Experiences of Chinese Academics

Working at an Australian Regional University

an Embedded Case Study

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Declaration

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted either in whole or in part for a degree at CQUniversity or any other tertiary institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the material presented in this thesis is original except where due reference is made in text.

Signed:

Date: March 2013
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Abstract

Globalisation and international migration can be found among many professions and occupations. Australian universities are employing academics with international experiences, plus international academics with experience of other educational systems. While there is increasing body of research about the experiences of international students in Australian universities, there is limited research concerning experiences of international academics, especially those of Chinese origin. This study explores and documents the experiences of nine Chinese academics working at a regional Australian university. An embedded case study approach enabled an analysis of interview data where the experiences of these academics were examined in relation to the changing social and political contexts within the People's Republic of China since 1949 and the HE context in Australia.

This study found that these academics began their educational journeys in China with eventual migration to Australia. All nine academics possessed higher education qualifications and a proven research capacity that enabled them gain academic positions at the regional university. Their experiences of the Australian higher education system varied and this demonstrated a range of personal and professional adjustments in order to gain a permanent position in a regional university. Therefore this study contributes to an area where there is little systematic research on Chinese academic migration generally, but more specifically the potential impact of the Chinese academics in Australian institutions.

Key words: globalisation, highly skilled international migration, transnational scholars, Chinese academics, an embedded case study
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Chapter 1       Identification of Topic Area

1.1 Introduction: Setting the scene for my research

("If, metaphorically, Australia rode to prosperity on the back of a sheep in the
last century our skill in riding the Chinese dragon will determine our
prosperity in this century" (Dupont, 2011, p. 1).

This thesis is about Chinese academics who have migrated to Australia to work in a
regional university. The thesis chronicles their educational journeys from primary
education to postgraduate status and the factors that enabled them to move to
Australia. The study reported in this thesis then deals with people who were part of
that wave of immigrants who used their Western oriented educational capacity to join
the global movement of skilled workers.

A report in Australia Business Forum (2011, September) states that the bulk of
Chinese migrants are living in Sydney and Melbourne. Most of them elected to reside
in Australia as China undertook its modernization phase after the Mao years. The
numbers of wealthy migrants to countries such as Australia, Canada and the US
steadily increased after 1990 (Chance, 2012). In that period, Chinese immigrants left
China “for their children’s sakes, to escape the narrow and harshly competitive
Chinese educational system for the broader and often less demanding programs on
offer at universities in Australia, Canada, Europe and the US” (Chance, 2012, p. 9).
Many saw the opportunity for their children to develop English skills alongside
students for whom English is their first language. Others migrated in response to
population pressures. They sought greater opportunities especially in Western
countries which are, in response, tightening their immigration requirements. These
days, China is in the midst of a powerful and sustained economic expansion and it can be predicted that the pressure to immigrate will lessen.

At the end of 2011, 391,060 China-born people were living in Australia; and China is the third largest migrant community in Australia after the United Kingdom and New Zealand, equivalent to 6.5 percent of Australia’s overseas-born population and 1.8 percent of its total population (Department of Immigration and Citizenship of Australian Government, 2012). In 2011–2012, there were 25,509 China-born permanent compared to only 8473 migrants in 2000–2001, additions to the Australian resident population, making China the third largest source country of new migrants to Australia (Department of Immigration and Citizenship of Australian Government, 2012). Hugo (2008a, p. 1) contends that a “significant number of university teachers and researchers are migrating from China and India to Australia and this phenomenon is likely to experience substantial increase in the flow to meet the projected requirements in Australian universities.” It is this context that provides the rich and dynamic background for my research.

1.2 The research questions

My interest in the area was generated by the fact that an increasing number of Chinese academics work in Australian universities. I became curious about how a relatively large number were employed in a regional setting. Accordingly, this study was guided by the following research questions:

*RQ (1) What are the ‘educational journeys’ of nine Chinese academics who now work in a regional Australian university?*

*RQ (2) What are the ‘academic experiences’ of these Chinese academics?*
In Chapter Three, I refine these questions so that they apply to nine Chinese academics at Regional University X.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the research

The principal aim of this research was to examine and document the patterns of experiences of the nine Chinese academics working at Regional University X. The objective of this research was to present a multiple (embedded) case study that reflected what it has been like for my participants across their respective educational journeys that ultimately led them to be working at a regional Australian university. To ensure the anonymity of the respondents, and the confidentiality of the information that they provided, throughout the thesis this University will be referred to as Regional University X.

Regional University X has had global university aspirations. I considered the research topic to be timely. I took the position that by documenting the educational journeys of Chinese academics, I would uncover how Chinese academics managed to find work in a regional Australian university. Also, in doing so I predicted, my study would to some extent reveal the socio-cultural experiences they had in reaching such a goal. The significance of this study is reflected in the following section.

1.4 Significance of the research

In Australia, “more than half of the $14.2 billion annual income from overseas education comes from the top five source countries of China, India, South Korea, Vietnam and Malaysia, with $ 3 billion from education exports to China alone” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2008, as cited in Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008, p. 87). In 2010, according to Australian Education International, international education contributed $18.6 billion in export income, representing an 8.1
percent increase on the $17.2 billion earning for the 2008-2009 financial year (Australian Education International, 2009). These figures show that “Australia’s economy is irrevocably linked with world developments and events, with increasing flows of people, information, trade and finances crossing national boarders” (Bradley, et al., 2008, p. 88).

The combined impacts of the expansion and globalisation of higher education are usually discussed in relation to students and their mobility. In contrast, Kim and Locke (2010) highlight that research into the experiences of academics is limited. Similarly Yang and Welch (2010) confirm there has been little research concerning the experiences of Chinese academics in Australia, especially in regional universities. This finding reinforced my concern to focus on the patterns of experiences of Chinese academics.

This literature about highly skilled migrants is dominated by economic perspectives. I elected to use a ‘cultural’ model. This model is a trend in the mainstream literature that places migration into a broad social and cultural context (Richmond, 1995). Accordingly, I place emphasis on the interplay between the Chinese cultural elements in the background experiences of the researched and the academic culture of a regional Australian university. My approach emphasizes characteristics and experiences of the nine Chinese academics that have chosen to move to a regional Australian university. Their own accounts of the academic experiences are mediated through their negotiating different Chinese and Australian university academic corporate culture. Their educational journeys comprise both Western and post-Mao politics and on-going Confucian traditions.
The conditions of life in China while the nine participants were undertaking their education encouraged the development of Appadurai (1996, p. 33) calls an ‘academic imagination’. According to Appadurai (1996, p. 33) ‘academic imagination’ is a social force that works across national boundaries and for the participants of this study, provided an initial driver for journeys that had different contexts. As such, the thesis deals with attitudes and skills required to succeed including those identified by Coyler and Shortland (1992): mobility, personal relationships, career development, cultural balance, cross-cultural skills and the ability to take a worldview.

1.5 Personal reasons associated with the research

This research was important to me personally for a number of reasons. First, I worked at a Chinese University as an academic and administrator for 22 years before moving to Australia. Moreover, in 2005, I obtained a scholarship from the China Scholarship Council and in 2006, visited the then Regional University X as a Visiting Scholar for six months. In that year, there were three other Chinese visitors in the host Faculty as well. All of us experienced a unique set of challenges, demands and rewards from being in such an unfamiliar setting. The experience deepened my insights into the kinds of issues that Chinese academics face when they were appointed to the university.

These experiences of my own workplace adjustment in 2006 included my level of functional English proficiency that was suitable for everyday life, but weak in academic matters; an inadequate knowledge of local culture and customs, and difficulties in networking in the Australian academic community. The different food and lifestyles frustrated me in the beginning. Fortunately, I worked my way through the challenges and I completed my research activities at Regional University X. On
my return to China, four additional visiting scholars from my institution visited the Faculty at Regional University X. The importance of such networking will be discussed in a later chapter.

Since the 1980s, the Chinese government has provided millions of overseas scholarships to intellectuals as part of the modernization of education policy that China has implemented (see Chapter Four). Regional University X has hosted many such visiting scholars from China.

My experiences indicated that Chinese academics as a group, were already well-educated, mostly had full-time positions and had participated in training and career development opportunities at the time of their recruitment to Regional University X. One might ask why they chose to work in a regional Australian university. Given the talent, skill, and international breadth that such people offer a university, it is relevant to critically examine the kinds of experiences that led them to this regional university.

These are some of the motivations that drove my current research interests, reinforced by the fact that there has been little research on Chinese academics working in Australian universities (Yang & Welch, 2010). Given the growing globalisation trends and global flows of people (Appadurai, 1996), it could be argued that one outcome of the growing relationships between China and Australia will be greater staff mobility between higher education institutions in both countries. The significance of my investigation will increase if such a trend eventuates.

1.6 Thesis structure

This thesis is organized as seven chapters. Chapter One sets the scene for the study through establishing its scope and significance. Chapter One also identifies the
research background and questions, the stated aim and objective and an overview of my personal motivations to do this study.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature related to the research questions. The chapter also considers recent trends in Chinese academic immigration to UK, the US, Australia and other countries. Chapter Two identifies the gaps in the literature that this study attempts to address.

In Chapter Three, a multiple-case (embedded) design case study is highlighted and justified as the main methodological approach to the interview study of nine Chinese academics working on the main campus of Regional University X. Data collection and analysis techniques are also discussed.

Chapter Four presents two sections: the interplay of Chinese educational policy and an overview of China's changing socio-economic and political development along with the associated educational reforms in the post-Cultural Revolution period; and vignettes that explore the individual educational journeys of the nine participants.

Chapter Five provides a cross case analysis of the individual case studies presented in Chapter Four. This chapter looks at the educational journeys of the nine participants in the context of the political, economic and educational policies since the year of 1949 as one context of a whole case study. The findings of the study under specific themes such as schoolings, the English language, universities and scholarships then that were identified through the analysis of the data are discussed.

Chapter Six documents what it is like to work in Chinese and Australian academia. This chapter also sketches the difference between Chinese and Australian universities
and how these participants have become international academics. Challenges and experiences are also presented while living and working in regional Australia.

Chapter Seven provides my interpretation of the findings and the conclusions of this study. The discussion is related back to the research questions driving this study and highlights implications arising from this study. The concluding chapter also sheds light on the direction for further research into Chinese academics working at regional Australian universities.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review selected literature about international migration, globalisation and internationalisation, transnational academic mobility and Chinese academics in Australian universities. A library database search demonstrated that there has been considerable research about the experiences of international students, and new cultural environments highlighting adjustment and language issues for international students (Thuraisingam & Singh, 2010; Kim & Locke, 2010; Frew, 2006). However, there is less work about the issues of interest to this study. More generally, as the United Nations (2009, 432) pointed out “at present, there is no single, coherent history of international migration, only a fragmented set of theories that have developed largely in isolation from one another, sometimes but not always segmented by disciplinary boundaries.”

It will be recalled that the aim of this study is to examine and describe the experiences of a group of nine Chinese academics working at a regional Australian university. With the intention of investigating their experiences, the literature review was based on peer reviewed studies published since the 1990s and studies linked to international migration, globalisation and internationalisation, transnational mobility of highly skilled academics and Chinese academics at Australian universities. The review located the study in such literature while describing the major concepts used in the study.

2.2 International migration

In this section, I draw on Massey, Arango, Hugo, Koaouci, Pellegrion and Taylor’s (1993) account of labour migration to illustrate the scope of the thesis. This account is
coherent and systematic and allows me to describe the migration setting without
losing the thread of the argument.

It is said that people are motivated “to move where they can be most productive,
given their skills, investments, cost of living and looking for jobs, the effort involved
in learning a new language and culture”, the difficulty of adapting a new labour
market, and the mental costs of cutting old binds and creating new ones (Massey,
Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrion & Taylor, 1993, p. 434). These authors go on to
say that the theory of international migration was developed originally to explain
labour migration in the process of economic development (Massey et al., 1993).

Massey et al. (1993, p. 431) argue that “over the past 30 years, immigration has
emerged as a major force throughout the world.” They describe traditional
immigration-receiving countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States in
which the numbers have grown and “its composition has shifted decisively away from
Europe, the historically dominant source, toward Asia, Africa and Latin America”
(Massey et al, 1993, p. 431). Migrants to Australia used to come from Europe but
nowadays there is more migration from China, India, Japan, Korea and Malaysia. As
Khoo, Hugo and McDonald (2010, p. 550) state “the so-called traditional immigration
countries (US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) have a distinctive place in the
global international migration system.” These four countries are still the most likely
destinations for migrants.

Massey et al. (1993, p. 433) further explain that “theories conceptualize causal
processes at different levels of analysis — the individual, the household, the national,
and the inter-national; they cannot be assumed, a priori, to be inherently
incompatible.” They point out that international migration follows the political and
economic organization of an expanding global market, a view that emerges from the following five distinct hypotheses:

1. “International migration is a natural consequence of capitalist market formation in the developing world; the penetration of the global economy into peripheral regions is the catalyst for international movement.” (Massey et al., 1993, p. 447)

2. “The international flow of labour follows the international flow of goods and capital, but in the opposite direction. Capitalist investment foments changes that create an uprooted, mobile population in peripheral countries while simultaneously forging strong material and cultural links with core countries, leading to transnational movement.” (Massey et al., 1993, p. 447)

3. “International migration is especially like between past colonial powers and their former colonies, because cultural, linguistic, administrative, investment, transportation, and communication links were established and were allowed to develop free from outside competition during the colonial era, leading to the formation of specific transnational markets and cultural systems.” (Massey et al., 1993, p. 447)

4. “Since international migration stems from the globalisation of the market economy, the way for governments to influence immigration rates is by regulating flows of capital and goods. Such policies, however, tend to incite international trade disputes, risk world economic recession, and antagonize multinational firms with substantial political resources that can be mobilized to block them.” (Massey et al., 1993, p. 448)

5. “International migration ultimately has little to do with wage rates or employment differentials between countries; it follows from the dynamics of
market creation and the structure of the global economy.” (Massey et al., 1993, p. 448)

I interpret these points as necessary but not sufficient concepts for this thesis. That is, international migration is irrevocably part of globalised markets that attract labour forces and bring cultural traditions together. To some extent, then, this conceptual perspective is illustrated by the educational journeys of the participants in this study. The perspective is developed by the following remarks.

Koser and Salt (1997, p. 285) state that “skilled migration” was established in the study of international migration in the 1980s and research on highly skilled migration began in the middle-1960s, “stimulated by fears that the British economy was suffering a scientific brain drain, largely to the US.” Later it was also prompted by political changes in Eastern Europe and the concern to improve economic performance by encouraging immigration by highly skilled workers (Borjas, 1990). Accordingly, Koser and Salt (1997, p. 286) point out that the internationalisation of higher education has consequences for the migration of students.

In Chapter One, the role of networks was emphasized. Poros (2001) describes how skilled migration networks are often based on personal links. Such links affect the intending migrants’ occupation or post-migration job choice as they attempt to remain with familiar cultural surroundings. In contrast, Poros (2001) also illustrates that the growth of migration patterns involving a mixture of personal networks and organizational ties may make possible successful occupational routes by way of channelling people into the most suitable jobs abroad.

Vertovec (2002) focuses on the role of networks in migration and the nature of transnationalism and patterns, process and the impact of transnational networks on the
movement of skilled workers. This builds on the work of Boyd (1989, p. 641) where much of the network approach to migration has been outlined:

"Networks connect migrants and non-migrants across time and space. Once begun, migration flows often become self-sustaining, reflecting the establishment of networks of information, assistance and obligations which develop between migrants in the host society and friends and relatives in the sending area. These networks link populations in origin and receiving countries and ensure that movements are not necessarily limited in time, unidirectional or permanent."

Vertovec (2002, p. 3) draws attention to "concepts, patterns and issues surrounding kinds of transnational networks involving highly skilled workers". He states that "social networks are crucial for finding jobs and accommodation, circulating goods and services, as well as psychological support and continuous social and economic information." Vertovec’s (2002) empirical work supports the view that schools and universities are a primary source of skilled migrant networks, especially among people who have completed degrees abroad.

The importance of Vertovec’s (2002, p. 7) work is that he advocates a shift from discussing skilled worker circulation as “brain drain” to one of globalisation of human capital, brain exchange, brain circulation and the creation of a global mobile workforce. Similarly, the United Nations (UNFPA & IMP, 2004) demonstrates how international migration is a part of the globalisation phenomenon and also shapes the development process. The term “brain drain” is a potential agent of development (Adams, 2003, p. 1) in both a negative and positive sense as one country loses while another gains.
Vertovec (2002, p. 5) proposes that “migration networks based on organizational ties (schools, professional associations, agencies) serve better to match skill levels and jobs, although they are open for competition and therefore less certain in conditioning migration outcomes.” In my study, such networking and organisational connections are crucial elements in the educational journeys of the nine participants. Chapters Five and Six show that these points are directly related to the two research questions. The educational journeys and academic experiences of the nine participants are shown to be involved with networks and international discipline associations.

The notion of Human Resources or personnel is core components of the network theory. The OECD Canberra Manual (1995, p. 19) defines Human Resources in Science and Technology (HRST) in University–level are people who fulfil one or other of the following conditions:

a) “Successfully completed education at the third level of the type that leads to a first or postgraduate university degree or equivalent, in an S & T field of study; or”

b) “Not formally qualified as above, but employed in an S & T occupation where the above qualifications are normally required”.

Hugo (2004) argues that the labour market for such highly skilled people has become increasingly international and highly selective. A broad range of people might then be identified as highly skilled migrants.

Koser and Salt (1997, p. 288) argue that the definition of “highly skilled” and “migrant” further complicate the wide range of people who may be defined as highly skilled migrants. There are issues in constructing “meaningful schemes based on individual characteristics and the circumstances within which moves take place”
(Koser & Salt, 1997, p. 288). In addition, Koser and Salt (1997, p. 288) distinguish between twelve categories of migrants, of which one is “academics, including researchers and students, in institutions of higher education.” The category depends mainly on their positions in the labour market (Koser & Salt, 1997) and includes students in institutions in official statistics and discourse. They go on to say that in the absence of official statistics, most research on the highly skilled has either generated its own survey data or used survey information provided by others.

I adopt these words “movement” and “mobility” as appropriate terms (Koser & Salt, 1997, p. 288) as framing ideas when referring to the people described in this thesis. I do this because the word migration has connotations of permanency or long-term stay, whereas the movement of many highly skilled persons tends today to be intermittent and short-term (Koser & Salt, 1997, p. 288) despite many cases of longer stays in countries distinct from the country of origin. In reference to academic workers, it is frequently the case that they elect to remain in the new country once they are acculturated, their careers are established and their national and international networks are operational (Koser & Salt, 1997). Hugo’s (2008b) study shows that there is a relationship between non-permanent migration and eventual permanent settlement in Australia, especially with students.

The combination of the concept of social network with the idea of movement is crucial for understanding the educational journeys of the nine academics referred to in this study. Together, these ideas encompass finding a job and accommodation, circulating their academic expertise and reputations, as well as providing psychological support and continuous social and economic information about discipline areas, research and teaching (Koser & Salt, 1997).
In summary, in this section I have shown that international movement, social networks, and highly skilled attributes in the context of globalisation offer a way of understanding the academic journeys of the participants in my study. In this sense, and in the particular circumstances of these participants, international academic mobility and Chinese academic development are major drivers of a globalised labour force. I now turn to the second section of the literature review.

2.3 Globalisation and internationalisation

It is generally believed that everyone lives in a global village. Anthropologists, sociologists and economists recognize that globalisation has noticeably changed the world. Luke (2005, p. 159) states that “in the last two decades, the multinational and transnational turn in economics, populations, and cultures has had powerful impacts on public institutions industrial and post-industrial states in the North and West.” Leung (2011, p. 475) notes that “the movement of international academic and human capital, students, knowledge and ideas has been facilitated by the ever more rapid and affordable transportation and communication technology in the increasingly interconnected world.”

