a different education system, and whether children could manage themselves without the physical presence of one, or both parents. In the case of Mrs. Wen, the border and distance obviously constrain her understanding of the systems and reality in another country.

In some Chinese *luoshang* families, their education strategy is about more than avoiding failure in the domestic education system. Their explanation reflects their awareness of equipping their children with global, cultural and social capital, to cultivate the ability to grasp opportunities arising in social changes, in the hope of excelling in the competitive and increasingly global society, and also to expand their education and occupation choices in a global dimension. This awareness of some *luoshang* families coincides with the prevailing official and popular discourse on *suzhi* in China. *Suzhi jiaoyu* (quality education) was adopted in 1999 as the education reform in response to the problems brought by the old cramming type exam orientation education. This *suzhi jiaoyu* encourages the comprehensive development of independence, creativity and the ability to solve questions in order to cultivate students who could stand out in the global economy (Crabb, 2010). As Gerhards et al. (2017) argue, the preference for a transnational education experience indicates a change of perception and evaluation schemes.

This awareness of global cultural capital acquisition is conceptualised by Carlson et al. (2016) as gaining "transnational cultural capital" and as "cosmopolitan capital" by Weenink (2008). According to Carlson et al. (2016, p.4), the transnational cultural capital not only refers to "foreign language skills, intercultural competence, knowledge of other cultures and countries, but also to specific attitudes and dispositions (e.g. an interest in or 'taste' for going abroad, an openness towards others, and an appreciation of other cultures)". This conceptualisation of cultural capital has transcended the container of nation-state by emphasizing a transnational social field.

For example, Mrs. Hong (No. 8) stressed the rationale when her family made the decision to emigrate to Canada. Her family emigrated to Canada in 2009 when her son was 12 years old. The family has been engaged in private business in the field of telecommunication since the late 1990s. With relatively much economic capital

accumulated in China, they emigrated to Canada as investors. Before emigration, Mrs. Hong's family had already planned to be a *luoshang* family, splitting up and living in two continents simultaneously.

> *We emigrated for the sake of our children. […] I hope my children could have a broader road of life, a broader horizon and have more choices of life in the future (after emigration).*

Mrs. Hong's opinion reveals that some *luoshang* families have already been aware of the opportunities arising in a global intellectual market. The family's emigration decision is not only a reflection of globalisation impacts on individuals, a strategy in response to the challenges and opportunities arising from the economic reforms in China, but also closely links to their transnational experiences, including tourism and business travels, and their relatively upper status in Chinese society.

Apart from Mrs. Hong's family, many other *luoshang* families have already gained the awareness of cultivating transnational social capital early, in order to increase the possibility to be enrolled by reputable universities abroad. For example, as was mentioned previously, Mr. Zhang sent his daughter to a private international school, as a targeted strategy, in order to prepare for overseas education in the future.

Apart from attending international schools, children of some *luoshang* families might start to travel overseas from a very young age to cultivate their transnational cultural capital. This is exemplified by Mrs. Miao's (No. 15) family. Mrs. Miao has the experience of being a *luoshang* wife. She received her undergraduate and postgraduate education in Canada and worked in Canada for several years afterwards. Her husband, Mr. Miao used to be her classmate, and after graduating, they got married. Later Mr. Miao went back to China to develop his career, whilst Mrs. Miao worked in Canada and obtained Canadian citizenship. Mrs. Miao's son was 8 years old at the time I interviewed her, and was in primary school in China. She was recently sent by her employer in Canada to work in China, and happily united with her family. In our conversation, she mentioned that her son had already begun to develop the ability to be a global citizen through traveling.

I want him to participate in summer camp every year from the Grade Three to feel and adapt to culture of different countries, to Australia, to America, everywhere. Now he is not afraid to go to any country. He has already been to many countries, Europe, Africa, South Asia. [...] He realised that English could be used in every country in the world, so he is willing to study English. He never thinks English is extracurricular lessons. He does not differentiate people by skin colours, because he knows every place has its features and he actively adapts himself in different cultures.

Though Mrs. Miao's son was still young in age, he had begun to obtain transnational cultural capital by frequently traveling abroad. This was exemplified by his willingness to study the English language, his perception towards the English language as a communication tool, his knowledge of other countries and other ethnicities, and an openness and appreciation of other cultures and people. The practices that the *luoshang* families adopted, of starting early to provide their children with transnational competences, could not be separated from their class position and the parents' transnational experience (Gerhards et al., 2017). The family's relatively rich economic capital is the solid foundation that these strategies could be built upon. These examples illustrate that the accumulation of transnational human capital requires access to economic capital.

Luoshang families expect their children to attend top universities abroad in the process of family emigration to Canada, and there is no exception. It is also observed in the *luoshang* families' migration strategy that it involves clear expectations and the willingness to disconnect with their locality and to explore the world. Through emigration, with the conversion of economic capital to cultural capital, children are expected to transcend borders, and get access to more opportunities in the global arena. In this way, the transnational strategy of *luoshang* families is actually a middle class education strategy for the purpose of maintaining social reproduction of family status. However, it was also revealed, that there is a tendency in these *luoshang* families to think that Canada (and other English speaking countries) is equal, and represents the rest of the world.

5.2.3 Other considerations behind *luoshang* families' transnational migration

The previous section analysed why the *luoshang* families' transnational migration is a household education strategy dealing with middle class fears of falling from the social ladder. However, their desire to move could not be fully explained by this. It is obvious that there are other means to obtain an international education and acquire transnational cultural capital if they feel it is a must: for example, becoming an international student instead. Therefore, in this section, I will provide some other considerations that *luoshang* families make to explain what drives them to make an emigration decision.

Some *luoshang* stressed that emigration, as an education strategy, could have better investment returns than other methods, e.g. being an international student. For example, Mr. Guo (No. 7) explained this with regards to his financial considerations. Mr. Guo's emigration experience was quite tortuous. He is a private entrepreneur in China and first applied to emigrate to Canada via the Immigrant Investor Program. Whilst he was waiting for approval, this programme was closed in 2014, so he was forced to withdraw. Then he turned to apply for emigration to the United States. Up until the time I interviewed him, he had not successfully obtained permanent residency status for either Canada or the United States, and was still waiting for his emigration application to be processed. However, as his brother has already emigrated to Canada, Mr. Guo sent his daughter to study in Canada together with his brother's son, whilst he was waiting to hear about his application to Canada. His wife was accompanying their daughter in Canada as a "study mother". Mr. Guo's family has been living a transnational life with family members, split across two continents for many years.

> *I calculate this from the economic perspective. You invest in their country, into their project, but the principal is still yours. [...] From the project, it provides stable principal guarantee, but if I send my daughter abroad to be an international student, [...] I calculated her tuition fees roughly, which could be really high. [...]But if my daughter becomes a citizen of that country, she could enjoy the welfare of the local education system. The fees will be reasonable, much lower than those of the international*

students.[…] This means that I would still have the principal and save the tuition fees, plus getting another citizenship.

From the words of Mr. Guo, we could see the careful calculating nature of a businessperson, but his arising emigration desire could hardly be explained by rational calculations. It reflects the fact that even though the *luoshang* families have relatively abundant economic capital and they are willing to exchange the economic capital for cultural capital, their middling class position determines that they could not bear wasting their valuable capital. In addition, interviewees rationalise their actions when asked the questions of why they did this or why they did that. The problem is they "leave unsaid all that goes without saying" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.91).

As a member of the emerging middle class in China, the *luoshang* families' desires and expectations grow with their wealth accumulation. As explained in Chapter 2, China is still in the initial stage of modernisation and industrialisation, and there are imbalances and incompatibilities in China's economic and social development. The middle class, with a short history of existence, gain many opportunities, whilst, at the same time, also facing much pressure and ambivalence in China's drastic social reform, economic prosperity and unforeseeable future development. With intensified feelings of anxiety, the *luoshang* families might wish to find solutions accordingly and their economic affluence also provides them with more alternative choices. Meanwhile, globalisation facilitates the information flow and the consumption of the images of Western countries, and reinforces the idea that the developed Western world could be immune to the "growth pains" that they discovered in China. In this process, their desire to emigrate arises.

That possibility of emigration as a solution by *luoshang* families is not separate from the development of immigration agents in China. The springing up of immigration agents in China, providing services for emigration to other countries, has greatly simplified the procedures and document preparation for applications, which has made migration become an easier decision, especially for capital holders. In addition, immigrant intermediaries also serve as convenient and easy sources for information on the circumstances of the targeted destination countries and prospects of emigration life, etc. Fuelled by economic profits, they spare no effort in grooming potential

emigrants by partially stressing the advantages of emigration and also constructing popular emigration destinations, with Canada included, as "a heaven". This could be reflected in the case of Mrs. Hou in section 5.2.1. From the applicants' perspective, it is often forgotten that the information from the immigration agents is often reworked for the purpose of better business performance. Positive aspects are often exaggerated and negative aspects and problems tend to be ignored.

Another example of how immigration agents affect the emigration decision is Mrs. Li's (No. 11) family. Mrs. Li was younger than other *luoshang* wives whom I interviewed. She was less than 40 years old, but her family emigrated to Canada in 2008 under the investor class. Mrs. Li's husband was a private entrepreneur in the construction industry in Shijiazhuang before emigration. After emigration, though Mrs. Li felt disappointed and reluctant to separate from her husband, she had to accept the family splitting arrangement because the family could not give up everything in China and restart in Canada. According to Mrs. Li, they were to some degree "tricked".

> *For my family, it is just an accident. One time my husband travelled with his friends in the United States. He met a boss of an immigrant agent and chatted with him. He told my husband how good Canada is. […]But my husband actually had never been to Canada. Frankly speaking, I think he and his friend were tricked. […] That boss said how good the welfare is in Canada. You don't need to pay to go to school. You don't need to pay to see a doctor. The environment is very exquisite. He talked a lot. Later, my husband wanted to emigrate.*

Mrs. Li's case illustrates the promotion effect of the immigration agents. They took advantage of the middle class mentality of upward social mobility. Based on the partial and uncomprehensive information provided by the immigration agents, Mrs. Li felt disappointed after she emigrated to Canada. She later found that "you don't need to pay to see a doctor", but you might have to wait and queue for quite a long time before you can see one; "you don't need to pay to go to school", but if you want to study in private schools, which is the first choice of the local middle class, you might have to pay a lot.

Apart from immigration agents, friends that have already emigrated also serve as a source of information and direct assistance, affecting the household emigration decision (Winters et al., 2001). Via social networks and ties, both the imaginaries towards Canada and the emigration desire are reinforced. For example, Mr. Ma mentioned how the friends of his wife's parents influenced the family's desire to emigrate and the choice of destination countries, and also supported their emigration process.

> *The friends of my wives' parents in Canada encouraged us to emigrate. [...] At that time, channels of information was quite limited and the Internet was not as developed as nowadays. We even could hardly find an immigration agent in China. They helped us and introduced a migration agent from Canada. [...] We learnt from our friends that Canada was more welcoming to people of other ethnicities and Canadian government was friendlier to Chinese. Those old immigrants said Canada was the best choice.*

The abundant social capital possessed by the family enabled Mr. Ma's family to get an idea of emigration quite early even before the 2000s. Their desire to live in another country was fuelled by their friends' affirmed words of a "better" life "there". Due to the trust transmitted via social networks, they rushed to apply for emigration, even though they realised that their understandings of "Canada" and emigration life, at that time, might not be complete and accurate. Mr. Ma's family considered Canada as a "best choice", not only because of the family's established social networks there, but also because of the prevailing images of Canada as a multicultural immigrant country embracing people from various ethnicities.

It is not surprising to identify that friends and kinship ties, instead of the Internet, were the main sources of information on the Western world, especially among those *luoshang* families who chose to emigrate in the 1990s, since Internet tools were not as developed and popularised as they are nowadays. The prevailing images of Canada, for example, full of hopes and dreams, were transmitted and confirmed via social ties, but "any elements of failure, suffering and exclusion" were denied, both to their

friends and relatives in the home country, and perhaps also to themselves (King and Wood, 2001). This also happened to Mrs. Wan. Mrs. Wan explained how her advisor told her of emigration, which was described as "very easy" and "costless".

> *I was studying in Beijing at that time. When I was studying in the university, my supervisor emigrated and I was influenced by him. He said it was very easy. You just needed to go to the immigration office to fill in some forms and then attended IELTS exams. You could emigrate abroad after doing these. ...I did not know anything. I just listened to my supervisor.*

Mr. Ma and Mrs. Wan's case illustrate that existing social networks and kinship ties have played a vital role in some *luoshang* families when they make their emigration decision to go to Canada. Apart from the consideration that social networks provide help and support in the practical emigration aspects, the fact that information and imaginaries are transmitted via social networks, which also promote and encourage migration, tends to be neglected. Neither Ong (1999) nor Ley (2011) emphasise the role that social networks play in shaping transnational migration strategy. Images transmitted in the media, the Internet and then reaffirmed by social networks, influence the selection and interpretation of information, and further influence the migration decision. For the *luoshang* families, many of them have access to first-hand information from former immigrants. However, the information could also be misleading.

In addition, by sharing fascinating emigration stories, friends and relatives have built up a context and discourse that being able to emigrate is a proof of personal ability and status, which also signifies extra global opportunities provided to their children. Under this context, when they observe that people around them emigrate abroad, some of the Chinese middle class would become anxious that if they fail to provide such global opportunities to their children, their children would not stand at the same starting line with their counterparts and this would hamper their social reproduction and upward social mobility. That is to say, the former emigrated friends and relatives could increase their feelings of "relative deprivation" (Stark and Bloom, 1985; Stark and Taylor, 1989). However, different from the observation of the new economics of

migration that relative deprivation results from imbalance of income caused by mobility, the interpersonal comparisons that lead to the feelings of relative deprivation, as exemplified by some of the *luoshang* families, come from the possibility of unequal opportunities and the fear of failure of the reproduction of social status. Their incentives to emigrate become stronger in their determination to prove that "I am not much worse than you", and the jealousy towards the possibility that their family and their children might be more successful after emigration, which is largely associated with middle class fears. This point is largely absent in the migration literature. For instance, Mr. Qiao explained how the migration decision of his colleagues has influenced his family's migration decision.

> *In 1999, one of my colleagues emigrated abroad all of a sudden. He has a graduate degree and had very promising career prospects, but he abandoned all these and moved to Toronto. At that time, I had no idea of emigration and I was not interested in it. Following him, another colleague of mine emigrated. [...]After these two people, another colleague's wife moved to Toronto. [...]After they all moved, my wife became a little [uneasy]...She thought "you can move abroad, so can I"!*

Mr. Qiao's quotation reveals his strong desires of upward social mobility and social reproduction, which is a middle class mentality. Not only what house people live in, what car people drive, how good their children perform academically, even whether to choose migration, can be something to compete with. In this sense, migration is not simply an action or family decision, but is regarded as a source of opportunities, cultural and social capital, and social prestige. To these *luoshang* families, not taking the chance to emigrate might mean a loss of development potential to the family, in which anxieties grow. However, in this case, even though the households make a transnational migration decision, the actors might not be sure of what exactly emigration would bring to their family.

This section mainly discussed the external and internal structures that contribute to the household migration decision making of *luoshang* families, with special focus on the relationship between migration and education strategies, migration and imaginaries, and migration and relative deprivation. In the transnational household

strategy, outward mobility is the first step and later the return of the husband makes it a unique household adaptation strategy to optimise family interests and minimise the risks of social downward mobility.

5.3 Family Splitting as a Household Adaptive Strategy

The family splitting arrangement is the main feature in the transnational household strategy of *luoshang* families. This household strategy is more precisely an adaptive strategy, where the couple (usually the husband) returns to China to continue his/her career and business, whilst the other remains in the foreign land, accompanying their children to practice the family's education strategy. The transnational adaptive strategy undertaken by *luoshang* families enables them to become a new family type different from traditional Chinese immigrant families. As Glenn (1983) identifies, in response to particular political and economic conditions, three immigrant family types emerged, namely the split household family, small producer family and dual-wage earner family, representing three family strategies undertaken by Chinese families to deal with life conditions in the United States. Glenn (1983) conceptualises the split household family, which mainly prevailed between 1882-1920, as a male sojourning family arrangement. The husband travelled to the United States to do some paid work while the wife remained at home to do unpaid domestic and subsistence work. Small producer families were a feature of the family business in the United States, in which all family members, husband, wife and children were involved in unpaid production work. This type emerged around 1920 and became more common after the 1940s, when women were allowed to reunite with their husbands. Glenn (1983) believes that dual wage earner families predominated amongst immigrants arriving after 1965, which was based on a strategy of individual wage work where both husband and wife were employed. *Luoshang* families' transnational household strategy is different from these three types of traditional Chinese immigrant families. It is a kind of splitting family arrangement, but the family's production station and reproduction station is reversed comparing to what Glenn identified as "split household families". The host country is no longer the family's production station and it returns to the home country. And both the husband and wife are not necessarily involved in lowly paid employment in the host country, like "dual-wage earner families".

The split household families which were considered traditional immigrant families also adopted a long-term sojourning strategy. The carrying out of the functions of production and other functions of reproduction, socialisation and consumption are separated in two localities by different family members. This strategy corresponds with the new economics of migration, in which the family member in the host country is expected to earn money and send remittances back to support his wife, children and other relatives in the home village. However, despite the geographical separation, the family remains an interdependent and cooperative unit (Glenn, 1983, p.39). In the case of Chinese *luoshang* families, it is the same in that family members are separated and living in different societies. The functions of production and the functions of reproduction are separated and carried out by different parties, while the family remains an interdependent unit. However, the localities considered to play the role of production and reproduction are reversed. In the *luoshang* families, the remittances flew from the origin country to the host country, rather than the other way around which is demonstrated by the traditional migrant families. These different characteristics actually reflect the different external institutional structures under which the mobility took place, and the shifting internal structures that triggered mobility desires. For *luoshang* families, distinct from traditional migrants, economic imperatives were no longer determinant considerations driving their mobility decision making. Instead, children's education and middle class fears played a vital role in triggering mobility desires. In other words, the desire for emigration is closely associated with cultural incentives. The following return of the breadwinner in the *luoshang* families is an adaptive strategy, and also an economic strategy, in response to the unfamiliar business environment and the deskilling experience in Canada after emigration.

In return migration studies, research on the return journey typically takes a success-failure dichotomy and the returnees are often identified in terms of success or failure returnees (Wang and Fan, 2006). In contrast to this traditional perception of positive or negative selection, the return of *luoshang* could hardly be identified in terms of whether they are negatively selective or positively selective among emigrants due to the heterogeneity in the group. The return of *luoshang* is not only an adaptive strategy, but also a family strategy in which the decision is made based on the interests of the

household. In addition, different from the conventional use of return migration, which suggests finality and completion of the migration tale, the return migration of *luoshang* is continuous and not finite, as implied in Ley and Kobayashi's (2005) research on Hong Kong "astronauts". This also seems to be in line with Ong's (1999) cultural logics of "flexible citizenship", a flexible notion of citizenship and sovereignty as strategies to accumulate capital and power. However, the central theme embedded in Ong (1999)'s "flexible citizenship" is a personal choice. In *luoshang's* household splitting arrangements, it is demonstrated in some families that it is more of a necessity than of a choice. The practices of *luoshang's* return also illustrate that mobility is an on-going journey, which is a result of the dynamic changes in external and internal structures, and the social and cultural capital might not be transferable when the social field changes.

5.3.1 Geography matters in investment

In some *luoshang* families, the return of *luoshang* and family splitting arrangement is a part of the transnational household strategy, planned well before emigration. In other words, *luoshang* families decide to emigrate for the main purpose of sending their children abroad for education and gaining access to the transnational opportunities, but have not yet decided to permanently resettle in Canada. They do not feel the necessity, and their desire to move is not strong enough to enable them to give up everything they have already achieved in China and restart in Canada. Neither are they prepared to expand their business transnationally. Therefore, in practice, they do not try to find a job, or establish a new business, or expand their business to Canada after they arrive and their return journey takes place very soon after.

Mrs. Shen's (No. 19) family is a case in point. Her family emigrated to Canada through the Investor Immigration Program in 2005 when her son was 12 and her little daughter was 5 years old. Her husband only stayed in Canada for 3 months and then returned to China immediately. She did not have the chance to return to China and accompany her husband until her son entered university. She then took her daughter with her and went to Hong Kong for 2 years. At the time I interviewed her, she and her children were back in Vancouver again, but still separated from her husband. Mrs. Shen mentioned, "*Before coming here, he has said that he would not live here all the*

time. He would shuttle between the two places." She recalled the experience of the family landing in Canada,

> *We searched for houses everyday without any specific goals. In order to buy a house, in three months, to prepare everything needed to deck out a home. [...] Buy a house; buy a car; take driving tests to get a driving license; buy furniture. Just three months. Once it was completed, my husband left.*

Mrs. Shen's words show that even though the family applied for emigration under the Investor Immigration Program—the immigration policy which aims to attract experienced businesspeople to invest in and establish business in Canada—it doesn't mean that the family had a target of establishing a business or expanding the existing business to Canada. Apart from Mrs. Shen's family, some other *luoshang* families also expressed the same geographical mobility plan. Without a desire to establish transnational business in Canada, the *luoshang* families would not abandon their family business in China, which is the main source of family income to maintain the family's living in the host country. So *luoshang* claimed that they had no choice but to return due to social responsibilities and family responsibilities. Just as Mrs. Shen joked that "*he had to make money for us!*" Mr. Fu (No. 6) mentioned that he felt the responsibilities of keeping the operation of his furniture plant. Mr. Fu was 52 years old when I talked to him. After his family emigrated to Canada in 2008, his wife accompanied their two children studying there, whilst he spent much of his time in China running his small furniture plant. He said he would not consider closing up his furniture plant and resettling in Canada in these years, not just for the family's financial considerations, but also for the employees who were loyal to the company.

> *I could not close my furniture plant. The workers have worked for me for many years and they are heavily dependent on the company to earn a living. I could not easily abandon them. It sounds like I escape abroad (if I do this). They have worked for many years and are very loyal to the company. [...]*

Furthermore, the majority of the *luoshang* migrants were in their 40s and 50s at the time of interview, which means that when they emigrated to Canada, they might be in their 30s and 40s—the golden age for them in terms of career development. Psychologically, they would not feel it could be the time to retire. Economically, as middle class, they were not rich enough to have the option of retiring in their 30s or 40s, as explained by Mrs. Li:

> *Our economic condition does not reach such a level that we could enjoy life in Canada without working. And we are still young. We are not like those who are over 50, with very successful career. They might be able to abandon their career in China and do something in Canada, whatever it is. But to us, we still need to fight and to realise the career pursuits. While in Canada, it is not that easy to reach that goal.*

Mr. Fu and Mrs. Li's words reveal that the Chinese middle class is one of the most active powers in China. They have a sense of social responsibility and also have relatively strong material desires and impulsions to pursue higher social status, prestige and wealth (Li, 2016). However, with such desires, most *luoshang* felt reluctant to set up new businesses or extend their business to Canada. For example, Mr. Cao, having emigrated to Canada for more than 10 years, has never considered doing business in Canada. He felt that it was too hard to establish a new business in Canada because of language difficulties and a lack of knowledge of the Canadian market demand.

> *The most important reason for keeping my business in China is that I know it is so difficult to fit in Canadian society for our generation. […]My capital will only flow to the place where generates benefits. If I invest in Canada, I could barely speak any English or express myself, and I don't know what Canadians are needing, either, how could I do business there? […]I have no idea of the local market requirements at all.[…] I will only do business where it is easier.*

According to Mr. Cao, the "psychic distance" (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977, p. 23), such as differences in language, business practices and culture, are the barriers for him

to establish business in Canada, because the psychic distance hinders the information flow in an international market. From the social network perspective, the psychic distance reflects the barriers of accessing networks of new business relations in a foreign market. In other words, social capital would not be easily converted to economic capital when the field changes, as argued by Bourdieu (1986). Though *luoshang* could be transnational and free to move across borders, their social capital and social resources, which enable the success of their business in China, might not be able to. As such, *luoshang's* intangible social capital is largely localised and too "sticky" to be transferred to an international market. This directly affects their economic decision not to establish a business in Canada. As Bourdieu (1986) identifies, social capital, as a resource representing noneconomic knowledge and assets, directly impacts economic behaviour.

