CITIES IN THE AGE OF GLOBAL MIGRATION: INTEGRATION OF MAINLAND CHINESE IN VANCOUVER, CANADA

by

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Abstract

Since the late 1990s, the People’s Republic of China has emerged as the largest source of foreign students, tourists, skilled and low-skilled workers for the Pacific cities and regions. Upon arrival, the ‘new’ Chinese migrants have to carve out a place for themselves, which entails more than looking for jobs and shelter. In particular, they find themselves in a social milieu shaped by both new and long-established Chinese groups in the receiving places. Using migration flows between Mainland China and Vancouver as a case study, I explore specific processes and mechanisms that directly shape the diversity of migrant integration experiences and the variegated relations between migrant integration and the socioeconomic and spatial transformation of the Vancouver region. Specifically, I seek to understand how certain political economic characteristics of place (in terms of economic structures, political cultures, processes and institutions) have hindered and facilitated the livelihood production of migrant groups in multifaceted ways.

Two methodological approaches inform my study: comparative historical analysis and agency-structure linkage. I argue that specific historical trajectory of urban development in localities in China and Vancouver offer very different structures of opportunities that enable individual migrant families to build different human capacity, hence, their capacity to adapt to a new life when they move from place to place. Group differences challenge the taken-for-granted claims of ‘Chineseness’ and the stale concept of ‘Chinese community’ in public debates and policy-making. By placing the multiplicity of Mainland Chinese experiences at the centre of my research, I have opened up new lines of theorizing about the substantive meaning of integration as opposed to providing definitive answers to when and how to achieve integration. The impossibility of presenting a coherent, unified trajectory through which one settles down with a definitive sense of belonging attests to the complexity and precariousness of migrant integration.
Preface

The research for this dissertation was reviewed and approved by the Behavioral Research Ethics Board of the University of British Columbia. The Certificate of Approval - Minimal Risk number for this project is: H10-03184.
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List of Characters

An tiaojian shenling huzhao 按条件申领护照
Anxu shenling huzhao 按需申领护照
Bairen jihua 百人计划
Beida 北大
Changjiang xuezhe jihua 长江学者计划
Chizi jihua 赤子计划
Chunhui jihua 春晖计划
Daxin 大新
Difang zhi 地方志
Fang nu 房奴
Fu erdai 富二代
Gaocengci rencai huiguo zizhu jihua 高层次人才回国资助计划
Guan erdai 官二代
Guanxi 关系
Guojia jiechu qingnian kexue jijin 国家杰出青年科学基金
Haiyang xitong ‘shierwu’ yinjin liuxue rencai jihua 海洋系统‘十二五’引进留学人才计划
Hanyu shuiping kaoshi 汉语水平考试
Huaqiao 华侨
Huaqiao nongchang 华侨农场
Hukou 户口
Jingji shiyong fang 经济适用房
Jinshan zhuang 金山庄
Lianzu fang 廉租房
Qianren jihua 千人计划
Qiaoxiang 侨乡
Qiong erdai 穷二代
Shiye baoxian 失业保险
Teding shenfen renyuan 特定身份人员
天时不如地利 地利不如人和
同乡
文化休闲街
蜗居
下海
先施
新世纪优秀人才支持计划
燕京大学
蚁族
应试教育
永安
再就业项目
抓大放小
走出去
最低生活保障
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This dissertation is a result of much research, reading, listening, and reflection, but it is also a fruit of love – love of theory and scholarship – and, most importantly, profound empathy for people on the move like myself, who have had to struggle against enormous odds in unexpected, trying circumstances. Writing a doctoral dissertation is always a daunting task. This is particularly so on a topic like Chinese integration in North America – an established field where distinguished scholars from various academic disciplines have called themselves experts. It is particularly hard when one writes from within an extremely diverse ‘ethnic’ community that seemingly confirms the racial stereotypes and at the same time makes the racialized knowledge blatantly ridiculous.

The fact that I almost lost my life in a fatal car accident as a passenger has added much difficulties to the completion of this dissertation. This happened a year right after I started my doctoral studies. Having lost my physical mobility for three months, I had to be confined to a hospital bed. Following one year of medical leave to recover from four surgeries, I found that my return to academia particularly precious. Unfortunately, a fifth surgery in the subsequent year took me on a bumpy ride. This dissertation has thus been written along a journey of healing and determination. I would not have the strength to survive the excruciating physical pain without, first of all, the meticulous care of my family but also Madge Wiesman, Professor Michael Leaf (and his wife Teck), Leslie Shieh, and Thien Phan, whose generous assistance in various ways kept my spirit.

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Dedication

For my mom, the source of my strength to venture into Canada on my own and to get back on my feet when I was shattered; and

For Yoel, the source of my spirit in life and work.
Chapter 1. Introduction: Migrant Settlement and Cities

Since the late 1990s, the People’s Republic of China has emerged as the largest source of foreign students, tourists, skilled and low-skilled workers for the Pacific cities and regions. Upon arrival, the ‘new’ Chinese migrants have to carve out a place for themselves, which entails more than looking for jobs and shelter (Pieke 2007). In particular, Chinese migrants find themselves in a social milieu shaped by both new and long-established Chinese communities in the receiving places. Because of the perceived wealth of some groups, the settlement of the new Chinese migrants had the effect of triggering public expressions of discontent and suspicion. Consider the following reports:

- “Wealthy Chinese snap up homes in Southern Europe as governments offer visas for buying” (Financial Post, August 22, 2013)
- “Mainland Chinese eye global real estate” (The Globe and Mail, March 27, 2012)
- While “New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco” remain the “traditional favorites” of Chinese investors, many are now also heading to “cities such as Houston, Boston and Seattle” as they seek “geographic diversity” and “bigger lot sizes” (The Wall Street Journal, September 24, 2013)
- “As Mainland Chinese snap up Vancouver’s mansions and apartments prices soar, one developer is now selling tiny 300 square feet flats.” (South China Morning Post, April 26, 2013)

This modest sampling of media coverage reveals the allegedly destabilizing side of global Chinese migration for the ‘receiving’ places. Scholars often portray ‘new’ Chinese migrants as flexible and strategic transnational actors. David Ley (2010), for example, used the elusive term “millionaire migrants” to describe the entrepreneurial migrant subjects from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and increasingly the People’s Republic of China. Similarly, Aihwa Ong (1999, 119) has written of the evasive tactics of Chinese or East Asian as “flexible citizens” “adept at subverting the political regimes of localization and control”. Yet, the slippage between different groups serves to construct a problematic category like the calculating, wealthy and highly mobile Chinese subjects without distinguishing who exactly are the ‘Chinese’ subjects that scholars refer to. Rarely do scholars contextualize the agency of migrants whose actions are informed by the already-existing rules and resources in specific localities. By agency I mean people’s intentions
and knowledge of how to adjust their behaviors in light of the social world and to participate in it as competent members. As agents, migrants have the capacity or power (within limits of course) to make a difference in the world through their actions.

The characterization of ‘Chinese’ as ‘transnational’, opportunistic subjects in existing scholarship often relies on a homogeneous vision of contemporary Chinese migration process, ignoring the specific realities that embed different migrant groups in different structures of opportunity and constraint. One example is the decisive role of China’s regional inequality and the political economy of place in shaping the various socio-economic integration processes in the migrant-receiving cities. While places of origin have the potential to shape the transnational activities of different economic groups, apparently generations of different Chinese groups have also played a productive developmental role in places of settlement. Many global cities that are presumably hotbeds of Chinese investors such as New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sydney or Vancouver have a long history of Chinese settlements dating back to the period of European colonization in the late 19th or early 20th centuries. Ethnic Chinese communities have provided the sound community infrastructure that has effectively facilitated the social and economic integration of newcomers from various places in Mainland China. The built environments transformed by the everyday life practices of generations of Chinese migrants have reaffirmed the permanent role of Chinese in these global cities.

The conflicting, ambiguous images of Chinese as transnational homo economicus and permanent settlers demand an answer to the question: what are the specific processes and mechanisms that directly shape the diversity of Chinese settlement and integration experiences? What are the variegated relationship between migrant integration and the repositioning of migrant-receiving region within the global processes of economic, cultural and social development?

The short answer: geography matters, as human geographers have asserted (e.g. Ley 2004; Mitchell 2004; Massey 2002; Massey and Allen 1984). Human geography is more than an outcome of social processes that produce differentiated social groups; it influences the very capacities, knowledge, social practices and identities that different immigrant groups carry with them. The sheer diversity of regional differences in terms of urban development in China is impressive and worthy of documentation for an empirical understanding of social group differentiation. With migration, such diversity does not necessarily result in an exact
reproduction in the destinations. Instead, migrant groups may engage in innovative actions that sometimes lead to the structural transformation of the place of settlement. Indeed, a study of intra-group diversity shaped by China’s regional political economies and its multifaceted ramifications upon the socio-spatial landscape of the ‘receiving’ places is much needed.

Moreover, there has been little comparative work done to examine the varying relationships between migrant settlement and urban transformation, hence, the repositioning of cities in the global hierarchy (Glick Schiller 2012). Socio-economic groups from places in China produce impacts ranging from differentiated demands for housing and employment opportunities to more existential questions such as the ways different Chinese migrant groups negotiate their senses of place and belonging. On the part of the receiving place, institutional mechanisms such as immigration policies, the provision of social services, land use and rezoning policies and the allocation of public resources for community development can play crucial roles in facilitating the settlement process and mediating the multifaceted impacts of population growth as a result of migration. Drawing on fifteen months of fieldwork between 2011 and 2013, this dissertation uses migrant linkages between places in China and the Vancouver region as a case study to shed light on how the political economy of places shape the different integration processes of Mainland Chinese.

This dissertation also shows that the political economic characteristics of place have implications for our understanding of the dynamics between Chinese settlement and a western city’s urban transformation and, more broadly, the way we think about community development and the substantive meaning of migrant integration. The territory known as ‘China’ is far from being an integrated place inhabited by people sharing one coherent, uncontested national identity. I therefore conceptualize China as a mosaic of places. In particular, regional differences within China have positioned social groups unequally in terms of their affiliations with the state-owned economy and the private economy. Divergence in socioeconomic positioning can be translated into differentiated access to livelihood production resources. This in turn shapes differences in political ideology, lifestyle practices, expectations and desires.

A greater emphasis on the role of the sending places, however, does not mean that they constitute deterministic factors. This is due to the agency of migrants, their capacity to act in response to livelihood needs and to reconfigure their sense of identity in the face of changing
circumstances. Despite the fact that the study of migration and urban life has been closely linked since the emergence of social sciences as organized disciplines of study, little work has been done about the agency of migrants and their varying relationships to urban transformation (Glick Schiller 2012). To fill in the knowledge gap, I place at the center of my research the multiplicity of innovative ways through which migrants mobilize resources in various places in order to reshape the spaces of socioeconomic inclusion.

In doing so, I intend to achieve the following four main objectives. First, I contextualize individual actions within the context of urban development that is beyond the geographical and administrative boundaries of places (e.g. neighbourhood, city, region, province and state). Second, I treat migrants as active agents with differentiated capacity to transform the political economic and spatial landscapes of a place. Third, I question the inflated use of the transnational lens in existing scholarship. Instead of using the transnational perspective as a given, I investigate how the political economy of places create different structures of opportunity and constraint that motivate individuals to engage in transnational activities, such as the maintenance of social and economic networks in more than one country. Finally, I relate urban development of a city-region in the historical context of colonization, emphasizing its relevance to contemporary planning policy and process. Through these four objectives, I intend to provide a deeper understanding of the relationships between migrant integration and urban structural change.

1.1. Locating Migrants in Urban Change

In the 1960s the word “transnational” was widely used by students of economic processes to refer to the establishment of corporate structures with established organizational bases in more than one sovereign state (Martinelli 1982, cited in Glick Schiller et al. 1995). Since the 1990s, its use has been expanded in the social sciences and cultural studies to refer to deterritorialization and unboundedness – the transgression of national borders and boundaries in the process of integration with the global economy. In a similar manner, migration studies are undergoing a paradigmatic shift – contemporary immigrants are conceived of as transmigrants, becoming firmly rooted in their new country while maintaining multiple linkages to their homeland (Glick Schiller et al. 1995). Since then, the relations between migrant integration and transnationalism have been the subjects of intense scholarly debate.
In existing literature on transnationalism, two opposing positions can be discerned: while some view transnationality as an impediment to integration, others maintain that transnational activities and integration are not incompatible, or even mutually supportive (Erdal and Oeppen 2013, 872-5). This broad debate is also reflected in the study of Chinese communities in North America. Pessimistic scholars often presuppose not only the pervasiveness of transnational practices but also the contradictions between migration and state-centered citizenship/belonging (e.g. Ong 1999; Ley 2013). While there is merit in applying the transnational lens to ‘new’ Chinese mobility, the preoccupation with ‘flexibility’ is challenged by comparable research on Latin American and ethnic Chinese groups through the prism of ethnic enclave economy in North America (e.g. Landolt 2002; Portes 2001; Zhou 1992). This scholarship has indicated the absence of transnationalism in the everyday lives of many migrants and the possibilities of rootedness in the receiving states. In light of the growing literature on transnationalism, Alejandro Portes (2003) cautioned against the over-enthusiastic tone of the transnational perspective portraying an exaggerated scope of the phenomenon.

The two well-established streams of literature on transnationalism and integration provide important comparative insights. Yet, they have been unable to explain processes that contribute to the coexistence of variations in the patterns of migrant behaviors, that is, while some migrant groups live a transnational life, others evince strong reluctance to engage with the sending country. Departing from the existing literature that often provides the highest level of generalization, my dissertation looks at specific processes and mechanisms that lead to the immense diversity of practices within one, albeit fragmented, ethnic community. Specifically, I examine how specific historical trajectories of urban development in localities in China and Vancouver offer different structures of opportunities that enable individual migrant families to build different human capacity, hence, their capacity to adapt to a new life when they move from place to place.

This research focus draws inspiration from the multidisciplinary literature on place and migration. Historians and anthropologists have advanced migration knowledge by foregrounding the role of ‘locality’ in migrant settlement processes (e.g. McKeown 2001; Glick Schiller et al. 2009). Their insights can be strengthened by geographers’ spatial concept of ‘place’ as an assemblage of networks and power relations (e.g. Massey 1993, 1994; Robinson 2006). In particular, my research is influenced by feminist geographer Doreen Massey’s argument on “a
global sense of place” – instead “of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings” that are constructed on a far larger scale than what we often think of as local (1994, 154).

This notion of place has encouraged us to think beyond the rigid binary of inside and outside: to Massey, places are not about boundaries, or the distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ on which exclusionary politics has been predicated. She sees the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ as mutually constitutive, one requiring the other for meaning. Embedded in the multiplicity of connections and flows in space are what she calls the power-geometry – different social groups and individuals have distinct relations to the flows and movements that constitute the ‘globalization’ of capital and culture (Massey 1993, 61). Power differentiation has led to unequal access among social actors to resources and information, which has contributed to a highly complex social reality and differentiated levels of socioeconomic integration. The conceptualization of place as constitutive of geographically unbounded networks of relations and power also has the promise of overcoming ‘methodological nationalism’, or the tendency of social scientists to assume that ‘The nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world’ (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 301). Meanwhile, it helps to highlight the complexity and uncertainty of transnational orientations. In dialogue with the literature on place and migrant settlement, the premise of my dissertation is that the conjunction of urban structures in Vancouver and migrants’ past and/or ongoing linkages with places in China have profound implications for their integration experiences and the ways they shape local living environments. My thick description of a case study on the intersection between place-based urban change and migrant settlement contributes to the growing literature on the globalization of cities and migrant settlement and integration.

1.2. Defining Integration: Theoretical Discussion

I understand that integration, as a contentious term, needs to be unpacked by an examination of the multiple layers of meanings and encompassing causal factors ranging from the economic structural, spatial to the socio-cultural. Here I define integration as a process through which migrant families acquire the necessary resources (e.g. social networks, financial capital, information, etc.) for livelihood production and for participation in the production and consumption of urban spaces. The process of integration comprises intricate moments of social
interaction and self-introspection, which ultimately shape the profound sense of identity and belonging. An individual’s level of integration hinges on four intertwined dimensions: what, where, who and how. Specifically, I try to shed light on the following interrelated questions: what resources do various migrant groups from China mobilize to meet their everyday life needs? Where are the resources located? Who controls such resources? And, how do the ‘new’ Chinese families negotiate access to social empowerment (e.g. access to employment, housing, education, information, social networks, etc.)?

In order to provide better understanding for these questions, I bring ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ places in one single study to explain the diversity of settlement and integration experiences. In doing so, I conceptualize China as an assemblage of multiple places. This conceptualization is particularly instrumental to move beyond the essentialized notion of ‘Chineseness’. This is based on the understanding that the land known as China consists of geographical places with extremely diverse histories, trajectories of urban development, cultures, languages, and people. In specific localities, the different state-market configurations offer different sets of opportunities and constraints that shape the incentive structure for the ‘new’ migrant families to engage with transnational activities, such as the maintenance of transnational households. As such, migrants also bring with them different world-views and expectations that impact their attitudes towards integration and, as a result, their interactions with the receiving society.

1.3. Integration From the Perspective of Livelihood Production: An Agenda for Research and Analysis

Migration and integration pathways are varied and dynamic, and thus highly resistant to generalization. Yet, there are no lack of theoretical approaches developed in the disciplines of economics, sociology, history and geography to provide general, descriptive accounts of migrant settlement and integration. I will thereby provide a brief discussion of the shortcomings of prominent theoretical frameworks in migration studies. Informed by migration systems theory, I put forward a research agenda to study integration through the lens of livelihood production that, as I argue, has the promise of linking micro-level strategies with a range of social, economic, and political relationships, processes, institutions and structures that make up the (historical) context in which these strategies are pursued.
In migration studies, neoclassical theory has played a dominant role. Developed originally in the nineteenth century to explain labour migration in the process of economic development, neoclassical theory assumes that potential migrants have the perfect knowledge of wage difference and employment opportunities in destinations, and their migration decisions are driven overwhelming by economic factors (Massey et al. 1993, 433). This theoretical framework is often known as the “push-pull” model, in which the causes of migration lie in a combination of “push factors” impelling people to leave the area of origin, and “pull factors” that attract them to certain countries (Castles and Miller 2009, 22). Typically, two main forces are distinguished to create the pushes and pulls: (1) rural population growth causing pressure on natural and agricultural resources, and pushing people out of marginal rural areas, and (2) economic conditions such as higher wages luring people into cities and industrialized countries (Skeldon 1997, cited in de Haas 2008, 9).

Studies of specific migration experiences, however, have cast doubt on the usefulness of neoclassical approach in explaining actual movements or predicting future ones. It is rarely the poorest people from the least developed countries that move to the richest countries; more frequently migrants are those of intermediate social status from areas undergoing both economic and social change (Castles and Miller 2009, 23). Similarly, the push-pull model cannot explain why only some move and others remain, why a certain group of migrants move at some historical period but not others, or why they go to one country rather than another. In the search for general theories to explain migration and its consequences, neoclassical theory takes a homogenizing and reductionist view that sees migrants and their households as atomized economic decision-makers who have full knowledge on their options and freedom to make rational choices. This assumption is in contrast to the historical reality that migrants, with limited and often even contradictory information, are subject to a variety of structural constraints set up by employers and governments. As a consequence of its tendency to prioritizing economic factors, neoclassical theory has not yet been able to provide more detailed analysis of the social, political and cultural contexts in both sending and receiving areas from which migrants derive their knowledge.

In contrast to the lack of attention to historical context in neoclassical theory, an alternative explanation of migration emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in response to the development of world economy. With its intellectual roots in Marxist political economy and in world systems
theory, the historical-structural paradigm postulates that economic and political power is unequally distributed among developed and underdeveloped countries, and that capitalist expansion has the tendency to reinforce these inequalities. Instead of modernizing and gradually progressing towards economic development, underdeveloped countries are trapped by their disadvantaged position within the global economic structure. From this perspective, migration is considered as an intrinsic process of the world system in which cheap labour force is mobilized for capital accumulation. In other words, people are forced to move because traditional economic structures on the basis of reciprocity and trust has been undermined as a result of their incorporation into the global capitalist production. Through the process of migration, the uprooted populations become part of the urban proletariat to the benefit of the core areas (de Haas 2008, 7-8).

Seeing the interests of capital as all determining, the historical-structural approach has been criticized for being too rigid in its view about individuals as victims that passively adapt to macro forces. From this perspective, migrants and their households are deprived of individual agency. Indeed, the rather pessimistic depiction of migrants and corresponding gloomy predictions about underdeveloped countries has been refuted by recent history, as various formerly developing countries have achieved sustained economic growth in the past decades and seen substantial improvement of individual livelihoods.¹

Out of the above-summarized critiques emerged a number of new approaches, among which is migration systems theory rooted in geography. According to Oliver Bakewell (2012, 13-4, italics in original),

“a migration system is defined by i) a set of interacting elements – including flows of people, ideas and goods, institutions in the sense of discourses and associated practices (e.g. ‘culture of migration’, smuggling, inequality …), and strategies as in plans for action by particular actors (e.g. individual and household strategies, policies of governments, private businesses, and civil society organizations) – which relate to the migration between localities; and ii) the dynamics governing the way in which the elements (flows, institutions and strategies) change in relation to changes in both these system elements (feedback mechanisms) and in the wider environment.”

What distinguishes the approach of migration systems from other attempts to theorise migration and integration is that it makes an effort to cover the totality, complexity and multi-dimensions

¹ More detailed discussions of the limitations of both the neoclassical theory and the historical-structural theory can be found at de Haas (1998) and Massey et al. 1993.
of migratory phenomena, taking into account the interconnectedness of micro-, meso- and macro- relations and interactions (Iosifides 2011, 28). The fundamental assumption of this theory is that migration alters the social, cultural, economic, and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends through the exercise of human agency. In other words, migration systems theory emphasizes that migration not only affects and is affected by the direct social environment of migrants, but also restructures the entire developmental context of the concrete spaces in which migration takes place (de Haas 2008, 21). As Oliver Bakewell (2012, 16) suggests, an immediate benefit by adopting the migration systems approach is that it forces the researchers to consider both origin and destination contexts as a migration system and the agency of social actors within this system.

As a holistic approach, migration systems theory represents a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding migration as opposed to grand theories such as neoclassical or historical-structural theories. While reflecting the major empirical findings I have covered in the dissertation, it also brings out two theoretical points I want to highlight, including the role of human agency in structural transformation and the interactions between sending and receiving localities. Despite its promise to provide a more realistic understanding of migration, the challenges of applying migration systems theory to empirical research lie on the difficulties to identify plausible elements in the migration system and feedback mechanisms (e.g. information, goods) through which migration induces changes to future migration patterns.

In light of such challenges, I use people’s livelihood strategies as a starting point for empirical research. Livelihood strategies depend upon a broad range of factors, including location, relative social status, political system, economic structure, structure of local governance, social networks, and access to housing, education, food, and other resources. Changes at the macro level – such as those associated with housing or economic reforms, political crisis, or geopolitics – can transform local political economies, which subsequently transforms the structure of opportunity and constraint for individual households, migrants and non-migrants alike. People adapt their livelihood strategies – including strategies to move from place to place – in order to minimize risks or to capitalize on the opportunities for life improvement.

The overarching theoretical framework I employed in the dissertation is the complex interaction of individual agency and structures within migration processes. By processes, I mean that the
relationships and interactions that motive people to migrate and/or settle down in a new place are played out over time, and can only be properly analyzed and evaluated within a historical perspective.

1.4. Migrant Linkages between Chinese Cities and Vancouver as a Case Study

In exploring processes and mechanisms that produce and reproduce diversity of livelihood strategies within the Chinese communities, I use linkages established by migration between localities in China and the Vancouver region as a case study. This research focus allows me to avoid lumping together various Chinese groups who lack direct lived experience of contemporary China’s urban development, such as those from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore or other Southeast Asian countries. It also allows me to contextualize group differences rather than simply rely on the convenient category of Chinese per se as the marker of identification and distinction.

Among the diversity of countries where Chinese emigrate to, Canada, where Vancouver is located, offers useful examples that demonstrate the possibility of migrant integration, and transcendental moments when differences can be bridged. As one of the “classical countries of immigration” (Castles and Miller 2009), Canada alongside the US and Australia are the major destinations of emigration from China. Overall, public policies and institutions in Canadian cities have been effective in mitigating the negative impacts of human settlement and in facilitating immigrant integration through the provision of language training and access to social services (Sandercock and Attilli 2009). Ghettoization in the US context is not a factor in Canadian cities where a high degree of racial concentration is not necessarily associated with greater neighborhood poverty (Walks and Bourne 2006). In contrast to European cities, tensions between immigrants and the host societies are less evident in Canada. On the whole, after initial periods of adaptation, immigrants have been able to catch up with the income levels of other Canadians and take on professional and other leadership roles (Simmons 2011).

Despite the vast territory in Canada, the settlement of Chinese has been mostly concentrated in the metropolitan areas of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary. While these cities do not rank highly in the listings of world cities, they nevertheless deserve the label ‘global’ (Bourne et al. 2011). Unlike Toronto, which is the financial center of Canada’s five major banks as well as other financial and industrial corporations, or Calgary where EnCana, one of the North
America’s largest natural gas producers, is located, Vancouver lacks the corporate functions characteristic of other Canadian metropolitan areas (ibid. 293). In spite of the absence of global corporations, Vancouver occupies significant niches within international circuits in terms of strategic gateway functions, including the Port of Vancouver and Vancouver International Airport. While the Port of Vancouver is the largest not only in Canada but also on the West Coast of North America, Vancouver International Airport is the second busiest airport in Canada after Toronto (ibid. 293). As the third most populous Canadian city-region and located on the Pacific Rim, Vancouver’s social, cultural and spatial transformation is predominantly driven by international migration. Among North American cities, Vancouver has the second highest percentage of foreign-born after Toronto (ibid. 30). Whereas Toronto has received significant flows of migrants from major sending regions in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe, immigration to Vancouver has a pronounced Asian profile. Since the 1980s, the flows of migration and accompanying investment from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and increasingly the People’s Republic of China to Vancouver have generated propulsive forces to restructure Vancouver’s housing markets, social ecology of neighbourhoods, local economy, lifestyle practices, citizenship and identity (Hutton et al. 2011).

Historically, however, Vancouver was a place hostile to Asian immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century. An array of anti-Chinese laws was created to prevent the Chinese from being an integral part of the ‘mainstream’ society. One of such discriminatory policies was the punitive Head Tax – rising successively from CAD $50 in 1885 to CAD $100 in 1900, and to the astonishing level of $500 in 1903 – that was imposed upon no groups other than the Chinese. Alongside the Head Tax, zoning bylaws and classification were in place to segregate Chinese in the ethnic neighbourhood of Chinatown and adjacent residential neighbourhood of Strathcona (Anderson 1991). The Chinese were systematically excluded from ownership of Crown Land, from professions and other employment including civil service through the implementation of the Chinese Exclusion Act. It was not until 1947 that the Chinese succeeded in overthrowing this Exclusion Act that was in contravention of the UN Charter of Human Rights and won the legal right to sponsor the entry of wives and minor children. As a result of persistent Chinese community struggles at the time, Canada adopted the Immigration Act and substantially ended the long history of institutional discrimination in selecting immigrants on the basis of ethnicity or
country of origin. From a broader historical perspective, institutionalized discrimination against Chinese in Canada was one episode of global discrimination against Asian migrants in general and Chinese in particular in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Of course, any of the Canadian urban regions can be sites of compelling case studies, as they all operate largely within global circuits of capital, commodity trade, migration, knowledge and cultural practices. The choice of Vancouver as my case study is strategic, as the city-region has become an integral part of the Asia Pacific Rim economy through population movement and trade, especially with China. Its uneven history of Chinese settlement as well as the growing influence of capital and people from the Asia Pacific should offer important comparative insights for globalizing cities who went through processes of (post-)colonization and whose trajectories of urban development are shaped by the integration of growing migrant populations in general and the China factors in particular.

1.5 Organization of the Dissertation

Focusing on one segment of the Chinese community, that is, migrant groups from the various parts of Mainland China, I try to untangle the complexities of livelihood production and migrants’ participation in the production and consumption of urban spaces. Each of the chapters therefore reflects the mutually reinforcing processes of economic, spatial and political integration. While chapters 3 to 5 focus on the context of sending places in China, the remaining chapters focus on the receiving end of the Vancouver metropolitan region. The intention is to bridge ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ places in one coherent study and to provide a comprehensive picture of how changing structural forces, historical events, and institutions shape the prospects of living in the city. I organize my dissertation as follows.

Chapter 2 provides a summary of the research design, the data collection process, and my reflections on methodological issues. Migration has conventionally been studied as two separate sets of processes, operating in places of departure on the one hand and arrival on the other. Accordingly, large bodies of empirical work have been conducted on causes of migration before departure and assimilation/integration issues after arrival. These two themes are hardly

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adequately linked (e.g. Castles and Miller 1998; Kelly and Lusis 2006). Instead, I treat Vancouver and places in China as components of a larger Pacific world in which the question of whether migrants are engaged in transnational activities is examined empirically rather than taken for granted.

Chapter 3 draws inspiration from sociologist John Torpey (1998)’s ideas on the state role in “monopolizing the legitimate means of movement” and provides a historical account of China’s border control from the 1940s to the late 1970s. This history produced a generation of Chinese emigrant families who tend to be suspicious of the Communist regime because of their political traumas before arriving in Vancouver. Moving from the late 1970s, I also summarize state policies on emigration control, arguing that the current surge of emigration flows from China is a process highly differentiated on the basis of locality and institutional affiliation with the state.

Chapter 4 situates emigration within urban processes of change in China, in particular the realms of housing, education and the changed everyday life in urban spaces that were three major recurring themes in my interviews with recent Chinese immigrants in Vancouver. Changes in China reflect the larger process of urban transition from socialist planned economy to market-oriented one since the late 1970s. In this chapter, I highlight how the mechanisms of housing, education and urban spaces inform migrant families’ decision-making. I consider emigration as a household strategy to cope with urban change, arguing that access to this strategy is structured on the basis of geographical location and household registration (hukou) status.

Chapter 5 breaks down the broad-brush category of Mainland Chinese into different groups originating from three specific places with contrasting political economic characteristics. The purpose is to engage place as an analytical framework to study a series of Chinese migrants groups and to examine the role of migrant-sending localities in shaping the settlement trajectories from a comparative perspective. It demonstrates that not only is locality crucial, but also that transformative processes in the sending areas are catalytic for intra-group diversity and the different levels of socio-spatial integration.

Chapter 6 moves to the ‘receiving’ place of Vancouver where generations of different Chinese migrants have settled. Informed by the extensive literature on ethnic economy conducted mainly in the United States’ context, this chapter maintains a cautionary perspective on the transnational
lens. I distinguish ethnic economy into three types: middleman minority, enclave economy and transnational entrepreneurship. In doing so, I argue that the different types of ethnic economy are the interactive outcomes of the socioeconomic and political processes in both migrant sending and receiving localities where different socioeconomic groups adapt to and reshape the structure of opportunity and constraint. Drawing on the concrete stories of migrants, I provide important insights into strategies of how migrants mobilize resources available at multiple localities for economic integration. I maintain that the process of adaptation to local economy contributes to structural change of a city-region.

Chapter 7 focuses on the changed patterns of spatial integration of ethnic Chinese in the Vancouver region. According to the integration model established by Chicago sociologists during the early 20th century, evolving settlement patterns were linked to the socioeconomic, cultural and political integration of migrants. In the past two decades or so, however, immigrant groups to North America with higher-than-average levels of education and financial capital have settled directly in middle-class neighbourhoods. This trend challenges the classical Chicago model of migrant settlement. To explain this phenomenon, Geographer Wei Li (1998, 2009) developed the concept of ‘ethnoburb’. While both models have been influential, they approach migrant settlement from the perspective of ethnicity. In contrast, I move beyond the ethnocentric lens to understand the spatial distribution of Chinese migrant groups from the political economic perspective. I argue that the fragmented settlement pattern of Chinese newcomers and long-terms residents of Chinese origin reflects the sociospatial inequality and polarization within the Chinese communities, attesting to the impossibility to present a coherent, unified category of ‘Chinese’.

Chapter 8 situates the Vancouver metropolis within a wider historical and spatial context – colonialism and global economy. I suggest that spatial patterns established by European settlers in the late 19th century, legitimized at the time by the creation of racialized knowledge of difference, are not easily erased. Instead, such patterns and knowledge have evolved and continued to shape the popular imagination of difference between ‘Chinese’ and ‘non-Chinese’, ‘Asian’ and ‘white’, ‘foreign’ and ‘local’. Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation by returning to the larger theoretical question of migrant integration, which I consider rather precarious with respect to Chinese in Canada. It also discusses the strength and limitations of my research before
closing with a call for more comparative research on human agency and the interrelations between migrant integration and urban transformation.
Chapter 2. Methodology: Historicizing Linkages Between Human Agency and Structure From a Comparative Perspective

Despite the fact that the settlement of migrants has always been integral to the past and present of cities, the topics of cities, migration and the global trend of urban transformation are often studied under separate fields of research and theory because of the “division of labour among academic disciplines” (Glick Schiller 2012, 31; De Haas 2010; Castles 2002). Within the studies of urban change, migrants figure mostly as faceless labour, such as Saskia Sassen’s (2001, 322) observation about global cities as “a key site for the incorporation of large numbers of immigrants in activities that service the strategic sectors.” Their survival needs, strategies, identities and senses of belonging are often treated as existing in an objective world outside researchers as observers. The prevalent view is that, rather than a potential solution to many challenges of urban governance, migration poses multiple problems for city governments, from housing demand, land use change and public service need to the management of interethnic relations. The assumption is that migrants “are the clients for whom planners perform their craft” because of new challenges introduced by the diversity of immigrant origins (Ley and Murphy 2001, 126). In general, urban scholars have provided little empirical work to address the mutually dependent relations among migrant integration, urban change and the development of transnational linkages.

To fill the void of this knowledge gap, I will shed light on the multifaceted relations between urban change and the various processes of migrant integration. Inspired by Janet Abu-Lughod’s urge to study the real world through multiple theoretical lenses (2011, 21-2), I piece together knowledge not only from urban studies but also sociology, urban planning, political science, anthropology, geography and history. Before offering historically grounded explanations of how the different integration trajectories are shaped by and shaping local social, economic, and political structures in chapters 3 to 8, I want to discuss some methodological matters in this chapter.

According to Stephen Castles (2012, 7), “Methodology and methods are often confused, or used as if they meant the same thing. Many articles in the social sciences have a section on ‘methodology’ that merely describes the methods used in a study, but does not actually discuss methodology.” Castles (2012, 7) further explains, “Methodology is about the underlying logic of
research. It is closely linked to the branch of philosophy known as epistemology – literally ‘the theory of knowledge’… A key dispute in epistemology is between ‘positivists’ who claim that there is an objective world outside ourselves as observers, and ‘constructivists’, who believe that meanings are constructed, interpreted and constantly reconstructed by people in their perceptions and social interactions.” By contrast, Castles (2012, 7) clarifies that methods “are specific techniques used to collect and analyze information or data”, such as “literature reviews, censuses or other large datasets, surveys, qualitative interviews, household budget analysis, life histories and participant observation.”

Interested in how knowledge is socially constructed, I apply two methodological approaches to my research design: comparative historical analysis and agency-structure linkage. Like other work following the comparative historical analysis tradition, I am concerned with causal analysis, an emphasis on processes over time, and the use of contextualized comparison (e.g. Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003). Meanwhile, I move beyond the micro/macro distinction that is characteristic of much urban studies in which the narrow focus on socioeconomic and spatial structures fails to incorporate the role of human agency in reproducing or transforming such structures. I use instead the dialectics between agency and structure as developed in British sociologist Anthony Gidden’s structuration theory to inform my historically grounded research. The main methods for data collection are qualitative, supplemented by statistical analysis.

In the following, I begin with an account of conceptual barriers at the early stage of my research that motivated me to modify my methodology. I then discuss how the comparative historical analysis and agency/structure distinction came to inform my research. I also discuss the specific procedures and sources used to collect data. This chapter concludes with an overview of my own positionality in relation to the methodological issues of migration and integration in a Canadian city-region.

2.1 Conceptual Barriers and Research Design Reconfiguration

Migration Paradigms and Assumptions

Migration has conventionally been studied as two separate sets of processes, operating in places of departure on the one hand and arrival on the other. Accordingly, a large body of empirical and theoretical work has been conducted on causes of migration before departure and integration
issues after arrival, two themes hardly adequately linked (Castles and Miller 2009; Kelly and Lusis 2006). The separation between causes and effects of migration is problematic. First, a linear process of departure, arrival and integration is more of a theoretical assumption rather than historical reality. As Wang Gungwu (2001) reminds us, it was the treatment received in the host society, the prospects of livelihood production there, and the relative living conditions in their places of departure that lead migrants to decide whether to stay, return, or move elsewhere. The indeterminacy of human movement offers a rebuttal to the over-simplified linear process of migration and the prediction of actions without attending to the specific historical, sociocultural, and political structures that migrants are embedded in.

Moreover, the rigid division between the ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ countries neglects temporary factors – both at individual household and local levels – that link different localities in a continuum of migration flows. In other words, migration is a process contingent upon urban conditions rather than permanent fixation upon specific places. The division of ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ countries also ignores the rapidly changing urban contexts that have shaped migrant experiences in the cities, and that have changed over time to motivate people to move into or out of their current living places. The complexities of migrant experiences in different places have driven a growing number of ethnographic studies to abandon the restrictive binary thinking – sending and receiving, or immigrants and emigrants – and embrace a transnational perspective on migration (e.g. Blanc et al. 1994; Ong and Nonini 1997). In light of the pitfalls of a binary approach, I use primarily the term of ‘migrant’, although, wherever appropriate, I also use ‘sending’, ‘receiving’, ‘immigrants’, ‘emigrants’ to highlight the specific geographic contexts under discussion.

“Methodological Nationalism”

Nina Glick Schiller (2012, 28) argued that scholars have been hindered by an inability to examine the relationship between migrant settlement and ongoing urban transformations in specific cities. According to Glick Schiller and her colleague (Glick Schiller 2012, 29; Glick Schiller and Caglar 2009), the obstacles are methodological nationalism and ethnic lens. Methodological nationalism is a tendency in social sciences to approach the social and historical processes as if they were contained within the borders of individual nation-states (e.g. Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; Beck 2000). The term ethnic lens refers to “the propensity of migration
researchers to rely on ethnic boundaries to define the unit of study and analysis in research on immigrant settlement and transnational connection” (Glick Schiller 2012, 29). As a result of methodological nationalism and the ethnic lens, researchers often approach the state as a homogeneous nation bounded by a single national culture and identity. A specific neighbourhood where members of a migrating population settle in is identified as an ethnic enclave and spoken of as a community. This mode of study and analysis ignores differences within national and ethnic communities along the lines of class, gender, language, identity, as well as macro-level factors such as place origin, urban development, history, and political culture. It misses much crucial knowledge that could have been useful for effective public policy-making, including the multiple forms of linkages that migrants forge with persons locally, nationally, and transnationally, even when not bounded by shared place or ethnic identity. In other words, such linkages could have been productive resources for economic and community development rather than a liability.

Research Design Reconfigured

In my pre-fieldwork proposal, I had planned to focus on one single neighbourhood in the East Side of the City of Vancouver as a case study to examine neighbourhood change through the lens of Chinese settlement and integration. I defined ‘Chinese’ migrants as those from countries where ‘Chinese’ was acquired as the mother tongue. I was cautious to justify the practicality of using this criterion to select my research subjects on the presumption that, despite the extreme phonetic diversity, ‘Chinese’ share a more or less similar written language system. I set out to conduct my fieldwork by recruiting research participants through snowball sampling.

Soon in my interviews with recent migrants from Mainland China, however, I was confronted with the overwhelming complexity of events and processes that were beyond the geographical boundaries of the neighbourhood, that were woven together through the flow of time to shape one’s profound sense of identity and belonging. For some of my interviewees, memories of events and experiences prior to their departure from China to Vancouver had played a decisive role in their sense of place and their engagement with places in China and Vancouver. As I conducted more and more in-depth interviews and learned to empathize the life stories of my research participants, I began to question the validity and usefulness of my research design, only to realize the impossibility of ‘forgetting’ places elsewhere where migrants acquired the
necessary knowledge, resources, experiences, and networks that had shaped their settlement experiences in Vancouver. The limitations of my original research design could be attributed to the conceptual barriers discussed above, that is, the assumptions that settlement in the ‘receiving’ place was separable from processes in the places of departure and that migrant communities were bounded by ethnicity. Considering the impossibility to lump together first-generation migrant groups from PRC, Hong Kong, Taiwan and other Southeast Asian countries, as well as their offspring, I refined the subject of my research to focus on one segment of the Chinese in Vancouver, that is, groups from the People’s Republic of China.

In a sense, my original research design had unintentionally followed the approach of ‘methodological nationalism’. It had also ignored the role of localities across historical periods in offering different urban opportunity structures for the diverse pathways of migrant integration. This oversight became apparent during the early stage of my interviews with Chinese migrants whose experiences in Vancouver were also linked with the ways cities in China differ in their political, economic, and cultural barriers and opportunities. In order to account for group diversity, I expanded my research efforts to approach the transformation of the Vancouver City-region from the perspective of migrant settlement and integration. Specifically, I modified my research design to focus on migrant groups from specific places in China and their varying relationships with the transnational social space and urban change. This design is built upon the combination of two methodological traditions – comparative historical analysis and agency-structure linkages – that I will explicate next.

2.2 Historicizing Linkages Between Human Agency and Structure From a Comparative Perspective

Basically, comparative historical researchers do not typically seek universal knowledge generalizable to all instances and historical contexts. From the perspective of the comparative historical tradition, no specified causal propositions could hold across all sociocultural contexts and historical periods, as the ahistorical concepts and propositions are often too general to be usefully applied in explanation (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 9). Instead, comparative historical analysts frequently derive lessons from past experiences that speak to the concerns of the present. Even though insights remain grounded in the historical processes under examination and cannot be transposed literally to other contexts, this method can yield more meaningful
advice concerning contemporary choices and possibilities than studies that aim for universal truths without grasping critical historical moments and details (ibid. 9).

Following the historical comparative tradition in my dissertation research, I incorporate considerations of both the temporal structure of events and specific geographical localities in my explanations. The timing or duration of events relative to one another may have different – even opposite – effects (Mahoney 2004, 90). For example, the period between the late 1940s and the early 1980s has a profound impact upon migrants who suffered from the Communist ideology during this period and therefore their attitudes towards the rapidly urbanizing Chinese society. While comparative historical researchers tend to rely on comparison among nation-states (e.g. Orloff 1993), I departed from the national level analysis by moving to the sub-national level to compare linkages between Vancouver and specific localities in China. This choice is informed by Jennifer Robsinson’s (2011) insightful suggestion to use processes that exceed a city’s administrative and physical boundaries, such as the circulation and flows of people and capital, as a unit for comparison.

Comparative-historical analysis has the capacity to address a wide range of issues concerning causal inference that are of general importance to social scientists. Yet, its focus on “processes over time to explain large-scale outcomes such as revolutions, political regimes, and welfare states” (Mahoney 2004, 81) is limited in terms of shedding light on the role of human agency in reproducing socioeconomic and spatial structures, that is, the knowledge, skills, and ability of human beings to make a difference in the course of events. Critical of the dichotomy between macro-level analysis (e.g. various Marxist or neo-Marxist perspectives) and micro-level symbolic interaction, Anthony Giddens provides his most elaborate version of the structuration theory in *The Constitution of Society* (1984) that I found instructive for my research.

In contrast to perspectives assuming that structures exist as an objective reality external to particular individuals, Giddens argues that social structures manifest themselves in individuals’ actions and intentions (Johnson 2008, 460). For Giddens, “Human beings transform nature socially, and by ‘humanizing’ it they transform themselves” (1976, 168). In other words, human beings are not passive or unreflective robots, controlled by structural forces beyond their knowledge and control. Rather, they are active agents whose knowledge and abilities are employed constantly in the ongoing production and reproduction of the social world (Johnson
2008, 460). As Giddens explains, “The production and reproduction of society thus has to be treated as a skilled performance on the part of its members, not merely a mechanical series of processes” (1976, 168, italics in original). The ‘skilled performance’ of individuals sometimes lead to (either intentionally or unintentionally) structural transformation (Johnson 2008, 461). From the perspective of Giddens, structure does not merely constrain human action but also enables it. Even though people cannot always choose the overall conditions in which they are in, they do always have the capability as agents to intervene in the course of events (ibid. 462).

Informed by the dialectics between structure and agency, I collected data not only through in-depth interviews with different economic groups, but also historical and statistical data to explain the larger social, political and economic contexts.

2.3 Negotiating Fieldwork: Data Collection

As discussed above, I set out to conduct my fieldwork by focusing on one single neighbourhood in the east side of the City of Vancouver. While in the field, I got a deeper sense of urban change and integration issues that were not bounded within the geography of the neighbourhood, not even the city itself. To redress the limitations of my original research design, I expanded my research scope to examine processes and linkages forged between Vancouver and cities in China as a case study. For clarity, I divided my fieldwork into three phases to account for my learning trajectory.

*Phase One (March-July 2011): Discovering the Norquay Area Within East Vancouver*

I originally proposed to research one neighbourhood in the east side of the City of Vancouver (known as ‘East Vancouver’) for the long history of Chinese settlement in the area. Since the 1880s, East Vancouver³ has been home for many non-British immigrants before working-class migrants from Asian countries moved into the neighbourhoods in the 1970s, notably Chinese together with Vietnamese, Philippines, Indonesians, East Indians and some other ethnic groups. Best known for its diversity in terms of family income, land use, ethnicity and mother tongue, East Vancouver has seen rapid increase in housing prices like elsewhere in the city-region,

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³ East Vancouver is more of an arbitrary construct than a geographical unit of administration. Whereas some use Ontario Street as the dividing line between East and West sides of Vancouver, others consider Main Street instead. Some others even use Cambie Street where the rapid transit of Canada Line runs along. http://realty.fullboon.com/vancity/vancouver.html (accessed on April 8, 2012).
although in general property values are still lower than those in the west side of Vancouver (Bing Thom Architects 2012).

Initially, I selected the neighbourhood of Kensington-Cedar Cottage for its high concentration of working-class Chinese immigrant families there. Located at the heart of East Vancouver, Kensington-Cedar Cottage stretches from Fraser to Nanaimo Streets and from Broadway to 41st Avenue (City of Vancouver, n.a). Since the 1960s, many Chinese families have moved out of Chinatown to live at Knight Street, as well as Victoria Drive of the neighbourhood where housing prices were affordable. Housing prices that had been relatively lower than other parts of the city also attracted subsequent waves of Chinese immigrants for home ownership as well as inexpensive rentals in single-family homes. Many Chinese grocery stores and businesses became established near Victoria Drive and 41st Avenue in the 1990s and continue to thrive today. The area is thus known as the second Chinatown in Vancouver in contrast to Chinatown in the Downtown Eastside in the sense that the former is more of an organic form of development while the later grew out of the history of racial discrimination and spatial segregation.

During phase one of my fieldwork between March to July 2011, I was not able to find significant issues with the social and spatial transformation of Kensington-Cedar Cottage other than incremental, sensible changes. There had been limited significant land use change except for the intersection between Kingsway and Knight Street that was rezoned in 2005 for key shopping areas improvement and new housing types. In contrast, the planning process to rezone the adjacent area further along the 1.3 kilometer of Kingsway between Gladstone Street and Killarney Street for higher residential density had encountered tremendous resistance from some local residents. The area to be rezoned was identified as Norquay by city planners (figures 2.1 and 2.2). It was named after two significant neighbourhood features: Norquay Park on the south side of Kingsway between Wales and Rhodes, and John Norquay Elementary School north of Kingsway.
The boundaries of Norquay Area are mapped out in red, which indicates its geographical location within the city.