Appadurai’s (1996) work introduces a further component for explaining the academic journey of my participants. He examines cultural dimensions such as diaspora and movements of cultural products as key elements of modernity and globalisation. In addition, globalisation is described as both homogenization and heterogenization. This approach highlights both sameness and difference in today’s globalised world as a partial consequence of migration and media. Migrating people and media, particularly television, produce different cultural spheres in different countries by contributing to differences as well as homogenization. This, he claims, is a new
framework for understanding the complexity and messiness of an emergent global cultural economy (Appadurai, 1996).

This complication of global cultural flows has deep effects on what Appadurai (1996, p. 42) calls the “production of locality” and the “production of local subjectivity”. What this means is that the movement of people around the world significantly influences both the nature of the place where they live and the consciousness of the people who live there. In short, Appadurai (1996) makes the common sense claim that local people respond to the flow of new people into a local area as well as experiencing changes in their subjectivity as an effect of having different cultures in their locality. The playing out of these trends in the lives of the nine participants is clearly observed in the comments they made to me. Chapter Six contains the relevant descriptive data.

Appadurai (1996, p. 33) proposes that there are five different global cultural flows: “ethnoscapes” (movement of people), “mediascapes” (movement of media), “technoscapes” (movement of technology), “fiancescapes” (movement of money), and ‘ideoscapes” (movement of ideas). These various scapes suggest an alternative postmodern spatial rendering of the present, one that is not fixed as a typical landscape, but one that is diverse, unexpected and full of movement. Appadurai (1996, p. 31) goes on to suggest that “imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order.” In other words, imagination is constituted and affected by the various scapes and is a driver of migration. I make the point later that the post Mao and post Cultural Revolution period in China had a similar effect on the nine participants.
Internationalisation at different levels in higher education creates rapid change in universities (Marginson, 2004, 2006 & 2007; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Bradley et al., 2008) where institutional rather than governmental schemes have encouraged movement of students, staff, study programs and curricula. In this way, universities are affected by globalisation and internationalisation while influencing them (Marginson, 2007).

Kim (2010) argues that much of the research on internationalisation, especially in the UK, Australia and elsewhere, has focused on student experiences, and has missed the analysis of international academic staff in the universities. Therefore, internationalisation can be seen as more than just the movement of international students (Kim, 2010).

Therefore it could be argued that the university is a site of cultural flows and what Appadurai (1996, p. 33) describes as “ethnoscapes”, “technoscapes” and “ideoscapes” where the internationalisation of the university changes the student body as well as the makeup of the academic staff (Kim, 2010). Iredale, Guo and Rozario (2003, p. 21) point out that:

"Few professional labour markets can be described as truly international at this stage as training, accreditation, ethics and standards continue to be managed mostly at the national level. However, there are distinct trends in this direction. Professional practice has become a transnational matter.”

Universities are a key component for creating skilled migrant networks. People become mobile on the basis of their expertise. Moreover, as the journeys described in this thesis illustrate, the experience of being an in-country student, especially a doctoral student, significantly increases the chances of being a skilled worker and
getting an academic job (Li, Findlay, Jowett & Skeldon, 1996; Koser & Salt, 1997; Hugo, 2004; Vertovec, 2002). Marginson (2007) agrees and argues that the emergence of a global market in higher education is due to a global communication and mobility. Meyer (2001a) suggests that in general researchers tend to become migrants through ad hoc colleague and project collaboration networks and propinquity when opportunities arise.

2.4 Transnational academic mobility

The internationalised movement such as transnational academics associated with universities includes foreign nationals, people recruited from overseas, or people who originated from overseas but are then recruited from other Australian universities (Guerin & Green, 2009). Several scholars have underlined connections between international migration and academic mobility (Koser & Salt, 1997; Hugo, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d; Kim & Locke, 2010). The term “transnational” academic mobility is used to emphasize the idea of academics moving “between” or “above” territorial boundaries (Kim, 2009, p. 395) as transnational academic mobility has been rearranged through political and economic forces determining the boundaries and directions. More recently, such movement has also involved personal choices and professional networks (Kim, 2009, 2010) as I outlined in this chapter.

Many academics who arrive in Australia are experts in their chosen disciplines and move to Australia on a specific contractual basis or as skilled migrants (Frew, 2006). However, some may experience difficulties while adjusting to the culture in a given university (Maadad, 2010). This is not an unusual situation for the international academic. Working in a foreign cultural setting and trying to maintain a professional
work life generate its own agendas and challenges for an academic and his or her family (Maadad, 2010).

Richardson and McKenna (2003) suggest that the key motivation in taking an overseas appointment is the aspiration to travel. They also point to promotion, progression and wage increase opportunities are the main reasons stimulating international appointments in a growing international higher education sector. In addition, internal faculty management of international recruits is particularly relevant given the demand for an increasingly international faculty in many universities and the potential contributions that such faculty makes (Altbach, 1996; Welch, 1997).

In addition, as Saltmarsh and Swirski (2010) show, the transition to Australian university life at a regional university campus by academics working outside their homeland is strongly affected by institutional cultures. Similarly, Green and Myatt (2011) demonstrate that adjustment to Australian academic life for international academics is done at great personal cost. Despite the expression of how “foreignness” can be a “resource” (Foote et al., 2008, as cited in Green & Myatt, 2011, p, 43) for a university’s internationalisation, there is little in the data that indicates that the value of international academics has been recognized by the universities in general.

Saltmarsh and Swirski (2010, pp. 298–299) argue that:

“The sense of the professional dislocation was heightened by personal and family dislocations with respect to which the employing institution seemed to have little to offer … collegial support can be ad hoc … support systems and orientation procedures that universities provide for overseas academic arrivals require increased awareness on the part of institutions about the impact of global cultural flows at a local, personal level.”
While internationalisation is firmly part of the university discussion on the whole, little is known about the efforts made by universities to draw on the knowledge and skills of academics from overseas as a source for teaching and disseminating knowledge (Maadad, 2010). Furthermore, there is a gap in the research literature about this set of circumstances. That is, Kim and Locke (2010, p. 27) state that:

“Assumptions about the international migration of academics, the conditions favouring and inhabiting mobility, the nature of international academics’ experiences in their institutions and countries and the broader impact of academic mobility on styles of scholarship and intellectual traditions, remain largely unexamined.”

Koser and Salt (1997, p. 285) also suggest that until recently, international migration research has ignored migration by the highly skilled. If Kim and Locke’s (2010, p. 30) view that “China provides the largest single group of non-UK nationals among researchers and this group constitutes approximately two-thirds of all Chinese staff in UK higher education institutions” is correct, then the omission is a major gap.

Taken together, these remarks confirm the approach taken in this thesis to document the academic mobility of the selected participants.

2.5 Chinese academics in Australian universities

Hugo’s (2005b) analysis of Chinese migration to Australia shows that China is the third largest contributor of migrants. Hugo (2008a) notes that in Australia the number of Chinese people who arrived as permanent lecturers and tutors and researchers increased from 384 in 1997-1998 to 6264 in 2005-2006. Hugo (2008a, p. 14) concludes that Australian universities have “switched from using permanent
settlement to temporary business visas to bring staff” while the arriving staff are predominantly coming to Australia as permanent settlers.

Yang (2005) believes that Chinese universities have changed because of globalisation and academic mobility. This change has brought about increased competition and accountability in China’s higher education system. In other words, China is beginning to compete on similar platforms as other countries for people with research skills and has seen potential possibilities in sending Chinese academics overseas to gain further education and research experience (Yang & Welch, 2010).

"Since China’s economic opening and reforms in 1978, the country has both broadened and deepened its exchanges and relations with other countries and this has contributed to the increase in the scale of international migration of highly skilled Chinese abroad” (Zhang, 2003, p.73). Zhang (2003, p. 73) also notes that these “highly skilled Chinese personnel mainly oriented toward Europe and the United States…while Australia and Canada receive the largest number of skilled Chinese manpower.” He attributes this to the Chinese habit of investing in education that is encouraged by the continuous increase in China’s economic strength and the population’s personal income. Importantly for this thesis, Zhang (2003, p. 91) observes that:

“In terms of China’s huge population, the scale of outflow of highly skilled Chinese may appear insignificant, but its negative impact cannot be ignored as they are a well-educated and talented human resource, including those who play a leading role in some academic fields.”
In short, joint advantages and benefits can be seen in the international migration of highly skilled personnel even though sending and receiving countries are unequally distributed (Zhang, 2003).

Yang (2005, p. 1) confirms that since China’s “Open Door Policy” has come into effect, more Chinese have been travelling to work in different countries. This policy has also impacted locally in China where attitudes towards academic work have been changing (see Chapter Four). Yang (2005) argues that many academics feel less secure because globalisation and market competition are encroaching on the traditional Chinese academic world. This means that Chinese academics have to join the international academic community to avoid marginalisation in their academic field. This often causes internal conflict as academics negotiate language difficulties, changing research paradigms and knowledge development (Yang, 2005). Welch and Zhang (2008, p. 532) highlight “a common lack of language proficiency” and “unfamiliarity with the Western research system” (Altbach, 2002, as cited in Welch & Zhang, 2008, p. 534), as being significant disadvantages for Chinese academics’ professional careers at Australian universities.

The numbers of Chinese academics outside of China represents a “Chinese knowledge diaspora” (Yang & Welch, 2010, p. 253). Yang and Welch (2010) have brought together the terms academic mobility and the Chinese knowledge diaspora to describe the global movement of Chinese academics as they move into Western countries for research, gaining qualifications and experience. A diaspora can be defined as a system of personal networks, shared culture and language, and an imaginary relationship to the motherland (Kapur, 2001).
In more contemporary times, Yang and Qiu (2010, p. 19) highlight the way in which this concept of a Chinese knowledge diaspora can be viewed as a modern kind of “cosmopolitan literati” referring to those who are well-travelled and roundly knowledge people. In this not only are Chinese being shaped by the effects of globalisation. They are also reshaping the notion of globalisation in the international knowledge system. They have maintained their cultural distinctiveness and have made good use of their Chinese educational backgrounds when contributing to both Australian and Chinese collaborations (Yang & Qiu, 2010).

Singh and Han (2009) argue that both China and the Western world, and more specifically Australia, could gain immensely from this Chinese knowledge diaspora. They illustrate that research higher degree students are able to gain from learning new knowledge and taking knowledge back to China, while at the same time forging research links between the previous host country and the home country of the Chinese academic (Singh & Han, 2009). Consequently, the Chinese diaspora group can contribute much to both China and Australia. Many are keen to do so with effective support and leadership among institutions and governments on both sides (Yang & Welch, 2010).

Yang and Welch (2010) suggest that the movement of Chinese academics to Western countries will hasten the integration and elevation of Chinese universities into wider knowledge systems. In other words mobile Chinese academics have the power to share, develop and lead research and, as Yang and Welch (2010) note, this is seen in the dramatically increased involvement of Chinese scholars in natural science and engineering. Nonetheless, as Welch and Zhang (2008) found, Chinese academics wanted to maintain ties to colleagues back in China. Chinese academics leaving China
to work at universities abroad could be seen as a loss to their home country. However
the notion of a knowledge diaspora points to how these academics could be a potential
resource to both host and home country.

Jiang, Di Napoli, Borg, Maunder, Fry and Walsh (2010) put forward an argument that
while Chinese academics took an active role in adjusting to life in the UK, perceived
academic norms and language issues meant that their acculturation did not change the
existing prevailing academic norms in the university. Similarly, Singh and Han (2009)
discover that Chinese research higher degree students in Australia are able to engage
with their own intellectual heritage once they are offered the possibility of extending
their capabilities for engaging in research projects and building knowledge. According
to their point of views, this is not so easy to do due to assumptions about what is
correct in traditional Western academic standards (Singh & Han, 2009). This
demonstrates that certain knowledge is still marginalized despite the growing Chinese
knowledge diaspora (Yang & Welch, 2010).

Although there are many Chinese academics across the world, Yang and Welch
(2010) point out that the international knowledge system is unequal, in that more
value is placed on Western knowledge systems. This can be seen in how Chinese
academics feel there is no attempt made to see their perspective on academic work
and knowledge from China (Jiang et al., 2010). It could be argued that more could be
done to make positive use of Chinese academics as intellectual resources for both
China and Australia, and engaging both non-Western and Western knowledge (Singh
& Han, 2009). Part of an inequitable valuing of knowledge systems could relate to
English language proficiency and other cultural differences. Kim and Locke (2010)
argue that teaching experiences are often more difficult in the host country compared
to the homeland because of language issues and cultural differences, where these issues are seen as important determinants of adjustment (Thuraisingam & Singh, 2010).

Some work has been done on the acculturation of Chinese academics in a Western setting (Jiang et al., 2010). Apart from the predictable language and day-to-day living challenges, Jiang et al. (2010) identify a disciplinary effect as well, especially given the number of Chinese academics who work in science and engineering. The experiences reported by Chinese staff may not be exceptional to international academics, but representative of many new academics. More studies of new academics focusing both on the intra-institutional and external social contexts are needed (Berry, 2003; Tremblay, 2002). As Yang and Welch (2010, p. 604) point out, Chinese academics with experiences in different cultures and intellectual traditions while working at Australian universities deserve more attention at both institutional and national level as they are a particularly important asset in an era of intensified globalisation.

Hugo (2005b) and Welch and Zhang (2008) contend that among these long-term Chinese immigrants to Australia, over 80 per cent currently have degrees, and fall within the three highest occupational categories, while considerable numbers have moved into academic positions, usually after taking their PhD at an Australian university. As Hugo (2008c, p. 85) describes it, since the opening up policy in 1978 and early 1980s, Chinese immigration to Australia “picked up” and the Australian Chinese community was one of the largest ethnic communities in Australia’s multicultural society in 2006 and has continued to experience substantial growth.
Qin and Zuo (2012, p. 1) canvass the view that of the “hundreds of thousands of Chinese who leave every year, many are driven by an overriding sense that they could do better outside of China.” They further explain that “China’s tremendous economic successes in recent years”; increased wealth and better education enabled Chinese immigrants to be “lured by Australia’s healthier environment, robust social service and the freedom to start a family” in such a country (Qin & Zuo, 2012, p.1).

In summary, since the development of China’s Open Door policy, more and more Chinese academics and researchers have come to Australia to join the international higher education labour market. Dealing with the English language and culture shock in work and life are issues, but do not present insoluble problems that prevent career development and success in Australian universities.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented an overview of selected literature concerned with concepts that lie at the heart of the phenomena important for this thesis. These are international migration, globalisation and internationalisation, transnational academic mobility, and Chinese academics in Australian universities and the role of cultural networks and traditions. The existence of a Chinese knowledge diaspora (Welch & Zhang, 2008) is an important contributor to understanding how Chinese academics come to work in Australia.

However, the impact of academic mobility on teaching remains largely unexamined (Kim & Locke, 2010). Maadad (2010) confirms little is really known about how international academics contribute to the teaching and learning that is happening within universities. Similarly, the nature of international academics’ experiences in their host institutions is rather underdeveloped (Kim & Locke, 2010).
While there have been studies that have investigated experiences of Chinese academics at large metropolitan universities in Australia (Welch & Zhang, 2008; Singh & Han, 2009; Yang & Welch, 2010; Yang & Qiu, 2010), only two studies have focused on universities in regional Australia (Saltmarsh & Swirski, 2010; Maadad, 2010). There have been no specific studies focusing on Chinese academics working in regional areas of Queensland. It follows that this study, focused on a small group of Chinese academics located in a regional area, has the potential to contribute to a better understanding of how Chinese academics come to work in Australian regional universities. I now turn to Chapter Three and explain how I conducted this research.
Chapter 3    The Methodological Approach

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe and justify the methodological approach used in the thesis. There are two sections to the chapter. The first section establishes why a qualitative case study approach was appropriate for this study. It continues with a more focused discussion of a methodological perspective of the case study. After dealing with the methodological approach, I illustrate the specific methods of data collection and the techniques of data analysis adopted in this study.

3.2 Section one: Philosophical underpinnings of the methodological research

In this section, I begin with an explanation of and justification for the use of a qualitative approach and interpretive perspective in this study. The implications of using multiple-case (embedded) designs for this research agenda, the role of vignettes and the researcher are also discussed. Finally I discuss ethical matters and illustrate the importance of credibility, consistency and trustworthiness in case study research.

3.2.1 A qualitative approach

Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3) state that “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world”. Creswell (2007, p. 37) describes qualitative research as beginning with “assumptions, a world view, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”. Merriam (2009, p. 19) delineates major characteristics of qualitative methods thus: “the focus is on understanding the meaning of experience, the researcher is the primary instrument in
data collection and analysis, the process is inductive, and rich description characterizes the end product.”

Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world which allows the researcher to study phenomena in their natural settings and to gain a sense of the meaning people have constructed of events and experiences in their lives (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Thus, for this study I searched for “a deeper understanding of the life experiences of my participants” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 39) and adopted this approach to investigate “how people interpret their experiences; how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23).

In addition, the research questions of the thesis were investigated through the demonstration of insights into what is like to be a Chinese academic making their way through academic experiences and then working in a regional Australian university. To achieve this goal, I adopted a qualitative approach or research paradigm.

The word “paradigm” refers to the researcher’s epistemological, ontological and methodological foundation (Maxwell, 2008, p. 224). Merriam (2009) identifies four paradigms: (1) Positivist/Post-Positivist; (2) Interpretive/Constructivism; (3) Critical and (4) Positivist/Post-Structural. Positivist research presupposes that knowledge is increased due to the study of reality that exists beyond the individual, a view attributed to “scientific”, whereas post-positivism argues that knowledge is “relative rather than absolute” (Patton, 2002, p. 93). Despite the enormous philosophical dilemmas that such positions in the social sciences evoke (Patton, 2002), interpretive/constructivist researchers maintain that people construct knowledge internally rather than “finding” it externally (Merriam, 2009, p. 9). Critical research
supposes that the eventual aim is to analyse, challenge, transform and empower (Merriam, 2009). In postmodern/post-structural research, there are said to be multiple truths generated by research that is investigative, creative and playful, purportedly celebrating the diversity of people, ideas and institutions (Merriam, 2009).

Merriam (2009, p. 13) highlights the point that qualitative researchers are interested in “understanding the meaning people have constructed”, that is, how people understand their world and the experiences they have in their lives. Qualitative research is interpretive and directed by the researcher’s arrays of beliefs about the world and how the research should be appreciated and studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Considering “a goodly portion of social phenomena consists of the meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around those phenomena” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 197), this study employs the framework of an interpretive-constructivist paradigm in which multiple interpretations are constructed by a small group of Chinese academics.

The underlying assumption of this research is that the nature of social reality is such that people construct their own meaning in different social contexts (Merriam, 2009). A constructivist paradigm is suitable for this study because “it is centred both in how people methodically construct their experiences and their worlds and in the configurations and managements and institutional life that inform and shape their reality-constituting activity” (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997, p. 215).

In adopting a constructivist paradigm in this study, I subscribe to the view that all human practices are developed and transmitted in a social context. Different individuals may construct different meanings about what appear to be the same phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). Following Merriam (2009) and others, I therefore
acknowledge that while people construct their own meaning, they do not do it alone but in socio-historical circumstances. As the discussion of the data generated by this approach shows, the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976) and China's four modernizations after the Open Up policies since 1978 were critical windows of opportunity for all of the nine participants.