In addition, as they are middle class, the *luoshang* families might not have enough economic capital and resources to bear the possible business failure in global investment. Their business in China was also not mature enough to enter the global market. Neither could they have, nor could they afford the great costs of building new relationships in a foreign country, because "it is presumably more costly to build new relationships in a foreign country than in the home country" (Chen, Chen and Ku, 2004, p. 321). As Zhao and Hsu (2007) identify, social capital, which is embedded in social ties, plays an important role in foreign market entry. A lack of social ties, which could bridge psychic distance, could make *luoshang* feel reluctant to enter the Canadian market.

Mr. Guo also mentioned that he did not have the intention to do business in Canada or the United States now because he felt that "*it is not the time*". If there is opportunity in the future, if for example, his daughter decided to live abroad forever, he probably would consider it. He emphasised that it would be better for him to do some research on foreign projects before investment. Meanwhile, he emphasised that a good return should not be expected on foreign projects.

> *There is no such project abroad which is as profitable as that in China.*
> *[...] The rate of return in Canada is low. If you calculate the return, you*
> *might feel the project is not worth the effort at all. It is a waste of time.*

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But if you regard it as a career or a pursuit, you want to take part in it.
You have your principal and some interests. It is good. […] Why do we
Chinese always think there are no business opportunities abroad? It is
because we evaluate the overseas project with the investment return rate
in China.

The accumulation of private wealth and business achievements of *luoshang* are largely based on the miracle of China's economic growth and the great consumer market provided by China's large population. These are conditions that would not exist in Canada. From the perspective of *luoshang*, the business opportunities and available resources are largely localised and locked to the land. Therefore, it requires *luoshang* to reconfigure their dynamic capabilities to overcome resource constraints and minimise the risk exposure if they would like to extend their business across the globe. In the current stage, as Mr. Cao and Mr. Guo identified, geography still matters when doing business, especially for *luoshang* like them who are not in the innovation industry.

5.3.2 Geography matters in the job market: the deskilling experience

Apart from some *luoshang* who make a direct decision not to enter the Canadian enterprise market and return to China immediately, some families decide not to practice a family splitting arrangement before looking for employment in Canada. They wish to try first whether they could make a living in Canada. Their failure to find employment equivalent to their qualifications in the Canadian job market, in the end, enforces their desire to return to China for work. This is different from what Ong (1999) stressed as the "strategic mechanism" in "flexible citizenship". In this sense, *luoshang* families' transnational strategy could be an adaptive strategy. Their failure illustrates that even though they came to Canada through immigration programmes assuming that both capital and entrepreneurial skills could be transplanted from China to Canada, in practice, geography still matters in capital recognition and conversion. As Bourdieu (1986) argues, capital could be devalued when it exchanges and transmits in different societies and contexts.

The deskilling experience of *luoshang* pushes them to consider the family splitting arrangements. *Luoshang's* family strategy is then switched from resettlement in Canada to returning to China and adopting transnational strategies in order to accumulate cultural and economic capital at the same time for the household. Without sufficient income, the family's economic capital is far from being able to support the household's high consumption in Canada and maintain their middle class markers after emigration. The family might face the risks of dropping from the middle class to the lower class. Low English proficiency is a direct cause of such deskilling experience. In addition, non-recognition of Chinese educational qualifications and working experience also play a role. Mr. Ma tried to find employment before he finally decided to return to China. He reflected on the reasons why he failed to find a decent job in Canada:

> *For me, language is an obvious obstacle. Meanwhile, with your working experience and your academic diplomas obtained in China, you are unable to find a job commensurate with your ability. Because what Canada job market requires is local working experience and overseas study experience. But I do not have either. For me, I am blocked from both sides. It is even impossible for me to begin from the most basic positions.*

This is mirrored in Ho and Ley's (2014, p.2) research on middling Chinese returnees from Canada, finding that they shared the same experience of "deskilling or sub-optimal job prospects" in the country in which they sought permanent residency or citizenship. For *luoshang*, being recognised by the point system of the skilled emigration programme as skilled and qualified is not a guarantee of employment in Canada. They still have great difficulty in finding decent jobs commensurate with their education and experience. Their social and cultural capital, for example, their Chinese education credentials and their years of experience of entrepreneurship and management in China, is not recognised and accepted in the Canadian job market. In other words, their cultural capital greatly devalues when it is brought to Canada, and the translation of their cultural capital into social and economic capital in Canada may never materialise. With years of being in a managerial position in China, some *luoshang* admitted that they could not accept doing low skilled jobs in Canada, and therefore chose not to work. Mr. Zhang recalled his experience in Canada:

> *I could not work in Canada. You know, you could only find jobs like cleaners and supermarket cashiers there. You could not find a good job. Why bother? I would rather return. I could earn much more money whatever I do in China.*

For Mr. Ma, he was even rejected when he tried to get involved in low skilled labour work. He was confused because he thought everyone could do these jobs. Even those who seemed to not be qualified were accepted, but not him.

> *I have tried to do labour work for three times. But all failed. In the first time, it was said that a paper board packing worker was needed and I called to ask. He asked me the work experience in China. And then he hung up and refused me by saying "you can't do the work". [...] The second time, my friend introduced me to work in an automated assembly line of a factory where she was worked in. I met her white [stress here] manager. Probably because my English was poor, I was rejected again. [...] He looked at me and my CV and said I was not suitable to do the work. [...] He asked me whether I had a license to drive a forklift. I did not have one. [...] The third time, I was quite angry. It was in a cake factory. The manager said he wanted a white labourer, not a Chinese.*

Mr. Ma's experience not only demonstrates the existence of racial discrimination, but also a phenomenon of double rejection exiting in Canada's employment market. In the capital-intensive primary sector of the labour market, migrants' knowledge and experience achieved in their home country are not recognised. However, in the labour-intensive secondary sector of the labour market, due to their highly professionalised working experience in their homeland, they are still not considered suitable for unskilled work. The middling position that these Chinese migrants are located in made them face an embarrassing situation in Canada, especially in the sector of employment.

With their middle class background, the *luoshang* families have already formed their class consciousness of being a relatively privileged class in society. However, after

emigration, they face a great downward social mobility, from a managerial position to a worker's position, which could be very hard to accept. The inability of obtaining employment in Canada has not only impacted the family's overall income, but also harmed a man's masculinity, causing psychological problems. In this case, the family splitting strategy seems to be a necessity. For example, Mrs. Hua (No. 10) suggested her husband leave Canada and return to China when he was suffering from unemployment in Canada. Mrs. Hua emigrated to Canada in 1999. With a good command of English, she had a strong desire to emigrate at that time, whilst her husband did not. At that time, her husband was working in local government. With strong personal initiatives, Mrs. Hua attended many classes to improve her English and job hunting skills in Canada after she landed in Vancouver, and finally managed to find a job. In 2000, her husband resigned from the government and opened his own business in China. Several years later, triggered by a special event, the family tried to unite in Canada. Mrs. Hua's husband tried to find employment or do some investment in Canada, but all failed.

> *Later, I said what about you going back? Like this, you made the whole family not happy. He stayed here (in Canada) for a year and it was the darkest year in our family. No smile and always a hard face. When there was public holiday and weekends, I suggested to take our child to go for a trip. He did not go.*

Mrs. Hua ascribed the inability of her husband to find employment in Canada to his poor English. With a business in China, they might also lack the strong initiative needed to master the language, which greatly narrows their career choices in Canada. It is also common to find that those with management and senior positions in China could not accept doing unskilled labour in Canada. However, in some cases, some *luoshang* accepted the offer of being an unskilled labourer. This experience was often not for long and often considered as "*experiencing life*" rather than a way of survival. For example, Mr. Qian depicted his three-month experience of being a decorator. Mr. Qian was a business entrepreneur in China, operating a company of his own. His family emigrated to Canada in 2012 through investment emigration.

At your age, you could go anywhere because your English is good. But for me, my English [was poor]. […] I had the experience of working as a house decoration worker with Canadian local people. I thought it was OK, just a kind of experience. Anyway, it was not a bad experience to work with Canadians. […] I was paid 15 Canadian dollars for an hour and quitted after three months.

The deskilling experience, as illustrated by the *luoshang* families, creates a desire to return to China to work and the family splitting arrangement becomes an adapting strategy in response to the unwelcome employment and business market of Canada. In this sense, this strategy could be non-predetermined, but is developed in on-going migration practices. It becomes a family necessity instead of a choice. Their deskilling experience also illustrates that geographical inequality exists in different social fields. Interestingly, the deskilling experience suggests that cultural capital could be devalued when it is transmitted from China to Canada. However, the inner logic of the transnational educational strategy implies that it also could become more appreciated when the cultural capital is transmitted back to China. The differences in the recognition of cultural capital in different countries reflect the inequalities in cultural power between nation states.

5.4 Summary

This chapter explored the two-step formation of the transnational migration strategy and the adaptation strategy adopted by the *luoshang* families. In the first step of family emigration, some external structures enable the family migration to become possible. These include China's economic growth, the relative affluence of the middle class, policy changes in both China and Canada, and the increasingly easier and more flexible movement facilitated by development of technology and globalisation. Middle class fears make Chinese middle class parents attach great importance to their children's education. Under the influence of imaginaries flowing across borders, foreign education credentials and the transnational cultural capital which is attached to it, become the first choice of parents. Emigration then becomes a part of the education strategies of the *luoshang* families to optimise accumulation of cultural

capital and ease their middle class fears of falling. The second step, which is the return trip of the husband, makes it become a unique household strategy to maximise perceived family gains by enabling accumulation of economic and cultural capital at different localities. This strategy taken by the *luoshang* families could either be a predetermined plan or an on-going decision. The *luoshang* families are less prepared to be involved in a transnational business market, and their business plan also suggests the "stickiness" of social capital to locality. The deskilling experience of *luoshang* in Canada illustrates the middling position of the *luoshang* families in Canadian society, the inequalities in transmission of social and cultural capital between different social fields, and the inequalities in cultural power between nation states. Including both the sense of strategic planning and on-going adaptive decisions, the transnational household strategy that Chinese *luoshang* families adopt could not be simplified as a strategic household capital accumulation strategy.

Chapter 6

Locality, Connectivity and Belonging of *Luoshang* Family

6.1 Introduction

As examined in Chapter 4, the external structural conditions of the reforms taking place in China, Canada and around the world enable family transnational migration and dispersal arrangements to become a choice available to *luoshang* families. With the transnational living arrangement, family interests are maximised through the accumulation of different forms of capital in two localities, economic capital in China and cultural capital in Canada. With the implementation of such a transnational household strategy, whether pre-planned or a forced choice, all family members become embedded in the transnational social field constituted by China and Canada, with transnational ties spanning across the Pacific. In this process, their perceptions towards place could change, causing ambivalence to their sense of home and belonging (Boccagni, 2008). In this chapter, I will look at the actual scope and depth of the transnational connectivity formed by different *luoshang* family members and examine the consequences of transnationalism on the level of individual belonging.

6.2 Trans-border Lives of *Luoshang*

In the transnational family splitting arrangements, *luoshang* are the most active family members in the transnational social field across the Pacific. Regularly commuting across the Pacific, they are closely linked to both China and Canada. To live a trans-border life, the husband in the *luoshang* families tried to separate his working life with his family life and developed different living aims in different places. China is for work and Canada is for leisure. Both locations have been incorporated seamlessly into one single life-world. However, the flexible and highly mobile residential practices of *luoshang* might cause confusion and uneasiness in their daily life, changing their perception of home.

6.2.1 Transnational mobility and citizenship

The relatively flexible movement of *luoshang* is built upon specific structural conditions. Owing to the advancement of telecommunication technology and transportation, it becomes possible and well accepted that people can easily stay in contact with others using the telephone and Internet while sitting at home, and one can easily travel anywhere with frequent and affordable flights provided both nationally and internationally. Without this, *luoshang* would find it harder to travel frequently back and forth, between China and Canada, and become deeply engaged in transnational connections and exchanges.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in order to maintain the family's middle class lifestyle and consumption patterns in Canada, *luoshang*'s business in China is the family's financial source. They cannot abandon it. Faced with an unfamiliar business environment and an unwelcome employment market in Canada, it seems that they have no other choice but to return to China, where they have effective social and cultural capital to rely upon. However, this return decision, though potentially beneficial for their families economically, would inevitably pose significant challenges to the household maintenance. Therefore, hoping to keep the family intact and the relationship alive across borders, *luoshang* travel between the two countries regularly. Most *luoshang* families interviewed reported that the husband travelled to their Canadian home three to four times a year. Depending on the progress of his business, each time he might stay in Canada for different length of time, anywhere from a month to as long as 3 months.

For example, Mrs. Fan (No. 5) described the frequent trans-border journeys made by her husband. Mrs. Fan's family emigrated to Canada and landed in Vancouver in 2000 when she was 35 years old. Her family started a private sector business in the 1980s, and accumulated enough economic capital to apply for the investment emigration programme. In her family, Mrs. Fan's husband was the person leading the emigration application. Mrs. Fan though did not have any desire to resettle in Canada. She wished that she could return to China after what she called the three-year "immigration-prison". She had probably never thought that her family would be split up for more than 15 years.

He just flies here and there! Three or four times in a year. Sometimes he stays here for 20 days and sometimes for two months. If the business in China needs him, he would fly back immediately. If the business in China is fine, he might stay longer. This time, he stayed here for more than a month. Sometimes for 3 months. It is not determined. If there is an emergency, he would change his ticket and fly back on the second day.

As this quotation suggests, *luoshang*'s trans-border life could be a hyper-mobile one. Even they themselves might not know when they have to leave. When he was with his family in Canada, he was still transnationally connected to his business in China, which continuously pulled him back. Seemingly, it is the business that determines when *luoshang* can visit Canada, when they have to return to China and how long they can stay. Such flexibility is based on the constraints of the Canadian immigration policy. To keep their permanent residence status, they must fulfil a residency obligation. The immigration policy regulates that permanent residents have the right to live outside of Canada, but they must be physically present in Canada for a minimum of two years in a five-year-period. If they failed to fulfil this obligation, they might lose their permanent residence status (Government of Canada, 2017). In other words, Chinese *luoshang* must meet this residency obligation and live in Canada for at least 730 days in every five years, otherwise they would have problems renewing their permanent residence cards. This obligation is nicknamed by Chinese *luoshang* families as *yimin jian* (immigration prison). Therefore, *luoshang* have to carefully calculate the arrangements for their time in Canada.

Though the residence obligation to some degree locks *luoshang* to Canada, most of them have held this status for years and do not expect to gain the Canadian citizenship. This is different from Ong's account (1999) of a Hong Konger's pursuit of a foreign passport, which could entitles the holder to a more flexible global movement. This is because *luoshang* are tightly bonded to business opportunities and social networks in mainland China. Their business in China means they are unable to fulfil the residence requirements for a citizenship application, which requires them to live in Canada for a minimum of three years in a four-year-period. More importantly, for them, being a

Canadian permanent resident could endow them with more flexible mobility across the Pacific. As explained by Mr. Ma,

> *I am holding a permanent residence card and I am going to renew it for the fourth time. […] I am not considering applying for citizenship, at least for now. […] It makes border crossing more complicated. There might be more problems in exit and entry Chinese Customs and it might cause problems in my business operation in China as well. I am not quite sure what are the problems, but at least I need to go through many formalities. I think it is quite troublesome.*

As mentioned in section 2.1.2, dual citizenship is not recognized in China, which means that if a Chinese citizen became citizen of another country, he/she would lose their Chinese citizenship (Zhuang, 2013). This would cause difficulties for their long-term stay and doing business in China. To legally reside and work in China, as a foreigner, they would need their employees to sponsor their working visas and might need to renew their visa repeatedly. The downward social mobility which they experience in Canada means that they could neither be regarded as elite returnees nor expatriate hires, thus they would not receive any preferential treatment targeted to attracting the highly skilled members of the Chinese diaspora (Ho and Ley, 2014). Additionally, they would not be eligible for social rights and social welfare in China, which is connected to Chinese citizenship, e.g. pensions, the housing fund, unemployment and medical insurance, etc. Meanwhile, physically absent from Canada, they would also not be able to claim and enjoy Canadian social welfare. So, in this case, not being entitled and covered by social rights and welfare of any country means they could be very vulnerable to risks. What's more, giving up Chinese citizenship might also impact their assets in China, for example, causing problems when buying and selling a house.

Therefore, in a different way to their Hong Kong counterparts (Ong, 1999), the *luoshang* families develop a special citizenship strategy to enable families to enjoy the benefits and citizenship rights offered by different nation state regimes. *Luoshang* would maintain their Chinese citizenship and keep their permanent residence status in Canada so that they could have the highest degree of flexibility when visiting Canada

and the access and entitlement to economic opportunities and social rights in China. Meanwhile, this status might make them very vulnerable to changes in immigration policies and residency laws in Canada. Whereas their wife and children would gain Canadian citizenship, and be able to enjoy Canadian social welfare offered to citizens. Furthermore, under this arrangement, when *luoshang* are unable to meet residency requirements, they could offer help and support by travelling to China, because the companion of a Canadian citizen (provided that he/she is a spouse, common-law partner or parent) outside Canada could also be counted in the calculation of the number of physically present days (Government of Canada, 2017). Meanwhile, as explained above, long-term residency in China without Chinese citizenship might not be easy. This is the citizenship strategy developed in transnational migration practices under the structural constraints of both China and Canada for the purpose of maximizing household benefits. For example, Mrs. Fan highlighted this consideration,

> *At that time, my children were in university. I joined the Canadian citizenship with them, because if my application is passed, they could naturally become Canadian citizens. In this way, if I am in China, the time I'm with him could also be counted in the residency requirements. For example, if he lacks two months, I can "give" him (the time). He often could not manage to live in Canada for half a year in every year.*

Due to the high frequency of travel between the continents, commuting and travelling becomes a new lifestyle developed by *luoshang* in their transnational migration practices. Travelling is no longer an important event that needs careful organisation and preparation either in their state of mind, or in their suitcase packing. It becomes as easy as and as natural as leaving home and going to work each morning. For example, Mrs. Cao (Mr. Cao's wife) stressed that,

> *It is quite simple. He doesn't need to prepare anything. When he wants to come, he just takes a little bag, with his passport and money, goes to the airport and then arrives. He would not check in luggage at the airport because he doesn't need to take any large baggage.*

6.2.2 Work in China and leisure in Canada

China is the site of production and source of income for the *luoshang* families. However, without the companionship of the wife and children, *luoshang* tend to depict their life living alone in China as busy, boring and trying one which they would like to escape from. This differs from what Ley (2011) stressed when he argued that life in Hong Kong, from the "astronauts" view, is too stressful and fast. In *luoshang's* narrative, they stressed their life was boring more than stressful. For example, Mr. Guo narrated how he spent his day after work:

> *My life is quite simple. We used to have a small group, Zhang, Wen, my sister's husband and me. After work every day at 5:30pm, we gathered at the game room of the hotel. There, we did two things. Firstly, have dinner. And secondly, kill time (by playing Mahjong). When we were tired, we took a shower and went back home to sleep. In these two years, our group parted and we played Mahjong less. […] I go home quite early every day after work. Sometimes, at 6pm, my friend called me to have dinner together. I said, "I have already had it".*

When *luoshang* are living and working in China, their transnational connections with family members in Canada are maintained, owing to the development of new technologies. They could use telephone calls and online chatting applications, such as WeChat and QQ to stay in close contacts with their wives and children, thus acknowledging what is happening on the other side of the globe. However, without the physical presence of their wife and children, *luoshang* might find themselves increasingly bored. Thus, their social networks —close friends and relatives— become an alternative source of emotional support. From another point of view, their private space might expand alongside the increase in time spent alone. Some *luoshang* thought positively of such experiences. For example, according to Mr. Liu,

> *A person needs a family, but he also desires a private space. […] For me, both these desires could be fulfilled. When I'm in China, I'm "single". I am free to arrange my time, including time for sports, relaxation and studying. When I'm in Canada, I would devote all my time to my wife and*

child and arrange my time according to their needs. So I think the co-presence of such spaces is favourable to me.

However, their wife, from a distance, might feel worried about the daily life of *luoshang*, and wonder whether they could take care of themselves. For example, Mrs. Sai (No. 18) complained of her husband's inability to care for himself and expressed her concern, *"If we are not at home, he would not eat regularly and healthily"*. Mrs. Sai was 46 when I talked to her. Her family emigrated to Canada in 2006 and they first landed at PEI (Prince Edward Island), as was required by the investment immigration programme to which that they applied. In 2007, the family moved to Vancouver and it has been more than 10 years since the family adopted the split-family arrangement.

With regards to their working life in China, even though their careers are generally successful, many *luoshang* are not satisfied because they have to put great efforts and time in cultivating business and social networks with other business elites and government officials. They find that they were constantly seeking new ways to manufacture *guanxi* (relationships) not only in their business career, for example, to improve sales performance, but also in their daily life, whether when seeing a doctor or sending their children to a better school. In their words, the networking practices among Chinese entrepreneurs and government officials, including banqueting, entertaining and gambling (Lu et al., 2015), which is often termed as *laguanxi,* become a significant burden.

For example, Mr. Xie (No. 22) complained of his dilemma and the feeling of having a tired heart when he had to build social networks when doing business. Mr. Xie was about 50 when I interviewed him. He had years of experience of being an entrepreneur and emigrated to Canada under the Investor Immigration Program in 2012. He told me that he loved his time in Canada as it was a break from his busy and complicated social networking routine in China.

The business field in China polishes people, but it is very trying. When you do business, you must establish public relations with various parties, such as the providers, the purchasers and the government officials. It is

very tortuous when dealing with them. For example, official corruption. […] In China, we businessman are undergoing great pain. It is the rules of the game. If you don't follow the rules, you don't eat and drink with them, you will not get the business deal.

He then stressed that such networking practices were harming his health, leading to obesity and related chronic diseases.

We played badminton every Saturday afternoon. It did not work. […] I also went to fitness centre for two years and failed to lose weight. […] It is difficult to lose weight even with large amount of exercise, because we drink and attend social activities at night.

Mr. Xie suggests the importance of social networks, or more broadly social capital, to business success. This kind of social network, in Chinese, is called *guanxi*, referring to "the dyadic interpersonal relationship ascribed to or achieved by an individual" (Guo and Miller, 2010, p. 270). Many business studies have observed the significant relationship between *guanxi* ties and entrepreneurial outcomes in the context of China (e.g. Batjargal, 2007; Carlisle and Flynn, 2005; Guo and Miller, 2011). Entrepreneurs have to rely on *guanxi* to manage the uncertainties that emerge in a changing environment (i.e. an altering institutional system and a transforming social structure, etc.), for example, to get access to limited resources and the trustworthy information unavailable through public channels (Chang, 2011). In terms of the hierarchy of resource possession, private entrepreneurs, especially small and medium-sized ones, are still the less powerful members of community and, have less advantages when it comes to resource access and receive little support from the government. Consequently, they could be more dependent on *guanxi* to reduce the risks, uncertainties and complexities that they might encounter in the business environment. However, the cultivation of *guanxi* might need great efforts, as it includes frequent interaction, intimacy, trust and reciprocity (Luo, 2011).

For the Chinese *luoshang,* they tend to hold ambivalent views towards the *guanxi* culture. Their business and career success is inseparable from the *guanxi* and social networks that they have established in China. They recognise the importance of

guanxi capital and enjoy the advantages and convenience which they gain through the use of *guanxi,* while at the same time they are tired of seeking and accumulating *guanxi* to shelter them from potential risks. In this case, a transnational trip to Canada could become an escape from their perceived boring life and complex *guanxi* relationships in China.

In contrast to China's images of busyness and sophistication, Canada is often represented by leisure and quality of life in the eyes of *luoshang*. This seemingly echoes the research on Hong Kong "astronauts" (Ley, 2011; Ley and Kobayashi, 2005), which emphasises that Canada represents a "high quality of life". However, we could not ignore the fact that the high quality and ease of *luoshang*'s life in Canada is built upon the material foundation that they made in China through their hard work. In this sense, Canada could only represent "quality of life" when it is a consumption station, serving as a tourist resort providing a break from their stressful business work.