Source: Google Maps
I also relied on planning documents, media reports, video recordings of Council meetings and perception with respect to the growing settlement of Mainland China. In addition to interviews, I differed in terms of the period of landing in Vancouver, socioeconomic status, gender, and education level, which offered a diversity of perspectives on local change, especially their perception with respect to the growing settlement of Mainland Chinese. In addition to interviews, I also relied on planning documents, media reports, video recordings of Council meetings and

Intrigued by the tensions and resistance against change and distrust expressed by some residents against planning officials, I decided to focus for a detailed case study on the Norquay area. During this stage of my fieldwork, I conducted a total of 18 interviews (as summarized in table 2.1). All interviews were conducted in Cantonese, Mandarin or English. The interviewees differed in terms of the period of landing in Vancouver, socioeconomic status, gender, and education level, which offered a diversity of perspectives on local change, especially their perception with respect to the growing settlement of Mainland Chinese. In addition to interviews, I also relied on planning documents, media reports, video recordings of Council meetings and

Source: City of Vancouver
meeting minutes, as well as field observations around neighbourhood to understand the policy context. In doing so, I was hoping to identify socio-spatial and economic factors in the neighbourhood that had contributed to the integration of Mainland China. Yet, individual life stories of my interviewees soon proved the insufficiency of focusing on one single neighbourhood whose boundaries were defined artificially by planning officials rather than the actual everyday life experiences. It became more and more apparent that my original research design was a hinderance rather than a guideline for my fieldwork. To get a deeper sense of migrant settlement issues, I participated in two research projects that introduced me to different Chinese groups with a wide spectrum of socioeconomic status that inspired and brought my research to a turning point.

Table 2.1 List of Interviews at Phase One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents in the Norquay area</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 from Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City planners</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 from Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business owners in the Norquay area</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 from Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents living adjacent to the Norquay area</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 from Guangzhou and 1 from Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase Two (June 2011 - July 2012): Redefining the Research Scope

During phase one of my fieldwork, I was introduced to the Vancouver Downtown Eastside (DTES) Neighbourhood Council through my informants living at the Norquay area. At the time, the city was trying to rezone five sites in Vancouver’s Chinatown to allow up to fifteen-story buildings. As a non-profit organization, the DTES Neighbourhood Council was in need of a multilingual speaker in both Mandarin and Cantonese to reach out Chinese residents living in the Chinatown area. Because of my fluency in both languages, I began to volunteer in June 2011 in the organization, through which I participated in workshops, public hearings, and later the monthly focus group discussion until November 2013. I got the chance to hear and empathize with the anxieties and resilience of low-income groups from Hong Kong and Mainland China at various time. Their stories of struggling to make both ends meet challenged the validity of any
homogenizing stereotypes about the ‘Chinese’. What struck me most in their stories was that their current hardship and living conditions could not simply be explained by individual factors alone (e.g. language capacity, gender, education level, etc.) but the social networks and historical contexts they had been part of. These social networks stretched far beyond the local at different points in time.

In addition, between August 2011 and July 2012 I participated in two research projects as a research assistant to evaluate the needs of immigrant newcomers and the role of settlement service providers in mediating immigrant needs. Through these projects, I gained access to a total of 36 immigrants from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, with whom I conducted in-depth interviews for the dissertation. These interviewees were recruited through advertisements at local community centers and immigrant settlement service organizations, as well as snowball sampling through my contacts and acquaintances originally from Mainland China. As an immigrant-turned-Canadian myself, I was able to empathize with my informants about what globalizing ‘China’ meant for them and their concrete everyday experiences of a rapidly urbanizing place there that had motivated them to immigrate to Vancouver. For my informants, settling in a new place by no means suggests the severing of their past that informed their actions and choice of where they want to live. This insight is nothing new, as the growing literature on transnationalism has suggested this point. Yet, the fact that transnational linkages were merely emotional attachment for some while the main source of livelihood production and support for others remained intriguing and puzzling. Although the uniqueness of the individual social world does not allow any generalization about the explanations, individual actions and behaviors do reflect the larger social structures, as Gidden’s structuration theory has suggested.

Having carefully analyzed the life histories of the 36 interviewees, I saw the patterns of integration paths that were linked with the political economies of ‘sending’ places in China in addition to those in the Vancouver region. To validate my proposition, I divided immigrant groups according to places of origin that were distinguished by such factors as the role of state in local economy, linkages with the global economy, and migration history. Among all the sending places that my interviewees came from, I found Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan clearly stood out from each other with distinctive processes of political economic development. Therefore, I further recruited a total of 19 more informants through snowball sampling from these three cities in order to exemplify the linkages between urban change and integration experiences. I show the
detailed information about these 19 informants in table 2.2. To probe the political, social, and economic contexts of China in general and these three localities in particular, I entered the third phase of my dissertation research.

*Table 2.2 List of Interviews at Phase Two (From Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Number of Interviews</th>
<th>Minimal Level of Education</th>
<th>Immigration To Canada Through</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>Investors and skilled workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Skilled workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhongshan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>Family reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Phase Three (May 2012-December 2013): Data Collection, Analysis, and Dissertation Writing*

Overall, a combination of three sampling methods – snowball sampling through my networks, recruitment through social organizations, and focus discussions with low-income groups – in the earlier stages of research ensures that my research subjects were from a wide spectrum of economic status, which is representative of “Mainland Chinese” as a whole in the Vancouver region. I had completed a total of 73 interviews by April 2012. Through these interviews as well as observation notes, I did not simply recount the stories or subjective views of my interviewees. Rather, I moved deeper to evaluate how meanings and practices are influenced and conditioned by broader processes, relations and structures, in other words, how social actions are oriented towards reproduction or transformation of certain social relationships. I quoted some of my interviewees in order to provide in depth and in detail the causal processes and associated mechanisms in the broader socio-spatial contexts.

In order to provide more contextual data, in the third stage of my research, I further collected both primary and secondary data in Chinese from May to November 2012 to explain processes of political economic development in the Vancouver region and urban China in general and the three Chinese cities (i.e. Beijing, Shanghai, and Zhongshan) in particular for comparison. The choice of these three cities was out of strategic consideration. They contrast with each other in terms of their positions in China’s political economy (e.g. the role of state-owned enterprises in relation to the private sector in the local economy, institutional arrangement between local and
central governments, historical linkages with North America, etc. See chapter 5 for details), thus offering very different prospects of human capacity building. The Chinese sources of data include yearbooks, policy guidelines and reports, archives, local gazette, legal documents, media reports, government publications, academic literature and so on. The purpose was to contextualize and substantiate my interview findings. My analysis of these data provides valuable knowledge for scholars of global Chinese migration and urban change, especially non-Chinese scholars who would have limited access to qualitative and statistical data in Chinese because of language barrier.

While I was able to conduct a fieldtrip in Beijing and Zhongshan in May 2012, most of my fieldwork was completed in Vancouver where I conducted in-depth interviews and observations. I also collected English language sources of data including census statistics, historical archives, media reports, and so on. All the qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed and utilized for dissertation writing from June 2012 to December 2013.

2.4 Conclusion: The Role of Empathy and Reflexivity in Fieldwork

This chapter summarizes the process of overcoming the conceptual barriers in my pre-fieldwork research design and reconfiguring my methodology during the course of the fieldwork. I moved beyond a bounded notion of place (e.g. one single neighbourhood, ‘methodological nationalism’) to account for processes and linkages that are beyond the geography of the local. This conceptualization enabled me to align with the actual life world of some migrant groups. In doing so, I follow the traditions of historical comparison and agency-structure dialectics to allow the space for examining the diversity of integration behaviors, that is, while some groups rely on transnational linkages for livelihood production, others choose to put down their roots in a new place, and how such multiplicity shapes and is shaped by the ways that places are constituted within the global social, economic and political structures.

In retrospect, the learning process of researching urban change and migrant integration was filled with many moments of pause, reflection, and empathy. Any researcher could prepare him- or herself by doing library research on the experiences of migrants from a rapidly urbanizing society like that in China, and then generate academic works based on findings presumably ‘emotionally detached’ and thus ‘scientific’. This turned out to be impossible for me. Having the knowledge and experience of living in both China and Vancouver is different. I learned the
hardship of settling in a new city without pre-existing social networks and made constant adaptation to a new life with kindness and help both near and afar. My experiences of places in China, still part of me through my linkages with family members there, constitute who I am. This knowing and remembering is rooted in my experience and understanding of integration, rather than in mental grasping of what ‘China’ is in abstract, stereotypical terms and how ‘Chinese’ migrants should behave in order to be tolerated by and eventually integrated into the ‘mainstream’ English-speaking world.

My experience of settlement and integration has increased my capacity and willingness to empathize and sympathize with migrants. Feminists have long argued that empathy for the women who participated in their studies is a crucial component for feminist research (e.g. Devault 1990). This line of thought can be extended to social science research in general. Although no one can fully understand another’s experience, I come closer to putting myself in the place of my research participants. No matter how privileged their social positions might be prior to migration, they are confronted with various challenges (e.g. language, employment, housing, lack of social networks, etc.) when they arrived in a new place. It was the common experiences of living in Chinese cities and settling in Vancouver that helped to establish a certain kind of connection and trust between my research participants and me. On the other hand, the fact that I was a doctoral student in a privileged university seemed to create some distance between certain groups and me. I suppose this ambivalence is inevitable. My strategy was to consciously downplay my somewhat advantageous position and foreground my identity as a member of ‘Chinese migrant community’.

All my interviews were conducted in languages that my informants were most comfortable with (i.e. Mandarin, Cantonese, and/or English) at places of their choices (e.g. their residence, community centers, schools, or coffee shops) without the need of an interpreter. All interviews lasted for at least one hour, with some more than 3 hours. I would not have been able to discover the richness of their migratory stories if I were not able to talk to them in their own language and connect with them as a migrant myself. These interviews enable me to find out how memories of and interactions with places had played a crucial role in shaping one’s migratory experiences and their sense of identity. I was thankful that many of my interviewees were willing to divulge to me their thoughts and experiences because of our common knowledge of China’s urbanization and its meanings for ordinary people who migrated and settled down in Vancouver. The stories I
analyzed offer a unique angle and valuable knowledge for scholars and policy makers interested in social and community planning related to migrant settlement and integration issues. Such knowledge would not have been available without my ability to communicate with migrants in their native languages. My language skills allowed natural flows of their thoughts and minimal distortion of ideas, which was not possible if I had to rely on an interpreter. Overall, the migration and settlement stories I analyze provide powerful voices of migrants, without which, I would not have been able to provide a humanistic understanding of the relationship between migrant integration and urban change, as presented in the following chapters.
Chapter 3. Governing Emigration: The Perspective of China

The bulk of literature on Chinese communities in Canada tends to focus on immigration policies and laws, as if they are the sole determining variable of immigration flows into Canada. The surge of Asian migration as opposed to the decline of European migrants has been extensively documented. The general consensus is that the surge was attributed to the removal of racially based criteria for immigration and the introduction of Business Immigration Program (not an uncommon practice among traditional settler countries such as the United States, Australia and New Zealand) in the Canadian immigration system. While the focus on the receiving nation and the borders offers important knowledge about the role of state actors in facilitating and hindering the movement of migrant subjects, it has neglected the agency of both migrants themselves and of the nation-state where migrants come from. Most importantly, it offers little useful insights on these puzzling questions: why so few people migrated out of the People’s Republic of China in the 1980s in comparison with the number of Hong Kong or Taiwan migrants, even though China’s population has been disproportionately larger than that of both regions; and, why the number of Chinese nationals has surged rapidly in Canada (and other countries) since the late 1990s, despite the fact that China, especially the Pearl River Delta area in southern China, already embarked on significant economic growth in the 1990s or earlier?

‘Geography matters’, as David Ley (2010) asserts in his long-term research on Asian communities in Vancouver and other Canadian cities. Yet, what matters more is the way we conceptualize the conjunction of transnational/ translocal networks and actors constituting what Ley coins “trans-Pacific life lines”. If we accept that the everyday life space cannot be practically confined within the national border, a more nuanced understanding of political actions in crafting the space of mobility is overdue. In this chapter, I focus on the missing link in the formation of transnational space, that is, the role of Chinese actors and their agency. The premise is that the ‘free’ flows of people and capital are at once possible only if both the ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ countries facilitate and block certain kinds of mobility. Seeing from the perspective of China, I incorporate the crucial knowledge of China’s regulatory regime, especially since the late 1970s when the country began to adopt a rather pragmatic approach to population mobility in the pursuit of economic growth and modernization. Economic realities since the late 1990s have made China one of the world’s most important migrant-sending
countries. How the Chinese governments control migration flows would be of profound significance for not only Canada but also the global migration order.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, I give a brief summary of scholarship on the state role in “monopolizing the legitimate means of movement”, borrowing a phrase from sociologist John Torpey (1998). I then provide a historical account of China’s border control from the 1940s to the late 1970s, followed by a telling story to illustrate the profound impact of this political history upon the migratory trajectories of Chinese individuals. Moving from the late 1970s onward, I summarize state policies on migration control, arguing that the current surge of emigration flows from China is a highly differentiated process on the basis of locality and institutional affiliation with the state.

3.1 State Monopoly of ‘Legitimate’ Human Movement

In the so-called age of ‘globalization’, many scholars have embraced the idea that border-crossing mobility is an increasingly pronounced feature of the human condition. In his critique of capitalism more than three decades ago, for example, Henri Lefebvre (1979, 113) characterized space as such, “Capitalist and neocapitalist space is a space of quantification and growing homogeneity, a merchandized space where all the elements are exchangeable and thus interchangeable ... Economic space and political space thus converge toward the elimination of all differences.” With the integration of economic space at the global level, Aihwa Ong (2000, 19) invoked such images as “multiple-passport holder”, “multicultural manager with ‘flexible capital’”, “astronaut” and “parachute kids” to describe the ‘transnational’ elite families. Without dismissing borders as irrelevant, Ong (ibid., 113) nonetheless conveyed a sense of ‘hypermobility’ among ‘flexible’ citizens who, Ong claimed, have the tactics to “evade, deflect, and take advantage of political and economic conditions in different parts of the world”. The world, as Thomas L. Friedman (2006) told us, is flat, a vivid denial of the significance of state surveillance and border patrolling.

In contrast to the inflated portrayal of territorial borders as irrelevant, some scholars offer a cautionary note. In asserting the role of state, Gary Freeman (1998) wryly put it, “Anyone who thinks differently should try landing at Sydney airport without an entry visa or go to France and apply for a job without a working permit”. From the perspective of nation-building history, it is
rather presumptuous to suggest the erosion of state sovereignty by (transnational) migrant groups. From a longer historical perspective than that typically adopted by scholars whose critiques are couched in the grand narratives of ‘globalization’ or ‘neoliberalism’, the development of a disciplinary order does not follow a linear process. Historian Adam McKeown (2008, 4) notes that, even in terms of simple measurement, the global movement of goods and people from the 1890s to 1910s reached per capita levels similar to the present. This comparative approach to migration history suggests “cycles of expansion and retreat” with respect to state preference for migration control.

From a historical-sociological perspective, John Torpey (2000) developed what he phrased as the “monopolization of the legitimate means of movement.” From a comparative perspective on the development of passport regimes in France, the German states and the United States, Torpey (ibid. 6-7) argued that a critical aspect of modern state formation is the gradual ease of local or sub-national movement and, at the same time, increased restrictions on movement across national frontiers. With questions of social welfare and entitlement becoming the subject of regional and national planning, modern states began to designate membership (through state-centered citizenship) in order to enforce the monopolizing power of population control. According to Torpey (ibid. 7), most of the historical tension between freedom of movement and strict control is largely a conflict between the needs of economic production and the political control aspired by state officials for the purposes of conscription, taxation, surveillance of suspect populations, and spatial distribution of growth. Over time, the economic imperatives, not to mention the provision of infrastructures such as railroads, highways, housing, etc. prevailed, which prompted the state to distinguish groups through official documents such as passports, health examinations, work permits, insurance and so on for inclusion/exclusion. The growth of bureaucracy in managing population mobility is one inherent project of state modernization.

Curious enough, if we accept that migration is a two-way process – before migrants can arrive in the destinations, they need various documents, permits or approval letters in order to ‘exit’ the place of origin, not to mention the entire transportation infrastructure that makes physical mobility possible – why scholars concerned about immigration to settler societies have paid scant attention to the regulatory regime on the part of the sending side? Scholars interested in migrant settlement and integration issues seldom attend to government policies, historical events, migrant networks and strategies on the sending side that have profoundly shaped individual
identities, ideologies, as well as social and cultural practices. While the common sense is that ‘legitimate’ emigration would not have been possible without the authorization of sending states (except for human smuggling or other ‘illegal’ means of exit), few scholars have looked beyond the receiving end of migrants. I attribute this knowledge gap to what Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) term “methodological nationalism,” or the tendency of social scientists to take nation/state for granted. The failure to think beyond the box of the receiving side is an unfortunate oversight, given the simple fact that both sending and receiving countries are integral components of the global migration order.

Indeed, restrictive exit controls are frequently found in the history of global migration. In 1906, for example, Japan enacted an emigration protection law to prohibit the private organization of emigration (McKeown 2008, 213). In 1982, the apartheid-era South African courts ruled that access to a passport was a privilege rather than a right for both blacks and whites, and the government could revoke any passport without appeal (Dowty 1987, 171). Even nominally democratic states have been known for denying the right of free movement to certain citizen groups. For example, the US Department of State gained the authority under the Internal Security Act of 1950 to deny passports or renewal of passports to members of the Communist Organizations (ibid. 128). Historical evidence as such suggests the state’s interest in blocking certain streams of emigration. China is no exception, but the history of its policy actions has been highly contingent upon the national and sub-national development of political economy and dominant ideologies.

3.2 Emigration from China

The ideal of “voting with one’s feet” is the very foundation of freedom in liberal democracies. In the case of China and Chinese nationals, however, this modernist belief needs to be interpreted in a more nuanced way because the freedom to move is intimately linked with state agendas and priorities. Like other modern nations, the People’s Republic of China has developed its own bureaucratic networks to ‘manage’ population movement. The one most extensively documented is the hukou (household registration) system, which has divided China’s population into two segments since Mao Zedong: peasant masses and urban-dwelling migrants on the one hand and native urbanites on the other. Without local urban hukou, peasant migrants are denied full citizenship rights and, therefore, participation in urban ways of life. Based on the notion of
exclusion, some scholars suggest that China’s migrants from rural areas are comparable with undocumented immigrants in the US (e.g. Zhou and Cai 2008; Wu and Rosenbaum 2008). As much as undocumented immigrants in the US are confronted with racial hierarchy and class stratification, rural migrants in China are treated as a transient underclass in policy-making. *Hukou* thus is known as China’s ‘internal passport’. Considering the proliferation of scholarship on the multifaceted aspects of the *hukou* system, I focus mainly on its relation with emigration from China.

### 3.2.1 Between 1949-1978

Compared to the magnitude of its population size, socialist China under Mao Zedong saw no more than a trickle of emigrants who transited through or settled in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau. War, famine and political catastrophe were the main driving forces during this historical period. The Civil War between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang drove an early estimate of two million people to Taiwan, although recent research suggests that these numbers were exaggerated (Fan 2011, cited in Madokoro 2012, 10). At some point in 1949, some 10,000 ‘refugees’ arrived in Hong Kong on a weekly basis, the majority comprising Kuomintang officials, or people traumatized by the Communist’s land reform⁴. For many, especially those branded ‘rightists’ (who were critical of the Maoist regime and its ideology) during the Hundred Flowers Campaign (1956-1957), the British Colony of Hong Kong was more than a safe haven (Burns 1987, 663). It received as many as 40,000 people from Mainland China each year during the 1950s, according to Ronald Skeldon’s (1996) estimate.

In 1958, Mao launched the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961), a massive political mobilization to develop China’s industrial and agricultural sectors. This campaign precipitated several years of economic regression and tens of millions of deaths out of hunger⁵. Given the circumstances at

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⁴ In 1955, the United Nations declared that Hong Kong had provided a haven for some 385,000 ‘refugees’ from Mainland China. Many were considered the ‘bad class elements’ consisting of urban bourgeoisie, rural landlords, rich peasants and their dependents. These ‘bad class elements’ were identified by Chinese authorities during the 1949 Revolution and placed under political surveillance. For details, refer to Hambro, Edvard Isak. 1955. The Problem of Chinese Refugees in Hong Kong: Report Submitted to to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Leyden, A.W.Sijthoff; Burns, John P. 1987. “Immigration from China and the Future of Hong Kong” in *Asian Survey* 27 (6): 661-82.

⁵ Given the magnitude of this catastrophe, there is a wide range of estimates of the death toll that varied from province to province. According to Kenneth R. Walker (1984), provinces such as Guangdong and Jilin experienced mild increases in excessive deaths partly because these provinces reduced their grain export to feed the people. For details, refer to Walker, Kenneth R. 1984. *Food Grain Procurement and Consumption in China*. New York:
the time, moving to the relatively well-off Hong Kong appeared a logical choice to escape economic hardship. During a six-week period in 1962, the Chinese authorities tried to defuse the Great Leap Forward crisis by opening the door for emigration. John P. Burns (1987, 663) estimated that some 120,000 people mostly from Guangdong Province fled to Hong Kong, although over half of them were caught by the colonial government as ‘illegal’ entrants to be repatriated. Due to the political pressure of the British government, Chinese authorities had to re-impose border control to allow people to leave as ‘legal emigrants’.

Table 3.1 provides some statistics on the fluctuation of both ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ emigration flows to Hong Kong, a trend more or less reflecting the political economic turmoil in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite growing discontent in the early stage of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the number of both ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ emigrants gradually dwindled but soon surged in the early 1970s. In 1971, the number of ‘illegal immigrants’ from China to Hong Kong jumped to 10,400 from 6,200 one year before, whereas that of ‘legal immigrants’ rocketed from 2,500 in 1971 to 20,400 in 1972 (Table 3.1).

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6 It is important to note that the vast majority of those “allowed” by both the Chinese and the British sides of the Hong Kong border were Cantonese speakers. A strict quota of non-Cantonese Chinese (i.e. Mandarin speakers) were allowed each day across the land border. I am thankful for Professor Henry Yu for pointing out this de facto practice by the border guards.
Table 3.1 Immigration From China, 1961-1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Legal immigrants from China</th>
<th>Illegal immigrants granted stay in Hong Kong</th>
<th>Illegal immigrants repatriated to China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>28,800</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>9,900</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>9,800</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>20,400</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>55,700</td>
<td>20,800</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>32,900</td>
<td>20,500</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>25,600</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>1,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>19,600</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>25,400</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>67,500</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>8,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>70,500</td>
<td>88,300</td>
<td>89,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>55,300</td>
<td>64,300</td>
<td>83,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>54,300</td>
<td>9,700</td>
<td>10,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>53,800</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>13,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>9,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>13,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Burns, John P., (1987)

Law professor Liu Guofu (2009) suggested that the surge could be attributed to the relaxed control of Chinese governments in 1971 over ‘returned overseas Chinese’ and their family members from Indonesia or Malaysia. These immigrant groups moved to their ‘homeland’ to avoid the political violence in Southeast Asia, only to find a place perhaps no less hostile than where they came from. Upon arrival, they were resettled in state-owned farms in Fujian and Guangdong Provinces as part of the nation-wide Rustication Movement in which youth from urban areas were sent to the countryside to learn from the peasants (Li 2010). In the late 1950s when the anti-rightist movement initiated by Mao Zedong gained strength, these groups were under more and more pressure to ‘invest’ their private savings and property in government projects or to prove one’s proletarian worth by simply ‘contributing’ their money to the state (Godley 1989, 333). During the Cultural Revolution, they were left at the mercy of Red Guards who rampaged throughout China in order to destroy the ‘Seven Black Elements” including all overseas Chinese, landlords, rich peasants, criminals, counter-revolutionaries, rightists and
capitalists. Because their foreign dress, hairstyles, and other lifestyle practices were considered elements of capitalism, ‘returned overseas Chinese’ were physically brutalized by the Red Guards. Many were imprisoned as ‘spies’ or ‘counter-revolutionaries’ and attacked as ‘capitalists’, ‘imperialists’, ‘worshippers of things foreign’ and even ‘foreign devils’ (ibid. 330). Those who could not bear the physical and psychological torture eventually committed suicide (ibid. 348).

In the face of escalated violence, the central government decided in November 1970 to grant certain groups exit permits to leave China. Premier Zhou Enlai at the time is frequently credited for the relaxation of exit regulations. Cadres, party members, government functionaries, or those with special skills could apply for exit permits, but their applications were often denied (Godley 1989, 348). In practice, the government only allowed the old, the crippled and groups deemed ‘undesirable’ to leave. The lack of transparency in the management had given bureaucrats considerable discretion. The whole business of exit control was so wide open to corruption that eventually, tens of thousands managed to leave China before the government stopped issuing exit permits in late 1973 (Godley 1989, 349). Nonetheless, by the end of 1976, approximately 250,000 ‘returned overseas Chinese’ from Southeast Asia settled in Hong Kong with another 2,500 in Macau (Godley 1989, 349). It is very likely that the traumatic experiences of the Communist Regime was one of the major factors driving these emigrant groups living in Hong Kong to resettle in North America or elsewhere when the fate of Hong Kong was negotiated between Deng Xiaoping and Margaret Thatcher in early 1980s.

Compared to the several hundreds of thousands moving to Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau between 1949 and 1978, the vast majority of the 960 million Chinese nationals remained in extreme poverty within China, especially the 82 percent of the population in rural areas (China Daily 2010) who were deprived of state benefits because of their rural hukou status. The exception was a small number of urban hukou holders whom the state sent to socialist bloc countries as students or professionals. For example, more than 11,000 Chinese students and scholars went to study in the Soviet Union in the 1950s. Over 13,000 engineers, technicians and

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7 According to Godley (1989), groups deemed expendable by the State Council included: 1) older folks without working capacity; 2) individuals born abroad or who lived there before the Sino-Japanese War and returned to their ancestral villages where no more extra labour was needed; 3) people deprived of overseas remittances in the past few years; 4) individuals who lagged behind politically; 5) ‘returned’ overseas Chinese who were sent to work on the ‘overseas-Chinese farms’ (huaqiao nongchang 华侨农场) in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces.
support staff went to Tanzania to assist with railway construction in the early 1970s (Skeldon 1996, 439-40). Emigration control was achieved by prohibiting the application for passports for private uses. In a way, this was reminiscent of policies during most of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) when emigration was banned and returnees might be punished for violating the prohibition.\(^8\)

Torn by both human and natural disasters, Chinese governments had little choice but to adopt a pragmatic policy approach under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. The country began economic reform in 1978 by gradually, but decidedly, opening up four special economic zones (i.e. Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Shantou in Guangdong Province and Xiamen in Fujian Province) for foreign investment in addition to adopting the household responsibility system.\(^10\) The explicit policy objective was to allow some people and some regions to become rich first before attaining the goal of common prosperity. This appears to be the rationale for the governments to introduce different emigration control policies for groups distinguished by hukou status and affiliations with the state-owned economy. Before I explain in more detail, I want to use the migration story of Mrs. Liu\(^11\) to illustrate the inter-linkages between individual experiences and China’s political history. Mrs. Liu is a Chinese Canadian who left Beijing over 30 years ago. Having settled in Vancouver for more than 20 years, her life world spanned Beijing, Vancouver, Kyoto in Japan and Portland in the US, constituting what Ley (2010) termed a “trans-Pacific life line”. The conjunction of experiential knowledge in multiple places, especially her accumulative knowledge about China passed on from her family, has a decisive impact on her sense of identity.

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\(^8\) The laws prohibiting emigration were not formally revoked until 1893, although the concession of treaty ports following the Opium War did result in the emigration of indentured or contracted laborers, mostly from the Pearl River Delta region in Guangdong. For details, refer to Skeldon, Ronald. 1996. “Migration from China” in Journal of International Affairs 49 (2). For a summary of governments’ attitudes toward emigration during the Qing and Ming Dynasties, refer to MacNair, Harley Farnsworth. 1924. The Chinese Abroad: Their Position and Protection: A Study in International Law and Regulations. Shanghai, China: The Commercial Press.

\(^9\) Political scientist Yang Dali L. (1997) suggested that Deng’s role in launching the reforms has been overestimated by the conventional literature. While Deng’s influence appears great, but, according to Yang (1997), it may simply reflect other structural and political forces that have been driving China’s political economy.


\(^11\) My interview with Mrs. Liu was conducted on May 11, 2011 at her home in Vancouver. I here use her premarital surname to protect her identity.
3.2.2 A Living Embodiment of Recent Chinese History in Vancouver

I got to know Mrs. Liu at the beginning of my dissertation research, which was originally set out to understand Chinese integration and their participation in neighbourhood planning. My initial conceptualization of neighbourhood was confined within the City of Vancouver. As I delved further into Mrs. Liu’s experiences and her desire to work with city planners in a rezoning process, however, I realized that the trajectories of migration and settlement are intertwined with development not only in where people live but also, if not in more profound ways, where people come from. It may not be an overstatement to claim that modern China’s political history under Mao has produced a whole generation who settled outside China with a strong reluctance to engage with their ‘homeland’.

Those who experienced that history at a relatively young age or learned about it from their family members are rather ambivalent about China as a concept, as Mrs. Liu’s story suggests. Mrs. Liu was born in Beijing to parents educated in Japan and the US. She left China in the early 1980s at a time when emigration and private passports were still strictly prohibited except for overseas Chinese, and residents of Hong Kong and Macau. As Mrs. Liu explained, the Communist Party granted her sister and her the privilege of private passports as “a compensation to injustice” their parents had suffered during the Cultural Revolution. What her family members have gone through epitomizes the twists and turns of China’s nation-building history.

Mrs. Liu’s father was admitted into Yenching University\(^\text{12}\), which was one of the most privileged universities in China at the time. Soon, however, the school was closed down because of the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941 and the Japanese invasion of Beijing. In 1946, her father moved to study economics as an undergraduate at Kyoto University in Japan before pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of California, Berkeley. Upon completion of the doctoral degree, he returned to Kyoto University as a lecturer. Often, one’s fate can take a dramatic turn because of the social networks and political forces one is connected with. In the context of the

\(^{12}\) Three separate Christian colleges in Beijing were integrated in 1916 to form Yenching University. When the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949, the university was closed because of its Christian origin. Its schools and departments were either broken down into different universities, or annexed to Qinghua and Beijing Universities. Refer to Yenching University (\textit{yanjing daxue} 燕京大学), \url{http://baike.baidu.com/view/6781.htm} (accessed on July 2, 2012).
Cold War, Mrs. Liu’s father was invited by the famous missile scientist, Qian Xuesen\textsuperscript{13}, to return to China. In hopes of “contributing their skills to the construction of new China”, Mrs. Liu’s parents thus went back, only to find that their patriotic idealism was betrayed by Mao’s unequivocal belief in revolution and class struggle. Because of his overseas education and work experience, Mrs. Liu’s father was accused as “an international spy” and put into prison in 1966, so were other relatives who were alleged to maintain overseas connections and with the Kuomintang Party (Mrs. Liu’s grandfather was a high level Kuomintang official). Mrs. Liu and her sister had to spend their childhood with their mother alone, until their father was released from prison nine years later.

While the suffering of Mrs. Liu and especially her family attests to some form of state despotism under Mao, their experiences during the transition to Deng suggest the equally arbitrary power of the state. As Mrs. Liu noted,

What happened to our family is like something that was out of your control in your destiny. ... If you let things that are beyond your control to ruin your life, then your life is ruined, but if you can think positively ... After [my father] was out of prison, the Communist Party needed my father’s help. He graduated from Kyoto University, which is one of the top universities in Japan. Many graduates there have become ministers of the Japanese governments. My father is fluent in Japanese because he went there at the age of 17 ... When China opened up, it first opened to Japan. The Communist Party realized that my father’s language skills and connections would be of great benefits to them. When they wanted to introduce the quality control system from Japan to China, they found that my father was the best candidate to help them... Because of his connections in Japan, he was able to introduce the best quality control system from Japan to China. That’s why my father is called the Father of quality control management in China.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Qian Xuesen moved from China to study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1935. After he finished his Master of Science degree and a doctoral degree, Qian established himself as one of the leading rocket scientists in the US. His Chinese identity, however, subjected him to political pressure from the US government who allegedly accused Qian of affiliation with Communist China. Discrimination eventually pressured him to return to China where he became the leader of the Chinese ballistic missile program. For the historical context of Qian’s experience, refer to Cheek, Timothy. Living With Reform: China Since 1989. Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Pub.

During the Cultural Revolution, millions of people lost material things of great value. Hundreds of thousands lost their beloved ones, or even their own lives. To my amazement, Mrs. Liu turned a traumatic event into a source of strength and resilience. What defined her self-identity more than anything else was her family history that was intertwined with the state’s, as she recalled:

When I was young, my family was of very good standing. If the Cultural Revolution didn’t happen, in Chinese words, I would have been a terribly spoiled person. Most likely I would have lived such a privileged life without any understanding of what life means, a person who takes everything for granted. ... The personal experience [during the Cultural Revolution] had made me a completely different person. Think about it. When I was young, we had a housekeeper at home. We didn’t need to do any housework. My father had high income and my mother was pretty and capable... Of course, psychologically, we suffered a lot from the Cultural Revolution. Now, looking back, you would think, in Chinese words, when the old man on the frontier lost his mare, who would have known it was a blessing in disguise? Good thing may turn out to be bad and bad thing may turn out to be good. This is the mentality of our family. Without this mentality, how can you live on?

As the direct victims of the Cultural Revolution, Mrs. Liu’s parents were determined to send their daughters abroad once the opportunity came. While her migratory path was partly decided by her parents’ social networks in Japan, she took the initiative to “venture out into North America” after spending seven years to complete both her undergraduate and graduate degrees at Kyoto University. Mrs. Liu travelled to Vancouver in order to prepare herself for English test while waiting for admission into graduate school in the US. Unfortunately, this happened during the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests. Her application for the US student visa was declined because the US government tightened control over visa applications from Chinese students. She was thus ‘stuck’ in Vancouver, where she happened to meet her future husband. Since then, she and her Canadian husband had lived in Vancouver with two inter-racial children. Taking advantage of her multicultural experiences and language skills in Japanese and English, she opened a ‘brokering’ company that helped travel agencies to bring in Japanese students to learn about Canada’s education system.

Similarly, Mrs. Liu’s sister moved to the US after her study in Japan and had settled down in Portland, Oregon. With family and social networks spread in Beijing, Kyoto, and Portland, her life world had spanned four nations: Canada, Japan, China and the US. The accumulation of networks, knowledge and experiences has made her a hybrid person, as she considered herself.
Perhaps I have a rather mixed identity. My children sometimes ask me, ‘Are you a Chinese, a Japanese, or a North American?’ My experience is very similar to my sister’s. She graduated from Renmin University in Beijing, studied in Japan and got married there. Now she and her family have settled down and worked in the US. We both sometimes wonder who we are. She thinks perhaps our thinking process is still very much Chinese, from the cultural perspective. In terms of life style, we are quite Japanese because of our training in Japan. For example, we need to be very polite. Japanese are very considerate and always put themselves in others’ shoes and think for others. In this aspect, I think we are more Japanese than Chinese, that is, we know our positions well in group activities. When it comes to logical thinking, we are more North American.

At first glance, it is curious that Mrs. Liu simply lumped Canada and the US as North America, despite the pronounced differences in geography, economic structure, welfare and political systems. Her interpretation of self-identity suggests the complexities/impossibility of defining oneself through the lens of one single state. The difficulty rests on the fact that we have little means to describe those whose lives straddle several nations. With social linkages across more than one nation, however, many migrants appear to be highly adaptable to new circumstances, as what Mrs. Liu explained.

In my opinion, whichever country you are in, you must lay down your root. During the process of settlement, I consciously made friends with local people. That’s why in my circle, I hardly have Chinese friends. ... When I was in Japan, I didn’t confine myself to the Chinese community. Actually, 30 years ago there were very few Chinese students in Japan because it was very difficult to get in our university. Because I was in Japan, I told myself that I should make friends with Japanese. All of my father’s friends there were Japanese. The same thing too after I came to Canada. Look, my husband is not a Chinese. Consciously, I don’t want to restrict myself to the Chinese circle.

Evidently, Chinese emigrants like Mrs. Liu made conscious decisions to ‘integrate’, which she believed, means the cultivation of networks and knowledge about places she lived in. Her words challenge the presumption that integration amounts to the erasing of memories that constitute one’s personality and sense of identity. Mrs. Liu was among the few thousands who moved from Mainland China to Canada in the early 1980s. Her story represents the voice of many others whose migratory paths were similarly shaped by China’s political history, especially the traumatic events during the Maoist period. With China’s emergence as a significant actor in the global economy, emigration has surged exponentially. While this may be attributed to the
relaxation of emigration control, in the following, I want to highlight the role of geography and institutional arrangements in structuring unequal access to emigration.

3.2.3 Exit Control Mechanisms Since the Early 1980s

Strict emigration control was motivated by socialist ideology or Cold War mentality (Liu 2009, 314-5) until the late 1970s. During the transition from Mao to Deng in the early 1980s, policy attitudes remained cautious and mostly reflected the need of the state at the time. Both Chinese and foreign nationals traveling from China had to apply for exit visas through the Public Security bureaus (Liu 2009, 316). There was no legislature regulating emigration until the introduction of the Exit-Entry Management Law in 1985. This law came into effect in February 1986 (Xiang 2003, note6).

At the early stage of exit control, two types of Chinese passports existed (in addition to diplomatic passports): passports for public uses granted to government officials, employees of state-owned enterprises, and students who received financial support from the government; and, passports for private uses granted to those who would join their relatives abroad and resettle there. ‘Public’ passports were valid for either two or five years, whereas ‘private’ passports five years (Skeldon 1996, 441). Upon their return to China, holders of passports for public uses had to hand over the documents to governments or work units to prevent ‘private uses’. Meanwhile, the number of Chinese nationals granted private passports between 1979 and 1985 was relatively small, estimated at about 350,000 (Wu X. 2011). The application process involved a labyrinth of procedures to acquire the necessary documents. Applications had to be submitted to different departments in cities or counties where one’s hukou was registered. Whereas applications for passports for public affairs had to be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or equivalent bureaus at the local level as authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, those for private passports had to apply through the Public Security Bureaus at local municipalities or counties (Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, 1985).

In 1986, China replaced the exit visa system (established in 1980) with an Exit Registration card that was required for Chinese nationals only. Yet, five categories of Chinese were prohibited from leaving the country, including: 1) defendants in criminal cases or crime suspects; 2) people involving in pending civil cases; 3) people serving their sentences; 4) people receiving re-
education through labour; and 5) groups whose exit was deemed to cause harm to national
security or significant loss to national interest (Standing Committee of the National People’s
Congress, 1985). At the time when the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests took place, the
governments briefly imposed some requirements for special exit permits. It was not until 1994
that the governments allowed exit without a permit if the traveller had gone abroad at least once
before (Xiang 2003, 26). For the vast majority who had never travelled outside China, the
procedures for exit permit and passports remained extremely daunting.

In order to obtain passports and exit permits, applicants had to submit the following documents
to the Public Security Bureau at the local municipality or county where their hukou were
registered (Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress 1994):

1. Local hukou booklet or other official documents to prove one’s hukou
   status;
2. A completed application form for exit visa;
3. Written comments from the work unit on the applicant’s exit;
4. Proof of reasons for exit;

The above 3 and 4 items referred to:

1. For emigration, the applicant must submit a written agreement from friends
   or relatives in the intended place of settlement or an official document granting
   immigration by the receiving country;
2. For a family visit, the applicant must submit an invitation letter from friends
   or relatives abroad;
3. For the purpose of going abroad to receive inheritance, the applicant must
   submit proof of the legitimate right of inheritance;
4. For overseas education, the applicant must submit a letter of acceptance and
   necessary proof of financial standing;
5. For overseas employment, the applicant must submit proof of employment;
6. For tourism outside China, the applicant must submit proof of foreign
   currency deposit.

It was practically impossible for individuals without overseas networks to live, study, or simply
travel out of China. These official requirements serve as evidence that in the early 1990s Chinese
nationals could not go abroad legally without an extensive bureaucratic network, including work
units, the Public Security Bureau administering the hukou system, local authorities in charge of
labour relations and resources, and the banking system strictly controlling individual purchase of
foreign currency. In the course of structural transition from socialism to a market-oriented
economy, the difficulties of coordination among different ministries and other governing units
had created much space for corruption and bribery. Unsurprisingly, social networks and substantial financial assets were critical, as the story of Kate’s parents suggested:

Our family left China at around 1989 or 1990 ... At the time, it was extremely difficult for Chinese to apply for private passports. My father had to give lots of gifts in order to get the passports. My mother worked as a dentist in China and had a very good salary. I still remember that she used one month’s salary to buy several gold necklaces as presents to others. That’s how my parents managed to get the passports to go abroad.

In other words, going abroad was very much contingent upon one’s class status. Despite the cumbersome procedures, the number of applicants for passports and exit visas swelled in the second half of the 1990s. From 1996 to the end of 2000, more than 3 million Chinese citizens received their passports and exit visas (China National Radio 2001).

In order to prepare for China’s pending entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in early 2001 rather progressive plans to reform the passport administration system. One strategy was to designate Zhongshan, a Qiaoxiang (侨乡) in Guangdong Province, as the first ‘pilot city’ to ‘experiment’ with passport reform. With the relative small size of state-owned economy and the long-established networks between Zhongshan and its overseas population, the experiment was relatively manageable. Residents with local urban hukou were allowed to apply for passports with Identity Cards and hukou booklets only. This procedure is known as ‘passport application according to need (anxu shenling huzhao 按需申领护照)’. Following the introduction of this regulation, it was reported that the Public Security Bureau of Zhongshan received as many as 2,000 applicants per day (Xinhua News 2001).

Authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the provincial governments, the procedure of ‘passport application according to need’ was gradually extended to other coastal cities and large municipalities. By early 2012, a total of 296 municipalities in China (excluding some county areas within certain municipalities known for human smuggling) were designated as areas where local urban hukou holders could follow the simplified procedure for passport application (Shenzhen Public Security Bureau n.a). Residents whose hukou are not registered locally in the designated areas, except for those employed by foreign-invested enterprises, state-owned

15 My interview with Kate was conducted at her home in Richmond, British Columbia on November 15, 2011. Kate is a pseudonym.
enterprises, or with overseas employment arrangement as contract laborers, are not eligible to apply through the simplified procedure.

Instead, non-local *hukou* groups living in the designated areas, together with those who live and register their *hukou* in areas other than the designated areas, must provide proof of employment, letters of consent from the employers, and record of criminal history to apply for passports. They are also subject to political investigation. Regardless of their residence, they have to return to where their *hukou* are registered and apply there. For example, someone born in Urumqi (the capital city in the Uyghur Autonomous Region) but living in Guangzhou had to travel back to Urumqi to apply for a passport. The distance between the two cities is approximately five hours by plane, or fifty-two hours by train. This excruciating procedure is known as ‘passport application according to conditions (*an tiaojian shenling huzhao* 按条件申领护照)’. This policy has remained virtually unchanged since the 1980s. Certain groups, such as (retired) government officials, and state employees in finance and taxation departments – known as ‘personnel with special identity (*teding shenfen renyuan* 特定身份人员)’ – are also required to follow this procedure, regardless of the localities where their *hukou* are registered.

Among the total of 657 cities in China, more than half of them together with all areas officially classified as rural are still required to follow the procedure of ‘passport application according to conditions’. In other words, the state set up different procedures to subject the whole Chinese population to differentiated citizenship entitlement. Individuals without meeting the necessary conditions demarcated by the state should find it hard, if not impossible, to move out of China. Given the substantial diversity of political economic configurations throughout the country, it is hard to determine the specific mechanisms to account for the variation. Yet, a comparative look suggests the continued significance of state sovereignty and history. For example, among all the capital cities in China, all *hukou* holders from Lhasa in Tibet are required to follow the

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16 ‘Personnel with special identity’ broadly refer to those working in any industries or departments related to public security and the management of state-owned assets. They have to seek written consents from their employers in order to apply for private passports. The state considers it necessary to keep records of these groups, according to a press conference held by the Public Security Bureau of Tianjin Municipality. For details, refer to Xinhua News. n.a. “Answers to the Press by Municipal Public Security Bureau regarding the Simplified Procedure for Ext Management (市公安机关负责人就简化出国手续答记者问)” [http://www.tj.xinhuanet.com/ztbd/churu/002.htm](http://www.tj.xinhuanet.com/ztbd/churu/002.htm) (accessed on July 5, 2012).

application procedure according to conditions. Indeed, none of the cities in Tibet is allowed to implement the simplified procedure for passport application. The cities of Changle and Fuqing around Fuzhou, a port city in Fujian Province well known for human trafficking and ‘informal financing’ activities, are also subject to strict policy scrutiny, despite the fact that overseas remittances have fueled much of the region’s economic growth in the last two decades. By contrast, among all the provinces, Guangdong has the most number of cities (21 cities in total) where local urban hukou holders can apply for passports through the simplified procedure.

The relaxation of passport control in certain areas by no means suggests the retreat of state control. Instead, state and national interests remain a high priority. For example, in Shanghai where the simplified passport application procedure was experimented in 2002, the Public Security Bureau set up two databases to keep records of groups prohibited from leaving the country and of ‘personnel with special identity’. For the purpose of “safeguarding national interests”, the Bureau also has access to the National Citizen Identity Information System in order to determine which procedure the applicant is subject to, or whether the application is prohibited at all from traveling out of China (Shanghai Public Security Bureau n.a). Effective or not, the state has been strategically adopting modern technologies to enhance its capacity to keep the population under surveillance while limiting the physical mobility of ‘politically suspicious’ groups.

3.2.4 Concluding Comments

Departing from existing scholarship that analyzes migrant settlement through the lens of the receiving state, I have traced the history between 1949 and 1978 when emigration from China was driven primarily by war, political disasters and social turmoil. This historical account allows me to contextualize the linkages between individual experiences and macro-level state priorities and agendas, as illustrated through an in-depth analysis of Mrs. Liu’s family history as well as her own migratory path. Situating individual stories within a larger historical, structural and institutional context also helps to shed important light on the formation of self-consciousness that derives from the cumulative effects of actions and experiences. As the structural and policy conditions change, such as China’s transition from socialism to market-oriented economy and

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18 The growth of the ‘informal banking’ system that has been linked with illegal outward migration is most comprehensively documented in Tsai, Kellee S. 2002. Back-Alley Banking: Private Entrepreneurs in China. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
policies regarding passport application, so do individual experiences. The number of Chinese passport holders has surged, especially since 2001 when the state adopted progressive policies to liberalize passport application. In 2004, about 4.5 million of Chinese nationals were granted private passports, 51 times the figure in 1986 and more than 200 times of the total number between 1949 and 1978 (although during this period, many left as refugees as well). In 2010, the number of private passport holders escalated to 7.8 million, a 32.2 percent increase from 2009 (when 5.9 millions acquired private passports). This trend is unlikely to be reversed. To take advantage of migration flows as a critical resource, the state has adopted aggressive initiatives to bring people, capital and technologies in.