In constructivism the purpose of the investigation is to understand “constructed and co-constructed realities” that people originally have, generate a new interpretation or to improve existing ones (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 193). From these constructions the knowledge that is created is multiple (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Both Stake (1995, 2005) and Yin (2009) base their approach to case study research on a constructivist paradigm. Similarly, Sarantakos (2005) argues that the reality of construction occurs by people’s interaction with the world; there is no solo structure of knowledge and beliefs but multiple structures linked with each other. The constructivist paradigm in this research is based on this perspective.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) summarise ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological dimensions that lie beneath qualitative research. These aspects have an effect on how qualitative researchers observe the world and act in it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As described by Guba (1990), Creswell (2007), and Maxwell (2008), the ontological and epistemological constructivist worldviews and the dimension of axiology of the researcher conducting this project influenced the focus of the study, the design of the research questions and methodology, and the data that were collected, analysed and interpreted.
Ontological perspective

For qualitative researchers, realities are built by those individuals who are engaged in the qualitative research. The multiple realities within the given circumstances need to be reported truly by researchers. To achieve this, they should count on the voices and interpretations of participants (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative researchers think of reality as subjective, constructed, multiple, and varied. They and those who participate in the investigation are people who observe the world in different ways and construct reality by using meaning systems learned in social life (Sarantakos, 2005). For example, an Australian might not give a second thought to the utterances four four, but for a Mandarin speaker, the sounds that convey si si (four four) mean death death because of the Mandarin conventions. Another good example is the Chinese phrase to give somebody a clock; the sounds that convey this seemingly benign act into Mandarin convey the meaning send somebody to death. These would not be obvious to an English speaker with a different cognitive worldview unless they had prior knowledge of Mandarin Chinese. It follows that I also appreciate that a person’s reality is constructed both individually and collectively by being socialised in social settings, especially language communities.

Since meaning making and people's behaviours are related, Guba and Lincoln (2005, p. 197) state that the “meaning-making activities of groups and individuals” are of central interest to social qualitative researchers.” In the research reported here, I studied a small group of Chinese academics who, in sharing their multiple realities, provided insights into their experiences of employment in a regional Australian university. The focus in this research was to gain a better understanding of the meaning of their experiences at the university workplace in which they were situated.
Epistemological perspective

Epistemologically, qualitative researchers interact with the participants who are being researched. In obtaining the perspectives of the participants being studied (Creswell, 2007), knowledge of the multiple social realities that they have experienced is jointly created. The researchers do their studies in the “field” where the participants work and live. These are vital backgrounds for “appreciating what the participants are talking about” (Creswell, 2007, p. 18). Through the interaction between the researchers and the participants being investigated, findings are constructed literally and knowledge accumulates through the shape of gradually formed constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). My own way of viewing reality lies with constructionism where knowledge is constructed through interpretation of meanings and interaction with my world and the realities of others.

In this particular research, I was interested in “describing how people interpret what they experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). Specifically I want to find out what are their educational journeys and academic experiences of Chinese academics. Through the structured interviews with Chinese academics working at Regional University X, I endeavoured to map their educational journeys that had led them from China to a regional Australian town, and how they made sense of “their experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). My main concern was to describe and analyse their experiences from what they told me in the interview. In this qualitative research, I was the “primary instrument for the data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). I was also aware of my role positioned by Stake (2005, p. 456) that the researcher should “give grounds for validating both the observation and the generalization.” In other words, I outline the process of data collection and analysis.
Axiological perspective

Values play an important part in creating inquiry outcomes (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Values permeate the participants' own constructions as well as the researchers' selection of techniques and interpretations (Creswell, 2007). In view of these circumstances, this study involved a host of values that I attempted to make explicit and control in my analysis. In preparing and administering my interview questions, I took particular care to guard against uncritically accepting responses in English. Interviews were transcribed, coded and individual grids and a master grid and vignettes were constructed and used as devices for identifying and then making explicit value positions. My role as a qualitative researcher, and at the same time I share a Chinese background as well as an academic background with my participants, all of this and more, provides the context for my own axiology.

3.2.2 Methodological perspective: case study

According to Merriam (2009), methodology should be a good match between the type of research and its aims and purpose: the worldview and skills of the researcher; and the design choices available to the researcher. Creswell (2007, p. 73) defines case study research as:

“A qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes.”

The multiple sources may include observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports (Creswell, 2007). Merriam (2009, p. 40) describes a case study as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” while Yin (2009, p. 18)
suggests that a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. Stake (2005, p. 443) draws attention to the case rather than techniques of arguing that a case study contains content that is of “interest, not by the methods of inquiry used, a view shared by Miles and Huberman (1994) who consider that a case is “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context”. For this study, I, as the case study researcher, employed structured interviews and nine participants’ responses to explain particular points (Stake, 2005).

A case study concentrates on instances of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth description of events, relationships, experiences or processes arising in that particular case (Denscombe, 2007). For my study, this means the Chinese participants’ experience of living in Australia and working in a regional Australian university (a phenomenon) was contextualised within the background of post-Cultural Revolution period in China and an emergent globalisation and transnational movement of academics in the contemporary age (bounded context).

There are three key approaches that guide case study methodology: those of Stake (1995, 2005); Yin (2009); and Merriam (1998, 2009). Stake (2005) states that it is helpful to identify three different types of case study namely: the intrinsic, the instrumental, and the collective. The intrinsic case study is undertaken because of an intrinsic interest in a particular issue; the instrumental case study offers insight into an issue or refines a theory and helps an understanding of something else: and the collective case study contains a number of studies enquiring into a phenomenon, population or general condition. The collective case study can be regarded as the
instrumental study expanded to several cases. Yin (2009, p. 9) also identifies three different case studies: exploratory case studies which explain informal links in real-life; descriptive case studies which describe an intervention and also the real-life context in which it happened; and explanatory case studies which identify the situations in which the intervention being considered has no obvious, sole set of outcomes. Similarly, Merriam (2009) identifies exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case studies.

There are differences among these characteristics of case studies. This study best fitted an embedded multiple case design where the responses of the nine participants collected through the interviews were multiple in the context of their educational journeys and academic experiences to Regional University X, within a cross case analysis presented as a whole case in Chapters Five and Six.

Multiple-case (embedded) designs are chosen for this study because this study explores nine Chinese academics, they are single cases, and they are embedded cases within a case. The multiple-case (embedded) designs in which the interview responses of the nine participants were treated as separate elements of a whole case. Each contributes to the overall case of Chinese academics in a regional Australian university; thus, this study based on multiple embedded-case designs according to Yin (2009, p. 53). This approach allows me to get individual responses to the structured interview questions and get an accurate description of the context and settings of each case study. The nine individual case study findings were presented first. A cross-case analysis followed. This analysis suggested generalisations about what constitutes the phenomenon of a Chinese Educational Journey to Regional University X. It also
provided insights into the academic experiences of these Chinese academics that accounted for the historical and economical changes in China since 1949.

This approach was justified by Yin (2009) who explained that the same project may use multiple rather than a single case study (Yin, 2009). That is, the “case” is made up of many individual cases (Yin, 2009, p. 53). Merriam (2009) and Creswell (2007) support such a view. This follows by Stake (2006, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 49):

“In multicasa study research, the single case is of interest because it belongs to a particular collection of cases. The individual cases share a common characteristic or condition. The cases in the collection are somehow categorically bound together. They may be members of a group or examples of a phenomenon.”

This study used the strengths of multiple-case (embedded) designs in order to capture greater variety in responses and “more compelling” interpretations (Merriam, 2009, p. 49). Moreover this approach offers a better understanding of the how and when and even why of a case, thus “adding to the accuracy, validity and strength of the study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29).

3.2.3 The role of vignettes in the methodology

Vignettes are focused descriptions of a series of events taken to be representative, typical or emblematic of a case/situation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hughes (1998, p. 381) describes vignettes as “short stories about individuals, situations and structures which can make reference to important points in the study of perceptions, beliefs and attitudes.” Vignettes typically preserve a chronological flow and are limited to a brief time span, one or a few key actors, and a bounded space (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Vignettes are helpful in “formulating core issues in a case-your theory of what is
happening… and can be embedded usefully in a longer case report as well” (Miles & Huberman, p. 1994, p. 81). They also provide “an opportunity to engage study participants actively in producing, reflecting on, and learning from the data” (Miles & Huberman, p. 1994, p. 81). I have used nine selective vignettes to provide a focused description of the participant in this study. The nine vignettes presented in Chapter Four have been drawn from the interview data and depict aspects of the individual cases in this embedded multiple case study.

While Stake (2005, p. 122) points out that “a write-up can be organized any way that contributes to the reader’s understanding of the case.” Yin (2009, p. 170) suggests four formats for case study reports. For this study, I chose the multiple-case report “containing multiple narratives, covering each of the case studies singly.” To this end I followed Yin’s (2009, p. 171) advice and present the “cross-case analysis in the main report” with the individual cases (vignettes) contained in Chapter Four.

3.2.4 The role of the researcher

As the instrument in qualitative research, the researcher is charged with the task of collecting and analysing the data (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 2009). Sarantakos (2005) acknowledges the researcher is responsible for uncovering the meaning contained in the collected data by searching for trends, patterns and relationships that are relevant to the research question. Patton (2002) recognizes the influence of the researcher’s background or perspective on the interpretation of the data and the need therefore to attend to the viewpoint, the researcher as well as that of the participants. The credibility of the research depends largely on the ability, competence and rigour of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). My own research career began back when I was in China.
I began my career in China as a lecturer in GY University in 1986. For the next 22 years, I taught both at a university and a college level before moving to Australia. In 2006, I visited Regional University X then as a visiting scholar. Upon my return from Australia, I was promoted to Director of the International Office at Guizhou Commercial College in September 2006. I held this position until I moved to Australia in 2008. Over this period, I developed some international collaborations and connections for my former university with two American universities, three Australian universities, one Canadian university and two New Zealand universities. I organized a delegation (with 35 academics) from America to GY University for a peer professional visit. In these roles, I acquired many skills that are now useful to me as a researcher, such as inter-relational skills and successful interviewing techniques.

At the time of this research, the participants in this study were working on the main campus of Regional University X. Before commencing data collection, I informed the participants about my Masters by Research candidature because I wanted them to be aware that I had an understanding of the university culture. Furthermore, as a researcher, I shared with the participants a common language (Mandarin) and mutual understanding of their roles and the context in which they work. In order to minimise disadvantages and maximise advantages emanating from my perspective, a number of strategies were factored into the methodology. I am aware that every researcher, regardless of the relationship to the research site and participants, brings preconceptions and bias (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006). To counter this, I always endeavoured to listen, remain neutral and non-judgmental, to be sensitive to conveying verbal and non-verbal messages, and to provide interested but non-committed feedback in the interviews (Wiersma, 2000). I also displayed a warm and empathetic approach in my interactions with the participants.
3.2.5 Credibility of case study

Burns (2000) explains that the steps and procedures of a case study must be obvious and well documented. This study can be recognized as a case study because it is bounded time and place, presenting a snapshot in a certain location. Yin (2009) states that recording the process in detail provides credibility to case study. Merriam (2009) points out that all research methods have strengths and limitations. This study followed Merriam (2009) particular strategies to bolster validity and reliability. First, I used “respondent validation” (Merriam, 2009, p. 217) with some of the participants where the need arose. Second, I made use of my native speaker of Mandarin capability to make sense of participants’ understanding of a phenomenon where appropriate, while relying on my own experiences with English to moderate my analysis.

Burns (2000) also adds that case study depends on the reader’s own analysis of the researcher’s thesis rather than empirical generalisations. This means when readers read my case study, they will interpret it from their point of view. The factual and interpretive commentary I provide will certainly frame the reader’s perspective, but ultimately, readers will have their own view of it. It also means that, I, as the researcher, make my own analysis of this thesis, by using known and commonly generalisations. Part of the credibility of this research and thesis lies with maintaining consistency and trustworthiness.

As Patton (2002) describes it, the skill, competence and rigour of the researcher is crucial in establishing consistency and trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is responsible for the accuracy of the findings, or how they fit with the reality described to the researcher by the participants (Patton, 2002). That is, the researcher is an interpreter
of raw data and therefore an intrinsic hazard insofar as the researcher may misconstrue what the participants intended, without further justification (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It is an ethical responsibility of all researchers to establish trustworthy data and to guard against intentional or accidental distortion and mistakes (Stake, 2005). By describing the data collection process and analytic process, I am making the research process related to the study open and transparent for the reader.

I set out to ensure consistency in my study in the following ways. First, all through the study I focussed on reporting as precisely as possible from the data. This study therefore used multiple devices to present and re-present data, its coding and sorting, including individual and master grids. The interview schedule was redrafted and refined many times in response to early feedback from the literature, colleagues and from Chinese participants. Consistency relates to the interview process and questions. I asked each person exactly the same questions.

In addition, I developed three tables as a means of validating the research findings which gave details of how I collected the data, derived codes and made decisions during the research (Merriam, 2009). I pursued this method throughout the study. The data file consists of the participants’ question sheet and recordings. The recordings have been kept as CDs, interviewer’s notes and transcriptions. Each interview transcription has been retained both in hard copy and electronically on hard drive and on computer disk and stored securely at separate locations.

To ensure trustworthiness each interview was transcribed verbatim. I spent time with participants after every interview, clarifying any responses that were unclear or ambiguous. During this time, I encouraged participants to put forward questions about the research and data that had been collected. The participants expressed their
satisfaction with the content of the data collection. I wrote down exactly what each participant said. Analytic process was to put the data into individual and cross case grids for coding.

3.2.6 Ethical considerations

In doing this research, ethics played an important part in improving consistency and building confidence and trust in the participants who have an interest in the research (Patton, 2002). As the research involved interaction between me as the researcher and professional academic participants, I made sure that the rights of the participants were protected. As a fellow Chinese person, I paid strict attention to manners and procedures to reinforce the participants' code of ethics (Stake, 2005). Accordingly, the research was conducted within the cultural standards of the group as well as the standard ethical considerations of educational research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2000) and the policies of the Human Research Ethics Committee of Regional University X, the standard operating procedures of which are in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans which approved the research. This study was set within the context of Regional University X campus and in keeping with good practice; approval was also sought and granted from the Chinese academics working in the university as shown in Appendix D.

I was also aware of the ethical codes of confidentiality, negotiation, collaboration and accountability (Burns, 2000) during this research. I guaranteed to the participants that their cooperation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage of the research. I also assured them that their identities would be protected. Before the interviews, I informed the participants of their rights both verbally and in writing and gave them the Informed Consent Form (McMillan & Schumacher 2000). Each
participant was allocated a fictitious name for anonymity (McMillan & Schumacher 2000). Recorded data, transcripts and other printed materials were stored in a locked filing cabinet in my Research students’ room at the University. Electronic data were password protected.

In this section, I discussed the role of a researcher in qualitative research and how ontology, epistemology and values influence methodology. I also elucidated the views using an embedded multiple case design approach and the role of vignettes. Issues of consistency, trustworthiness and ethics were discussed as part of the research process. I now turn to section two, which deals with how I conducted the study.

3.3 Section two: Data collection and analysis techniques

In this section, I describe the specific techniques used to investigate the research questions and to analyse the data. The procedures for data collection and subsequent analysis were guided by the discussion presented in section one. There are four parts to this second section. First, I describe data collection methods. Second, I provide contextual features of the research participants. Third, the use of structured-interviews is discussed. Fourth, I provide the analytic method and a discussion of how I conducted analysis of the data. Fifth, I discuss the themes and subthemes that emerged from the grids.

3.3.1 Data collection methods

Interviews are the most frequently used form of data collection in qualitative research in the educational field (Merriam, 2009). In a case study, the researcher is the main collector and interpreter of data (Merriam, 2009). In this research, I developed a Question Sheet (see Appendix A) that I used to ask each participant to describe some information such as schooling, qualifications and academic experiences. This question
sheet also included ten structured interview questions. The following data collection practices were used for this specific study:

- An interview schedule was created with 9 participants identified and interview times arranged.
- The interview then followed with some personal information and ten structured questions (see Appendix A) that enabled me to answer my two research questions.

### 3.3.2 Research participants

Participants in this study are Chinese academics at Regional University X. The term *academic* refers to those employed and paid by Regional University X for their academic work. Those recruited depends on “what the investigator wants to know and from whose perspective the information is desired” (Merriam, 2009, p. 105). Initially, fourteen Chinese academics working at Regional University X were recruited during the data collection period. All nine participants volunteered to participate while the remaining five possible candidates declined. Having gained ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the university, I emailed to the Executive Deans of the faculties in which the participants worked and seeking their permission to invite the Chinese staff to join my research project.

My research participants comprised Chinese academics from two faculties. These Chinese academics voluntarily participated in the interviews. At the time of their interviews all participants held full academic appointments. Participants needed to satisfy the following selection criteria:

- Chinese academics who had lived in the local community for 1–5 years, obtained PhDs, born in China and went to school and university in China.
These Chinese academics who are research fellows at Regional University X.

I followed these steps in the data collection period:

- I sent a recruitment invitation by email to the group of Chinese academics on the main campus inviting those who would like to tell me about the experiences of their educational journey to contact me.
- I followed up the recruitment invitations by telephone or email within three days.

I pursued this procedure with all of the potential participants, emailing an invitation letter in the first instance and then contacting by telephone in three days to invite them to participate in the research. The invitation in the email included an Information Sheet (see Appendix B) that outlined the purpose of the research, the criteria for participation in the study and explained the design and data collection methods to be used. It also indicated the length of the interview, the steps that would be taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, an assurance that participants could withdraw at any time and details about how the findings of the study would be communicated to the participants. An informed Consent Form (see Appendix C) was also included with the invitation.

As the research was embedded in real life situations, I used pseudonyms for participants in order to make participants' identities anonymous (Stake, 1995). Of the participants in the research, there were eight males and one female. Seven participants were around 40 and two were around 30 years old.
3.3.3 The structured-interviews

Yin (2009, p. 69) outlines that a case study researcher should be capable of asking quality questions; to be an excellent listener; to be “adaptive and flexible”; and to be “unbiased by preconceived notions”. The most significant and crucial source of case study information is the interview (Yin, 2009). There are different types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Roulston, 2010). In this study, I chose to use structured interview questions and the interview schedule which consisted of an information section and the interview questions for the participants.

Each interview, in English was approximately 45 minutes. Some participants used Chinese proverbs or sayings to address their ideas to answer the interview questions. This was reflected in Chapters Five and Six where English grammar was unsuitable to express cultural peculiarities and Mandarin was introduced to explain important points. In addition, my time remained open, flexible and adaptable to the participants’ time schedules. The interview places were in such settings as the participants’ office or the researcher’s Common Room at the university, but with due care to ensure privacy.

I tried to obtain as much data as I could during the interviews by taking notes and recording using an iPod with their permission. Interviews were immediately transcribed by me. When I interviewed the participants, I gave each of them the question sheet at the interview that they could think about their personal information and record it in writing. I also used fictitious names and no identifying characteristics were recorded as data.
3.3.4 Data analysis techniques

Nine case studies are presented in Chapter Four. The Chinese academic participants in this study were the units of analyses. Each participant can be compared to other participants. The nine selected cases reflected the diversity of Chinese academics at Regional University X as they were from different disciplines.

The nine individual cases were complemented by an analysis of the group in relation to the historic-cultural conditions in which each participant entered and completed their formal schooling and higher education. In particular, this macro-level analysis is grounded in the post-Cultural Revolution period in China, the advent of the modernization and the Opening Up policy after 1978, and the university entry system (the Gao Kao) that shapes Chinese higher education. This macro approach was then relevant for a micro-level analysis of each participant as they undertook their respective education journeys and the social conditions that both hindered and maximised their opportunities. The sources of data collection for the micro-level analysis were the interviews with nine Chinese academics. Data for the macro-level analysis came from literature reviews presented in the first section of Chapter Four.

A list of codes was generated, based on the original framework themes introduced by the participants.