For example, Mr. Bin (No. 3) explained his life when he visited Canada. He was about 50 when I talked to him. Mr. Bin was used to being a senior manager in a state-owned enterprise and emigrated to Canada in 1999 as a skilled emigrant in hope of gaining better employment opportunities. However, after emigration, he discovered a business opportunity in China and then decided to continue his career there and left his daughter and wife in Canada. The family was then split across two continents. Mr. Bin visited Canada several times a year, and it was not until 2009 that his wife returned to China and was reunited with him. At the time of interview, both Mr. Bin and his wife had given up their permanent residence status in Canada.

> *Living there (in Canada) is relatively easy. Interpersonal interaction is easy—just playing golf or going fishing. …Life is simple there. It was like returning to nature. Normally, I watched some Chinese TV series and Chinese newspapers, then walked along the river and looked at white seagulls, or lay on a deckchair to have a rest.*

Mrs. Sai narrated the daily life of her husband when he travelled to Canada:

> *At home, he just grows flowers and grass, surfs on the Internet. My husband likes reading and doesn't like going out. He likes growing vegetables. Sometimes, he helps me pick up children from school, but I am a little worried about him, because he doesn't drive well.*

Canada became a quiet and relaxed place for *luoshang* to enjoy their life free of work. As concluded by Mr. Zhang,

> *There is only one thing there (in Canada): entertainment. Rich people spend money on entertainment that they could not buy in China. ...But you have to pay for it, you have to consume.*

Closely associated with the entertainment function, Canada is also viewed as a place that could provide the kind of life style and experience that might be hard or impossible to access in China, instead of a place for permanent stay. As part of the middle class, the *luoshang* families are inclined to view Western modernity as their learning model (Wang, 2006). Entering Canada could be the family's first step towards getting close to authentic foreign taste. For example, it is often shown in movies and TV programmes that the middle class in Western countries live in large private houses with elaborately designed gardens. After emigrating to Canada, the *luoshang* families could afford such housing, which might be too costly in the city in which they resided due to the dense population. In this sense, the increasing material requirements and the pursuit of qualify of life among the Chinese *luoshang* families are satisfied in their transnational trajectories. In one *luoshang's* Canadian home I visited, the family decorated their spacious two-floor house with luxurious and vintage Western style furniture. In front of the house was a small garden with carefully nurtured grass, flowers and trees. The interior and exterior decoration of their home shows particular preference for the Western style, representing their Westernised middle class taste and reflecting the family's rich economic capital.

Some *luoshang* and their families raised issues like entertainment activities in Canada, such as hunting and adventure, which they found very new and were willing to try. For example, Mr. Qian narrated and shared the rich and varied experience of his *luoshang* friends after emigration to Vancouver, asserting how his transnational

journey might enrich people's life and meet other desires when they could have already lived a wealthy life.

> *I have a business partner who has already emigrated to Vancouver. You know what he is doing now? He, as a member of a group of six or seven, is going to sail a boat from Vancouver to China. Now he has already set off. [...] Several days ago, he sent me pictures and told me he arrived at Hawaii and planned to have a rest there and then continued to sail to Shanghai. [...] He plays golf, goes skiing and goes hunting, and tries everything there. [...] He is there purely to enjoy life. [...] Abroad, whatever you want to do, as long as you could afford and you are willing to do, you could do it. So life abroad could be much richer and more varied than that in China.*

Given the opportunity to escape from the busy business and routine of cultivating business networks in China, for some *luoshang,* they find that transnational mobility brings changes to their body. For instance, Mr. Xie thought he became healthier after living in Canada.

> *My body becomes better. My former hypertension and hyperlipidaemia are improved and my sleeping becomes better. [...] Life in Canada is simple and I don't need to worry a lot. Nor do I need to entertain my clients. Only we friends go out to have a drink, but not to drink for business deals. Without too many business banquets, my body is better.*

According to Mrs. Hua, her husband could have a break and enjoy a more relaxed life in Canada.

> *He can have a peaceful mind and have a good rest in Canada. In China, there are too many business banquets and he is always thinking about his work and his business. When he comes here, he could not easily reach the business in China. So he could free himself for a while.*

Seemingly, *luoshang* could manage to "*divide work with their lives*" as argued by Mr. Cao. This belief seems to mirror Ley and Kobayashi's (2005) findings among Hong Kong "astronauts" that Hong Kong is a place to make money, whereas Vancouver is a place for a high quality of life. However, in practice, what Mr. Cao described might be more illusory than real since many *luoshang* families found it difficult to simply "*enjoy lives in Canada*". They could hardly abandon their business in China and always stay in remote control over their business operation and management while they were in Canada. According to Mrs. Shen,

> *He directed his business via telephone calls when he was in Canada. If there was an emergency, he would need to go back as soon as possible.*

Mrs. Sai narrated the frequency of her husband's telephone calls when he was in Canada, and the harm of the frequent transnational mobility.

> *When he was here, his telephone calls never stopped. He even had to answer the phone in our bedroom because his phone calls at night would influence our sleep. [...] In addition, he is not feeling very well because of the constant jet lag. I have a friend. Her husband used to have dense hair, but due to frequent jet lag, he is now balding.*

Though the development of technology has greatly shrunk time and space, managing business transnationally could still be a problem in the case of *luoshang*. They have to constantly struggle between and weigh up business needs in China and residence requirements in Canada. Frequent transnational trips also pose challenges to their health, especially for those *luoshang* who are older.

6.2.3 Dual-placedness of home

Transnational movement, in the words of Chan (2013, p. 30) "blunts and blurs the distinctions between place of 'origin' and 'destination', between 'exit' and 'entry', in people's mind and also their experiences". As a result, the stable relationship between people and place has been broken down in the transcending processes (Butcher, 2010), and home is no longer necessarily based on a particular soil (Chan, 2013). The

frequent transnational trips that *luoshang* are involved in have given rise to their sense of the "multi-placedness of home" (Leung, 2003, p. 247). Many *luoshang* identify themselves as having two homes and feel at home in both China and Canada. This is exemplified by a quotation from Mr. Liu.

> *I think both places are my home, because I have many new friends and established social networks there. I think the concept of home and the feeling of at home might come from two perspectives. One is the place of your close relatives, dwelling and the other is the place where there are the social affairs and your social networks. For relatives, they (wife and children) are in Canada, but my father and my sister are in China. [...] From social relatives, I have a friend circle in Canada fitting with my personal values and social interests. From the side of China, my career is in China and definitely I have more social networks in China.*

For many migrants, the concept of home possesses multiple meanings, ranging from the family dwelling, a city, to their country of origin (Ma, 2003). It is more than a material object, but in many cases involves imagination, local memories, networks, cultural ideals, values and so on. (Faist, 2000). In reality, many refer to the dwelling of families (Ma, 2003). According to Yeoh, et al. (2005), there is a shared imaginary of belonging in transnational families encompassing past memories and trajectories, and future continuities, but one which transcends notions of place and time. For Mr. Liu, he thought the places where his families dwelled and where social networks existed could be regarded as "home". In this sense, he has two homes. Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004) argue that transmigrants expand their notion of home as they "maintain, build and reinforce multiple linkages with their countries of origins" (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 52).

Due to the high frequency of transnational migration, the existence of home might not be based on a specific house in which they dwell. This is especially true for some *luoshang*. For instance, Mr. Cao thought his home to be in the air.

> *I now feel my home is on the Pacific and on the airplane. [...] My understanding of home is the home in your heart, wherever you are, even*

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if you are in Africa. It doesn't mean that I must have a place, a house, and it becomes the home, or the place you dwell in is the home. I never think in this way. I think the most important thing is whether you have a home in your heart.

For Mr. Liu, even though he did not have a house in the city which he is currently working in, and lived in a hotel, he had a sense of home in the city he is working in. This arrangement is a result of his economic considerations and also his hyper mobile lifestyle.

My wife and children have settled abroad, so I don't feel the necessity to buy houses here. [...] Houses are irrationally expensive in China. [...] I now live in hotels. And in my calculation, it is even cheaper than renting a house. [...] As I become familiar with the hotel, I can choose the best room. I don't need to care about cleaning. The only thing is you need to take all your things away when you check out. But it is not a problem for me. [...] I don't want to put too much thought in the place I live in. [...] I have very good relationships with the waiters in the hotel and I feel more comfortable than living in a neighbourhood where I know nobody. My activities and hobbies make me feel attached to the city.

In addition, some people thought that home was where there their wives and children were. For these *luoshang*, this might involve a disjunction between a physical location and emotional attachment. Even though they were living in China, they felt their home was in another country. Mr. Ma expressed his opinion:

I think to a man who has married, where his wife is where his home is. For a man who has not married, where his parents live is where his home is.

However, even though many *luoshang* interviewed claimed that they felt at home in two places, they might always suffer from dislocation. For example, Mr. Cao described his feeling,

When I am in China, I always think about Canada, because my wife and children are there. When I am in Canada, I begin to miss my friends in China. […] Now I feel better, because I tell myself to regard going to Canada as a business trip and going to China as a business trip as well.

This section described the transnational mobility and transnational connectivity of the husband in *luoshang* families. Their perceptions and lives in the transnational social field built between China and Canada are explored, revealing the dynamics of *luoshang's* transnational trajectories and challenging the traditional view that Canada could simply be regarded as a place to enjoy life. The frequent transnational trips created a sense amongst the *luoshang* of having two homes.

6.3 Localisation and Transnational Ties of *Luoshang* Wives

In the actual practices of the transnational household adaptation strategy, it is apparent that the women, instead of their husbands, often feel more of the impacts, because they are not only experiencing separation, but also going through the process of localisation and acculturation alone in an unfamiliar society that demands English, and are undertaking domestic and parenting responsibilities alone. As Huang and Yeoh (2005) argue, the women are paying a greater price than their husbands since they are uprooted from their home country and have to meet the challenges arising from transnational family arrangements alone. Therefore, women in transnational migration are often described as being victims who sacrifice their own interests for the interests of the family (Chee, 2005; Ley, 2011; Ong, 1999). Compared to husbands who are engaged in frequent transnational travels, wives are relatively immobile and more settled in the host country. In their transnational trajectories, they have undergone complex processes of identity negotiation across borders. This section aims to discuss the kind of transnational ties that the *luoshang* wives have established and how they renegotiate their gender and ethnic identities in Canada.

6.3.1 Renegotiation of gender identities

In the transnational trajectories of the *luoshang* families, the *luoshang* wives are pushed to integrate in a foreign country alone, whilst also being physically separated from their friends and relatives, and shouldering domestic and parenting responsibilities alone. In their "*spurious single parent household*" (*jiaxing danqin jiating*) in Canada, as Mrs. Sai described it, the *luoshang* wives, as agents, actively negotiated their gender identities with the surrounding socio-cultural environment in the localisation and mobility process.

For most *luoshang* wives, migrating to Canada means that they have to give up their career path in China completely. Similar to their husbands, these *luoshang* wives face downward mobility in their professional paths in Canada and many even became housewives. In the family splitting arrangements, the *luoshang* wives sacrifice their employment prospects for the maximisation of household profits. However, in contrast to what Chiang (2008) and Waters (2002) claimed, being a housewife might not be the only choice for *luoshang* wives. With their middle class family background, the *luoshang* wives from mainland China might be able to pursue their career, even though they find their career paths are somehow hindered in Canada. Whether they choose to be housewives or not is not only related to the family's economic status, but also to their previous career position and work experience before migration.

Some *luoshang* wives naturally chose to be housewives when they arrived in Canada because they had stopped working long before emigration. With the successful career of their husbands in China, these *luoshang* wives could be available to other employment forms, e.g. being housewives. However, their ability and pursuit to work has gradually faded away as time goes by. How to manage their home and kids becomes the centre of their life. For instance, Mrs. Sai admitted her inability to work as she stopped working in 1995.

> *I am not a strong woman. […] My family is very traditional. Man goes*
> *out and woman stays at home. If you want money, go to your husband.*
> *But it is a woman's duty to look after the parents and children.*

The "traditional" family style that was mentioned by Mrs. Sai could refer to the traditional way that a woman's role is constructed—*xian neizhu* (a supportive and assisted role to husband's career). In traditional Chinese culture, women were not expected to assume any public power in society, for example, a Chinese saying states that decent women are not supposed to set foot outside the home (Zhou, 2000). These housewives in *luoshang* families, represented especially by Mrs. Sai, as revealed by Waters (2002) in her research on Hong Kong "astronaut" wives, were satisfied with the family arrangement and with being housewives. They did not perceive their child-care responsibilities and lack of employment as being oppressive. After leaving their work a long time ago, they lost the confidence and ability to pursue their personal careers, particularly in Canada, where they faced hindrance in the job market because of the language barrier.

However, advocated by the contemporary Chinese values, women are expected to be economic independent and take part in employment outside home as a signifier of gender equality, and China has become a society where urban female labour participation is the highest in the world (Zhou, 2000). In this context, many *luoshang* wives were well-educated professional women in China before emigration. However, upon their arrival in Canada, they were forced to become housewives, because they encountered de-skilling in Canada due to language barriers and unrecognition of previous education and work experience. In addition, their roles as mothers and wives were reemphasised after emigration. Their career pursuits were given low priority and delayed, whereas the Chinese ideals of being a good mother and wife were prioritised. Therefore, bound by their roles as mothers, they felt their time and energy were too limited to do another paid job in Canada. For example, when Mrs. Li arrived in Canada, she needed to care for her two children by herself. She felt exhausted already with a one-year-old and eight-year-old son.

> *I am so busy because my kids are so little. After I send them to school, I would go to ESL language schools to study English. When I am back, I need to start preparing dinner for them. Because my elder son's school is over at 2:50pm. After school, I need to take him to English classes and many other classes, such as swimming classes, etc. I feel I am always on the way to do something. To be honest, I feel very tired.*

Mrs. Shen complained of the same problem,

> *I also don't have time. I have to send my children to go to school at 9am*
> *pick them up at 3pm. For this limited time, what job can you do? After*
> *3pm, I am also very busy. [...] My son goes to play basketball in 7.30am*
> *twice a week. And my daughter goes to learn ice-skating on Monday and*
> *Wednesday, painting and singing on Tuesday, Chinese on Thursday, and*
> *swimming on Friday. Her brother learns to play guitar on*
> *Weekends. ...Sometimes I am too busy to sit down during the day.*

The experience of Mrs. Shen and Mrs. Li suggests that they encountered a different child-rearing experience in Canada to that in China. Their domestic responsibilities have been exacerbated due to the absence of a familial support system and inadequacy of childcare services in the new country. In some *luoshang* families, prior to migration, they were able to hire domestic helpers to help with cooking, children-care and other domestic responsibilities. The extended family could also provide some support if needed. However, emigration meant that extended families and friends were absent in the lives of these *luoshang* wives. In addition, the high cost of hiring domestic helpers in Canada made them hesitate to hire one, as they did before in China. This is partially because of their middle class status, which makes them unable to afford high levels of consumption. Even in some families that could afford the expense of hiring a domestic helper in Canada, they refused to do so. They thought "*it isn't worth it*" (Mrs. Fan) spending more than four times the money in Canada to receive the same service as in China. They would rather to do it by themselves. This belief is illustrated by a quotation from Mrs. Fan.

> *In China, our family had a domestic helper. Here in Canada, I do it all by*
> *myself, but I feel good. Like we cook by ourselves, it is good. I don't feel*
> *bad. For example, in China, people might think you are rich, why not hire*
> *a domestic helper? But we don't have such thinking here. When we came*
> *here in 2004, 1,000 Canadian dollars a month for a domestic helper. Now*
> *it costs 4,000 Canadian dollars. I feel it is too expensive. With the money,*

you could eat out everyday. I also feel unaccustomed and uneasy with a
stranger at home.

This reveals that the middle class that the *luoshang* families belong to is a newly emerging class. Without rich capital accumulation from the previous generation, their hard experience of entrepreneurship and wealth accumulation leads to their pragmatic, calculative and plain consumption habits (Lu, 2004). Therefore, after emigration, such sources of help as those mentioned above become inapplicable to the *luoshang* wives. In this process, their gender roles are renegotiated in the transnational social space. Interestingly, when they were suddenly thrust into Canada, some *luoshang* wives had no domestic skills. For example, Mrs. Shen shared her experience.

Before, in China, we had a domestic helper and our parents, so I did not
need to do any domestic works. When I came here, I even did not know
how to cook porridge. […] On our arrival, we lived in a hotel for 40 days
and ate in restaurants for 40 days. We were going crazy. Later we moved
to a family hotel where we could cook by ourselves….I was very excited
and planned to cook porridge. But even the easiest porridge, I did not
know how to cook. I knew it needed much water, but how much is needed?
I was so silly.

Though it was hard, they finally mastered these skills and became more independent as a consequence of the transnational family separation. Mrs. Shen said, "*it is not a matter of can cook or can't cook now. I am very good at it now*." However, even though these *luoshang* wives felt that it was difficult to care for their children and undertake domestic work alone in Canada, few chose to ask their parents to come and help. This might because these *luoshang* families chose to emigrate in their middle age and their parents were not of an age where they could provide much domestic support. This is different from Zontini's (2004) findings, which showed that there was a new trend among Filipino migrants to import grandparents to help with caring tasks for families in Barcelona.

However, many *luoshang* wives were not satisfied with staying at home and they wished to expand their activities. This was especially true of those who had well-paid

jobs and promising professional paths before they came to Canada. With strong initiative to establish their career in Canada, they either actively used their social networks established in China to find a job (Mrs. An), or actively learned English and received training to find a job in Canada (Mrs. Hua). Mrs. An (No. 1) used to be a senior manager in a private company in China before her family emigrated to Canada in 2007. She was 45 at the time of the interview. Her husband was a senior manager in a private company in China while Mrs. An and her daughter were resettling in Canada. Mrs. An could not accept being a housewife.

> *I think the female should be independent. [...] It is not good for a woman to rely on her husband and her family with everything. [...] Even though you might not need to work, you need to have at least a part-time job, so that you could feel satisfied and be confident.*

Mrs. An's thinking is deeply embedded in the PRC's values on gender equality that women should have equal access to employment alongside men. In this sense, the main goal behind obtaining a job in Canada was mainly personal fulfilment, rather than to support the family, given their relatively strong economic position. Because their income would not be the main source of financial support for the family, they were selective of where they worked in Canada. They might accept a job that was not as good as that in China. However, they were less accepting of low-end labour work in Canada. This is different from other Asian women, for example Filipinos, who migrate internationally and work in another country for the purpose of obtaining higher incomes to support their families (Huang and Yeoh, 2005; Zontini, 2004). Similarly, this also stands in contrast to earlier Chinese immigrants, for whom, as Zhou (2009) argues, the "economic contribution to the family is crucial for survival" (p. 178). Even if they chose not to work and stay at home instead as housewives, they often wished to make some extra money by taking care of other children in addition to their own (Zhou, 2009). The experience of Mrs. Hua and Mrs. An illustrates that the transnational experiences of *luoshang* wives could contradict the experience of Hong Kong and Taiwan "astronaut" wives, who were often seen as "trailing wives" (Chee, 2005) and housewives (Chiang, 2008; Ley, 2011; Waters, 2002).

6.3.2 Transnational linkages and sense of belonging

The above section shows that in the resettlement of the *luoshang* wives in Canada, gender roles were reinforced instead of being transformed. Meanwhile, their sense of home and belonging was also challenged in their transnational trajectories. As noted by Ma (2003), spatial mobility could give rise to multiple and flexible personal identities, because local linkages, connections and the power of attachment to a certain place have reduced mobility. People's sense of belonging is not necessarily attached to the particular place of dwelling (Ong, 1999). In other words, even though people are living in a particular place, it doesn't mean that they possess a sense of belonging to that place. This is especially true for the *luoshang* wives.

In their resettlement in Canada, some *luoshang* wives developed the same sense of multi-placedness of home as their husband. Their emotional attachment to Canada has been gradually strengthened as they spent years living there and accumulated memories attached to the place. However, it doesn't mean that their ties to China decrease overtime. In fact, the deeper an individual is involved in the two places, the more he or she feels belonging to both homes. For example, Mrs. Li described how she felt in both China and Canada.

> *I now feel both [China and Canada] are my home. In the beginning, because I just arrived, I felt China is my home and I don't feel Canada is [my home]. But as I live here longer, I feel accustomed to both places. Children are the centre of parents. So when children feel here is home, I feel more at home. Both places are my home now.*

As a part of a family's citizenship strategy, the *luoshang* wives do not hold Canadian citizenship and have given up their Chinese citizenship. However, their sense of belonging tends to stand in contrast to their political identity, and this sense of Chineseness could even be intensified as a result of living in Canada. As Ma (2003, p.35) argues, "a trans-migrant's sense of national identity and nationalism can be heightened by globalisation and by staying in a diasporic location other than his or her home place". In this sense, China becomes a source of belonging in the transnational social field. Ong (1999, p.88) attributes this Chineseness to ethnic

features: Chinese entrepreneurs were "agents actively shaping their self-identity" in transnational settings.

For example, Mrs. Zhou (No. 25) expressed a strong sense of belonging and attachment to China. Mrs. Zhou was already 52 years old when I talked to her. Her family was engaged in the sector of household appliances in Shijiazhuang, and emigrated Canada in 2011 via the investment immigration stream. Mrs. Zhou has three children and her eldest daughter had graduated from university when the family emigrated Canada, but her two sons are still little. After emigration, Mrs. Zhou's family adopted a split-family arrangement. According to Mrs. Zhou,

> *I still love China. Without China, I am nothing. I am born in China and grew up in China. Now when I see the five-starred red flag, I still feel very close and I wish I could go back. Canada is a foreign land and I don't feel I belong here.*

Mrs. Zhou is not alone. Mrs. Wan also mentioned that her Chinese belonging has been strengthened as she emigrated Canada. She thought she had become more patriotic now.

> *Another feeling is that I become more patriotic. Before when I was living in China, I loved China, but did not have such experiences. But when I moved out, if anyone said bad words about China, I would quarrel and argue with him. I feel living abroad, I am generally becoming more patriotic.*

The strong attachment to China revealed by Mrs. Zhou and Mrs. Wan might be associated with their age and their experience in Canada. Their strong commitment to Chinese identity should be depicted more as a product of the social environment, instead of their individual feelings (Leung, 2003). Firstly, the rise of Chinese national power in regards to economics, culture and foreign relations has resulted in growing confidence among Chinese people in their national thought, identity and practices (Ho and Ley, 2014). In the words of Mrs. Hong, "*Now China has been increasingly*

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powerful and I have high income here, so I feel confident wherever I go. If our country is not strong, we can hardly lift our head in abroad."

Secondly, the strong attachment and belonging to the homeland might also result from the practical and emotional difficulties of fitting into a new society (Ho, 2008). In the host society, new migrants are not always welcomed. As Ong (1999, p. 101) discovered, despite the possession of high social prestige and economic capital in Hong Kong, affluent Asian newcomers found that "their welcome from the local Anglo upper class has been cool". From the perspective of migrants, they found it hard to establish social networks and ties with the "locals" due to their inability to speak English and different cultural backgrounds. Their friendship circles were mainly Chinese. The *luoshang* families found it difficult to integrate into Canadian society. This relationship was described by Mrs. Cao:

> *When I emigrated, I thought I must integrate in Canadian society. I wanted to learn English well. However, later, I realised that me and Canada were like oil and water. How can I integrate in it? Now, I feel why do I need to integrate? They probably have to learn from me.*

Mrs. Cao's words demonstrate the isolation that she felt as she and her family settled in Canada. After settling abroad for a longer time, Mrs. Zhao (No. 24) expressed her confusion as to whether it is a good family decision to emigrate, as she increasingly identified the difficulties of integration. She began to recognise her position in Canadian society as a "minority" who was largely marginalised. Mrs. Zhao's family is a relatively new *luoshang* family. She was 43 when I interviewed her. Opening a textile business in Shijiazhuang, her family entered Canada in 2013 as investor emigrants.

> *What I am confused about is that the Chinese in Canada are still "others". Those foreign "locals" still discriminate against Asian people. It means that you can't integrate in their society if you want. I think those "locals" feel superior to us. And the phenomenon of "glass ceiling". As a Chinese, no matter how hard you work, you probably can only be stuck in the middle level and cannot touch the higher level. Now I have taken my two*

kids to this "unequal" society. In China, we are all the same and no one is superior or inferior. What's more, our family has a very good economic situation in China. But abroad, foreign people unconsciously view us as Asians and as second-class citizens, even though they are polite to you. I am always thinking whether it is right to take them here without their permission.