3.3 Incentive Policies for Global Competitiveness

Since the early 1990s, China has gradually implemented a series of generous policies to attract the return of overseas Chinese (both with and without Chinese citizenship) who received education abroad, and whose expertise in science and technology would make significant contributions to economic development. In 2008, the overall incentive structure became officially known as the “Recruitment Program of Global Experts (qianren jihua 千人计划)”, supported by three levels of governing bodies: the central government, ministries and commissions directly under the State Council, the provincial and municipal governments. I summarize the main recruitment plans and benefit packages in Table 3.2. In addition to these, 27 provinces, autonomous regions, and provincial-level municipalities (including Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing) have their own plans and priorities to recruit overseas Chinese. The governments also built high-tech industrial parks and development zones to encourage overseas graduates to set up businesses there. Located in the outskirts of cities, these newly developed areas usually include housing, office space, transportation infrastructure, and other community facilities (www.haijiaonet.com). As I learned from a friend who received her doctoral degree in Canada and returned to work in Beijing 5 year ago, housing in the newly-developed zones is much cheaper than central city areas, with more green space and better quality of life.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment Plans</th>
<th>Governing Department</th>
<th>Main Benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td>“One Thousand Experts Plan (qianren jihua 千人计划)” (2008-2018)</td>
<td>The Organization Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee</td>
<td>1. A lump-sum payment of RMB 1 million (CAD$160,000) subsidy for each award recipient; 2. Social insurance, including old-age pension, health care insurance, work-safety insurance for the award recipients and their spouses and dependents; 3. Subsidies for housing, food, transportation, and children’s education; all subsidies are tax deductible 4. Negotiated arrangements for spouses’ employment and children’s education;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Chizi Plan (chizi jihua 赤子计划)” Since 2010</td>
<td>Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security</td>
<td>Fundings are allocated by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security to governments and ministries at the local level in order to subsidize “patriotic overseas Chinese” for their service of the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Subsidy Plan For the Return of High-level Overseas Chinese (gaocengci liuxue rencai huiguo zizhu jihua 高层次留学人才回国资助计划)” Since 2002</td>
<td>Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security</td>
<td>A lump-sum payment of RMB 600,000 (About CAD $100,000) subsidy for each award recipient, with half from the Ministry and half from the local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Changjiang Scholar Plan (changjiang xuezhe jihua 长江学者计划)” Since 1998</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Depending on the academic ranking, each scholar receive yearly funding award ranging from RMB 30,000 (About CAD $5,000) to RMB 200,000 (about CAD $33,000). (At the early stage, this plan received a total of Hong Kong $70 million, or about CAD $9.2 million from the Hong Kong business magnate Li Ka-shing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Spring Sunshine Plan (chunhui jihua 春晖计划)” Since 1997</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>1. Monthly bonus ranging from RMB 5,000 (about CAD $800) to RMB 8,000 (about CAD $1,300) for each award recipient, depending on the academic ranking of the recipients; 2. Free housing or housing subsidy; 3. Health care insurance; 4. Funding for academic activities; 5. Round trip air fare;</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3.2 Recruitment Program of Global Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Program for New Century Excellent Talents in Universities” (xinshiji youxiu rencai zhichi jihua 新世纪优秀人才支持计划)”</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Research funding for each award recipient for three years in the amount of RMB 500,000 (about CAD $800,000) for natural sciences, or RMB 200,000 (about CAD $33,000) for social sciences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“One Hundred Experts Plan (bairen jihua 百人计划)”</td>
<td>Chinese Academy of Science</td>
<td>A total of RMB 2 million (CAD $320,000) funding support for each award recipient, including research funding, costs for equipments, and housing subsidy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars” (guojia jiechu qingnian kexue jijin 国家杰出青年科学基金)”</td>
<td>National Natural Science Foundation of China</td>
<td>Research funding for three years based on individual assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Recruitment Program under the 12th Five-Year Plan for Experts in Marine System (haiyang xitong ‘shierwu’ yijin liuxue rencai jihua 海洋系统‘十二五’引进留学人才计划)”</td>
<td>National Deep Sea 1. Center</td>
<td>1. Research fund in the total of RMB 2 million (CAD $320,000) for each award recipient;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Settlement fund in the total of RMB 500,000 (CAD $80,000).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on policy statements at Recruitment Program of Global Experts (www.1000plan.org).

Different cities set up different reward packages to recruit overseas Chinese, but generally they include business tax deduction, discount government loans, health care insurance and various subsidies in housing, children’s education, and other living expenses. For example, the first three years for enterprises set up in Zhongguancun Life Science Park in Beijing is tax-free, followed by 7.5 percent business tax from years forth to sixth. Starting from the seventh year, business tax will be 15 percent\(^\text{19}\). For leading experts in science and technology who were educated abroad, Beijing government offers a lump-sum payment of RMB ¥1 million (approximate CAD $168,000) to attract their resettlement. To facilitate the exit and entry of those who have lost their Chinese citizenship, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Public Security

introduced in 2003 the *Regulations of Permanent Residency in China for Foreign Nationals* that specifies the strict criteria for permanent residency. Alternatively, foreign nationals can apply for multiple-entry visa valid for up to five years\(^20\).

Economic realities in China have attracted an increased return of Chinese who were educated abroad. By the end of 2011, a total of 186,200 Chinese students returned, about 38 percent growth compared to 2010. Between 1978 and the end of 2011, a total of 818,400 returned, out of 2.3 million who went abroad to study (Xinhua News, 2012). Given that students may return without registering with the government, such statistics serve as an indicator of a general trend rather than the absolute number. This trend may be attributed to the effectiveness of government policies and the availability of economic opportunities in Chinese coastal regions as opposed to the economic decline in developed countries. Most importantly, it reflects a willingness or desire of the new waves of Chinese emigrants to engage with China. Their mentality and attitudes are profoundly different from those who left prior to the 1980s.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Moving from one place to another and adjusting to new socio-economic circumstances is a continuous process. Individuals carry the weight of their past to live through the present. Both the past and present constitute one’s identity that shapes individual actions in the future. From this perspective, I have traced the historical, socio-economic, and political contexts where different Chinese emigrant groups have gone through. I hope to provide a more nuanced understanding of China’s state actions, especially with respect to the emigration history between 1949 and 1978. Some individuals directly experienced this historical period as traumas, others learned about the collective suffering through memories past on from parents or grandparents. The dialectics between micro-level experiences and political-economic development at the macro-level challenge a simple interpretation of individual behaviors without accounting for the larger processes or structures in which individual migrants are embedded.

An overview of emigration history and state policies that I have provided in this chapter suggest the continued relevance of national borders and state sovereignty. As far as I am concerned, modern states, such as China since the early 1980s, take a rather pragmatic approach to

distinguish its population for the control of transnational mobility. In recent years, global migration of Chinese nationals has surged. Different from previous decades when emigrants predominantly originated from Guangdong and Fujian provinces, the source of emigration flows since the late 1980s has rapidly expanded to include areas where the state has simplified the procedures to go abroad. Exit-entry control policies alone, however, would not have achieved their intended goals if urban change had not occurred to profoundly transform the meanings of living in Chinese cities. Focusing on the urban transition from socialism to market-oriented economy in the next chapter, I will explore some urban processes that give rise to the growing trend of moving abroad.
Chapter 4: Becoming Emigrants: China’s Urban Transformation and Emigration

As of 2010, China passed Japan to become the world’s second largest economy after the United States, with more than half of its total population now living in urban areas. The trend of urbanization is ongoing and irreversible. In the same process, emigration has grown in volume. Compared to the earlier waves of emigrants who were mostly peasants from villages or small towns in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces, the post-1978 emigration flow is predominantly an urban phenomenon, in that urban population moves from cities to cities, from China’s urban regions to both developed and developing countries. Neoclassical economists may suggest that potential emigrants compare and choose to invest in migration, in the same way as they might invest in education, if the expected return from higher wages or benefits in the destination country is greater than the associated costs (Chiswick 2000). This economic explanation makes intuitive sense. It may explain emigration to North America, Australia, New Zealand and European countries prior to the economic takeoff of China’s coastal regions. It remains unclear, however, why educated, well-off Chinese are leaving for other countries, even though employment opportunities and the many institutional loopholes to profit in China offer seemingly better economic prospect than in the receiving end.

What is missing in the neoclassical, neoliberal interpretations of emigration surge is a critical analysis of what urbanization means for ordinary Chinese citizens. While China’s repositioning in the global economy has generated mixed sentiments of both astonishment and fear in the West, its intricate linkages with emigration have been largely neglected by both China bashers and admirers. Urban development in China is characterized by fragmentation, differentiation, and self-contradiction. Processes that empower certain groups are detrimental for others. Without understanding the inherently conflicting processes of urban change that contribute to the decision of leaving China, we may risk perpetuating essentialized notions of ‘new’ Chinese emigrants based on western biases and stereotypes.

While there is no lack of scholarship dedicated to the multifaceted topic of China’s urban transition, I want to focus in this chapter the realms of housing, education and the changed everyday life in China’s large cities. These are three recurring themes in my interviews with recent Chinese immigrants in Vancouver. The purposes are to use migrants’ own voices and
highlight the basic processes that emigrant groups have lived/been living through, that instruct their decision-making. In the following of this chapter, I will first draw on existing scholarship, policy documents, and statistical data to briefly summarize the urban transition from a socialist planned economy to a market-oriented one. I then focus on the period of the post-1990s and examine specific changes in housing, education and urban spaces where access is structured on the basis of geographic locations and hukou registration status. I use my interview findings to support the argument that increased emigration reflects some deep structural constraints in balancing the interests and needs of social groups across a wide economic spectrum. I conclude this chapter by reflecting upon the relationship between localities and emigration.

4.1 Socialist Planned Economy

Prior to economic reforms in the late 1970s, the central state was the ultimate planning decision maker with respect to the distribution of productive resources such as land use, capital and workforce. In urban areas, planning and economic activities were organized within the work units (danwei 单位) who took care of their workers from cradle to grave. To be urban meant entitlements to rationed food, clothes, housing, health care, basic education and cultural opportunities. In rural areas, the communes performed a similar function, except that peasants were left without the basic guarantee of livelihood production resources enjoyed by the urbanites.

The geographic boundaries between rural and urban have been demarcated by the invisible wall of hukou operating since the late 1950s (Chan and Zhang 1999). The hukou system divided the whole population into the categories of rural and urban. Each urban household in cities registered as non-agricultural hukou whereas all peasants in each commune or state farm under one collective agricultural hukou. Commodity markets were practically absent because urban resources were collectively owned by danwei who allocated jobs, housing and food to their urban employees. Everyday life was tightly regimented in both rural and urban areas. There were few opportunities for peasants to leave the commune for the cities. Through socialist planning and the enforcement of the hukou system, China effectively curtailed rural to urban migration, a period that was characterized by sociologist Wang Feng (1997, 155) as “industrialization without urbanization”.

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Strictly speaking, industrialization did occur in the early years of the Mao period (1949-1976), but was slowed down during the Cultural Revolution when the cities were engulfed by ‘class struggles’ and political campaigns. City planning to improve housing and basic infrastructure such as roads, energy supply, bridges, sewage, power plants and communication networks nearly stalled. Economic activities were stagnant, if not completely abandoned. The life of many families were at best disrupted and at worst destroyed as people committed suicide or were killed outright by the Red Guards. For years, people were mobilized by Mao to work selflessly, to sacrifice themselves for the ‘common good’, only to realize at the end of the day that they remained impoverished and took no pride in their clothes, homes and jobs. By the end of the Cultural Revolution, the worst of socialism and Maoist ideology had reached such an extreme that pressure for change from below was irresistible.

It was under such historical circumstances that as soon as Deng Xiaoping consolidated his political power, he announced significant reforms in 1978 to improve the livelihood of the general population\(^{21}\). The reform principle was to encourage the development of socialist market economy, which has brought about relentless changes in virtually every aspect of everyday life, ranging from commodification of labour, privatization of unproductive state-owned enterprises, and finally the establishment of a leasehold land system and commodity housing market (Wu et al. 2007). Power of the market manifests itself most forcefully in large Chinese cities where the ‘facelift’ of the built environments has instilled a sense of national pride in China’s modernity. Meanwhile, it has also generated a deep sense of disorientation and alienation in many who fail to catch up with the pace and scope of change. In the face of China’s dramatic urbanization process, how Chinese nationals interpret this historical process and make the decision of moving to other countries are the issues to be examined in the rest of this chapter.

### 4.2 Urban Transition To Market-Oriented Economy

Since the beginning of economic reforms, the level of urbanization has exploded. It grew from about 18 percent in 1978 to 29 percent in 1995 (Wei 2010), to nearly 53 percent by the end of 2012 (Xinhua News 2013). It is estimated that China’s urbanization will reach 60 percent by

2020, with an annual increase of 20 million people in China’s urban areas (Wen 2012). In retrospect, it took Britain 180 years to grow from a 30 percent to a 60 percent urbanization rate, the United States 90 years, and Japan 60 years. Very likely, it will take China 30 years to reach this urbanization level (Shanghai Urban Planning and Design Research Institute 2012). The definition of urban population and urbanization rate are perplexing in China’s context because of the complicated relations between geographic boundaries and the hukou system. While these figures do reflect the astonishing pace of urbanization, they indicate neither the significant regional variations nor the quality of change.

Instead, I draw on provincial-level statistics to suggest that China’s urban transition is a highly fragmented process on the basis of localities. Table 4.1 summarize per capital GDP in 2010 and urbanization rates in 2000 and 2009 in provinces, autonomous regions, or provincial-level municipalities. These statistics show the significant unevenness of regional development. By the end of 2009, for example, the level of urbanization in Shanghai already reached 88.6 percent, followed by Beijing and Tianjin with over 78 percent. As a whole, urbanization in Guangdong Province was 63.4 percent, the highest among all provinces and autonomous regions. In contrast, urban development was less than 40 percent in most provinces and regions of western China (State Statistics Bureau 2010). The highly uneven concentration of urban settlement is demonstrated in figure 4.1. These statistics challenge the tendency to see China as a coherent, unproblematic place.
**Table 4.1 Urbanization and Per Capita Gross Domestic Product**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Per Capita GDP in 2010 (US Dollars)</th>
<th>Urbanization Rate (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>10377</td>
<td>77.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tianjin</td>
<td>10399</td>
<td>71.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebei</td>
<td>4192</td>
<td>26.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanxi</td>
<td>3806</td>
<td>34.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner Mongolia</td>
<td>6978</td>
<td>42.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaoning</td>
<td>6232</td>
<td>54.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jilin</td>
<td>4662</td>
<td>49.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heilongjiang</td>
<td>3998</td>
<td>51.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>10827</td>
<td>88.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiangsu</td>
<td>7779</td>
<td>41.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhejiang</td>
<td>7524</td>
<td>48.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anhui</td>
<td>3068</td>
<td>27.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fujian</td>
<td>5900</td>
<td>41.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiangxi</td>
<td>3132</td>
<td>27.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shandong</td>
<td>6040</td>
<td>38.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henan</td>
<td>3628</td>
<td>23.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubei</td>
<td>4121</td>
<td>40.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunan</td>
<td>3607</td>
<td>29.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guangdong</td>
<td>6440</td>
<td>55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guangxi</td>
<td>3071</td>
<td>28.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hainan</td>
<td>3517</td>
<td>40.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chongqing</td>
<td>4058</td>
<td>33.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sichuan</td>
<td>3157</td>
<td>26.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guizhou</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>23.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yunnan</td>
<td>2321</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibet</td>
<td>2497</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaanxi</td>
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<td>Gansu</td>
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<td>Qinghai</td>
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<td>Ningxia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xinjiang</td>
<td>3682</td>
<td>33.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Statistical Bureau (various years)

Notes:

1. Urbanization rate here refers to the percentage of population in all urban jurisdictions (including rural migrants with agricultural *hukou* who lived in urban areas for at least half a year) out of the total population in the province/autonomous region/provincial-level municipality.


3. SSB no longer publishes the percentage of urban population by region in the Yearbook 2011.
Any official statistics, however, should be interpreted with caution. Quantitative data indicate increased population density of various scales, but tell little about qualitative change of economic activities and the rising demand for personal freedom, choice and individual happiness. In defining urbanization, John Friedmann (2002, 3-6) emphasizes three dimensions of transformation: demographic, economic and sociocultural. This multidimensional conceptualization urges us to think of the city beyond its built environment. Following this line of thought, I will next discuss urban transformation of Chinese cities. While highlighting the role of the state (including national and sub-national levels of governments) in facilitating the transformative process, I will also explore the relationship between urbanization and outward migration.

4.2.1 Theorizing Urban Development in Chinese Cities

The increasing concentration of China’s population in the coastal regions (as shown in figure 4.1) is driven by explosive internal migration. In her study of China’s internal migration, Dorothy J.
Solinger (1999) brought in the concept of citizenship to study a privileged urban society in contrast to its rural counterpart deprived of basic citizenship rights. The encountering of urban and rural populations in the burgeoning cities has not weakened the entrenched social and economic divide inherited from the Maoist era. Instead, the rural-urban divide has evolved to the extent that being urban carries rather ambivalent meanings. As one of my informants in Zhongshan put it bluntly,

Nowadays who cares about hukou? Things have changed. Whether you have local hukou or not, you have to pay to send your kids to school, to pay to see a doctor, to pay for pension. Everything is costly. That’s why I have to work so hard.

I doubt the diminished role of hukou, as claimed by my informant who held a local urban hukou, but her words do reflect the ambivalent role of hukou that is no longer the sole determinant of access to life security. As more and more rights and privileges have been articulated through the market, especially in the past decade or so, residents in Chinese cities – rural and urban hukou holders alike – are engaged in a sweeping process of what anthropologist Yan Yunxiang (2009) perceptibly notes “the rise of the individual”. Key notions that are all-familiar in the West, such as independence, choice, freedom, self-realization and happiness, are redefining one’s relationship with the family and kinship organization, two social categories that have defined Chinese individuals for centuries (Yan 2009, xxiii).

The market, in the West, has long been the primary driver behind the rise of the individual and the assertion of individual rights and autonomy (Yan 2009, xxxi). The “expanding spaces of personal autonomy” (Friedmann 2005, 77) in the context of China’s rising market power may conjure up a nerve-racking ordeal for western scholars who are still grappling with a neoliberal reality mostly associated with government policies since Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the United States. Based on the historical experience in the West, scholars are prone to see China from the grand theoretical lenses such as capitalism or neoliberalism. For example, Aihwa Ong (1999, 43) describes, “visiting the booming cities was like being caught up in the eye of the greatest typhoon in the history of capitalism.” For Ong, urban life in China was stripped of social grace by the “people’s headlong race to make money and trample on one another” (ibid.). To explain China’s spectacular urban development, David Harvey (2005, 121) resorts to the grand narrative of neoliberalism, suggesting that the rise of China as a global economic power was “in part an unintended consequence of the neoliberal turn in the advanced
capitalist world” that has opened up a space for China’s entry into the world market. The idea of neoliberalism as a universal model of urban development assumes an inexorable process that renders all states commensurable in accord with certain characteristics such as private property rights, individual liberty, and the triumph of free market and free trade over state sovereignty. This assumption privileges the hegemony of western and more specifically American practices that hardly appeal to the Chinese audience because of the preeminent role of the state. The “functional integration” between state and society (Leaf 2005, 93; Frolic 1997) has long been a basic characteristic of Chinese governance. For example, it is well known that in the wake of economic reform, the Communist state responded to the demand from rural peasants for releasing them from the constraints of the planned economy (e.g. Yan 2009; Huang 2008). The state did tolerate individual actions as long as they are within the boundaries acceptable to the hegemonic but adaptive Party-state.

Sensible of China’s historical particularities and political circumstances, Yusuf and Wu (1997, 3) argue that “China’s reforms do not constitute the unfolding of a grand design; rather at each major juncture they have been hedged and extensively brokered response to emerging contingencies”. Similarly, Friedmann (2005) notes that China cannot be fitted neatly into the grand narrative of any theory, such as the narratives of modernization, globalization or neoliberatization. Through a lifelong reading of Chinese philosophy and history, Friedmann (2005, xxv) suggests that China is not just another country but a civilization that deserves to be understood in its own terms.

The complexities of urban development in China preclude the simple application of neo-classical, neoliberal theories to analyze the Chinese society. I would argue that, like yin and yang in Chinese philosophy, the market economy, state and Chinese individuals have become deeply integrated and dependent on each other for survival or empowerment. For example, employees of large state-owned enterprises and state institutions are immediate beneficiaries of the market economy. In the process of SOE restructuring, the state did create welfare programs at the municipal level, such as unemployment insurance (shiye baoxian 失业保险), “reemployment project (zai jiuye xiangmu 再就业项目)”, or “minimum livelihood guarantee (zuidi shenghuo baozhang 最低生活保障)” in response to urban poverty and workers’ protests (Solinger 2009, 196-205). In light of China’s unique developmental path, I choose not to use the grand theories of capitalism or neoliberalism to analyze China. Instead, I want to emphasize the specific
circumstances and institutional arrangements that led to the emergence of a market-oriented economy and the splintering of social class structure.

4.2.2 Socio-spatial Transformation in Chinese Cities: The Role of the Chinese State

China is constitutionally a Party-State. Under the central government, sub-national governments consist of a hierarchy of provinces, counties and cities, townships and villages. Until the late 1970s, the central state had direct control over three main planning domains: allocation of materials and resources, planning for key industries, and budgetary control of revenue and expenditure (Yeh and Wu 1999). The nominal role of the local governments was to collect and remit taxes and profits to the central coffers. The central state then made budgetary plans based on local expenditure needs and priorities and redistributed funding to provinces and municipalities (Yeh and Wu 1999; Wang et al. 2011). This highly centralized fiscal structure went through an experimental process of trial-and-error in the 1970s and 1980s (Oksenberg and Tong 1991), before its unraveling by the mid-1990s when competition from foreign-invested enterprises, quasi-private township and village enterprises made most state-owned enterprises (SOEs) unprofitable and deeply indebted to state-owned banks (Frazier 2010). While the local SOE-based revenues declined, the fiscal responsibilities of sub-national governments remained the same, which prompted local governments to make up the shortfall by selling off state assets to foreign and private investors. This de facto privatization and restructuring (through which a small number of people accumulated a substantial amount of wealth) was later officially accepted by the central government in 1997 through the slogan of “release the small [SOE], retain the large (zhuada fangxiao 抓大放小)” (Lin and Zhu 2001; Gallagher 2005).

According to OECD data, 60 percent of foreign-direct-investment (FDI) to China in 1999 was in the form of merging with state enterprises (Gallagher 2005, 49). Key to the SOE reform was to remain ownership of large SOEs that were usually under the control of the central ministries, while allowing local governments to let go of unprofitable ones. As a result, the once privileged class of SOE workers became splintered into different segments: the “unemployed” from ailing firms that were allowed to dissolve; and, the “laid-off” whose prospect of returning to their original employers was practically impossible. The numbers were in tens of millions. These groups were in contrast to employees of enterprises prosperous enough to continue operating, those considered by the state as essential for the national economy, and those whose managers
were able to acquire state subsidies requisite to their survival through *guanxi* with the government (Solinger 2009, 196).

China’s SOE restructuring that has practically transformed the relationship between the state and the urban population encountered one enormous obstacle, that is, the prospect of SOE employees who had long been promised lifelong jobs and extensive benefits. One solution was to retire a large number of workers by providing them with pensions. This resulted in a massive wave of retirements throughout urban China, many being early retirements. According to official statistics, the number of pensioners from enterprises, most of which were SOEs, rose from 23.7 million in 1995 to 32.6 million in 2002, or a 37.5 percent increase (China Labour Statistics Yearbook 2003, cited in Frazier 2010, 76). Between 1993 and 2005, William Hurst (2009, 16) estimated that more than 73 million jobs were lost. The process of retirement/"laid-off" in some regions, especially northeastern China where state-owned heavy industries were concentrated, was highly contentious because of the lack of funding for pensioners (Hurst 2004). To deal with the redundancy of labour force, the local governments often organized retired or laid-off workers to be exported to other cities, provinces, and increasingly foreign countries (Xinhua News 2002). This initiative constitutes the growing internal and international flow of Chinese contract laborers.

Another way to combat uncertainties arising from the restructuring of the public sector was the termination of housing provision that had long been the responsibility of work units. The decoupling of housing from employment has had profound implications for home ownership and the emergence of a housing market. Until the late 1990s, work units were the principal stakeholders in housing production, maintenance and distribution. Since reforms, housing as social welfare had become increasingly burdensome for work units, especially state-owned enterprises that were not able to afford housing provision or investment any more. In the early 1990s when unprofitable SOEs started to lay off workers, they sold the work-unit-owned housing to their sitting tenants at heavily discounted prices. This practice had significantly distorted an emerging housing market and directly resulted in an exponential growth of homeownership in urban China (Logan 2012, 433-4). It further deepened inequality in terms of housing access and quality among different work units and people at different hierarchical

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22 Housing here refers to urban housing, which is distinguished from housing in rural areas where land is collectively owned by individual villages.
positions within the same unit (Wu F. 1996)\textsuperscript{23}. The central government intervened by adopting a housing reform in 1998 that prohibited work units from building or buying new housing units for their employees. Instead, employees would receive monetary subsidies from their work units to purchase homes in the market (Deng et al. 2011). This policy practice has essentially created a huge, \textit{de facto} income gap between work-unit employees and the rest of the urban population.

The implementation of policy guidelines set out by the central government is contingent upon the particularities of specific localities and social groups (Leaf 1997). Since the 1998 housing reform, the informally constructed space by rural migrants has been squeezed by inner city redevelopment, a process further intensifying the conflicts and contradictions inherent in the long-established practice of excluding rural-hukou holders. As for former employees of work units, the situations are far more polarizing, complicated by the fact that the younger generation is joining the competitive labour and housing markets. Some scholars argue that housing reform has in effect sustained the institutional linkages between \textit{danwei} and their employees because profitable state enterprises and government institutions continue to provide attractive housing benefits in monetary terms (e.g. Wang and Murie 2000; Wu F. 1996; Deng et al. 2011). For example, even in 2009, agencies directly under the central ministries and the State Council were found to build high-end residential housing in premium localities in Beijing and sell to cadres at a heavily subsidized price of RMB ¥20,000 per square meter, or CAD $344 per square feet (Yang 2010, 349-51). The sheer reality in China is that a small minority of state-affiliated individuals continue to benefit from personal networks (\textit{guanxi} 关系) with the Communist Party and from enduring socialist practices, such as housing subsidies. By contrast, the majority of the once privileged class became jobless because their work units were sold, downsized, merged, or simply shut down.

Sociologist Sun Liping (2012) suggests that China is in a “transition trap” in that groups with vested interests have blocked further structural reforms in order to maintain their status quo. To quell public anger and frustration at dominant interest groups (mostly towards local government

\textsuperscript{23} The distribution of heavily subsidized housing was based on a number of factors, including the ability of work units to obtain resources to develop housing, status of the work units (e.g. state enterprises, state agencies or institutes), hierarchical ranking and seniority of the household head within the work unit and informal network with the gatekeeper of housing resource. The types and conditions of housing received from the work units were independent of household needs, number of family members, and existing housing conditions. For details, see Wu, Fulong. 1996. “Changes in the Structure of Public Housing Provision in Urban China” in Urban Studies 33 (9): 1601-27.
officials and large state-owned enterprises), the central government under former President Hu Jintao tried to promote the official narrative of “harmony and stability”. Official discourse shows what the state and Party leaders want, not what actually happen on the ground. In a deeper sense, it reflects the structural contradictions that have fallen into certain patterns to limit the space of self-development not only for the majority of Chinese citizens but also their second-generation. Such terms as “rich second generation (fu erdai 富二代)”, “generation of the officials’ children (guan erdai 官二代)”, or “poor second generation (qiong erdai 穷二代)” have been popularly used among Chinese. The new lexicon attests to the growing sense of the unequal playing field for the young generation whose chance of improving their living conditions often hinges on the socioeconomic status of their parents.

In light of China’s transitions towards a market-oriented economy, I broadly conceptualize three social strata in Chinese society: the privileged one based on the institutional affiliation with the state, the marginalized one consisting of rural migrants, laid-off workers, pensioners, unemployed youth, the handicapped and so on. In between is the middle stratum associated mostly with the private economy. Chinese nationals from all these strata are increasingly turning to emigration as a sensible response to the socio-political and economic realities. As my interviews with recent Chinese newcomers revealed, housing development, education reform and the resultant change in everyday life were three major areas that motivated Chinese nationals to move abroad. I further examine changes in these three aspects next.

4.3 The Ambiguous Meanings of Housing Development in Chinese Cities

China’s polarized/polarizing social structure is most visible in the spatial transformation of cities. Over the past three decades, labour, energy resources, different social practices have been converging for the “production of space” (Lefebvre 1991). Informal settlement of rural migrants, automobiles, glittering architecture, gated communities, highways, shopping malls are now side by side with remnants of socialism, such as factory buildings and workers’ housing complexes. Space is becoming regenerated at a frantic speed, especially in most of China’s coastal regions. According to national statistics, the total floor space that was constructed in 2010 was eight times that in 1998 (State Statistics Bureau 2011). The majority was in residential buildings (see figure 4.2). Meanwhile, the number of enterprises in real estate development and related service industries has expanded by leaps and bounds. For example, the number of real estate enterprises
increased by 298 percent from 1998 to 2010, with funding mostly from within China (see figure 4.3).

Figure 4.2 Total Floor Space of Buildings by Use

Figure 4.3 Number of Enterprises for Real Estate Development

Apparently, housing and other real estate development has become a crucial means to regenerate capital and fuel China’s astonishing growth rate. Overall, housing conditions have improved significantly in comparison with pre-reform era. Following the structural reform of danwei, local urban hukou holders who emigrated abroad after the late 1990s most likely still own one or more properties in Chinese cities. In recent years, the escalating housing price in certain areas appear to enable some to emigrate. In July 2010 at a real estate fair in Beijing, presumptuous migration consultant agencies took precedence over the original purpose of the fair and set up advertisements such as, “US$ 500,000 = American property + green cards for the whole family”,

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“Emigration to Canada before it is too late to regret”, “70 years of land use right in China vs. permanent property right abroad”. Qi Lixin, the chairman of Beijing Entry and Exit Service Association, claimed bluntly in the media, “whoever could afford to buy an apartment for investment in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou or Shenzhen is qualified for business immigration to the US” (China Economic Weekly 2010). While these advertisements do exaggerate the ease of emigration, they nonetheless demonstrate how certain groups have profited from China’s burgeoning housing markets to go abroad.

Ren Zhiqiang, China’s most outspoken developer whose posts at Sina Weibo are followed by more than 1.2 million Chinese, openly asserted, “real estate should be a lucrative industry.” In an online Chinese Entrepreneurs Forum in 2012, Ren claimed, “market housing is always for the rich because of the large amount of land transfer fee that is charged by the government” (Sina Weibo, 2012). Ren’s words triggered widespread discussion in the media and online. Despite his blatancy, Ren did point out a troubling dilemma: commercial housing development has brought the government a substantial amount of revenue through land-use fees, tax and other charges, which in turn, had financed some welfare programs such as affordable housing (jingji shiyong fang 经济适用房) and government-assisted rental housing (lianzu fang 廉租房) for the low-income households (Wang Y. and Murie 2011). The creation of such housing programs, however, are hardly relevant to households either in the middle- or upper-strata employed by the private sector. Neither are the housing programs of concern for the young high-school and university graduates who are not eligible for government-funded housing assistance. Members of these economic groups may be housed either in commercial housing or danwei with their parents (who bought the housing units before the late-1990s housing reform).

Anthropologist Zhang Li (2010) summarizes housing conditions in China a matter of highly stratified one. The new Chinese lexicon may provide a sense of how some Chinese identify themselves in relation to the housing realities. Many refer themselves as “mortgage slaves (fang nu 房奴)”, usually in their 30s or 40s, spending 50 percent or even higher of the household income on mortgage payment. For those whose incomes or parents’ saving are not enough for mortgage down payment, they have to rely on the rental market. Meanwhile, many poor college or university graduates are forming “ant family” (yi zu 蚁族) sharing shelters as groups in urban

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24 Sina Weibo is one of the most popular microblogging website in China, an equivalent to Twitter in the US.
fringe or peri-urban areas. These new words serve as a vivid reminder of the ambiguous meanings of living in Chinese cities.

To get a more nuanced understanding of the dilemma facing groups often thought as ‘middle-class’, one may refer to the highly popular TV series “Snail Dwellers (wo ju 蜗居)” aired in 2009. The story is set in a fictional city resembling Shanghai. The central theme is how a young woman struggles with her husband, both being graduates from a prestigious Chinese university, for a home in the city. In order to save enough money for a down payment, they rent a ten-square-meter bedroom with shared kitchen and washroom with five other households. This is known as a typical living arrangement in old Shanghai. Because their living space is as small as snail’s shell, they have to send the newborn daughter back to the hometown to be taken care of by the grandparents. The psychological pain of living apart from her daughter is overwhelming for the wife. Meanwhile, the husband is consumed by the sense of guilt for being unable to provide a good life for the family, a simple life that the husband describes to the wife like this,

If time could go back, I would take you over to another life, not too much money, not to fuss about the food price in the grocery market, not to argue with others until everyone is red in the face because of publications, or the evaluation of professional titles, not to be anxious about our daughter unable to get into a good university. Perhaps, this is a happy life, which I did not realize before.

Despite how frugal a life the couple live, their incomes are far from being able to catch up with inflation, especially that of housing. In the wake of eviction because their household is to be demolished for redevelopment, the young couple had to borrow money from parents and relatives to put a down payment for an apartment two hours away from their workplace by public transit. The wife describes her understanding of housing in this way.

Everyone around you is talking about housing, speculating on housing. Everyone is hoarding apartments. If you don’t have one, you feel marginalized. You are constantly struck by a sense of fear.

The story alludes to so many sensitive issues deriving from China’s urban development, including the astronomic rise of housing price, government corruption, inner city redevelopment and urban poverty. It strikes such a familiar chord among Chinese urban residents who share more or less similar experiences. Despite the fact that the TV series is fictional, the government censored it in many cities after the first few episodes were aired. The government’s attempt,
however, seemed to have made the TV series more popular. More episodes were circulated online where Chinese netizens are crafting an outlet to vent their frustration with the government.

While western scholars tend to imagine China as a rising global power with a rapidly growing ‘middle-class’, I am reluctant to embrace this thesis. My justification is that rich and poor, local and global, the socialist legacy and marketization are now juxtaposed in Chinese cities. The interconnectedness of different forces and networks is strikingly inscribed in the built environment, which has heightened the sense of ambivalence about the future of living in China. The vast economic disparities were most visible to me when I took an ethnographic walk-about in the central business area in Beijing’s Dongcheng district. As I reached a two-level interchange packed with rumbling automobiles, I found myself surrounded by a cluster of colossal buildings with conspicuous signs of Poly (a state-owned corporation linked with China’s military). These buildings immediately made pedestrians appear insignificant. Across from the Poly buildings is a place called Imperial Granary (figure 4.4). It was a crop storage built in 1409 for the imperial families, but has been completely refurbished in recent years as a “culture and leisure street (wenhua xiuxian jie 文化休闲街)” where a number of wine bars and exquisite restaurants serving Chinese and other world cuisines are frequented by the affluent class.
Figure 4.4 Heritage of Imperial Granary with Modern Buildings at the Back. Photo taken by the author in Beijing Dongcheng CBD.

Figure 4.5 Low-rise danwei apartments in front of an upscale gated condominium complex for the middle-class and foreign expatriates in Beijing. Photo taken by the author in Beijing Dongcheng CBD.
get away from the traffic noise and ostentatious display of wealth and ‘power’, I hurried off to a sidestreet where I found rows of high-rise condominiums sitting next to low-rise danwei apartments (figure 4.5). Within respective gated communities, both housing types are the outcomes of different historical conditions and dominant ideologies. A few blocks further was a row of small dilapidated bungalows in which vendors were selling Sichuan-, Hunan- and Fujian-style street food. When I was still wondering whether these street vendors could make both ends meet in such an expensive city, a group of policemen suddenly arrived to throw the stools, tables and food stands into the police truck, smashing the hand-written signboards and rushing off the food patrons. In a blink of an eye, a vibrant street was cleared up. The police handed over notices to the vendors, to whom Beijing must be a rather hostile place.

What I just described in a Beijing neighbourhood was merely a snapshot of the larger unequal social structure that Martin K. Whyte considers “a looming social volcano” (Whyte 2010, 5). It is hard to tell definitively whether socioeconomic inequality is a potential source of future political instability, but based on in-depth interviews and numerous informal conversations with emigrants and residents in China, dissatisfaction with China’s education reform has played a significant role in motivating Chinese individuals to emigrate or to study abroad. To elaborate on this, I focus on changes in the education system next.

### 4.4 China’s Education Reform and Emigration

After ten years of disruption by the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping restored the university entrance examination in 1977. At the time, university education was provided for free by the state. It was a relatively predictable means to improve one’s livelihood, whether for rural peasants or industrial workers, as long as he or she could pass the entrance exam. Students would be assigned jobs by the state upon graduation. Some would seek further education abroad, most notably in the US, but had to rely on scholarships and/or part-time jobs as a funding source. In the mid-1980s, however, China began to reform the education system, with socialist practices completely terminated in the late 1990s.

In 1997, the Asian financial crisis put China in a disadvantageous place because of the decline in exports. In light of the economic slow-down, economist Tang Min put forward to the central government a proposal entitled *Double University Enrollments As An Effective Way to Stimulate Chinese Economy*. Tang was among the first group of university students in 1978 who received
free education from the state. He went to study in the US and received his doctoral degree in economics in the late 1980s. Having benefited from China’s socialist system himself, Tang recommended significant university expansion in 1998 for the following reasons: 1) the number of university students in China was far smaller than that of other countries at the same development level; 2) a large number of laid-off workers were entering the job market and it would create unhealthy competition if so many young people were to enter the job market at the same time; 3) university expansion could stimulate domestic consumption and economic growth; 4) the teacher to student ratio was 1:7 at the time. Universities still had the capacity to enroll more students; 5) the population of higher education was of vital importance to the overall revitalization of China as a nation. Tang’s proposal was immediately adopted by the State Council, who in early 1999 drafted the 21st Century Education Revitalization Action Plan (Xinhua News 2009) for subnational governments to implement. The single-minded objective of the plan was to stimulate domestic needs and economic growth (Xiang and Wei 2009).

As a result, the number of student admissions jumped from 108.04 million in 1998 to 661.8 million in 2010, or 510 percent increase. In contrast, the number of full-time university teachers increased from 40.7 million to 134.3 million, or 230 percent increase in the same period (figure 4.6). The sharp increase in university students (including undergraduates and graduates) without corresponding investment in teaching resources has significantly compromised the general quality of teaching and learning. In a matter of two decades or so, Chinese universities shifted from “the Soviet-style free-plus-stipend system to a more capitalist-style tuition system” (Whyte 2010, 149-50), making university tuition and related costs one of the most significant expenditures (in addition to housing and health care) for ordinary urban households. Because of the enormous pressure to prepare for the university entrance exam, concerns have been growing about the impacts of China’s education system (from kindergarten to universities) upon the psychological, emotional and physical well being of the next generation, driving many parents to send their children abroad for high schools, or even emigrate for the sake of children’s education.

Much as the expansion has widened the door to higher education to an unprecedented extent, access remains unequally structured on the basis of one's hukou status in specific localities. The prospect of receiving higher education is determined not only by one’s grades in the entrance exam, but also one’s hukou registration. High-school students must take the exam in cities or rural areas where their hukou are registered, even though the registered localities may be different from where they actually attend high school. This practice has created huge logistical barriers for many who have settled with their parents elsewhere but are not eligible to have their hukou transferred, for example, children of rural migrants or employees of small-private enterprises in big cities. Moreover, prestigious universities are generally located in major cities such as Beijing, Wuhan, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Tianjin and Shanghai. Each university or college...
This dramatic shift has made university tuition and related costs one of the most significant expenditures (in addition to housing and health care) for ordinary urban households. Because of the enormous pressure to prepare for the university entrance exam, concerns have been growing about the impacts of China’s education system (from kindergarten to universities) upon the psychological, emotional and physical well being of the next generation, driving many parents to send their children abroad for high schools, or even emigrate for the sake of children’s education. While Chinese nationals have to deal with institutional barriers such as the highly competitive university entrance examination and hukou restrictions, those with foreign citizenships can be admitted into China’s top universities with Chinese Proficiency Test (hanyu shuiping kaoshi 汉语水平考试) and foreign passports only (Shanghai Government n.a.). It is difficult to determine whether this is the incentive for parents to emigration for foreign citizenship and return for their children’s university education. Yet, the institutional design does create an unequal structure for Chinese and foreign nationals, reinforcing a sense of inequality among Chinese citizens.

Much as university expansion has widened the door to higher education to an unprecedented extent, access to universities continue to be distinguished on the basis of one’s hukou status in specific localities. The prospect of receiving higher education is determined not only by one’s grades in the entrance exam, but also one’s hukou registration. High-school students must take the exam in cities or rural areas where their hukou are registered, even though the registered localities may be different from where they actually attend high school. This practice has created huge logistical barriers for many who have settled with their parents elsewhere but are not eligible to have their hukou transferred, for example, children of rural migrants or employees of small-private enterprises in large cities.

Moreover, prestigious universities are generally located in major cities such as Beijing, Wuhan, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Tianjin and Shanghai. Each university or college has the discretion to set annual admission quotas for different provinces, autonomous regions, or provincial-level municipalities, with disproportionately higher quotas for their home regions or cities. For example, Beijing University planned to enroll 614 undergraduates in 2012 from 73,000 university-exam-takers in Beijing. In contrast, a total of over 3.3 million students took the exam in six provinces (including Henan, Shandong, Sichuan, Anhui, Hubei and Hebei), from which Beijing University would accept only 409 students (Tencent News 2012). The structuring of
access based on *hukou* and regional discrimination set off widespread debates and strong criticism on the education reform initiative.

Despite public anger and frustration, the government has not been able to take effective policy action, because any move involves the interests of a wide range of groups, individuals, institutions, local and central governments. Faced with the challenges of bringing about institutional change, more and more Chinese seek education abroad. According to state statistics, the number of Chinese students abroad climbed from 17,622 in 1998 to 284,700 in 2010 (figure 4.7). The overall trend is that the US remains the major magnet for Chinese students but education in Canada, Britain and Australia is gaining importance. In 2011, the number of students from China to the US reached 157,588 or a 23 percent increase compared to 2010, constituting 21.8 percent of all foreign students in the US. Most were high school students, the number of which was one hundred times of that in 2006 (People’s Daily 2012). From 2005 to 2008, China was the second top source country of foreign students in Canada after South Korea and has been the top spot since 2009. Chinese students also account for a significant percentage of foreign students in Australia and Britain (Guangzhou Daily 2012).

Undoubtedly, rich entrepreneurs and corrupt government officials have been sending their children overseas to get a foothold, especially in Australia and Canada, to prepare for the relocation of the whole family, or to seek a safe heaven for their wealth. This, however, only tells part of the story. Going abroad for study or resettlement is also an individual or household choice to exit a political system infected with rampant corruption and lack of accountability and
transparency. Emigration is also a matter of self-development, as the stories of my informants in Vancouver suggest.

4.5 Emigration for Self-Development

China’s urban transformation is an extremely convoluted process in which Chinese individuals are now cast out to assume more responsibilities for themselves, a fundamental difference from living under socialism. Based on in-depth interviews with ‘new’ Chinese immigrants to Vancouver, I found that the decision to move abroad was not so much driven by the ‘pull’ as by the ‘push’ factors of China’s urban change, such as the limited space for living a meaningful life without compromising one’s consciousness or integrity. Other factors also include the desire to expand one’s knowledge horizon and to provide children with a safe, cosmopolitan environment to grow up. I divide my interview findings into two broad categories: young Chinese who came to Vancouver initially as international students; and emigrant families who left China for their children’s education.

4.5.1 Young, Well-educated Chinese

Going abroad to study has become a growing trend in China. Many of my informants pointed out the unsatisfying education system and/or the slim prospect of getting into top Chinese universities are the major reasons to pursue undergraduate studies abroad. Among them was Dave, who had recently obtained his doctoral degree in law in Vancouver. He explained to me,

> I was from Liaoning and famous universities in Beijing such as Tsinghua University or Beida (Beijing University) accepted a small number of students from our province. It was almost impossible for me to get in top-ranking universities. I didn’t want to waste my time and money in a mediocre university in China. That’s why I came directly to pursue an undergraduate degree in Canada.

When Dave just arrived in Canada in the late 1990s, his English was very poor, so he attended English language school in Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia. Having successfully improved his English, Dave was accepted by the undergraduate program at the University of Victoria, and later moved to complete his doctoral degree at the University of British Columbia. With a solid education in Canada, he found himself a place as a corporate lawyer in a Vancouver

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26 Interview on March 12, 2012 in Vancouver.
law firm. The job qualified him to apply for permanent residency in Canada. Dave’s story is by no means an exception, as many Chinese students do end up being permanent residents or naturalized citizens of their host countries.

Unlike Dave, some may return to China after their graduation only to realize the difficulty to resettle there. This is the case with Jessy. Jessy came to study in London, Ontario by herself as an international student. After she completed her undergraduate degree, she worked as an intern in Toronto for two years. She then had to return to China because her study-permit would not allow her to stay in Canada for more than two years after graduation. With education and work experience in a western country, Jessy soon launched herself as a manager in a state-owned bank in Wuhan where she was born and grew up with her family. Returning to her home city with an apparently secure job was, however, rather unsettling experience for her. She explained,

I was about 18 or 19 years old when I first came to Canada as an international student. My worldview and many social values were developed in Canada. I have a strong sense of identification with the Canadian society than the Chinese one. I know Canada better and feel more confident to settle down here than in China. After I went back, I felt I couldn’t adjust to the life in Wuhan, so I decided to emigrate and eventually came back with my husband as permanent residents of Canada.

Her encounter with Canada, where there is a relatively broad consensus on social justice and democracy, had heightened Jessy’s sense of what she valued and resented. My interview with Jessy was conducted at her residency, an old one-bedroom rental apartment where she lived with her husband. To save money, they rented out the living room to an international student from China. Three of them shared a small kitchen and one washroom. The only available place for Jessy and I to sit was a small dining set squeezed next to the kitchen stove. Intrigued by the contrast between her current living conditions and the kind of apartment that a bank manager could possibly afford in Wuhan, I probed further and Jessy’s answer gave me a better understanding of why she decided to leave behind what she could have earned.

When I was in Wuhan, I had to work seven days a week. I was in the bank loan department, and our clients were from corporations. We had to socialize with them and government officials all the time. During the day, I worked in the office, but after work, we had to entertain them by going out for dinners, drinks, and karaoke. I hate drinking. You know, in China you don’t really have a

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27 Interview on November 26, 2011 in Burnaby.
choice, not even for girls, but the worst thing was that when you came home after mid-night, half-drunk and half-awake, your boss called and demanded a progress report the next morning! How could I write when I was drunk and would surely have hangover the next day?

Despite her living conditions, Jessy told me she felt much happier in Vancouver now that she could spend more time with her husband. He found a job as a computer programmer soon after they landed in Vancouver. It took her about two months to find a job as a bank teller at the Royal Bank of Canada. With decent salaries, both Jessy and her husband were planning to save enough money for an apartment so that they could prepare for having a baby. If we had follow a purely economic rationale to explain individual decisions to emigrate, we would not have been able to appreciate the variegated factors that motivate people to leave a burgeoning economy.

China has become an important stakeholder in the global economy and culture, but its governing structure evolved out of the socialist past and earlier has become a significant deterrent for young, educated Chinese professionals. As one of my informants in his early 30s who used to be the regional manager of a German company in Guangzhou puts explicitly,

In Guangzhou, my salary is considered high but look at how much money corrupt government officials or private business owners are making! With the inflation and the high living expense in China, I am not confident that I could get the kind of life I want in China.