The aim of the data analysis process is to find “answers” to the research questions, and the general process starts by classifying sections in the data set that appear to respond the research questions (Merriam, 2009, p. 176). To do this, I prepared a master grid from the participants’ responses. With that information, I then used a thematic analysis grid aimed at developing further themes.
According to Bryman (2008, p. 555), this approach provides “a framework for the qualitative data and one way of thinking about how to manage themes and data.” In this section I briefly discuss the specific aspects of the analytic process outlining the specific aspects of the process of transcribing, recording in the grids, preparing codes of individual grids and the master grid, developing themes, examining themes, and reporting themes. The data analysis steps in this study were as follows:

**Stage 1: Preparing individual grids and the master grid**

I divided all of the gathered personal information and the ten interview questions into three grids in order to take a more analytic stance to them. Grid 1 contains personal background; Grid 2 schooling and university (educational journeys); and Grid 3 contains professional work backgrounds (post school and university). In order to understand the participants’ background of education and careers in China, I also developed a timeline to demonstrate the major events of historical, political and economic development of China since 1949—present.

**Stage 2: Transcribing recording**

I developed two grids: one individual and one master grid. Participants’ personal information and responses to the interview questions were put in nine individual grids. Then I catalogued them into two groups: schooling and university; and work backgrounds.

I filled in the individual grids and a master grid when I listened to the recorded interviews. I then transcribed the interview data into written text. I put all the recorded files onto a CD disk for subsequent coding and file saving. These let me efficiently and precisely transcribe the work and keep the files safe. This procedure of organising
data also means beginning to categorise broad patterns within the data collections which facilitate the researcher’s actual data analysis (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

**Stage 3: Put answers into individual grids and the master grid**

I developed a summary that described what the grid told me (viz. a vignette for each participant). I then put a summary grid together that was a synthesis of all the grids, with a summary. This summary told a story about the Chinese academics taken together (a cross case analysis).

**Stage 4: Developing themes**

The core meanings identified through content analysis are often called “patterns or themes” (Patton, 2002, p. 453). According to (Patton, 2002), thematic analysis focuses on developing themes and patterns:

(i) identification of data that relate to identified patterns

(ii) combining and cataloguing related patterns into sub-themes

(iii) building a valid argument for choosing the themes in light of the research question and the literature of the study. In this study, developing themes provided the means to find the most outstanding categories and the potential relationships between them.

### 3.3.5 Findings and interpretation

The individual and master grids depicted the results of the fieldwork and analysis. The results in Chapters Five and Six of the thesis consist of a mixture of the themes and subthemes that emerged from the individual and the master grids. When the themes were clear to me, I created theme statements to develop a storyline. The storyline is important because it explains why and how I did this research. Together, these grids
form the more abstract story of the educational journeys and academic experiences of
the participants as the next chapter shows.

In this section, I have outlined the methods utilised to collect and analyse data. I also
described the contextual features of the data collection area and discussed my use of
vignettes. I then outlined the data analysis techniques proposed by Miles and
Huberman (1994), Yin (2009) and Merriam (2009) that guided the analysis of the data
in this research. An account of how I analysed the data followed. Before turning to
Chapter Four, I conclude this chapter.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodological approach selected for its potential to provide an
answer to the research questions of this thesis has been outlined and discussed.
Specifically, a qualitative approach using a constructivist paradigm was considered
consistent with the type of information and understanding I sought about the
experiences of Chinese academics working at an Australian regional university.
Moreover, by constructing structured interview questions, I sought to document the
experiences of a group of Chinese academics living in an Australian community and
working in a regional Australian university. An embedded multiple case study design
and its associated analytic methods were considered an appropriate for the
methodology for purposes of this study. Findings from the process of analysis and
interpretation are reported in Chapters Four, Five and Six.
Chapter 4  Background and Data Presentation

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the historical context for the life trajectories, specific vignettes and personal information of the participants. First, I sketch the political, social and economic background and selected events of the past three decades in Chinese history that correspond with the participants' lives. I do this in order to demonstrate that their educational journeys are irrevocably tied to the unique conditions of Chinese history at the time when their journeys were being shaped and directed. Second, the vignettes, derived from the data, provide insights into the life stories of the participants during those historical conditions. Third, I describe personal information of the participants depicted from the Question Sheet (see Appendix A). Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the presented data. I now discuss each section.

4.2 Section one: Social, political, economic and educational background

In this section, I introduce the interplay between Chinese educational policy, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Chinese state, and their influence on the educational and academic career journeys of the participants in this study. I begin with a review of China’s changing socio-economic and political development and the associated educational reforms since 1949. This period was critical because it set the limits and possibilities of educational opportunity for each of the participants.

The data indicate that each of the participants took advantage of opportunities as they arose and yet, to some degree, their preferred options were limited at particular periods. After Deng Xiaoping’s Open Up policies in 1978, China opened its door to
the world and academics with higher qualifications and English skills went overseas
to work or do research or study. By the time the participants in this study came to
Australia in the middle of the 1990s and early 2000s, they were already experienced
academics and able to take advantage of further opportunities as they arose. I now
discuss these issues.

4.2.1 Political and social economic development since 1949

Educational changes and educational policies of China in the past five decades have
been inextricably linked by “bold moves, major shifts and reversals since 1949”
(Tsang, 2000, p. 2). China has suffered the rapid and uneven pace of change in its
socio-economic, political and cultural realms since Chairman Mao Zedong (on behalf
of CPP) announced the founding of the People’s Republic of China on 1st October
1949. The Chinese government was led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and
Mao took control of the CCP and directed China into a series of experiments that were
of a massive scale and never before seen in human history (Tsang, 2000). The
1958—1960 Great Leap Forward campaign (大跃进 Da Yue Jin) and the social
disturbance of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution (无产阶级文化大革命 Wu Chan Jie Ji Wen Hua Da Ge Ming) during 1966—1976 were among these experiments
(Tsang, 2000). These movements in China’s national development were characterized
by big policy changes and arguments. They were also associated with impressive
successes and devastating failures that had enormous impacts on the fabric of society,
most notably the great famines of the 1960s and the Cultural Revolution
4.2.2 The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)

The Cultural Revolution was initiated by Mao Zedong in 1966 and lasted until his death. It was a political and cultural campaign on a national scale aimed at ridding China of all bourgeois influences and confirming Mao's power against his nationalist competitors and those in the Party vying for leadership (OECD, 2011). Violent activities sought to remove and destroy all symbols of bourgeois culture, such as music, drama, novels and even opera to make sure their replacements were rooted in the rural and urban proletariat or working class ideology (Chen, 1999). Intellectuals were the most susceptible to attack in the Cultural Revolution period (OECD, 2011).

The impact of the Cultural Revolution affected education with the closure of formal schools and institutions. “Although most primary schools continued to operate as usual, almost all secondary and tertiary level institutions were shut down completely from 1966-68 and most tertiary level institutions remained closed until 1972” (Bernstein, 1977; Unger 1982, as cited in Deng & Treiman, 1997, p. 400). Political teams of workers, peasants and soldiers, operated class struggle everywhere to carry out Mao's program (Deng & Treiman, 1997).

Universities did not have normal student recruitment during the Cultural Revolution period and consequently, there were effects on the formal education of a whole generation of young people (Deng & Treiman, 1997). In a strong sense, over this period, China's educational system was destroyed and it had to be reconstructed in the late 1970s and early 1980s (OECD, 2011).

The year of 1976 in China was cataclysmic: Zhou Enlai (former premier) died in January 1976 and Mao Zedong (the first generation leader) died in September of the same year. Hua Guofeng (nominated by Mao Zedong as his successor) assumed
power after Mao’s death in October 1976. Hua and his followers arrested The Gang of Four (四人帮 Si Ren Bang). This was the name given to a political faction composed of four Chinese Communist Party officials including Mao Zedong’s last wife Jiang Qing, who was the leading figure of the group. Her close associates were Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen. They came to prominence during the Cultural Revolution and were subsequently charged with treason (Hsu, 1990). Hua and his followers finally brought the Cultural Revolution to an end.

4.2.3 The leaders of the Chinese Communist Party

From 1949 to 1977, “China modelled itself on the former Soviet Union and established its socialist economic system and higher education institutions with highly fragmented disciplines and a highly centralized administration” (Wang & Liu, 2011, p. 215). Despite the education losses of a generation of Chinese, (that is, those born in the late 1950s) resulting from the major disruptions during the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government still maintains that the education system under the three successive generations of CCP leadership of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin were splendid achievements (Chen, 1999). The United Nations Development programme (UNDP, 1999) concurs with this assessment and concludes that Chinese education and the educational development of China compares favourably with countries of a similar level of economic development.

4.2.4 The Third Plenum, Eleventh Central Committee of China (December, 1978)

It was former Premier Zhou Enlai who introduced the Four Modernizations before his death in 1976. In December 1978, at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee (TPSCC 十一届三中全会), Deng Xiaoping announced the official launch of these Four Modernizations, formally symbolizing the beginning of the reforming
period (Baum, 1994). The Four Modernizations Scheme focused on the fields of agriculture, industry, technology and defence. The aim was to develop China into a great and self-reliant economic power by the early 21st century (Baum, 1994). The Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee in 1978 was a “turning point” in the history of the CCP in terms of China’s policies for its economic and social development (Baum, 1994, p. 73).

In addition, it was confirmed that “The general task put forward by our party for the new period reflects the demands of history and the people’s aspirations and represents their fundamental interests” (Chinese Communist Party central Committee, 1991, p. 10). It was at this session that agriculture was reformed as it was the foundation of the national economy (Tisdell, 2008).

Educational reforms were introduced under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping at the Fourth National People’s Congress in 1978. Key education milestones and reform occurred after the Third Plenum, Eleventh Central Committee of China also under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

4.2.5 The Era of Deng Xiaoping after 1978

Deng Xiaoping’s tactics for economic and social reforms were criticized by the then leadership of the CPP before Mao’s death. In 1977 Deng Xiaoping had come back from the political wilderness to which he was assigned for a while before Mao died (Baum, 1994). In December 1978, during the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee Congress of the Communist Party of China Deng Xiaoping took over the reins of power (Baum, 1994). Deng (the second generation leader of the CCP) with his acquaintances launched the reforming the revolution movement. Under this initiative, the land contract with individual (包产到户 Bao Chan Dao Hu) was agreed
to. This “simple and effective land reform policy” was first started at Anhui province and then nationwide and proved to be an efficient way to stimulate the peasant’s passion for “increasing productivity” (Ma, 2003, p. 2).

Notably, one of Deng Xiaoping’s greatest accomplishments was to focus the CCP on economic construction (Baum, 1994). Researchers such as Baum (1994), Zhong and Treiman (1997) and Ma (2003) agree that this session was a landmark in China’s history, lifting the curtain on to a period of reform and the opening up of China. In my experience as a high school student in the period of 1978-1979, the whole of China at that time moved into a totally different era compared to Mao’s times.

In January 1979, Deng Xiaoping undertook an official visit to the United States during which he met President Jimmy Carter in Washington and several congressmen. After Deng’s visit to the United States, many young Chinese went to study abroad (Ma, 2003).

In March 1979, Deng presented a significant speech in which he stated:

“Most of our ideological and theoretical workers should dig into one or more specialized subjects. All those who can do so should learn foreign languages, so as to be able to read important foreign works on the social sciences without difficulty. We have admitted that we lag behind many countries in our study of the natural sciences. Now we should admit that we also lag behind in our study of the social sciences, insofar as they are comparable in China and abroad. Our level is very low and for years we have not even had adequate statistical data in the social sciences, a lack that is naturally a great obstacle to any serious study.” (Deng Xiaoping 1979, p. 188, as cited in Tisdell, 2008, p. 25)
Deng emphasized that he wanted to change the primary focus from politics to economics in order to provide China with positive economic benefits. Foreign individuals and businesses were encouraged to invest and stimulate the country's economy following the ‘Open Door Policy’ (Ma, 2003). The Chinese Economic Reform (改革开放 Gai Ge Kai Fang), referred to as the program of economic reforms called *Socialism with Chinese characteristics*, was commenced in December 1978 by reformists within the Communist Party of China (CPC) led by Deng Xiaoping. Deng created a new era for the national development of China since then. Officially, Deng decided to retire from top positions when he stepped down as Chairman of the Central Military Commission in 1989, and retired from political scene in 1992. After his death in 1997, China continued its reform and opening up policies under the leadership of Jiang Zemin (1989-2002, the third generation leader), Hu Jintao (2003—2012, the fourth generation leader), and Xi Jinping (being elected in November, 2012, the fifth generation leader from 2013).

4.2.6 Iron Rice Bowl

Correspondingly, in the industrial segment, “a reform was first started in employment and personal management by smashing the so called Iron Rice Bowl in the early 1980s” (Ma, 2003, p. 2). Iron Rice Bowl (铁饭碗) is a Chinese term used to refer to an occupation with guaranteed job security, as well as steady income and benefits (Ma, 2003). It is a metaphor used to indicate employment in the military, as a member of the civil service, as well as in various state-run enterprises. Whether one performed well or not, the position was secure forever like an iron bowl that was very solid. The Iron Rice Bowl, though not a scientific term, refers to national arrangements for the provision of jobs and employment security in such a way that workers were
safeguarded from the anxieties of unemployment and job seeking (Fung, 2001, p. 259).

In 1978, Deng Xiaoping began to transform China from a centrally planned economy to a free-market model, “whereby the collectively owned sector and the private sector were allowed to recruit workers to absorb the excessive supply of urban labour” (Fung, 2001, p. 263). Since then, high position administrators have been given the right of hiring and firing especially in the “industry, business and education” sectors (Ma, 2003, p. 3). This was quite a new development and the policy resulted in “the decentralization of decision-making in a traditionally centrally planned industry” (Ma, 2003, p. 3). Performance in the job became a recognised criterion. These political events affected generations of Chinese people who grew up in these special times. The same events had significant implications for my research participants.

4.2.7 Education systems in China

The Chinese Government has attached great importance to the development of education since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. The education system of China went through three different political phases:


With the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, the borrowed Soviet mode was no longer prized, and the Chinese government returned to creating curricula that demonstrated a balance between Western-style education (Li, 2001) and Confucianism.
The education system in China is divided into three sections: basic education, higher education, and adult education. Basic education in China includes pre-school education, primary (or elementary) education and regular secondary education (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007). The academic year is divided into two semesters. Secondary education is divided into academic secondary education and specialized/vocational/technical secondary education. Academic secondary education is delivered by academic lower and upper middle schools. The Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China stipulates that each child has nine years of formal education (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007).

Senior Middle School is accessible through a locally administered entrance examination, on the basis of which school graduates have the option either of continuing in an academic upper middle school or of entering a vocational secondary school (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007). Students at the senior secondary school educated for three years and then admitted to study at a higher education institution if the GaoKao results fit the requirements of the institutions (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007, p. 7). “Those students whose abilities are rather practical or who want to enter the labour market at an earlier stage are educated in specialised technical schools with three- to four year programmes” and sometimes these schools are “called as vocational or professional schools with three-year programmes” (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007, p. 7).

Higher education at the undergraduate level includes two-and three-year junior colleges (sometimes also called colleges or institutes, four-year colleges, and universities offering programs in both academic and vocational subjects (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007). Many colleges and universities also offer graduate programs leading to
the masters or PhDs degrees. Chinese higher education at the undergraduate level is divided into four-year programs. The three-year junior college is offered not only at short-cycle colleges, but frequently also at four-year colleges and universities. The latter is offered at “four-year colleges and universities but do not always lead to the Bachelor’s degree” (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007, p. 18).

Schooling in the years of 1960s and 1970s

In 1960s—1970s, especially during the period of the Cultural Revolution, the educational structure was a 5–3–2 system: five years at primary school, followed by three years of junior, and two years senior middle school, and four years of university (Deng & Treiman, 1997).

Table 1 shows a new 6–3–3–4/5 structure: six years of primary school, three years of lower school and upper secondary school (equivalent to American junior and senior high school), and four or five years of the university education in the early 1980s (Gao, 1985).

Table 1: A Schematic Representation of the Educational System In China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergartens 3—5 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary (Elementary) School 6—12 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Middle School 12—15 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhong Kao (Senior Middle School Entry Exam) in May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Middle School 15—18 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gao Kao (National College Entry Exam) on 7th and 8th June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The higher education section of the Chinese education system carries characteristics of both the US and the UK systems with a stronger affiliation to the US system (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007). Two or three years colleges referred to as short-sequence colleges typically awarding associate degrees, exist next to typically four year colleges and universities which offer academic as well as vocational courses leading to bachelor degrees or higher.

When Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978, educational policies were thoroughly modified to fit a new emphasis on economic modernisation. The new education system was elitist exemplified by designating ninety-eight of China’s then 715 universities as “key-point” (Dryer, 1996, p. 219) institutions that received better resources than the rest and also enrolled the best students from those who had passed the university entrance examinations. Beginning in 1978, key point schools were also established at primary and secondary levels to ensure that the best students progressed and entrance was determined by intellectual ability demonstrated by examination (Dryer, 1996). Universities now create special bonds with some of the best middle schools, with the aim of improving teaching at the secondary level and also of attracting that school’s brightest students to attend their university.
National College Entrance Examination the GaoKao

The GaoKao (高考), literally meaning high exam was regarded as the baton of the whole educational system, especially the schools before university. Deng Xiaoping restored the National College Entrance System (the GaoKao 高考) in early 1977. Chances for students to go to universities or colleges were based on academic merits as indicated by this examination. Before 1977 some students whose family members who had previously been landlords or capitalists, with political connections banned from sitting for the university entrance exam (Li, Dray-Novey & Kong, 2007).

The GaoKao was vividly and metaphorically described as millions of soldiers trying to cross a one-log bridge (千军万马过独木桥) especially in the late 1970s and 1980s as it was the only standard test for Chinese students nationwide (Li et., 2007).

Appendix E shows the date of Arrangement of National Matriculation Test. Hannum, Xue and Cherng (2011, p. 267) state that “the GaoKao results play an important role in determining transitions to tertiary education and in determination the type of education received”. Appendix F shows the competitive nature of the GaoKao from the years 1977 to 2011.

It is widely believed by parents and students in China that getting a degree from universities with good reputations (especially Project 211 or Project 985 nominated universities) brings a better job and eventually a better life (Li, 2001). Key national universities (重点大学) are those that are considered to be the most prestigious and are charged with awarding Master and Doctoral degrees to China’s educational elite (Deng & Treiman, 1997). Project 211 and Project 985 universities are widely regarded to be the most prestigious in China (Li, 2001).
The public conception is that every family and student is concerned about the National College Entrance Examination because it has such great importance in their lives and for the student’s future. The GaoKao is regarded as the door to the future for the young students (Li, 2001). They are the most sought after by higher education institutions and the goal of entering such institutions motivates students and families alike. Children and their education are perhaps the top priority of every Chinese family in general.

Old higher education system in 1960s—1980s

China’s higher education policy has been through striking paradigm shifts corresponding to the nation’s alteration “from a planned to a market economy” during the past six decades (Yang, 2012, p. 29). When the Open Up policy was announced and the decision for economic reform was made, higher education had to expand as fast as it could. “Education serves the economy became a new principle of policy-making” (Yang, 2012. p. 30).

China’s higher education system was profoundly shaped by the former Soviet Union model before China began its reform and opening up in the late 1970s (Wu & Zhang, 2008). The Ministry of Education of the Chinese government funded and managed all higher education institutes and universities. Graduate employment and specific positions were guaranteed and assigned by central or local government agencies (Ma, 2003). “With a limited number of institutions, limited enrolment and a planned economy, higher education was free to everyone for the first 30 years of the People’s Republic of China” (Ma, 2003, p. 6). Admitted students also obtained living allowance from their institutions according to the individual needs (Ma, 2003).
However comparatively few Chinese gained entrance to higher education in that historical period.

“With the establishment of teaching and researching facilities, the scale of campus and teaching resources, under these circumstances, it became obvious that higher education could not always stay free of charge” (Ma, 2003, p. 7). Conversely, while higher education had constantly expanded, there was still a shortage of supply to meet the individual need for higher education and the marketplace demands for qualified human resources (Ma, 2003). Knowing these issues, Deng Xiaoping (Deng, 1984, as cited in Ma, 2003, p. 7) stated: “Following the system reform of economy, there is an urgent need for the reform of the system of science and technology and the system of education. The central government should discuss these issues and make relevant decisions.” Themes of these decisions emphasized that “Education must serve the socialist construction, and the socialist construction must rely on education” (Deng, 1984, as cited in Ma, 2003, p. 7). Since 1978, higher education reform in China has been driven by economic and market forces.