Emigration has provided *luoshang* families with global opportunities to escape from the perceived "inequality" for the middle class when compared to the more powerful and elite class in China. However, at the same time, when they enter Western society, they might encounter other unexpected power asymmetries and the family's privilege could be diminished. Though the *luoshang* wives feel attached to China, when they return China, they might find that they feel as though they are an intruder in their Chinese home. For example, Mrs. Zhou expressed confusion as to whether China is still her home.

I always feel alienated when I go back China. Relatives and friends are not as close as before and I have no say in the family's business. Sometimes when a foreign land becomes a homeland, you become confused as to where the foreign land is and where the homeland is. When I go back to China, I always have a foreign feeling, but I can still feel the warmth.

Mrs. Zhou's words reveal her embarrassment over her position in Chinese and Canadian society, where she felt cultural marginalisation and social exclusion. The words of Mrs. Zhao and Mrs. Zhou demonstrate that the institutional structures of nation-states have produced the power asymmetries underpinning migrant subjectivities and their livelihoods (Ho and Ley, 2014).

Thirdly, the strong attachment to China of these *luoshang* wives could also be because of their transnational linkages that they established with the home country. Though the *luoshang* wives are more settled and immobile after emigration, they often travel with their children back to China to unite with their husbands during the summer and

winter holidays. Therefore, normally, they tend to travel back to China twice a year so that the family can have more time together.

> *In summer, we go back to China. […] He comes three times a year and we go back twice a year. So in total, five times a year. (Mrs. Shen)*

> *We go back to China in the summer holidays every year. Because children's summer holiday is long and we live in China for about a month and half. (Mrs. Li)*

Economics is an important band linking *luoshang*'s families in Canada to China. *Luoshang* wives receive continuous remittances from their husband in China to support the family's consumption in Canada. This reversed form of remittances — from the home country to the host country — is different from the traditional ones depicted in the literature on migration studies (Pieke et al., 2004; Taylor, 1999). These financial flows from China to Canada are used to support the family's consumption, investment and social reproduction in Canada. In addition, some *luoshang* wives manage to set up other economic transnational connections to China while they are settled in Canada. Mrs. Cao had a good friend in Canada who was an expert in buying stocks, and because of her, Mrs. Cao's interests in "*chaogu*" (selling and buying stocks) grew. She lived on Chinese stock market time whilst in Canada and was actively involved in the selling and buying activities every day under the guidance of her friend. Mrs. Hong was involved in e-commerce to China while she was in Canada. She joined the business system of a North American online shopping website. Using WeChat as social commerce platform, she sold North American products to China and played a role as a purchasing intermediary helping Chinese customers purchase foreign products at a cheaper price. Mrs. Hong re-found her value in e-commerce.

> *In China I used to work, but in Canada, I became a housewife. I didn't like the life of being a housewife. Everyday watch TV series and cook. It was boring and I felt I became stupid. I like myself now as I found the platform of e-commerce and knew many friends. I feel I have found some feelings when I was in China. About three years after arrival, I found what*

I could do here. If I was still a housewife, I probably would be neurotic now.

Figure 6.2 A Combination of Chinese Culture and Western Culture on a Wardrobe [10]

Source: Author

Though living in Canada, the *luoshang* wives still consume Chinese cultural products as if they are in China (Figure 6.2). For example, owing to the rapid advancement of Internet technology, Chinese television media resources become increasingly easy to access on the Internet, which was hard to imagine decades ago. As the majority of *luoshang* families started their transnational trajectories in the 2000s, when information science and technology began to experience rapid development, they

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[10] A traditional Chinese symbol "*fu*" (representing lucky and happiness) sticks at the bottom of the wardrobe. On the top, there are two ceramic sculptures of white ladies.

became able to choose from TV programmes in various languages. For the *luoshang* wives, even though they are living in Canada, they still keep updated on the Chinese news, TV plays, programmes and movies. They experience constant transnational cultural influence from China via the information smoothly flowing over the Pacific.

For instance, Mrs. Lu (No. 13) narrated the changes on her preference for TV shows. Mrs. Lu was 46 years old at the time of interview. Her family moved four times over twenty years. They first moved to the United States for study and work in 1994 and later the whole family emigrated to Canada in the 2000s. They started small businesses in Canada, and in 2006, the whole family decided to sell their businesses and move back to Beijing so that their little son could establish Chinese roots. In addition, they also hoped to take advantage of the good economic situation in China and find new business opportunities. In 2010, Mrs. Lu and her son moved to Canada again. However, this time, her husband did not move to Canada, but stayed in China to continue his entrepreneurship. The family chose to adopt a transnational household strategy because it was believed to be in the best interests of the family at the time.

> *Before I was in the U.S., I was accustomed to watching American TV series because at that time the Internet was not very developed. […] Later when I came to Canada, the Internet had developed so rapidly that it was no longer like before. Now it is very easy to find Chinese TV series. I prefer to watch Chinese TV series. […] I began to watch Chinese TV series from 2006. […] From "The Disguise" to "Nirvana in Fire", my idol has changed from Xiubo Wu to Dong Jin and Kai Wang.*

Apart from TV series, the *luoshang* wives are also updated about the newest Chinese movies. When I was living in a *luoshang's* home in Canada, Mrs. Cao invited me to watch the newly released Chinese movie "The Witness" with her at a movie theatre in Vancouver. According to her, it was a regular entertainment activity. When they knew Chinese movies were on show, she would watch them with her friends.

Contrasting to the traditional view that the wives in the transnational household strategy are immobile, this section highlighted the renegotiation of gender roles and the renegotiation of belonging in their transnational trajectories and the transnational

connections that the *luoshang* wives were engaged in. Their female gender roles and their belonging to China have been reinforced in the process of geographical mobility. Meanwhile, power asymmetries continuously emerge.

6.4 Transnational Ties and Child-rearing Arrangement

The family-splitting arrangements of the transnational strategy of *luoshang* families stress sending children to Canada to receive local education so that their children could get access to global opportunities, secure a better future and avoid downward social mobility. In most *luoshang* families, mothers would take on the responsibility for caring for children by staying with them in Canada. In some rare cases, both parents might be absent in the family's Canadian household and the children become "parachute kids". In each case, children are expected to remain in Canada most of their time, especially during term time. However, their relative stability does not imply that they are immobile individuals in the transnational social field formed across the Pacific and they are free from transnational connectivity and influences. This section will introduce the transnational connectivity that was established by children in the *luoshang* families and illustrate how transnationalism serves as a socio-cultural space providing transnational opportunities and a sense of ethnic belonging.

6.4.1 Children and transnational connectivity

Family splitting in Chinese families is not a unique strategy that will only be adopted transnationally. In China, cases are easily found where one or both parents work in one city while the children study in another. Families are organised in this way for many reasons, ranging from access to better schools in certain cities, parents changing workplaces, and so on. (Zhou, 2009). In *luoshang* families, it is also not rare to find families that had already adopted a separate living arrangement before emigration. For instance, before emigration in 2009, Mr. Zhang's families had been living in two separate cities for 6 years. Mr. Zhang first worked in Zhangjiakou, later in Beijing and finally in Datong and his wife changed her workplace to Beijing. Their daughter studied in an international school in Beijing with her mother.

However, the practice of transnational living arrangements is greatly different from the separate living arrangements in the home country, wherein the children are still living within the same sociocultural environment. When children are living and studying in a foreign country, their accustomed interactions with former relatives, neighbours and friends might be broken, and they are thrown into a society wherein languages, social values, norms and behaviours are drastically different from those they are familiar with. With the economic capital support and their "class consciousness" cultivated in China, *luoshang* parents concern the transmission of the middle class taste in the host society as well. However, they might encounter some problems in the transmission of the cultural and social capital across generations. Meanwhile, not like their *luoshang* father who can enjoy relatively flexible mobility, children are to some degree more bound to a locality, and may only visit China during summer or winter holidays. In this case, cross-border interactions could be alive in the children's livelihood, acting as an emotional support when they are in the foreign land.

The middle class background of the *luoshang* families means that they have a relatively solid economic foundation to offer their children in Canada. They are aware that the quality of schools could be highly dependent upon the sociocultural environment of the neighbourhood. Therefore, with relatively abundant economic capital accumulated in China, the *luoshang* families would carefully select their houses in safe middle-class neighbourhoods so that their children could receive education in reputable and high quality schools. In this sense, their decision on houses is dramatically influenced by their middle class status in China.

With the economic capital, in order to reproduce their middle class power and privilege, they are also aware of the necessity of transmitting power and privilege to their children through the form of cultural capital. The cultural capital is not only limited to the institutionalised form of education qualifications. They also care for the cultivation of the children's ability to "consume" cultural or symbolic goods, which represents "distinctive styles of life" (Brubaker, 1985, p. 756). One indication is the popularity of piano in Chinese *luoshang* families. It seems that every family has a piano at home and requires their children to learn how to play the piano from a very young age. According to Kraus (1989), Chinese urban middle class families tend to

view the piano as a representation of modernity, source of prestige and status symbol. In the *luoshang* families, their preference towards piano in Canada implies that they try to transplant their habitus formed in China to Canada. It is also interesting to find that though some parents claimed that they wished their children to accept a freer and relaxed education in Canada in their childhood, they did not abandon preparing cultural capital for their children in Canada and sent their children to various after-school classes. For instance, Mrs. Shen mentioned that when they moved to Canada, she let her son attend English training classes, painting classes, swimming classes and badminton classes. Mrs. Fan's little daughter needs to attend painting and playing violin classes every week.

Though abundant in economic capital, the *luoshang* families could feel powerless in providing their children access to social capital resources in Canada. These capital resources not only refer to the resources that could help their children to cope with challenges they meet during adjustments and to ease bicultural tensions in the host country, as suggested by Zhou (2009), but also include the social support and social networks in Canada available for children's future career development there.

The *luoshang* parents are sometimes powerless to help children overcome the difficulties that emerged from their cultural and bilingual adjustments in the host society. In many cases, upon their arrival in Canada, they tend to be less prepared for the potential problems and psychological costs associated with overseas education, for example, whether children could psychologically adjust to the foreign language and culture, different education system, and whether children could manage themselves without the physical presence of both parents. For example, Mrs. Shen described the hard times her little daughter had, who was only 5 at the time of arrival. Without adequate linguistic preparation in advance, Mrs. Shen's daughter had problems communicating when she was thrust into the English-speaking environment.

> *My daughter was in kindergarten. For a whole year, she did not open her mouth, she did not speak. For a whole year. It was painful. She could not understand what people said. Nor could she speak English. So she did not speak a word. […] Later, she naturally spoke. She is outgoing. Probably because she was too young at that time, just 5 years old.*

Some young children might feel isolated and alienated when they were thrown in to a foreign country. And they would like to resort to their transnational ties, for example, their former classmates and close friends in China, as emotional support to share and relieve their stress. This was discovered by Mrs. Zhao.

> *I told my daughter to make friends with the locals to improve English. One time, I found her chatting on QQ when she was doing homework. I was angry with her, because of her bad study habits. She told me, mom, do you know? I could only practice English with them. How could I have any common words with them? I could not speak my mind with them at all. Via QQ, I could speak with my friends.*

Meanwhile, more risks might arise when children are taken away from the support and care provided by intact families and adapt to the unfamiliar social environment alone or with the presence of only one parent.

With only one parent accompanying them in Canada, children in the *luoshang* families are normally under the remote control of the father via video calls or phone calls from China and the direct control of the mother in Canada. However, in this transnational arrangement, the traditional mechanism of support and control from both parents has been weakened. Both moms and fathers feel powerless as fathers are unable to be physical present in Canada and moms are alone shouldering the responsibility of caring for their children. Via remote control in transnational household arrangements, *luoshang* families tend to accept the fact that transnational living arrangements might not be an effective method for monitoring children's academic achievement and psychological development. Without effective guidance, monitoring and support, children could be easily impacted by the Canadian youth culture and find it difficult to integrate in the alien environment by themselves. For example, four years after emigration, when Mr. Qiao's son was just 15 years old, he found that video chat was no longer applicable in monitoring his son and he was often absent from school. His wife also had no control over his son.

> *So the case of my child is that he was too lazy and had no idea how to study. Canada is so rich and people could make a living without high education qualifications. My son even said, 'if I could not attend university, what does it matter? I could be a truck driver.' […] When my son was in the third year of high middle school, he had skipped classes 48 times.*

Mr. Qiao attributed the academic failure of his son to the great freedom that the education system in Canada provides. He found that this education system greatly contradicted what he expected and imagined as the modern and quality-centred Western education. Recalling his memories in China, his demands on the role of Canadian schools and teachers were quite similar to that of China, which is to stress strong academic support and stricter supervision over children's educational output. He also recognised the negative effect of the split family arrangement due to his absence. With the strong middle class desire of maintaining social reproduction, Mr. Qiao could not accept his son's wish to become a truck driver in the future. Such a wish would not only represent a failure of his cultural investment in his son, but also signal possible downward social mobility. This downward social mobility could be more threatening in the context of Canada than in the context of China, because in the context of China, educational "failures" might be altered with supportive social capital. However, in Canada, due to a lack of the supportive social capital, education might be the only route to upward social mobility (Zhou and Kim, 2006).

Some families luckily experienced a smooth transition between the two societies. They attributed such a smooth transition and the academic success of their children to their good luck. For example, Mrs. Shen said, "*Our family is lucky. My two children study well in Canada. […] I even told them to have a rest and not to work that hard.*"

Without the physical presence of fathers, for some families, the academic performance of their children was closely associated with whether the mother had authority, control and proper guidance over their children. For example, Mrs. Sai described her family's educational principles and concerns:

His father said "go with the flow". But it is impossible. If I let him grow
naturally, the children will fail here (in Canada). […] We are a "spurious
single parent household". It is actually so bad, especially for boys. Like,
we Chinese, children in China normally won't misbehave. But here I
could not imagine what I should do if my son smokes marijuana!

Mrs. Sai referred to their family as the "spurious single parent household", vividly demonstrating the dilemma that the family faced in Canada. The family is an intact family in the sense that they have the same memories, the same life goals and finances. However, the family members are living separately in different geographical localities, experiencing different lives. Though their children could receive transnational financial support from the father, the father generally could be largely absent in the children's daily life, as if he doesn't exist. Child-rearing responsibilities largely fall on the mother's shoulders.

6.4.2 Transnational ties as an alternative child-rearing arrangement

With sustained ties to the home country, transnationalism brings the alternative education resources of China to the Chinese emigrant families. With the financial support of *luoshang* from China, *luoshang* families do not need to worry about the security and well-being of their life in Canada. On the one hand, they expected their children to benefit from educational opportunities in Canada. On the other, they also expected their children to have access to Chinese education opportunities, and to be rooted in Chinese traditions. For example, their ethnic ties to China, their ability to read, write and speak Chinese, and the mastery of traditional Chinese culture are all valuable cultural capital that might entitle them to more life opportunities in the future. As stressed by Mrs. Miao, "*My personal feeling is that no matter which citizenship you are holding, your biggest advantage is that you are Chinese*". However, in contrast to their expectations, these parents also realised that the home country ties and attachment, for instance, the emotional attachment to China, the ability to speak, read and write Chinese, etc. is diminishing in the second generation as they are Canadianized, despite their great efforts to retain it.

For example, the second son in Mrs. Li's family was only one-year-old when the family moved to Canada. Though she has taught him Chinese at home and sent him to Chinese language classes in Canada, she found that his Chinese language level was still unacceptable. At the time I interviewed her, she had just taken her second son back to China in an effort to improve his Chinese.

I found that he could not understand much Chinese language in conversations of family members. And he doesn't want to learn Chinese characters. From my perspective, as a Chinese person, at least, you could understand what others are saying and at least, from your deep heart, you know you are Chinese. At least, you need to know some Chinese culture more or less. In the future, probably you could not write in Chinese, but you must be able to read Chinese. If you stand on a street in China, but do not know a word, like an illiterate person, it is horrible. I could not accept it. I hope he could at least understand what I am talking about.

It seems to be an unexpected cost of transnationalism for Canadian born children in the *luoshang* families that they could not master the Chinese language and lack emotional attachment to China. *Luoshang* parents thus experienced great tensions in their child-rearing efforts. In efforts to provide more educational resources and opportunities to their children, which might enable them to gain a competitive edge in an increasingly globalised world, they did not anticipate that their young children might lose their Chinese ethnic cultural traits and Chinese sense of belonging. This is unforeseen to them, because they thought children could master the Chinese language naturally in a Chinese speaking family, even though the family might reside in Canada. Therefore, they view China as a sociocultural space that can help them in this regard. Their solution is to use their strong transnational social networks and send their young children back to China in order to receive several years of Chinese basic education, so that their Chinese language skills could be rapidly improved. Transnationalism could provide opportunities to gain cultural knowledge and reinforce language skills (Viruell-Fuentes, 2006). For instance, Mr. Ma talked about his decision to bring his son back to China:

When he was in kindergarten in Canada, […] I found that his Chinese was so poor. In just one sentence, which was a very simple one and only consisted of no more than 10 words, he used half English. […] Only using Chinese at home with parents is far from enough. When he goes out, the surrounding environment is all in English. […] Thus, I decided to take him back to China and send him to primary school here. I plan to keep him here for at least 3 years and send him back to Canada when he has no problem in speaking and reading Chinese. […] Now one and two years have passed, he can speak Chinese fluently.

The *luoshang* families emphasise the importance of being bilingual and bicultural, having mastery of both the Chinese and English language, and adapting to both Chinese society and English speaking society. Parents hope their children born in Canada would not abandon their Chinese roots. Though she gave birth to her son in Canada, Mrs. Miao stressed that she would like her son to receive Chinese education until senior high. In her opinion, Chinese language and culture would become a form of cultural capital that would give them a competitive edge in their children's future career.

You are ethnic Chinese when you are abroad, even though you were born abroad. Your parents are Chinese and you are Chinese in your bones. What you do better than people of other countries is the Chinese language.

However, for Canadian born children themselves, despite the efforts of their parents, their emotional attachment to the home country would be hard to establish. As Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004) argue, home country allegiances of the first generation emigrants could be hard to maintain with the second generation. *Luoshang*'s children might not accept the transnational practices of studying in China. For example, Mrs. Sai was with her little daughter when she was being interviewed. A quick question and answer between herself and her daughter suggests this problem.

I will ask her if I should take her back to China after two years. [She lowered her head and asked her little daughter in Chinese: Do you want

to go back China after two years? Where do you want to go to school?
Her daughter answered in English, Here.] You see, like this.

Mrs. Zhou's children were the same:

My children all like Canada. They are happy here and do not want to
return to China, especially my eldest son. He said he would never go back
China. He has only visited China once.

The *luoshang* families have expressed a strong desire to maintain their children's
ethnic roots and Chinese language skills. The thinking from these *luoshang* families
could be significant, not just in their awareness and expectation of their children being
bilingual. These transnational practices could help to foster ethnic identities and the
sense of belonging of their children in a society where the Chinese are minorities and
could be marginalised. When confronting stereotypes and "othering" messages, ethnic
pride could be a source of power and a form of resistance. In this sense,
transnationalism could be a potential space to cultivate a sense of belonging for
migrants and their children (Viruell-Fuentes, 2006).

We need to be aware that this practice of transnationalism is carried out under
structural restrictions, especially the political restrictions that result from their loss of
Chinese citizenship and acquisition of Canadian citizenship. Given the fact that China
does not recognise "dual citizenship", their mobility is much less flexible and free in
practice compared to what is reflected in Ong's (1999) notion of "flexible citizenship".
For example, Mr. Ma complained about the problem of applying for a Chinese visa
for his Canadian born son so that he can study in China.

Because their [the son and the wife] citizenship is Canadian and dual
citizenship is not recognised in China, I could not help him get Chinese
citizenship. In this case, if my son doesn't go back to Canada, it is very
troublesome to apply for a visa. In these years, in order to study in China,
he has gone to neighbouring countries, such as Korea and Japan four or
five times to apply for a visa. […] It is not easy to apply even though I am
Chinese and I am his father.[…] Instead, the control is even tighter.

In addition, as a foreigner, Mr. Ma's son would not be accepted in public schools. He was not qualified to enter the free nine-year compulsory education that Chinese citizens are entitled to. That means he can only go to private schools or international schools. Private schools generally do not offer very high quality education, and international schools are quite expensive, costing more than 10,000 CNY (which is roughly equivalent to 1,121GBP) a year.

China is not only a sociocultural space for language learning and cultural belonging for some young kids in *luoshang* families, but also an alternative source of high quality higher education. Some children of *luoshang* families gained opportunities to be enrolled in the top universities in China as an international student. As such, emigration provides them with the easy access to educational resources that they might not be excellent enough to access previously. For example, Mr. Cao's son, who was studying in one of the top universities in Canada, took a chance to be an exchange student in Zhejiang University (which ranks No.3 after Tsinghua University and Peking University in China) last year. During his stay in this top Chinese university, he found that though he was also from one of the top universities in Canada, he could hardly be compared to his classmates in China. In his words, "*They are so excellent and super clever, not even human.*" In his transnational journey, he successfully established many transnational connections with his classmates in Zhejiang University, and hosted them when they came to Canada. He was planning to establish a software programming company with the transnational social networks he established in China.

Mrs. Zhou was thinking about sending her two sons as international students to Tsinghua University and Peking University. Being Chinese, it would be very difficult to be enrolled in these two top universities in China due to the high requirements on students' academic performance. However, as a foreigner, it could become much easier. In addition, their mastery of Chinese could give them an advantage compared to other Canadian locals, because they could easily pass the Chinese language tests set by these Chinese universities.

After graduation, in some *luoshang* families, children returned to China and entered China's employment market as skilled returnees. This is illustrated by Mrs. Hua's daughter:

> *My daughter is in China. […] She is now working in her father's company.*
> *When she came to Canada, she was in her teens. So she likes China more.*

Mrs. Hua interpreted it as her daughter being more Chinese. This could be a reason. Their educational qualifications and the transnational cultural capital obtained in Canada could give them a competitive edge in China's employment market. The family's middle class social status and the family's social networks in China could also assist their children in job hunting. Therefore, some families were strategically considering sending their children back to China and using their *guanxi* relationships in China to develop their career. For example, Mr. Cao expected his son to develop his career in China.

> *[I told my son.] What you only need to do is get a diploma. Because we*
> *have social networks and guanxi [in China], you just need to work hard.*
> *You don't need to work for someone else. Whatever you want to do, you*
> *probably want to work in the finance sector, I could always support you.*

In this case, the presence of *luoshang* and their previous career foundation in China could act as strong economic and social support to their children's career development, providing alternative transnational career choices and opportunities. This could also be viewed as an adaptive strategy to deal with the difficulty of upward social mobility in Canada that result from the difficulties translating a family's social capital from China to Canada. In Zhou and Kim's research (2006) on the educational achievement of Asian immigrant children in the US, they found that immigrants could encounter a "relatively open education system" and "abundant education resources" compared to their original society where access to quality education is fiercely competitive. However, they would also meet a more "blocked" space of upward social mobility, which intensifies the perception of education being the only route to upward social mobility (p. 17). One solution of the problem could be to return to China and resort to the family's social capital accumulated in the home country.

6.5 Summary

This chapter explored the impacts of transnationalism on an individual level from the perspective of *luoshang*, *luoshang's* wives and their children. *Luoshang* live a trans-border life. Straddling the two worlds, *luoshang* try to separate their working life from their family life and view the two worlds separately. China is the site of economic support and Canada is the site of consumption. In transnational practices, *luoshang* families develop their citizenship strategy to ensure the flexibility of movement and maximisation of capital accumulation of the household, where *luoshang* hold Chinese citizenship and permanent residency status in Canada and the wife and children have Canadian citizenship. However, the flexible and highly mobile residential practices of *luoshang* causes confusion and uneasiness in their daily life, changing their sense of home and giving rise to a "multi-placedness of home" (Leung, 2003, p. 247).

In terms of the *luoshang* wives, they are both involved in the transnational connectivity and resettlement in an unfamiliar society. In their transnational trajectories, they encounter deskilling experiences and generate dynamic employment choices under particular socio-economic structures. In this process, their female gender role is reinforced. In addition, though the *luoshang* wives have resettled in Canada, their Chineseness seems to be strengthened, because: 1) they have recognised Chinese modernity; 2) they felt isolation and marginalisation from the host society; 3) they established close economic and cultural transnational connections to China.