I am not sure the kind of good life my informant had in his mind, but he did give up his senior position in Guangzhou and came to Canada with his wife as permanent residents. At the time of my interview, he was to go back to school for another master’s degree (in addition to the one he received in Britain). He was hoping that Canadian education and work experience would enable him and his wife to put down their roots in the newly adopted country.

4.5.2 Prioritizing Children’s Education

In contrast to the young overseas Chinese, those in their late 30s or 40s leave China mostly for the overwhelming reason of children’s education, as in the case of Lin and his wife. In his late 40s, Lin28 used to be the manager of a large real estate corporation in Shanghai. His wife was a dentist in the biggest dental hospital there. When asked why they gave up their careers there, Lin gave me this answer,

28 Interview on September 17, 2011 in Richmond.
The reasons were quite complicated. There were many reasons, but the most important one is my son’s education.

There seem to be other important factors that Lin was reluctant to reveal. During my interview, I learned that the couple owned three apartments in Shanghai, and that Lin’s company covered all of his daily expenses: a car (plus fuel), meals, health care and housing. Lin has a master’s degree in architecture from Chongqing, China. Before they decided to come to Vancouver, he had psychologically prepared for the slim prospect of finding a job that would be nearly comparable to his income level in Shanghai. Without local education, his wife knew she would not be qualified to practice dentistry in the new country. The couple nonetheless decided to move to Canada. They sold one of their properties in Shanghai so that they could afford the down payment for a townhouse in Richmond, a municipality adjacent to the City of Vancouver. Their rental incomes in Shanghai also qualified them for mortgage. Both of them were attending adult high school to improve their English so that they could apply for local vocational colleges later. Despite the economic uncertainties and the hardships of establishing themselves in a new place at their prime age, Lin and his wife found comfort in the fact that the whole family could spend more time together, and that their son was enjoying school here. Lin’s wife was active in volunteering in social organizations, which she hoped, would help her practice her English and get to know more people.

Compared to families like Lin and his wife who decided to emigrate together with their son, some may choose to live in separate cities as ‘astronaut’ households. This is the case with Chong. In his mid-40s, Chong was a vice-president of a coal import-export company in Beijing. His job required extensive travel not only within China but also all over other parts of the world. Because of the demanding workload for both him and his wife, they had to send their son to a boarding school in Beijing when he was only one and a half years old. When the son approached the age for junior high school, Chong and his wife became more and more concerned about the kind of education available in Beijing. They both wanted to provide the son with an environment where he could learn a wide range of knowledge as opposed to China’s ‘examination-oriented education (yingshi jiaoyu 应试教育)’. It happened that one day they came across an emigration consultant company. Through the emigration broker, Chong and his wife decided to try their

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29 Interview on November 20, 2011 in Vancouver.
luck and apply for Canadian permanent residency. They waited for six years before their application was approved.

While Chong explained that his son’s education was the main motive for their emigration, he added that he wanted to experience a way of life different from what he had in Beijing. With an undergraduate degree in English, Chong was proficient in both oral and written English. Therefore, Chong came to live with his son in Vancouver whereas the wife continued to work in Beijing and take care of the aged parents of both. Having lived in Vancouver for three years, Chong’s son had made promising progress by having more A’s in his transcript than C’s. Despite the separation from his wife and parents, Chong seemed to have adjusted well to living in Vancouver. While enjoying more father-son bonding time, he was occasionally invited by local Chinese media to discuss his experience of parenting. His English proficiency allowed him to play an important role in his son’s school. He had helped to design a parent brochure and translate it into Chinese for the increasing number of Chinese parents moving into their neighbourhood. At the time of our interview, he just passed the examination to be a certified English translator and interpreter in Canada.

The general assumption in China is that corruption is rampant in industries heavily involved with local governments, especially real estate or energy resources. This may explain the reluctance of Lin and Chong to dwell on their past in Shanghai or Beijing. By comparison, another interviewee of mine, Dongmei30 was more open about her decision-making process of emigration. In her early 40s, Dongmei was a regional manager in a Swiss company in Tianjin, the forth-largest city in China. She described her everyday life in Tianjin in this way,

I worked day and night. Usually, my driver came to pick me up for work before my daughter woke up for school and when I came home from work, she and my husband were already sleeping.

Apparently, for Dongmei, work took precedence over other matters, including her daughter’s wellbeing. Consequently, the daughter became very rebellious and had been skipping classes. The teacher eventually demanded that her daughter withdraw from high school. Both Dongmei and her husband were afraid of the consequences for the whole family, so they decided to emigrate out of China for the sake of the daughter. In our interview, Dongmei constantly referred

30 Interview on December 13, 2011 in Burnaby.
to God, which made me realize that she was a devout Christian. Lack of religious freedom in China appeared to be another important reason for their emigration.

In China, you are not allowed to worship God because the government is very afraid of organized religious activities. Our worshipping and gathering had to go underground. In recent years, the government has become more nervous about religious organizations. Our church have several hundred members and the government demanded from each one of us personal information, such as identity card number, home address, and work status. Of course we wouldn’t do anything to sabotage the government but you never know when the government would come to harass you. We could easily become scapegoats of the government.

Dongmei’s husband was a state employee before they came to Canada. Because he did not want to be involved in bribery or corruption, as Dongmei explained, he could not get promoted for higher position or salary. I met Dongmei at their place, which was a one-bedroom, ground-floor suite rented out in a single-family house. Sharing the house with two other families, Dongmei showed more contentment than grudge, as she noted,

My daughter often jokes, we now sleep on second-hand beds and use second-hand furniture in a place that we don’t even own, but we are all much happier. My daughter said, even though the apartment we had in Tianjin was much bigger, it was not a home. This is our home.

To my surprise, their family saving could have actually allowed them to buy an apartment for their own, but they wanted to know more of the city before they decided which neighbourhood to settle in. Since they moved in their current place, Dongmei had been a regular volunteer in a church where she used her managerial skills to organize church activities. Her husband worked as a laborer to financially support the family, whereas her daughter made friends through a local language school and regularly volunteered at an animal-shelter organization. At the end of our interview, I was struck by Dongmei’s revealing words of a humanistic perspective on settlement, as in the following,

Everyone in the family found their place in a new country and is making efforts to have a meaningful life.

Overall, the voices of emigrants that I have included here show the complexities and the variegated reasons for emigration from China. Economic rationality alone is far from being sufficient to explain the decision of those from the middle strata who gave up the relatively
secure socio-economic status in China despite the enormous uncertainty of settling in a new country.

4.6 Conclusion

Since the late 1970s, urbanization in China has been proceeding apace, so has been emigration in recent years. Focusing on the basic processes of urban change in housing, education and every life, I intend to shed light on the relationship between emigration growth and China’s urban transition. The central argument is that the transition from socialist planned economy to the market-oriented one is a highly fragmented process. The exponential growth of national wealth is at the expense of equal citizenship rights and entitlements. The absence of more equitable distribution of economic benefits is in tension with the expanded space of individual freedom and choice through the market. In light of this development, I suggest that emigration from China needs to be seen as a political action informed by China’s changed political economic conditions.

Emigration as a political action implies a particular way of thinking about planning for both the sending and receiving cities and regions. As more and more people in China are living in urban forms of settlement (with its characteristics of higher population densities compared to the rural surroundings, as well as specialized spaces such as airports, office buildings, roads, restaurants, cafes, shopping centers, etc. to support more diverse economic and social activities), one important assumption is that more people will continue to move abroad from China’s growing urban areas. Historically, a similar process of emigration occurred in other Asian countries, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea. The governments of those countries implemented effective policies to attract the return-migration of intellectuals, turning “brain drain” into “brain circulation” (Zweig et al. 2008). Similarly, China has adopted a pragmatic policy approach to bring in foreign-educated, highly-accomplished Chinese for economic development (see chapter 3). Facilitated by the recent economic downturn in North America and European countries since 2008, China has been receiving a growing number of returnees, which, however, hardly challenges the structural constraints inherent in China’s political economy.

There is an urgent need to interpret Chinese migration in a more nuanced way. The global migration of people from China consists of those with financial resources and skills as well as those who were rendered redundant in the SOE reform and other restructuring processes. After
migration, they develop complex networks of family, kinship, association, socioeconomic status, class and occupation in the receiving places. Such networks and relationships are transforming the politics of place that is the context of socio-spatial planning. While the receiving cities or regions may implement social and economic policies to facilitate immigrant settlement, how immigrants themselves would fare is hardly disconnected with the political economic structure of places they leave behind. Indeed, as I would argue in the next chapter, specific localities produce very different opportunity structures that shape the multiplicity of integration behaviors and outcomes.
Chapter 5: Locating Migrants: A Comparative Perspective on Migration Flows from Three Chinese Cities

At the international airports in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu or Guangzhou, it is easy to spot Chinese travelers to, or coming back from, abroad. A good proportion of them are holders of foreign passports, speaking Beijing Mandarin, Shanghai dialect, Sichuanese, Cantonese, Hokkien, among a great number of other Chinese dialects. Coming from all over China, they are business investors, entrepreneurs, students, professionals, tourists, contract workers, as well as family members of Chinese-turned-foreign nationals. Through jet flights, the Internet, telephone and remittances, many of them weave a trans-Pacific life-world that encompasses North America and rapidly urbanized areas in China. Unlike the relatively homogeneous population coming from the Pearl River Delta region in Guangdong in the late 19th and early 20th century, to whom North America stood for the land of opportunities, migrant groups from China since the early 1980s have become increasingly diverse. Similar to other immigrant groups to Canada or the United States, internal differentiation by class, place of origin, gender, education, spoken language and political identity precludes easy generalization.

While some scholars attribute differentiation to the national origins of the migrant population (e.g. Waldinger and Tseng 1992; Ettlinger and Kwon 1994; Vertovec 2007; Portes and Bach 1985), others explain ethnic diversity through the different local contexts in the receiving countries (e.g. Y. Zhou1998, 2001; Waldinger 1996; Logan et al. 2002; Foner and Waldinger 2012). In contrast, in this chapter, I try to provide a more detailed explanation, taking into account another dimension that is rarely explored, that is, the differentiated socioeconomic political development processes occurring in the sending localities. These processes are not deterministic, as migrant settlement experiences are shaped by the synergy between distinctive urban institutions and the specific characteristics of relevant groups. Yet, like those in the migrant destinations, the place-specific institutions in the sending areas make a difference, as we shall see through the case of three Chinese cities – Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan. Having examined the highly fragmented process of urban development in China in chapter 4, I here approach China as an assemblage of places with different urbanization levels. Specifically, I

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31 This reflects a common issue in relying on census data provided by immigrant-receiving countries. The data record countries of migrant origin but not specific localities of origin. One way to compensate for this limitation is to conduct in-depth ethnographic research in specific locations.
engage place as an analytical framework to compare the linkages between ‘sending’ place characteristics and the trajectories of settlement and integration.

Different localities, as argued by geographers, offer different sets of opportunities and constraints at different points in time (Massey 1994; Amin 2004; Amin and Thrift 2002; Y. Zhou 1998; Mitchell 1997). Such constraints and opportunities interact with the dynamics of migration and, as a result, shape the settlement patterns of different immigrant groups and their strategies in adapting to local environments. While there are merits in considering the locality-based factors to understand migrant integration, scholarship tends to be limited to leading immigrant destinations without paying sufficient attention to the particularities of the places where migrants come from, that have equal impact on settlement and integration experiences. Through a comparative study of migration flows from three different localities, I demonstrate that not only is locality crucial, but also that transformative processes in the sending areas are catalytic for intra-group diversity and the different outcomes of migrant integration.

5.1 Foregrounding ‘Place’ and Local Contingence

Research on migrant communities in the last three decades has departed a great deal from its earlier emphasis on cultural distinctiveness toward the influence of local institutions and political ideology (e.g. Y. Zhou 1998; Logan et al. 2002; Shin and Liang 2012). A distinguished group of scholars has argued that ethnic difference is socially constructed by historically specific discourses and practices, including not only the intellectual discourses of social scientists but also the discriminatory policies of the ruling elites (e.g. Yu 2001; Anderson 1991; Smith 2000). Anderson (1991), for example, applied such a social-constructionist approach to the history of Vancouver’s Chinatown. She demonstrated the key role of racist ideology and government policies in the construction of “Chineseness” as a racial category and Chinatown as a spatially defined ethnic neighbourhood.

Some scholars, prompted by the complexity of migrant experiences, tend to view the social construction of race and ethnicity as a process of two-way interaction. In other words, migrants are active agents in defining and negotiating their identity in relation to the imposition of ethnic identification by the host society. Alan Smart and Josephine Smart (1998), for example, told the story of how multiple identifications (with the People’s Republic of China, with Chinese culture, and the Communist Party’s vision of economic development) were brought into play by Hong
Kong invests in Mainland China. In their pursuit of new opportunities, Hong Kong investors foregrounded their ethnic identity as Chinese “compatriots” so as to invoke common ground with local officials in Mainland China. This is in contrast to Hong Kong immigrants in Vancouver who accommodated to a different setting by downplaying their “Chineseness” and repositioning themselves within the dominant discourses of multiculturalism and democracy (Mitchell 2004). Similarly, as documented by Adam McKeown (2001), Chinese from a small region of south China in the early twentieth century demonstrated different adaptations and ethnic structures in Peru, Chicago and Hawaii. Overall, this literature highlights the importance of place context and its linkage with migrant experiences, transnational activity and identity.

Studies of migrant communities are generally grounded in place: starting from the Chicago sociologists’ obsession with slums and ghettos in the 1920s to Portes and Bach’s (1985) study of immigrant enclaves in Miami, Anderson’s (1991) and Mitchell’s (2004) analyses of local politics in Vancouver, and Min Zhou’s (1992) research of New York Chinatown. These studies demonstrate the importance of local labor markets, settlement patterns, ethnic politics, historical contingency and the synergy of entrepreneurship in the building of migrant communities. Such studies, however, tend to select specific aspects of the local – most notably employment and socioeconomic characteristics of migrant groups – in highlighting geographical variations without accounting for the multifaceted interactions between the local structures and the agency of migrant groups. Little is known about the urban restructuring processes that give rise to the differentiated migrant experiences in the receiving localities. Much less is known about the structure of opportunity through which human capacity is built differently prior to migration, that plays a vital role in the prospect of livelihood production among migrant groups from various localities. In light of the great diversity across different American cities, Waldinger (1996) explicitly urged for bringing the “urban” back to migration research. Glick Schiller and her colleagues (2006, 2009) recently have also sought to link migration with specific localities in addressing the relationships between migrant integration and the repositioning of cities in relation to regional, national, and global flows of people and capital.

The recent intellectual awakening to “place” among sociologists and anthropologists may benefit from the spatial concept of place best articulated by geographers. Place, according to Massey (1994), refers to the construction of multiple social relations across all spatial scales. From this perspective, she argued for “a global sense of place,” that is, place as “articulated moments in
networks of social relations and understandings” constructed on a far larger scale than what we often think of as local (1994, 154). Embedded in the multiplicity of connections is what Massey (1993) called power-geometry, or the differentiated access among political actors to resources, capital and information. Amin (2004) argued that social processes need to be understood as spatially unbounded, challenging the rigid binary of local and global. Jennifer Robinson (2011) used a post-colonial approach to the city as a site of assemblage, multiplicity and connectivity. Drawing on geographers’ insights on place, Smith (2000) conceptualized city as a fluid, porous space in which social agents, networks, practices and power operating at local, national, and transnational scales interact with each other. It is the particular patterns of interaction among socioeconomic networks, political actors and the institutional hierarchy in specific localities, I would argue, that shape the power, meaning and identity of migrant communities. My research is aligned with this stream of literature that emphasizes processes and linkages beyond the administrative boundary of a locality.

To foreground the role of place in the building of migrant communities, Yu Zhou (1998, 533) points out three processes that can be examined: the spatial distribution of migrant population that is heavily conditioned by chain migration, local economic conditions, social infrastructure, and transportation; local structures of opportunity and constraint as reflected in employment and housing niches; and, the different sets of local-global linkages that produce differentiated outcomes for migrant communities. Comparing two Chinese communities in Los Angeles and New York, Zhou (1998) generated useful insight on an array of socioeconomic processes underlying the divergence of Chinese ethnic economies. Scholars conducting comparative research of a single migrant group at different localities (e.g. Waldinger and Tseng 1992; M. Zhou and Kim 2003; M. Zhou and Lin 2005; Razin and Light 1998), however, often fall short of articulating the transformative processes in which public policies and state action play a vital role in allocating different resources for socioeconomic and human development. As much as migrants have built for themselves the capacity to adapt and overcome the various institutional barriers before they land in a new place, the capacity of the state to transform urban space and places through planning and local policies has yet to be incorporated in the conceptualization of place.

Building on the above summarized literature, this chapter brings in another dimension that is not yet explored by scholars, that is, the role of migrant-sending localities in which different sets of
opportunities as a result of the changed political economy enable (prospective) migrants to develop different types of skills, experiences, social and political capitals. One way to systematically discern the role of migrant-sending place is to emulate the existing literature (e.g. Y. Zhou 1998, 2001; M. Zhou and Lin 2005; Waldinger and Tseng 1992) by using the comparative approach to study groups converging in one single destination from different localities. Such a place-based comparison can shed important light on why different migrant groups categorized under the same ethnic label in census, living in the same city, are indeed a world apart from each other in terms of their interaction with ethnic associations, economic activities, housing and employment markets, as well as transnational networks and practices.

This chapter documents migration flows from three localities in China, Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan (figure 5.1), which occupy different positions in the Chinese political economy. Beijing is home to the headquarters of China’s largest state-owned enterprises, with a sizable workforce that is part of the state or the work units (i.e. state enterprises, agencies or institutes). Shanghai is a cosmopolitan city where regional headquarters of multinational corporations are concentrated. Both Beijing and Shanghai are provincial-level cities directly under the control of the central government. In comparison, Zhongshan is a prefecture-level city located in the Pearl River Delta region of Guangdong Province, with an approximate population of 3.14 million by the end of 2011 (Zhongshan Statistical Yearbook, 2012). Zhongshan local government is somewhat insulated from the central state by the layer of provincial government, the institutional structure of which offers more autonomy and incentives for the local state and social groups to cultivate “external” resources for economic development.
These three localities resemble each other in the sense that they have been the major sending areas of migrants to North America since China’s gradual relaxation of emigration control in the early 1980s. They differ from areas in Fujian province or northeastern China (especially Shandong province32) in that Fujian is often associated with undocumented migration (e.g. Liang and Morooka 2004; Thuno and Pieke 2005; Sheng and Bax 2012; Pieke and Speelman 2013) while northeastern China is known for contract labor export through state-owned enterprises (e.g. Pieke and Xiang 2010; Wang and Liu 2012, 18). While Beijing and Shanghai have clearly made it into the maps of the global- and world-cities theorists (e.g. Friedmann 1986, 1995; Sassen 1994, 2002), Zhongshan is equally global in the sense that the supply of labour and goods has long been integral to the global trade networks with Southeast Asia and North America, if we agree with Jennifer Robinson’s theory of “ordinary cities”. Robinson (2006) urged urban

scholars to move beyond the divisive categories (e.g. Third World vs. the West, developed vs. developing countries) and hierarchies to conceptualize cities as ordinary. One way to bring cities together for research, according to Robinson (2011), is to use processes of circulation and flows that exceed a city’s administrative and physical boundaries as units of comparison. This strategy opens up a vast potential to travel to different geographical contexts across different national boundaries for comparative studies. My research follows this strategy, using migration flows from three cities as the basis of comparison. Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan are distinguished from each other in terms of migration history, economic structure, distribution of educational and financial resources, political culture, as well as the forms of integration with the global economy and culture.

Comparison across regions is also inspired by a growing number of political scientists using a subnational (i.e. provincial, municipal, township, and village) approach to local variations. While China’s urban transformation since the late 1970s has attracted a great deal of media and academic attention, scholars tend to treat “urban China” as a coherent unit of analysis (e.g. Hsing 2010; Friedmann 2005; He and Wu 2009; Wu et al. 2007), or jump to conclusions based on research in a specific locale (e.g. Wang et al. 2009; Shen and Wu 2012). While both research agendas are valuable in enriching our understanding of the complex realities in China since the late 1970s, political scientists have departed from these approaches by comparing specific cities or regions (e.g. Yang 1990, 1997; Rithmire, 2010; Tsai 2002), or even specific localities between China and beyond, such as Kellee Tsai’s (2003; 2004; 2012) work comparing different localities in China and India.

In this chapter, I review some characteristics of three different localities arising from the complex histories in China, suggesting that recent development since the beginning of economic reform plays a crucial role in shaping settlement experiences. By no means do I imply the causal relations between place and the various pathways of integration. Rather, my intention is to demonstrate the diverse processes in which sending areas interact with the development of human capacities. Statistical data are based on various municipal statistical yearbooks. Information is also gathered from archives, local chronicles (difang zhi 地方志), media and government reports as well as academic scholarship. Meanwhile, my analysis is benefited from two field visits to Beijing and Zhongshan during the summers of 2011 and 2012.
5.2 Locating Cities in Time and Space: Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan

Outward migration from China is no longer limited to a few sites in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces. Instead, more and more Chinese nationals across a wide range of localities and socioeconomic backgrounds are moving abroad. Knowledge of this recent global phenomenon is rather limited compared to the voluminous scholarship on internal migration within China. Nonetheless, it is no longer possible to talk about the Chinese in a singular sense because of the vast diversity in terms of class backgrounds, social practices, ideology, regional identity and even languages. In 2011, it was estimated that as many as 150,000 people moved out of China as permanent residents in foreign countries (Wang 2013). By the end of 2009, the cumulative number of Chinese emigrants was estimated as high as 4.5 million (Chinanews 2011).

According to the 2012 Annual Report on China International Migration (Wang and Liu 2012, 13-4), the leading recipient countries of Chinese emigrants were traditional settler societies including the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In the same year, approximately 340,000 went abroad to study (Wang and Liu 2012, 94), making the cumulative number of Chinese students abroad 2.25 million by the end of 2011. By comparison, according to the Department of Outward Investment and Economic Cooperation under China’s Ministry of Commerce, in 2012, the total number of Chinese contract workers abroad was 850,000, making the cumulative number by the end of 2012 as high as 6.39 million (Ministry of Commerce 2013). The annual remittances sent or brought back to China by the contract workers were estimated as over US $4 billion (Ministry of Commerce 2012).

Added to the complexities of emigration flows is the magnitude of Chinese tourists, visitors on businesses, exchange programs, or government delegates abroad. One way to analyze the complex reality is to disaggregate the different flows according to the specific political economic processes of development in specific localities. The three localities chosen here embody prominent features that are aspects of the same process of national and global transformation. The difference among them is often a matter of degree rather than of kind.
Unlike Shanghai or Zhongshan where historical records of overseas migration can be gleaned from established literature,\textsuperscript{33} there is little evidence of overseas migration as an engrained social practice in Beijing prior to the late 1970s (except for a small number of intellectuals sent abroad for education). For most of the imperial era, Beijing had been the center of the ruling elite because of its location at the interface between the North China Plain and the northeast China in proximity to Inner Asia, Mongolia and Manchuria where imperial powers originated. Its privileged position, however, was disrupted by the outbreak of the Second Opium War (1856-1860) when Britain and France forced the city open for trade and diplomatic presence. The history of foreign invasion and national humiliation has ever since been carved in the ruined Summer Palace serving as one episode of the city’s collective memory. Following the overthrow of the Qing dynasty during the Xinhai Revolution (1911-1912), Beijing suffered years of turmoil: warlord feuds, student protests against foreign invasion, and economic decline as the Nationalist government was relocated to Nanjing.

In contrast to Beijing at the crux of political hierarchy, Shanghai represents a unique urban type as a treaty port in history (Esherick 2000). Because of its location at the mouth of the Yangtze River, the city had become a crucial port for regional trade before it was brought into a global trade network by force during the First Sino-British Opium War (1839-1842). Subsequently, concessions were carved out by Britain, France, United States and Japan for direct trade on Chinese soil through the treaty port system. The treaty system resembled colonization without the complete surrender of national sovereignty and the Qing government could not interfere with the concessions. This political autonomy attracted a great deal of commercial, political, journalistic, and cultural activity to Shanghai (ibid. 2), giving rise to a number of trade-related industries such as insurance, finance, warehousing, and manufacturing in ship repair and packaging (Zhong 2010). One notable example of Shanghai’s forced insertion into the global system of colonial trade was the establishment of HSBC in 1865 in both Hong Kong and Shanghai. From a regional perspective, the long-established commercial linkages with the

flourishing areas of Suzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing and Ningbo were significant contributors to Shanghai’s prosperity at the time (Yusuf and Wu 1997, 66). By 1930, Shanghai had become “the fifth largest city in the world” and “China’s largest harbor and treaty port” (Lee 1999, 3). The confluence of the many foreign and indigenous components gave Shanghai residents a distinctive sense of being modern and being Chinese. Shanghai’s splendid modernity drew the attention of sociologist Robert Park who put the city together with London, New York, San Francisco, Yokohama, Osaka, Singapore and Bombay as “integral parts of a system of international commerce” (Park 1952, 133-4).

Modernization in Shanghai, however, cannot be understood simply as an isolated phenomenon, but as an important articulation of linkages with Zhongshan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney, and other Chinese-receiving places in North America. Migrant populations originating from the geographical area where the City of Zhongshan is located were part of the conduits linking Shanghai to the Asia Pacific business networks in the early years of the 20th century. To demonstrate this point, it is important to underscore the history of migration from Zhongshan and its broader political, socioeconomic and cultural implications for Shanghai as well as modern China as a whole.

In contrast to the long histories of Beijing and Shanghai as world cities, Zhongshan remained a predominantly agrarian society until some thirty years ago. The area was historically known as Xiangshan County (or Hsiang-shan). It had long functioned as the leading transit port for agricultural products because of its geographical proximity to Macau by land and Hong Kong by ship (Hsieh 1974, 130). In the 19th century, young, male villagers were recruited by brokers in Macau and Hong Kong to work in mines, railways, or plantations in Honolulu, San Francisco, Costa Rica, and newly colonized areas in western Canada, Australia and Southeast Asia (Zhongshan Municipality, 1996). Macau and Hong Kong were integrated in the translocal, transnational spatial economy in which migrants and non-migrants alike found their niche as brokers to sell ship tickets, arrange accommodation for newcomers, transfer letters, remittances or other belongings between migrants’ home villages and abroad (Zhongshan Museum, n.d.).

Like overseas Chinese from the few counties in the Pearl River Delta, migrants from Xiangshan belonged to lineage groups that sometimes occupied an entire village. They organized themselves into surname, place-based, or benevolent associations as a way to overcome the
difficulties of settling in foreign lands. Seen as sojourners at the time by the ‘mainstream’ society, they maintained contact with the home villages through remittances, letters and goods. Such linkages play a crucial role in three interrelated dimensions that are often understated in existing literature on Chinese diasporic communities and migrant-sending areas alone (e.g. Liang et al. 2008; Liang and Morooka 2008).

The first dimension is concerned with the political history of modern China. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, referred to as the “Father of the Nation”, was from Xiangshan, one of the eight counties in the Pearl River Delta where almost every single migrant to North America came from (Yu 2011). Migrant networks laid the foundation for an emigration ‘tradition’ in these county areas. They also allowed Sun to galvanize significant support from his kin and other overseas Chinese, whose encounters with nationalism and racism in the Asia Pacific and North America had motivated them to end the Qing dynasty under the Manchu. Overseas Chinese had made substantial donations for the 1911 Xinhai Revolution, and some even returned to China to participate in the revolutionary uprisings that eventually led to the collapse of the Qing Empire (Hsien 1974). Sun was remembered as the founding father of the Republic of China (1912-1949) and the cofounder of the Chinese Nationalist Party that ruled much of China from 1928 to 1949. Following their defeat by the Communists in 1949, troops of the Nationalist Party retreated to Taiwan and claimed sovereignty over Taiwan Island. After Sun’s death in 1925, Xiangshan County was renamed Zhongshan in honor of his revolutionary leadership.

The second dimension that has received relatively little scholarly attention is the developmental impacts of diasporic linkages upon the home villages. In Zhongshan, remittances from abroad were used to build more elegant ancestral halls and homes that were rare in villages without overseas connections (Vogel 1969, 21). Overseas Chinese also sent money back home for disaster relief and the construction of roads, schools and hospitals (Zhongshan Municipality, 1996). Such physical infrastructure served as the symbol of wealth that further encouraged local people to seek their fortune abroad. Migration to Southeast Asia and the Americas was an entrenched social practice in the area. To facilitate transactions related to remittances and foreign currency exchange, informal banks were set up in Hong Kong and Shiqi, the urban centre of Zhongshan County. This prototype of a modern banking system was known as “Gold Mountain House (Jinshan zhuang 金山庄)” that also issued bonds to raise investment funds from overseas Chinese (Chen 2007). Linkages with fellow villagers abroad and the development of physical
and financial infrastructure had enabled those left behind in the county to conduct trade through Hong Kong and Macau without having to interact with westerners. Some enterprising ones could learn basic English from westerners in Macau or receive formal education in Hong Kong. The language skills and educational training had allowed them to become compradors for trading with Europeans for whom silk, spice, tea and porcelain were highly desirable (Chen 2006).

Overall, emigration had profoundly altered the local community structures. Until the late 1980s or early 1990s, dynamics of emigration from Zhongshan followed patterns of ‘chain migration’ similarly found in Mexican migration to the United States (e.g. Massey et al. 1994; Massey 1999; Fussell and Massey 2004). As a migration industry emerged in the 1990s, opportunities to move abroad became expanded to groups without existing kinship networks in the receiving places. The developmental impacts of overseas linkages could spread over the boundaries of kinship and lineage and out in urbanized areas where economic opportunities were more abundant. This is the third dimension in thinking about the role of place in migration dynamics. While abroad, many Chinese had converted to Christianity. The sharing of religious beliefs allowed them to establish solidarity with non-kinship groups, which raises an important issue regarding the conceptualization of an ethnic network that tends to focus narrowly on the web of family members, friends, and people with shared community of origin (tongxiang 同乡) (e.g. Bian 1997; Liang et al. 2008). Discriminated against by host societies abroad, many migrants returned to China and pulled money together to build churches in Zhongshan, Hong Kong, Macau and Shanghai. Those from the merchant class who had cultivated useful connections with Europeans and Chinese politicians while abroad were key players in spreading entrepreneurialism and innovative ideas to urban China.

The most compelling evidence was the “four great department stores” known as Sincere (Xianshi 先施), Wing On (Yong’an 永安), Sunsun (Xinxin 新新) and the Sun (Daxin 大新) (Shanghai Archives, 2010). All of them were founded by migrants from Xiangshan who were inspired by their overseas experiences. Barred from entering the mainstream society in the receiving areas, Zhongshan migrants brought their newly-made fortune back and partnered with other returned overseas Chinese to open department stores in Hong Kong and the treaty ports of Guangzhou and Shanghai (Mai 2001). Following the success in retailing industry, these entrepreneurs expanded their business to finance, insurance, hotel services, travel agency, textile manufacturing, and entertainment industry, generating employment opportunities for not only
the local residents but also fellow villagers from Zhongshan who came to seek a good life in these burgeoning metropolises (Xinhua Net 2006). Meanwhile, successful ones who had made it to the higher ranks of the social hierarchy could afford to enroll themselves or their offspring in prestigious institutes such as St. John’s University, the most prominent university in Shanghai that had produced numerous highly educated and accomplished figures scattered all over the world, mostly in Canada. Shanghai’s flourishing past remains visible through its architecturally sophisticated buildings, such as the four department stores in Nanjing Road or St. John’s University (that is now the site of East China University of Politics and Law). Yet, its rich meanings linked with Chinese migration history may not be transparent for casual observers.

5.3 Divergent Development Since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China

5.3.1 Pre-reform Era (1949 - the late 1970s)

The founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 had very different meanings and prospects for the three places under comparison. As the home place of the Chinese Communist Party, Beijing was imbued with a sense of national identity and urban pride. During the subsequent decades under Mao Zedong, it became one of the leading locomotives for China’s industrialization. Around the old city, the central state spent a disproportionate amount of investment on large factories for the production of chemicals, steel and other noxious heavy industries. Meanwhile, the local government and collectives built small factories (Gan 1990). To facilitate industrialization, a number of universities, colleges, and special scientific research institutes were established, which laid a solid ground for Beijing to become the national center of higher education. In the context of Maoist socialism (1949-1976) and the Cold War (1947-1991), Beijing was an isolated place living off the surplus of the rural economy. With the strict implement of a socialist welfare system, urban residents lacked the incentives to move away while rural peasants were bound to their collectives and communes.

In contrast, socialist ideology against capitalist production had a different story in Shanghai. By the late 1940s, Shanghai had developed a sound manufacturing sector dominated by textiles,

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34 Many alumni of St. John’s University (Shanghai) known as Johanneans moved to Hong Kong and Taiwan in the mid-1950s following the end of China’s Civil War. A large number of them later migrated from both regions to Vancouver and founded St. John’s College at the University of British Columbia. The remarkable stories of the Johanneans were collected in the Chinese Canadian Stories research project led by Professor Henry Yu. See http://ccs.library.ubc.ca/en/stories/viewItem/2/0/50/.
food processing, and a handful of other light industries, supported by essential service industries ranging from formal activities such as banking to informal ones such as petty retailing (Howe 1981, cited in Yusuf and Wu 1997, 46). Radical policies including centralized planning, the severing of foreign trade networks and the increasing emphases on heavy industry and regional self-reliance had resulted in insurmountable fear among Shanghai’s industrialists, who eventually fled to Hong Kong in the late 1940s and early 1950s with as much manufacturing equipment, employees, and wealth as they could take (Yusuf and Wu 1997, 46). It is well recognized among scholars that the exodus of resources from Shanghai was a major contributing factor for Hong Kong’s industrialization (e.g. Wong 1988). During the decades of Maoist socialism, Shanghai’s identity as a “global city” faded away, replaced by a strong sense of local identity evolving from the complex interaction between its (semi-)colonial past and the socialist present (Rudolph and Lu 2008). Until the early 1990s, Shanghai remained a “somber and congested city” suffering from minimal interaction with its hinterland and from the lack of capital investment in urban infrastructure (Yusuf and Wu 1997, 48-9).

In contrast to Beijing and Shanghai where urban residents could enjoy relatively moderate levels of livelihood comfort because of the danwei welfare system, in Zhongshan that was still predominantly rural, local residents were faced with a rather harsh prospect. Overseas linkages and commercial culture consolidated in the previous century became a liability like other hometowns of overseas Chinese. Land was taken away from landlords and then distributed to the peasants, who were subsequently organized into cooperatives and communes to cultivate the collectively-owned agricultural land\(^{35}\). Remittances to Zhongshan dwindled dramatically from US$2.76 million in 1956 to less than one million in 1966 (Zhongshan Municipality, 1996). During the Cultural Revolution, family members of overseas Chinese were labeled as capitalists and purged by the Red Guards. Some young desperate males fled to Hong Kong or Macau as refugees (Vogel 1989, 164). Others were kept from uniting with their families abroad. One of my interviewees came to Canada in 1955 from Zhongshan via Hong Kong. After he left his hometown the rural commune refused to let his mother leave, which set the mother and son apart for as long as ten years. Until the 1980s, the general living standard in Zhongshan remained low

\(^{35}\) The land reform process in Guangdong was particularly ticklish because of the difficulty to distinguish whether land ownership was acquired through overseas remittances, or the exploitation of poor peasants’ labor. The intricate process of land reform in Guangdong was well documented in Vogel, Ezra F. 1969. “Central Control: the Legacy of Land Reform, 1951-1953” in Canton under Communism: Programs and Politics in a Provincial Capital, 1949-1968. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
as a result of disinvestment in Guangdong by the central government. Even for Guangzhou, the
largest city in Guangdong and historically one of the largest trading ports in China, the average
per capita annual rural income in 1978 was only 193 yuan, just about US$100, and for urban
residents, it was only 402 yuan (Vogel 1989, 1). Like other areas in the province, physical
infrastructure in Zhongshan was woefully lagging behind demand (ibid. 165) and institutes of
higher education were practically non-existent until 1986 when the first college was founded
with remittances from Zhongshanese in the United States. According to the local Zhongshan
chronology (1996), between 1980 and 1990, 40 percent of the funding for new (mostly primary
and secondary) schools was collected from Zhongshan huaqiao (华侨) living in North America,
Hong Kong and Macau while the rest came from the local government.

In their study on recent trends of emigration from China between 1982 and 2000 using China’s
1995 One Percent Population Sample Survey, Liang and Morooka (2004) found a significant
difference in the socio-demographic characteristics of emigrants from Fujian province and
Beijing. Seventy-four percent of emigrants from Fujian, mostly the several counties around
Fuzhou, were male in the 1995 while the gender ratio is much more balanced among emigrants
from Beijing. It was noted that emigrants from Fujian were 20 percent more likely to be between
the ages of 18 and 39 when compared to emigrants from Beijing. The contrast was even more
striking with respect to education, with almost 80 percent having an education level of junior
high school or lower among emigrants from Fujian. 76 percent of emigrants from Beijing have a
college degree. Liang and Morooka showed that emigrants from Fujian represented a much
lower socio-economic stratum than those from Beijing. They suggested that the polarization in
socio-economic origin was also reflected in the migration destinations. Given the hugely uneven
spatial distribution of educational institutions and other resources, it is evident that the same
inference can be drawn about migration flows from Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan in the
early 1980s, with the first two occupying much higher positions in the human capital spectrum.

Using the 1982 China Population Census, Liang and Morooka (2004) also found that, of the total
of 56,930 emigrants from China in 1982, Beijing accounted for the highest percentage (more
than 22 percent), followed by Shanghai (approximately 10 percent). 5.2 percent was from
Guangdong where people reunited with their family members abroad. These statistical findings
are consistent with my interviews and observations in Vancouver where those who left Beijing
or Shanghai in the 1980s were students in Japan or United States before settling in Canada. Most
Cantonese-speakers came under the family reunification category. Some came directly from Zhongshan among other qiaoxiang in Guangdong. Others moved from qiaoxiang to live in Hong Kong or elsewhere for a long time before they moved to Vancouver, challenging the assumption that social boundaries between Hong Kong emigrants and other Cantonese-speaking emigrant groups are readily distinguishable.

5.3.2 Reform Era (Since the Early 1980s)

Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan embarked on divergent routes when Deng Xiaoping introduced economic reform in the late 1970s. While there is an extensive literature debating on the various aspects of China’s transformation, the following highlights relevant features of the local political economy that shapes the livelihood prospects of migrants abroad.

- Zhongshan

The transformation of Zhongshan from a predominantly rural society to a rapidly urbanized one cannot be understood without discussing the ongoing realignment of central-local state relations. In 1979, four Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou (in Guangdong), and Xiamen (in Fujian) were established by the central government in order to take advantage of the geographic proximity to Hong Kong and Taiwan. A considerable amount of foreign investment was attracted by the open-door policy to set up joint ventures and co-operative enterprises. Because of its linkages with overseas Chinese (most importantly those from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Southeast Asian countries), Guangdong benefited most in comparison with other regions, hosting over 65 percent of all foreign investment enterprises in China in 1987 (Yang 1990, 247)\(^{36}\). With its strategic location near Hong Kong and the SEZs of Shenzhen and Zhuhai, Zhongshan local government was motivated by the newly-bestowed autonomy as a result of the fiscal reform\(^{37}\) to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors (Oi 1992, 36).

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\(^{37}\) Unlike previous Chinese governments, the communist leadership under Mao was able to channel resources for industrial development through the centralized economic planning. Capital-intensive projects, especially in military-defense-oriented industries, were concentrated in selected areas in interior China while the coastal regions, especially Guangdong and Fujian suffered from minimum central-state investment despite the fact that coastal provinces contributed a much larger share to the central coffer. With the dwindled central revenue as a result of mismanagement and unbalanced development, fiscal responsibilities have been transferred to the provincial and lower-level governments. Jean C Oi (1992, 1999) did critical evaluation of the changed central-local fiscal arrangements. A comprehensive assessment of the economic decentralization and its consequences for regional
The most important resources mobilized by the local government were linkages with the Zhongshan diasporic communities in Hong Kong, Macau, North America and Southeast Asia. Foreign investment was utilized in four major aspects: setting up export-oriented manufactories in townships and agricultural areas; opening new kindergartens, primary and middle schools, and colleges; constructing halls to commemorate Sun Yat-sen; and, philanthropic projects such as the construction of hospitals and senior houses in addition to social and cultural activities during Chinese festivals (Zhongshan Municipality 1996).

Like other areas in the Pearl River Delta with extensive overseas Chinese networks, local-global linkages have profoundly transformed the socio-spatial landscapes of Zhongshan. Between 1979 and the end of 1990, Zhongshan received a total of US $510 million from predominantly Zhongshan diasporic networks in Hong Kong. Such investment stimulated an industrialization process that led to a rapid growth of rural entrepreneurs. Since the late 1980s, rural townships and village enterprises have surged to be the backbone of a strong local private sector. By the end of 2011, the local private sector employed a total of approximately 1 million people in comparison with 84,700 in the state-owned sector and another 12,700 in the collectives of rural villages or townships (Zhongshan Statistical Bureau 2012). Meanwhile, in 1978, agriculture accounted for 47.86 percent of Zhongshan’s GDP output. This percentage quickly dropped to 34.38 percent in 1983 when manufacturing industry surged for the first time to outperform agricultural production, which continued to decline significantly to a miserable 2.7 percent of the total GDP in 2011. In the same year, 55.8 percent of the local GDP was generated by the manufacturing industry while 41.6 percent was from the service industry (Zhongshan Statistical Bureau 2012). The changed composition of different industries is shown in figure 5.2. Migrants from both rural and urban China consist of a significant portion of the local labour development can be found in Yang, Dali. 1997. Beyond Beijing: Liberalization and the Regions in China. London: Routledge.

38 The term “foreign” may obscure the fact that investors were actually returned Zhongshan migrants who had been residents in Hong Kong and other areas outside China. It is used here for the sake of consistency with established literature on FDI in China.

39 The extensive overseas Chinese networks with Southeast Asia have received much attention from anthropologists to explain the economic ‘takeoff’ of China. Most such scholarship, however, tend to essentialize the distinctiveness of ethnic Chinese practices without prioritizing the policy context or the centrality of the state, for example, Ong and Nonini (1997). Some geographers and political scientists challenge such view by highlighting the importance of place, such as Zhou and Tseng (2001). More recently, Kellee Tsai (2012) noted the various developmental impacts of diasporic networks in Dongguan (in Guangdong), Wenzhou (in Zhejiang) and Changle (in Fujian). Tsai challenges the broad-brush assumption that diasporic networks lead to positive local change.
force, of which 52 percent in 2011 were without local urban hukou (Zhongshan Statistical Bureau 2012).

\[ \text{Figure 5.2 Gross Domestic Production by Industrial Sectors} \]

Shanghai

Compared to Zhongshan’s takeoff, economic growth in Shanghai remained slow in the 1980s because the central state only allowed FDI in the four Special Economic Zones in Guangdong and Fujian as a testing ground. Even though in 1983, the central government granted Shanghai the privileges of international trade and investment, the metropolis received no more than a trickle of foreign capital. Shanghai local government also lacked the incentives to cultivate external resources (Yusuf and Wu 1997, 74). One possible explanation may be the inertia of socialist mentality. The functioning of the state-owned sector, which employed more than two million people between 1985 and 1992 (Shanghai Statistical Yearbook, 2000), had not motivated local government to be entrepreneurial, unlike their counterparts in Guangdong and Fujian where the state-owned sector was notoriously insignificant.

Following the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, investor interest waned. To rekindle investment confidence in Shanghai as well as other coastal areas, Deng Xiaoping made his famous tour of southern China in 1992 to reassert the central state’s endorsement of economic reform (Yusuf and Wu 1997, 74-5). Further encouraged by the comprehensive infrastructure development in
Shanghai’s Pudong district authorized by the central government in 1990, a skyrocketing amount of non-ethnic FDI\textsuperscript{40} began to flow into the metropolis (see figure 5.3). Meanwhile, the effects of regional networks came to assume a renewed salient role. A number of factors came to revitalize the regional economy, including increased agricultural production in the hinterland of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces that helped to meet the consumption needs of Shanghai’s local population and the increased influx of rural migrants from adjacent areas (Yusuf and Wu 1997). The number of prestigious universities in Shanghai is only second to that in Beijing, followed by Nanjing, a metropolis about 300 kilometers away. An extensive network of cities – including Nanjing, Changzhou, Suzhou, Wuxi, Nantong (in Jiangsu province) and Hangzhou, Ningbo, Wenzhou (in Zhejiang province) where colleges and universities are located – has provided the highly-desired human resources for Shanghai’s technologically innovated industries.

**Figure 5.3 Foreign Direct Investment in Shanghai 1984-2011**

The combination of these favorable conditions attracted “the cream of the FDI” by “large and technologically sophisticated multinational corporations (MNCs)” (Huang 2008, 179). By the end of 2011, about 63 percent of the total FDI was invested in sole-foreign funded enterprises, followed by 28.9 percent in joint ventures and 8.1 percent in corporative ventures (Shanghai Statistical Yearbook 2012). In 2002, the central state chose Shanghai as the first city to experiment with policies to attract regional headquarters of MNCs. By 2011, a total of 872 MNCs had established themselves in Shanghai, of which 326 were regional headquarters, 223

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\textsuperscript{40} Non-ethnic capital can be understood as opposed to “ethnic capital”, a concept proposed by Zhou and Lin (2005) referring to interactive processes of ethnic-specific financial capital, human capital and social capital. In contract, non-ethnic capital does not involves solidarity or financial capital based on co-ethnicity. For example, investment by many MNCs such as Procter & Gamble, or General Motors in Shanghai or Beijing can be seen as non-ethnic capital.
investment companies, and 323 R&D centers (Shanghai Municipal Commission of Commerce 2011, 1). Among the total of 326 MNCs regional headquarters, 32.4 percent were from the United States, 27.2 percent from Europe, 16.1 percent from Japan, 6.2 percent from Hong Kong and Taiwan and the rest from a combination of other countries (ibid. 2).

With the clustering of MNCs, Shanghai has firmly established itself as a crucial node in the national and global flows of people, goods, capital and technology, which is reminiscent of its global status in the early 20th century. The elevated role of Shanghai in the global economy has attracted a huge number of foreign nationals. Excluding those from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, the number of foreign visitors jumped from 1.39 million in 2000 to 6.48 million in 2011. A total of 164,359 foreign-passage holders (excluding residents from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) lived in Shanghai on a minimum one-year basis, including international students, representatives of foreign agencies, MNCs employees, foreign experts and their family members (Shanghai Statistics Bureau, 2012).

To further enhance Shanghai’s role in global finance, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) announced in January 2012 the Construction Plan of Shanghai as the International Financial Center in the “12th Five-Year Plan” Period. This plan specified the national government’s objective to develop Shanghai into a global financial center and shipping hub by 2020. It recognized Shanghai’s sound financial infrastructure, most notably the total of 1,049 financial institutions with gross assets of 1,400 billion yuan by the end of 2010 (NDRC 2012). The financial sector together with commerce and trade have surged to drive Shanghai’s service industry that as a whole absorbed 85 percent of the Shanghai’s total FDI in 2011. According to the Shanghai Statistical Bureau (2012), in 2011, the service industry accounted for 58 percent of the metropolis’s GDP, employing 6.22 million people. Given the dominance of the service industry (especially the sectors of finance, commerce and trade), it is more likely to find skilled-emigrants from Shanghai with international financial know-how than emigrants from Zhongshan or similar places serving different segments (e.g. manufactories) of the global economy.
Beijing

Beijing is similar to Shanghai and Zhongshan in the sense that these cities as well as the regions they are located in all have been major recipients of FDI (see figure 5.4), especially diasporic capital from Hong Kong\textsuperscript{41}. Unlike Zhongshan that is one of major exporters of manufactured goods, both Beijing and Shanghai have become exporters of capital by large state-owned enterprises, which, I would argue, means more than the migratory flow of people but far more consequentially, investment capital by representatives of state-owned enterprises. Yet, Beijing cannot be understood without considering its unique identity as China’s capital city representing the nation.