*Higher education system in 1990s—2000s*

As indicated earlier, higher education used to be elite education, with only few young students lucky enough to enter the university system (Li, 2004). In order to accelerate the development of education, the Ministry of Education developed the plan for revitalizing education in 1998 (Gu, 2011). One of the specific goals was to popularize senior high school education in urban and advanced areas, and to enlarge the scale of higher education (Gu, 2011). “After 1999 when the higher education expansion policy was issued”, China began to expand its higher education system on a large scale (Gu, 2011, p. 514). The expansion was a response both to the pressure from the people for
access, and the increase in the number of students graduating from secondary schools (Gu, 2011).

China had unprecedented expansion in its higher education since 1999, with the gross enrolment rate increasing from 4.8 percent in 1977 to 56 percent by 1999, the year in which the system transited from elite to a mass one (Gu, 2011). As illustrated in (Appendix F), the number of student enrolment was 610,000, 2.21 million and 6.57 million in the years 1990, 2000 and 2010, respectively. More and more Chinese students have achieved pathways to enter higher education in the late 1990s and 2000s (Gu, 2011). People like the participants in this study were in the first wave for what was to become common place.

4.2.8 Education serves economic construction

Economic construction has been the supreme policy goal of the Chinese government since 1978 (Ngok, 2007). “Deng Xiaoping proclaimed that education must change to meet the needs of China’s modernization, of the world and of the future” (Ngok, 2007, p. 144). With this policy, education was seen as the essential ingredient for modernization, and in turn the educational policy agenda contributed to economic growth (Ngok, 2007). As a result, the political function of education became a strategy to speed up China’s advance toward modernization and the new direction of the market economy has important implications for China’s education (Ngok, 2007).

The Soviet influenced system of the 1950s was restored in the early 1960s and 1970s (Hayhoe & Li, 2010). Shi Fan 师范 literally refers to teacher model. Teacher Colleges and Normal Universities are widely established institutes where students are being trained to become teachers. Once called Shi Fan Colleges or Universities in
1950s—1980s, they correspond to Normal Universities nowadays (Hayhoe & Li, 2010).

A major reform document of 1985 stated that teacher education must be the first priority of educational development (The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China & The State Council, 1999). Normal universities or colleges still carry the main responsibility for teacher education and graduate schools of education. Teacher education programs aim to educate prospective teachers. Normal universities have a special responsibility for setting high standards for training teachers and offering the profession a high profile nationally. They are required to maintain their unique status as Normal universities in China (Hayhoe & Li, 2010). Normal universities were established in line with educational reform began in 1985; this reform was then followed by the establishment of Project 211 and Project 985.

“In 1995, the Chinese Government introduced the Project 211. The title refers to the aim of building up 100 top level HEIs and key disciplines in the 21st century” (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007, p. 37). The figure of 21 and 1 within the name 211 are from the abbreviation of the 21st century and approximately 100 universities respectively. In general, “during the ninth 5-Year Plan, Project 211 gives priority to the improvement of the universities’ standards and outputs” (Brandenburg & Zhu, 2007, p. 37, 8). A list of Project 211 Universities is attached (see Appendix G). The number of participating institutions fluctuates a great deal, partly due to the many recent mergers taking place in Chinese higher education.

“Project 985, the title of the project derives from the month in which it was announced, May, 1998, Jiang Zemin, then President of P.R China declared that China was in need of some first-rate universities on an international level” (Brandenburg &
Zhu, 2007, p. 39). According to Brandenburg and Zhu (2007), in the first stage, ten universities were included in the project and in the second stage, launched in 2003, expanded the program until it has now reached 39 universities (see Appendix H).

Economic policies and the need for education

While participants in this study were studying at university in 1978-2002, significant changes in the higher education field were shaped and reshaped by the market needs and economic reforms during that time (Ngok, 2007). For example, in the 1970s, government required students to take up degrees and work in nominated fields. Table 2 indicates the percentage of student enrolment allocations in different majors at the undergraduate level in 1978, 1988 and 1998.

Table 2: Disciplines and Enrolment Per Cent by Year

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Training</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political science and Law</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics and Finance</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows Engineering, Teacher Training and Medicine were the top three majors in the late 1970s. After 10 years of Open Up policies in China, competitive majors in the late 1980s were Engineering, Teacher’s Training and Economics and Finance. In the late 1990s, within 20 years development of China, Engineering was the most popular major among Chinese university students. After the reclassifications of the disciplines, the four popular majors were Engineering, Economics and Finance and Literature. In the period of the national development of China, Engineering had been the most important and favoured disciplines subjects to meet the need of market (Ma, 2003).

4.2.9 The English language

Wang and Gao (2008, p. 386) state that “the spread of English is widely seen as linked to dramatic social and political changes in China”. During the Cultural Revolution period, those who had English language skills were labelled *Bourgeois* and suffered oppression. Knowing Western languages, apart from Russian, was a sensitive political issue in the period of Cultural Revolution because of the communist policies towards the western world.

As well as attending top schools and achieving success in the examination system, the participants in this study also learned English. By doing so, they pre-empted the national development speculation aimed at making China more accessible to global influences and increasing the capacity of individual Chinese to participate in the global economy of ideas and labour force (Wang & Gao, 2008). The opportunity to learn English in that period was mandated by the Ministry of Education and provided by the school and university curriculum where the participants were educated.
With the accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the ability to communicate in a foreign language, particularly English is emphasized in universities and colleges. In the early years of the open-door policy, English began to be a subject in the Gao Kao, but only a certain percentage of the points was added to the total scores. By the mid-1990s, English became one of the three key subjects (an addition to Math and Chinese) in Gao Kao. “It is important to reiterate that China is a multilingual and multidialectal context with 56 ethnic groups, among which the Han Chinese speak Mandarin besides their local dialects and the 55 minority groups speak as many as 80-120 languages” (Lam, 2005, as cited in Wang & Gao, 2008, p. 383).

“English is a second language for most Han Chinese and a third language for minority Chinese as they learn Mandarin as their second language” (Lam, 2007a & 2007b, as cited in Wang & Gao, 2008, p. 383).

University students continue to learn English with at least 4 class periods a week for two years. They are expected to pass the College English Test (4–6) before graduation. The College English Test (CET) administered by the Ministry of Education of China is “a nationwide standardized test, aiming at an objective assessment of English proficiency of Chinese college students and an effective feedback for college teachers to improve their classroom teaching” (Guo, 2006, p. 14). The CET is divided into two types for the grading and held twice in June and December, CET 4 started (from 1987) and CET 6 (from 1989). One of the important reasons for college students is that “the CET certificate has become as a necessity in one’s application for job” (Guo, 2006, p. 14).
Significance of learning English

“English has never had such influence in China since the Open Up policy was adopted in 1978, nor can anyone deny that English has grown closer and closer to the life of the Chinese people” (Kang, 1999, p. 46). There was a passion for learning English exemplified by the Teach Yourself English programmes on Television such as Follow Me, the BBC English learning program, and broadcast by China Central Television in the early 1980s. As China opened up more and Chinese scholars were allowed to go overseas for study or research, the need for both social and academic English became obvious to students and intellectuals though not everyone was intent on going abroad. Learning English at that time was a window on the outside world.

By the 1990s a greater understanding and knowledge of English had begun to play an important role in academic and professional development for Chinese people (Kang, 1999). It remains today as it did then. Nevertheless, many university students from the countryside in the late 1970s and the early 1980s had few opportunities to learn English at high school even though English was a formal prerequisite subject for passing the GaoKao and entry into a Bachelor’s degree. Participants had to commit to learning English under unfavourable conditions as part of their GaoKao preparation (Wang & Gao, 2008).

English has been a two-year compulsory course in the universities. The College English Test (CET 4—6) is the standard test to check students’ competence while at university. English has been the required subjects to pass the entrance to postgraduate degrees. English language, as well as Japanese, Russian and French, has been a test subject for those academics who wanted to be promoted to higher academic titles since the 1990s. It is widely acknowledged that the better your English competency,
the better your chances to go abroad or to study or work overseas. Thus learning English has taken on a special significance in China.

After China officially became a member in The World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 (Prime, 2002), and the Reform & Opening Policy was implemented more widely, the value of international communications in all domains become a high priority. English, as an important tool for cross-cultural communication, has greater status compared to other available languages. People in China have been aware of this trend and have developed ways to take advantage of it (Wang & Gao, 2008). The participants in this study anticipated such a move. It proved to be very advantageous to them as their vignettes demonstrated.

4.2.10 Open Door Policy to the outside world (economic developments in Deng’s period)

Before 1978, China’s major business partners had been the former Soviet Union and its satellites. When the Chinese government decided to reform the national economic system in 1978, it carried out a policy of opening to the outside world gradually. Deng Xiaoping understood that China must have Western technology and investment and opened the door to foreign business that wanted to invest in China (Hsu, 1990).

For example, ShenZhen (深圳) is a city in the Southern Guangdong province of China, situated north of Hong Kong. It was only a small village before 1979. After Deng’s reform and opening policy, ShenZhen became the first special economic zone. Both Chinese and foreigners have invested enormous amounts of capital there. There has been more than US$ 30 billion in foreign investment in both foreign-owned and joint manufacturing and service industry ventures Chow, 2004). ZhuHai (珠海) and ShanTou (汕头) in Guangdong province and XiaMen (厦门) in the Eastern south
province of China, and HaiNan (海南岛) province became special economic zones like Shenzhen. In 1984, China opened 14 coastal cities: DaiLian (大连), QinHuangDao (秦皇岛), TianJin (天津), YanTai (烟台), QingDao (青岛), LianYunGang (连云港), NanTon (南通), FuZhou (福州), GuangZhou (广州), ZhanJiang (湛江) and BeiHai (北海) to overseas investment.

In 1985, the state expanded the open coastal areas. In 1990, the Pudong New Zone (浦东新区) in Shanghai became the dragon head in the Yangtze River valley. These open areas have been able to develop special policies and have played the dual roles of creating foreign exchanges by exporting products and importing advanced technologies, and acting as radiators that in tum accelerate internal economic development (Chow, 2004).

In 2001, China's entry into the World Trade Organization enhanced the country's process of openness and globalisation. The Chinese hope was that its reforms and market-oriented economy would continue to grow. “Success in China’s economic reform was measured partly by its rapid economic growth in real GDP in the order of about 9.5 percent annually in the two decades after 1978” (Chow, 2004, p. 141).

China retained political and business relations only with the Soviet Union and the Eastern European satellite countries in the first decade of the People's Republic in 1949-1959 (Hsu, 1990). Deng Xiaoping and his followers used practical strategies because they were aware that China could not develop in isolation and must trade in foreign science, technology, capital, and management skills in order to achieve her modernizations (Hsu, 1990). Deng’s calls for “Practice is the sole criterion of truth” 实践是检验真理的唯一标准, shi jian shi jian yun zhen li de wei yi biao zhun “Seeking
truth from facts” 实事求是 shi shi qiu shi and “Emancipating the mind” 解放思想 jie fan si xiang, have been remarkable guiding principles in China’s economy development for 30 years. Foreign individuals and businesses were encouraged to invest and stimulate the country’s economy following the implementation of China’s open-up policy. With the opening to the outside world, new theories and methods entered China at an unprecedented speed and scale (Hsu, 1990).

Due to China’s family planning policy, most urban families have only one child and parents tend to offer their children the best education they can as education is the most important investment priority of Chinese families. The growing numbers of middle class families have provided overseas education for their offspring, a possibility more easily accessible after Deng Xiaoping’s open policy. It was in this period that unprecedented opportunities opened for the university student who could speak and write English.

4.2.11 Scholars and students with English skills were sent overseas

“China began its economic reform from 1978, and the policies of studying abroad have also been changed since then” (Yao, 2004, p. 7). The tasks were to help upgrade research levels in China’s major universities and research institutes. The China Scholarship Council (CSC), set up in 1996, is a non-profit institution with legal person status affiliated with the Ministry of Education (Yao, 2004). CSC is funded mostly by the state’s special appropriations for scholarship programmes. The aim of CSC is to provide financial assistance for Chinese citizens to study abroad and for foreign citizens to study in China in the light of the law and relevant principles and policies of China. CSC makes the appropriate management regulations and methods and process, assesses and approves the application for the financial assistance, awards
scholarships and provides the consultation and service; supervises and inspects the use of China Scholarship by the projects and people financed by the CSC. According to official statistics, the CSC, established in 1996, sent 78,524 scholars to abroad between the years of 1996-2009 (Yao, 2004).

The CSC sponsors two groups of Chinese people: (1) visiting scholars and (2) students. Visiting scholars do some research and study abroad for a certain period of time, normally 3 months, 6 months or 12 months in overseas universities or research institutions. The aims are for visiting scholars to go overseas to improve their research ability in their field, but not for obtaining any academic degree (Yao, 2004). In contrast, students offered opportunities to study abroad by CSC are those who intend to achieve degree qualifications such as Bachelors, Masters or PhDs.

By way of drawing this together it has been established that the reform and development of China's educational establishment especially over the past three decades are integral to China's political, economic and social modernization. It is clear that post-Mao, the increase in the scale of Chinese education has provided opportunities for more students to progress through the system to higher education and entry into professions. In the early stages, degree and career choice were somewhat limited by the exigencies of economic development. The emergence of English as a favoured language in trade, communication and education has also created unprecedented opportunities for graduates and professionals to imagine and then achieve, study opportunities and work potential beyond China. These historical developments and the life trajectories of Chinese born in the 1960s and later are irrevocably linked and provide the basis for the discussion of the data in Chapters Five and Six. However, before I discuss the data in the next chapter, I present the life
stories of the participants individually as they encapsulate the events and movements discussed in section one.

4.3 Section two: Vignettes and personal information of the nine participants

In this section I describe the participants’ stories presented as vignettes that I derived from the case study data and personal information of the nine participants from the Question Sheet (see Appendix A). These are stories relating to their educational journeys and academic experiences in China and Australia. My analysis links these to China’s history by showing how each of them exhibits differences as well as critical similarities as they negotiated Chinese social and political history. I introduce the vignettes individually and conclude the section with a brief summary. The interpretation of the vignettes appears in Chapter Five and Six. I now turn to the stories.

4.3.1 Vignettes of the nine participants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Vignette 1 Zhang Jie</th>
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Zhang Jie was born in eastern China in 1963. He is the first son of three children in his family. He went to a public school when he was six years old in his birthplace city. He finished his high school and went to a Normal University in September 1979 in an eastern province where he started to learn English. He had no English background before university. At that time, it was hard to qualify for university entry. After two years university English public courses, he learned English by self-instruction as he enjoyed learning a foreign language. While he was at the university, he attended English classes for an English major and worked very hard on English learning. He became a top student when he graduated from the university. At the time Zhang was at university, English courses were compulsory public courses for college students.
Those students who major in English have four years courses at university. Zhang did not attend the College English Test 4-6 because it only commenced in 1987.

His major at university was mathematics even though he was good at physics, chemistry and literature at high school. He chose that major because at that time, a lot of mathematicians were famous in China and he was influenced by them. His university offered students financial support to cover tuition and a living allowance. When he was doing his Master’s degree, the university offered him 6000 Yuan (AU$ 923) which was the top award and only one student received this award for excellence.

After he finished his Master’s degree, he both worked at a university and a company. He became a vice-manager and associate professor before he went overseas. The reason why he chose to work at a university was because he thought he could learn more and more and self-study as well. He also developed good practical sense of working at a company.

He came to Australia after working in France for one and a half years and working in America where he held a professorship. After that experience he did not want to return to China. He was able to secure first a research position for 2 years at Regional University X and later, a senior lecturer position. The move from temporary work in a university to a permanent job was an important aspect for his wishing to continue working at Regional University X. On arrival, having become used to North American intonation, his major challenge was the local Australian accent. However, it has not affected his teaching capacity and his teaching feedback and ratings are excellent. He has won a teaching excellence award and as well as Dean’s research award.
Pu Ling was born in a rural village south western province of China in 1965. He is the second son of the two children in his family. He went to a village school when he was six years old where he finished his primary and secondary school. Then he moved to a metropolitan city in the northern part of China where he spent three years at a high school. He started to learn English when he was at high school. The English teacher was a good experienced teacher who brought cassettes to class so that the students could listen and follow the native speaker’s pronunciation. At his northern city high school he had to learn English as well as Mandarin because his hometown village spoke a local dialect. After he graduated from high school, he passed the national entrance examination and received an offer from a Normal University in a south western province where he started his university journey in 1982.

While he was at the university, the Chinese government financially supported those students who were studying at Normal universities. It was a government policy to encourage university students to become middle school teachers since the Chinese government wanted to strengthen the education field especially in the elementary foundation levels. Pu Ling achieved his Bachelor’s degree in 1986. After he graduated from the university instead of teaching at a high school he worked for a couple of years at a college and later in different universities in two provinces of China. He also had three years’ work experience for a province government. Before he moved to Australia, Pu was an experienced lecturer and he had 13 years work experiences in China: teaching experiences in three universities in the south part of China for 9-10 years, and 3 years for the state government before he moved to Australia.
Pu obtained his PhD degree three years after moving to work in an Australian university. He is a highly skilled and experienced university staff member, based on an Australian model.

Vignette 3 Liu Xiang

Liu Xiang was born in a central province of China in 1968. He is the third of three boys in his family. He started his primary public school when he was six years old and secondary and high school at the same town.

He began learning English in 1980 when he was at secondary school. At that time he just remembered and recited English words by heart, the prime method for learning Mandarin characters. After he finished his high school, he went to a Normal University in 1986. His major was mathematics. At that time, Liu declared that “no information can be known and advised” (Liu, Q5) when he was at high school. He chose this major because he was quite interested in mathematics and was good at it in high school.

While he was studying at university, every student received financial support from the Chinese government. After completing his Bachelor’s degree, he finished a Master’s degree and then applied for a job at that university. He obtained his PhD degree at the same university in 2005. He accumulated 15 years teaching experience at university level and was promoted to Associate Professor before moving to Australia.

In 2005, he was offered a visiting scholar opportunity by a Professor at Regional University X so that they could undertake joint research. After returning to China in 2006, he was again offered a position as a post-doctoral research fellow at Regional University X in 2007. He now works as a senior research fellow in his disciplinary
area. He has attended international conferences in the US and Shanghai and his papers have been published in scholarly journals. The major challenges for him are of an academic nature. He is concerned about doing advanced research and the expectations that he should achieve high quality research outcomes. He is intent on publishing articles in world class journals. He feels the pressure of reaching this goal because of the competition and strict rules of procedure. He also worries about his English competency and communication with colleagues at the university. He feels that there are communication barriers with his neighbours and local people after work.

**Vignette 4 Qin Tao**

Qin Tao was born in 1972 in an eastern province of China. He is the second of two boys in his family. He went to a public primary school when he was seven years old and then studied at a public high school at the same city. He started learning English when he was at high school. He learned English in class and at that time his English teacher taught him how to read and write. He went to a university which is famous in the mining field. He felt that he was lucky to have the chance to study there and get his Bachelor’s degree in 1996. The reason he chose this major in mining technology is because he loves it. He received a scholarship while he was studying at the university because he was a top student in his class. The top scholarship then paid only 500 Yuan (AU$ 76) and the university paid it to students once a year.

After receiving his PhD degree he had many career choices, including university teaching or joining a mining company. Because he likes reading and undertaking research at university, he chose university work as his first career. While there he was promoted to Associate Professor in 2005 and a full Professor in 2009. He visited an Australian university in 2006 and again in 2010 as part of his university’s cooperation
and collaboration arrangements with international universities. In 2010, he was motivated to come to Australia again because of common research interests with some Australian researchers. Qin’s educational journey includes Bachelors, Masters and PhD degrees in China, 2-years in a post-doctoral fellow position at Regional University X and a visiting professor 6 years ago at an Australian university. He was already an experienced academic in a Chinese Normal University (one of the Project 211 institutions) at professorial rank before his post-doctoral work at Regional University X.