In terms of the *luoshang* children, the family's child-rearing strategies are closely related to their memories of China. In transnational migration and family-splitting arrangements, *luoshang* children form different forms of transnational linkages and the *luoshang* parents tend to overlook the difficulties and risks that might arise in transnational fathering. Additionally, transnationalism could provide a socio-cultural space to construct ethnic roots and language of the *luoshang* children, and also provide an alternative space of transnational education and employment opportunities.

Chapter 7

Distance, Uncertainties and Vulnerability of *Luoshang* Familial Relations

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 discussed the transnational household adaptation strategy of *luoshang* families and the significant impact it exerts on those involved. Transnationalism means different things to different family members involved, even though they are in the same household. This is because they are located in different geographical positions and involved in different degrees of transnational mobility and transnational linkages. However, to understand the transnational migration strategies of *luoshang* families, being aware of the impacts on an individual level is obviously not enough. Even though the family seems to remain intact with this dispersed arrangement, spatial distance still maters and generates impacts on the relationships between family members. This chapter will re-evaluate the flexibility of *luoshang* families' transnational household emigration and family-splitting arrangements by discussing the effects of geographic distance and transnationalism on familial relationships. The question lies in whether, how and to what extent social relationships at distance could offset the lack of physical proximity in the familial relationships of the *luoshang* families.

7.2 Marital Relationships

Whether and how family-splitting strategies can impact marital relationships has been heatedly discussed in literature on transnational migration. Researchers generally agree that there are distance frictions, and families living apart influence the wife-husband relationship (Chiang, 2008; Jeong and Belanger, 2011; Ley, 2011; Ong, 1999; Waters, 2002). However, concerning how the marital relationship is influenced, researchers hold different opinions. For example, though Waters (2003) and Chiang (2008) admitted the existence of extramarital affairs, they claimed that in most cases, the relationships between separated spouses in Hong Kong "astronaut" families were still largely positive. Distance enhanced sharing and absence made the heart grow

fonder (Chiang, 2008). In contrast to these portrayals, through an examination of the family ruptures of the *luoshang* families, I would like to highlight that despite the great efforts that the *luoshang* families took in family maintenance, in most cases, spatial separation still tends to negatively impact marital relationships, giving rise to tensions and uncertainties. Social relationships at a distance could hardly substitute co-presence relationships. In the following section, I will first introduce the emotions of the *luoshang* wives that were effected by distance and localisation and then connect these with the wife-husband relationships to illustrate how physical distance has resulted in uncertainties and ambivalences in their relationship.

7.2.1 Establishment of social circles

In the transnational strategy of the *luoshang* families, *luoshang* are largely based in China and engaged in frequent transnational mobility between China and Canada, whereas the *luoshang* wives are expected to remain in Canada. Though the *luoshang* wives are also involved in some degree of transnational mobility and connections between China and Canada, as was exemplified in Chapter 6, compared to their husbands, they experience more localisation and acculturation in Canada. The effects of localisation in Canada have substantially transformed their emotions, personalities, habits and even religion. However, Ong's (1999) "flexible citizenship" mentions little of the settlement, adjustment and integration process of the relative immobile "astronaut" wives. Therefore, the experience of the *luoshang* wives might be able to contribute to such a vision of the experience of the "left-behind", and their social and affective ties in the every-day life away from the home country (Boccagni, 2008).

Many *luoshang* wives reported that they felt quite bored, lonely and pained when they arrived in Canada, especially those who became housewives. For some, their reluctant attitude before emigration negatively impacted their view of the host country upon arrival. For example, Mrs. Li felt unwilling and hesitated to resettle in Canada. "*When I thought about living in Canada, I felt very reluctant. Because my kids were so little. My English is so poor.*" So when she arrived at Vancouver, she felt even more disappointed. "*My first feeling of the city was bad. It is not a bustling city. There were not many people, even in shopping malls and supermarkets. So I felt I moved from a city to a village.*" Vancouver is a metropolis that is clearly more developed than Mrs.

Li's hometown, Shijiazhuang. Her first impression of Vancouver as being underdeveloped might be attributed to the different urban and demographic structures of the Chinese and Canadian cities. In addition, the quiet and the relatively small population of the place strengthened her feeling of loneliness and severance to her previous social networks. These feelings suggest that they were not emotionally prepared to leave their families and friends in China. The citizenship regime of the country also limits their mobility, giving them a sense that they might need to be separated from their familiar environment for quite long time. For example, according to Mrs. Shen, "*when I went to Canada, I thought we might need to be parted forever. Next time I could see them would be years away. I had heard about yimin jian (immigration prison).*" Suddenly separated from the familiar environment and social networks, they might have feelings of fear, worry and loneliness in a foreign society. Without work, the big geographical distance and time differences could reinforce such feelings of emptiness. In contrast to the traditional Chinese immigrants who were under constant anxieties to provide their families with financial support, the middle class status of these *luoshang* families could enable them to be free from such worries and gave them the opportunity to live a comfortable life in Canada. However, as Waters (2003, p. 229) described, "their days were empty and lacked meaning beyond the ultimate goal of the passport".

For Mrs. Shen, it was the first time that she was separated from her husband, which she found was unbearable.

> *In the beginning, I felt painful. We had been married for more than ten years when we emigrated to Canada. And before that, we had never separated even for one day. So when I came here and had to be separated from him, it was really torturous.*

Mrs. Li stressed that it was really hard for her in the first year of arrival due to unfamiliarity with the environment, diverse responsibilities and pressures, and language barrier.

> *In the first year, I was quite homesick. Every time I called home, I could not help crying. I felt suffering. I had very good life in China, why did I*

come here? Everything started over again. My kid was so young and I had to look after him. My English was so poor and what should I do if something happened? When I first came here, I could not communicate because I could barely understand an English word or speak anything. I felt I could not move even a single step in this society. In addition, I knew no one here, no friends and no relatives. This kind of loneliness…

Figure 7.1 A Street Corner in Richmond, Vancouver [11]

Source: Author

The language barrier is regarded as the most important institutional constraint according to Mrs. Li. Many *luoshang* families considered emigrating to Canada and moving to Vancouver because of its long history of and maturely established Chinese communities (Figure 7.1). However, from the perspective of Mrs. Li, that was far from enough. Her inability to speak the English language impeded her adaptation in Vancouver. This also contradicts the imaginaries prevailing in China.

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[11] The march performance was made by white people, but the crowds were mainly people with an Asian face. Along the street, we can see many Chinese shops and restaurants.

Many friends told me that language is not a problem. As long as you settle in Canada, you could get it naturally without learning. But that is not the case at all. What I mastered were largely daily expressions. And my time is always occupied by the children, so I learned English quite slowly. It is not as easy as people imagined in China. (Mrs. Li)

Facing these challenges in their daily life, the *luoshang* wives might suffer from severe homesickness. However, they are "locked" to the land and their mobility is constrained because of their children's education in Canada. For example, Mrs. Wan said even though she felt desperate to go back China, she had to stay in Canada for the sake of her daughter. She described the feeling: "*when I saw a plane in the sky, I wished I could climb on it and fly back China*".

As a husband, Mr. Guo was also aware of the struggles and social isolation that his wife experienced in Canada.

(She felt) pained and found it hard. She said she was depressed. I called her and asked her what she was doing. She answered, "I was talking to the wall". This was the true reflection of her life. After the child went to school, she went back home and became alone.

The emotional reflections of *luoshang* wives on the transnational household separation in the initial stage echoes what Waters (2002; 2003) found with Hong Kong "astronaut" wives. As time goes by, their feelings of loneliness and depression could be alleviated when they established their careers or social networks in Canada to substitute the absence of the husband and old friends in China. Their "empty life" could then be filled with leisure and social activities (Ley, 2011). This is discussed by Mrs. Shen:

I knew a group of mothers, mothers of my son's classmates and mothers of my daughter's classmates, who shared the same experiences with me. Their husbands are also in China and separated with them. Over ninety percent of them are like my family. We then formed a group. So after

children go to school, we have our activities and I feel quite easy and
happy. [...] This big house, we called it our family. [...] Yesterday we just
had a party.

Mrs. Shen's feelings of loneliness were quickly alleviated via new social networks in Canada. She did not try to rely on the social relationships at a distance, but managed to find other relations in Canada by relocating herself in the ethnic Chinese community. However, her socialisation in Canada was likely framed under the same country of origin, even city of origin and migration background. She found resonance with the *luoshang* wives who were of similar ages, from the same home country (mainland China) or home city and had similar family backgrounds, similar transnational migration experiences and similar transnational household arrangement. These lonely wives quickly united together and formed an "imagined family", supporting each other in Canada.

They recognised each other from the Chinese mothers of their children's classmates, as exemplified by Mrs. Shen, and also from their classmates in language schools provided by the Canadian government for new immigrants. Ip (2007) points out that two thirds of emigrants from mainland China in Australia found their social networks in language schools, where cultural and group affinity were easily achieved. According to Waters (2003), Hong Kong "astronaut" wives' social networks were expanded by attending English classes. However, in contrast to what Waters (2003) insisted, when it comes to their desire to learn English, I found that in the case of *luoshang* wives, English classes and language schools were regarded more as site of socializing than of English learning. These English classes are often referred by the *luoshang* families as ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. This is the English training provided by the Canadian government to help new immigrants resettle in Canada. Most of these classes are free, have no systematic teaching content and no assessment of the language learning outcome. Without strong English learning initiatives, it is hard to make any substantial language progress in such classes. However, the majority of the new immigrants would attend these classes upon their arrival. It doesn't mean that they have strong desires to learn the language, but reflects the fact that these classes are free and that they are the only social activity that they could engage with to fulfil their "empty" lives. Additionally, people also get more

chances to meet new immigrants like them in these classes. According to Mr. Zhang, the friends of his wife in Canada were all from the ESL classes she attended in Canada. In accordance with Mr. Guo, his wife attended the English classes very regularly, because she could socialise with her classmates in the language classes and felt happier.

With such methods of establishing social networks, it is not surprising to find that the social networks established by the *luoshang* wives and also their husbands in Canada were mainly restricted to ethnic Chinese. Though the *luoshang* families emigrated to Canada, their livelihood mainly remained in the community of ethnic minorities. Though with financial support from China, their consumption in Canada could reach the level of the local middle class (e.g. the consumption of daily goods, houses, children's education, etc.), they hardly got access to mainstream society. This might be because both the *luoshang* wives and their husbands could not get employment in Canada, which gives them little opportunities to connect to mainstream society. Language barriers could also be a crucial factor affecting the establishment of friendships with local Canadians. Teo (2007) argues that language and culture have hindered Chinese emigrants in their ability to integrate into Canadian society and resulted in the friendship circle of Chinese emigrants being largely Chinese. Ho and Ley (2014) also point out that poor English and a lack of conversation topics means that Chinese immigrants are unable to develop social networks with the locals. Mr. Guo expressed his opinion on this issue,

> *When we are in Canada, language is the first barrier. We can't speak English. So it is very difficult to make friends with them. Secondly, from the perspective of Canadians, probably some wish to make friends with Chinese, but definitely not all. However, due to self-culture and politeness, they tend to behave very politely. When a Canadian comes along the street, he smiles, nods his head and says hi to you, but it doesn't mean he wants to make friends with you.*

It is apparent that the limitations of the social networks that *luoshang* families established in Canada could constrain their localisation process, which would somehow block the family's upward social mobility in Canada. As a result, their

children might choose a reverse migration route back to China (as was analysed in Chapter 6).

According to Waters (2002), Hong Kong "astronaut" wives became "happy mothers" after they established new social networks in Canada. In contrast, my findings indicate that the feelings of boredom, loneliness and disempowerment of *luoshang* wives might be relieved to a certain extent with the deepening of their localisation process, but in many cases, these feelings could linger though the experience of transnational household arrangement. They concluded these feelings in Canada as "*haoshan haoshui haowuliao*" (beautiful mountains, beautiful waters and beautifully bored) (quotation from Mrs. Wan).

Mrs. Fan emphasised that after she gave up her job in China and came to Canada, her feeling of loss of confidence and superiority lingered even now.

> *Relatives and friends are few here. I feel quite lonely and bored. Not like in China. In addition, I lost my career, and I feel my feeling of superiority and feeling of satisfaction generated by my job disappeared. I feel sad, but I have no choice. All for the sake of my children. I am fine if they are happy.*

Mrs. Fan's suffering might resonate with many other *luoshang* wives who used to be in professional work and had no choice but to become a housewife after emigration. Influenced by the gender equality ideology advocated by the CCP in China, citizens generally accept the value that women are strongly encouraged to participate in the construction of modernity, and working outside home is more appreciated (Zhou, 2000). Within this context, the current generation of Chinese women tend to regard working as an indicator of gender equality, whereas being a housewife infers subordination. This could explain why Mrs. Fan felt bitter about accepting the choice of being a housewife. One reason could be that it greatly challenges the generally accepted social value in China.

7.2.2 Transnational migration and marital relationships

Luoshang families are maintained through transnational communication and frequent travel across the Pacific. Compared to families living together, physical proximity is largely absent in split families like the *luoshang* families. In this section, I will discuss the interactions between *luoshang* and their wives left behind in Canada, including the practices of "distance filling" (Boccagni, 2008, p. 10) and the dilemmas that they encountered in the transnational social field. For them, family maintenance is built upon the "virtual world", realised by new media tools. According to Aguila (2009), the use of new media communication technology can produce virtual closeness and realise a status of "absent presence" in time and space. Merolla (2010) has particularly argued that debriefing conversations via telecommunication carried out between partners at a distance can effectively promote long distance relationships and reduce uncertainties. However, these are by no means enough or are a complete substitute for physical contact (Bacigalupe and Cámara, 2012; Ley, 2011).

Despite the support of various communication tools, physical distance would still to some extent impede the free flow of information across the Pacific, which has put great pressure on lone mothers in Canada. For example, Mrs. Zhao shared her concerns over her family's transnational household strategy.

> *Family members are separated in two countries. This is the greatest trouble. If we are all in China, when there are some problems, families can sit together and discuss the solutions together. But now you live in different countries. When you meet problems, it is useless to tell him because he is too far away to offer any help. I would rather not to tell him and find solutions by myself. People need to communicate. Not being together is not as good as being together.*

Mrs. Zhao's words stress that even though instant communication techniques have compressed time and space, this compression is not adequate in the affective realm. In being physically absent, physical and emotional support from afar could be largely limited. In addition, geographical distance and time differences between the two countries affect the timeliness and efficiency of the information exchanges. The

information asymmetry might further cause a power asymmetry, impacting familial relationships. For example, knowing her husband's habits, even though Mrs. Zhao was not in China by his side, she still could not stop worrying about his ability to care for himself, especially when he did not reply to her message and calls.

> *He probably doesn't worry about me, because I have strong abilities to manage my life. Normally, I don't worry about him. But sometimes, when I can't find him, for example, when he doesn't reply to my WeChat messages or doesn't answer my calls, I will feel worried. What I am worried about is not whether he is with any secret woman, but his safety. I will think about whether he is drunk, whether he is safely back home. If I am not by the side of him, who can go to find him? [...] Because he doesn't have good health, what if he is sick and nobody knows?*

In long distance relationships, communication could only be established when both the two parties accept the request. Compared to traditional face-to-face communication, interaction via Internet and phones could be easily refused or ignored, which might cause an intensified feeling of powerlessness in the long-distance relationships. The blocked flow of information brings a sort of unspoken uncertainty to the relationship because some negative events might take place when "the other" is absent and unable to participate directly (Boccagni, 2008).

In the transnational social relationship, *luoshang* families might find that the transmission of emotional support could be more difficult than the transmission of financial support. For example, Mr. Guo offered his opinions from the perspective of the husband. He expressed his inability to help when his wife complained of boredom and loneliness. And he expected his wife to learn by herself how to manage the challenges and problems that she faced in Canada.

> *She stayed at home every day, and was not willing to go out. Even though her friends asked her out, she did not want to go. So she felt increasingly bored and depressed. She hoped I would accompany her. But I couldn't. Even though I went there, I could not change anything.*

In many cases, Chinese *luoshang* showed little understanding of the efforts and suffering of their wives who were living with the children in Canada. As explained in Chapter 6, in China, women are expected to work outside the home to signal gender equality, and the domestic roles of women are often viewed as trivial. Therefore, being housewives could often be interpreted as becoming "useless" and making "no contribution to the family". Meanwhile, in the women's full employment society of China, the husband also tends to look down on the role of housewives. They might expect their wives to become housewives for their own comfort. However, this could not change their perceptions on such housework, work "requiring low intelligence, [and which is] unproductive and low in status" (Zhou, 2000, p. 455). This view can be seen by Mrs. Sai's reference to her husband's words:

> *People in China think here (Canada) is very good. In my husband's words, "what you drink is spring water. What you breathe is fresh and unpolluted air. What you eat is beef and lamb from New Zealand! And you don't need to work! You should enjoy your life!" All people in China, all friends think I am very good here. However, to me, it is hard to say whether it is truly good.*

From Mrs. Sai's perspective, though, she did not need to work and could enjoy material pleasures in Canada because of the transnational financial support provided by her husband in China. However, the absence of loved ones and the social isolation in Canada can be psychologically painful for the *luoshang* wives. What is more problematic is that the contribution of the women to their families is often not recognised and the pain is not understood by their husbands. The perception of Mrs. Sai's husband and her friends and relatives in China on Mrs. Sai's life was framed in terms of their imaginaries of Canada. And there was information gap between the migrants and non-migrants.

Mrs. Zhao, Mr. Guo and Mrs. Sai's narratives illustrate that in transnational household separation, the emotional support that the husband is able to provide from a great distance could be quite limited. This finding contradicts what Waters (2003) found within Hong Kong "astronaut" families, where the husband was able to be a significant source of emotional support for "astronaut" wives.

Another challenge brought by transnational family lives concerns extramarital affairs (Chan, 2013; Huang and Yeoh, 2005; Waters, 2002; Willis and Yeoh, 2000), which Ong (1999, p.21) has conceptualised as "new regimes of sexual exploitation". As noted by Ley (2004, p.158), the "mastery of distance and sovereignty over space is much less than is apparent". Prolonged separation and distance put men in a situation of being unwatched and unattended, challenging their ability to stay faithful to marriage and resist the "temptation" in China (Chan, 2013). Financial dependence of *luoshang* wives has reinforced the patriarchal ideology and gender hierarchy in households.

At first glance, *luoshang* wives do not seem to be worried that their husbands might have extramarital affairs in China, as was also noted by Chiang (2008) among his Taiwanese interviewees. They have confidence in their husbands and themselves, because they trust them and communicate regularly, despite the geographical distance. For example, according to Mrs. Hong,

> *No, I am not worried about extramarital affairs. I understand him well. Our communication flows fluently. I trust him and he trusts me. So this kind of thing does not happen to us.*

Mrs. Sai also expressed her confidence and trust in her husband.

> *He will not. I definitely trust him. Even if I let him do that, he will not. He said, even if Zhang Ziyi [a famous film star in China] lies beside me, I would have no interests. You know, when we were dating, he was very shy and he was older than me. I definitely trust him in this respect.*

In the meantime, rumours and anecdotes of families that broke up as a result of transnational household arrangements have been circulating in Canada, especially in Vancouver, which receives many Chinese new migrants. *Luoshang* wives widely acknowledge and accept that. According to Mrs. Sai,

People say Vancouver is a danaicun [fist/big wife village, as explained in section 4.1.4]. The first wife is sent here and he keeps a mistress in China. It is so normal here. You even could not fight with him, because if you do that, the husband would cut off the financial support. […] I have a friend who is suffering from it. Her first child has graduated and is going to be married. His father at that age still tried to develop extramarital affairs. She is suffering. They are rich, so what?

The quotation revealed the widespread perception that a marital relationship could be impacted by prolonged physical separation. The *luoshang* wives are generally convinced that it is possible that their husbands might find a mistress in China. However, they are also aware that if their husbands want to develop extramarital relationships, even if they are in China and beside them, they could do nothing to stop that. It seems that they have no other choice except for "trusting" their husbands, otherwise, their marital relationship could be even more fragile. Their financial dependence upon their husband also reduce and limit their independence and freedom of choices in the marriage relationships. They express great tolerance for this phenomenon due to their financial dependence and powerlessness. For example, Mrs. Fan's opinion is a case in point:

Separation definitely affects family. However, you know, even if you are together, affairs still can emerge in China. You are in Canada, and he is in China and wants to do something. You can just turn a blind eye. If you think too much, you cannot live your life. Even if I am in China, our family is in China and he wants to do something, he will still do it. Ordinary families also divorce and might have extramarital affairs. So I don't think that much. I now just want to care for my children and live my own life. I have no control over him.

Mrs. Fan did not frame extramarital affairs as being the result of geographical distance. Instead, she claimed that it results from the negative and stereotypical representation of man's irresponsibility (Banfi and Boccagni, 2011). In addition, she also associated it with the prevailing impetuous and material desires in Chinese society where some young ladies might aim to marry a mature male who has already established a

successful career. Therefore, it is not a problem that the wife being present could solve. Mrs. Zhao expressed a similar opinion to Mrs. Fan. She said that as a wife, she could do nothing to prevent extramarital affairs from happening. However, she thought that distance to some extent freed her from worries of extramarital affairs.

> *Extramarital affairs…I sometimes worry about it. But now I think it is useless to think that much whilst abroad. If it happens, you face it. If it doesn't, you don't need to give yourself unnecessary trouble. […] I feel I am more relaxed on this issue when abroad, […] because it is useless to worry about it. Though the chances of extramarital affairs have increased, I tend not to think about it.*

Challenges might even emerge in frequent family reunion as a result of prolonged family separation. *Luoshang* wives have become accustomed to the absence of their husbands and developed their own daily routines, social networks, activities and sense of independence. The arrival of the husband then would break these habits, and present changes and problems to the family (Zontini, 2004). According to Jeong and Belanger (2011), husbands might feel like strangers during reunions. This negative effect of physical distance is frequently mentioned by the *luoshang* families. From the perspective of some *luoshang* wives, the return of their husband unexpectedly restricts their freedom. This confused and complex reaction to family reunion has not been discussed by Ong (1999), but it shows similar traits with what Ley (2011) and Waters (2002) noted in their research on "astronaut" wives.

In the transnational household arrangements, the marital relationship at a distance become inferior to the relationship with children, forming an "affection hierarchy" in the transnational social space, as proposed by Banfi and Boccagni (2011, p. 299). With *luoshang*'s arrival in Canada, male surveillance would be back in the household. This could even be intensified amongst *luoshang*'s families, because *luoshang* are the sources of income for their households in Canada. Their income and economic status justify their central position in the family. Therefore, *luoshang* might expect the family to become accustomed to his habits, instead of the other way around, causing uncertainties for the familial life in Canada. For instance, Mrs. Cao complained that sometimes she did not want her husband to come to Canada because her domestic work would increase and leisure activities would have to stop. With the arrival of her

husband, male surveillance and dominance came back and he became the centre of the family.

> *I have become accustomed to living alone and don't wish my husband to come. If he comes, I have to cook what he likes, but if he doesn't come, I can eat anything I want. When my son was living at home, we often ate outside and bought McDonald's, etc. When he comes, my friends will stop asking me out, because they know he comes. But he likes playing golf and doesn't stay at home. So I then have to be at home alone. When he comes, he often sleeps late due to time lag and affects my sleep. I think his arrival is quite troublesome and I prefer to stay by myself.*

For Mrs. Fan, she expressed her rejection of the return of male surveillance and dominance in her family when her husband seasonally visited Canada.

> *I have my own social activities. Just now my husband asked me to accompany him to visit a friend, I refused. "Go there by yourself. I have my things to do and you do your things." He plays golf every day. So when you want to play golf, you do not ask me and go directly. But when I want to socialise with my friends, you want me to accompany you? If you do not ask me ahead of time, it is impossible. I have changed. Before, when he came to Canada, I thought about how to care for him, what to cook for him. Now I am not like this. You have your things and I have my things. You have your car, just drive your car and go anywhere you want, but do not think about controlling me.*

Both Mrs. Cao and Mrs. Fan became more independent in Canada, developing lifestyles and social activities different to their lives in China. So when their husbands visited Canada, *luoshang* were viewed more as an intruder interrupting the established family routines than a family member sharing the same habits. Therefore, Mr. Liu experimented with different rhythms of travels between continents to make him more a part of the family than a stranger.