At the outset of economic reform, the private economy was practically nonexistent in Beijing and the means of production were owned either by the state or the collectives. In 1978, for example, 83.6 percent of Beijing’s total industrial output was produced by state-owned enterprises, whereas the remaining 16.4 percent was by collective enterprises (Wang L. 2003). At the early stage of economic reform in the 1980s, some danwei had begun to set up offices and companies in Hong Kong, Macau and later the United States as part of the open door policy. Most of the danwei employees sent abroad later became permanent residents or naturalized citizens of United States and Canada.

\textsuperscript{41} In terms of the total FDI volume, Hong Kong was the top source area for Zhongshan, Shanghai and Beijing in 2011, according to the statistical yearbooks of respective municipality. Yet, official statistics need to be interpreted with caution. Both investment from Taiwan and round-trip capital (meaning capital from Mainland China but registered in Hong Kong to reap the benefits of being “foreign”) are also recorded as from Hong Kong. In general, Hong Kong capitals were utilized in different industries (service industry in Shanghai and Beijing vs manufacturing industries in Zhongshan).
With the deepening of structural reform since the 1990s, the state-owned sector became splintered into fragments consisting of large state-owned enterprises (SOEs), collective enterprises, shareholding enterprises, and domestic joint-ownership firms (Yusuf and Nabeshima 2008, 39-40). These firms consist of what Singh and Jefferson (1993, 9) considered as a “vaguely defined ownership maze.” Most of their headquarters are clustered in Beijing, and have developed new forms of institutional affiliation with both the central and local governments who make sure large SOEs are competitive in the global market (Nolan and Wang 1999). Large SOEs, especially those in the energy and resource sectors, concern a complex web of interests,

Contrary to literature from the perspective of neoliberal ideology assuming the retreat of the state, the Chinese governments have retained a prominent role in building the competitiveness of SOEs. According to Nolan and Wang (1999), there has been extensive state action in the restructuring of SOEs, such as the governments’ allocation of procurement contracts with emerging Chinese indigenous companies and bargaining with leading MNCs in order to secure technical transfer and enable large SOEs to compete with MNCs on an equal footing. At the local level, linkages between rural officials and SOEs had played a prominent role in the “export” of rural workers to the urban areas, as documented in Guang, Lei. 2005. “The State Connection in China’s Rural-Urban Migrants” in International Migration Review 39 (2): 354-380.
such as direct revenue and other indirect benefits for central and local governments, the central ministries as well as companies and corporations “designed to act as an intermediary between enterprises and state agencies proper” (White 1991, cited in Nolan and Wang 1999, 193).

Despite their ambiguous ownership, SOEs directly under the central government invested a total of US$38.2 billion abroad (excluding investment in the financial market) in 2009, consisting of 67.6 percent of the total investment flow from China, in comparison with 0.6 percent from private enterprises (Ministry of Commerce et al. 2009, 12). 71.4 percent of China’s outward investment flowed to Asia (primarily Hong Kong and Singapore) while 13.0 percent landed in Latin America (ibid. 8-11). The recent jump of state outward capital flows (in non-financial market) (see figure 5.5)\(^43\) into primarily resource-rich countries such as Canada and Australia further complicates the migration dynamics and impacts upon local communities at the receiving end. The acquisition of companies by Chinese investment capital abroad has created an increased demand for highly-educated, bi-lingual, bi-cultural human resources abroad.

Figure 5.5 1990-2009 China’s Outward Direct Investment in Non-Financial Market (unit: 100 million US$)


Similar to Shanghai, Beijing is home to an impressive collection of universities and colleges. Its locational advantage as the national hub of China’s most prestigious universities, R&D institutes and other educational resources during the early Maoist era has been greatly enhanced since the restoration of the university entrance examination in 1977, especially after the rapid expansion of university education in the late 1990s. According to year-2012 statistics, Beijing was home to the largest number of colleges and universities (a total of 83) among all Chinese cities (Ministry of Education 2012). These higher education institutes in Beijing received a total funding of 63.3 billion yuan in 2011 from both the central and municipal governments, with Tsinghua University, Beijing University and Renmin University being the top recipients of public funding (Ministry of Education, 2012a). The concentration of educational resources has turned the city into one of the central nodes in the global circulation of Chinese students and highly-educated workers. Given the spatial distribution of higher education resources among these three cities, it is more likely to find migrants with high educational credentials from Beijing or Shanghai than Zhongshan, although more and more young families with improved economic conditions in Zhongshan are sending their children or accompanying them abroad for high school or even junior-level education.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the migrant-sending locality as an explanatory variable in the diversity of migration and settlement experiences. Rather than assuming locality as a factor subsidiary to individual characteristics (such as language proficiency, gender, education attainment etc.), I put the different processes of change in specific localities at the forefront of my comparison. Informed by geographers’ conceptualization of place and the methodology of sub-national comparison used by political scientists, I have traced in details the uneven developmental histories of three localities in China and their positions within people and capital flows. The overall comparative review calls for attention to different institutions and structures of opportunity and constraint underlying process of migration and integration. The point resonates somewhat with what Thuno and Pieke (2005) found among rural migrants from different villages in Fujian to Europe. Because of path dependence and networks of social relations, it is more than

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44 As recorded in the China Educational Finance Statistical Yearbook, Jiangsu province as a whole received the second largest amount of 46.6 billion yuan in 2011, even though a total of 128 colleges and universities were located in the province according to year 2012 statistics.
likely that when migrants from different localities arrive in the same place abroad, they may demonstrate different levels of engagement with ethnic entrepreneurship, transnational practices, local labor market and communities. In fact, more than ten years ago, Logan et al. (2002, 320) had noted “the limit of what can be accomplished through the analysis of publicly available census data”. They called for different research strategies, especially intensive comparative approach to study migrant diversity. Recently, Shin and Liang (2012, 16) have suggested that different groups have different migration histories and socioeconomic characteristics. Both scholars examined the earnings of six Asian immigrant groups in the United States and found that “overly simplistic renderings of Asian Americans as a whole” does not likely yield much useful insight into “distinctive and noteworthy within-group diversity”.

Echoing with these scholars’ emphasis on intra-group diversity, I have broadened the conceptualization of settlement by engaging with migrant-sending places. The logic is rather straightforward. A manager working in Sinopec would likely find it affordable to send his wife and children to live in the most affluent neighbourhoods in New York, Los Angeles, Vancouver or London, while his work is primarily based in Beijing. Someone working in an MNC in Shanghai would probably have more exposure to cosmopolitan culture and practices than another whose work was primarily to discipline rural migrant workers in a factory in the Pearl River Delta. Regardless of places, all of them would be counted as Chinese in the census data of immigrant-receiving countries, but there is a world of difference among them when they arrive in the same North American city.

In short, this chapter contextualizes the different emigration streams within the socioeconomic and political processes of specific localities. By highlighting geographic variations in a single country, I do not mean to suggest the causal effects between place of origin and migration experiences abroad, because the specific pathways of settlement and integration are subject to the dynamics between different socioeconomic groups and the receiving society at specific time and place. With approximately one fifth of the world’s population, China has seen in recent years escalated outward migration of not only people but also capital as part of the nation-wide strategy of “going out” (zou chuqu 走出去). This official strategy involves two components,

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45 In 2011, Sinopec ranked as the 5th largest company in sales in Forbes Global 2000. Its headquarter is in Beijing, and its shares are traded in Shanghai, Hong Kong, New York, and London. As of end 2010, 75.84 percent of its shares were held by Sinopec Group, 19.35 percent were listed overseas and 4.81 percent were domestic public shares.
outward capital investment in non-financial markets and the export of contract workers\textsuperscript{46}. The key facilitator for “going out” is the Ministry of Commerce. A labyrinth of ministries and departments at various administrative levels are also involved, such as the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, State Administration for Industry and Commerce, State Administration of Foreign Exchange, as well as departments in charge of customs, commodity inspection and quality control\textsuperscript{47}. As Jian Chen, the current vice Minister of Commerce, has asserted recently, China’s entry into WTO by no means amounts to simply opening up the domestic market. It also means that China is entering the global market (Wu, 2013). From below, Chinese alumni and entrepreneur groups in Europe and North America have been actively participating since 2004 in dialogues and annual forums to promote the “going out” of Chinese enterprises. Such dynamics represent both challenges and opportunities for the receiving communities of migrants and/or investment capital from China. Policy agendas to integrate such forces for positive change have never been more critical. To trace the various paths of settlement in the receiving place, I move next to the Vancouver area where waves of Chinese emigrant groups have put down their roots for themselves as well as the subsequent generations.

\textsuperscript{46} The Ministry of Commerce hosts a website to facilitate the “going out” strategy. See http://zcq.mofcom.gov.cn
Chapter 6: Ethnic Entrepreneurs and Beyond: Divergent Engagement with Chinese Ethnic Economy in Vancouver

Since the 1960s, changes in the immigration policies in Canada, as much as in the United States, have led to substantial growth of immigrants from an ever-expanding array of non-European countries. The revival of large-scale non-European immigration has highlighted an increasingly visible phenomenon in urban areas: self-employment and work in sectors with high concentration of co-ethnic owners and workers. Such employment opportunities provide crucial space for the economic integration of newcomers. Certain ethnic groups are often known to have higher than average rates of self-employment, such as Jews, Japanese, Koreans, Chinese and Cubans (Zhou 2004, 1043), while others have shunned entrepreneurial activities (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990, 112). Some ethnic entrepreneurs are seen as middleman minorities who often concentrate in certain occupations, notably trade and commerce (Bonacich 1973). Others tend to associate with the enclave economy that is culturally bounded by norms of trust and reciprocity and spatially segregated in certain geographical areas (Zhou 1992). The significance of ethnic entrepreneurship has grown in tandem with immigrants’ creativity to build a new life in the receiving areas despite the various institutional and cultural barriers.

Ethnic entrepreneurship as a viable route of economic integration has stimulated considerable academic debate and research. An extensive literature has sought to explain the causes and consequences of ethnic entrepreneurship (e.g. Light and Bonacich; Light 1972; Wong 1988; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Mata and Pendakur 1999; Reza et al. 2009). Since the 1990s, the sweeping changes in the global division of labor and geopolitics have created a new context for ethnic entrepreneurship. These global trends have led ethnographers to use transnationalism as a framework to understand the relationship between transnational linkages and entrepreneurship. These scholars recognize the recurrent nature of migration interactions with both sending and receiving countries, raising questions about the synergy of transnationalism in community building. Central to the concept of transnationalism is the reconfiguration of space and the geographical boundaries of cities, regions, and states. Some scholars suggested that transnationalism represents the retreat of state sovereignty and the erosion of statist citizenship (e.g. Ong 1999; Ong and Nonini 1997). Others found that transnational activities strengthened the economic base of localities and resulted in cosmopolitan forms of identity and citizenship (e.g. Zhou and Tseng 2001; Wong and Ng 2002).
This chapter engages with the established literature on ethnic entrepreneurship to explore the formation of social and economic linkages that mediate between various groups of immigrants from China and the political, economic institutions in the receiving place. While the existing scholarship is valuable in shedding important light on the heterogeneity of economic strategies among migrants, it has not been able to reconcile the often mixed findings about the outcomes of entrepreneurship. Neither has it been able to explain why, despite common ethnicity and similar length of residency in the same receiving place, some groups are caught in employment niches that constitute little social mobility while others quickly join the middle-class and settle in neighbourhoods with a high living status. The recent advancement of transnational entrepreneurship has encouraged scholars to think beyond the geographic boundaries of neighbourhood (e.g. Chinatown), city, region, and nation state. Yet, in the transnationalism literature, the role of locality is under-theorized (Zhou and Tseng 2001, 135). We still know little about how transnational activities are conditioned by transformative processes in both the sending and receiving places.

This chapter aims to provide a fuller understanding of self-employment by contextualizing group differences. In untangling the complexities, I use the sociological concept of “ethnic capital” (Zhou, 2005) to examine the various characteristics of groups from the People’s Republic of China and the multiplicity of entrepreneurial activities in Vancouver. Despite the common challenges, the settlement of Chinese newcomers in Vancouver has been a relatively smooth process because of the increased economic opportunities these migrants have brought to the region (Edgington et al. 2003). I will demonstrate that the different types of ethnic economy (middle-man minority, enclave economy, and transnational entrepreneurship) are the interactive outcomes of the socioeconomic and political processes in both migrant sending and receiving localities that redefine the economic structure of opportunity and constraint.

6.1 Conceptualizing Ethnic Entrepreneurship

Primarily a sociological concept, ethnic entrepreneurship analytically distinguishes two types of entrepreneurs: middleman minorities and enclave entrepreneurs (Zhou 2004, 1041). Historically, middlemen were perceived as strangers who kept themselves apart from the local communities. Bonacich (1973, 593) argued that middleman minorities, lacking in political power, “are likely to lose in their conflict with the host society.” In the theory of middleman minorities, scholars’
overemphasis of sojourning mentality and the consequential hostility of the host society have invited much criticism (Zhou 2004, 1045). In recent years, historians and anthropologists have come to recognize middlemen as an integral component in the global flows of people despite the obstructionist role of state bureaucracy (e.g. Mar 2010; Lindquist et al. 2012; Lindquist 2012). In her telling story of Chinese in Canada’s exclusion era (1885-1945), for example, Mar (2010) asserted the crucial role of middlemen in helping immigrants to deal with the larger society. In the context of the global economy, scholars began to recognize the “natural advantages” of middleman minorities to promote trade because of their international social networks and multilingual fluency that allow such migrants to discover, mobilize and cultivate resources (Light 2007, 90).

Enclave entrepreneurs, in contrast, refer to “those who are bounded by coethnicity, coethnic social structures, and location” (Zhou 2004, 1042). They are characterized by two components: culturally, they are bounded by “an identifiable ethnic community and embedded in a system of community-based coethnic social relations”; spatially, they are concentrated in ethnic enclaves (Zhou 2004, 1044-5). In her in-depth study of New York’s Chinatown, Zhou (1992) argued that the high density of Chinese businesses and intimate social interactions within the enclave were contributing factors for the integration of Chinese immigrants. Many ethnic entrepreneurs often play the role of middleman and enclave entrepreneurs. For example, a Korean business owner in Los Angeles’s Koreatown is an enclave entrepreneur in relation to her Korean neighbours but one of the middlemen to the Latino residents there (Zhou and Cho 2010). Both middleman minorities and enclave entrepreneurs are components of the ethnic economy that also includes enterprises supervised or staffed by the ethnic minority (Zhou 2004, 1043).

To account for the phenomenon of ethnic entrepreneurship, earlier scholarship emphasized the relevance of cultural values distinctive to certain ethnic groups. Bonacich (1973, 588), for example, claimed “the culture of origin” as an “important contributory factor” underlying the concentration of Chinese, Indians, and Jews as small businessmen. Similarly, Goldberg (1985) argued that certain Chinese cultural elements (e.g. diligence, filial piety, and value on education and land) had contributed to the success of Chinese entrepreneurship overseas. Departing from the cultural thesis, some scholars (e.g. Waldinger 1986; Cummings 1980; Light et al. 1990; Bates 1997; Zhou 1992) examined networks, social structures of the ethnic community, and ethnic associations in civil society to explain the persistence of ethnic entrepreneurship. Others
stressed institutions in the receiving society, such as racial discrimination, labor segmentation and immigration policies favoring skilled immigrants and business entrepreneurs (e.g. Li 1982; 1988; Wong and Ng 2002), as determinants for self-employment.

Focusing on different aspects, scholars often found mixed consequences of ethnic entrepreneurship. Some scholars, for example, emphasized the potential of enclave entrepreneurs in creating employment opportunities for themselves and co-ethnic workers who could earn more than if they were unemployed (e.g. Light et al. 1994; Portes 1987; Zhou 1992; Portes and Zhou 1999). Others, however, dismissed the generally positive portrait of ethnic entrepreneurship, suggesting wide variations among groups. Logan et al. (1994), for example, reported that most enclaves in 1980 clustered in a few economic sectors with low levels of investment and low average wages. Similarly, Wilson (1999) found that working in a sector with more co-ethnic owners and managers was associated with lower hourly wages for whites, Hispanics and Asians. Logan and his colleagues (2003) showed mixed implications of self-employment for different ethnic groups in New York and Los Angeles with respect to working hours and hourly earnings. They concluded that employment in an ethnic economy is neither “a magic bullet” nor “a poison pill” (381). The mixed findings, Zhou (2004, 1053) suggested, resulted not only from data limitations but also a considerable confusion on the part of researchers in distinguishing between the enclave economy and the ethnic economy concepts. As a special case of ethnic economy, the enclave economy is physically concentrated within an ethnically identifiable neighbourhood (ibid. 1043-4).

Overall, debates on ethnic entrepreneurship offer important insights into differences across ethnic groups. Most of the existing literature, however, refrained from comparing various groups within the same ethnicity, which may be due to the limitations of using census data as a primary methodology. Scholars often presupposed that the structure of opportunities for economic mobility emerged and functioned within a national context. Based on the realization that immigrants are increasingly living across national borders, however, a new perspective has emerged since the 1990s to view migration as transnational. Transnational migrants, often dubbed “trans-migrants”, develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political – that link sending and receiving countries (e.g. Basch et al. 1994; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; McKeown 1999; Smith 2000). This lifestyle enables trans-migrants to remain comfortably bi-cultural, bi- or multi-lingual (Light 2007). Proponents
acknowledged that maintenance of long-distance ties and persistent identification with distant homelands have historically existed for various immigrant populations (Foner 2000). Portes et al. (1999, 225) argued that it was not so much the occurrence but the “regularity, routine involvement, and critical mass” that characterized contemporary transnationalism.

Regardless of how new transnational practices are, what does seem to be new is the openness of scholars to engage with the transnational perspective in the research of ethnic entrepreneurship. Li (1993, 224), for example, documented four categories of Chinese businesses in Canada including traditional types of family-operated businesses such as food services and retailing; professional services in the fields of medicine, law and accounting; large firms with capital transferred to Canada by Chinese business immigrants and offshore Chinese corporations; and, capital-intensive investment as a result of Canada’s business immigration program. Focusing on small enterprises, Wong and Ng (2002) identified three types of transnational practices in Vancouver: Asian production-North American distribution, retail chains and import/export. These entrepreneurial activities highlight the growing economic integration of Canada and regions in East Asia. In a similar vein, Waldinger and Tseng (1992, 104) noted two categories of Chinese diasporas in Los Angeles: Hong Kong or Taiwan immigrants who retained their business operation or professional practice in the place of origin while keeping their families in Los Angeles for quality of life; and, Chinese entrepreneurs who had established their business base in Los Angeles but remained heavily dependent on their social networks back in the homeland or other Chinese diaspora areas. Despite the typologies, it is evident that regions across nation states have developed multiple economic linkages through migration. The transnational activities of migrants raise important issues regarding globalization that are normally associated with such players as multinational corporations, international organizations, and national governments in structuring the global network of interactions. Instead of thinking of migration as a reactionary process of globalization, I found that the agency of migrants represents a crucial driver of the globalization of cities and regions.

Overall, such concepts as the middleman minority, ethnic economy, enclave entrepreneurs and transnational entrepreneurship are valuable in reminding researchers of migrants’ own initiatives to cultivate economic opportunities for themselves in the face of institutional barriers, limited education or language capacity. While conceptual distinctions are analytically useful, they should not be overdrawn, as the geographical boundaries and structural forces underlying the
different types of entrepreneurship are not easily distinguishable, or agreed upon among scholars. For example, the geographical boundary of Chinatown drawn by a city planner is most likely different from a sociologist’s conceptualization centering on the social space of its Chinese residents. Furthermore, it is crucial not to isolate the dynamics and class structure underlying the types of ethnic entrepreneurship and assume that they represent different stages of development.

Instead of exhausting ourselves with technical details that detract us from seeing the big picture, I suggest that the various types of ethnic entrepreneurship interact and mutually depend upon each other to provide the economic space for migrant livelihood production. An enclave economy provides employment options for low-skilled, low-English-proficiency immigrants and their children, acting as a springboard for newcomers who can get themselves on their feet and be part of the local economy. As Guarnizo and Smith (1998, 11) argued, local specificity is central to transnationalism. The presence of ethnic economies (i.e. enclave economy and middleman minorities) in turn provides the crucial locational advantages for the development of transnational businesses. Sassen (1994, 123), in her study of global cities, argues, “globalization processes assume concrete, localized forms.” In this sense, transnational businesses are located in places and cannot be separated from the regional context and the ethnic economy at large. I hypothesize that groups embedded in different socioeconomic processes and networks of social relations are integrated in the different segments of the ethnic economy that, as a whole, provide a critical material base for local communities to function effectively. To test this hypothesis, I trace immigrant groups from Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan to Vancouver. In doing so, I try to demonstrate how their embeddedness in different socioeconomic processes and networks shapes, and are in turn shaped by, differentiated participation in entrepreneurial activities.

48 Scholars from different disciplines have followed different traditions to map ethnic enclaves. While city planners draw boundaries of ethnic enclave based on their policy objectives, sociologists and geographers often rely on census tract data to identify the spatial clustering of ethnic groups. The techniques of planners, sociologists and geographers may be further distinguished from that of anthropologists who begins with the knowledge of the ethnic character visible through observation of people in public places, the names of shops or the languages found on signs or spoken by participants in the local community life. Scholars from different disciplines studying the same phenomenon seem to have little interest in establishing common criteria on how to identify ethnic enclave or neighbourhoods.
6.1.1 Ethnic Capital: A Tool for Analysis

To unravel the multiple dynamics, I found the concept of ethnic capital developed by sociologists Min Zhou and Mingang Lin (2005) particularly helpful. Building upon the theoretical debates on social capital and the enclave economy, Zhou and Lin (2005, 260) developed the concept of ethnic capital to refer to the “interactive processes of ethnic-specific financial capital, human capital, and social capital.” The definitions of financial capital and human capital are rather straightforward: the former simply means “tangible economic resources, such as money and liquidable assets” and the later is “generally measured by education, English proficiency, and job skills.” In contrast, social capital is more complex. Despite its various definitions among scholars, the consensus is that social capital is lodged not in the individual but “processes of goal-directed social relations embedded in particular social structures” (Zhou and Lin 2005, 260). As Zhou and Lin (2005) argued, the physical and economic environments of ethnic enclaves provide opportunities for new immigrants to interact with members sharing common languages and cultural practices, and to forge social networks and a sense of community. Not necessarily “intimate and homey”, local networks developed in ethnic enclave through social and economic interactions are instrumental in terms of meeting newcomers’ survival needs such as housing and jobs (ibid. 262-3).

With the tremendous diversity within the same ethnic group, as discussed in chapter 5, an enclave economy and its physical space carry different meanings for different economic groups. Logan et al. (2002, 321) pointed out that for some groups, an ethnic enclave is a destination but for others it is a springboard. Having settled down and established themselves in a new place, ethnic members with proficient language skills, educational resources, and financial capital (accumulated both before and after arriving in the receiving place) may participate in economic activities as middlemen, or transnational entrepreneurs. For groups engaging in activities beyond the enclave, according to Zhou and Lin (2005, 278), ethnic capital may develop some distinctive features: (1) interpersonal relations are less likely to be formed on strong ties defined by blood, kin and place of origin than on ties defined by common socioeconomic or professional status; (2) economic organizations are embedded less in locally-based ethnic social structures than in diversified connections with the local economy and global economic production; and (3) solidarity and cooperation are defined not necessarily by a common ethnicity but by common economic interests with non-ethnic groups. The analytical vigor of the ethnic capital concept
rests on its ability to bring in a fuller understanding of integration without privileging one form of capital over another. For example, immigrants without sufficient financial or human capital are often rewarded with social capital formed through intimate face-to-face interaction within the ethnic enclave, as shown in Zhou’s (1992) research in New York’s Chinatown. Meanwhile, middle-class immigrants can benefit from many services provided by enclave and other co-ethnic entrepreneurs in local places.

While highlighting the complex interplay of the different variables, the concept of ethnic capital has yet to broaden the conceptualization of space. Local places in New York, Los Angeles, Vancouver, or San Francisco, notably their “ethnoburbs” coined by Wei Li (1998; 2009), provide the space for transnational economic development beyond traditional ethnic enclaves. Yet, the entrepreneurial initiatives of middle-class migrants can also be lodged in their sending countries (e.g. Saxenian and Hsu 2001; Saxenian and Sabel 2008). The catalytic role of returned-migrants to the sending areas for the rapid growth of regional economy is well documented, for example, American-trained scientists and engineers in the development of technological industries in Taiwan during the 1980s and 1990s and in Mainland China since the late 1990s (e.g. Zhou and Hsu 2011; Zhou 2008;), and the development of labor-intensive export industries in the Pearl River Delta spurred by the capital and skill sets brought over by Hong Kong and Taiwan investors in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. Lin 1997). To facilitate “brain circulation”, policy makers in sending countries have mobilized widespread mechanisms to attract the return of capital, skill and technology. In the case of China, these include flexible multi-year visas for returnees, the development of industrial zones for foreign-trained Chinese to set up innovative enterprises, and generous rewards for highly accomplished overseas Chinese experts (see chapter 3). This literature highlights a range of possibilities to think about the spatiality of the ethnic economy and the localities of transnational entrepreneurship.

Drawing on the theoretical conceptualization of ethnic capital, I break down a nationality-based immigrant community into groups originating from specific localities in China. I argue that through the interactive processes comprising social, human and financial capitals, different groups become integrated into the different components of the ethnic economy. I suggest that intra-group diversity as illustrated in chapter 5 has its lingering repercussions in the place of settlement.
6.2 The Formation of Ethnic Capital and Ethnic Entrepreneurship: A Comparative Perspective on Various Immigrant Groups From Chinese Cities to Vancouver

Associated with different regional economic and socio-political processes, immigrants from different localities in China are endowed with different amounts and forms of financial capital and human capital. Since the late 1970s, the number of immigrants from China to Canada in general and Vancouver in particular has grown by leaps and bounds. How the different groups from places in China become integrated with the various components of the ethnic economy cannot be understood without considering the legacy of Chinese migration history in Vancouver.

6.2.1 Locating Vancouver’s Chinatown in History

Historically, pioneering Chinese immigrants to Canada were exclusively from the Pearl River Delta region of south China. They arrived in British Columbia as early as the mid-19h century (Wickberg et al. 1982). The majority of them were born into a society closely knit by kinship and deeply rooted in an agrarian mode of economic production. With immigration, they became coolies, railroad workers, miners, cannery workers, but also merchants, and community leaders. Disadvantaged in terms of education, language, and economic status, many of the earlier Chinese immigrants found themselves easy targets of discrimination and exclusion.

Having helped to build the Canadian Pacific Railway that allowed the Province of British Columbia to be incorporated into the Canadian Confederation in 1871, Chinese were confronted with a series of discriminatory laws and disenfranchisement. Among these laws, the most notorious one was the Chinese Head Tax. Every person of Chinese origin entering Canada (with the exception of diplomats, tourists, and international students) had to pay $50. The amount increased successively to $100 in 1900 and astonishingly, $500 in 1903. Yu (2006) suggests that the amount of revenue generated from the Head Tax had played a far more profound role in the making of British Columbia than has been acknowledged in Canada’s collective history. Along with the Head Tax, zoning bylaws and classification were in place to segregate Chinese in the enclave of Chinatown and the adjacent neighbourhood of Strathcona (Anderson 1991). Chinese immigrants were systematically excluded from ownership of Crown land, and from professional and government employment. Many of the Chinese were forced to live their lives in Chinatown.
as lonely men, separated from wives and children in China because immigration policy had kept Chinese women out of Canada.

At best, the non-Chinese groups remained aloof from involvement in the affairs in the Chinese community, which allowed Chinese immigrants the space to organize voluntary associations in the enclave of Chinatown to deal with the challenges of moving between two distinctive social systems (Wickberg et al. 1982). Despite the vast array of anti-Chinese laws and disenfranchisement, a number of early Chinese immigrants did make it in Canada as middlemen and a prototype of transnational entrepreneurs. Among them was Yip Sang who worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) before establishing the Wing Sang Company, an import-export business in the heart of Vancouver’s Chinatown. Yip Sang sold imported Chinese-style goods to his Chinese Canadian customers, while exporting Canadian foodstuffs, salted herring in particular, to China. To keep up with the demand for salted herring in China, Yip set up two fish packing plants on Vancouver Island and employed a number of Chinese workers, which had helped to build a large ethnic Chinese enclave in Nanaimo on the Vancouver Island. Financial capital derived from his business success allowed Yip to help fund a night school and the Chinese Benevolent Association in Vancouver’s Chinatown. He also helped to establish schools in his home areas in the Pearl River Delta (Vancouver Museum et al. 2000). Through the economic niche created by ethnic entrepreneurs like Yip, earlier generation of Chinese immigrants responded to the harsh realities in their own right and survived the many discriminatory policies covered by the Chinese Exclusion Act, which was not repealed until 1947 due to pressure from Chinese veterans serving in the Second World War on behalf of Canada.

As far as scholars interested in the history of Chinese immigration to Canada are concerned, however, the repeal consisted of “little more than a token gesture” (Wickberg et al. 1982, 207, cited in Madokoro 2012, 27). What followed 1947 was more than two decades of arduous community struggle for family reunification. Representatives of the Chinese community had to make repeated petitions demanding Ottawa to speed up the naturalization process for Chinese Canadians and the admission of their family members (Modokoro 2012, 33–6). Community efforts resulted in rather slow progress. For example, it took the Canadian government years to introduce a special refugee resettlement program in 1962 to allow desperate Chinese Canadians to bring their family members out of the dire situations in Hong Kong (see chapter 3 for
background). According to historian Modokoro (2012), this gesture appeared to be no more than a symbolic act in that the Canadian government ultimately approved a mere 109 families out of more than 3000 applications.

The restrictive measures against Chinese immigrants, among other immigrant groups from Asia, were not revoked until 1967, two years following the introduction of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act in the United States (Li and Lo 2012). Based on the principles of socio-demographic character rather than race, the Canadian Federal government introduced a point system in 1967. In 1978, the federal government introduced the Business Immigration Program that was expanded to include the investor category in 1986. The primary focus of immigration policies shifted to value human capital (age, education, and official language proficiency) and financial capital at the gradual exclusion of family reunification. These policy interventions have played a crucial role in restructuring the socio-demographic and economic aspects of the Chinese communities in Canada. The increased settlement of Chinese immigrants in Vancouver, mostly Cantonese speakers, had revitalized Chinatown where retail businesses attracted not only those living outside the ethnic enclave but also customers from as far as Seattle in Washington State.

To a great extent, immigration policies on the part of Canada at the time had little relevance for Chinese nationals living within Mainland China. Until the early 1970s, China had no diplomatic relations with Canada. Despite the long history of emigration from the Pearl River Delta, there were no direct flights between the two countries. Hardly any Canadians were allowed to enter China (Frolic 2011, 2). It was not until 1973 following Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s “diplomatic coup” to visit China and sign a number of bilateral agreements with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai that Chinese Canadians could sponsor their family members directly from the newly-opened Canadian embassy in Beijing. Because of the restrictions on applying for Chinese passports and exit permits, migration from Mainland China remained no more than a trickle throughout the 1970s. As many as about 6000 applications were submitted to the Canadian Immigration Department through Beijing, but only 50 managed to arrive in Vancouver in 1974 (Chinatown News, 1974). Many whose applications for Canadian immigration had been approved were not able to leave China until the Chinese state began to grant private passports to people with proper guanxi and political standing in the early 1980s. Overall, immigration from Mainland China to Canada during the 1970s was trivial, and the ethnic enclave of Chinatown at the time consisted largely of members speaking various Cantonese dialects.
As China’s central government began to relax passport regulations at the turn of the 1980s, people in the Pearl River Delta region began to arrive in Canada under the family reunification category. Yet, emigration from China to British Columbia began to decline in 1982 (see figure 6.1), possibly because qualified applicants already exhausted the family networks to emigrate, or the prospect of emigration was no longer attractive in comparison with the anticipated economic benefits under China’s reform. Beyond the Pearl River Delta, people from urbanized areas, such as Beijing and Shanghai, left to study primarily in Japan and the United States. In response to the 1989 Tiananmen incident, the Canadian government relaxed control over the immigration of Chinese students who were already in North America at the time. The quicker processing time and the prospect of acquiring citizenship (in contrast to the strict naturalization requirements in Japan) had brought many Chinese students, mostly Mandarin speakers, from Japan and the United States to Canada. Chinese from various countries to Canada have now made up the largest ethnic group in major Canadian cities, with a rapidly growing concentration of Chinese businesses in municipalities (e.g. Richmond, Burnaby, Surrey and West Vancouver) surrounding the metropolitan center of Vancouver. The different socio-political contexts that brought the same ethnic groups together in Vancouver underlie their divergent engagements with the ethnic economy. In the following, I analyze the concrete stories of my interviewees from a comparative perspective to shed light on the intersections among intra-group dynamics, economic integration and place-making.

![Figure 6.1 Immigration to B.C. From Hong Kong, Mainland China & Taiwan](image)

Source: BC Stats
6.2.2 Immigrant Groups From Three Chinese Localities: A Comparative Perspective on Ethnic Capital Formation By the Mid-1990s

Among the total of 73 immigrants from places in China with whom I conducted in-depth interviews in Vancouver for my dissertation, 24 were from Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan respectively. None of my interviewees came to Canada as foreign workers, refugees, or illegal immigrants. During the interviews, I used languages (i.e. Cantonese, Mandarin, or English) that the immigrants were most comfortable with, which allowed the natural flows of thoughts. To contextualize my interview findings, I drew on statistical data, and other qualitative data including non-participant observations in Chinatown associations, archives, Internet sources in Chinese, as well as numerous informal conversations with participants in the Chinese enclaves and other Chinese economic activities.

Using places of origin as a crucial variable in distinguishing group differences, I disaggregate Mainland Chinese according to where they come from to explicate the processes of ethnic capital formation. I suggest that within the group from the same locality, distinctions need to be further drawn among those arriving before and after the late 1990s because of the significant amount of human and financial capital accompanying recent arrivals. With reference to place characteristics discussed in chapter 5, I provide a summary of the ethnic capital formation processes in figure 6.2. At one extreme, immigrants have a minimal amount of social networks, financial capital, skills and English competency, and the other extreme is the maximal amount of social networks, financial and human capital. Depending on the different configurations of social, financial and human capital at specific moments in time, the immigrants I interviewed fall into this continuum of socioeconomic status (i.e. ranging from upper-middle to working classes). My interviewees demonstrated divergent engagements with the ethnic economy as a way to compensate for whatever type(s) of capital they were short of upon their arrival.
Figure 6.2 Ethnic Capital Formations

China's Economic Reform Since the Late 1970s

Beijing:
- Representative of national identity;
- Diverse sources of FDI from both ethnic and non-ethnic Chinese;
- Dominance of large state-owned enterprises;
- Well-developed service industries;
- Clustering of prestigious universities;
- Growth of indigenous technologically advanced industries;
- High visibility of the central state.

Shanghai:
- Cosmopolitan culture;
- Long history of global trade linkages;
- Diverse sources of FDI with a significant presence of non-Chinese investment;
- Locale of large state-owned enterprises;
- Well-developed service industries;
- Clustering of prestigious universities;
- Clustering of the cream of MNCs;
- Global financial centre;
- Long-established regional linkages;
- Visibility of the central state.

Zhongshan:
- Hometown of overseas Chinese;
- FDI overwhelmingly from Zhongshan diasporic communities in Hong Kong and the United States;
- Absence of state-owned enterprises;
- Developing service industries;
- Lack of competitive educational resources and technological innovations;
- Clustering of Township and Village enterprises;
- Dominance of labor-intensive manufacturing industries;
- High visibility of local state.

Canadian Immigration Policies

- Foreign workers and refugees
- Skilled Immigrants
- International Students
- Investors and entrepreneurs
- Family Reunification

Strongest:
- Social capital
- Financial capital
- Human capital

Weakest:
- Social capital
- Financial capital
- Human capital
In the 1980s or earlier, the overall financial capital brought over to Vancouver by emigrants from China in general was low because China was still an impoverished country. The overwhelming majority of immigrants from Zhongshan during the 1980s came to Canada through the family unification category. By comparison, groups from Beijing or Shanghai arrived as skilled immigrants with foreign-trained education in Japan or the United States. Family, clan, kinship, place-based associations, and Cantonese-speaking social organizations such as S.U.C.C.E.S.S located in the heart of Chinatown represented crucial community resources for rebuilding social networks and a sense of place. Small-scale businesses in Chinatown, such as restaurants, grocery shops, Chinese herbal shops, bakeries, and other family-run retail businesses, were often the primary source of livelihood at the time.

The closely-knit community bound by common Cantonese dialect, together with employment opportunities in the ethnic enclave, had enabled immigrant groups from overseas Chinese hometowns like Zhongshan to survive without having to interact with the larger society. Their reliance on the ethnic enclave as a social and economic space persists. Consequently, many still cannot speak much English despite the fact that they have lived in Vancouver for some thirty years or even longer. Yet, as property owners, they pay taxes and earned employment income that allowed them to support their children’s college or university education. These educational opportunities were deprived of many first-generation immigrants because of the political and economic turmoils in China (as reviewed in previous chapters). With access to Canada’s public education system and family income in Canada, many have moved up the social hierarchy to be middle-class and provide professional services to the larger society as a whole. This follows a national trend already underway since 1976 or even earlier with respect to Chinese Canadians (BC Stats, 1998).

Using the 1981 census, Li (1993) found a conspicuous presence of self-employed Chinese-Canadians in professional and technical fields such as finance, real estate, business management, education and health care, alongside self-employment in retail trade, accommodation, food and beverage services. With more and more Cantonese-speaking immigrants settling in Vancouver (primarily Hong Kong immigrants driven by the anxieties about the British colony’s future after 1997), an increased number of Chinese businesses began in the early 1990s to settle in about

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49 It is difficult to distinguish immigrants from Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta in the 1980s or earlier as many of the Hong Kong immigrants were actually born and/or raised in Zhongshan or other ancestral hometowns of
ten blocks along Victoria Drive between E. 33rd and E. 43rd Avenues where Chinese restaurants, shops and single-family housing shared the same physical space with Vietnamese, Filipinos and other ethnic groups. Many of these shops are run by immigrants from qiaoxiang in Guangdong who have found their economic niche in the ethnic enclave (see figures 6.3 and 6.4). Among local Chinese Canadians, this area is now known as a second Chinatown.

overseas Chinese. Some grew up in Shanghai and belonged to the exodus of upper-middle class industrials as documented by Siu-lun Wong (1988). Socially and economically, these immigrant groups were more integrated with each other than census data would suggest.
Figure 6.3 Grocery store at Victoria Drive  
(Note: This shop is run by immigrants from Taishan, another qiaoxiang.)  
Source: Taken by the author

Figure 6.4 Noodle shop at Victoria Drive  
(Note: This shop is run by immigrants from Zhongshan.)  
Source: Yang 2009
Rather than through chain migration, as was characteristic of groups from Zhongshan in the 1980s, all of my interviewees from Beijing or Shanghai ended up being in Vancouver because of the geopolitics between North America and China. Soon after the 1989 Tiananmen incident, they came to Canada simply because the US tightened their immigration policies while the Canadian government approved their immigration applications faster. Vancouver was the preferred choice compared to Toronto and Montreal because of its warmer weather and greater proximity to Asia. One of my informants, Mrs. Liu, whose story was told in chapter 3, ended up being in Vancouver because her student visa to the US was denied at the time of the Tiananmen incident. ‘Stuck’ in Vancouver where she was supposed to prepare for entry into graduate school in the US, Mrs. Liu met her future husband and decided to settle down in the city.

Upon arrivals, immigrants from areas other than the traditional qiaoxiang are generally without pre-existing social networks. By means of higher levels of education and English proficiency, they are capable of developing networks beyond the circles of ethnic Chinese. Higher levels of education, however, do not always allow immigrants to translate human capital into financial capital because of the difficulty to have foreign credentials recognized in Canada. This was the case with Mrs. Liu, who earned both undergraduate and graduate degrees in civil engineering from Kyoto University in Japan. According to Mrs. Liu, “many graduates have become highly influential people in the Japanese government.” Yet, her education meant little in Vancouver. Not many people at the time recognized the value of her training except for the Japanese Canadian community, where she was offered a job in a small travel agency owned by a Japanese Canadian. Having saved enough money, Mrs. Liu and her husband opened their own company to help travel agencies in Vancouver to bring in international students from Japan for language training in Canada.

Scholars have researched extensively about the institutional barriers to block upward mobility for highly educated immigrants, such as the failure to recognize foreign credentials and the requirement of local work experience. Despite the apparent contradiction between the intent of the Canadian immigration system and the economic performance of highly educated immigrants, Jock Finlayson from the Business Council of British Columbia suggested that immigrants of Asian origin “have demonstrated a strong entrepreneurial flair” (BC Stats, 1997, 3). He noted, “With no ready supply of employment, people coming to British Columbia are obliged to make their own work.” He also explained, “the employment base is small here because relatively few
major companies are based in British Columbia and there are few technology companies of any size.” (ibid. 4) In other words, the lack of a sizable economic base in the context of other institutional barriers is the primary drivers for the rise of ethnic entrepreneurs. Between 1990 and 1997, the number of self-employed population in British Columbia (excluding full-time students) rose 49.4 percent, faster than anywhere else in Canada, and much faster than the 11.5 percent increase in the number of employees in the province (BC Stats, 1998, 4). Self-employment was highly concentrated in four industrial sectors, with almost two thirds of all self-employed persons being in construction, trade, business services and other services (ibid. 3). According to an analytical report in 1997 by BC Stats, Lino Siracusa, manager of Economic Development in the municipality of Richmond where a great number of recent Chinese immigrants have settled, observed that “about 50 percent of business licenses issued by the city are taken out by people of Chinese background.” (BC Stats 1997, 4).

While immigrants with relatively high levels of human capital or social capital alike found employment in the ethnic economy as employees or self-employers, the fact that spoken Cantonese and Mandarin are mutually unintelligible dialects often sets apart groups from Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan. Moreover, a distinguishable sense of class associated with Shanghai’s cosmopolitan history (as discussed in chapter 5) tends to lead immigrants from Shanghai to distance themselves with the working class groups in Vancouver’s old Chinatown. One of my informants, who was born in Zhongshan, grew up in Wuhan, received his education in the most prestigious university in Shanghai at the time and worked in Hong Kong as an architect before immigrating to Vancouver in the late 1960s, could hardly identify himself with the Chinatown community. His upbringing and embeddedness in a cosmopolitan culture and professional world in different localities, facilitated by the multilingual capacity, had enabled him to become one of the most influential figures in bringing in transnational capital to Vancouver. Indeed, this informant’s name is Stanley Kwok, who was personally hired in the 1980s by Li Ka-shing, the primary shareholder of Concord Pacific, to collaborate with city planners and council in the 1980s for the development of the former Expo 86 site in Vancouver. This development, known as the False Creek North redevelopment, has profoundly transformed Vancouver’s downtown core, which caught the local communities off guard at the time because of the perceived surge of capital and immigration flows from Hong Kong to Vancouver. Its urban design and concept of high-density living branded as “Vancouverism” were later exported to Dubai through middlemen like Kwok and Larry Beasley, Vancouver’s former planning director.
Geographer Kris Olds (2001) documented in detail the planning process of Concord Pacific’s projects in which middlemen of Chinese origin like Kwok had played a crucial role in the extension of “transnational cultures” across the Pacific. In contrast to Olds’ reliance on culture as an explanation for urban spatial transformation, I argue that Concord Pacific’s project was no more than one episode in the more than one century long history of Chinese settlement in Vancouver. The myriad of individuals had built a vibrant Chinese ethnic economy that made Vancouver a desirable place for more and more migrants to arrive through family networks. The place-making endeavors of various Chinese groups further brought about the arrivals of transnational entrepreneurs like Li Ka-shing and others who landed their investment capital in the same place as their predecessors. In a sense, the co-existence of these various economic groups consists of what Guarnizo and Smith (1998) consider as “transnationalism from below” (Guarnizo and Smith 1998). While much scholarly attention tends to follow players such as transnational corporations, “millionaire migrants” or other capital-intensive investment projects, the equally significant – if not more – ordinary migrant groups engaging in the ethnic economy that eventually evolves to be a transnational phenomenon deserve further exploration within the context of the changed economic structure in British Columbia, particularly its largest metropolitan center of Vancouver.

6.2.3 Changed Economic Structure in the Vancouver Area by the late-1990s

Historically, economic development in Canada has been based on its resource industries. Urban centers like Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver grew out of the demand for transportation, labour force, and administration related to the extraction and processing of natural resources (Hutton 1998, 39). In the 1960s, Canada’s economic structure began to undergo a significant structural transformation characterized by the rapid growth of service industries in conjunction with the relative decline of manufacturing and resource-based industries (ibid. 42). Specific outcomes of this national trend have been highly uneven across Canadian cities and regions, and across different periods in the subsequent decades. In the Province of British Columbia where the Vancouver region is located, rural communities were hit hard by the economic slowdowns in the resource sectors in the 1970s and early 1980s. Some remote towns were doomed to disappear simply for the fact that there were no longer any basic industries to support the local economies. Rising unemployment rates in the rural areas had led to significant outward migration of people in search of employment in the urban centers (BC Stats, 1997b, 3-4).
In contrast, urban areas in British Columbia had embarked on a different direction. As an integral component of the Canadian political economy, the city of Vancouver responded by endorsing the post-industrial ideal in that the city gradually removed the resource-processing enterprises and manufacturing industries along the banks (both north and south) of the False Creek. These areas constituted a primary portion of the city’s industrial land base. In the 1970s, City Council insisted on the rezoning and land use changes in False Creek South, followed by the rezoning of the False Creek North for redevelopment at the turn of the 1990s. These initiatives through the collaboration between the provincial and the municipal governments represent the defining moments of Vancouver’s comprehensive restructuring experience (Hutton 2004, 1960-61). With such land use policy changes, industrial land was converted for high-density residential development and other spaces for consumption. As a result, the City was transformed from an industrial to a post-industrial place, with significant losses of employment in manufacturing and industrial production (Hutton 2004, 1961-2).

The employment losses, however, had not resulted in a negative employment rate, despite the fact that Vancouver and its surrounding municipalities were among the major destinations of both internal and international migration (predominantly from Hong Kong in the 1980s and the early 1990s). Moreover, Vancouver was marked by sustained economic growth, as shown by a comparison of employment change in different industrial sectors between 1989 and 1994 (Table 6.1). While there were strikingly divergent experiences across sectors, all the three metropolitan regions recorded gains in the managerial, administrative and other professional service category (Hutton, 1998, 54). Such achievements were significant in comparison with other Canadian metropolitan centers. As Hutton (1998, 51) observed, some of the winners of economic restructuring in the 1980s “suffered reversals in their fortunes” in the 1990s. While Toronto lapsed into economic recession in the early 1990s after “a spectacular 25 percent increase in employment during the 1980s”, Montreal had seen protracted economic decline throughout the 1980s and early 1990s (ibid. 52).
To understand the forces sustaining Vancouver’s economic growth, I found a particularly strong rate of self-employment in British Columbia compared to other provinces in Canada. With the second highest proportion of immigrants in its population after Toronto, Vancouver has had an exceptional concentration of self-employment (see figure 6.5). A significant number of immigrants have become entrepreneurs to create wealth for themselves and their employees.