The reason why he is working at Regional University X now is because he was offered the position as a post-doctoral research fellow by a professor at that University. Qin’s previous university has long connections and partnerships with Regional University X. He collaborated with a professor from Regional University X to write a book in 2007. It was the first published book in China in his discipline area.

Qin has had some challenges working at Regional University X with database resources for his research. He has called academic friends in China so that he can continue writing articles and papers in his field. Qin has experienced some cultural differences working at a regional university. He finds that he tends to speak Chinese with his compatriots at work and has found difficulties communicating with his Australian colleagues and people in the local community. However, he has not experienced problems with publication. He lives near others in the Chinese academic group and shares their life experiences in Mandarin, the mother tongue.

Vignette 5 Xiao Guan

Xiao Guan was born in a large city of a south-eastern province of China in 1981. He is the second of two children in his family. He went to a public primary school when
he was five and half years old. Usually children attend school when they are six years
old. His secondary school was one of the top two secondary schools in the city. Most
students who attend that school go to universities after graduation.

Xiao began learning English when he was in Grade 5. His English teacher was
excellent and Xiao developed a deep interest in studying English. His parents also
subscribed to some English magazines which improved his reading and
comprehension. When he was 17 and half years old, Xiao started his university
journey. He attended one of the top universities in China, a university that is
especially very popular with people in the south of China. In his Bachelor and Masters
studies, Xiao focused on business administration. At that time in China, business
administration was popular amongst students and parents. His parents played a major
role in making the decision to study business administration.

While studying Xiao was awarded different scholarships for his bachelors and
Master’s degree studies. The university also offered a couple of thousand Yuan as a
bonus for being the top student at the end of the year. He states that the scholarship in
his previous Chinese university was like a post-study award.

After finishing his Master’s study, he obtained a teaching position at the university
where he studied with the assistance of his supervisors. Xiao, on arrival at Regional
University X had five years of teaching in a Chinese university, Bachelors and
Master’s degree from China, and a PhD degree from one of the Group of Eight
Australian universities.

Xiao came to Australia in 2007 because he was offered a research scholarship by a
Go8 University and he wanted a PhD. For the three years it took for him to obtain the
doctorate, he lived in an Australian metropolitan city. After completing his PhD
thesis, he applied by Internet to Regional University X which offered him a
lectureship position. He also received an offer from an American university but
decided to stay near his PhD supervisors who gave non-stop career support to him.

Xiao has been challenged by the ways Regional University X delivers classes in the
distance education mode, Web Fuse and other electronic procedures for teaching
purposes. These were quite different compared to his previous teaching and work
experiences both in China and in Australia where face-to-face teaching was the norm.
After a shaky start, he is now confident and supportive of the new teaching tools and
distance education teaching.

He describes the trauma of not having buses on weekends and the difficulties of
getting to and from work and shopping areas. At the time of the interview with him he
was learning to drive up and looks forward to a better future.

Vignette 6 Gao Hua

Gao Hua was born in the west of China in 1984. He is an only child. He went to a
public primary school when he was six years old in 1990. His secondary school was
also a public high school. He started to learn English at high school in 1998. He was
fortunate to have an experienced English teacher who taught her students to listen to
English, to pronounce words and to read a variety of materials as well as focusing on
English textbooks. Gao is very interested in English because that early English
teaching raised his motivation.

After he graduated from high school in 2002, Gao attended one of the top universities
in Beijing China. This university is famous for engineering and science. He majored
in civil engineering at first but moved to construction management in his later studies.
He loves mathematics, physics and engineering. His reason for changing from civil engineering to construction management is that he thought civil engineering was too broad an area and he wanted to study a part of engineering with more focus. Gao obtained three scholarships while doing his Bachelor's degree. After his graduation, he received an offer from a UK university where he spent two years completing a Master's degree. He also won a scholarship for academic merit following high grades in a degree essay.

After he finished his Master's degree, Gao was offered a research scholar position in a top university in Singapore. The research scholarship funding from the university covered his costs and fees for three years. After completing a PhD in Singapore, he took up a teaching position in a Singapore private education institution. He came to Australia in 2011 because there is a limited and highly competitive market in Singapore for teaching positions and Australia is a relatively larger market. It took him 6 months to find and apply for the job at Regional University X.

He chose to work at Regional University X because engineering has a good reputation, there was much going on in the engineering field at the university, and Australia is a great country to work and live. He thinks that Regional University X is a great starting-point for his academic career with engineering being identified as a disciplinary brand of the University.

Gao is feeling more comfortable at work as time goes by. He describes his supervisor as wonderful and so are his colleagues. Initially, he says, it was difficult to meet and socialize with different people, but things became are much better after he adjusted to work and life here.
His main challenges at a regional university include a degree of depression generated by the small numbers of Chinese students and scholars at the main campus. This was compounded by difficulties in socializing with work and community people. He also found some cultural differences between Singapore and Australia with customs, food preferences, transport and daily life. He especially mentions his difficulty in understanding jokes that locals make and why his colleagues laugh at them. He realizes that he faces a language barrier despite not having problems in his academic career.

**Vignette 7 Chen Yi**

Chen Yi was born in a northwest province of China in 1963. He is the last of seven children in his family. He started his primary school at six years of age in his hometown and attended a public high school. In 1978, he attended a top university (project 211) in the northeast of China at the age of 16.

He did not learn English until he was at the university. Compared with other participants of his age, he was late to start his English learning. The way he learned English was to follow the English classes at the university in 1978. He studied applied geophysics and mathematics which were assigned to him by the university. University students at that time were financially supported by the government. Of his time at the university, he stated “all students were on government assistance at different levels during my university study from 1978-1982 in China” (Chen, Q6).

He started to work at the same university where he completed a Master degree after his graduation. He remained at that university for three years. His previous work experiences in China included having been a research scientist for 3 years and a geoscientist for seven years. He studied at an Australian university for a PhD on a
scholarship provided by the Australian Commonwealth Government and the university. After completing his PhD, he worked at the same university as a lecturer in IT and then obtained a post-doctoral fellow position at that university.

He has worked outside China for 17 years. Of all the participants, he came to Australia the earliest. He chose to work at Regional University X because he was offered a senior lecturer position. He has been living in the local community for more than four years. His main challenges have been a lack of research funding and a lot of face-to-face undergraduate teaching. He has found it difficult to recruit and support research students.

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**Vignette 8 Fei Xin**

Fei Xin was born in a north-west province of China in 1963. She was the first of four girls in her family. She started her public primary school when she was six years old. Fei went to a public secondary and high school in her home town. She started to learn English when she was in Grade Seven. She learned English at school in a class once a week. After graduating from high school, she passed the Gao Kao in 1979 and received an offer from one of the ten top universities in her home city in that year.

Her major at the university was engineering, but her preferred major was mathematics. Back then, it was normal for the university to allocate majors to students. The year in which Fei went to university was the second year of the Chinese Economic Reform; the country needed lots of university students whose majors could meet the country's need. After completing her Bachelor's degree, she was offered work at that university and lectured there for 14 years before moving to Australia. At the same time, Fei chose to work in that university because she liked the university environment.
Fei came to Australia in 1998 to follow her family. After living in Australia for a couple of years, she completed a Master’s Degree in IT at an Australian university and then applied for the teaching position job at Regional University X where She has been working as a lecturer ever since.

While living in the community and working at a Regional University X, teaching in the English language is the major challenge for her. She states that because “many of the students are from the countryside and lack the experiences” to understand the accents and intonation of international teachers’ English (Fei, Q10). Apart from that issue, she believes that it is easy for her to work and live in the university community, and she is quite happy to work here.

Vignette 9 Wen Hong

Wen Hong was born in a north-east province of China in 1963. He is the first son of two children in his family. He went to a public primary and secondary school in his home city. He started to learn English when he was at high school. He attended English classes and followed the English teacher’s teaching every week at high school. He passed the Gao Kao in 1982 and attended a good university in technology in the capital city of his province. He studied what was a popular major in 1980s since by then China had started to reform in many fields and needed a lot of people who had computer knowledge and skill. He did not have scholarship support.

He chose to work at a Chinese university because he liked teaching and doing some research. His work experience included teaching as a university lecturer and then as an associate professor. He achieved his Bachelors and Masters degrees at the same university, and then a PhD program in computer science at another Chinese university.
He came to Australia in 2001 to work at Regional University X as a lecturer, first and foremost. His motivation for working at the current university was job availability as well as the wish for a change in career. He has faced challenges posed by different cultures, laws, and languages from those of China. Wen is working as a senior lecturer at the current university and has worked and lived in the local community for 12 years.

4.3.2 Personal information of the nine participants

The participants consisted of eight males and one female. All of them were originally from mainland China. There were two age groups represented among the participants: those who were in their early or late 40s, and those who were around 30 years old. Because of their age differences, the two groups had different educational journeys both in China and then in Australia. I explain such differences in the next chapter.

Eight of the nine participants have two siblings or more while one is from a one child family. The reasons why the nine participants came to Australia were different. Given their historical settings, it is not surprising that these Chinese academics mainly choose to live where they could follow their professional career or studies based on perceived opportunities.

I have presented details of the nine participants in this section. The educational journeys in their earlier stages were the same. They went to public primary and high schools, passed the Gao Kao and attended university, and then were employed by the government or university allocation. Classroom practices were the key to the implementation of English language policy and curriculum for the participants. While they were similar in sharing these circumstances, each of the participants presented
some variations in their educational journeys and academic career development whether in China or Australia.

4.4 Conclusion

The participants and their families lived through the massive large-scale political changes (the Cultural Revolution 1966—1976 and the Open Up policies 1978—present) with the common thread that both the society and the participants’ families emphasized the value of education. The cultural value given to education and the need to work hard to get it the rewards provided the participants with the motivation to be diligent and to value learning in the education system of the day. The participants’ life stories indicate how the coincidence of learning English and having the opportunity to complete university together changed their educational journeys in ways that proved decisive in recent decades. Their journeys figuratively opened the door for them to study and work in China and in the global transnational academic labour market. I discuss these aspects in more details in Chapters Five and Six.
Chapter 5  Staring the Educational Journey

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin the presentation of findings and initial cross case analysis of the nine individual case studies looking at educational journeys. These individual case studies form the embedded nature of this larger case concerning academic mobility. The cross analysis of data has enabled me to also locate the educational journeys of the participants in the political events and educational policies of China’s national economic development since 1949 as one context of this case study. The chapter is divided into two major sections; in the first section I focus on mapping the social and political context of China in the post Cultural Revolution period as a way of outlining the background of the participants. This is important because it not only highlights how the influences impacted on the choices made by the participants but also helps to explain why these choices were made. In the second major section of this chapter I chart the beginning of the participants' educational journeys and then describe their academic experiences as university students. By the end of this chapter I establish the experiences of my participants prior to working as academics.

Using the data gained from the ten structured interview questions and the personal information (see Appendix A) supplied by the nine participants, I present the findings of the cross case analysis under specific themes, namely schooling, English language, going to university, gaining qualifications and scholarships. I also explore the university student experience to show the way that this has changed over the years from when the Open Door policy was introduced to the current situation.
5.2 Early Schooling

Participants went to primary schools which were all public institutions, some located in the small towns while others in the big cities. One participant began schooling in a rural village. Six of the nine participants went to school when they were six years old, two of the nine were seven years old, and one was five and a half years old. They all went to the primary schools located where they were born. All of the schools were public schools either in cities or the countryside.

All participants went to public secondary schools and one attended a top public secondary school. Top schools in a city or town at the secondary level refer to those schools that have good reputations in high enrolment rates of the GaoKao. The participants finished secondary school and passed the GaoKao examination. Six of the nine participants went to Project 211 universities and three in a Normal University.

Chinese students and families like to emphasize that they have been to good schools as most students in those top schools are guaranteed to pass the GaoKao and then attend Project 211 and 985 universities. In addition, it is considered by many parents that top schools have well-qualified teachers and better teaching and learning resources than general schools.

In Olsen’s research report (2009, p. 10), he states that “the Chinese government is responsible for regulating the number of university graduates based on the economic and social needs of the country”. Olsen (2009, p. 13) highlights “universities, colleges and vocational institutions, private colleges and joint foreign programs are categorised under Tiers for the purpose of university entrance via the GaoKao” in China. Furthermore, “these national and provincial university recruitment plans are targeted so that the top percent of GaoKao candidates are eligible for admission to Tier One
universities and the next 20 percent of candidates are eligible for admission to Tier Two universities” (Olsen, 2009, p. 5). When participants in this study applied to university and majors, the eligibility for admission to Tier One and Tier Two universities depended on score on the GaoKao report.

5.3 The English language

As China began to open up to the West the English language became more prominent. Language had become a sensitive issue during the Cultural Revolution and those speaking English were labelled as bourgeois. English remained in the background in China until the GaoKao was restored in 1977 and the open-door policy adopted in 1978. English, like Chinese, became one of the required subjects in the GaoKao examination from that time (see Appendix E). The Chinese government allowed foreign investors to enter China and young people were encouraged to study abroad. The GaoKao examination necessitated that young Chinese students should learn English so as to be capable of taking greater opportunities. Therefore the uptake and spread of English could be linked to this post Cultural Revolution period of social and political change under Deng (Wang & Gao, 2008). The participants’ educational journeys straddled this period.

Those participants who entered university during the late 1970s were not required to have English proficiency prior to the GaoKao and began learning English at university. Chen explains the way he learnt English:

*I followed English classes at (Chinese) University in 1978. (Chen, Q3)*

Zhang also began learning English at university:
Actually I started English at university ... After the university I got public entry course from the ABC - a very basic one- the university only had about 2 years public course for English -actually very little. After that, I learned English by myself. I always attended English major students classes and became usually the very bottom one-became the top student. (Zhang, Q3)

Zhang started learning English at university and then sought out further tuition. Zhang had two years of public entry courses in English at the university from 1979 to 1981. Public entry course refers to compulsory English courses for university students in the first two years of their program. Zhang liked learning English and retained his interest in the language by attending English major classes and self-tuition. Fei (Q3) “learned English at Year Seven. We only had one English class in a week. I learned English at English class”. So this indicates that English language had been introduced to the school curriculum during the 1970s. English was also in the secondary curriculum as Wen indicates:

I learned English from English lessons at high school. (Wen, Q3)

Wen started to learn English in the late 1970s. By then, English was given equal prominence with Chinese and Maths in schools and became a compulsory subject in the KaoGao examination. Pu began to learn English at high school in a metropolitan city in China where the others already had the experiences of learning. Learning English was not easy for Pu and because of being in a non-urban area he did not have the same access to English resources. Pu’s comments below show that while in urban high schools students were taught English from textbooks however learning English was not consistent across all schools. Pu started from ABC:
Most of the students at that school had some experiences of learning English. Only a few like me we did not know any English, we started from ABC and they started the high school textbook and I did not like English at that time. In the GaoKao I was just thinking to give up the test or try my luck for something. So I did not develop any English competency and language learning because it was not quite a good experience. But the English teacher was good; I was not a good student. (Pu, Q3)

When Pu moved from his hometown in a rural village to a high school in the capital city, he found that the English classes were different however the English teacher was good. Liu learnt English at high school however rather than understanding English he learnt words off by heart to pass the text:

When I was at secondary school maybe in the year 1980, I started learning English. I just remembered at that time, just learned English words and remembered in the heart. (Liu, Q3)

While Liu attended English classes at school he basically learnt English by learning vocabulary off by heart. Liu's way of learning English off by heart was common amongst students at that time and survives into the 2000s. Qin’s method is explained thus:

I studied English in my secondary school. I learned English in class. My English teacher taught us how to do reading and writing. (Qin, Q3)

It was the early 1990s when Xiao started to learn English. Xiao learned English in an earlier grade than the others illustrating how the introduction of English language as a subject at school was being implemented in the early grades:
I started learning my English at Grade 5 at my primary school. I attended English classes and we have got very good English teachers and I was also quite interested in studying English. And my parents also subscribed for me some English learning magazines to read and learn. (Xiao, Q3)

Xiao comments that his parents subscribed to English language magazines showing that there were a variety of resources now available for students to access, perhaps indicating that English language resources were able to be imported into China and that there were more native speaker teachers. There was more than just textbooks available and students could use newspapers and other media to source English language practice. Across this time it can also be seen that the teacher made a difference to the enjoyment of learning English in particular Gao found that it was the teacher who made a difference for him:

*I started to learn English at high school that was probably in 1996. I think the best part is I met a wonderful teacher who knows how to teach English and she taught us to listen to a lot, to pronounce a lot, to read papers not just on the textbooks. I think it is because of her who raises this part of interest in English. I am really appreciated to have a good English teacher.* (Gao, Q3)

Gao was very appreciative of the teacher and the way that she encouraged students to move beyond the textbook as a way of learning English. It could also be seen from Gao’s comments that the pedagogical style around language teaching was changing from a focus on learning vocabulary to using language in a communicative style. The above discussions show that the nine participants started to learn English at different times, levels and backgrounds.
Comments from the participants indicate that learning English required effort and that to continue with an academic career it was important to know English. From the experience of the participants in this study it is possible to track the introduction of English language as a school subject. During the 1970s students were exposed to English at university for the first time. During the 1980s English was introduced to the high school curriculum. By the 1990s English was being taught at primary school. It could be argued here that the gradual implementation of English into the primary and secondary schools was part of the revitalisation of the education system (Gu, 2011) plus a way of expanding the higher education system by encouraging students to learn English, which was a compulsory subject for the GaoKao enabling student to sit the exam and go onto university. While for many of the participants English language was part of the usual school pattern, especially those going to school in the 1990s, for those who entered university at the end of the Cultural Revolution much more personal effort was needed to gain proficiency in speaking and understanding English.

5.4 Starting university in China

All participants passed the GaoKao and started university in the following years: 1978 (Chen), 1979 (Fei and Zhang), 1982 (Pu, and Wen), 1986 (Liu), 1992 (Qin), 1998 (Xiao), and 2002 (Gao). It can be seen that three participants went to university during the 1970s, three during the 1980s and the last three were at university more recently around the turn of the century. This means that all of the participants would have had different experiences; for example Chen, Fei and Zhang entered university at the end of the Cultural Revolution while Gao started university twenty-three years later.

Six participants attended Project 211 universities (some of those universities also hold the title of Project 985 universities); three participants went to Normal Universities
(which train students to become teachers). Most participants regarded their universities as top universities in China. Chen comments:

I started university study in 1978 at a Project 211 and 985 university, one of the best universities in China. (Chen, Q4)

Universities have enrolled students through students’ GaoKao scores since 1977. The university Chen attended holds both Project 211 and 985 university statuses. To have had the opportunity to study in this university showed that Chen had higher scores on his GaoKao report than most students in his province. After his undergraduate degree, Chen obtained a Master’s and PhD degree at another university in China and Postdoctoral fellowship program in Australia.

Fei aslo describes the university and again emphasizes its quality:

I went to university in 1979; it is a Project 211 as well as a Project 985 university. It is a very good university which is very famous at science and engineering disciplinary area. (Fei, Q4)

Obviously Fei achieved scores that her university demanded and she was proud of the programs which her university offered. Fei later continued to study and obtained her Masters and PhD degrees after moving to Australia in 1998. Xiao spoke of similar experiences:

The university where I started of my undergraduate and master degrees is one of the top universities in China. It is particularly famous in the south of China; yeah, so it is a Project 211 and a 985 university. It is famous for its science, technology and engineering and it is also in its business study. (Xiao, Q4)
Science, technology and engineering and business programs of Xiao’s university have been popular from 1977 to present. Xiao started university in 1998 and obtained a Master’s degree at the same university and a PhD degree in Australia later on. Gao repeats the pattern of university study seen in the enrolment of the nine participants:

My bachelor study was a Project 211 and 985 University in China in 2002. I want to say it is one of the best universities in China, especially in engineering, but when it comes to science and law; there are better universities in China. (Gao, Q4)

In 2011 Gao’s university ranked 35th in The Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings (Yang & Welch, 2012). Usually only the best students nationwide gained entry into this university. Gao went to England for a Master’s degree and then completed a PhD degree in Singapore.