From 2010 to 2015, it is 5 years. In the first one or two years, I stayed in China for quite a long time and stayed there for a relatively short time. I only went there on Chinese public holidays. Later, I went there more frequently, about half time here and half time there. Normally, I stayed in China for two months and then stayed there for one and a half months, because my business in China at that time was not that busy. From last year, I changed again. Basically, I stayed in China for a month and stayed there for about half a month. High frequency and small steps strategy. This is the best model that we found from our four to five year experience.

Mr. Liu was satisfied with the current transnational mobility strategy he took. This is a strategy he developed in the transnational migration process through balancing business and familial requirements. Because he ran a small business, it was not possible for him to be absent from his business for a long time. However, his family in Canada also required a father and a husband, which he valued a lot. Supported by a relatively good financial background and Mr. Liu's relative youth, the family could afford the cost and his body could quickly adapt to such frequent commuting between the two continents.

The dispersed family arrangement has generally strained the marital relationship of *luoshang* families, posing more strains, worries and risks to the wives. This is what Mrs. Wan described when she said that, "*the real taste of the ups and downs during separation, only I know. My family nearly broke up.*" The dispersed family arrangement requires great family resilience and strength. The source of motivation and energy required to continue this arrangement is explained by Chan (2013, p.30) as "delayed gratification *par excellence*, purposive and conscious", or, in the words of *luoshang* families, "*for the sake of children*". It is also observed that some *luoshang* families seem to be better able to maintain the family and communicate transnationally than others in developing family intimacy. According to Huang and Yeoh (2005, p.383), the key to success in transnational marriages lies in the abilities of the family to "imagine their lives as unfolding on the same stage". Zontini (2004) believes that it is of great importance for dispersed family members to create a sense of "togetherness" during geographical separation.

7.3 Parent-child Relationships

The previous section explored the cost of long distance relationships on the marital relationship. However, as Ho and Ley (2014) argue, family splitting could pose great challenges to transnational families both in terms of marital alienation and parent-child estrangement. In the following section, I will continue to examine how transnationalism affects transnational families with regards to the mother-child and father-child relationships. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the transnational family arrangement has changed the typical Chinese nuclear family into a "spurious single parent household", which might challenge and change the parent-child relationship in *luoshang* families. According to Ley (2011, p.196), "the cost of separation is measured less in conventional units of time or cost, but instead in terms of emotional distance and the subjective challenges it brings to the family unit".

7.3.1 Mother-child relationships

In the transnational family arrangements, *luoshang* wives move to Canada accompanied by their children, practicing what is conceptualised by Chee (2003, p.137) as "privileging motherhood over wifehood". They are separated from their husbands, give up their careers and risk their marriages, but they get the opportunity to witness the growth of their children in great everyday physical proximity. Though the absence of their husbands has increased their child-caring responsibilities, women reported that they enjoyed their quality time with their children, and their relationships with the children were closer in Canada than in China. The closer relationships between lone mothers and children have been identified by some researchers, including Chiang (2008), Huang and Yeoh (2005), Jeong and Belanger (2011) and Ley (2011). However, emphasizing the positive aspects of more intimate relationships, these researchers tended to overlook the challenges that emerged in the process.

Luoshang wives generally feel that the relationships with their children are closer compared to when they were in China, because in Canada they have more time to spend with them. With the absence of the husband, *luoshang* wives shoulder all the children-caring responsibilities and their children become the first priority. Thanks to

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their middle class status, the *luoshang* wives are not compelled to work in Canada. Thus, they are afforded the opportunity to be intimate with their children, cook for them, send them to school and pick them up every day. Every little sign of progress and growth in the children could make them satisfied. For example, according to Mrs. Fan,

> *I have accompanied them (children) all the way and never left them even for one day. From a very young age, I have never been separated from them. So they listen to me more and "qin" me more, but less their father because it is me who cares for them every day.*

The relationships between Mrs. Fan and her children exemplified the traditional features of the Chinese parent-child relationship. Mrs. Fan used the notion *"qin"* (closeness) to describe her relationship with her children—who became closer and more in love with her in response to her benevolence and *"guan"* (devotion, care and discipline) (Wu and Chao, 2011). She was satisfied because her children then repaid her with gratitude and love in the form of *"qin"*. Sometimes *luoshang* wives have to perform both the role of a mother and father. For example, Mrs. Hou mentioned that she tried to balance the role of mother and father by *"help[ing] him to participate in various activities, e.g. football and basketball competition and encourage[ing] him to contact and learn from some male models."*

Mrs. Shen did not regret the transnational family arrangement because it provided her the opportunity to raise her children in Canada and devote her heart to her children, especially when she found that her children were more successful than those of her friends in China.

> *I think it is lucky that I came, because I can witness their growth from knowing nothing to knowing everything. This is my proudest achievement in the ten years. If I am in China, even though I do not work, I don't think I can devote my heart 100 percent to them. […] I saw my classmates and friends who are the same age as me. I think I am the most successful one in terms of educating the children. My children's life, growth, personalities and education are the best in my friendship circle.*

After emigrating to Canada, the *luoshang* wives might be deprived of the opportunity to develop their own professional path. And they might have to swallow the pain of losing their equal gender status in the household. However, being housewives means they can maximise their time with their children, which brings them happiness, grows their domestic skills and increases their sense of achievement. Although mothers might find that they become more intimate with their children after emigration, some *luoshang* wives complained of the difficulties of rearing sons in the absence of the father and in a host society where different values are cherished. This is especially true for Mrs. Sai.

> *My son has big ideas. You could control him when he was a little kid. Now he is grown up; he is quick in thinking and he knows a lot. You can hardly control him.[…]Before I quarrelled with him and he did not listen to me, I would beat him. Now I am not able to do that because he is so strong. One time, I beat him and he kept me off with his hands. My arm hurt for half a month. He plays basketball and badminton every day and is over 180cm tall. He is too strong!*

Lone mothers are good at providing care in life and moral encouragement, however, they might lack authority over their children, especially sons. This becomes increasingly apparent as their children grow up. *Luoshang* mothers expect a level of respect, deference and obedience, however, it seems that the children who are raised under Canadian culture are more independent (Foner and Dreby, 2011). Mrs. Sai's son emigrated to Canada in his adolescence and grew up in Canada, which means that he has been exposed to both cultures of China and Canada. Therefore, he tended to solve conflicts in a more covert and implicit way, as discovered by Phinney et al. (2000). That Mrs. Sai finds her son has "big ideas" and is "hard to control" could be a reflection of her son's way of reconciling two different cultures by rejecting his parents' views.

Due to the lack of linguistic competence of the mothers, their children often take on the role of "language broker" in the family. *Luoshang* wives sometimes have to rely on their children to know what is happening and communicate with mainstream

society. However, my interviewees did not develop in a way as awkward as that described by Ley (2011) who referred to a role reversal in households. Due to language barriers, some of them expressed their inability and powerlessness when it comes to their children's education. *Luoshang* wives might find it difficult to efficiently communicate with their children's teacher about their education performance. For example, Mrs. Zhou narrated her experience:

> *Before, in China, I could communicate with the teacher, and now I can't. Teachers in Canada only say good words and never talk of problems. I also don't know what learning materials I need to find for them. I only told them not to have relationships and learn hard. These kids know more than you! I can only urge them not to come back too late, not to play too much. But I even don't know whether they have finished their homework!*

It is not surprising to find that *luoshang* families generally have high expectations for their children's education because their family emigration itself is more or less an education strategy, as explained in Chapter 5. Mrs. Zhou's words reveal that even though *luoshang* wives could have more time to care for their children, language barriers might limit her ability to monitor and help with their children's study in the context of Canada. The *luoshang* parents also have problems in dealing with the different education system in Canada. They tend to transplant their Chinese education approach and parental expectations to Canada. For example, Mrs. Zhou said that she wished to receive some true "negative" feedback from her son's teachers instead of just encouragement. She also hoped to have some suggestions from the teachers about extra learning materials, which is common in China. One restriction she set for her son was that he could not have a relationship during high school. Chinese parents are often afraid that an early relationship might impact the child's academic performance in school.

In addition, mothers also find that they are unable to reproduce the same social relationship with their children when they moved to Canada. As their children begin to accept western values and traditions in Canada, Chinese mothers feel the strain when educating their children in traditional Chinese values. They have to mediate

between children's changing demands and the family's tradition. For instance, Mrs. Wan identified the changes in her daughter.

> *For example, she thinks "I have grown up and you can't invade my privacy now". When she wants to go out, she goes directly and will not ask for your permission. Once I joked with her, saying that "when I am old, I want to live in your home". She replied, "No! You can buy a house beside me, but you can't live in my home". Chinese children are not like this. They will definitely say yes. Because it is an unquestionable truth in Chinese tradition to live in their children's home after they get married. But she can't accept that.*

The mother-child relationship of Mrs. Wan was under tension because of the cultural differences between Chinese traditional norms and values of mainstream Canadian culture. The *luoshang* children who entered Canada during their adolescence assimilated to mainstream Canadian society to a greater extent and more quickly than their parents, because they were exposed to the school setting and media in the host society (Wu and Chao, 2011). The conflicts between Mrs. Wan and her daughter suggest that "generational dissonance" (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) and "cultural value discrepancies" (Wu and Chao, 2011) might exist in *luoshang* families.

The improvement of the mother-child relationship is related to women's disempowerment as a result of mobility. The dispersal strategy deprives mothers of employment prospects, but endows them with the opportunity to better look after their children and integrate in their growth, forming an "affection hierarchy" (Banfi and Boccagni, 2011, p. 299) in the transnational social space. However, within this process, caring and cooperation mix with conflicts and tensions in the mother-child relationships.

7.3.2 Father-child relationships

In a transnational household arrangement, the wives provide children with physical proximity, daily care and emotional support in Canada, while the husbands play an opposing parenting role. As a result of the geographical distance, *luoshang* provide

material support for the family because they are largely absent from their Canadian families. Separation has weakened male patriarchy and fathers find it difficult to provide emotional support and maintain their fatherly authority from distance (Ley, 2011). Parreñas (2008, p.1058) notes that compared to women, transnational fathers normally have difficulties "reconstitut[ing] fathering to adjust to the needs engendered by the temporal and spatial distance that defines transnational family life". In the case of *luoshang* families, father-child relationships are significantly impacted by the family dispersal with fathers becoming less authoritative in the process.

The geographical separation and prolonged absence of fathers weakens the father-child relationship in a way that means that fathers and children are emotionally distant. It is reported amongst *luoshang* families that there are communication gaps between fathers and children, and conflicts emerge, as fathers still expect to exercise their male patriarchy when they seasonally visit Canada, even though the children growing up in Canada could not accept it. Mrs. Zhou's family is a case in point.

> *When it comes to the children's education in particular, children became emotionally distanced from their father. So what can I do? […] He often conflicts with our children, because they have different ideas. My husband said, "You are my son. You must do what I expect you to do. You must listen to me". My son said, "I am your son. You can ask me to do anything. But you can't force me". Their ideas become different. […] He has become accustomed to being alone in China and he also feels it hard to integrate with us. We are often confused as to whether he should follow our habits or if we should follow his. So sometimes we feel some gaps. […] Children always say why you always use the parent authority to control us.*

Though *luoshang* could visit Canada every now and then, as mentioned in section 6.2.2, Canada is largely viewed as a site of consumption and *luoshang* have limited access to mainstream Canadian society, because of language barriers, limited social networks and the limited duration of their stays. Compared to the *luoshang* wives who resettle in Canada, *luoshang* are even more deeply embedded in traditional Chinese values and show little understanding of the Western culture to which their children

are exposed. In this sense, the "generational dissonance" (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) between father and children could be intensified even more, which could give rise to overt conflicts between *luoshang* and their children.

This finding contradicts those of Jeong and Belanger (2011), who note that within Korean "astronaut" families, the father-child relationship improved because, from afar, fathers showed more understanding and offered more affection to their children. Many *luoshang* families mentioned that because of the long distance, fathers even gave up educating and controlling their children and solely focused on their own career development in China. According to Mrs. Fan, "*he doesn't care about the children's education, but only cares about his own staff*". Being far away, *luoshang* also lost their role as male role-model. As explained by Mrs. Sai, "*he has been absent for so many years and my son no longer listens to him any more*".

These reflections show that it is difficult to practice transnational fatherhood when the family is split. When *luoshang* are in China, transnational ties with their children left in Canada could only be maintained via long-distance communication, for example, through video and phone calls and sending money. *Luoshang* are accustomed to regular contact via WeChat and phone calls with their families in Canada, with a frequency ranging from every day to once a week. However, they are not generally good at demonstrating their care and love from afar. For example, Mrs. An said,

> *Though we communicate a lot, almost every day, [...] my daughter normally doesn't speak a lot with her father via phone calls. It is not like living together, children might share their experiences in school during the meals. And her father is not good at chatting via phone calls. He might only ask "are you good? I am good. Do you need money?" That's all.*

Luoshang reply on their wives to provide emotional support for their children, while their fathering is limited to the role of "good provider" (Parreñas, 2008, p. 1067). In other words, in transnational family arrangements, a father's love is only expressed through the provision of material goods. It is apparent that children in *luoshang* families would find it insufficient. The inability of fathers to exercise transnational fathering has been discussed by Ley (2011) and Ong (1999), wherein their role was

compared to an ATM machine. My findings are consistent with their research. According to Mrs. Hua,

> *Once, my son said I am from a single parent family. I corrected and told him, we are not single parent family. He asked, "he (father) only gives me money and doesn't play with me, nor care for me. What's the difference with a single parent family?" If both parents are present, there will be a division of labour. So the father can take the children to play, go skating or go swimming. But for me, I can only tell them, go to play. So the father is actually absent in his life.*

Luoshang in Mrs. An's and Mrs. Hua's families show their love and affection to their children via instructional support, or more specifically via financial support. However, these forms of expressing warmth to their children are not satisfactory in building close father-child relationships. In spite of the remittances, physical distance is still an objective constraint to the relationship, even though in the *luoshang* families, the distance could be filled via frequent regular visits. According to Parreñas (2008), the emergence of a gap between father and children results from a lack of shared experiences. This might be the reason why Mr. Liu adopted special frequency when travelling between continents and also attempted to experience every important moment together with his son. Mothers might also play an important role in improving the father and child relationship in transnational families. For example, Mrs. Shen described her efforts in creating a status of "absent presence" of the father in her family by constantly talking about the father with their children.

> *I think I have done very well. In front of them, I always say how their father cares about them, what sacrifices he makes for them, how hard he has to work. So even though he doesn't come very often and they only have limited time to live together, my children still feel emotionally attached to him. Maybe it is because my daughter is so young and daughters naturally like fathers more. She has a very good relationship with her father. Compared to her, my son might feel less intimate with his father. But I can feel, with my efforts, he adores him very much. […] The father is very important to him.*

However, because of the absence of their father, the children might lose the sense of security that only an intact family could provide. Mr. Qiao realised that his absence affected his son's confidence, because he found his son was initially "very happy" when he arrived in Canada.

> *When I came, I found my son was very happy. Children hope to have both mom and dad accompany them. I did not have this feeling when I was in China. Another phenomenon I discovered is that when he was playing with his classmates, because I was here, he came to feel he has more power to rely on. The world of boys is a world of competitions and fighting .This is different from girls. When I came, he felt that someone could be backing him. Others have both of their parents here. So when he was playing with them before, without both of his parents standing behind, it seems that he felt a little scared and less confident.*

This is similar to what Ley (2011) identifies: the family splitting strategy has formed a distinctive emotional geography amongst the transnational families. In this emotional geography, the family relationships, whether marital relationships, mother-child relationships or father-child relationships have all been affected. Transnationalism is thus not without its costs. Distance creates potential risks for marriages, brings mothers closer to their children but alienates fathers.

7.4 Other Relationships

The previous section has examined the usability of transnational ties and their impacts on familial relationships. However, it is generally accepted in transnationalism research that not all migrants are engaged in transnational practices (Levitt, Dewind and Vertovec, 2003). In this section, I will concentrate on the relationship and transnational ties established between the *luoshang* families and non-migrants.

Through telephones, WeChat and QQ, *luoshang* wives in Canada not only stay in contact with *luoshang* in China, but also with relatives and friends in China. With the

presence of *luoshang* wives in Canada, another foothold for large families in China is constructed. They are prepared to offer help when the family's relatives or friends visited Canada. In this way, transnational connections change the lives of those who are immobile and who thus remain in the homeland. For example, Mrs. Cao provided suggestions when her brother was planning to send her brother's son to study in Canada.

> *I told them why not choose Vancouver? My son was in that university and*
> *probably he could help his cousin in his studies. And I could also help to*
> *look after him.*

Mrs. Cao's case shows that though *luoshang* wives were not physically present in China, they could change the choices of non-migrants who were facing the prospect of transnational migration. However, geographical distance is not easily overcome in transnational connections. For example, the *luoshang* wives, being physically absent from the big extended family in China, might feel powerless when it comes to their old parents. This perceived inability to overcome distance could be intensified when critical events took place, e.g. a serious disease, or even the death of their elderly parents in the home country. Mrs. Shen, for example, expressed her mixed feelings on hearing bad news about her father.

> *Because the time in China and Canada is not the same, I am more*
> *accustomed to using WeChat to communicate. Phone calls […] before*
> *were made everyday, but over these last two years, when my father was*
> *sick, phone calls were made less often. I am too sad to hear the bad news.*
> *I would rather not make phone calls. I don't want to call them.*

Mrs. Ba (No. 2) could do nothing when her father was sent to the emergency centre in China as she was thousands of miles away in Canada. Mrs. Ba emigrated to Canada in 2001 through skilled emigration. Her husband was a PhD in engineering. In order to gain better employment prospects, he returned to China to launch his business career in 2005. Mrs. Ba opened a laundry shop in Canada, and because of it, she could not promptly return back to China to attend her father's funeral. She told me this story with tears in her eyes.

> *At that time, my father was in the emergency centre and I did not know
> what to do. One of my friends asked me to kneel and pray in the Buddhist
> temple from 9am to 4pm. I even could not move on the second day. [...] I
> was not able to return to China when my father passed away. The laundry
> store needed to change machines and I had to stay. I did not attend my
> father's funeral.*

With intermittent transnational connections via telephone calls, Mrs. An found that
her social networks in China had broken down.

> *I am actually quite disconnected with China now. If I need to find guanxi
> for something, I am unable to find it. Without interests, I mean I became
> useless to them, they probably would not grant me face.*

The *luoshang* families have also established some connections with ethnic
communities in Canada, exemplifying what is called "sociocultural transnationalism"
(Itzigsohn and Saucedo, 2002, p.767), though this does not imply that they have
formed a community public space. In empirical research, sociocultural
transnationalism might refer to transnational practices, including participating in
hometown associations, providing financial support for projects in the home country,
travelling back home for public festivals, or being engaged in clubs or charities
connected to the home country, etc. (Boccagni, 2008; Portes, 2003). Though not
systematic, I observed some clues that *luoshang* groups engaged in such transnational
practices. For example, co-nationals might be a source of reference when searching
for employment, accommodation and support in Canada. Mrs. Hua found her first job
in Canada with the help of Chinese ethnic clubs.

> *I attended some clubs launched by Chinese immigrants here. My English
> listening was good, but speaking was poor. So I attended some classes
> there. [...] I especially appreciated the job finding classes, which taught
> me how to find a job, how to adapt to life in Canada, how to communicate
> with others, and how to find the information I want, and so on.*

The social networks in China might be expanded transnationally to Canada, providing extra opportunities. For example, Mrs. An took advantage of the social networks and resources she established in China to find her first and second job in Canada.

My first job had already been found when I was in Shanghai, so I started to work on the second day I arrived in Canada. […] The head office was in Shanghai and in Vancouver I worked in its branch office. […] Because I was successful in Shanghai in this field and knew many bosses and managers. Once I found a job advertisement of a branch company in Canada, and I happened to know the boss of the head office. So I called the boss in Shanghai and told him I was willing to work in his branch office in Vancouver. After one month and a half, I worked in his company.

7.5 Summary

This chapter discussed the effects of geographic distance and transnational connections on the familial relationships with reference to marital relationships, mother-child relationships and father-child relationships. The dispersed family arrangements strained the marital relationship of *luoshang* families, posing greater threats to the wives. With the application of the adaptive strategy of family splitting, the *luoshang* wives became lone mothers in Canada and generally reported that they were bored, lonely and suffering as a result of language barriers and social isolation, especially in the initial stage. Afterwards, they might be able to establish social networks in Chinese ethnic communities of Canada, offsetting the emptiness to some degree. However, feelings of disempowerment might linger. Though the family remained intact because of frequent communication and travels, the long distance relationship could not substitute for a co-presence relationship. Spatial distance could impede information flows and the transmission of emotional support and understandings across borders, causing uncertainties and ambivalence in marital relationships. The financial dependence of *luoshang* wives further disempowered women in the marital relationship, reinforcing the patriarchal ideology and gender hierarchy in households. And what's more, the *luoshang* wives showed greater tolerance of the extramarital affairs of their husbands.

With regards to the mother-child relationship, *luoshang* wives enjoyed more quality time with their children and had a closer relationship with them. Indeed, the mother-child relationship was prioritised over the marital relationship in transnational families. However, deeply rooted in Chinese customs, values and behavioural norms, mothers encountered challenges when it came to the children's education and "generational dissonance" (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) in the families. In terms of the father-child relationship, *luoshang* generally faced difficulties when practicing transnational fathering. The geographical separation and prolonged absence of fathers weakened the father-child relationship in a way that meant that fathers and children became emotionally distant. Though *luoshang* wives tried to help build good father-child relationships, the father's role was largely limited to institutional and financial support, whilst the father's authority was reduced. Apart from these relationships, *luoshang* families maintained close transnational ties with their loved ones in China, for example, siblings and parents. However, the disempowerment that results from the distance between them could be greatly intensified when critical events took place, e.g. the death of a family member.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

8.1 Revisiting the Research Questions

This study, which stressed the relevance of "family" as an emigration decision-making unit, examined the transnational household arrangements and transnational practices of *luoshang* families, a new form of transnationalism increasingly visible in China since the early 21ˢᵗ century. The thesis aimed to explore the formation of this variation of Chinese transnational migration by interweaving their mobility desires with macro socio-economic and political changes in both China and Canada, and how their transnational practices have impacted both the individual and their relationships.

This thesis thus set out to address the following questions:

> 1. What are the characteristics of the Chinese *luoshang*? And what are the broader socio-economic changes in China and Canada that *luoshang*'s transnationalism has reflected?

> 2. In what ways is their transnational migration a household strategy, as well as a new lifestyle for the Chinese "new rich", that is, the new middle class that has emerged on the basis of China's recent development?

> 3. How are their transnational familial and social lives practiced, networks extended or constrained, and identities negotiated and renegotiated in these cross-Pacific transnational social processes, spaces and dynamics?

> 4. What are the consequences and implications of *luoshang*'s transnationalism for family members involved?

Guided by a combination of theoretical perspectives on the new economics of migration, Bourdieu's ideas of various "capitals", and theories of transnationalism, the study has tackled the research questions by applying a qualitative research

methodology of multi-sited fieldwork conducted in China and Canada between April and November, 2015, which involved in-depth interviews and observations.

This conclusion chapter proceeds as follows. Firstly, it synthesises the key themes, findings and arguments of the research. This is followed by an articulation of the new insights that the thesis has made to knowledge and understanding both in Chinese migration studies and in wider empirical research of transnationalism. The contributions of this study to both Chinese migration studies and transnationalism will then be readdressed. The thesis will end by discussing possible avenues for future research.

8.2 Key Themes, Findings and Arguments

This section focuses on the key themes, findings and arguments of the research and includes five sub-sections. In section 8.2.1, I will explain *luoshang* and their migration. Section 8.2.2 will further elaborate upon *luoshang's* transnational family migration arrangements. In section 8.2.3, 8.2.4 and 8.2.5, I will encapsulate the discussions on how the flexibility and liberty, as well as the constraints and uncertainties brought by transnationalism, is reflected in the individual and familial relationships of *luoshang* families.