Table 6.1 Percentage of Employment Change between 1989 and 1994 in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver Metropolitan Regions by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Toronto</th>
<th>Montreal</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All industries</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary//agriculture</td>
<td>-26.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>-23.4</td>
<td>-18.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>-25.9</td>
<td>-26.9</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, communication &amp; utilities</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
<td>-10.9</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
<td>-9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance &amp; real estate</td>
<td>-3.7</td>
<td>-3.9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 6.5 Self-Employment Growth in Canadian Provinces, 1984-1996

Source: BC Stats, 1997a
Breaking down B.C.’s self-employment rate in 1997 provides a sense of industries where immigrants were most likely found. Statistics in table 6.2 show that self-employment in 1997 was highly concentrated in construction, retail and wholesale trade, business services, and other services including repair services, personal and laundry services, religious and civic services and private households.

Table 6.2 Self-employment by Industry in B.C. 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total self-employment percentage</th>
<th>Proportion of all self-employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goods-producting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other primary</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service-producting</strong></td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage, &amp; communication</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; wholesale trade</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance &amp; real estate</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business services</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; social services</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; food services</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
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<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While self-employment represented the fastest growing employment option of the 1990s for the economic integration of immigrants, it created fewer and fewer jobs for anyone other than the self-employed themselves (see table 6.3). In other words, immigrants without sufficient financial and social capital to begin with as self-employed entrepreneurs were faced with more competition for jobs. Moreover, according to a report by BC Stats (1997b, 5), the central statistical agency of the Province, an increase in the number of self-employed entrepreneurs did not occur in numbers large enough to offset the employment losses in the resource sectors and manufacturing industries. Such dynamics in the local economic structure provide a sensible rationale for intensified transnational linkages with respect to migration from Mainland China to Vancouver since the late 1990s.
6.2.4 New Dynamics in Chinese Ethnic Economy since the Late-1990s

Statistical data provide a general picture of the local economy that various Mainland Chinese groups come into contact with. Yet, the more nuanced dynamics are better understood with a more detailed analysis of qualitative materials such as interviews, observations, and other materials in both Chinese and English, which I use here as well.

As shown in figure 6.1, migration from Mainland China to the Province of British Columbia began to climb in the mid-1990s. In contrast to the surge in 1980s that was associated with family reunification, or the turn of the 1990s linked with regional politics, the recent growth of Mainland Chinese immigration into the Vancouver region has been the result of what I found to be a mature, transnational “immigration industry” linking Vancouver with cities in China and other Asia Pacific regions. Participants in this industry approach Canada, Hong Kong, mainland China and other East and Southeast Asian countries as a single field of economic opportunity. Within the broad category of self-employment in service industries, a growing number of immigration consulting firms, lawyers, translators, accountants, retired government officials, travel agents, realtors, and mortgage brokers are directly involved in the promotion of migration from urban China to Vancouver. These market players are located either in Vancouver or localities in China, or on both sides of the Pacific. In many ways, their material interests constitute a significant driving force for the transnational flows of people and capital.

One revealing example of “transnationalism from below” may be the story of Kwan and his household brand of “Jing Hong Yimin (Eddie Kwan Immigration)” widespread in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta area in the early 1990s and subsequently throughout major Chinese cities. Like other immigrants from Hong Kong driven by the region’s economic and political

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.3 B.C. Self-employment by Class</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BC Stats 2002
situations during the 1960s and 1970s, Kwan followed his parents who were originally from the qiaoxiang of Taishan to settle in Calgary in 1980. Having completed a college degree in accounting, Kwan launched a career as a certified accountant. With China’s gradual removal of passport applications in the early 1980s, many relatives and friends in his parents’ hometown were desperate to leave the still underdeveloped, rural place. Naturally, Kwan became the major source of immigration information and an informal broker offering help to his parents’ networks eligible for family reunification in Canada. By learning about the Canadian immigration system, Kwan got to know some immigration officers, who suggested that he take a course on immigration law and set up an immigration consultant firm. Inspired by this idea in the context of the migration surge from Hong Kong and Taiwan in the late 1980s, Kwan partnered with a retired immigration officer to open their first company in Calgary in 1990. Evidently, immigration represented a huge market for a business like Kwan’s. He soon opened his own company in Hong Kong in 1991, followed by substantial growth in various localities in the following decades. The timeline for his business expansion is summarized in table 6.4. While Kwan’s company had extended to several locations across the Pacific in the 1990s, the following years since the mid-2000s have seen substantial consolidation of business.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Company expansion in Guangzhou and Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Company expansion in Shenzhen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Vancouver and Toronto</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Company expansion in Guangzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Guangzhou</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>New branch in Singapore, and an additional branch in Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Shenzhen and Montreal</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Headquarter relocated from Calgary to Vancouver; Company expansion in Hong Kong and Shenzhen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Company expansion in Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>New branch in Beijing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4 Economic Expansion of Eddie Kwan Immigration

While ethnic entrepreneurs like Kwan operating in a transnational space have evidently capitalized on the growing demand from China’s urban population to emigrate, others whose economic activities have been based locally, such as retail business or restaurants, have benefited (from) the growing Chinese community’s demands for ethnic products as well as things exotic. The rapid emergence of T&T Supermarket that has grown to be Canada’s largest Asian supermarket chain serves as striking evidence. Cindy Lee, an immigrant from Taiwan to Vancouver in 1972, opened her first T&T Supermarket in Burnaby, a municipality in the Vancouver region in 1993. Soon, it expanded to the City of Vancouver and other municipalities.
in the region, followed by more stores in Calgary, Edmonton, Greater Toronto Area, and Ottawa50. Employing more than 4,000 staff (CBC news, 2007), T&T Supermarket Inc. provides a significant niche for Chinese newcomers and long-term working-class Chinese to find local employment. With a huge selection of food products imported from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China and other areas in Asia, it operates in a way similar to other North American supermarkets, attracting an enormous amount of customers from the local communities at large, Chinese immigrants in particular. In 2009, T&T was bought by Loblaw Companies Ltd., Canada’s largest food distributor, for about $225 million (CBC News, 2009). The purpose of this acquisition, as Galen G. Weston, Executive Chairman of Loblaw Companies Limited, explained unequivocally, was to use “T&T’s talented management team and colleagues” to “help Loblaw extend its ethnic offering to better serve Canada’s largest growing customer segment.” (Loblaw website, 2009).

Regardless of the locations of their targeted markets (e.g. the growing urban population in Chinese cities or the Chinese communities in Canada), participants in the ethnic economy (e.g. small business owners, owners of big companies, transnational entrepreneurs and employees of respective economic segments) have created important economic networks to facilitate the influx of people, capital and goods from Asia to Canada. Meanwhile, it is possible that the recent “export” surge of goods from British Columbia’s resource sectors to China can benefit immigrants with the right fit of human and social capital. Much as B.C.’s exports to the United States plunged from almost 70% of its total in 2001 to under 43% in 2011 (Schrier 2011, 3), B.C.’s overall export picture has not been as bleak for the fact that the market share was taken up by countries of the Pacific Rim, particularly Mainland China (Schrier 2012, 1). The shipments of coal (BC’s top export), softwood lumber, natural gas, electricity, metallic mineral products such as copper ores and concentrates, solid wood products and a number of other resources have seen robust growth, pushing Mainland China to have overtaken Japan since 2010 as B.C.’s second largest export market after the United States (Schrier 2012, 1-3).

China’s emergence as a global economic power has exerted undeniable influence on British Columbia’s exports, creating the career niche for immigrants with skills that match the market demands. This is particularly the case with international trade, in which jobs require professional experience and specialized knowledge with respect to different markets, financial systems,

foreign currency regulations, and acceptable business practices. Bi-lingual ability and social networks across different countries represent desirable qualities among immigrants, especially those with experiences in import and export. Given such economic environments, it is not unlikely that Mainland Chinese with the necessary human capital and knowledge, especially those who already have experiences with the global trade market, to find their place in the fields related to international trade and other service industries.

Indeed, the story of Laura⁵¹, one of my interviewees, may offer an instructive lesson regarding the prospect of economic integration because of the changed trade relations between China and Canada. Like the majority of young Chinese families coming to Canada for their children’s education, the couple immigrated from Shanghai in 2007, both with graduate degrees from prestigious universities and work experiences in multinational corporations there. Soon after Laura’s husband completed a local diploma in Vancouver, he was able to find a job as a trader in an American company located in North Vancouver (another municipality in the Vancouver region), specializing in the export of softwood lumber to China. His previous international trade experience in Shanghai, facilitated by his Canadian education, enabled him to launch a rewarding career not long after he arrived in Canada. With the more-than-average income for mortgage, the couple soon saved enough money for down payment to buy a single-family house in West Vancouver⁵², a predominantly “white” middle- and upper-middle class neighbourhood. The purpose of their locational choice was to send their daughter to one of the best public schools in the Province.

The encouraging story of Laura reflects the possibilities of how individuals could actually position themselves within the global networks of flows for livelihood improvement. Such global networks are facilitated by new dynamics in which both China and Canada are increasingly asserting themselves. In recent years, China has been actively promoting its national “go global” (走出去) policy, through which large Chinese state-owned enterprises have made substantial investments in Canada’s resource industries (about half of China’s $14 billion

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⁵¹ Interview with Laura was conducted at her home in West Vancouver on November 6, 2011.
⁵² The percentage of single-family housing in total housing stock in West Vancouver was the second highest in the region after the west side of Vancouver city known as Vancouver West. In 2012, the average single-family housing price in West Vancouver was approximate 1.7 million while that of Vancouver West was 2 million. Source: Metro Vancouver. 2013. “Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book” http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/housingdiversity/HousingDataBookDocuments/MV_Housing_Data_Book.pdf
investments in Canada in 2012). Meanwhile, the Canadian federal and the provincial government of British Columbia are attempting to grow and diversity Canada’s export markets (Grant 2012). At the regional level, the regional planning authorities are promoting trade relationships with the Asia Pacific region, particularly China (Port Metro Vancouver 2009). All these policy efforts have given new impetus to the Chinese ethnic economy in Vancouver where newcomers with tangible economic resources (i.e. money, skills, and other assets brought over across the Pacific or accumulated locally) are now living in the same physical space with those who, lacking English language proficiency and transferable job skills, depend all the more on the ethnic enclave for jobs and other livelihood production. Moreover, joining the immigrant groups are the rapidly growing “temporary” cohorts consisting of international students, tourists and foreign workers from China. This growing segment of the Chinese population is a direct consequence of Canada’s strategies to position itself as a prominent destination for international students and tourists, and to bring in temporary workers to meet labor market demands. Such dynamics challenge an all-inclusive notion of “Chinese” in social sciences and public policy making, highlighting the urgency to understand intra-group diversity in the context of global Chinese migration.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I sought to break down the broad-brush category of the Chinese community into groups originating from specific places in China. I try to reconcile the often-mixed findings in the literature of economic integration through ethnic entrepreneurship. By paying closer attention to the dynamics between sending and receiving localities, I argue that such dynamics account for the wide spectrum of socioeconomic status within the Mainland Chinese cohort. To substantiate my argument, I use the concept of ethnic capital (Zhou and Lin 2005) to emphasize the types of social capital, financial capital and human capital that immigrant groups from different places are endowed with because of the political economic development in those places (see chapter 5). The strength of this concept lies in its ability to transcend national boundaries that tend to limit our conceptualization of transformative forces and change.

Furthermore, the number and economic power of recent immigrants from urban places in China to North American cities have given rise to an ethnic economic model that incorporates both the traditional type of small businesses and business growth driven by market globalization. The
hybrid form of ethnic entrepreneurship has propelled significant social, spatial, and economic changes in Chinese-receiving areas like Vancouver. The highly visible spatial transformation is popularly captured by the term “ethnoburb” developed by the geographer Wei Li (1998; 2009). In light of the significant changes in global geopolitics, division of labor, socio-demographic characteristics of global migration and the intensity of transnational linkages, Li (1998; 2009) proposed the concept of “ethnoburb” as a new model of ethnic settlement. This model refers to the multiethnic communities in the suburban areas of metropolitan centers where the residential and business spaces created by one ethnic group have a significant presence. Without excluding the presence of other ethnicities, as Li (2009, 1) suggested, the prominent clusters of one particular ethnic group “replicate some features of an ethnic enclave” but not necessarily the usual assumptions of poverty and isolation. Originally used to study the Chinese communities in Monterey Park, a suburban municipality in the Los Angeles Metropolitan area, Li (2009, chapter 8) later applied this concept to the Chinese communities in other metropolitan areas of the United States as well as Canada, suggesting that ethnoburbs coexist with traditional ethnic enclaves in the same metropolitan regions.

From a regional perspective, ideas of ethnic enclave and its “suburban” morphology can help to shed important light on the spatial integration of immigrants. In the Vancouver metropolitan region, newcomers from Mainland China arrive with higher than average education, economic resources and capability of creating or locating themselves in employment niches in their own right, settling in neighbourhoods within their financial means. The trend is that municipalities of Richmond and Burnaby in contrast to the exorbitant real estate prices in the City of Vancouver have become popular destinations of Chinese newcomers. According to the 2006 census, the percentage of population whose mother tongue was neither English nor French (the two official languages in Canada) reached 54.5% in Burnaby and 58.7% in Richmond. In the City of Vancouver, this number was 48.3%, slightly over the 48.1% of native English speakers within the city’s population (Vancouver Foundation 2010, 26). Chinese (rather than English) was the most commonly reported ethnic origin in the three municipalities (ibid., 70).

The rapid “suburbanization” of ethnic Chinese has led to the development of what Breton (1964) defined as “institutional completeness” in terms of the formation of neighbourhood-based institutions that sufficiently meet residents’ everyday life needs. Breton (1964) measured the degree of the institutional completeness on a continuum. At one extreme, the ethnic community
“consists essentially in a network of interpersonal relations” without established “formal organization” of its own. At the other extreme, an informal network of interpersonal relations persists, but ethnic groups have also developed a more formal community structure consisting of organizations of various sorts: ranging from welfare and mutual aid societies to ethnic media, religious organizations, schools, commercial and service organizations. With the growing Chinese population in areas outside the City of Vancouver, a high degree of institutional completeness can be found there for the satisfaction of residents’ needs, such as education, work, food, housing, medical care and social assistance, which in turn attracts the settlement of more Chinese newcomers. To account for the changed patterns of spatial integration of the increased Chinese population in Vancouver, I turn to chapter 7.
Chapter 7: Ethnic Enclave or Ethnoburb? The Political Economy of Place and Fragmented Chinese Settlement in the Vancouver Region

The integration model established by Chicago sociologists during the early 20th century has long dominated studies of migrant settlement. According to this model, evolving settlement patterns were linked to socioeconomic, cultural, and political integration. In the past two decades, however, the Chicago model has been increasingly challenged by new trends. Immigrants with higher-than-average levels of education and financial capital have bypassed the ethnic enclaves to settle directly in white middle-class suburbs. This development contradicts the integration patterns predicted by classical Chicago School of Sociology. The injection of immigrants and associated capital flows has given rise to the formation of “ethnoburbs”, a concept developed by geographer Wei Li (1998, 2009).

Based on her research of Chinese communities in the Los Angeles’ suburb of San Gabriel Valley, Li (1998) describes the cluster of ethnic residential areas and business districts in suburban areas as “ethnoburb”. According to Li (2009), the transformation of suburbs into “ethnoburbs” is a result of the interplay of contemporary global, national, and local dynamics linking migration to socio-economic, cultural and residential changes. Li (2009, 174) suggested that the dynamics underlying the formation of an ethnoburb in Los Angeles have also occurred to the Chinese in Houston, the San Francisco Bay area, Toronto and Vancouver. Other ethnic groups such as Koreans, and Asian Indians in the suburban New York/New Jersey region, and the Vietnamese of Northern Virginia demonstrate similar settlement patterns as well.

The terminology of ethnoburb has stimulated important research in other contexts. Johnson et al. (2008), for example, applied the ethnoburb model to compare Asians and Pacific Islanders in Auckland, New Zealand. They raised some concerns about the lack of specific criteria to identify an ethnoburb. Focusing on the Chinese communities, Xue et al. (2012) found distinct sub-areas within the broad Auckland Chinese ethnoburb. The considerable demographic and structural variation led Xue et al. (2012) to hypothesize multiple ethnoburbs rather than a single homogeneous ethnoburb.

While both classical and contemporary models have been influential, they tend to treat the different settlement patterns as distinguishable stages of development characterized by ghettos or
enclaves in the past and ethnoburbs at present, with the association between suburbs and middle-class often taken for granted. The conceptual focus on either ethnic enclave or suburban areas has left areas between the two forms of settlement unaccounted for. In other words, migrants use a diversity of strategies to settle neither in enclaves nor ethnoburbs. Moreover, while an ethnic lens can shed important light on how social and economic networks are cultivated, it obscures the fact that locational choices are bound up with real estate markets organized by human interests in wealth, power and affection as well as with local state institutions that have the legislative power to intervene in markets. Politics is the largest chunk of the puzzle missing from the existing models, because migrants’ locational choices are never without economic constraints. Interactions between market and the state constitute a crucial context to understand the spatial integration of immigrants. In light of the limitations of existing scholarship, I use the sociological concepts of use and exchange values in the “growth machine” model (Logan and Molotch 1987) to shed light on the political economy of place that shapes immigrant settlement.

In this chapter, I show that Mainland Chinese newcomers and long-term ethnic Chinese demonstrate a rather fragmented settlement pattern throughout the metropolitan region. The central argument is that such a pattern reflects social and spatial inequality and polarization within the Chinese communities. From a planning perspective, I argue that such socio-spatial inequality needs to be addressed most effectively at the regional scale. Supported by interviews and other quantitative data, I attribute the fragmented settlement patterns to a number of factors including the function of affinity networks, public policies, the continued role of Chinatown in attracting low-income groups, and the substantially differentiated housing markets throughout the region that constrain the locational choice of individual migrant families. The wide differences manifested in the spatial distribution patterns suggest the impossibility to demarcate Chinese as a fixed racial category with definitive economic characteristics.

7.1 Ethnic Enclaves or Ethnoburbs? The Political Economy of Place

Based on urban forms typical of large American cities in the early 20th century, Chicago sociologists, most notably Robert Park, developed an influential model of human settlement to assume that immigrants initially sought to live with co-ethnic groups in inner-city enclaves marked by poverty, alienation and loneliness. According to Park (1928, 881), migration led to “collision, conflicts, and fusions of peoples and cultures,” producing “an unstable character” of
the “marginal man.” In order to rise up from their marginal position, immigrants were expected to overcome barriers of various sorts along the process of “acculturation” and eventually adopt the dominant urban way of life. In the Chicago model, the integration process was understood through an analysis of spatial relations. Chicago sociologists assumed that the relocation from enclaves to better housing in the suburbs represents the successful integration of immigrants into a “mainstream” dominated by a majority group.

Since Park’s dictum of assimilation, however, ethnic enclaves have not yet disappeared. On the contrary, their persistence in urban space led a prominent group of scholars to refute the negative portrayals of ethnic enclaves as places with rampant crime, diseases, and labor exploitation. Alejandro Portes and his associates (e.g. Portes 1987; Portes and Jensen 1989; Portes and Manning 1986), for example, found that ethnic enclaves could serve as a springboard for upward social mobility. They developed the theory of the ethnic economy to understand the process of migrant economic integration. Drawing upon the enclave economy paradigm, Zhou (1992) elaborated on the sociocultural dimension through an in-depth study of New York’s Chinatown, arguing that social networks and place attachments facilitated rather than impede immigrant integration.

In light of “the variegated nature of people entering countries like Canada and Australia” that have adopted policies to accept cultural pluralism, Ley and Murphy (2001, 139) have rejected the Chicago model of social and spatial integration on the grounds that it is no longer sufficient to explain the settlement patterns in both Sydney in Australia and Vancouver in Canada. To account for the increasing concentration of ethnic groups in suburban areas, Wei Li (1998, 2009) developed the term “ethnoburb” to refer to “voluntary concentrations of ethnic people to maximize their own personal network and business connections and to create a community with a familiar language and culture” as opposed to the traditional types of settlements resulting from forced segregation (2009, 46).

Indeed, without pre-existing family networks in the receiving areas, immigrants often rely on brokers such as realtors, immigration consultants, social organizations, lawyers, the Internet and other ethnic media for housing information. Their housing choice with respect to location and housing types are necessarily constrained by their differentiated financial capacities. The overall conceptual framework of ethnoburb speaks more to a human ecological approach that
emphasizes ethnic suburbanization as a natural, benign outcome of global geopolitics and local conditions. It postulates the emergence of ethnoburbs as a new model of settlement replacing the traditional type of ethnic enclaves. The structural distinctions between inner-city and suburban ethnic enclaves are necessary, but they should not neglect the pragmatic considerations of migrants. After all, ethnic enclaves where low-wage jobs are located persist alongside areas outside enclaves where ethnic groups also work and live.

Rather than assuming the types of settlement patterns as subject to somewhat distinguishable sets of socioeconomic and political processes at local, national, and global scales, I treat them as different spatial manifestations arising from the same historical processes. In doing so, I use the “growth machine” model developed by Logan and Molotch (1987, 2005) to explain Chinese migrants’ locational choice. According to Logan and Molotch (1987), any given piece of real estate has both a use value and an exchange value: use values refers to values individuals assign to their properties or places that do not enter into commodity markets; exchange values refer to the utilization of property to generate profit. People use place in ways to secure access to certain resources, for example, housing, school, friends, work, transportation and shops.

The locational choice of homes, neighbourhoods, and businesses shapes individuals’ life chances and the ways individuals organize their everyday life. Depending on the quality of public services (e.g. parks, schools, transportation, hospitals, etc.), places consisting of a fixed supply of land acquire certain values in the real estate market. When local institutions intervene in the spatial arrangements of a place, for example, highway construction, school closure, regulations of rezoning, building height, neighbourhood density, and so on, place characteristics are altered, so are the use and exchange values. A multifaceted matrix of political groups and institutions – such as property owners, businessmen, developers, architects, planning authorities, transportation and utility providers, banks, among a number of other stakeholders – can gain profit from their control of land. These “place entrepreneurs” make up the “growth machine” in their search of further exchange values, which leads to conflicts with neighbourhood groups and community activists seeking to defend the use values of places.

I argue that this political economic perspective of place offers a crucial vantage point to understand the spatial distribution of Chinese throughout the Vancouver region, as opposed to the lens of ethnicity. In forging my argument, I aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of
Chinese settlement that occurs at the region as a whole. In the following section, I first contextualize the growth machine model within the urban history of Vancouver and the fragmented governance structure underlying the highly differentiated housing market throughout the region. Using both qualitative and quantitative data, I reveal the variegated ways that a series of Chinese immigrant groups negotiate their housing and locational choice.

7.2 Locating Vancouver in History and the Regional Governance Context

7.2.1 Vancouver as a Growth Machine

Situated within the Province of British Columbia, Vancouver is Canada’s third largest metropolitan region. In retrospect, the role of the growth machine as a driving force for urban development has long been a factor in Vancouver’s past and present. Like other cities on the west coast of North America, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco where early development hinged on access to railways, deep-water ports (Logan and Molotch 2005, 103) and the displacement of aboriginal people and Asians, Vancouver grew out of the history related to the CPR, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. In exchange for the CPR to extend its original terminus of the transcontinental railway from Port Moody to Coal Harbour which is the heart of downtown Vancouver today (Gutstein 1975, 11), the federal government granted the railway company a substantial piece of land (see figure 7.1) containing some of the most expensive land today in the City of Vancouver. The CPR benefited not only from the increased land value resulting from the construction of a railway depot, but also from approximately 15,000 Chinese workers recruited from Guangdong’s Pearl River Delta in the 1880s (Yu 2009, 1014). In other words, from the very beginning of Vancouver’s history, Chinese immigration was an integral part of the colonial expansion and marketization in which land resources taken away from the aboriginal people came to bear exchange values.
Beyond the economic realm, the CPR was part of the nation-building process of a “White Canada”. According to the CPR propaganda, the railway-steamship connection was the new, “all-British” route to Australia and the riches of the Far East (Stam 1984). As promised by the Canadian Confederation, the railway linking provinces from coast to coast brought British Columbia into the Confederation in 1871. It also allowed more and more European settlers to arrive on the west coast where Chinese and other Asian settlers had been living alongside aboriginal peoples. The increasing number of European migrants organized under labor unions pushed for legislation that would clear Aboriginals from their lands and curb Chinese migration from across the Pacific and the United States (Yu 2009, 1015). Racial discrimination in multiple forms, including disenfranchisement and legal segregation in housing and employment, led to the emergence of Chinatown (Anderson 1991) located in now Vancouver’s vibrant downtown.
area. This history suggests that the physical space occupied by the Chinese was a deeply political issue.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Chinatown and its residential area of Strathcona consisting primarily of Cantonese-speaking families were subject to urban renewal and the construction of a highway. Chinese residents mobilized ethnic networks and built alliance with non-Chinese community activists to successfully resist against the renewal plan that would have turned the ethnic neighbourhood into “[a six-lane] freeway and a wall of concrete high-rise office towers” (Harcourt 1996, 16-7). The Chinese ethnic enclave became the first community in Canada that stood up and said to developers and their political friends on city council, “Go to hell - you are not building that freeway through my neighbourhood!” (Feng 2011). This success story of Chinatown offers comparative insight into ethnic enclave as a positive place that facilitates rather than impedes social, economic and political integration of immigrants (e.g. Zhou 1992; Zhou and Bankston 1998; Portes and Jensen 1989).

Yet, the assumption of solidarity and trust based on a common ethnicity is fragile especially in the context of a global economy and significant intra-group diversity. Like ethnic enclaves in other social and geographic contexts, Vancouver’s Chinatown served as a springboard for social mobility. The improved economic conditions allowed some families to move elsewhere from the 1950s onward, especially when the area was under significant pressure for urban renewal. The growth of family size as a consequence of changed immigration policy was another factor that led Chinese/Cantonese families to move into bigger houses outside Chinatown (figure 7.2). Despite the demographic change, Chinatown remained a vibrant place, with many immigrant families having put down their roots by opening restaurants, shops, or purchasing more land for clan or hometown associations, social organizations, temples, and so on.
As one of the major receiving place of migrants from Hong Kong, the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong Province, and other diasporas in Southeast Asia, Vancouver had firmly established itself in the transnational flows of people and capital by the 1980s. The timing of several events at the time further strengthened such role, including the substantial growth of Cantonese-speaking population in Vancouver, the negotiation between Margaret Thatcher and Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s about Hong Kong’s future, and the provincial government’s initiative to sell the former Expo86 site for redevelopment. The convergence of such events led place entrepreneurs like Li Ka-shing to establish the real estate company of Concord Pacific in the late 1980s for economic opportunities in Vancouver (Olds 2001).

Li’s investment initiated a collaborative planning process spearheaded by key actors including the late Downtown Eastside community activist Jim Green, Concord Pacific’s Stanley Kwok, and the former Direct of City Planning Ray Spaxman for the redevelopment of Vancouver’s

Figure 7.2 Chinese Settlement in the City of Vancouver, 1960. Source: Cho and Leigh 1972, cited in Edgington et al. (2003, 9)
False Creek North. As a native Cantonese speaker, Kwok was a key person mediating the relationships between the planning authorities and the Chinatown community adjacent to the development site. When he arrived in Vancouver in 1960s, Kwok and his family moved into Kerrisdale at the west side of Vancouver, an affluent neighbourhood dominated by Anglo Europeans. According to Kwok, when he met the Chinatown associations for the first time to negotiate about the development, they were surprised and curious about how he could find the job representing the powerful groups. Kwok explained to me his perception of the different generations of immigrants:

The problem with earlier Chinese immigrants is their ‘sojourner mentality’ in that they thought about making money here, sent money back for the family, and retiring later back in China, since they were not able to bring their family to Canada. Hong Kong immigrants are different. They started to come in the 1960s where there were no longer outright discrimination policies, and they didn’t have the baggage of racial discrimination. They were able to choose wherever they found convenient and affordable. Then the Taiwanese followed. After 1997, many Hong Kong people found that situations in Hong Kong were not as bad as they imagined, so they moved back to Hong Kong.53

When describing his role in the planning process, Kwok preferred explaining to me in English, even though we both came from the same geographical area in the Pearl River Delta and can speak the same dialect. Without doubt, Kwok represented the business interest of the dominant groups. His account above nonetheless highlights two important points. First, immigrants consciously resist the social construction of ethnicity, and second, their locational choice is based on pragmatic considerations (e.g. “convenient” and “affordable”). Indeed, the spatial distribution of Chinese in the City of Vancouver (figure 7.2) shows that Chinese had settled beyond the ethnic enclave as early as the 1960s. It is possible that the sporadic settlement across the city suggests the already differentiated socioeconomic conditions at the time within the same ethnic group.

In short, as Logan and Molotch (2005, 103-4) asserted, the jockeying for railroads, water supply, and ports of the late 19th and early 20th century in North American cities has given way to “more complex and subtle efforts to manipulate space” and redistribute profits. In Vancouver, following Li Ka-shing’s redevelopment of False Creek North was an influx of investment capital in search of higher profits. Such investment capital further stimulated significant development

53 Interview with Stanley Kwok was conducted in Vancouver on September 14, 2011.
activities in Vancouver’s downtown and the surrounding municipalities (Li 1993). The growth machine has evolved from a few players like the CPR to include a diversity of interests and institutions fostering the booster spirit, such as banks, mortgage brokers, realtors, real estate developers, ethnic media, skilled planning officials and politicians. The interplay of different interests among groups and institutions results in significant variations of housing price throughout the region. Before providing the statistical evidence to demonstrate this point, I will first lay out the fragmented regional governance structure as a crucial factor underlying the locational and market differences.

7.2.2 Fragmented Regional Governance

Interestingly, scholars using the ethnic enclave and ethnoburb models to explain migrant settlement often take the concept of suburb for granted. The meanings of suburbs are rarely contested and the “superior” suburban way of life associated with the middle-class seems to be accepted as desirable. With respect to the rather ambiguous definitions of suburbs, Ann Forsyth (2012) found that scholars rarely define the term explicitly. According to Forsyth, scholars often focus on specific physical features of suburbs such as low densities with single-family houses and substantial open space, or their peripheral location in the metropolitan region and relative newness of the built environments. From a global comparative perspective, Michael Leaf (2011) raised some perceptive concerns about the labeling of suburbs in “developed” countries as opposed to peri-urban in the “developing” world context. I would argue that the conceptual ambiguity of suburbs is not some negligible oversight in existing literature. It actually ignores the governance structure that shapes the density of urban/suburban neighbourhoods. State regulations in different places constitute the most crucial factor in structuring a highly stratified housing market. Local municipalities with their own elected councils have an enormous amount of political power to influence the local real estate market, which subsequently shapes migrant settlement patterns. In other words, a county or a municipality with the administrative power and fiscal capacity to provide local services may have an approach to immigrant settlement different from an urban/suburban neighbourhood without comparable power.

In the Vancouver region, suburban municipalities such as Richmond or Burnaby have their own elected council accountable to their constituencies rather than the region as a whole. This is similar to their counterpart of Monterey Park in the Los Angeles Metropolitan area where an
increased number of Mainland Chinese have settled. Rather than passive receivers of migrants and their economic activities, these municipalities are important political actors. According to the Local Government Act, municipalities outside the City of Vancouver are allowed to establish zoning bylaws to regulate population density and the provision of amenities and subsidized housing. In contrast, the City of Vancouver is governed by its own Charter that grants Vancouver Council and the planning director more discretionary power over the built environments. Overall, individual municipality has its own bylaws and programs to collecting revenue from real estate developers in order to meet the needs of the growing communities, such as community centers, parks, child care facilities, subsidized housing and the like (Metro Vancouver, 2012).

The names of programs to collect funding from developers vary by municipality but are generally known as “Community Amenity Contributions (CAC)” or “Bonus Density” on top of miscellaneous charges related to the development rezoning process. Different municipalities use different methods to calculate the amounts (in kind or cash) of contribution by the developers. Table 7.1 provides a summary of current practices in top ‘receiving’ municipalities of Mainland Chinese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bylaw/Policies</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
<th>Burnaby</th>
<th>Richmond</th>
<th>Coquitlam</th>
<th>Surrey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAC Provision in Bylaw?</td>
<td>No (CACs are Council policy)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (certain areas only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus Density Provision in Bylaw?</td>
<td>Yes (limited use)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (certain areas only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAC used ad hoc but not in Bylaw?</td>
<td>Yes (Council approved Financial Growth Policies; site-specific negotiation)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Used for Official Plan Amendment</td>
<td>Yes (certain areas only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefiting Amenities/Facilities</th>
<th>Community Centre</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Cash-in-lieu of indoor amenity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks/Trails</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (certain areas only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.1 Current “Community Amenity Contribution (CAC)” and “Bonus Density” Practices in Major Receiving Municipalities of Mainland Chinese Migrants

| Transportation Improvements | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Negotiation on case by case basis |
| Libraries                  | Yes | No  | No  | Yes | Library materials fee in certain areas |
| Child Care or Cultural Facilities | Yes | Yes | Yes | No  | Negotiated |
| Heritage Upgrading         | Yes (mostly through density transfer) | Yes | Yes | No  | Density bonus |
| Subsidized Housing Units   | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Density bonus |
| Year Started               | Late 1990s | 1997 | 1992 | 2004 | 1995 |

Source: Derived from Metro Vancouver, 2012.

Such policies represent important tools to regulate real estate development. For example, as an explicit objective to promote commercial (particularly office) development, some municipalities may require no CAC from developers, such as in Richmond and Coquitlam. In the case of North Vancouver, CACs are negotiated on a case-by-case basis (Council Report, 2013). CACs mean huge net profits for municipalities, landowners or land-regulators. In the jurisdiction of the University Endowment Land (UEL), for example, developers are charged $3 on every square foot of the building they construct. 1.5 million square feet of property development currently under negotiation could result in $4.5 million from the developer to pay for a community center (University Neighbourhood Association, 2013). In 2011, it was reported that the City of Vancouver collected a total of $180 million in “community amenity contributions” on top of $55 million from developers (Bula, 2012). Such practices suggest the role of planning policy in the increased exchange value of land. Eventually, it is homebuyers, whether they are immigrants or...

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54 The University Endowment Lands (UEL) refers to the area of 14.13 square kilometres that lies to the west of the City of Vancouver, surrounding the University of British Columbia. While geographically located within the UEL, the University of British Columbia and private housing on university land are outside the authority of the UEL, which is administered directly by the province. Landowners of UEL pay their property tax directly to the provincial government, in contrast to private housing on the university land that is administered by a partnership between the University of British Columbia and the University Neighbourhood Association (UNA). These institutional arrangements have in recent years allowed the administrative body to function as a de facto developer. Condominiums on the university land have attracted a significant number of Mainland Chinese immigrant families because of the proximity to UBC and other educational resources.
not, that have to bear all the cost of land development because of the profit-oriented nature of the real estate industry.

In the context of uneven policy framework across municipalities in the Vancouver region, there are substantial variations among different housing markets that immigrant groups of different economic statuses can buy into. Before discussing these variations, I want to highlight the fragmented regional governance that intensifies the housing gaps among different places. Consisting of 22 municipalities, one electoral area, and one treaty First Nation (figure 7.3), the Vancouver region is managed by the Greater Vancouver Regional (GVRD). GVRD is a regional planning agency established by the Province of British Columbia in 1967. In 2007, this agency was renamed Metro Vancouver but its functions remain pretty much the same, including the formulation of regional plans as well as policies related to regional parks, waste disposal, water supply, and certain infrastructures (Hutton 2011, 239). Instead of being elected directly, the Metro Vancouver Board members are drawn from elected councilors appointed by respective municipalities. The number of board members from each municipality and their voting power are based on the population of each constituency, with one vote for every 20,000 people (GVRD website). For example, the City of Vancouver has the highest population, so it has the most voting power in the regional planning agency.
The agency of Metro Vancouver, however, does not have the executive power to implement

Figure 7.3 Metro Vancouver consisting of member municipalities and Electoral Area A.


The agency of Metro Vancouver, however, does not have the executive power to implement
land-use regulations in the regional plans. Nor does it have planning power over the many Indian Reserves as well as the University Endowment Lands (UEL) that are lumped together as Electoral Area A (figure 7.4). Geographically speaking, the Electoral Area A is part of the regional district and yet outside the regional planning authority. Indeed, conflicting local interests and ambitions of municipalities and other governing bodies could undermine the principles and objectives of regional planning (Hutton 2011, 243).

In the absence of a coherent legal framework to enforce regional plans, municipal planners can only rely on the “good will” of politicians and other planning agencies through “endless negotiation in order to get things done.” The weak regional planning results in rather unequal distribution of public resources that shapes the locational choices of migrants and non-migrants alike, with those with fewer financial capital living in less desirable neighbourhoods or neighbourhoods requiring long commute for work and other livelihood necessities.

Figure 7.4 Electoral Area A (consisting of Indian Reserves and the University Endowment Land; marked in yellow)

Source: Metro Vancouver.

55 Interview with a planning professional on October 24, 2011.
What has aggravated the challenges associated with a weak regional governance structure was the provincial government’s decision to restructure the regional transportation agency of TransLink for enhanced power over revenue generation (CBC 2007; Hutton 2011). As a result of restructuring, board members of the agency do not represent the interests of any constituencies but the corporation itself who is the ultimate decision-maker on transportation planning, regional funding and borrowing limits (TransLink 2013).

Despite the difficulties to plan for increased human settlement, I found that settlement in agricultural land represents some unique space for entrepreneurial migrants to become integrated in the local place. This may be attributed to its effective management. Within the GVRD, all agricultural lands are regulated by the Agricultural Land Commission Act. Since its inception in the mid-1970s, this act has served as an effective legal framework at the provincial level to prevent the erosion of agricultural land base. Because of its relatively low market value in comparison with urban land, agricultural land provides some interesting niche for immigrants with incredible creativity and a certain level of financial and social capital to settle in. This is the story of Wu Chuanming, a migrant from Zhongshan to Richmond in 1995 who explained this:

It is very cost effective for us to have bought this large piece of land for our horticulture business. One acre of non-agricultural land cost more than a million, but most agricultural land costs merely $200,000 or $300,000 per acre. We built a big house on it and settled my family here. I’ve also set up my business here. Schools, shops and other facilities are not far away. Compared to the west side of Vancouver where many new immigrants like to settle, it is much more practical to be here. A house in the west side of Vancouver amounts to the total cost of our entire fields. (Interview by Yang Yingxia, 2013)

Like his counterparts who tend to be members of the middle-class in Mainland China, Wu used to be a senior manager at one of the largest state-owned enterprises in Zhongshan. After he arrived with his family in Vancouver, he worked in a horticulture field owned by another fellow Zhongshan (tong xiang 同乡) immigrant for 8 years. Having learned a lot about landscape gardening and management at work, he then bought two horticulture fields totaling 180,000 square feet in Richmond. He established his own business specializing in the supply of garden

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plants and auxiliary materials, as well as landscaping services to private homeowners, landscape
design companies, developers and builders throughout the Vancouver region.

Indeed, Wu’s rationale makes much economic sense when I compare the property values across
different localities in the region. Table 7.2 provides the statistics of total property values (with
the highest values marked in red) in individual municipality and area, offering a sense of the
different housing markets throughout the region. These statistics also indicate the amount of
wealth that different municipalities have been able to absorb in its built environments, but for
specific property types and location, the property values can vary significantly, as shown in table
7.3. This highly stratified pricing in the region serves as a “sorting” mechanism through which
different economic groups, immigrants and non-immigrants alike, rationalize their locational
choices within their financial capacity. With various Chinese groups settling throughout the
region, a comparative look at the housing markets at different locations highlights the fact that
there is a huge diversity of economic status within the so-called Chinese community, as
demonstrated in homeownership and housing choice.
### Table 7.2 Metro Vancouver Municipal Assessed Property Values (2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>2011 Census Population</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number of properties</th>
<th>Actual Total Values (current $)</th>
<th>Land Value/km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anmore</td>
<td>2,092</td>
<td>28.24</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>799,230,300</td>
<td>28,301,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belcarra</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>368,742,300</td>
<td>67,044,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen Island</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>50.14</td>
<td>2,265</td>
<td>1,471,623,705</td>
<td>29,350,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
<td>223,218</td>
<td>90.61</td>
<td>69,700</td>
<td>56,823,190,949</td>
<td>627,118,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coquitlam</td>
<td>126,456</td>
<td>122.3</td>
<td>41,810</td>
<td>27,165,694,252</td>
<td>222,123,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>99,863</td>
<td>180.11</td>
<td>33,078</td>
<td>21,983,709,329</td>
<td>122,057,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langley City</td>
<td>25,081</td>
<td>10.22</td>
<td>9,786</td>
<td>4,164,076,063</td>
<td>407,443,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langley Township</td>
<td>104,177</td>
<td>308.03</td>
<td>40,510</td>
<td>22,657,052,262</td>
<td>73,554,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lions Bay</td>
<td>1,318</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>612,857,660</td>
<td>242,236,229</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maple Ridge</td>
<td>76,052</td>
<td>266.78</td>
<td>28,130</td>
<td>12,544,390,835</td>
<td>47,021,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Westminster</td>
<td>65,976</td>
<td>15.63</td>
<td>21,922</td>
<td>12,177,361,592</td>
<td>779,101,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Vancouver City</td>
<td>48,196</td>
<td>11.83</td>
<td>16,782</td>
<td>13,283,279,868</td>
<td>1,122,846,988</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Vancouver District</td>
<td>84,412</td>
<td>160.76</td>
<td>28,132</td>
<td>26,210,955,523</td>
<td>163,044,013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pitt Meadows</td>
<td>17,736</td>
<td>86.51</td>
<td>7,076</td>
<td>3,007,474,836</td>
<td>34,764,477</td>
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<tr>
<td>Port Coquitlam</td>
<td>56,342</td>
<td>29.17</td>
<td>19,438</td>
<td>10,108,467,760</td>
<td>346,536,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Moody</td>
<td>32,975</td>
<td>25.89</td>
<td>11,856</td>
<td>6,922,626,933</td>
<td>267,386,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>190,473</td>
<td>129.27</td>
<td>72,203</td>
<td>55,188,678,039</td>
<td>426,925,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>468,251</td>
<td>316.41</td>
<td>141,861</td>
<td>83,364,714,315</td>
<td>263,470,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsawwassen</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>165,450,587</td>
<td>25,259,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver</strong></td>
<td><strong>603,502</strong></td>
<td><strong>114.97</strong></td>
<td><strong>191,005</strong></td>
<td><strong>217,138,323,816</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,888,652,029</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Vancouver</td>
<td>42,694</td>
<td>87.26</td>
<td>16,180</td>
<td>30,650,506,498</td>
<td>351,254,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Rock</td>
<td>19,339</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>8,365</td>
<td>5,246,275,805</td>
<td>1,022,665,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Area</td>
<td>13,035</td>
<td>815.59</td>
<td>4,544</td>
<td>5,917,032,485</td>
<td>7,254,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GVRD Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,313,328</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,882.55</strong></td>
<td><strong>766,717</strong></td>
<td><strong>617,917,715,712</strong></td>
<td><strong>214,364,960</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: GVRD totals include the population of Indian Reserves.
Source: Derived from “Municipal Assessed Property Values” (Metro Vancouver, 2013).
### 7.3 Spatial Distribution of the Chinese Communities in the Vancouver Region

Chinese settlements in the Vancouver region demonstrate patterns similar to other North American metropolitan areas such as Toronto, New York or Los Angeles where Chinese live in areas beyond the old ethnic enclaves. In 1981, the Census enumerated about 300,000 Chinese

#### Table 7.3 Housing Price Index (CAD$) for Selected Municipalities in Metro Vancouver (2004 – 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single-family housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
<td>$463,205</td>
<td>$516,964</td>
<td>$647,356</td>
<td>$696,282</td>
<td>$766,644</td>
<td>$693,171</td>
<td>$789,405</td>
<td>$912,300</td>
<td>$902,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coquitlam</td>
<td>$424,881</td>
<td>$457,937</td>
<td>$551,617</td>
<td>$623,560</td>
<td>$672,246</td>
<td>$597,539</td>
<td>$686,612</td>
<td>$706,735</td>
<td>$720,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>$482,366</td>
<td>$507,222</td>
<td>$627,226</td>
<td>$699,408</td>
<td>$781,881</td>
<td>$695,960</td>
<td>$901,706</td>
<td>$1,101,128</td>
<td>$999,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>$339,860</td>
<td>$376,677</td>
<td>$468,718</td>
<td>$506,979</td>
<td>$520,354</td>
<td>$484,997</td>
<td>$530,763</td>
<td>$546,964</td>
<td>$564,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver West</strong></td>
<td>$779,772</td>
<td>$895,525</td>
<td>$1,119,282</td>
<td>$1,313,171</td>
<td>$1,439,026</td>
<td>$1,277,018</td>
<td>$1,648,096</td>
<td>$1,986,905</td>
<td>$2,207,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver East</strong></td>
<td>$415,378</td>
<td>$467,758</td>
<td>$590,028</td>
<td>$639,962</td>
<td>$693,202</td>
<td>$628,128</td>
<td>$745,497</td>
<td>$824,056</td>
<td>$863,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Vancouver</strong></td>
<td>$899,843</td>
<td>$1,080,240</td>
<td>$1,243,376</td>
<td>$1,413,063</td>
<td>$1,506,302</td>
<td>$1,179,133</td>
<td>$1,410,756</td>
<td>$1,714,714</td>
<td>$1,934,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Townhouse and Rowhouse</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
<td>$300,615</td>
<td>$318,475</td>
<td>$388,926</td>
<td>$423,847</td>
<td>$461,602</td>
<td>$433,780</td>
<td>$492,510</td>
<td>$509,140</td>
<td>$414,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coquitlam</td>
<td>$278,841</td>
<td>$303,049</td>
<td>$358,122</td>
<td>$396,560</td>
<td>$430,890</td>
<td>$380,251</td>
<td>$447,025</td>
<td>$452,491</td>
<td>$382,867</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>$303,440</td>
<td>$316,162</td>
<td>$386,636</td>
<td>$424,067</td>
<td>$470,075</td>
<td>$435,097</td>
<td>$517,348</td>
<td>$561,807</td>
<td>$506,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>$223,070</td>
<td>$231,872</td>
<td>$284,564</td>
<td>$315,026</td>
<td>$386,636</td>
<td>$304,675</td>
<td>$330,194</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$431,096</td>
<td>$491,895</td>
<td>$586,045</td>
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<td>$730,928</td>
<td>$655,001</td>
<td>$765,336</td>
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<td><strong>Vancouver East</strong></td>
<td>$298,951</td>
<td>$340,788</td>
<td>$408,029</td>
<td>$471,065</td>
<td>$522,994</td>
<td>$480,259</td>
<td>$535,723</td>
<td>$561,608</td>
<td>$522,799</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>West Vancouver</strong></td>
<td>$677,844</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$755,012</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td><strong>Apartment</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
<td>$208,115</td>
<td>$233,333</td>
<td>$282,297</td>
<td>$316,311</td>
<td>$348,053</td>
<td>$314,704</td>
<td>$354,100</td>
<td>$369,382</td>
<td>$362,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coquitlam</td>
<td>$180,953</td>
<td>$195,124</td>
<td>$245,538</td>
<td>$276,533</td>
<td>$298,262</td>
<td>$258,533</td>
<td>$295,670</td>
<td>$301,469</td>
<td>$257,467</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>$212,125</td>
<td>$211,376</td>
<td>$265,015</td>
<td>$293,429</td>
<td>$323,322</td>
<td>$294,271</td>
<td>$339,497</td>
<td>$361,611</td>
<td>$350,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>$148,090</td>
<td>$147,585</td>
<td>$204,776</td>
<td>$246,414</td>
<td>$238,563</td>
<td>$221,886</td>
<td>$220,514</td>
<td>$218,693</td>
<td>$199,700</td>
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<td><strong>Vancouver West</strong></td>
<td>$280,422</td>
<td>$335,591</td>
<td>$409,168</td>
<td>$454,500</td>
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<td>$444,161</td>
<td>$508,628</td>
<td>$525,502</td>
<td>$480,533</td>
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<td><strong>Vancouver East</strong></td>
<td>$174,137</td>
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<td>$264,949</td>
<td>$300,200</td>
<td>$333,346</td>
<td>$303,992</td>
<td>$336,472</td>
<td>$345,256</td>
<td>$311,733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Vancouver</strong></td>
<td>$435,568</td>
<td>$481,485</td>
<td>$557,907</td>
<td>$661,463</td>
<td>$673,523</td>
<td>$560,814</td>
<td>$661,505</td>
<td>$676,098</td>
<td>$632,533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Derived from “Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book”
living in Canada. By 2001, this population had more than tripled to over one million, or 3.5 percent of Canada’s total population, making Chinese the largest non-European group in Canada (Lindsay 2001). As a major receiving area, Vancouver continued to receive a growing number of Mainland Chinese migrants. According to the 2001 and 2006 Census, Mainland China surpassed Hong Kong to be the leading source country of immigrants to the Vancouver region, following the national trend. Figure 7.5 shows the spatial distribution of Chinese settlement in general.