Qin attended a Project 211 university where he obtained Bachelors, Masters, and PhD degrees. Qin comments:

I went to university in 1992 which is a Project 211 university. My university is a famous university in Mining field. So I was lucky to be at this university.

(Qin, Q4)

Qin obtained scores what the university demanded in 1992. The programs in Qin’s university were specific and meeting the needs of the construction in the era of 1990s. At that time, the booming of economy stimulated the development of natural resources.

Wen studied at a Project 211 and also a 985 university and took out a Master’s degree.
I went to university in 1982. It is a good university in technology in the capital city, Harbin of He Long Jiang province, China. (Wen, Q4)

Wen’s university is a provincial university in the north-eastern part of China where he studied. Wen undertook studies in technology programs that met the needs of China in the 1980s when there was a focus on the development of technology and technology use in China.

By the end of the 1970s when three of the participants were starting university the competition for places was intense. 1979 was the third year of the GaoKao after the end of the Cultural Revolution. That year, 4.68 million people (mostly young students) sat for this university entrance. Only 284,000 passed the GaoKao, representing 6.1 percent of those who attempted the examination (see Appendix B). In his comments, Zhang, who had pursued his Masters and PhD degrees in a Project 211 university at that time, provides an overview of the situation.

In September 1979, I went to a Normal University. You know, Shan Dong province is very difficult to be qualified for the university entry. At that time, I think, exactly at that year- the whole country, only got 270,000 students for the university, including Diploma and Bachelor levels -altogether- I think a lot were Diploma level, not at Bachelor level, not many Bachelor’s level. (Zhang, Q4)

What Zhang noted here in 1979, the competitive demands for the admission to Bachelor’s level degrees nationwide, resulted in lots of candidates of the GaoKao having to accept the diploma level training which equivalent to vocational education now.
Pu’s comments provide an insight into the Normal universities that rank below the top academic institutions:

*After three years of high school, I passed the exam and I went to university in 1982. I went to HM Normal University (substitute) at that time which they call it HT University now (substitute). It is not a top university in China, but good in education to educate students as secondary school teachers and it is quite good in that area.* (Pu, Q4)

Pu’s university was merged in July 2005 through the incorporation of a former Normal University and an Agricultural University upon the approval of the Ministry of Education. Pu’s university then offered teachers’ training programs and it was famous in the west south area of China.

Liu commented:

*I went to university in 1986. My university is a Normal university in Yi Yang, central south part province of China.* (Liu, Q4)

Liu’s university was not a Project 211 or 985 university, but the study there kept Liu in his educational journey. Liu did not become a secondary school teacher but rather after obtaining Masters and PhD degrees in a Project 211 university, Liu became an academic in this university.

These remarks reveal that all of the participants had successful GaoKao results that enabled them to attend nine different universities. Six of them attended Project 211 and 985 universities while three participants were educated at Normal universities. Three participants attended university in the late 1970s, two participants in the early 1980s. The remaining participants attended university in the middle of 1980s, the
early and late 1990s, while one studied in the early 2000s. The socio-political conditions of the earlier years were different compared to the later years as discussed in Chapter Four. In particular Chen, Fei and Zhang were at university at the same time as Deng Xiaoping came to power and a new direction in economic development was being implemented (Baum 1994). During the 1980s there was an emphasis on teacher education and maintaining high standards for teachers and secondary school education (Hayhoe & Li, 2010) thus seeing an improvement in the status of Normal Universities.

5.5 Being a student at university

Some participants chose those majors in which they were interested or which were popular in the context of the social and economic development of China from 1978. For some participants majors were assigned by the university as described by Chen:

I was assigned to the major in applied geophysics and mathematics by the university. (Chen, Q5)

During Chen’s time at the university, China aimed to achieve the four modernizations by 2000 (Ma, 2003), science subjects met the need and accordingly, students were directed to science courses. Fei had a similar experience:

My major is engineering; the university had arranged the major for me; and my original intended major was to do mathematics. (Fei, Q5)

Both Fei and Chen had limited choice in majors when they started university. Fei was assigned to learn engineering program by her university. This showed the links between control of university programs and the educational policy following the economic reforms and the Open Door policy since 1978 (Ngok, 2007). This also
highlights the way that Deng Xiaoping’s policies were being implemented, in that it appeared to follow that those students with high scores showed the ability to learn new knowledge so were assigned to areas that were becoming important to China’s development. Zhang also commented that science and math were in the top status level, plus there were famous mathematicians that added to this status. Zhang was interested in both science and the arts but went with Math as his major:

*My major is math. At that time, you know, actually I am good in the science area, to be honestly, including math, physics and chemistry. I am also very good like literature. Every subject is in the top position, but most like subject is math. Because you know, at that time, a lot of mathematicians were very famous - so that was the case.* (Zhang, Q5)

There is a Chinese saying 学好数理化，走遍天下都不怕, Xue Hao Shu Li Hua, Zou Bian Tian Xia Dou Bu Pa (a metaphor), which means once you are good at the subjects of Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, you will not be scared to learn anything else anywhere in the world. In 1978, a mathematician called Chen Jing Run achieved fame by solving Goldbach’s Conjecture. It was an epic story for that period in China’s development and Chen Jing Run became a generation model for millions of young students who wanted to emulate his feat. Chen was the realization of the four modernizations in practice and represented the heights of science just in the year of Deng’s Open Up policy. Liu liked mathematics too:

*At that time, no information can be known and advised, I just chose major in the view of my interest in the study of the school. So in the secondary school, I was interested in mathematics, so I chose maths as my major at the university and I was not bad at that time.* (Liu, Q5)
By the 1980s, when Liu went to university, students could choose majors that they were good at in high school. Students got the priorities to choose majors if their scores were higher than the other candidates on the GaoKao report. Similar Pu had more freedom to choose a specific major of interest rather than being assigned by the university, albeit still limited by the type of institution and describes his choice of major at the university:

Why I chose my major, because in China, when at high school, we were supposed to be science class, not supposed to study geography; how I chose it, I just had no idea to choose the major because at that time I do not know geography, but I thought geography had the opportunity to go outside to see the wild world and know the world, so I studied geography. To learn something outside the classroom was a good experience. You have to be teachers when you are studying at a Normal University; we don’t have many choices, 男怕入错行 (Men fear the wrong career line), 女怕嫁错郎 (Women fear marrying the wrong husband). When you are studying at the normal university, you have to be a teacher; we don’t have many choices at that time. (Pu, Q5).

What Pu is saying here is that by choosing to study at a Normal University, he knew his career choice. He was going to be a teacher as that was the only pathway through this particular university. Pu was also interested in doing something other than science. He thought it better to do a major that would get him outside the classroom. So there is an inference here that he did not really want to be a secondary school teacher but wanted to attend a certain university. Luckily the one he was able to get into because of his scores on the GaoKao report.
The Chinese saying 男怕入错行 Nan Pa Ru Cuo Hang (men fear the wrong career) means that if a man selects the wrong career, then he will not be happy or have a good life. The use of the saying shows that career was the primary motivation in Pu’s life, an understandable Chinese cultural trait. Furthermore, when the saying 女怕嫁错郎 Nv Pa Jia Cuo Lang (Women fear marrying the wrong husband), it means that for a woman, marrying the wrong person will destroy her life. These remarks, drawn from Chinese cultural traditions, indicate that Pu feared that being a middle school teacher after university graduation would not be a good career that would lead to a better life and fame for the family.

Pu and Wen started university in the same year in the early 1980s. It could be seen that both Pu and Wen were taking up university study in areas that were seen as important to China’s development. With Pu, this was following the new emphasis on teacher education quality and Wen moved into the area of computer science:

_The area of computer science and engineering was becoming popular in China since 1980s. (Wen, Q5)._ 

Computer science was a popular subject with students in the early 1980s, with this area becoming increasingly important in China’s open policy and learning about the West. In the 1990s while students had more scope to choose majors or study areas that they were interested in, it could also be seen that these areas were aligned with economic development. In Chapter Four it was highlighted that Engineering, Teacher Training and Medicine were the top three majors in the late 1970s. By the 1980s the competitive majors were Engineering, Teacher’s Training and Economics and Finance. In the late 1990s Engineering was the most popular major among Chinese university students. In the twenty years period of the national development of China,
Engineering had been the most important and favoured disciplines subjects to meet the need of market (Ma, 2003). Qin’s university is famous in China for its Mining and Technology fields. Qin’s career choice was ready-made:

*I learned Cooperation in the university. Why I chose this Mining Technology, because I love this major.* (Qin, Q5)

Qin was lucky to achieve enough scores to choose his favourite majors at the university. This was why the students at high school worked hard then in order to achieve higher scores on the GaoKao report.

Xiao went to university in 1998 so was entering the Higher Education sector towards the end of the 20th century and from his comments had a different experience when it came to choosing particular majors as shown below:

*I studied business administration as my undergraduate degree and then actually further my master study in the same major. In those years, it was quite popular among school kids and also among parents. A lot of Chinese parents made decisions for their kids. So they actually recommended me to put this on my preference list, so I put it on my preference list and ended up studying this. It is part of my parents’ decision I guess.* (Xiao, Q5)

The year 1998 was the 20th year of open door policy, China achieved huge achievements in economic development, and Xiao chose something that was both of interest to him and of interest to his parents. The program was also popular among students but because Xiao’s parents had suggested that Business Administration was a good choice it was listed on his preference list. This shows two things: firstly, parents rather than the government had the initial influence on choices made by students. It could be argued that students listened to their parents’ advice as in China most parents
support the university tuition and fees for their children. Secondly, students were still required to list preferences at the specific university. Because Gao was entering university in 2002 it could be argued that there were now many universities to choose from, however despite there being more choice about the programs being offered, certain universities had status or a history aligned to specific areas. China now has more than 2,000 standard institutions of higher education, with around six percent being 211 Project institutions; developments of these institutions are connected to the long history of economic development associated with the Open Door policy. About his major, Gao commented:

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\text{Civil engineering, I started in the middle of civil engineering and moved to construction management, more realistic kind of things. It is hard to say when you first know nothing about the major, and basically I love mathematics and engineering part and physics, that kind of stuff. I chose engineering field and the reason why civil engineering because it is a more broader area, you can play road or bridge like that kind of stuff and when you study more part of engineering, that should be more specific. (Gao, Q5)}
\]

Gao’s university had a major focus on studying Engineering. What he enjoyed the most about his choice of major was that civil engineering allowed him scope to study across a broad area that included road and bridge construction. Historically higher education in China expanded to assist in the modernisation of the country and was seen as the vehicle to economic growth (Ngok, 2007). Over a period of thirty years students going onto higher education have progressed through a system where choice of majors was determined by the university in line with key messages from the government to currently where choice of majors is becoming more closely aligned with personal interests.
The participants began university between 1978 and 2002. Over that particular period China became more open to the world and was developing its market economy. All nine participants spoke of their choice of majors as having been influenced by some factors that reflected China’s economic goals.

5.6 Changing financial support for university study in China

Those participants, who attended university in the late 1970s and early 1980s, did not have scholarships, but they received government financial support and free tuition. According to Ma (2003) because of the restricted number of universities and therefore students, higher education was free to everyone lucky enough to get to university. Since the 1990s the Higher Education system has moved from an elitist model to a more mass education system and has seen a change in student fees from being supported by the government to being supported by parents. Chen’s comment illustrates this:

All university students were on government assistance at different levels during my university study from 1978-1982 in China. (Chen, Q6)

Government assistance mentioned by Chen here means free tuition and also accommodation and a living allowance then. The different levels to which Chen refers reflects the fact that the student’s family income was counted by the university in order to ensure that assistance was guaranteed and that low income families received more support from the government. Those who attended a Normal University received similar support as well as some living allowance. Zhang mentions this in what follows:

At that time, we got support; we do not call it a scholarship. The government supports you to cover your tuition fees and they also give you (at a Normal
university) some living allowances. At Masters Level, I still do the similar things – not like the current situation, a lot of universities provide a scholarship because they ask the students to pay tuition fee. The top scholarship we called award - given an excellence award. (Zhang, Q6)

Government support Zhang mentioned refers to financial assistance to cover the cost at a Normal University. When Zhang was doing a Master’s degree; the university introduced a scholarship initiative. Zhang was “awarded 6000 Yuan in 1986” (Zhang, Q6) which was the top award granted to the best student. Pu provides more information about the student support:

At that time, we do not have scholarships at the university; the university gave all students financial support. I think the Grade 83 started to have scholarship and pay some tuition not fully, but we Grade 82 did not pay the tuition. Grade 77 to 82 students did not pay at the university; university students got money from the university or the government to cover our cost at that time. (Pu, Q6)

Grade 77, 82, 83 mentioned by Pu refers to those students who attended university in the years of 1977, 1982 and 1983. It was during this time that the fee or support structure changed. As Pu went to a Normal University, the government policies towards to Normal Universities were different from general universities. After Grade 83, the universities started scholarships and charged some tuition fees.

Liu mentioned the support received by students in Normal universities and pointed out those scholarships did not exist, but that “At that time, every student can receive a support from the government because I was at a Normal university; the government supports every student studying at Normal universities.” (Liu, Q6). Qin’s comment indicated this change of policy:
I did get a scholarship every year. It was about 500 Yuan per year. It was the top scholarship at that time in my university. (Qin, Q6)

Scholarships at the time that Qin was at the university could be seen as a top up scholarship to assist with tuition and living costs. Xiao also benefited from this development:

I was actually awarded a couple of different scholarships when I was studying my Bachelors and Masters degrees. But those scholarships are very different from the scholarships Australian universities offered. Back then it's like at the end of the whole year, if you are a top student of the class and the school, they will give you couple of thousands as a bonus for being the top student. (Xiao, Q6)

Xiao’s descriptions illustrate that only the top students were awarded scholarships in the late 1990s. The difference between the early and late 1990s show that scholarship changed from being a support to being a reward for good work and were increased from couple of hundreds to thousands of Yuan. Gao states:

I did have a scholarship. It is not a very high rank scholarship, but it is a scholarship for academic merits; it is like a second or third prize for academic merits. (Gao, Q6)

The policy towards to scholarship in the early 2000s at the university awarded to those students who academic merits with different ranks: first, second and third prize. This shows that scholarships were now competitive and targeted students with higher academic achievements.
Government financial support, living allowance and scholarships were available to these participants at different times according to China’s educational policy. From the above discussions, Grades 78–82 received government financial support at the universities and then the funding model changed. Participants who went to universities in the years of late 1970s and early 1980s had total sponsorship from the government to help them through their higher education period. Participants who went to universities in the years of 1990s and 2000s were awarded scholarships.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter my cross case analysis has found that firstly, all participants passed the Gao Kao right after their high school in a competitive situation as China emerged from the chaos of the Cultural Revolution and entered the opening up and four modernizations. Second, the politico-cultural context of the day provided opportunities for the participants to complete schooling and higher education. Third, the opening up policies of the Chinese government made it compulsory for the participants to learn English. Difficult as it was for some of them, learning English proved to be a key capability for their future academic progress and careers. All participants had elite education backgrounds in China during that time and during the course of their education, developed aspirations to work overseas. The paths on an educational journey to immigrate to Australia and to work in the current university were shaped by higher education qualifications, permanent lecturer jobs and research positions and academic experiences in China and Australia. In the next chapter I present my findings concerning the participants becoming international academics.
Chapter 6  Becoming an International Academic

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the academic phase of the educational journeys of the participants. Since the implementation of the Open Door policy in 1978, Chinese people have been encouraged to go overseas to gain experience. Academics are seen as one profession where international migration and mobility is closely linked to career development and gaining experience. All of my participants spent time as university students in China. Some of the participants then went overseas as international students while the rest travelled to gain experience and employment. I have divided the presentation of these findings into five major sections: firstly I document what it was like to work in Chinese universities and then I outline the Australian academic environment to show the difference between China and Australia. The third section is about working in Australian universities and the challenges experienced by the nine participants. The fourth section looks at the participants' experiences with living in regional Australia. These findings are then discussed in relation to the literature with my interpretation and conclusions from the data.

6.2 Working in Chinese universities

All participants were successful in gaining Bachelor degrees at different universities in China. All but one of the participants in this study have a PhD: four were gained in China, four in Australia and one in an Asian country. Four of the nine participants achieved appointments in Postdoctoral fellowship programs in Australia. I argue that this demonstrates the globalisation process in action. These academics have travelled both within and beyond China to gain academic qualifications and experience,
providing an example of what Appadurai (1996) calls *cultural flows* and changing *scapes*. The following table shows where the nine participants pursued their educational qualifications.

**Table 3: The participants’ qualifications and where they were obtained**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID #</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree Where</th>
<th>Master’s Degree Where</th>
<th>PhD Degree Where</th>
<th>Postdoctoral fellowship program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pu</td>
<td>A Normal University (a Project 211 University)</td>
<td>Another Project 211 university</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin</td>
<td>A Project 211 University</td>
<td>At the same university</td>
<td>The same university</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiao</td>
<td>A Project 211 and 985 University</td>
<td>At the same university</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang</td>
<td>A Normal University</td>
<td>A Project 211 university</td>
<td>The same university</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gao</td>
<td>The Project 211 and 985 University</td>
<td>Outside China</td>
<td>Outside China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fei</td>
<td>The Project 211 and 985 University</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen</td>
<td>A Project 211 and 985 University</td>
<td>At the same university</td>
<td>A Project 211 university</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>A Project 211 and 985 University</td>
<td>Another Project 211 university</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu</td>
<td>A Normal University</td>
<td>A Project 211 university</td>
<td>The same university</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: From the participant’s data collection)

University graduates in the 1980s were described as 天之骄子 Tian Zhi Jiao Zi (God’s favoured one). This idiom was used to praise people, especially university graduates as the most favoured ones by the market in that period (Li, 2004). It was
particularly salient during the years of 1977–1989 for graduates of prestigious universities. Pu’s comments show how this worked:

If I had any alternatives, I do not want to work at a university at that time. Because you studied at that university, you were 分配 allocated; you were assigned by that university. You do not have any opportunity, in the whole class, as far as I knew, no anyone not working at the education sector, all are teachers in universities, colleges or high school. The whole market even the labour market is controlled by the government and you were assigned and allocated by the government to that that job. You don’t have choice. (Pu, Q7)

Reflecting on Pu’s commentary, in the 1980s, graduates were allocated to work in specific universities. At that time, university graduates were regarded as talented intellectuals necessary for national modernization and therefore were assigned to where the greatest national needs lay. These graduates were in demand, with employment guaranteed, even though not all of them were content with the allocation they received.

Table 4: Academic appointment on graduation in the 1980s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID #</th>
<th>Year at the university</th>
<th>Year of Graduation</th>
<th>Academic Appointment and Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pu</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Lecturer (1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fei</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Lecturer (1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Lecturer (1986)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The four participants in Table 4 who graduated from university in the 1980s were given jobs on graduation; they also highlight the term 天之骄子 Tian Zhi Jiao Zi (God’s favoured one) as described by Li (2004) where these people were seen as very useful to China's future direction. Fei also started teaching at the university where she studied in the early 1980s and asked why that choice and she stated that she “liked the university environment, that’s all” (Fei, Q7). Likewise Wen enjoyed both “teaching and researching at university” (Wen Q7). Qin had thought about doing other options at the time of graduation but similar to Wen, enjoyed the research side of academic life in China:

*After I got my PhD from university, then I had many choices, such as going to universities or going to Mining and Irons. But I like reading and doing research at the university. So that’s why I chose a Project 211 institution as my first career. (Qin, Q7)*

Four participants - Pu, Fei, Chen and Zhang started their academic careers when they graduated with a Bachelor degree in the 1980s. During the 1990s Pu and Chen did their Masters degrees while working as lecturers along with Fei and Liu. Xiao attained his Masters degree in 1996. Zhang gained his PhD in 1997 while Wen gained his PhD qualification in 1999. The rest of the participants - Pu, Liu, Qin, and Gao gained PhDs in early to mid-2000s. Fei completed her doctoral program in 2010.