8.2.1 *Luoshang* and the context of migration

Luoshang is a popular Chinese term to describe a group of businessmen whose families have emigrated abroad, taking with them fluid assets, whilst they themselves stay in mainland China to do business. Despite the homogenous image presented in the popular media, especially on the Internet, *luoshang*, as I have shown in this study, are a highly heterogeneous group. I have argued that *luoshang* is an umbrella term covering a spectrum of wealth possession, migration experiences and which represents a typology from the super-rich to skilled migrants. Examples include Mr. Cao, who was the boss of a medium sized private company and emigrated to Canada through the investment immigration programme, and Mrs. An's husband, who was the senior manager of a private company and whose family emigrated to Canada under

the skilled migrant class. The *luoshang* group also covers families like Mrs. Miao, who used to study at a Canadian university and obtained permanent residency status afterwards, and whose husband returned to China to develop his career in the private business sector.

Canada is often perceived to be one of the most popular destination countries for *luoshang* families, due to its skilled immigration programme and its investment immigration programme which brings with it relative simplicity, low cost and low risk. Additionally, this is also because Canada is a country built upon and which therefore cherishes multiculturalism. This means that large and mature Chinese Canadian communities have formed. These Chinese communities provide convenience to the everyday lives of the Chinese new migrants.

Because of the accumulation of private wealth and the effects that globalisation has had on China, an increasing number of Chinese immigrants who are on the whole highly skilled and abundant in capital entered Canada, and became the main actors in transnational communities and who engaged in frequent cross-border connections between the two countries. They are members of *xin yimin* (new migrants), distinguished from the traditional migrants, whose practice models were classified by Wang (1991) as *luodi shenggen, zhancao chugen* and *shigen lizu*. By the early 2000s, immigrants from mainland China, replacing those from Hong Kong, accounted for the largest number of new immigrants to Canada from any single country or region (CIC, various years).

The *luoshang* phenomenon emerged in the context of wider socio-economic changes and transformations in both China and globally at the turn of century, e.g. rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of China and globalisation. Chinese economic reforms and the rising prosperity that has taken place since the 1980s built the material foundation for the emergence and expansion of the "new rich" and the middle class. By the early 2000s, the Chinese economy evolved out of a public ownership-dominated structure into a much more diverse one with public, private and mixed ownership, contributing to about one third of the national GDP respectively (Lu, 2002, p. 1). The proportion of private and foreign ownership relative to public ownership as a percentage of China's total GDP has continued to grow, and it is estimated that in

2012, it reached 67.59% (Pei, 2014, p. 21). With the prosperity of the private economy and the accumulation of private wealth, Western influence in China has become more prominent, especially after 2001, when China joined the WTO, an event that symbolises the increasing interactions and interdependence between China and the rest of the global economy. The globalisation of China was accelerated and deepened thereafter, accompanied by an increase in transnational migration out of the country. It is the *xin yimin* that increasingly came to dominate this emigration.

Luoshang are a part of this emerging Chinese middle class. They have grasped the opportunities that arose in the context of dramatic changes to political and institutional structures, and become the "new rich" and part of the privileged class, forming the "class-consciousness" that is identified by Ehrenreich (1990) in the American middle class. However, due to the fact that they have only recently emerged and because of the history of colonial influence, they lack the confidence in their symbolic capital, e.g. diploma, "manners" and "tastes". Perceiving the West as an icon of modernity, affluence and status, *luoshang* tend to seek Western modernisation as a guiding model from which to learn (Wang, 2006). The growing access to global media that has resulted from processes of globalisation has intensified their neo-colonial cultural mentality and imaginaries of Western countries. Additionally, *luoshang* are also aware that accompanying opportunities are challenges, risks, uncertainties and ambivalences of the social changes and reforms of China, e.g. the fierce competition in the market, the continuous rises to living costs and the imbalances in China's economic and social development (Li, 2016; Lu, 2010). Anxiety and fear of falling arise, which is related to how to maintain their class, social status, lifestyle, as well as its social reproduction over generations, and how to shield themselves from an unknown future.

The migration of *luoshang* is not only an emigration phenomenon within the *xin yimin* context, but also signifies a unique transnational household arrangement adopted by the Chinese new middle class. In the following sections, I will discuss the diversity and dynamics of Chinese *luoshang* families' transnational experiences and linkages which are found in this research.

8.2.2 Transnational family organisation

My analysis, by attending to the intricacies of the formation of the *luoshang* families' transnational migration and family adaptation strategies, shows that their transnational practices are a consequence of a combination of structural changes in both China and the world, increasing ambitions and anxieties of the emerging Chinese middle class, and aspirations for transnational cultural capital and alternative global opportunities. Traditional Chinese migrants, for example, the Chinese communities formed in the United States that were researched by Zhou (2009) and the Fujianese in Europe that were studied by Pieke et al. (2004), tend to be from less privileged social backgrounds, and their mobility was largely motivated by economic imperatives. In contrast, the *luoshang* families generally come from middle and upper middle class backgrounds, and are highly educated and skilled. Their emigration was closely associated with cultural imperatives, driven by educational considerations and imaginaries of a new lifestyle.

With the market economy replacing the state provision system in China, the family becomes the basic unit responsible for its success or failure (Crabb, 2010). With society increasingly emphasizing the links between knowledge and skills and career success, the *luoshang* families expended strategic efforts to foster a cultural investment in their children, e.g. achievement of good academic results, cultivation of artistic abilities, scientific skills and the capacity to compete in a global market, expecting the children's education to secure the transmission of middle class status and lifestyle. Due to the imaginaries of Western education as "pressureless", "playlike" and "quality" education that has been instilled and fanned by popular media, e.g. tabloid newspapers and Internet materials, emigration is viewed by the *luoshang* families as an alternative route to access foreign education, which is considered as "modern", "elite" and "superior" by the "new rich" in their pursuit of modernity and advantage. Additionally, the goal of the *luoshang* families to find an alternative lifestyle might be increased with the accumulation of private wealth. Their economic affluence entitles them to more choices that can ease their middle class anxiety when the old socialist safety nets of China were gradually abandoned and the new social welfare systems have not yet matured (Zhang, 2010). Their emigration desires could be reinforced by the imaginaries flowing across borders via the Internet,

media, friends and immigration agents that the developed Western world would be immune to these "growth pains".

Following family emigration, the return of the husband to China signifies a unique household adaptation arrangement taken by the *luoshang* families to maximise perceived family gains. In contrast to Ong's (1999) "flexible citizenship" in which the mobility of people is interpreted as a product of strategic planning, the return of *luoshang* shows itself to be more dynamic, as it could either be a pre-planned decision before emigration or an adaptive strategy driven by necessity. In both cases, families have to adopt a split arrangement, diversifying their livelihood in different localities, in order to make money in China while culturally investing in the children's education in Canada. This, however, might not be their originally imagined or expected lifestyle, but instead an outcome of their renegotiation and balancing of citizenship, livelihood, their middle class status and their sense of belonging. Through emigration, *luoshang* families get access to the cultural capital attached to Canadian citizenship, but their access to other forms of capital in Canada is still limited. As part of the middle class, *luoshang* are likely less prepared to expand their private business transnationally or establish new businesses in Canada. In the employment market of Canada, they are largely marginalised and deskilled. In order to maintain the marker of the middle classes, i.e. the family's consumption level in Canada and the emotional and other needs of the family are sacrificed in order to preserve other perceived gains for the family and education opportunities for the children. As such, transnationalism is used as a household strategy, splitting the family into two sites in the transnational social space across the Pacific: the site of production and that of reproduction.

The case of *luoshang's* migration illustrates an attempt by Chinese middle class families to deal with their increasing aspirations and desires to access global opportunities in the era of transnationalism, exemplifying the phenomenon of "middling transnationalism" (Conradson and Latham, 2005b, p. 229). Being the middle class, they have economic capital, abilities and opportunities to access global resources. However, their transnational practices are largely localised because their economic status limits their choices—they are closely attached to China, where they obtain and have access to economic, social and cultural capital. Their special transnational household arrangements could be a response to the agents processing

and acting on the opportunities and dilemmas that they face in the macro-structural changes in both China and the world.

8.2.3 Transnational ties and identity

International migration in the age of globalisation is different from the classical depiction of the migration as "uprooted". It is increasingly characterised by greater spatial mobility, more frequent and intensive spatial communications, and multiple connections and interactions between the home and the host country (Faist, 2000; Portes, 2003; Schiller et al., 1994; Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 1999). *Luoshang* families are typical transnational families insofar as they are involved in frequent cross-border travels and transnational exchanges as a way to retain family unity, ethnic and cultural identity. Families in Canada are financially linked to China, receiving continuous remittances from the husbands in China to support the family's consumption and investment in Canada. This is in stark contrast to traditional transnational family models, which emphasise the need for family members in the host country to earn money and send remittances back to the home country to support those families left behind (Pieke et al., 2004; Taylor, 1999). The *luoshang* families instead have a reverse financial flow. Apart from the remittances, the networks of communication and their sense of family and belonging are also kept alive across geographical distance.

Frequent visits, ICT communication and reversed flows of remittances and financial support from China to Canada enable each family member of the *luoshang* families to maintain their familial and social ties with China. However, the transnational linkages that the *luoshang* families build across the Pacific are highly confined within the familial domain. Though they are relatively economically affluent, the *luoshang* families are not as prepared for "transnational entrepreneurship" (Portes, 1999) as their Hong Kong counterparts, as described by Ley (2011). China serves as the site of production, and Canada as a site of consumption. Additionally, some *luoshang* families are involved in "sociocultural transnational activities" (Portes, 2003), but those who have the ability to form a community public space are relatively rare.

The sense of belonging of both the *luoshang* and their wives is still more embedded in China than in Canada, in spite of the distance. For *luoshang*, frequent transnational mobility has given rise to their sense of a "multi-placedness of home" (Leung, 2003, p. 247). Many *luoshang* identify themselves as having two homes and feel at home in both China and Canada. For *luoshang* wives, China also serves as a source of cultural belonging in the transnational social field formed by the *luoshang* families. Their attachment to China and Chineseness is strengthened, even though they are physically settled in Canada because of the social isolation they experience in Canada and the close economic and cultural transnational connections that they have established with China. The disjuncture between the physical space inhabitation and the emotional and affective space (Pries, 2007) is prominent for both *luoshang* and their wives. Though they inhabit "here", their affective space has stretched "there". Such identification is also reflected in the socialisation of *luoshang* families in Canada, since the country and city of origin are likely to be framed as a major term of reference in their social activities there, as illustrated in the case of Mrs. Shen.

To *luoshang* families, and especially their children, China may not only be a source of identity and belonging but also a source of cultural resources. This is reflected in some of the *luoshang* families who perceive China as an alternate and valuable sociocultural space that could help them raise their young Canadian born children as Chinese in Canada. The growing global influence of China has also increased *luoshang* parents' ethnic and cultural confidence and sense of pride. And thus, transnationalism is adopted as a way to cultivate in the second generation a sense of belonging and foster their connection with their ethnic routes and language (Viruell-Fuentes, 2006). China could also provide alternative transnational employment opportunities for the children of *luoshang* families, which is reflected in the plan of some parents to send their children back to China so that they can develop their careers after graduation from University.

If transnational attitude should properly qualify only as a "feeling [of being] equally at home in both countries" (which might only qualify in a restricted group of "cosmopolitans"), as argued by Haller and Landolt (2005), *luoshang* families certainly would not qualify. Their Chinese identity is more than a patriotic one, but significantly impacts their settlement in Canada and their transnational linkages.

While transnationalism could enable connections, it, at the same time, might highlight differences between countries and across generations. For instance, though some *luoshang* families may try to pass on their Chineseness as a source of identity and belonging to the second generation, they also find that the home country ties and attachment, especially the emotional attachment to China, is diminishing in the second generation, as illustrated in the case of Mrs. Li and Mrs. Sai. The next section will discuss the liberatory and non-liberatory dimensions of perspective of transnationalism in the case of *luoshang* families.

8.2.4 Transnationalism—liberatory vs. non-liberatory

Luoshang families' embeddedness in the transnational social field has both "liberatory" and "non-liberatory" (Viruell-Fuentes, 2006, p. 335) dimensions. As explained above, transnationalism has provided *luoshang* families with a space to seek a new life style and education opportunities beyond national boundaries, a space where they could draw resources to rear their children in Canada, and an alternative space of belonging negotiation. In this sense, transnationalism is liberatory for *luoshang* families. This idea of liberation is also stressed by Ong (1999, p.6) in her "flexible citizenship" assumption, which stresses the family's strategic search and selection of space in order to benefit from different nation-state regimes. However, what is largely omitted in the literature is the non-liberatory dimension of transnationalism whereby limits to flexibility and inequalities exist on the basis of region, class, and gender (Levitt, 2000).

The mobility of *luoshang* and their families is restricted by national schemes. Since dual citizenship is not recognised in China, Chinese *luoshang* maintain their Chinese citizenship and keep Canadian permanent residence status in order to enable the highest degree of flexibility when visiting Canada, and in order to maintain their entitlement the economic opportunities and social rights in China. However, their wives and children take Canadian citizenship to enjoy the education resources and social welfare opportunities afforded to Canadian citizens. In this way, the *luoshang* families' citizenship strategy is developed in order to maximise the flexibility of mobility and perceived family benefits. Yet when the family wishes to take advantage of the alternative education resources and employment opportunities in China, their

citizenship strategy restricts their choices, e.g. they need to submit repetitive visa applications, and this affects their selection of schools and employment, and so on.

Inequalities by region in the transnational social field is clearly reflected in the *luoshang's* transnational family arrangements across the Pacific, which is born more out of necessiry than of choice. In most studies of social stratification in a single society, education levels are expected to be broadly consistent with occupational status. However, when two or more social fields are involved, it might not be the case, because a conversion of capital between different societies arises. For example, when making decisions about emigration, the *luoshang* families' desires are closely related to the possibility of obtaining high levels of cultural capital in another place besides the home country. Their imaginaries of Western education and their transnational experiences reflect inequalities in cultural power between nation-states. The cultural capital obtained in Canada is valued if it is transmitted to China, but not *vice versa*. After emigration, the *luoshang's* cultural capital, e.g. Chinese education credentials and Chinese working experience, is devalued in the Canadian employment market. As a result, the translation of their cultural capital into social and economic capital in Canada may never materialise, which directly facilitates the need to split the family.

Paradoxically, transnationalism enables *luoshang* families to become more mobile and flexible, while at the same time, the regional inequalities in the transnational social field make them more attached to and dependent upon their home country, because the culturally specific social capital and social resources that enable their wealth accumulation and social advancement in China are not 'mobile', 'portable' or 'transferable'. In this sense, not only the education credentials but also the social networks (or *guanxi*) that the *luoshang* families utilise to successfully conduct business and achieve their middle class status cannot transcend borders and their embodied inequalities in cultural power. The *luoshang* families are largely marginalised in the social environment of Canada. The cultural power inequalities limit their mobility and increase their dependence on the home country, so they are straddling the two countries. In addition, their marginalised position in Canada also hinders the *luoshang* parents' ability to provide social capital for their children in Canada (e.g. support for future career development). As a result, children in the *luoshang* families might face barriers to social mobility in Canada.

Class inequalities could endure in the transnational social field. Transnational trajectories of *luoshang* families are closely related to their middle class status— a status that endows them with a certain degree of flexibility but which also constrains their choices. Due to their middle-class status, their business success, wealth accumulation and social advancement in China means that migration is one possible strategy for the family, and that the family could maintain their middle class markers after emigration. In this sense, the *luoshang* families enjoy more flexibility than traditional Chinese migrants with less privileged social backgrounds prior to emigration. However, at the same time, they lack the enormous capital possessed by the elite class, which limits their livelihood choices. In order to maintain the family's consumption level in the host country, *luoshang* have to live a transnational life, frequently travelling between countries and putting up with the family splitting arrangements.

Transnationalism might also bring about a gendered social space, where economic, labour and power disparities between men and women are reinforced (Zontini, 2010). With a division of the site of production from that of reproduction and consumption, the gendered role of both the *luoshang* and their wives is reconfigured and renegotiated. To the *luoshang*, 'caring for families' has come to mean providing economic support, while for the wives, an economic role is not expected, leading to a disruption to their career paths. However, the traditional notion that a woman's sole responsibility is for reproductive work is strengthened. Though reluctant, they often give up their professional work for full-time caring roles and, if they do work, it is out of choice (e.g. because of personal interest or to fight off boredom) rather than necessity. As such, transnationalism brings the *luoshang* wives new domestic responsibilities which are even harder to fulfil than before, given that they lack the support of their extended families, e.g. parents or parents-in-law. Being housewives, however, is not deemed to be advantageous in the context of contemporary China, where gender equality is emphasised and women are encouraged to work outside the home. Influenced by such values, *luoshang* wives might find that losing the opportunity to work lowers their self-confidence and intensifies their feelings of depression, even though they do not need to struggle to make a living.

The transnational experience of the *luoshang* families illustrates that transnationalism should not be a "sociology without frontier" or a completely liberatory process. Irreversible barriers and borders constantly persist and power disparities and social-cultural hierarchies endure within the transnational social field, as stressed by Guarnizo (1998), Levitt (2000) and Viruell-Fuentes (2006). The next section will continue this line of argument with a discussion on how transnationalism affects familial relationships.

8.2.5 Transnational familial relationships

Stretching transnational familial and social ties across national boundaries, *luoshang* families become transnational households. Their family lives are complicated by transnationalism, such that spatial separation, instead of co-residency and physical unity, becomes salient features of family life. The fact that the family members live separately and distantly in different geographical locations brings about great challenges and risks to family relationships. The compression of time and space that is enabled by instant and convenient communication technologies may facilitate information flows, allow people to keep in touch, and exert influence from afar, but they do not fully meet the needs of family life. That is especially true in the emotional and affective realm. Many scholars have discussed and agreed that familial relationships are impacted by distance frictions (Banfi and Boccagni, 2011; Boccagni, 2008; Chiang, 2008; Huang and Yeoh, 2005; Willis and Yeoh, 2000; Zontini, 2010). As Faist (2010, p. 1674) argues, "intensive and continuous cross-border flows of persons, ideas and goods do not necessarily result in a de-bordered world. Instead, boundaries and borders are constantly redrawn". As such, in the case of *luoshang* families, physical proximity of familial life in its full sense could hardly be replaced by occasional cross-border or even frequent virtual contacts. As a consequence, strangeness, information gaps, and frustrations constantly arise in the familial environment.

Transnationalism affects intra-familial relationships. In terms of the marital relationships, though being a transnational wife could be liberating for some, financial dependence and prolonged separation would inevitably increase the strains, worries, and risks on the *luoshang* families' marital lives. We have seen that the *luoshang*

wives could become more vulnerable in their marriage, feel more anxious, and face increasing risks of divorce and extramarital affairs. This problem could hardly be solved by regular transnational contacts. Even regular visits and family reunions (e.g. every few months) sometimes could not help, since the arrival of the husband after prolonged separation often signals changes and problems in the household. Even when the marital relationships could endure, the *luoshang* wives tend to feel closer to the children than to the absent husband, forming an "affection hierarchy" in the transnational social space (Banfi and Boccagni, 2011, p. 299).

The relationship between *luoshang* wives and their children generally becomes closer. However, without the presence of the father, *luoshang* mothers have to shoulder child-rearing responsibilities alone, and thus, constantly feel the strains and conflicts of educating children in a transnational context. Transnationalism could hardly help the *luoshang* mothers to deal with the "generational dissonance" (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) that results from the differences and contrasts between cultures and values. They often find it difficult to reproduce the same relationship with their children to which they were accustomed in China. Problems caused by transnationalism could be noted in the father-child relationship too. *Luoshang* fathers are largely absent in transnational fatherhood, and the closeness and bond between father and child is greatly weakened as a result of the great physical distance. The fathers frequently miss out on the key moments in their children's lives, and find it difficult to fill the emotional gap using cross-border virtual communication and remittances alone. Even though *luoshang* wives might try to help build a good father-child relationship, the father's role is largely limited to offering financial support, and the father's authority is reduced. The physical distance also complicates the relationship between the *luoshang* wives and their parents. Their inability to provide care for their aging parents becomes a source of worry and guilt, especially when they learn about health problems and experience bereavement.

In this sense, transnational family life could hardly be regarded as a value or a resource in its own right (Boccagni, 2008). It refers to constant struggles to overcome the injurious effects of an extended separation. Thus, "trust" and "reciprocal control" is severely challenged in proximity relationship. Boccagni (2008, p. 13) argues that, "family life at distance is a matter of endurance, or of resilient affections". However,

the *luoshang* families' stories show that this resilience, though stretching and pulling back family members across dispersed locations, might age easily and quickly. For that very reason, transnational family life is expected to be a transient condition for *luoshang* families. They generally expect to return or to live together, whether "here" (in Canada) or "there" (in China) in the near future.

8.3 Contributions

In short, the thesis, as one of the first scholarly inquiries on the *luoshang* phenomenon, contributes to Chinese migration studies, shedding light on a new variation of Chinese transnational migration in the context of dramatic socio-economic change in China and across the world. By attending to the nuances of the transnational experiences of *luoshang* families, it reveals the increasing expectations and desires of the emerging Chinese middle class, and dilemmas and struggles they face when emigrating and splitting their families. In addition, the thesis suggests a diversity in the transnational migration patterns and trajectories of Chinese *luoshang* families, mediated by structural and institutional factors, e.g. policy and economic status, and demographic features, e.g. age and gender, etc.

In terms of methodology, the study adopted an extensive multi-sited fieldwork in both China and Canada by tracing the social networks of *luoshang* and their families, and this approach was combined with an actor-oriented perspective to understand *luoshang* and their families as social actors. In this way, I captured both the micro dimension of individuals and the macro dimension of space, and researched the simultaneous embeddedness of the *luoshang* families in two nation-states. Transnational linkages and ties imply two-way relationships. Suggesting mobility and inclusion of both parties (those relatively mobile and those relatively immobile) in the methodological approaches of migration studies, this methodological approach is a novel contribution to existing discussions on research methodology in migration studies.

This research also contributes to the study of transnationalism. Uncovering the diversity and dynamics of Chinese *luoshang* families' transnational experiences and

linkages, the study enriches and broadens an empirical understanding of transnationalism practised by the global South middle class trans-migrants. As Favell et al. (2006) argue, the liberalisation possibility of human mobility of the highly skilled and the middle class, who are located between the global elites and the poverty-stricken labour migrants, certainly needs further elaboration. This study, by focusing on, documenting and analysing the intricacies of the transnational practices of mainland Chinese *luoshang* families, reveals the heterogeneity of the international mobility of the middling migrants, in particular, the middle class from the global South.

8.4 Future Research

There are three areas in which further research could be developed to further our understanding of Chinese *luoshang* families. Firstly, the research has only focused on how the *luoshang* and their wives considered transnational migration. Future research could explore the perspectives of children in the *luoshang* families, e.g. children's transnational trajectories, identity formation, sense of belonging, their perceptions of relationships with parents, career prospects and so on.

Secondly, this research aims to explore the transnational migration of *luoshang* by interweaving the macro socio-economic structural context with micro agency desires and choices. The methodology, which focuses on the spatial dimension, was designed. Future research could adopt a different methodology to capture the temporal dynamics of the transnational trajectories amongst *luoshang* families. For example, utilising a life course approach could both capture the "micro dynamics of an individual's biographical time" and "macro dynamics of social and historical time" (Wingens et al., 2011, p.10). An interweaving of "the dimension of space" and "the dimension of time" could be realised if combined with the multi-sited approach.

Thirdly, future research could consider including the theme of transnational aging into the context of the *luoshang* families. Such a perspective could help to better and more deeply understand the process of organising, shaping and dealing with life in old age in transnational contexts, e.g. the everyday experiences of older people, the social security systems and services available for older people, and how older people interact

with the state welfare system and global ideologies of aging (Horn et al., 2013). The *luoshang* families could be an interesting target group for this kind of focus, since their transnational family organisation and trajectories might have changed intergenerational relationships, intergenerational perceptions on Chinese cultural values, e.g. filial piety, and the elder care plan in contexts that extend across borders. However, it might not be the right time to focus on the way that *luoshang* families consider their elderly care. It could be worthwhile to look again at the issue in a few years' time.