When breaking down the broad category of Chinese into Mandarin and Cantonese speaking groups, however, I found a striking difference clearly indicating the intra-group diversity. While the Cantonese Chinese consist mostly of immigrants from the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong, and other Southeast Asian countries, Mandarin speakers are mostly Mainland Chinese from areas other than the Pearl River Delta region. As shown in figure 7.6, Cantonese-speaking Chinese followed a rather continuous settlement patterns throughout the region. In contrast, the settlements of Mandarin-speaking Chinese were concentrated in several discontinuous areas.
including the west side of Vancouver, the University Endowment Land, southeast Burnaby, Richmond central area, Coquitlam and north Surrey (figure 7.7). I argue that such spatial patterns cannot be simply interpreted as a natural, voluntary process. Rather, they reflect the highly uneven financial capacity among different groups, as indicated by the housing markets that different Chinese groups buy into (see table 7.3).
Figure 7.7 Distribution of Mandarin Chinese (2006)

Source: 2006 Census Atlas on Immigration in British Columbia by Daniel Hiebert and Mathew Coyle
Different housing markets imply different levels of risk and uncertainty (Marris 1996), which is most salient during times of economic crisis. The unequal distribution of risks subjects already disadvantaged groups to precarious conditions. I illustrate this point by using the 2008 US financial crisis and subsequent global recession of 2009 as an example. Table 7.4 summarizes the housing market changes between 2008 and 2012 for selected municipalities and housing types. Prices for Single-family housing in the Vancouver region as a whole appreciated 40% from 2008 to 2012. In the same housing segment, Vancouver’s west side saw an astonishing 80% increase, the highest appreciation rate among all municipalities. In contrast, the apartment markets in many areas saw substantial depreciation, with 23% price drop in Surrey where an increasing number of Chinese immigrants have settled. These statistical data suggest that, market forces continue to reinforce the gap between the rich and the poor in terms of their capacity to survive global uncertainties, regardless of ethnicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Single-family Housing</th>
<th>Townhouse and Rowhouse</th>
<th>Apartments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coquitlam</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladner-Delta (South)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta (North)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langley</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>-36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Ridge</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>-36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Westminster</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Vancouver</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitt Meadows</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Coquitlam</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Moody</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver West</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver East</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Vancouver</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Surrey &amp; White</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>-24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Vancouver</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Derived from “Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book”

From a humanistic perspective, market risks and uncertainties create very different senses of place and family dynamics, as suggested by the strikingly different sentiments expressed by two
of my informants. One was living in Surrey57 and the other in the UBC neighbourhood58. The 65-year-old Yuping came from Guangzhou in 2010. She followed her only son who immigrated to Canada in 2003. Initially the son could make about $45,000 to $50,000 a year before tax, which allowed him to buy a two-bedroom apartment in Surrey with savings from his previous job in Guangzhou for the down payment. The recent economic crisis, however, had cost his job. Because of her son’s loss of employment income, Yuping and her husband had to rely on their old-age savings to pay for the mortgage. During my interview, Yuping expressed to me an overwhelming sense of disappointment in the following,

I regretted so much that he [my son] came to Canada.... if he had stayed in China, he could have already owned an apartment and a car. He should also have a family of his own. ... He used to work in China Telecom as an associate engineer. He was among the last generation that was granted life-long jobs in the company. It was very hard to get hired by China Telecom, but my son got the job. That’s why when he lost his job here, I was very depressed because of what my son had to go through here.

Living in a two-bedroom apartment with her son who was unemployed seemed to aggravate the already tense relations within the family, as Yuping explained to me,

Our apartment is about 900 square feet. Because we have lots of stuff, it feels quite crowded... Sometimes when my husband and I talk, my son would complain that we talk too loud. He even suggested that we’d better move out.

In contrast, the economic crisis has completely different connotations for groups at the other end of the economic spectrum. Alice, my interviewee living in the UBC neighbourhood, was a full-time housewife taking care of two teenage sons. Before buying a townhouse within the UBC campus, Alice’s family owned a single-family house in Richmond. After the 2008 economic crisis, housing price in Richmond continued to climb, with the price in 2011 reaching 2.28 times of that in 2004 (see table 7.3). By contrast, there was a slight drop of townhouse price in 2012 in the City of Vancouver. With the gap between different housing markets, Alice and her husband rented out their house in Richmond and mortgaged a property at the UBC area in order to send

57 Interview conducted on October 22, 2011 at the Surrey Public Library with a recent immigrant from Guangzhou through the family reunification category.
58 Interview conducted on February 15, 2012 at the interviewee’s townhouse on UBC campus. The interviewee and her family are originally from Beijing. They studied and worked in the US before immigrating to Canada as skilled immigrants in the early 1990s following the Tiananmen Incident.
their sons to the high school in the neighbourhood. They were also able to enjoy a wide range of community services offered by their proximity to one of the best universities in the country.

To sum up, by no means do I attempt to dismiss the significance of theoretical concepts to explain migrant settlement patterns. In contrast, I approach settlement through the vantage point of political economy. I use both qualitative and quantitative data to highlight how market economy and political institutions function to channel various Chinese migrant groups into different geographical places. While I found the concept of ethnoburb useful in explaining contemporary migrant settlement dynamics, I think it is premature to treat inner-city ethnic enclaves as something in the past. Indeed, as the case in Vancouver shows, ethnic enclave like Chinatown is no less than a meaningful place where migrants’ needs continue to be met, which I will elaborate next.

7.3.1 The Enduring Place of the Ethnic Enclave

Located in the downtown area popularly noted for its walkability, Vancouver’s Chinatown is well connected with other neighbourhoods and municipalities by public transportation. Its locational advantage has attracted significant market interest in housing development in Chinatown, and the Downtown Eastside of which Chinatown is part of. Such interest was marked by two recent controversial developments approved by city planners and the Vancouver Council. First is the redevelopment of the former Woodward’s Department Store site located in the Downtown Eastside, a neighbourhood known for a high incidence of poverty, drug use, sex trade, as well as a history of community activism. Due to the growth of commercial activities in other areas, the Woodward’s Department Store went bankrupt in 1993, followed by other stores and restaurants, which precipitated a rapid business decline in the area. As part of the official Downtown Eastside Revitalization initiative, the vacant store building was demolished in 2006 and the City made an exception of its long-established height restriction policy to allow the construction of a 42 storey-building complex that was completed in 2010. In exchange for the policy exemption, the developer provided some subsidized housing units, which has become an acceptable practice to extract funding from developers for low-income housing. As the city councilor Kerry Jang, a descendant of an immigrant family from China, admitted, “as provincial money dried up, we had to turn to the developer industry” (CBC, 2012). The alliance between developers and city officials is rather unambiguous.
While the redevelopment of Vancouver’s landmark site represents one of the turning points in Vancouver’s planning practice, the acquisition of the Wing Sang building by Bob Rennie symbolizes the successful efforts of certain interest groups. The Wing Sang building is the oldest in Chinatown, and among the oldest in Vancouver. Designed by the architect Thomas Ennor Julian, the building was owned by Yip Sang, who was an impoverished peasant from Taishan in Guangdong and became highly successful in Canada (see chapter 6). According to Larry Wong (2003), the Wing Sang building was a multi-functional space containing shops, restaurants, a bakery, the Yip Sang travel agency, Yip’s family residence, and the famous B.C. Royal Cafe best featured in Denise Chong’s award-winning novel, *the Concubine’s Children* (1995). Except for the shop at the street level and a family association on the second floor, the building went into decline after the closure of the travel agency in the 1970s. Rooms previously sheltering Chinese workers were left deteriorating. Although the Chinese Benevolent Association considered converting the structures into a seniors’ residence that has been desperately needed in the city, the association balked at the renovation costs (Wong 2003). Eventually, Bob Rennie who was known colloquially as the ‘condo king’ bought the building. Rennie owns Rennie Marketing Systems, which is the largest real estate marketing firm in Vancouver. It was reported that Rennie spent upwards of $10 million transforming the building into the home of his company and most controversially his private art gallery (Vancouver Sun 2009).

The privatization of space has bought increased conflicts rather than harmony into a now ethnically diverse neighbourhood, stimulating fear over gentrification among local residents who rely on cheap grocery produce made possible by the Chinese enclave economy. The affordable housing space in the Chinatown area represents probably the only option for low-income groups, especially Mandarin and Cantonese-speaking seniors who lack both the language and financial capacity to survive in Vancouver’s housing market. These low-income groups have to rely on heavily subsidized housing in Chinatown that is currently provided by clans and hometown associations, non-profit organizations, as well as the municipal, provincial and federal governments. Unfortunately, the subsidy agreements with the provincial or federal government will expire between now and 2020, with the fate of nearly 72 percent of the existing social housing stock up in the air (Metro Vancouver, 2013). Despite the distressing uncertainties ahead, many Chinese and non-Chinese residents had very positive lived experiences in the neighbourhood. In my numerous conversations with them, I was amazed by their incredible sense of belonging. This represents a sharp contrast to the popular portrayals of Chinatown as a
place suffering from serious social problems and the parochial assumption that it impedes rather than facilitates immigrant integration.

7.4 Conclusion

The traditional spatial “ecological” model of migrant settlement proposed by Chicago sociologists in the early 20th century no longer, if ever, describes the spatial patterns of today’s cities or of the urban dynamics we are witnessing. Many of the contemporary immigrants to North America have bypassed the traditional enclaves and settled directly in both middle- and working-class neighbourhoods. In light of this increasingly salient feature, Wei Li (1998 & 2009) proposed the concept “ethnoburb” to describe the phenomenon of increased ethnic concentration in suburban areas. The usefulness of Li’s concept has been widely acknowledged.

Without undermining the importance of this new conceptual framework, my research approaches migrant settlement from the perspective of political economy. I take a comprehensive look at the role of both planning institutions and market economy in conditioning Chinese migrants’ settlement patterns. I analyze planning policies, housing statistics, mappings of census data, and interviews. I suggest that the fragmented settlement of various Chinese groups reflect the significant diversity of economic status, especially with respect to Mandarin speakers who live in both rich and poor neighbourhoods. Mechanisms such as regional planning, land use policy, housing cost, and the historical continuity of Vancouver’s Chinatown have all functioned to further differentiate social and economic groups, despite their ethnic label as Chinese. Such differentiation or diversity, however, could be quite baffling for the ‘receiving’ society, especially when the ‘local’ is insulated by both bureaucracy and some ‘imagined’ racial boundaries inherited from colonialism. Focusing on the City of Vancouver where racial intension surfaces once in a while, I will examine how some spatial patterns and racial knowledge have evolved to shape the popular imaginations of social difference between ‘Chinese’ and ‘non-Chinese’.
Chapter 8: Globalizing “Vancouver”: Chinese Immigration and the History of Place Politics in the City of Vancouver

Born to a poor peasant family in China’s Jiangsu Province, Yu Minhong epitomizes the ethos of the “American Dream”, an upward social mobility achieved through hard work and perseverance. Known as the “Godfather of English Training” in China, Yu failed two university entrance examinations before he was finally admitted to Beijing University (Beida 北大), one of the best universities in China to study English. Yet, his study was interrupted when he caught pneumonia and had to take a year off. After his graduation, Yu taught English at Beida. Like many of his classmates who had left for graduate schools in the United States, Yu applied but failed repeatedly to secure scholarship for his study. Stymied by his American ambition, Yu decided to “jump into the sea of business” (xiahai 下海) and started his own English training school, New Oriental, in 1993. It was listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 2006 as the New Oriental Education and Technology Group. By May 2012, New Oriental has grown from a class of only 30 students to a network of over 600 learning centers, 55 language training schools, and 32 bookstores in a total of 49 cities in China. The cumulative number of students who received English training in New Oriental reached over 13 million and Yu is thought to be China’s richest teacher with over 2 billion yuan (US$ 250 million) of assets.

Why bring a Chinese version of the “American Dream” to wider attention? Because concrete stories help to explain the large context. In Chinese philosophy, Mencius said, Heaven’s timing is not as important as advantageous location, while advantageous location is not as important as harmony among people (tianshi buru dili, dili buru renhe 天时不如地利 地利不如人和). The three crucial factors of timing, location and people pinpointed by Mencius over two thousand years ago summarize the larger context in which Yu’s economic success can be demystified. The fact that universities in English-speaking countries require standardized English test scores such as TOEFL, IELTS or GRE for admission has created the market niche in the non-English world. The timing of New Oriental’s growth and the locational choice reflect the general patterns of change in Chinese society as well as China’s changed economic position in relation to the global

Yu’s experience highlights the critical confluence of seemingly disconnected histories and processes.

Why is Yu’s story relevant here? Because like many other immigrant families from China, Yu’s wife and two children now live in the west side of Vancouver while he himself commutes back and forth between Vancouver and China every month.60 Yu’s family is among the 175,000 ethnic Chinese living in the City of Vancouver, the largest ethnic group among all ethnicities including those of English and Scottish origins (Vancouver Foundation, 2010). The perceived wealth of some individuals has made Chinese as an ethnic group the easy suspects embroiled in a protracted housing debate in Vancouver, one that pitted Chinese immigrants as foreign investors against local white Vancouverites. Housing and real estate development is a polarizing issue in Vancouver. For some scholars, it embodies the conflicts on the grounds of race and cultural difference, with “an established hegemony of Anglo-conformity” destabilized by Asian immigrants (Ley 1995, 185). Consequently, citizenship and integration remain contested issues.

To address anxieties associated with transnational capital flowing into Vancouver’s real estate development and, ultimately, the sense of erosion of national sovereignty, I want to emphasize the significant diversity in terms of socioeconomic status. Such diversity, however, is often blinded by the socially constructed notion of “Chinese”, as reflected in the narratives of Vancouver’s housing challenges. I problematize the construction of “Chinese” by situating the City of Vancouver within a wider historical and spatial context of colonialism and global economy. My thick description of Vancouver’s developmental process suggests that certain racial categorizations and planning models inherited from the colonial mode of production continues to dominate the spatial arrangements of the city. I argue that a generalized assumption of “Chinese” as global investors conceals rather than exposes the existing structural forces that render certain economic groups disenfranchised and powerless. I illustrate this point through the planning process of a typical working class neighbourhood in the east side of Vancouver, followed by some concluding thoughts.

8.1 Setting the Stage

The nation not only exists, but is also embodied in the spaces of city...

Abidin Kusno, Behind The Postcolonial (2000)

Meaningful debates on cities and migration must begin with the history of colonialism. Scholars often attribute the growth of Chinese immigrants to the enlightened attitudes of white Canadians expressed by the removal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1947, the endorsement of multiculturalism, and/or to the ‘neoliberal’ agenda for Asian investment capital in the 1960s onward (e.g. Ley 2011; Mitchell 2004). These stories have certain appeal among scholars interested in the modernist interpretation of urbanism, but they do not tell the full story. Changes in Canada’s immigration policy in the late 1960s and subsequent decades offer some explanation for the immigration flows from China and other parts of Asia. Yet, the arrival of immigrants from Asian countries – notably (former) British colonies of Hong Kong and India – did not begin in the 1960s. The story begins in the nineteenth century when Europeans (or the historic British Empire) colonized the territory that became known as Vancouver. My inspiration to provide an alternative account of Vancouver is drawn from an established scholarship on (post)colonialism and urban space (e.g. King 1990a; 1990b; Leaf 1994; Kusno 2000; Robinson 2006; Jacobs 1996). Rather than accepting race as the explanation for housing conflicts, I want to trace the history of colonization and examine the legacy of colonial practices in shaping our understandings of “Chinese”.

8.1.1 Institutionalizing Colonialism

Historically, the indigenous society who had been living in British Columbia used land for livelihood production rather than profit. This began to change when Europeans began to arrive in the second half of the nineteenth century. Settlers from European cities brought with them assumptions behind a “free” land market to the territory (e.g. King 1990a; Jacobs 1996). Drawing on the experiences of other colonial cities (e.g. King 1990a), I identify three dimensions of transformation that helped to institutionalize colonialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
The colonial project began with the imposition of an exogenous political system. In 1872, the provincial government passed the Municipality Act to allow the creation of a municipality “if thirty or more men – and they had to be men – signed a petition” for incorporation (Hayes 2005, 40). Settlers were motivated to petition for municipal status because the autonomy to levy tax would enable them to build roads and to increase land value (ibid. 40). Municipal boundaries were drawn based on colonizers’ arbitrary conceptualization of space, as shown in figure 8.1, and land was arranged as a grid to allow the precise location of lots for the purposes of market transaction and taxation.

Figure 8.1 A detailed map of the Lower Fraser Valley Published by Rand Brothers Real Estate Brokers (Vancouver, BC, 1886; note the area marked in grey amounts to much of what is today the west side of Vancouver City)

Source: City of Vancouver Archives (Item: MAP 1184 - Map of New Westminster District, B.C.).

The second dimension of institutional change relates to the role of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in transportation and real estate planning. Backed by the coercive power of the state, CPR decided to build a railway terminus at Burrard Inlet, which was crucial for the birth of Vancouver. As early as 1874, the CPR considered Port Moody as the preferred terminus of the Pacific railway built by Chinese workers. In anticipation of the plan, land in Port Moody controlled by two major landowners, John Murrery Sr. and James Anthony Clarke, was subdivided for sale. According to Derek Hayes’ Historical Atlas of Vancouver and the Lower Fraser Valley (2005, 48), a grand sale of Port Moody lots was held in 1883, at first for as low as $15 and changing hands a short time later for $1,000. Yet, to the disappointment of land speculators, in 1884, CPR’s general manager, William Cornelius Van Horne, visited Granville
and the Burrard Inlet and found the extensive shoreline (figure 8.2) more attractive (Hayes 2005, 48). While both Port Moody and Burrard Inlet are connected with Pacific waters, Van Horne had decided on building the railway terminus at Burrard. His decision was an intriguing one. At the time, Canton (now the City of Guangzhou, which was a treaty port in the Pearl River Delta Region), Hong Kong and other British colonies in Southeast Asia had already become integral parts of the global colonial trade network. The spatial access to the Pacific Ocean at Burrard would have accommodated more docks and wharves for trans-Pacific trade. It is most likely that from the very beginning, Van Horne had intended to set the stage for linking the area that he named Vancouver with the market across the Pacific.

*Figure 8.2 Plan of the City of Vancouver in 1891, Western Terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway at the Burrard Inlet*

My speculation aside, Van Horne did seal a deal with the provincial government who gave the CPR about 6,300 acres of land for the extension of railway line to Coal Harbour at Burrard Inlet. Two exclusive neighbourhoods, Shaughnessy Heights and Kerrisdale, were developed out of the CPR land (Mitchell 2004, 141). The residents of Granville embraced Van Horne’s plan and petitioned the provincial government for the incorporation of a city to be called Vancouver. A Charter was granted for the new city in 1886 (Hayes 2005, 49-52), which granted significant
political power to the City Council. In 1952, the City Planning Department was set up. According to the Charter, the planning director had the discretionary power to decide on various land use matters. This is in contrast to other Canadian municipalities that are governed under the Municipal Act. According to Hayes (2005, 76), from the very beginning of its birth, Vancouver “seems to have held a special fascination for those who liked to invest, or rather, speculate, in real estate.” It was a “playground for real estate agents.” By 1912, there were about 170 real estate companies operating in Vancouver. Forests were cleared for the development of real estate, roads and streetcar tracks (that were phased out in the late 1940s)\(^\text{61}\). Lots were sold to prospective residents and those who hoped to “make a nice turnover”. This practice came to be known as “flipping” in the 1970s (ibid. 76).

Through the development of land and railway construction, the CPR made an enormous profit. The substantial growth of wealth enabled the corporation to play a major role in determining Vancouver’s street layout and general land-use patterns (Mitchell 2004, 142). The land owned by the CPR became the Municipality of Point Grey in 1908 (now encompassing Vancouver’s local areas of West Point Grey, Dunbar Southlands, Arbutus Ridge, Kerrisdale and Shaughnessy Heights) (ibid. 143). Long before the establishment of Vancouver Town Planning Commission (the forerunner of the City Planning Department) in 1926 (Hayes 2005, 86), powerful groups had exerted considerable power on the location of tramway service, parks, water supply, sewer, and other utility infrastructure (Mitchell 2004, 143). Notably, these groups include Vancouver Property Owners’ Association (later the Associated Property Owners) representing the CPR, the B.C. Land and Investment Agency, and the Vancouver Land and Improvement Company (Mitchell 2004, 143). In 1928, the Town Planning Commission adopted “a modern zoning by-law” to divide the city into districts for the “complete regulations” of not only land but also “height, size of yards, and the density of population to be permitted” (Vancouver Town Planning Commission 1928, 220).

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\(^{61}\) According to Hayes (2005, 64-7), the highly efficient streetcar system “was killed by the automobile and the bus” that was controlled by BCER, the British Columbia Electric Railway Company based in London. BCER bought substantial investment from Britain and fought competition from companies running a bus service, streetcar, and interurban by buying them out. BCER was taken over by the provincial government in 1961 as a division of the Crown Corporation BC Hydro. BC Hydro later sold the transportation services that eventually came under the control of TransLink. Under BCER, decisions from Britain dictated much of Vancouver’s growth. As documented by A.J. Christopher (1988), cited in King (1990b, 20), in 1914 Canada received the second largest amount (£515 million) of overseas investment from the British Empire, following the United States of America (in the amount of £755 million). Such investment had generated enormous revenue for the metropolitan cores in the Empire.
According to Vancouver’s first comprehensive town plan prepared by Harland Bartholomew and Associates in 1928, the practice of dividing the city into districts regulated by zoning was intended to serve the following purposes: “(a) The promotion of public health, safety, convenience and welfare (b) The prevention of the overcrowding of land and the preservation of the amenity of residential districts (c) The securing of adequate provisions for light, air and reasonable access (d) The value of the land and the nature of its use and occupancy (e) The character of each district, the character of the buildings already erected and the peculiar suitability of the district for particular uses (f) The conservation of property values and the direction of building development” (ibid. 220). These objectives reflect the essence of the “modernist” approach embodied in the “Garden City movement” born in Britain (King 1990a, 53-4). Physical planning through comprehensive zoning came to be seen as the panacea for the many arbitrarily defined social pathologies.

In 1929, the municipalities of Vancouver, Point Grey and South Vancouver were amalgamated to become today the City of Vancouver (Vancouver Town Planning Commission 1928, 10). Living in large mansions at the time, European elite became concentrated in the single-family neighbourhoods of West Point Grey, Kerrisdale and Shaughnessy. Those in the upper echelon were able to uphold the “exclusivity” of their life space through “the selective enforcement of private covenants and zoning regulations” (Mitchell 2004, 145). Meanwhile, an ideology of modernity (e.g. Leaf 1994; King 1990a; Robinson 2006) and white supremacy was inserted into the heterogeneous spaces of the city at the expense of non-Europeans. This constitutes the third dimension of transformation in the early stage of colonization. Despite an equal number of non-Europeans, if not more, English became the dominant “official” language that later became one of the defining criteria for contemporary Canadian citizenship. With skin color or race/ethnicity as a signifier of cultural difference, hegemonic groups began to differentiate space for inclusion/exclusion (Yu 2001).

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62 The plan was revised in 1929 to include the newly amalgamated municipalities of South Vancouver and Point Grey. It dealt extensively with all aspects of physical planning including transportation, parks, recreational space, schools, and zoning. Although not all of Bartholomew’s plan was adopted by the City, the ideas have been influential in shaping the appearance of Vancouver today. See Bigelow, Sue. 2011. “How did Harland Bartholomew’s Ideas Shape Vancouver?” April 18. http://www.vancouverarchives.ca/2011/04/how-did-harland-bartolome%E2%80%99s-ideas-shape-vancouver/

63 The city is separated from the City of Burnaby by Boundary Road, and the municipalities of North Vancouver and Richmond by the Burrard Inlet and the Fraser River. This geographical characteristic prevents the city from urban sprawl.
Scholars have well demonstrated the linkages between space and the process of racialization. Through the case of Songhees Reserve in Victoria, British Columbia, Renisa Mawani (2003) argues that the Aboriginal reserve was created out of concern about valuable urban property and later decried as a “racial slum”. In a similar vein, Jean Barman (2007) examines the making of Vancouver’s Stanley Park and the removal of Aboriginal people from Vancouver’s Kitsilano Reserve in 1913 to highlight the role of urban ‘stakeholders,’ such as municipal bureaucrats and Vancouver businessmen in the history of colonization. Parallel to experiences of the Aboriginal peoples was the spatial segregation of Chinese enforced by zoning and other legislation. The numerous planning policies and regulations have been extensively documented by Anderson (1991). Racial knowledge in turn legitimized the spatial segregation of groups who were deemed “primitive” and “uncivilized”, who were conveniently distinguished by their physical features. Consequently, up until World War II, Vancouver’s east side and downtown neighbourhoods were ethnically mixed, while the west side remained “nearly 100 percent white and Protestant” (Mitchell 2004, 145). Such spatial segregation helped to create a fantasy among the elite of “White Canada”, in which Chinese together with Japanese, Indians and other ‘non-white’ were ‘foreign’ by means of their physical appearance.

Inherited from Canada’s colonial history, “the practice of ‘visualizing’ the Chinese as an exclusive category” (Kusno 2000, 160) offers a convenient means of race and cultural differentiation to oversimplify the complexities of urban conditions, the conditions in which significant diversity within one ethnic group challenges any attempt to define ‘Chinese’ or ‘Chinese’ identity. In everyday life, however, ‘Chinese’ identity is often internalized unconsciously. Speakers may construct arbitrarily the meanings of ‘Chinese’ for convenience or whatever purpose they intend to achieve. I want to illustrate this point by quoting one of my interviews with one participant in a neighbourhood planning process.

Mrs. Liu: When I participated in the Norquay planning, I didn’t think of myself as an immigrant or not. I just consider this area is where my home is. ... After I went there, I realized I was the only one...

Me: You mean you were the only Chinese there?

Mrs. Liu: There were Chinese, but meetings after meetings, I was the only one that can be considered landed immigrant. There were other Chinese too. But one group was Chinese Canadians. They don’t have any accent in their English. You could tell they were either born in Canada... Of course, I wouldn’t ask them if they were born here, or they came at very young age. From their
English, you could tell they were native speakers. I could tell my ideas about living in Tokyo, or living in Beijing, or Shanghai. They didn’t have that kind of living experiences. The other group was senior Chinese. I could tell they have accent. ... I guess they must have been living here for long, probably for more than 40 years. I was the only one that can be said to be an immigrant, although I was in Canada for more than 20 years.

As an immigrant from Beijing more than 20 years ago, Mrs. Liu was perceptive of the nuances within the broad racial category of “Chinese”. She was part of a neighbourhood group defending against rezoning for fear of gentrification. Ironically, it is the encountering with the representatives of state power (e.g. Councilors, planners, architects and urban designers) that “forced” her to pick up her “Chinese” identity. My interview with Mrs. Liu (May 20, 2011) began in Mandarin, but in a natural way, she started to describe to me her experience of engaging in the planning politics in fluent English. I also interviewed her husband (March 21, 2011), Larry, a local-born non-Chinese who also participated in the same neighbourhood group as Mrs. Liu. Larry told me that he once saw a busload of “Chinese” touring a soon-to-be-completed condo building in their neighbourhood. He also provided me with other anecdotal stories of “Chinese investors”. While anxieties from community members such as Mrs. Liu or Larry are understandable, I found that the arbitrary construct of ‘Chinese’ as the culprit obscures the institutional practices and place politics in which conflicts are part and parcel of living together.

8.2 The Politics of Place in the City of Vancouver

There is no such thing as a city. Rather, the city designates the space produced by the interaction of historically and geographically specific institutions, social relations of production and reproduction, practices of government, forms and media of communication and so forth. By calling this diversity ‘the city’ we ascribe to it a coherence and integrity. The city, then, is above all a representation ... I would argue that the city constitutes an ‘imagined environment’.

James Donald, *Metropolis: The City as Text*

With the growth of Chinese immigration to Canada, Vancouver has been able to cream off some of the well-educated, affluent groups. To understand the intersection between integration of these groups and urban change, I examine the mechanisms to attract immigrants, especially wealthy ones like Yu (whose story was told at the beginning of this chapter) to the City of Vancouver
among a wide range of options (in terms of neighbourhoods, cities, and countries). As suggested by James Donald quoted above, the city is a cultural construct. I follow Anthony D. King (1990c, 398) to refer to two dimensions of meanings: “the material culture of the built environment itself as well as the systems of meaning, action and symbolic forms” in association with the built environment. According to King (1990a), physical planning and design as particular place-making industries, like other major cultural production industries such as film and advertising, contribute to the constitution of human subjectivity and identity. Meanwhile, such consciousness motivates human action and choice that in turn constantly negotiate with the large socioeconomic and political structures. In talking about the production of the built environment and its representation as an instrument to attract Chinese nationals, I will highlight the actions of groups in powerful positions in relation to those rendered disempowered in the context of urban change. In doing so, I first discuss how a diversity of interest groups promote Vancouver with a “healthy” “sustainable” “modern” lifestyle. I will then focus on a neighbourhood planning process to illustrate how the dominant interests are protected by certain planning practices that privilege the position of some while disadvantaging others within the so-called ‘Chinese community’.

8.2.1 Globalizing “Vancouver”

It is not enough that this future city be a smooth-functioning organism; it must be a pleasant, healthful, attractive place in which each citizen may live fully. We require more of our automobiles than that they operate efficiently and give us a maximum mileage per gallon of gasoline; they must also have a good appearance. We require more of our clothing than it be warm and comfortable; it must look well, also. Similarly the city’s appearance is important as it affects the daily life of every citizen. Beauty is not a luxury. It is as important in a modern city as in the design of an automobile or the cut or style of our clothing. ... The appearance of a city not only has a pronounced influence on the morale of its citizens but is the measure by which visitors are most likely to judge the entire character of the community and its people.

Vancouver Town Planning Commission, 1947

Vancouverites have consistently made choices that have turned our home into one of the world’s most livable cities. There is much to love about Vancouver, from magnificent natural surroundings to strong environmental values, from a diverse cultural mix and innovative economy to our vibrant neighbourhoods.

City of Vancouver, 2012
Physical appearance and order have long been the primary concerns of professional planners, architects and urban designers (Scott 1998). As shown in the above quotes, in Vancouver, there has long been “careful planning” to make the city “more pleasing to the eye” (Vancouver Town Planning Commission 1947, 11) This tradition was entrenched in the planning system when Ray Spaxman was Vancouver’s planning director between 1973 and 1989. Since then, few North American cities seem to have exercised greater control through the implementation of design guidelines and careful negotiations with developers than Vancouver. With his architectural training in Britain, Spaxman was hired by City Council to become Vancouver’s Planning Director in the early 1970s. He had a strong belief in “neighbourliness”, which includes such defining characteristics as “sunlight preservation, view protection, privacy, topographic adaptation, tree preservation, social and recreational amenities, safe parking garages”. Consequently these characteristics became guiding principles for rezoning and urban design (Punter 2003, 28-9). Meanwhile, Spaxman committed himself to citizen participation, which distinguished him from previous generations of planners who were trained engineers. The importance of citizen participation led the reform in 1975 of Vancouver’s Development Permit Board who had the obligation to notify the public of prospective development projects (Vancouver Sun, 1976). Nonetheless, the Board remained to be the decision maker who “cannot deny a development if it meets the zoning/Official Development Plan (ODP) and guidelines, or approve a development if it does not fall within the zoning/ODP” unless developers request rezoning (City of Vancouver, 2012).

Under the reformed Development Permit system, developers are allowed to build higher buildings with more floor space provided their developments include public amenities such as social housing, green space and so on. Contribution to the public has to be negotiated between the Planning Director and developers. Therefore, the Planning Director has a substantial amount of discretion in the decision-making process in comparison with other North American metropolis such as Los Angeles, as a senior planner explained to me (interview on May 10, 2011). Through this practice, the City was able to acquire a substantial amount of public amenities from developers while limiting real estate development in the downtown area in the 1990s. Yet, there is no lack of dilemmas. The most controversial one was the development by Concord Pacific, who contributed 42 acres of public park space, two elementary schools, four daycare centers, a full-service community center, multi-purpose meeting rooms, a sports field-house, public arts and notably, 20 percent of the residential units for social housing (City of
Vancouver 2003, 14). Concord Pacific’s project to extend the downtown street grid has transformed “a city cut off from its waterfront by an impregnable layer of industry and railways” and brought it back for public use (ibid. 12-3).

In a way, Vancouver’s transformation by Concord Pacific that was owned by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing is of little difference from decades ago when colonial power transformed the territory to be Vancouver. Yet, Anthony King (1990b, 42) notes that a major difference between colonial city and global city rests on the power differentiation “between indigenous and exogenous inhabitants”. In a colonial city, the local were subordinated to the exogenous population while in the contemporary world system, local elite in a global city are “in superordinate positions”. In other words, the globalization of cities is hardly possible without local initiatives and political actions. As Beauregard (1995, 242) asserts, “the global only comes into being through the integration of numerous locally based actors and activities.” Drawing on these insights, I want to highlight some local actions that promote the branding of “Vancouver”.

Certain attributes of Vancouver dominate our imagination of the city, most notably “magnificent natural surroundings”, “strong environmental values”, livability and multiethnic, multi-lingual communities (City of Vancouver 2012, quoted at the beginning of this section). In terms of public policy, the idea of “sustainability” has become a widely embraced ethos through the practice of a “sustainable” lifestyle (by walking and cycling) and stringent enforcement of design guidelines and building codes. The clustering of condominiums in Vancouver’s downtown, especially Concord Pacific’s redevelopment project of False Creek North, alongside beaches of Spanish Banks and Kitsilano, the historical buildings of Chinatown and Gastown, as well as Stanley Park, all have become the signature images popularly featured in magazines, newspapers, movies and TV shows. While such imagines certainly instill a sense of local pride among the general public, they downplay the conflicts over the meaning of space and entitlement. Nonetheless, the cultural constructs of Vancouver as the world’s ‘most livable city’ travel far and wide to China where more and more people long for a place to escape the uncertainties of everyday living in urban China.

The travelling of Vancouver as a cultural construct would not have been possible without the concerted efforts of local actors (e.g. politicians, planners, real estate developers, immigrant consultants, film industries, architect and urban designers) who have contributed to building
Vancouver as a symbol of modernity and best practices. It did not occur to me that Vancouver itself represents some symbol that is marketable until three years ago when I was travelling in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. On the highway to the airport, a large housing complex with a conspicuous sign of “Vancouver Garden” (figure 8.3) caught my attention. This real estate development was located on the periphery of Chengdu metropolitan area. Curious by the branding of the name Vancouver, I did a quick Google search afterwards and found that “Vancouver Garden” was designed by a Hong Kong architect. The motif of the design was said to highlight the “exotic theme” of “modern gardening, landscape design” in Canada and to fully consider human “visual perception” and “participation”\(^6{4}\). The developer’s website advertised that 1,000 cherry blossom trees were planted in the community. With the awkward “import” of lexicons frequently found in western planning documents, the developer managed to introduce the concept of Vancouver into the consciousness of those living in urban China. The ‘export’ of design ideas and practices to China would not have been possible without the integration of local stakeholders, many being Chinese Canadians. Bing Thom who was born in

\(^6{4}\) http://chengdu.anjuke.com/community/view/141785
Hong Kong, for example, was the chief architect for Shanghai Expo (2010). Since 2003, Hong Kong-born Vancouverite James Cheng has brought his architectural and design ideas that represent the gist of “Vancouverism” to mega-projects in China. His most notable production is Interwest, a 300,000 square meters mega-project of housing and commercial development in Beijing.65 In this development, the average price per square meter in May, 2013 was ¥74,514 (or about CAD $12,645), a 41.7 percent increase compared to the previous year. A two-bedroom, 125 square meter (or 1345.5 square feet) apartment in this development would cost as much as ¥9 million (or about CAD$1.5 million).66 Cheng explained that a mega-project like this meant substantial revenue for his architectural firm in Vancouver, as the whole process involved numerous sectors such as civil engineering, landscape architecture, urban design, interior design and modeling. His employees travelled frequently between China and Vancouver. Cheng revealed that many local architectural firms in Vancouver have set up companies in China and some even relied on construction projects there as the major source of revenue (Canadian City Post, 2011).

Overall, such instances point to the economic logic that drives not only local change but also the consolidation of linkages between China and Vancouver. The strengthened social, economic, and political linkages further entice more and more people to travel, immigrate to or study in Vancouver from Mainland China. The growth of population flows across the Pacific can invoke different sentiments among local residents, depending on the extent to which different socioeconomic classes benefit from this growth. Under these circumstances, it has never been so critical for planners to address the significant diversity within the so-called Chinese community in land use planning. Yet, I found that bureaucracy and certain practices seem to have inhibited planners’ capacity to address local residents’ anxieties and fear over the growing presence of ‘Chinese’. I illustrate this point through the case of a local neighbourhood planning process.

8.2 Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre Plan

... the idea of empire is not confined to the past. It is an active memory which inhabits the present in a variety of practices and traditions and which still works to constitute the future of the City.

66 The most recent housing prices for the project of Interwest (zhuyu cheng) are found at this website (xiaoqu wang), http://zhuyucheng2.soufun.com/jiage/
Since the late 1990s, the increasing influx of immigrants from Mainland China has been accompanied by substantial capital flow into the residential housing market. The transnational flow of people and capital represents significant market pressure for real estate development. In an effort to identify “local” actions in response to “global” forces, I began my inquiry by looking at the Norquay Neighbourhood in the east side of Vancouver. As a way to implement CityPlan the Renfrew-Collingwood Community Vision, in 2006 city planners came up with “Norquay” to designate an area surrounding the 1.35 kilometers of Kingsway from Gladstone to Killarney for massive rezoning. 48 percent of the residents in the Norquay area identified Chinese as their mother tongue in the 2006 census. Numerous workshops and open houses (more than 50), together with surveys and community outreach, were organized by planners to solicit input from local residents. The plan, known as Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre Plan, was approved by City Council in 2010. The purpose was to rezone the area for housing redevelopment with the anticipation of bringing about some positive benefits, including “more affordable homeownership”, “a walkable neighbourhood”, “public amenities” and “robust community life” (Planning Department 2010, 5).

Through a concrete case study, I had hoped to see if “Chinese” immigrants would become “active citizens” in the collective defense of their living space against global market interests. Yet, my assumption soon turned out to be a shaky one for two reasons: the lack of solidarity within the ethnic group and the problematic conceptualization of local and global as an opposed pair. After a few interviews, I realized that residents were strikingly divided with respect to the proposed densification in the neighbourhood: some residents were adamant in resisting against rezoning, some indifferent and leaning towards moving out of Vancouver because of the much lower housing prices and property tax in Richmond, New Westminster, or Surrey; others supported the rezoning for higher density because they could sell their properties for higher

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67 Vancouver CityPlan (1995) was a city-wide participatory planning practice to envision the future development of Vancouver for the next 20/30 years. It officially identified Vancouver as “a city of neighbourhoods”. While some applauded it for innovation in public participation, others criticized the exercise as costly ($15 millions) and purposeless (lack of specifics for implementation). Following the CityPlan, different neighbourhoods were to carry out their own citizen participation processes to develop their own Community Vision. Most of the Norquay area falls into the Council-approved Renfew-Collingwood Community Vision, which was the second single-family neighbourhood in Vancouver undergoing massive rezoning. Some residents became resistant against the Norquay Plan because they learned that rezoning in a neighbouring community (at Kingsway and Knight Street) failed to deliver the “public amenities” as promised. Again, the issues of timing and sequence were noteworthy.
prices. The presence of different interests and spaces forced me to rethink the meanings of ‘Chinese’ or ‘Chineseness’.

To be fair, values of democracy and transparency have become the guiding principles for city planning in Vancouver. Yet, the danger, as Foucault (cited in Bent Flyvbjerg 2001, 101) had warned us, is that policies and institutions “provide no guarantee of freedom, equality, or democracy”, even where they are established with this purpose. Following Foucault’s ideas on power, Bent Flyvbjerg (2001, 100) noted that submitting to some form of morality amounts to endangering democracy, not empowering it. Reminded by these critical views on power, I found it instructive to situate the planning process within the wider spatial, historical, and structural context to illustrate how local residents internalize certain assumptions about the ‘Chinese’.

The Municipal government’s ambition to assert itself in the global market has made Vancouver a major node in global migration, especially with respect to those from Mainland China. As a matter of fact, it is a path dependent function of previous generations of social and economic networks. In the process of economic restructuring since the 1960s, there has emerged a “new middle class” (Ley 1996) consisting of lawyers, accountants, immigration consultants, financial advisors, realtors, and other professional service providers. Many of these professionals are of Chinese/Hong Kong origin, second or third generations of immigrant families from previous decades. This diverse range of actors, Chinese and non-Chinese alike, have contributed to the formation of social and economic infrastructure (as shown in the example of Kwan in chapter 6) that in turn attracts more people from Mainland China to Vancouver through transnational social and economic networks. This outcome is reinforced by the economic system that has relied on migration from China, India and other Asian countries since the late 1960s.

To manage many challenges associated with Chinese settlement and integration, public policy did bring about many positive changes in Vancouver and Canada as a whole, such as the provision of settlement services and the engagement of local citizens in neighbourhood planning. Yet, the persistence of some spatial and institutional arrangements suggests that change is bounded. The most significant is the example of Shaughnessy. Created by the CPR, Shaughnessy has a higher-than average proportion of heritage houses from the first half of the twentieth century (City of Vancouver 2013). Architecture and urban design in Shaughnessy are often described as “house and garden”, “picturesque landscape”, “garden city”, “park-like streets” and
“country home”. Such neighbourhood characteristics, combined with the low residential density and automobile control, are protected by council-approved design guidelines (adopted in 1982 and amended in 1998 and 2001), heritage designation, zoning and development by-law (City of Vancouver, 2012; Punter 2003, 120-3). Change with respect to subdivision, rezoning and heritage preservation can only occur within certain parameters prescribed within a policy framework. Such policy practices underlie the continued relevance of colonialism when the physical landscape was created (Jacobs 1996).

Under conditions of the global market economy, access to exclusive space like Shaughnessy became a matter of economics. The settlement of affluent non-white groups there, notably those from Hong Kong, Taiwan and increasingly Mainland Chinese challenges the symbolic meanings of national belonging and Canadian citizenship. The conflicts over space have been well documented by geographer Katharyne Mitchell (2004). By moving into privileged neighbourhoods like Shaughnessy, the upper-middle class is able to insulate themselves from the volatility of global market as opposed to those living in less privileged areas like Norquay.

Norquay area has no intrinsic meanings for residents. It was identified in the Council-approved Renfrew-Collingwood (RC) Community Vision (2004) as the second “neighbourhood enter” project in the city. This follows instructions in CityPlan (1995) that identifies nineteen areas for the development of neighbourhood centers. Yet, neither CityPlan nor the Renfrew-Collingwood (RC) Community Vision provides concrete steps for implementation, so city planners had to devise the Norquay Village Neighbourhood Center Plan in order to fill in the gap of previous planning documents68. City planners drew the boundaries of Norquay arbitrarily for the purpose of policy making. The Norquay Plan prescribes clearly the location of housing types, building height and scale so that planners can ‘predict’ and determine the physical characteristics of the neighbourhood.

Despite the fact that planning objectives are contingent upon market forces, the planning documents themselves (i.e. CityPlan, Community Visions or the Norquay Village Plan) contain significant public involvement. In the public participation processes, however, there is no lack of conflicts with specific directions for actions, varying from matters within the responsibilities of the municipality (e.g. the physical boundaries of areas to be rezoned, housing types to be

68 Interview on November 22, 2011 with a city planner involved in the Norquay planning process.
permitted in the rezoned area) to those of the region (e.g. transportation), the province (e.g. the provision of senior housing, schools) or even the federal government (e.g. immigration types). While planners organized numerous workshops and public consultation meetings, they limited their discussion with the public to technical details. This inadvertently led to the conflict between the scientific knowledge of planning professionals and the experiential knowledge of residents. I want to elaborate on this conflict by the following quote from my interview with one Norquay resident.

I thought it was we were telling you what we want, and then we use your expertise to do the drawing and planning, because I am not trained as an urban planner. I don’t know all these architectural terminology, some shadow study, or how wide the pedestrian walk has to be, or where is the best route for the bicycle path.... Of course I do know that I want a bicycle path in our area.... I am only relying on your ability to then tell us ... this building shouldn’t be here because its shadow would cover these many houses... even though I was such an amateur in the city planning right from the very beginning, I said to the city planning department ... I would rather think this is a very comprehensive plan. It cannot just focus on only one thing. For example, in terms of focusing on improving affordability, let’s just keep building or keep rezoning it, so we get more people to stay. We need more kids to keep our school open... blah blah blah ... But I said, for me, it is like people somehow have to work together. How about the TransLink? ... We were also talking about the crime. The Chinese residents talked about the traffic, the crime, about the amenity, the duplex, triplex, or whatever, talked about the rowdy parties, a whole bunch of things... And there is this next door grandpa. He just had a car accident so his car was towed away. He doesn’t have a garage, and always parked here. I always want to leave him enough space for this grandpa who is almost 90 years old, so I always park in the back. So you know all these parking issue, safety issue, increased crime around the Skytrain stations, the amenity issue, the traffic jam here, and all these things, I said, don’t we need to sit down with TransLink people, the park board, or whoever to come up with a comprehensive plan. Right from the very beginning, I made this question, and Miller [the planner] said to me, don’t dream. We would never be able to work with other people, especially TransLink... I said, can’t we invite some one over from TransLink to give us some kind of ideas, some kind of blueprint?... Miller said, no way, it doesn’t matter whether we invite them or not they won’t come.

The words of Mrs. Liu, one of my interviewees, reflect the difficulties of coordinating with different levels of governance. While the city took rather progressive initiative to invite local residents to form “working groups” in the planning process, it has not been able to resolve the institutional barriers inherent in the fragmented governance structure discussed in chapter 7. Consequently, one member of the working group suggested, “The more you played, the more
frustrated you became, since you had absolutely no decision-making or guiding powers, nor could you draw a line.” (Culham, 2010) The city’s inability to co-ordinate the different layers of governance further estranged residents who were resistant against policy change to begin with. While angry English-speaking residents vented their frustration in local newspapers about the planning authority as “a charade of indoctrination into the city’s development agenda” (Culham 2010), many Mandarin-speaking residents could not even get their voice heard because they understood neither English nor Cantonese (interview with Liu, May 20, 2011).

Despite the appearance of democratic engagement, the triumph of developers’ interests over residents’ concerns is evident by the timing and recommendations put forward in a financial viability report by Coriolis Consulting Corp., a private consulting firm specialized in real estate market analysis. Less than one month before the Council approved the Norquay Village Plan in November, 2010, the City hired Coriolis to produce a report on the land value change after rezoning for different housing types. The economic rationale is rather obvious. For example, Norquay residents consistently expressed their preferences for 6- to 8-storey mixed-used buildings. Yet, Coriolis considered the building heights financially unattractive on the grounds that “the sales price premium in this part of Vancouver is not currently high enough to off-set the increased construction costs”. The Coriolis’s report suggested that developers “may not be interested in rezoning and may elect to redevelop” under the existing rezoning (Coriolis Consulting Corp. 2010, 7).

The rezoning of Norquay for real estate development is not unique throughout the city or the region, as rezoning policies have long been used in North America to allow land use change. What I want to emphasize is that it leaves unchallenged the institutional structure that sustain the current unequal distribution of population density and ultimately the unequal right to space. I use figure 8.4 to show the substantial lower population density in the west side of Vancouver containing roughly the neighbourhoods of Shaughnessy, Kerrisdale, Dunbar and the westside of Oakridge. Table 8.1 summarizes density and population change between 1971 and 2011.
Figure 8.4 Population Density of Vancouver in 2011 (excluding the University Endowment Land area)

Source: City of Vancouver (http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/census/2011/popdensity2011.pdf)
Table 8.1 Population Change by Neighbourhoods (1971-2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
<th>Persons per Hectares</th>
<th>1971 Population</th>
<th>2011 Population</th>
<th>Change (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbutus Ridge</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>12,870</td>
<td>15,908</td>
<td>23.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>145.8</td>
<td>6,585</td>
<td>54,690</td>
<td>730.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunbar</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>19,635</td>
<td>21,754</td>
<td>10.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairview</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>16,070</td>
<td>31,432</td>
<td>95.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandview-Woodland</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>26,740</td>
<td>27,297</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings-Sunrise</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>28,530</td>
<td>33,992</td>
<td>19.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kensington-Cedar Cottage</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>34,105</td>
<td>47,471</td>
<td>39.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerrisdale</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>13,410</td>
<td>14,732</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killarney</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>11,575</td>
<td>28,458</td>
<td>145.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsilano</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>33,910</td>
<td>41,371</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marpole</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>17,700</td>
<td>23,832</td>
<td>34.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mount Pleasant</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>19,970</td>
<td>26,400</td>
<td>32.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakridge</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>10,670</td>
<td>12,443</td>
<td>16.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renfrew-Collingwood</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>29,850</td>
<td>50,495</td>
<td>69.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley Park</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>20,165</td>
<td>21,794</td>
<td>8.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaughnessy</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>10,370</td>
<td>8,807</td>
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<td>South Cambie</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>6,940</td>
<td>7,682</td>
<td>10.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strathcona/ Downtown Eastside</td>
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<td>12,170</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunset</td>
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<td>24,355</td>
<td>36,286</td>
<td>48.99</td>
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<td>Victoria-Fraserview</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>22,145</td>
<td>30,711</td>
<td>38.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>West End</td>
<td>218.3</td>
<td>37,515</td>
<td>44,543</td>
<td>18.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Point Grey</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>11,870</td>
<td>12,803</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Vancouver Census Data, compiled by Joseph Jones (2013)

(Note the negative population growth between 1971 and 2011 in Shaughnessy that has the lowest population density in the city.

Despite that population increase has been absorbed by housing redevelopment in many areas, rich neighbourhoods have managed to keep their density low through their political influence (Punter 2003, 120-3). In contrast, changes are directed at many working class neighbourhoods (especially the impoverished ones like Chinatown and its Downtown Eastside) where working-class Chinese are left at the mercy of the market. This point is evident in the story that Mrs. Liu described to me,

There was a father there pleading with the city planners and my heart was bleeding. He was a Cantonese speaking person, and got his daughter there who was studying at the university in Toronto and came to visit.... And the father grabbed her and she was very emotional, and she was translating for her father.
The father said they just built their house eight years ago, with the intention that the family was going to live there happily together, and said they had no intention to tear their house down and move somewhere else. The developer already started to knock at their door to ask if they wanted to sell, because the developer wanted to buy a couple of properties there.

8.3 Conclusion

With both rich and poor Mainland Chinese living in the city, it has never been more critical to analyze the diversity within a rapidly growing ethnic population. In this chapter, I challenge the oversimplified category of Chinese as a race by situating my discussion within the history of colonization and the context of city globalization. Colonization is not something in the past. Rather, it lives in the presence in the sense that the physical landscape created at the time continues to shape the spatial distribution of population and neighbourhood characteristics nowadays. With its significant diversity in terms of socioeconomic status, Chinese are now settling in both rich and poor neighbourhoods.

From the historical perspective, Chinese have always been an integral component of the making of Vancouver. It was the hegemony of the colonial elite that set up rules and standards (e.g. English as the dominant language, and the disenfranchisement of “ethnic minorities”) in the early half of the twentieth century to legitimize the spatial segregation of non-European groups. Through decades of political struggle, earlier generations of Chinese Canadians have redefined certain rules of the game for the benefits of formal citizenship, such as voting rights, decent education and employment opportunities. Citizen actions to remove institutionalized racism have enabled subsequent waves of Chinese immigrants to become better off than they could have been if formal recognition of equality had not occurred.

Moreover, since the early 1970s there has emerged the new, outward-looking supports of business and cultural organizations, immigrant churches, Chinese professional organizations, university student associations, and immigrant service organizations, notably the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society (SUCCESS) by Hong Kong Chinese immigrants. Established in 1973, SUCCESS has developed close collaborative relations with other civic groups and with the local, provincial, and federal governments to facilitate the settlement, adaptation, and integration of immigrant households in the region. With services expanded to cover a wide range of immigrant needs in neighborhoods where the growing
Chinese immigrant population settled (Guo 2004; Leaf 2005), SUCCESS has proven instrumental in bridging ethnic Chinese and Canadian society at large and filling in the gap between immigrant needs and government services. Over the course of more than three decades, it has become a steppingstone for many immigrants to develop a sense of pride and belonging (Guo 2004). In 2008, SUCCESS’s services were extended overseas, with reception offices opened in Taipei and Seoul to offer pre-departure orientation to skilled workers, members of the family class, and live-in caregivers from South Korea and Taiwan (Hiebert and Sherrell, 2009).

Indeed, the growth of SUCCESS attests to conscious efforts of governments at federal, provincial, and local levels to build state-civil society collaboration for immigrant integration. SUCCESS, together with DIVERSEcity, ISSofBC, and MOSAIC which gear towards immigrants from a broad range of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, are the four major non-profit immigrant serving agencies (ISAs) that belong to the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA), an umbrella organization of over 75 multicultural agencies in British Columbia to provide a venue for networking among its member organizations (www.amssa.org). In 1998, the Province of British Columbia signed the Agreement for Canada-British Columbia Cooperation on Immigration, decentralizing power to the provincial government, who receives funding from the federal government for settlement and integration services. The provincial government is also responsible for managing immigration activities, such as provincial nominees, international students, sponsorship, immigration health issues and temporary foreign workers. The Agreement was renewed in April 2010 to replace a previous agreement in 2004 and remains valid for five years from the date of signing (CIC, 2010). Guided by the Agreement, the B.C. Government administers three key programs with respect to immigrant settlement and multiculturalism programs: B.C. Settlement and Adaptation Program; B.C. Anti-racism and Multicultural Program; and Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (Hiebert and Sherrell, 2009). In a sense, the development of such institutional infrastructure attests to the changing attitudes towards immigration in Canada.

Yet, those who have succeeded in integrating into the Canadian middle class no longer interact as closely, if at all, with the less advantaged groups, as they now live in separate neighbourhoods and conduct ways of life that are worlds apart. The mutual ignorance of each other because of the reliance on racial assumptions seems to further distance advantaged and disadvantaged
Chinese groups. It may be tempting to project one’s fear onto Mainland Chinese newcomers on the basis of gross generalization and assumptions about cultural differences. Through the lens of place politics in Vancouver, I found that the claim about the economic power of Mainland Chinese is more of an exaggeration because of the extreme diversity within this cohort. This claim ignores the legacy of colonialism in shaping our assumptions about Chinese and the spatial distribution of various economic groups in the context of economic globalization. Since the very beginning of Vancouver’s existence, land has always been part and parcel of the story and individuals learn to adopt actions that would generate increasing returns. Chinese settlers did not bring over the instrumental rationality of profit maximization through land development. Long before the surge of people from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Mainland China, this economic practice had been built into the spatial and institutional development of Vancouver. Placing the onus on Chinese newcomers risks concealing the power relations that keep the growth machine running.

To conclude, it is critical to look beyond the hierarchical dichotomy between Chinese/English, immigrants/non-immigrants, global/local to uncover the intricate moments and networks of solidarity and cooperation that citizens consider worth aspiring for. Chinese and non-Chinese alike build networks based not on some abstract sense of “imagined community” or socially constructed differences of ethnicity but on concrete experiences in the household, the neighbourhood and the city. Such linkages and networks demand more theoretical discussion on the meanings and possibility of Chinese integration, which I will turn to in the concluding chapter.
Chapter 9: Conclusion: Living With Differences

Focusing on various migrant groups from places in the People’s Republic of China, I have examined specific processes and mechanisms that directly shape the linkages between the diversity of migrant integration experiences and the socioeconomic, spatial and political transformation of a Canadian city-region. I have more specifically sought to understand how certain political economic characteristics of place (in terms of economic structures, political cultures, processes and institutions) have hindered and facilitated migrant groups’ livelihood production in multifaceted ways. In doing so, I have tried to unpacked the multiple layers of meanings and encompassing causal factors ranging from the economic structural, spatial to the socio-cultural, to shed light on the differentiated integration processes in which migrant groups acquire the necessary livelihood production resources (e.g. social networks, financial capital, education, information, etc.) for participation in the production and consumption of urban spaces. This inclusive definition of integration has allowed me to uncover the symbiotic relations between migrant settlement and place-making.

Though each of the previous interrelated chapters has its own focus, the dissertation as a whole has four main objectives. The first, and most important, has been to demonstrate the past and present entanglement of urban processes that are beyond the geographical and administrative boundaries of places (e.g. neighbourhood, city, region, province and state), that shape migrants’ choice and action. The second has been to treat migrants as active agents with differentiated capacity to transform the political economic and spatial landscapes of a place. The third objective has been to question the inflated use of the transnational lens in most existing scholarship by highlighting the role of place in terms of its political economic structure of opportunity and constraint for transnational activities, thus the different strategies of settling in a new place among migrant groups from places of various urban developmental levels. In other words, differentiating localities provides the opportunity to interrogate the theoretical framework of transnationalism rather than take it for granted. Finally, I have aimed to examine the implications of colonial history for its relevance to current and future policy development. All these purposes have been served by focusing on linkages as a case study between Vancouver and Mainland China forged by different migrant groups.
The themes of previous chapters – Chinese governments’ emigration control, urbanization processes in China in general and trajectories of urban development in specific Chinese cities, ethnic economy and spatial patterns of Chinese migrant settlement in the Vancouver region, and place politics in the City of Vancouver – are woven together through the notion of “migration-urbanization dialectics”. Whatever the controversy surrounding the meanings of an increased flow of migrants to globalizing cities, its value can hardly be evaluated unless one can adequately address the complex urban opportunity-constraint structure that condition migrants’ capacity, action and intention. In other words, I maintain that migrant integration and urbanization are mutually constituted processes with constantly shifting meanings and dynamics at specific times and places that require empirical studies.

In this concluding chapter, I further reflect upon both the empirical and theoretical contributions of my research on migrant linkages between Vancouver and Mainland China. I then summarize the general lessons inferred with respect to the challenge of living together in difference, one of the most urgent predicaments of our ‘age of global migration’. I also discuss the strength and limitations of the study before closing with a call for more comparative research on the interrelations between migration and urban transformation attentive to human agency.

9.1 Moving Beyond Official Categorization

Profound changes in China’s emigration policy as discussed in chapter 3 have made it possible for Chinese nationals to leave as legal migrants for Canadian metropolitan areas in general and Vancouver in particular. Their socioeconomic profile and places of origin in China are far more complex and diverse than their predecessors more than one and a half centuries ago, or their counterparts from Hong Kong or Taiwan in the 1970s and afterwards. At the turn of the twentieth century, Chinese migrant groups were predominantly from the four counties in Guangdong Province. The majority of them were born into a society deeply rooted in an agrarian mode of production and closely knit by kinship. With immigration, they became coolies, railroad workers, miners, and cannery workers to help build Canada. Disadvantaged in terms of education, language, ethnicity and economic status, they nonetheless had an inventory of social networks and cultural strength that helped to ease the process of settlement in Canada, and to survive the hardship of racism and discriminatory policies (Anderson 1991).
The relatively homogeneous Chinese community at the onset of Vancouver’s history began to change in the late 1960s. In 1967, the Canadian Immigration Act was adopted, which substantially ended the long history of systematic discrimination in selection by ethnicity or country of origin. Groups with desired qualifications such as education and family networks were eligible to immigrate to Canada. Among them were Chinese whose fathers or grandfathers had settled in Canada for decades, as well as those without any family affiliation. Until the late 1970s, political turmoil and poverty allowed only a limited amount of outward migration directly from Mainland China in comparison with the movements of the various Chinese groups from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, and other Southeast and Latin American countries. In 1978, Canada introduced the Business Immigration Program that was later expanded to include the investor category in 1986. Such programs have made it possible for potential migrants with the qualified amount of financial capital to immigrate to Canada. Among the business immigrants were groups from Taiwan and Hong Kong. The number of Taiwanese immigrants reached its peak in the 1990s when the political tension across the Taiwan Strait escalated. With the pending return of Hong Kong to Mainland China in 1997, groups fearing the Communist takeover also immigrated to Canada in the 1980s and early 1990s as business investors or entrepreneurs. Many of them ended up settling in Vancouver.

The manner in which the Canadian state categorized migrant groups has contributed to the socioeconomic diversity of the Chinese community in Vancouver. Public policy research in Canada often relies on official categories of migrants in the formulation of analytical frameworks. Scholars also tend to use the official record as a starting point for their research on settlement and integration issues. While such scholarship offers a useful glimpse of the general trends, I found, however, that state categorization provides little ground to predict the diverse processes and outcomes of integration. Neither do official categories of migration tell much about the objectives and actions of migrants that directly shape and are shaped by the process of urbanization. The tendency to rely on nation-states or ethnic boundaries as the unit of analysis has also been well critiqued by anthropologists, historians and sociologists (e.g. Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; Beck 2000; Glick Schiller 2012). Indeed, scholarship that takes migrant agency as a focal point of study has highlighted the gulf between official categorization of migration and the lived experiences of migrants in the cities (e.g. Mar 2010; Hsu 2000).
Inspired by the limitations and insights in existing literature, I place the agency of migrant groups at the center of my analysis. Migrants use official categories (i.e. skilled workers, family unification, international students, business investors, illegal migrants, etc.) to fulfill their objectives, needs and desires. On the basis of their individual characteristics, such as education, language capacity, social network, financial capital, and so on, they become labeled ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’, ‘desired’ and ‘undesired’, ‘permanent’ and ‘temporary’. Such labeling plays a significant role in shaping the public imagination of what it means to receive migrants, yet sheds little light on the specific structure of opportunities and constraints that migrant groups are embedded in, that shape their integration behaviors and outcomes. The categories under which people immigrated to Canada, for example, serve as poor indicators of individual capacity to adjust to and settle down in a new place. As I have shown, it is the social, political and economic processes in specific localities that condition individual capacity and shape accordingly the diverse prospects of migrant integration in a new place – one of the major scholarly contributions of my research to the fields of migrant integration, urban development and change.

9.2 Empirical Contribution

I depart from empirical works that approach migration and integration issues through grand theories such as neoclassical theory or historical-structural theory. What I have covered in the dissertation is in line with the migration systems theory that “draws a two-way, reciprocal and dynamic link between migration and development” (de Haas 2008, 21). While migration systems theory represents a significant advance on migration theories by putting migratory processes in a broader development perspective, I found the theoretical schema too broad to be applicable in empirical research. Instead, I started with some fundamental questions of human existence, that is, the livelihood strategies of migrant households. I used the stories of my interviewees, their interpretation of meanings, experiences and practices to help me navigate through the migration system that shapes and is shaped by social actions. In other words, I grounded my knowledge about social, economic, political and spatial structures through an inductive approach.

Instead of following the official categorization of immigration to Canada, I set out to examine the role of place in shaping the trajectories of migrant integration. The premise is that specific localities offer very different structures of opportunities that enable individual families to build human capacity (in terms of access to education, employment, language training, capital
accumulation, cultural activities, and so on) and consequently their capacity to adjust to a new life when they migrate elsewhere. In exploring the linkages between political economic characteristics of places and the diversity of migration experiences, I have focused on groups from various places in the People’s Republic of China. This has allowed me to identify specific processes and mechanisms that distinguish those born and raised in rapidly urbanizing China from those identified as ethnic Chinese Canadians yet without any direct experiential knowledge of and linkages with contemporary China’s urban development. This focus has also allowed me to contextualize group differences rather than simply rely on the convenient category of Chinese per se as the marker of identification and distinction.

As chapter 4 suggests, knowledge and lived experiences of urbanization in specific Chinese localities, facilitated by the dense business and social networks between Canada and China, have motivated Chinese nationals to search for a good life in Canadian cities. With migration, Chinese nationals carry with them both material (e.g. personal belongings, financial capital, etc.) and non-material assets (e.g. knowledge, experiences, education) to Canada. Such assets, together with networks and linkages they maintain with places in China, offer very different prospects of survival and flourishing usually without pre-existing social networks in a new place. This consists of a fundamental difference from their predecessors who left their villages in Guangdong through chain migration in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

In chapter 5, I further distinguished Chinese nationals on the basis of localities they come from. I used three cities – Beijing, Shanghai and Zhongshan – to illustrate how migrant groups originating from these places are positioned unequally in terms of access to livelihood production resources prior to arrivals in Vancouver. These cities differ from each other in terms of the proportion of state-owned economy vs. private economy. These differences in turn shape the diversity of groups in terms of political ideology, lifestyle practices, human capacity, expectations and desires. Such diversity is made up of individual migrants who carry their past into the presence wherever they are. Their past and presence shapes ultimately their sense of identity that cannot be easily overcome.

Immigrant groups from these localities serve as point of references to indicate the interactions between migrant integration and structural changes. When transposed to a different socio-political context, group differences represents part of the significant diversity within the so-
called Chinese community. Such differences do not result in a simple reproduction. Instead, individual migrants use their own social networks and resources in innovative ways, engaging in economic activities that would allow them to make a living, even to thrive in a new place. As shown in chapter 6, economic integration of different Chinese migrant groups in Vancouver has given rise to an ethnic economic model including both the traditional type of small self-employed businesses and business growth driven by market globalization, which has not only propelled significant socioeconomic change in local places but also strengthened social and economic ties between Vancouver and urban areas in China. Such ties further channel information back to China through personal networks, family visits, media and popular culture, promoting Vancouver as one of the desirable places for Chinese nationals to settle in.

Evolving from specific urban contexts in China and shaped by Vancouver’s economic structural transformation, social differences manifest themselves spatially throughout the Vancouver region. Such dynamics have compounded the diversity of an already complex Chinese community that, originating from the history of racial discrimination and spatial segregation in Vancouver’s Chinatown, has been significantly transformed under contexts of immigration policy change, urbanization and globalization. In this regard, one might question whether it makes sense to speak of a unitary ‘Chinese community as a whole’ in the first place. Nevertheless, I argue that the diversity and complexity of the Chinese in Vancouver is best understood from a regional perspective, given that the removal of spatial segregation policies has allowed different Chinese groups to settle throughout the region, thus integrating neighbourhoods and municipalities in the region as a whole. In chapter 7, I have relied on statistical evidence to demonstrate the rather fragmented settlement patterns of ethnic Chinese including both Mandarin and Cantonese speakers – a spatial manifestation of socioeconomic diversity within the Chinese in Vancouver. Supported by interviews and quantitative data, I have attributed such spatial distribution to a number of factors including the function of affinity networks, public policies, the continued role of Chinatown in attracting low-income groups, and the substantially different housing markets in specific localities in the region that constrain the locational choice of individual households. The vast differences in socio-economic status manifest themselves in the spatial patterns of Chinese. This settlement pattern suggests the impossibility to demarcate the Chinese as a fixed category with unambiguous economic attributes and conditions of existence.
Social and economic diversity within ‘the Chinese community’ arising from either China and the specific historical trajectory of urban development in Vancouver, or the interactive nature of both, may be quite baffling for the ‘receiving’ society, especially when the ‘local’ is compartmentalized by both bureaucracy and ‘imagined’ racial boundaries inherited from colonialism. In chapter 8, I have offered a critique of such compartmentalization in the City of Vancouver that allegedly has the least affordable housing market in Canadian cities (in contrast to the housing markets of other municipalities in the Vancouver region). I suggest that spatial patterns established by European settlers in the late 19th century, legitimized at the time by the creation of racialized knowledge of difference, are not easily erased. Instead, such patterns and knowledge have evolved and continued to shape the popular imagination of difference between ‘Chinese’ and ‘non-Chinese’, ‘Asian’ and ‘white’, ‘foreign’ and ‘local’. In the context of democracy, city planners in Vancouver have artificially demarcated geographical boundaries of neighbourhoods without taking into consideration the extremely complex multiplicity of the social world. Residents living in the officially bounded neighbourhoods are encouraged to participate in planning processes that concern their own residential neighbourhoods. Yet, such participation is limited in the sense that the fragmented local governance structure is ineffective in addressing anxieties and fear over population growth in which Mainland Chinese constitute a significant portion. Without addressing the diversity within the Chinese through the local planning system, local residents continue to be baffled by the presence of wealthy Chinese alongside impoverished ones in the city as a whole.

Overall, I have taken a multi-scalar approach to identify empirically specific processes, mechanisms and structures that splinter the broad-brushed category of Mainland Chinese into groups characterized by significant socio-economic diversity, complexity and multiplicity of lived experiences. They converge with other Chinese cohorts originating from different histories and places outside Mainland China, making ‘Chinese’ the largest ethnic group in the Vancouver region. These various Chinese form group affinities on the basis of concrete everyday realities in the city, challenging the authoritative, taken-for-granted claims of ‘Chineseness’ and the stale concept of ‘community’ in public debates and policy-making. Despite its internal diversity, ‘Chinese’ as an ethnic category is substantially different from the composition of immigration to other global cities/regions such as Toronto, New York or London where immigrants come from a remarkable diversity of source countries, including Latin America, the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Europe, as well as the broadly-defined Asia.
The pronounced profile of ‘Chinese’ or Asians in general has played an instrumental role in Vancouver’s economic structural transformation. Over the second half of the twentieth century, the large infusion of immigrants from Greater China (including Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau) has consolidated migrant networks established over the previous century. Such networks have helped to transform Vancouver into a dynamic, multicultural region with a cosmopolitan flair. More than perhaps many other Canadian metropolitan regions, Vancouver exemplifies the city-region as a space of flows rather than a durable container of stable industries, social class and communities. Although the Asian connections were well established more than a century ago, it was not until the 1980s when the economy of the Province of British Columbia rapidly deteriorated that municipal, provincial, and federal governments turned to Asia Pacific in which economic growth became a magnet for attention (Hutton 1998). In 1988, the Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-Shing bought the Expo’86 site for inner city redevelopment, which consolidated Vancouver’s identity as the gateway to the Asia-Pacific. In the following decades, Vancouver has undergone profound transformation in terms of its housing markets, social ecology of neighbourhoods, local economy, lifestyle practices and citizenship. As a result of immigration and accompanying capital flow, the substantial socio-economic linkages between Vancouver and cities/regions in the Asia Pacific region, Mainland China in particular, have raised an important issue with respect to the meanings of migrant integration.

9.3 Theoretical Contribution: The Precariousness of Integration

I have presented certain factual conditions under which a great number of Chinese migrants in Vancouver have successfully gone on the path of upward mobility (which is perhaps the rationale for the designation of ‘model minority’ to Chinese in North America), among those whose livelihoods have been made worse off with migration to a city outside China. The lack of homogeneous Chineseness to comprise the diverse experiences of all who can fit into that racial and ethnic category allows me to unsettle the essentialist notions of ‘China’ or ‘Chinese identity’. Neither notions can be demarcated as ontologically stable objects of study with fixed boundaries – be they racial, cultural or geographical. In light of diversity within the cohort of Mainland Chinese that has added substantial complexities to the well-established Chinese community in Vancouver, I want to return to the larger theoretical question of migrant integration, which I consider rather precarious with respect to the Chinese in Canada.
The very conditions of diverse existence among the Chinese provokes us to interrogate the possibility of complete integration or an absolutist definition of integration, no matter how much individual Chinese strive for it, because the desire to integrate and to fit in is often at the same time contradicted by the incapability, reluctance or resistance to adapt and conform. By placing the multiplicity of Mainland Chinese experiences at the center of my research, I have opened up new lines of theorizing about the substantive meaning of integration as opposed to providing positivistic answers to when and how to achieve integration. The impossibility of presenting a coherent, unified trajectory through which one settles down with a definitive sense of belonging attests to the complexity and precariousness of Chinese integration.

Settlement and integration as indeterminate processes in relation to Chinese can be attributed to “the prominent place of ‘China’ in the Western imagination” (Ang 2001, 32) and Chinese essentialism arising from the historical conjunction between China and the West. In the Western imagination, Chinese culture has been imagined as fundamentally different from the West, which helped to legitimize a structure of subordination in relation to Western hegemony. Many Chinese themselves internalize such essentialist construction of cultural difference or otherness in relation to the West. Without denying the relevance of culture, I have provided evidence of opportunity structure to question the assumption of differences in the name of culture, that is, the reliance on Chinese culture as an explanatory factor in social science research. By emphasizing the particular historical and political contexts that informed individual decision-making, I have raised some concerns about the production of cultural knowledge about China or Chinese migrants as some innocent intellectual reflection of a natural reality.

Since Marco Polo’s journey to Asia, the West has been fascinated with China as a great, ‘other’ civilization. Everything happening in that country is imbued with more than ‘normal’ significance, arousing intense interest and scrutiny in the Western imagination (Ang 2001, 32). As a consequence, Chinese in the West continue to find themselves inevitably entangled with the fate of China. In the nineteenth century, a feeble Qing government following the Opium Wars left Chinese defenseless in front of racially-based exclusionary policy, which mobilized diverse and dispersed Chinese groups from different class and religious backgrounds at the turn of the twentieth century to transform their self-consciousness into a collective identity anchored to an imagined community of the ‘Chinese nation’ (中华民族). This Chinese nationalism had its genesis in the historical entanglement between China and the West. It did not necessarily reflect
a longing for return to the ‘motherland’ but possibly the only way for Chinese at the time to better their collective conditions by asserting their solidarity as a minority population in North America. In other words, the appeal to a collective Chinese identity had its political purposes, reflecting a structure of subordination and hegemony originating from the history of European colonialism.

With the presumed ascent of China’s economic power in recent decades, the general social status of Chinese in the West has been elevated, yet not without tensions and contradictions. The nationalist sentiment has instilled a sense of pride among some while alienating others, depriving Chinese of an autonomous space to determine their self-identity, hence, their political positioning. Chinese nationalism has continued to create a gulf among groups clinging to an essentialist notion of Chineseness and those whose sense of Chinese identity is characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty. Such internal antagonism and indifference is opaque to researchers who are unable to explicate the identity politics of Chineseness. In different contexts, Chinese may stage a strategic, positional identity, resorting to different notions of ‘Chinese culture’ for the justification and defense of their political position, which renders the theoretical lens of culture particularly volatile and arbitrary. In other words, the construction of cultural knowledge about Chineseness, and the meaning and representation of Chinese settlement and integration, is a profound political act, fraught with contradictions and inconsistence. By instead emphasizing the particular historical and structural forces, I have resisted the convenient reduction of multiplicity as a seemingly natural racial essence. I have also contributed to the creation of theoretical space to debate the substantive meanings of integration that are capable of inspiring practical policy action and deliberation.

9.4 Lessons Learned: The Complexity of Integrating Migrants in City Life

Problematizing The Notion of ‘Chinese’

In most existing literature on the topic, differences are often subsumed under the broadly objectified category of the ‘Chinese’ irrespective of specific practices, experiences, language, and other historically and culturally specific forms of social existence. The popular assumption is that the general status of the ‘Chinese’ has been elevated from ‘yellow peril’ in a ‘White Canada’ in the past to ‘model minority’ in contemporary ‘multicultural Canadian society’ or ‘Western’ societies in general. The very statement that Canada is now a ‘multicultural nation’ is often
implicitly put forward as evidence that the value of ethnic ‘Chinese’, or ethnic minorities in general, can be fully realized and protected by formally neutral rules and policies.

This linear, homogenizing portrayal of ‘Chinese’ in Canada, especially in large Canadian cities, is extremely problematic. First of all, the formal ending of the White Canada policy followed by the official endorsement of multiculturalism does not address appropriately “the continued operation of racial thinking” that fixes ‘the infinite differences and diversities of human beings through a rigid binary coding’ of ‘white’ versus ‘Asian’, ‘local’ versus ‘foreign’ (Ang 2001, 108). One important indication of such fixity has been the classification of people in the census according to ‘country of birth’ and ‘language spoken at home’. As such, new migrant groups are distinguished among those from ‘China’, ‘Hong Kong’, ‘Taiwan’, ‘Singapore’, ‘Vietnam’, ‘Philippines’, ‘India’, ‘Japan’, ‘Korea’, and so on. The distinction of the Chinese on the basis of source country is fine, but tells little about the specific socioeconomic, political and historical contexts that shape their relations with the immediate environments and their interactions with the ‘receiving’ society. Based on such census data, a great deal of quantitative research was produced by social scientists to study the various aspects of migration and settlement. Groups from these ‘Asian’ countries are designated ethnic identities respectively and simply added to the growing list of ‘ethnic minorities’ making up the increasingly heterogeneous multicultural mix of Canadian society as a nation.

By virtue of substantive attributes (e.g. physical characteristics, country of origin, spoken language, etc.) that ‘Chinese’ or ‘Asians’ in general are alleged to have by nature, the new migrant groups are assumed to have specific dispositions that suit them for some activities but not others. The presumption of ‘Chinese’ as ‘foreign investors’ quoted at the beginning of this dissertation is an example of such. Differences defined by the marker of ethnicity often mean exclusionary opposition. In the realm of real estate in Vancouver, for example, David Ley (2010, 14) describes as the meeting between “Asian modernity” and “nostalgic white settler preferences for Euro-Canadian heritage”. The conceptualization of opposition as such helps to perpetuate, rather than to unsettle, “the racially-based two-tiered structure” (Ang 2001, 104) that distinguishes Europeans from Asians, white from non-white, long-established Anglo residents from newcomers, without providing contextualized understandings of difference, collaboration and solidarity.
Besides, an objectified category of ‘Chinese’ implies blindness to social group differences, which disadvantages those whose everyday life practice and socialized capacities differ from those of the privileged groups. This blindness is most often expressed in official discourse through the inflated use of the ‘Chinese’ community that indeed includes middle-class Chinese and working-class Chinese, men and women, young and old, abled and disabled, Christians and Buddhists, Mandarin-, Cantonese- and other Chinese dialect-speakers, and so on. When there is an ideal of what being Canadian means according to which everyone should be evaluated equally, then it is not surprising that some Chinese Canadians seek to root out association with the less fortunate ones, those who allegedly do not hold up to this ideal. In my research, it was not uncommon for those who had well-established themselves in Canadian society (indicated by their home ownership, language capacity, education level, etc.) to denounce ‘Chinese newcomers’ who would not prove themselves according to rules and standards that had already been set, such as English fluency as a criterion of being Canadian, or proper behavior in public places. The insistence of allegedly neutral rules and standards such as language allows privileged groups especially within the ‘Chinese’ community to continue to ignore the specific history, social processes and institutional arrangements that produce group differences and disadvantages in the first place.

Moreover, the contempt for ‘newcomers’, for example, is particularly salient among those who internalize such standards and rules. The internalization sometimes unfortunately perpetuates a sense of devaluation among individuals who are ashamed of the behavior of other ‘Chinese’. Being Chinese can be easily constructed as a liability or disadvantage of not being ‘fit’ for Canada. The aspiration to become Canadian helps to produce the double consciousness characteristic: on the one hand, the marker of being Chinese easily reminds oneself ‘not to lose face for us Chinese’ (‘不要为中国人丢脸’), an expression that often came up in my interviews; on the other, the seemingly neutral rules and ideals of being Canadian (e.g. English proficiency, certain lifestyle practices, etc.) mean to accept and adopt an identity one is not. This irresolvable dilemma put those identified or identifying themselves as Chinese a constant struggle of identity performance.
Affirming Social Group Differences

Instead of upholding an ideal of general standards and criteria of being Canadian, I embrace the politics of difference, as Iris Marion Young (1990, 166) argued, a politics asserting that different social groups “have distinct cultures, experiences, and perspectives on social life with humanly positive meaning, some of which may even be superior to the culture and perspectives of mainstream society.” This ideal is in sharp contrast to the conformist notion of integration in which status quo institutions and norms are assumed as given and disadvantaged groups such as migrant newcomers who differ from those norms are expected to accept and conform to them (Young 1990, 165). Such a conformist ideal reproduces rather than undermines the established patterns of privilege and disadvantage. In the political struggle for difference, on the other hand, as Young (1990, 166) argued, the assertion of values and specificities of their attributes allow disadvantaged groups to challenge the norms of dominant groups as neutral and universal and those of the Other as deviant and inferior. The assertion of positive group differences introduces the possibility of understanding group relations as merely difference, instead of exclusion and opposition.

In Young’s conceptualization, difference emerges “not as a description of the attributes of a group” but as “a function of the relations between groups and the interaction of groups with institutions.” (Young 1990, 171) In this relational understanding, the meaning of difference demands contextualized understandings that have the potential to undermine essentialist assumptions. In the context of rapid urbanization in some Chinese cities, for example, the specific mechanisms to motivate some groups to emigrate out of their home place are different from groups who left Britain for North Americas during the Industrial Revolution, but the groups compared are not different in many other aspects, such as the desire for a better way of life both for themselves and for their next generation. Relational understanding of group difference as such helps to overcome the assumption that difference implies the lack of overlapping experiences and common grounds for collaboration. In other words, different groups always potentially share some attributes, experiences and goals. In Vancouver, for example, a discerning researcher would easily find the intermingling of people of different skin colors and different accents on the streets, at restaurant tables, coffee shops, community centers, and many other public places as well as private households.
Such a relational understanding of difference suggests the limits of identity politics. The preoccupation with demarcating the line between ‘Chinese’ and ‘non-Chinese’, ‘Canadian’ and ‘non-Canadian’, ‘Asian’ and ‘Western’ – that is, the setting of boundaries to mark who belongs and who does not – is problematic because attributes or criteria to maintain such boundaries are hardly fixed (Ang 2001, 172). As people go through a social process of interaction and mutual learning, they come to have a particular affinity with groups with whom they feel the most comfortable because they share similar experiences and aspirations. The salience of a person’s group identity may shift according to the social environments or changes in his or her life, which renders the adherence of a set of fixed attributes or identities inflexible or even suffocating. Chinese identity, for example, can be a double-edged sword: the association with an economically strong China is empowering but also a liability. Being Chinese may invoke different sentiments, depending on the specific social contexts and historical points. Moving beyond the politics of identity, I argue for a democratic, voluntary membership in a community, be it a social group, a residential neighbourhood or the nation as ‘an imagined community”, that would be a function of subjective affirmation of affinity among group members without exclusion.

Towards Regional Governance

With respect to geographical scales, group differences within the so-called ‘Chinese’ community and the function of group affinity are most visible and best understood at the regional level. As discussed in chapter 7, ethnic ‘Chinese’ settle all over the Vancouver region, which highlights the dilemma of small unit governance as practiced in the City of Vancouver (see chapter 8). The City of Vancouver is officially divided into 23 neighbourhoods. From 1993 to 1995, the City engaged more than 20,000 residents to develop a shared vision for Vancouver’s future, which became the official planning framework of CityPlan. To bring CityPlan to the neighbourhood level, the Community Visions Program was launched in 1997. In total, the City has completed eight Community Visions, through which 17 “neighbourhood centers” were identified for shopping, services and new housing types (City of Vancouver, n.a.).

The neighbourhood unit of democratic governance has unique virtues and functions. The smaller the number of people participating in public policy-making, the more influence potentially each member has over decisions in the process. In small geographical settings (such as within walking
distance), members have more opportunities to know and directly interact with other members face-to-face, to create dense networks of associations. As organized by the City, residents have easier access to meetings, hearings, planners and other public servants who implement policy decisions. Thus, residents are able most easily to monitor the implementation of policies and hold public officials accountable. Neighbourhood units of governance can best encourage and enable the active participation of residents in raising issues, shaping policy agenda, and implementing policies designed through democratic processes of public deliberation.

In today’s complex society, however, small units of neighbourhood governance could function to separate people administratively who dwell together in environments affected by shared structural processes and causal relations. The illusion of neighbourhood autonomy encourages rather than undermines planning decisions at the expense of many neighboring communities who have no say in these decisions. Moreover, in the case of the City of Vancouver, neighbourhood planning also facilitates the entrenchment of certain essentialist stereotypes about the ‘Chinese’. For example, the high-profile conflict in the 1990s over housing in the up-scale neighbourhoods of Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale where long-established Anglo residents resorted to zoning policies to preserve their housing and lifestyle (e.g. Mitchell 1996) reflected the anxiety about the loss of symbolic control over the meaning of place. Such fear and conflict is specific to a group of ‘wealthy Hong Kong Chinese’ living in some particular neighbourhoods. It risks fueling racist sentiments if we generalize the housing conflicts in the specific context of upper-class neighbourhoods to the ‘Chinese’ in the city or region at large.

The scope of governance, as I have learned through the lens of migrant integration, ought to be the metropolitan region in which different ‘Chinese’ migrant groups cluster not only in the centers of high population density but also in low-density areas, according to affinities of religion, cultural preference, or way of life. They travel across the region frequently for work, school, play, shop, and visit family and friends. They dwell in their neighbourhoods but also in the whole region, which reflects the general patterns of urban development. The convergence of such relations and activities requires that municipalities making up the Vancouver region as a whole take the interests of others in the region into account. A set of regional governance institutions needs to coordinate and enforce this requirement. At present, the fragmented nature of the regional governance structure as discussed in chapter 7 does not seem to allow effective
procedures for negotiations and cooperation among municipalities for more effective and equitable distribution of services and resources.

9.5 Strength and Limitations of The Dissertation

As someone born in Mainland China and educated in Canada, I sort of fit into the category of what Ien Ang (2001, 4) considered a “migrant intellectual”, always and inevitably undergoing “a process of cross-cultural translation”. This dissertation draws on my own particular experiences with “living in translation” when I move among places and cultural systems. I maintain a heightened sense of suspicion when scholars subsume the extremely complex histories, geographies, societies and people within the socially-constructed, homogenizing categories of ‘Asia’ or ‘the West’. I know, commonsensically, that I am (positioned as) an Asian, or more precisely a Chinese in the West, but I do not have an unambiguously felt identification with both: the dramatic changes in Chinese society always left me a sense of being out-of-place during the occasional family visits to Guangdong; I live in a period when the West views the ‘resurgence of non-Western cultures’ with awe and anxiety, which entails experiences very different from my predecessors who have lived through the periods when Asia was firmly associated with “Third World backwardness in the Western imagination” (Ang 2001, 5).

This ambivalence of insider/outsider in both places has led me to pay particular attention to the space of complicated entanglement and collaboration rather than opposition, offering a unique angle to research issues of integration and urban change. In my opinion, attention to ambivalence and entanglement has been long overdue for ‘the West’ that is trapped in the irrevocable dilemma of engaging with ‘Asian’ countries, China in particular: on the one hand, governments in Canada have greatly welcomed Chinese and other Asian migrants as human assets for labor and economic capital; on the other, there is a subtle sense of suspicion about the social and political impacts of the new arrivals. In the context of such a paradox, my dissertation research is a small step towards building some mutual understanding between western and Asian audiences.

In addition to the unique perspective offered in my dissertation thanks to my own social positioning, I have been able to take advantage of my local knowledge about the several Chinese cities I lived in and Vancouver where I’ve been a resident for the past eleven years. My multilingual, multicultural capacity has allowed me to build connections of trust with my research participants in multiple research sites. Yet, due to the limited funding and time, I have
not been able to dedicate my energy more evenly in both the China and the Vancouver sides as I had hoped. Issues of integration are far more complicated than I had imagined, not because of the lack of academic literature on relevant subjects that I could consult, but because of the inherent moral standards and expectations constructed by Anglo scholars. The methodological and conceptual barriers at the outset of the research, compounded by the complexities of issues under examination, has made the writing about the various parts of the project daunting and difficult.

9.6 Possible Directions for Future Research

I want to conclude my dissertation by offering some thoughts on possible directions for future comparative research. Research projects that are not explicitly comparative actually contain comparative elements, as researchers go about selecting cases and analyzing data. We agree with literature that makes sense to us while disputing others. The study of migrant settlement and integration in cities would have been meaningless if we do not have some types of non-migrants as the yardsticks for comparison. Well-designed comparative research has the potential of heightening the awareness of some implicit assumptions and prejudices.

For future research, one way of comparison may be to focus on Chinese settlements in cities of different political culture and history. For example, many metropolitan areas in Southeast Asian countries and the Americas have long histories of Chinese migration. They have become the major receiving places of migrants from the rapidly urbanizing areas of Mainland China. The processes of settlement and integration of different Mainland Chinese groups pose very interesting comparisons with the experiences of Vancouver under very different national and geographical contexts. The path dependency function of institutional structures, the complexities of the established Chinese communities, and the specific geo-politics that the cities are situated within may subject Chinese newcomers to different policy treatments, attitudes, and expectations. One example may be the contrasting experiences of Mainland Chinese newcomers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Vancouver where the changing institutions under the British colonization and subsequent periods have created very different social, economic and political environments that newcomer groups from various places in China have come into contact with.
Another comparison may be between cities of relatively similar political economic characteristics (e.g. the institutionalization of democratic procedures and culture, etc.) but with very different Chinese migration histories, such as many North American cities in contrast to those in Europe where Chinese settlements have been of a relatively new phenomenon, a matter of some thirty years or less. The comparison between cities with and without long-established Chinese communities may help to sort out the ways that community resources may contribute to the different integration processes.

Much as migration flows between China and other parts of the world are not the only forces shaping global migration dynamics, future research may also take into consideration the role of sending places for comparison. As emphasized in my dissertation, the city that a migrant comes from plays a significant role in shaping the settlement patterns because different urbanization levels entail very different structure of opportunities and constraints. This is in contrast to many comparative studies that tend to highlight specific group attributes such as immigrants’ ethnicity, religious affiliation, education level, class position, labor market outcome, and so on. By highlighting places that migrants originate from, we may have a better sense of macro-level forces that constrain the capacity-development of migrants, thus a more humanistic understanding of difference and possible policy intervention to help migrants to adjust to a new life.

To conclude, the case of migrant linkages between places in China and Vancouver would, of course, benefit from more comparative studies of other geographical contexts, hopefully to provide more knowledge on the complex dynamics between migration and urbanization. The accumulative knowledge of such dynamics provides indispensable tools for planners to devise effective policies for the management of the shared geographical space. Nonetheless, by examining the urban processes and actual practices of migrants who make places for themselves and the communities they feel belonging to, I have offered an innovative approach to urban transformation and migrant integration issues. I am confident that by paying more attention to the intersection of both, future research will contribute to a better understanding of ways that social and community planners may adopt to mediate the many conflicts associated with the arrivals of newcomers in metropolitan regions.
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(accessed on September 18, 2012).


Appendix A: List of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Period</th>
<th>Number of Interviews</th>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage One: March – July 2011</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in the Norquay area</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 from Beijing; 6 non-Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents living adjacent to the Norquay area</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 from Guangzhou; 1 from Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business owners in the Norquay area</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 from Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban planners from the City of Vancouver</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 from Hong Kong; 4 non-Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage Two: June 2011 – July 2012</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in Richmond</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4 from Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in Burnaby</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4 from Shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in Surrey</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>None from Shanghai, Beijing or Zhongshan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in Vancouver</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6 from Zhongshan; 4 from Beijing; 3 from Shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in West Vancouver</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 from Shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Interviews</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Sample Interview Questions

Interviews with Chinese residents

1. Can you tell me about yourself (e.g. age, level of education, previous occupation before immigration, year of landing in Canada, birthplace, marital status, family members in Vancouver, number of children, etc.)?
2. How do you make a living here?
3. How often do you talk to your family members or friends in China? How frequent do you travel back to China?
4. Can you describe your experiences of living in China?
5. Can you describe your everyday life to me?
6. Why did you decide to immigrate to Canada?
7. How has settlement in a new society impacted upon your family life?
8. How would you compare the quality of your life before and after you immigrated to Canada?
9. How long have you been living in this neighbourhood? What is it like to be living in this neighbourhood?
10. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations? What community activities do you participate in?
11. From your perspective, what changes in the neighbourhood or the city are desirable and what are not? What do you think the city or the government should have done to prevent undesirable changes?
12. Can you tell me one or two experiences that have helped you feel at home since you arrived in Canada?
13. What would you want to achieve for yourself and/or your children in 5 years? How about 10 years?

Interview with non-Chinese residents

1. Can you tell me about yourself (e.g. age, level of education, occupation, birthplace, marital status, family composition, etc.)?
2. Can you describe your everyday life to me?
3. How long have you been living in this neighbourhood? What is it like to be living here?
4. What have motivated you to participate in the neighbourhood planning process?
5. In your opinion, what are the barriers for people not to get involved in the neighborhood planning process?
6. In your opinion, what are the desirable changes in the neighbourhood/city and what are not? What do you think the government should have done to cope with undesirable changes?
7. What’s your opinion on the fact that the city is receiving more and more migrants from Mainland China?
8. How would you compare living in the city 10 or 20 years ago and now?
9. What would you envision the city would be like in 10 years?
10. Do you have any suggestions or thoughts on community life that you would like to share with me?

**Interview with Urban Planners**

1. What is your education and training background?
2. Can you describe to me your work responsibilities?
3. What have been the positive and/or negative changes in the neighbourhood?
4. What are the known concerns and issues in the neighbourhood and how have they been addressed in the planning process?
5. How has the city coped with increased population?
6. What are the policies well received by neighbourhood residents? And what policies or initiatives are resisted by residents? How does the city cope with resistance from residents?
7. In your opinions, what are the impacts of migrant settlement upon community building?
8. What policy initiatives do you think are most effective in helping migrants to settle in the city? What do you think are the barriers for migrants to settle and feel at home in the city?
9. Any thoughts on community planning that you would like to share with me?