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Glossary of Chinese Terms

Chinese in Pinyin	Chinese Characters	English Meaning
Bao	报	Reciprocity
Caifang	采访	To interview
Chaogu	炒股	Selling and buying stocks
Chujingka	出境卡	A prior approval from the local Public Security Bureau before applying for visas going abroad
Danaicun	大奶村	Fist/big wife village
Ernai	二奶	Second wife
Ganbu	干部	Cadres
Getihu	个体户	Small individual business owners
Guan	管	Devotion，care and discipline
Guanxi	关系	The dyadic interpersonal relationship ascribed to or achieved by an individual
Haigui	海归	Chinese returnees of those who migrated abroad and obtained permanent residence or citizenship of the countries of abode
Haoshan haoshui haowuliao	好山好水好无聊	Beautiful mountains, beautiful waters and beautifully bored
Huaqiao	华侨	Chinese sojourners
Huashang	华商	Chinese merchants
Hukou	户口	Household registration system
Jiaxing danqin jiating	假性单亲家庭	Spurious single parent household
Kuli	苦力	Chinese coolies
La guanxi	拉关系	To establish social networks, emphasizing the networking practices such as banqueting and entertaining
Liao	聊	To chat
Liaojie	了解	To understand
Luodi shenggen	落地生根	Strike out new roots in the host country
Luoguan	裸官	Naked government officials
Luoshang	裸商	Naked businessperson, the businessmen whose families have emigrated abroad

		taking with them fluid assets , whilst they themselves stay in mainland China to do business
Luoti zuoguan	裸体做官	Being naked officials
Mianzi	面子	Face
Qiaojuan	侨眷	The relatives of the migrants living in China
Qiaoxiang	侨乡	Hometowns of overseas Chinese
Qin	亲	Closeness
Shigen lizu	失根离祖	Uprooted or losing roots
Suzhi	素质	Quality
Suzhi jiaoyu	素质教育	Quality education
Taikongren	太空人	Emigrants who return to his origin country to work alone and does not live with his wife and children after emigration
Weiguo fuwu	为国服务	To serve the country
Xiahai	下海	Jumping into the commercial sea
Xian neizhu	贤内助	A supportive and assisted role to husband's career
Xin yimin	新移民	New migrants
Xungen wenzu	寻根问祖	Trace origins or search for one's roots
Yeluo guigen	叶落归根	The falling leaves settling on the roots or immigrants' desire to return to and be buried in China when they die
Yimin bu yiju	移民不移居	To emigrate without resettling
Yimin jian	移民监	Immigration prison
Zhancao chugen	斩草除根	Cutting off completely the original roots
Zhichi liuxue, guli huiguo, laiqu ziyou	支持留学，鼓励回国，来去自由	Supporting overseas studies, encouraging the return of Chinese students, and upholding the freedom of their movement
Jiahua fenggong guangzhao riyue; Xianxian weiye zhizhuang shanhe	加华丰功光昭日月，先贤伟业志壮山河	Rich legacies of Chinese Pioneers shining bright as the sun and moon; Great deeds of noble forbears zeal entrenched as mountains and rivers
Zhongchan jieceng	中产阶层	The middle strata
Zhongchan jieji	中产阶级	The middle class
Zhonggen	重根	Multiple rootedness or consciousness

Appendix A

Interviews Conducted and Information of Participants

No.	Name	Date of Interview	Place of Interview	Type of Migrant	Year of Landing
1	Mrs. An	November, 2015	Vancouver	Skilled	2007

Mrs. An was 45 at the time of interview. She used to be a senior manager in a private company in China. In 1999, Mrs. An's family submitted an emigration application to Canada as skilled migrants. However, it was not until 2007 that the family's application was approved, because the immigration agency which she applied through was closed, hence no one followed up the family's application in a long period. After emigration, Mrs. An took her daughter to Canada and successfully found a job in a Chinese company through her previous business networks, though she was not as well paid as before. Her husband is a senior manager in a private company in China as well. He originally planned to unite with the family and find a job in Canada, but the plan was interrupted in 2008 because of the global financial crisis. Mrs. An's husband visited Canada about twice a year. The family was still split in two continents when the interview took place.

2	Mrs. Ba	November, 2015	Edmonton	Skilled	2001

Mrs. Ba was from Xinjiang Province and she was 48 at the time of interview. Mrs. Ba's family emigrated to Canada in 2001 through skilled emigration. Mrs. and Mr. Ba and their two sons originally planned to resettle in Canada. Mrs. Ba found a job at a laundry shop after arrival, and later she bought this shop and managed it by herself. Her husband is an engineering PhD in China. After emigration, he accepted a postdoc offer in the University of Alberta. However, he increasingly found that he could not have a good career prospect in Canada. In 2005, he returned to China and wished to take advantage of China's booming economy, and to launch his business career. Because the laundry shop that Mrs. Ba opened in Canada needed to be taken care of, she rarely visited China and the familial relationship was kept alive via ICT communication and her husband's visits. In the beginning, Mr. Ba travelled to Canada frequently, but in recent years, he visited Canada once or twice a year, because he could not adjust himself to frequent transitions between different time zones as he grows older.

3	Mr. Bin	July, 2015	Shijiazhuang	Skilled	1999

Mr. Bin was about 50 when I talked to him. He used to be a senior manager in a state-owned enterprise in Shijiazhuang. He emigrated to Canada in 1999 as a skilled emigrant, in hope of gaining better employment opportunities there. However, before he could find a satisfied job in Canada, he discovered a business opportunity in China, and then decided to continue his career in

China. He left his daughter and wife in Canada, and joined a private enterprise. At that time, his daughter was studying in primary school. Mr. Bin could manage to visit Canada several times a year. It was not until 2009 that his wife returned to China and reunited with him. At the time of interview, both Mr. Bin and his wife had given up the permanent residence status of Canada and resettled in China.

4	Mr.& Mrs. Cao	May, 2015	Shijiazhuang	Investment	2005

Mr. Cao was 52 when I spoke to him. He is a private entrepreneur of a software company in Shijiazhuang. He and his families emigrated to Canada in 2005 through the Investor Immigration Program. Mr. Cao was not prepared to give up his career in China. After emigration, his business in China was still the main source of income for the family. He travelled between China and Canada regularly about three to four times a year, whilst Mrs. Cao and their son resettled in Vancouver. Mrs. Cao used to be a professional woman in China, but became a housewife after emigration. Later, she joined a hometown association and became an active participant in the transnational networks between China and Canada. Mrs. Cao and her son had the Canadian citizenship at the time of interview, but Mr. Cao kept his permanent resident status. The transnational lifestyle of the family was still maintained at the time of interview, though at that time, Mr. Cao's son had attended university and Mrs. Cao was living in Vancouver alone.

5	Mrs. Fan	November, 2015	Vancouver	Investment	2000

Mrs. Fan was about 50 years old at the time of interview. Mrs. Fan's family emigrated to Canada and landed in Vancouver in 2000, when she was just 35 years old. Her family started to do business and developed in the private sector in the 1980s, thus had accumulated enough economic capital to satisfy the requirements of the investment emigration programme. Mrs. Fan's husband was the person leading the family's emigration application. After emigration, though being hesitate to resettle in Canada, Mrs. Fan took her daughter and son to Canada, whilst her husband remained in China and dealt with the family's business. In the second year of settlement in Canada, Mrs. Fan gave birth to another daughter. Before emigration, Mrs. Fan helped in the family's business. After emigration, she became a housewife, but in free time, she invested in the real estate market in Vancouver. Her husband normally travelled to Canada four to six times a year to meet the residence requirements. At the time of interview, her family had been organised transnationally for more than 15 years.

6	Mr. Fu	June, 2015	Zhengzhou	Investment	2008

Mr. Fu was 52 years old when I talked to him. Mr. Fu is a private entrepreneur in the field of furniture industry. He has a small furniture plant in Zhengzhou. His family emigrated to Canada in 2008, when his eldest daughter was in middle high school and his son was only one year old. After emigration, his

wife took the two children living in Canada, while Mr. Fu spent much of his time in China to run his business. He frequently travelled between China and Canada, and spent more than four months in a year in Canada. According to Mr. Fu, he would not consider closing up his furniture plant and resettle in Canada in these years, but he wished that he could end up the transnational life and lived in China when he was retired.

7	Mr. Guo	June, 2015	Datong	Investment	2016

Mr. Guo was about 40 at the time of interview. He is a private entrepreneur in China. He first applied to emigrate Canada via the Immigrant Investor Program. Whilst he was waiting for approval, this programme was closed in 2014, so he was forced to withdraw. Then he turned to apply for emigration to the United States. Up until the time I interviewed him, he had not successfully obtained permanent residency status for either Canada or the United States, and was still waiting for his emigration application to be processed. However, as his brother has already emigrated to Canada, Mr. Guo sent his daughter to study in Canada together with his brother's son, whilst he was applying for emigrating to Canada. His wife accompanied their daughter in Canada as a "study mother". Mr. Guo visited Canada three times a year and his wife and daughter went back China twice a year. From further interactions, the researcher knew that Mr. Guo's family's application to emigrate to the United States had been approved, and his daughter had transferred to study there, but the transnational management of his family is maintained.

8	Mrs. Hong	October, 2015	Edmonton	Investment	2009

Mrs. Hong was 47 when I talked to her. Her family emigrated to Canada in 2009 when her son was 12 years old. The family has been engaged in private business sector in the field of telecommunication since the late 1990s. With relatively much economic capital accumulated in China, they emigrated to Canada as investors. Mrs. Hong led the family's emigration, in hope of the mobility could offer their son more opportunities. Before emigration, Mrs. Hong's family had already planned to be a *luoshang* family—splitting up and living in two continents simultaneously. Mrs. Hong's husband visited Canada three to four times a year to fulfil the residence obligation and maintain his permanent residence status. Mrs. Hong was a professional woman in China and became a housewife after emigration. Now she was engaged in the electronic commerce in Canada.

9	Mrs. Hou	November, 2015	Edmonton	Skilled	2009

Mrs. Hou was about 38 when she was interviewed. Her family emigrated to Canada in 2009 as skilled migrants when her son was about 5 years old. The family's emigration decision was highly impacted by the immigration agent in her hometown, and they chose Canada as the destination country because the emigration agency suggested them to do so. Her husband receives a PhD

	in computer science, working as a senior manager in a private company, and she used to be an accountant before their emigration. After emigration, she received some training provided by a Canadian organisation and successfully found a job in a Chinese company in Canada. Whereas, her husband stayed in Canada for two years and later chose to return back China because he could not see good career prospects in Canada. Her husband now visited Canada twice or three times a year, and Mrs. Hou took her son back China once a year.				
10	Mrs. Hua	November, 2015	Vancouver	Skilled	1999
	Mrs. Hua was 53 at the time of interview. She used to be a researcher in a research institution in Shijiazhuang. The family emigrated to Canada in 1999 through skilled emigration, when her eldest daughter was 13 years old and youngest son was 6 years old. With a good command of English, she had a strong desire to emigrate at that time, whilst her husband did not. At that time, her husband was working in local government. With strong personal initiatives, Mrs. Hua attended many clubs to train her English and job hunting skills upon her arrival at Vancouver, and finally managed to find a job. In 2000, her husband resigned from the government and opened his own business in China. Several years later, triggered by a special event, the family tried to unite in Canada. Mrs. Hua's husband tried to find employment or do some investment in Canada, but all failed. Later, her husband returned to China and continued his business. At the time of interview, Mrs. Hua's daughter also returned and worked in China.				
11	Mrs. Li	October, 2015	Vancouver	Investment	2008
	Mrs. Li was about 38 years old at the time of interview, and her family emigrated to Canada in 2008 as the investment migrants when her eldest son was eight-year-old and her second son was just one-year-old. Mrs. Li's husband was a private entrepreneur in the construction industry in Shijiazhuang before emigration. After emigration, though Mrs. Li felt disappointed and reluctant to separate from her husband, she had to accept the family splitting arrangement, because the family could not give up everything in China, and restart in Canada. Mrs. Li used to be a teacher in China, but after emigration, she became a housewife, because raising her two sons occupied most of her time. In recent years, she found that the younger son was so poor in Chinese language, which she could not accept. So she took her second son back to China, hoping to improve his Chinese.				
12	Mr. Liu	July, 2015	Shijiazhuang	Investment	2010
	Mr. Liu is a young entrepreneur in the field of IT who just entered his 40s. Mr. Liu's wife used to be an international student in Canada, then managed to obtain the permanent residency status in 2005. After they gave birth to a "Canadian baby" in 2008, Mr. Liu applied and got the permanent residency of Canada. However, because his career development in China was quite good,				

	Mr. Liu did not consider resettling in Canada in the beginning. In 2010, due to some considerations on his child's education, his family decided to resettle in Canada. After resettling in Canada, Mr. Liu's wife tried to open a cafe, but closed after one year. In 2013, she gave birth to the second child and became a housewife afterwards. In the five-year transnational life of Mr. Liu, he experimented with different frequency of travels between continents to make him more a part of the family.				
13	Mrs. Lu	November, 2015	Vancouver	Skilled	2000
	Mrs. Lu was 46 years old at the time of interview. Her family moved four times over twenty years. They first moved to the United States to study and work in 1994 and later the whole family emigrated to Canada in the 2000s. They started small businesses in Canada, and in 2006, the whole family decided to sell their businesses and move back to Beijing so that their little son could establish Chinese roots. In addition, they hoped to take advantage of the good economic situation in China and find new business opportunities. In 2010, Mrs. Lu and her son moved back to Canada again. However, this time, her husband did not move to Canada together, but stayed in China to continue his entrepreneurship in the sector of seasoning. The family chose to adopt the transnational household strategy, because it was believed to be in the best interests of the family at the time. Mrs. Lu was a housewife when she was interviewed, and she was receiving training to get the licence of being a Chinese teacher in Canada.				
14	Mr. Ma	September, 2015	Shijiazhuang	Investment	1998
	Mr. Ma was 46 when he was interviewed. His family emigrated to Canada before the 2000s under the skilled immigration category. At that time, he was a middle-level manager in a state-owned enterprise. As part of the family plan, he first acted as the family's source of income in China, while his wife did an MBA in Canada. After his wife graduated and found a job in Canada, he quitted his job in China and joined the family in Canada. However, after his arrival, he found it was so difficult for him to master the English language and he was de-skilled in Canada. So he decided to return to China and started his own business in 2004. Now he is running a company in the field of electromechanical engineering. He travelled to Canada not very regularly, about twice or three times a year. His son was born in Canada, but entered primary school in China to improve his Chinese language.				
15	Mr.& Mrs. Miao	September, 2015	Shijiazhuang	Skilled	2002
	Mrs. Miao was about 40 when I talked to her. Mrs. Miao and her husband studied in the same university in Canada, and after graduation, they got married. Later, Mrs. Miao found an employment in Canada and obtained Canadian citizenship, whilst her husband did not wish to work in Canada, but chose to return to China to establish and develop his career due to his existing family networks in China. The family was then split apart in two countries. In				

	this meantime, Mrs. Miao gave birth to her son in Canada who had been 8 years old at the time of interview, and was studying in primary school in China. Both Mrs. Miao and her son are Canadian citizens. When I met her, she just finished the life living apart because she was sent by her employer in Canada to work in China in recent years, and happily united with her family.				
16	Mr. Qian	June, 2015	Datong	Investment	2012
	Mr. Qian was a business entrepreneur in China, operating a company of his own. He was over 50 when I talked to him. His family emigrated to Canada in 2012 through investment emigration. According to his words, emigration was mainly for the sake of children. Mr. Qian's eldest son was an international student in the United States, who obtained a Masters degree, but was unable to find a job there. Mr. Qian thought it was because his son was not local citizens, thus had limited employment opportunities provided. Therefore, he wished that his second son, who were about 12 years old when emigrated to Canada, could had more life choices in the future. After emigration, Mr. Qian's wife took their second son living in Canada, and he had accustomed to his study life in Canada. Holding the permanent residence status, Mr. Qian normally spent half a year in Canada, and half a year in China. Mr. Qian's wife and their second son had obtained citizenship.				
17	Mr. Qiao	October, 2015	Edmonton	Skilled	2007
	Mr. Qiao was over 50 when I interviewed him. His family applied to emigrate to Canada under the skilled emigration programme in 2004. Before emigration, he was a senior director in a state-owned enterprise. However, the family has not decided to leave China and move to Canada at that time. After three years, in 2007, the family decided to resettle in Canada, when their son entered middle high school. Mr. Qiao's wife accompanied their son resettling and studying in Edmonton. She was an accountant in China, and after emigration, she successfully found a job in a Chinese company as an accountant, whilst Mr. Qiao remained in China. However, Mr. Qiao increasingly found that he lost control over his son via video chats after his son entered high school. In order to guide his son back to the right route of study, Mr. Qiao abandoned his business in China and went to Canada. So the family's economic condition was not as good as before.				
18	Mrs. Sai	November, 2015	Vancouver	Investment	2006
	Mrs. Sai's husband grew from a rural family, grasped the opportunity emerged in China's modernization and became private entrepreneur in Henan Province. The emigration of Mrs. Sai's family was driven by her husband. In the first attempt of the family's emigration application in 2002, Mrs. Sai did not acknowledge this decision until the family received the interview request. This application was rejected. Later in 2005, the family made a second emigration application through another immigration agency. Finally, her family				

	emigrated to Canada in 2006 and they firstly landed at PEI (Prince Edward Island), as was required by the investment immigration programme that they applied. In 2007, the family moved to Vancouver. Mrs. Sai was 46 when I talked to her, and she has been a housewife since 1995. Her family has two children: an elder son and a younger daughter, and her daughter was born in Canada. It had been more than 10 years since the family adopted the splitting family arrangement.				
19	Mrs. Shen	November, 2015	Vancouver	Investment	2005
	Mrs. Shen was 45 when she was interviewed. Mrs. Shen's family emigrated to Canada through the investor immigration programme in 2005 when her son was 12 and her little daughter was 5 years old. Mrs. Shen's husband is a private entrepreneur in printing industry. The family's emigration was mainly driven by her husband, but Mrs. Shen felt reluctant to move to Canada. Before emigration, the family had reached a consensus that the family's business in China could not be given up because it is the source of household income. Mrs. Shen lost her job when she gave birth to her little daughter in 2000 and became a housewife afterwards. After emigration, she did not have much chances to return to China until her son entered university. Grown up in Canada, her daughter received education in Hong Kong for two years and middle school education for one year. In these years, the families were even split in three regions. At the time I interviewed her, her daughter were back to Vancouver again, but Mrs. Shen and the children were still separated with her husband.				
20	Mr. & Mrs. Wan	September, 2015	Shijiazhuang	Skilled	2002
	Mrs. Wan's family emigrated to Canada in 2002 as skilled emigrants. Before emigration, Mr. Wan was a senior director in a state owned enterprise, whilst Mrs. Wan was a doctor in China. After emigration, Mr. Wan only lived in Canada for half a year, during which he tried to find a job, but failed. In addition, the enterprise he was employed in China did not let him go, so he then returned to China. After emigration, Mrs. Wan gave up her professional path in China and accompanied her daughter in Canada, because she was worried about her daughter's growth. She later became a doctor of Chinese medicine in Canada in 2004, due to her doctor training background. At the time of interviewing, both of them were about 60 years old and retired. It was not until their daughter became a postgraduate in the United States that Mrs.Wan returned to China. They finally reunited and lived in China after over 10 years of family splitting across the Pacific.				
21	Mrs. Wen	July, 2015	Shijiazhuang	Investment	N/A
	Mrs. Wen was 38 when I talked to her. The emigration application of Mrs. Wen's family was still under processing when she was interviewed. Mrs. Wen's family first applied Canada's Investor Immigration Program, but this				

	programme was closed in 2014. So later they turned to America's investment immigration programmes. The family is engaged in the field of clothes business. In the current stage, the family have already planned their transnational family arrangement. Once it is approved, Mrs. Wen and her daughter will go to America, whilst her husband will still stay in China to deal with the family's business. Mrs. Wen was quite positive towards the forthcoming transnational trajectories and she thought she could find a solution in face of any challenges.				
22	Mr. Xie	June, 2015	Shijiazhuang	Investment	2012
	Mr. Xie is a private entrepreneur in the field of telecommunication. He was about 50 when he was interviewed. With years of experience of being an entrepreneur, he emigrated to Canada under the Investor Immigration Program in 2012. Mr. Xie has two children. The university study of his elder daughter directly triggered the family's emigration decision. After emigration, he bought a small business in Canada, which is a mature small foreign trade business established by old ethnic Chinese immigrants. However, the family livelihood of Mr. Xie was still mainly relied on his business in China. Due to his long absence in Canada, the business in Canada was mainly managed by his wife who had relatively good English language skills. Before emigration, Mr. Xie's wife worked in the field of international trade and had a lot of experience on dealing with foreign clients.				
23	Mr. Zhang	June, 2015	Datong	Skilled	2009
	Mr. Zhang is a senior manager in a private company and a private entrepreneur in Datong. When I talked to him, he was 46 and his family had reunited in China, giving up the permanent residence status in Canada. Mr. Zhang visited Canada for a business meeting in 2006, after which his desire of emigration grew. After consulting an immigration agency, he applied emigration to Canada in 2008 as skilled migrants, and landed at Canada in 2009. His daughter then studied in Canada from the Grade Two of high school. Without a Beijing *hukou*, before emigration, his daughter was studying in an international school in Beijing. When he was applying for emigration, he planned to work in the Canadian branch of the company that he worked in. However, when his emigration application was approved, the Canadian branch was closed due to corporate reforms. Without a better career prospect in Canada, he returned to China after three months of arrival. In 2011, he started his own business and became a private entrepreneur. His wife stayed in Canada to accompany their daughter for two years, and returned to China when their daughter entered university. Though Mr. Zhang visited Canada frequently during these years, he did not fulfil the residence requirements and thus his permanent residence card could not be renewed afterwards. But Mr. Zhang's daughter obtained Canadian citizenship now.				

24	Mrs. Zhao	July, 2015	Shijiazhuang	Investment	2013
	Mrs. Zhao was 43 when I talked to her. Her family emigrated to Canada in 2013 under the entrepreneur emigration stream. Mrs. Zhao's family has two children and the family's business is in the field of international trade of textile. Before the family started the emigration application, the eldest daughter had already entered Canada as a high school student. Following the suggestions of her friends and considering the future education demands of her children, the family applied emigration. After emigration, Mrs. Zhao was mainly living in Canada to accompany her two daughters and assist in the family's international trade business in Canada's part. And her husband was mainly based in the family's business in China and travelled to Canada every two months. Though the family is engaged in international trade, both Mrs. Zhao and her husband are not good at English.				
25	Mrs. Zhou	November, 2015	Vancouver	Investment	2011
	Mrs. Zhou was 52 years old when I talked to her. Her family was engaged in the sector of household appliances in Shijiazhuang, and emigrated Canada in 2011 via the investment immigration program. Mrs. Zhou has three children, and her eldest daughter had graduated from university when the family emigrated Canada. Her two sons were at the age of 11 and 12 when the family moved to Canada. Before emigration, Mrs. Zhou assisted and managed a part of the family's business. After emigration, her husband took full charge of the family's business in China, whilst Mrs. Zhou became a housewife in Canada. Mrs. Zhou tried to establish her business in Canada, ranging from being driving instructors, selling health care products and opening beauty salon, but all failed. Though her husband loved the lifestyle in Canada, he could not give up the family business in China because of the family's high consumption in Canada.				

Appendix A

Appendix B

Outline of Interview Questions

1. Basic information of the participants: Age, hometown, occupation, family background, year of emigration, etc.

2. Emigration decision-making:
   a. Why did the family decide to emigrate and select Canada as the destination country?
   b. Where did the idea of emigration come from?
   c. How did you imagine Canada/your life in Canada at this stage?

3. Family splitting arrangement:
   a. How did you feel after emigration?
   b. When, what happened and what were the considerations that the husband decided to return?
   c. How did the family decide who should return? What was the wife's feeling?
   d. Did the family consider extending the family's business to Canada, or establishing a new business in Canada?
   e. Did the husband/the wife try to find employment in Canada?

4. Transnational life:
   a. How often does the husband visit Canada? How often do the wife and children visit China?
   b. Depict the husband/the wife's daily life in both China and Canada. (Routine, social activities, special events, etc.)
   c. How do the family maintain familial relationship? How do the husband, the wife and the children feel of the relationships? And special stories/events?
   d. Do you think mobility has changed you, your life and family? In what ways?
   e. How do you evaluate your transnational lifestyle?

5. Supplement questions:
   a. Where do you think you are belonging to? Where do you think is your home?
   b. What's the biggest problem you have met after emigration?
   c. How do you evaluate your family's entire immigration experience?
   d. What are your family plans for future?