Table 5 shows the academic appointments of these seven participants after graduation. Each gained employment as lecturers while progressing through the sequence of Bachelors, Masters and PhD degrees.
Table 5: Academic experiences after Masters or PhD degrees in China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Years of Masters or PhD Degrees</th>
<th>Academic Appointment Where</th>
<th>Academic titles before moved to Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pu</td>
<td>A Master degree in 1995</td>
<td>Lecturer (University)</td>
<td>Lecturer (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin</td>
<td>A PhD degree in 2002</td>
<td>Lecturer (University)</td>
<td>Associate Professor (2005) Associate Professor (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu</td>
<td>A PhD degree in 2005</td>
<td>Associate Professor (University)</td>
<td>Associate professor 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen</td>
<td>A PhD degree in 1999</td>
<td>Associate professor (University)</td>
<td>Associate Professor (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiao</td>
<td>A Master degree 2006</td>
<td>A teaching/research assistant and then a lecturer (University)</td>
<td>Lecturer (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang</td>
<td>A PhD degree in 1997</td>
<td>Associate Professor (University)</td>
<td>Associate Professor (1997)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: From the participants’ data collection)

Xiao followed a traditional pathway in gaining an academic position where the recommendations of supervisors or professors play an important role. Xiao’s comment illustrates this point:

*I started working at a Project 211 and 985 institutions as a teaching assistant and then I lectured one course. I chose doing there mainly because of my Masters supervisors. They created these opportunities for us and they highly recommended that we pursue these teaching opportunities. (Xiao, Q7)*

The Masters supervisors of Xiao sponsored him into a lectureship at the university. Personal relationships with supervisors helped Xiao enter the academic profession in
his university. Liu’s history followed a different path. Liu gained his Master’s degree and then looked for a job:

When I finished my Master’s degree in 1992, at that time, I did not know what I should do. I contacted the Adult learning College of a Project 211 Institution to ask for a job. They offered me to work with them and so I stayed working at the university. (Liu, Q7)

Liu pursued his PhD degree while working at the university and became an Associate Professor before he finished his academic career in China. Chen graduated and then worked in his alma mater while completing a Master’s degree. He became a research scientist. Zhang’s case is different from the other participants:

I chose different work in a company and I also worked in a university. I found the university and the company are totally different environments. In the university, you can learn more and more and you can self-study and expand your career. When I worked in a company, they gave me more in the practical sense. So if you work both ways, you can understand the situation. I finally chose the university because it is good for me. I chose to be a Professorship in the university. (Zhang, Q7)

Working in the two roles early in his professional career enabled Zhang to choose his future career path. He was appointed as an Associate Professor, a well-respected title while he was working at a company, which then saw he finally shift to the university sector. Zhang’s career choice shows that he valued the practical experience but saw the university workplace as a more secure field for his personal development. While eight of the nine participants achieved their initial academic experiences in
China, Gao started as a lecturer in an Asian university after completing a PhD degree and before re-locating to Australia.

Table 6: Years worked as an academic in China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Levels of teaching in China</th>
<th>Years of teaching in China</th>
<th>Previous academic experiences in China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhang</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pu</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiao</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>5 year</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gao</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>1 year in an Asian country</td>
<td>Lecturer in an Asian country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>Geoscientist and Research scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fei</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: From the participants’ data collection)

Table 6 shows all participants had academic careers before coming to Australia. Four of the nine participants had worked for 10 years or more before making the move from China. The nine participants are skilled and experienced university staff members, based on what counts as academic work experience in the Australian model in the higher education sector. Their academic work experiences and PhD qualifications enabled them to apply for and obtain work in research and teaching at the Australian university for which they applied. It can be argued that the career pathways taken by all the participants document educational journeys that show them as moving nationally, globally and internationally thus making them an example of
transnational academic mobility (Koser & Salt, 1997; Kim, 2009; Guerin & Green, 2009).

In summary, gaining qualifications in the 1980s in prestigious Chinese universities enabled four of the participants to become lecturers. Participants with Masters or PhD degrees in the 1990s and 2000s had more choices than those in the 1980s due to the changes of government policy. Their educational journeys and historical circumstances with combined career prospects improved and in the social and political context of China during this time enabled the participants to travel to Australia for further study or employment. In the next section I outline the broad academic environment in Australia to provide a context or background to how my participants firstly came to Australia and then gained employment as an academic in Australian universities, then a permanent job in regional Australia.

6.3 Mapping the academic environment in Australia

According to Australian Government (Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, 2013), the Australian higher education system makes a fundamental contribution to the future of Australia’s intellectual, economic, cultural and social development. The Australian Government has the primary responsibility for public funding of higher education. The sector consists of the following:

- 39 universities of which 37 are public institutions and 2 are private
- 1 Australian branch of an overseas university
- 3 other self-accrediting higher education institutions
- And non-self-accrediting higher education providers accredited by State and Territory authorities.
These institutions award higher education qualifications under specific legislation. Admission to undergraduate programs is usually based on successful completion of a total of 13 years of school education though some institutions use interviews; portfolios or demonstrated aptitude and most provided alternative pathways for mature-age (non-school leaver) students.

Admission to postgraduate programs is based on the level of achievement in previous higher education studies, or in some vocational areas such as Business, by experience in the field. Admission to doctoral programs is usually based on high achievement in a Research Master’s degree or completion of a Bachelor degree with First Class or Second Class Honours Division A.

Australian universities are autonomous bodies that are responsible for managing quality through internal self-accreditation processes and codes of practice. Universities are also subject to a wide range of government legislation administered by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. All post-secondary institutions receiving Australian Government financial support must meet quality and accountability recruitments set out in the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, 2013).

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, an independent, national quality assurance body assesses the performance of higher education providers against the Higher Education Standards Framework. Australian Government funding support for higher education is provided largely through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme which provides for a specified number of Commonwealth Supported places each year (Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education,
The Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) arrangements provide financial assistance to students predominantly in the non-self-accrediting sector. There are also Commonwealth Scholarships and a range of grants for specific purposes including quality, learning and teaching, research and research training programmes.

The Group of Eight (Go8) comprises the most prestigious institutions. It is a coalition of leading Australian universities that concentrates on research activities. Members (University of Adelaide, Australian National University, Monash University, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, and University of Western Australia) are the oldest and most established large city institutions; many with strong alumni support schemes (Group of Eight, 2012). The remaining 33 are located in the 6 States, often in regional areas. Most were previously Colleges of Advanced Education that were amalgamated into the university sector in 1987 by the Labour Minister for Education, John Dawkins (Meyers, 2012). There are ranks for academic in the university structure, namely: Associate Lecturer, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor. These positions carry standard levels that are shared across the sector, from A at the lowest to E, the highest, for professor. It is an expectation that most academics will reach Level C in their careers. Promotion is competitive and depends largely on research and teaching performance, community service and administrative skill.

Across Australia, a number of Centres, Centres of Excellence and Special Research Centres exist in order to pool together expertise and resources on specific topics; many are funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) on a highly competitive nature.
Australian universities have expanded rapidly since the 1980s establishing mass higher education as a reality (Meyers, 2012). There are on-going political disputes over the level of funding as universities have been exposed to competition for funds and business-like ways of accounting for performance (Meyers, 2012). Thus, Coats, Dobson, Edwards, Friedman, Goedegeburre and Meek (2009, p. 5) declare that “staff members have not kept pace with the growth of the system overall”. There are on-going debates about whether staff should be “teaching only or teaching and research” staff (Coates et al., 2009, p. 5) or casually employed.

Bexley, James and Arkoudis (2011) argue that sessional staff contribute significantly to teaching in today’s universities. There are currently 67,000 academics employed on a casual basis in Australian universities, or 60% of the academic workforce. According to Bexley et al. (2011) causal/sessional academics are disadvantaged and highlight that in the move to massification of higher education, most universities have not adequately supported causal academics in a systematic way, with most of the workshops and development opportunities for sessional academics used more to achieve systemic or institutional quality assurance.

Australian universities have rapidly moved into e-learning environment as course delivery under what is often seen as both a cost saving measure and as a way of competing for students. At Regional University X considerable resources have been devoted to preparing existing and new staff to work in the new environment. E-learning techniques attempt to focus student responsibility for learning but curriculum and pedagogical implications are profound with many experienced staff having to re-learn much of their knowledge base towards a constructivist approach to learning (Oliver, 2001).
This thesis suggests that the nine participants of this study have entered a system that was both similar in respect to the disciplines they were required to teach and research but different to the ways the workplace was organized. While it could be argued here that the pressure to publish was immediately recognised and they were keen to join the race, the pedagogical challenge of e-learning, which in many respects, contradicts core Confucian principles about the respective roles of the teacher and student, has proved a challenge for all of them as discussed elsewhere in this chapter. In the following section I explore the academic journeys of the participants once they had become part of the Australian academic environment.

6.4 Gaining work in Australian academic environments

The academic experiences of nine participants in this study at the current university can be divided into five groups. Four of the nine participants obtained their PhD degrees in China and worked as researchers or lecturers in the current university (group 1). One participant came to do research work and joined a PhD program in an Australian university (group 2). Two participants came to Australia and joined PhD programs in Australia and then were appointed as lecturers (group 3). One participant obtained an academic appointment after completing a Master’s degree in Australia (group 4). One participant in Group 5 completed a Masters and PhD degree outside China and Australia and was then appointed as a lecturer (group 5).

Eight of the nine participants had already obtained PhD degrees before they started to work at the university, while one of the nine participants is completing their doctoral program while also working at the university. Fei comments:

*I got the job offer from the university after my Master’s degree in an Australian university.* (Fei, Q9)
Higher education qualification and the major in Information Technology at the earlier years of 2000s helped Fei obtain an academic position at Regional University. Zhang elaborates his experiences thus:

*When I came here, I was just a Postdoctoral research fellow - 2 years only. That’s fine. But after 1 year, this university got some job opening-like a senior lectureship - I applied. A senior lectureship I thought it would be just 2 years and then back to North America. But my family came here and said OK, this is good. They didn’t want to go back to North America, that’s why I am still here.* (Zhang, Q9)

Zhang started working for Regional University as a contract researcher but when job availability changed, Zhang and his family choose to stay in Australian local community. The combination of a permanent job offer and family desire to stay in Australia provided the grounds for Zhang to stay in regional Australia. Likewise the importance of a permanent job is shown in Pu’s comment:

*I think the main reason is the university gave me the tenured job. My family need more stability, that’s why I came here to apply for the job. The specific reason to come to work here is for the nature of the job. After I finished my PhD, hard work for so many years, a stable job means that - I can do more.*

(Pu, Q9)

The reasons for Pu staying in regional Australia are centred on his tenured position which brings a stable and secure life to his family. Pu has worked very hard and experienced contract work, now there was the opportunity to gain a tenured position. Xiao began to look for employment after he submitted his thesis. He used the Internet
and the advice of his supervisors in order to make a decision about staying in regional Australia. Xiao illustrates thus:

\[
\text{Actually it was right after my submission of my PhD thesis; my friends told me that you can start looking for a job. So I just look for job on internet and I sent some CV and I got two offers, and the other offer is a position in an American university. I consulted my PhD supervisors. They actually analysed both universities for me and they thought if I stay in an Australian university, I can keep working with them and learning from them and it will be beneficial to my career. They have been wonderful supervisors and they have given me support it is like non-stop. (Xiao, Q9)}
\]

Xiao chose to stay in Australia to maintain his personal networks for his research interest and career. Hugo (2008b) found that those Chinese academic who arrived as permanent lecturers, tutors and/or researchers have increased from 384 in 1997-1998 to 6264 in 2005-2006. The participants on this study had added to that total. In creating a growing body of Chinese academics across the range of Australian universities the extensiveness of personal and professional networks are increasing. Yang and Welch (2010) refer to this as a Chinese diaspora while Yang and Qiu (2010) call this a kind of “cosmopolitan literati”.

Chen’s transition into work was straightforward. He finished PhD studies in one of the Australian Group of Eight universities and then took a Post-Doctoral research fellowship in another Australian university. He was then offered a Senior lecturer position by his current university (Chen, Q9). Wen obtained a PhD degree in China and wanted to change his career by living in Australia. He had a popular major
(Computer Science) that in the 2000s was sought after in both China and Australia. As he put it:

_It depended on the job availability at the time and I wanted to make a change._

_(Wen, Q9)_

Wen wanted to move to Australia and is part of the growing transnational academics. Wen entered university back in the 1980s so was also part of the group of people encouraged to travel beyond China to improve knowledge and experience. He has been at the university for a decade and can now be seen as a long-term migrant to Australia.

Having a supervisor in an Australia university has influenced career decisions of Chinese academics. Liu originally came to Regional University X because of the relationship as a visiting scholar - this program enabled Chinese academics to visit overseas institutions for a specific period of time. Liu explained that:

_Because my supervisor was here, I had no choice. I was invited by him. Yes, at first time, I was a visiting Professor here. When I was back to China, Professor X (substitute) offered me the position as a Postdoctoral research fellow._ (Liu, Q9)

Liu returned to China after the visiting scholarship had finished but remained in contact with his supervisor in regional Australia. He was then offered a position at Regional University X as a postdoctoral researcher and since then, Liu has worked at the university for 5 years. This is another example of transnational links and the networking of the Chinese diaspora. It also highlights how some university institutions are recruiting new staff. Zhang (2003) would regrade this as having a negative impact on China as the country has lost well-educated human resources to
other countries. Liu’s case also illustrates how researchers are likely to become a
migrant through project partnership network (Meyer, 2001a). Qin had a similar
experience:

*I have connections with Professor X here because we had a long collaboration
in past years. So I chose here to join a study group and to do some research.
We have long time collaboration together, since 2002. We wrote a book
together in 2007: (Title) was published by Science Publisher in 2007. It was
the first book in this field. (Qin, Q9).*

Qin has a long established research interest with a professor at the current university,
with this being an example of the professional networks forged between countries.
Singh and Han (2009) see this kind of relationship as one that benefits both countries
where research students take back new knowledge and experience to China but that
Chinese knowledge can flow to Australia. Qin then decided to move to regional
Australia because of the opportunity to work within an established research group.
Although Yang and Welch (2010) state that they think there is an unequal
appreciation of Chinese knowledge and that in coming to places like Australia there is
a privileging of Western knowledge, it could be argued that by consolidating research
groups such as the one established at Regional University X there is now a critical
mass of Chinese people that are combining both Chinese knowledge and experience,
plus what has been learnt through study and experience of Australian academic
environments to begin to change the perception of what is privileged knowledge
through the engagement of both non-western and Western knowledge (Singh & Han
2009). Gao sees working at the university as perhaps a stepping stone for further
career development:
I think this question came to when they gave me the interview, why I chose working at Regional University X. I am saying that, it is a great opportunity and it is a great university and I mean especially the engineering has the reputation there. Yeah, and of course, Australia is a great country. Regional University X, I mean, is a great point to start a career although the research here is not as good as the top Eight, where there is a group heading universities. It is expanding rapidly, we have seen the funds going into the university, and there are much going on in the engineering field. I am not sure whether it is the same in the art or business, there is much going on in the engineering. (Gao, Q9)

Gao’s educational journey began with a Bachelor’s degree in China, followed by a Master’s degree in England and a PhD in Singapore therefore he can be described as a global academic. He has moved to different countries as part of establishing an academic career and qualifications. Gao is a very much a contemporary Chinese citizen who has benefitted from the soaring Chinese economy in being able to travel widely and attend global universities as an international student. It can be argued that his educational journey is very different to that of Pu or Chen who started their journeys back in the 1970s. During the intervening thirty years mainly influenced by the Open Door policy and the desire to modernise China there have been many changes and opportunities for those Chinese who want to pursue an academic career. However despite having internationally recognised qualifications changing countries and different educational systems does provide challenges for the participants.
6.5 Challenges while working at the current university

All participants have had different challenges at work even though they have similar educational qualifications to other Australian academics. One of the major professional challenges related to teaching. Pu talks about teaching practices in his current university:

*You can talk about the challenges, it is like distance education. It is difficult to get engaged with the students and for teaching and also time consuming. You don’t have time for your more personal interest development, especially your research.* (Pu, Q10)

One of the major teaching deliveries at Regional University X concerns Distance or online education. It is often stated that Distance education aims to deliver a quality university education to students who are not able to be physically present on campus. With these flexible study options, students can study from home, work, or anywhere in the world, at a time that suits him/her lifestyle. However Pu thinks this kind of teaching lacks engagement with students and that this is different to teaching experiences in Chinese universities where there are large face-to-face classes.

Pu also thinks that the teaching and learning style requires staff to devote a lot of time to familiarise themselves with the computer system. As Oliver (2001) stated many academics have had to re-learn new pedagogical approaches to their usual teaching approach because of technology. Moreover, Pu has found it hard to interact with students effectively while teaching distance education courses, but also saw the amount of time spent doing his own research decreased. Pu adds further explanations:

*Other universities I used to work, they try to simplify the computer system and give some space to your personal development. I think compared to*
universities in China. It is almost like a party system in China, you have to follow and you have to do that. But this computer system is just useless, as no contributions to the understanding of the modern university even the teaching. They just show that they want to and they intend to control, maybe, for their purpose. (Pu, Q10)

Pu is trying to express ideas comparing the dictates of the computer teaching system to the old style Chinese party system where you had to follow certain ways. Pu sees the use of the computer system with teaching delivery as making the teaching delivery very controlled with no room for adding in new ideas, or even conforming to how modern universities are perceived. This illustrates what Saltmarsh and Swirski (2010) discuss as part of the transition to Australian universities and how the institutional culture can impact on that transition. While Pu enjoys being at the university the teaching delivery system is proving to be a major challenge and also goes against what he sees as good teaching practice at a university level.

Continuing on the theme of teaching style, Xiao remarks:

But at the very beginning, I just felt like obviously it is hard to achieve for teaching distance education students, and I just kept on asking my colleagues questions about how to do that. But now I feel like, o.k., with distance education teaching and learning. There is an actual beauty in the distance education teaching and learning tool. I think I made some friends with my current students too. (Xiao, Q10)

When Xiao first started teaching at regional University X he also found the teaching delivery a challenge but through asking his colleagues he is now more comfortable with the technology. Xiao comments further:
In those universities (e.g. in China, and another in Australia), I only taught face-to-face students. Here so far I have been only teaching distance education. I think that is the first challenge, like all that Moodle and Web Fuse ... I haven’t used this before. I asked a lot of colleagues to teach me how to use it. I am getting used to all these tools now. Some of those tools are really good. (Xiao, Q10)

Compared to Pu there is an age difference so some of the adjusting to new technology may be easier for Xiao as someone with more technology experience. As Maadad (2010) explained many of the international academics were very comfortable with their discipline knowledge and experience but experience difficulties adjusting to the university culture. My participants felt Regional University X is moving to technology-based teaching. They believe there are institutional expectations that staff will adopt certain technological approaches to teaching and communication with students. This finding is important because it adds to a relatively new theme to how international academics experience the workplace that has not being explored. On a slightly different note, Fei comments:

*Teaching in English to regional students is the challenge because many university students are from the countryside; they don’t have the experiences to understand international people. Apart from that, it is quite easy for me working here. I am very happy to work and live at the university.* (Fei, Q10).

Fei highlights the rather ethnocentric perceptions of Australian regional students who have had limited interaction in people from other countries. While many migrants are now coming to live in regional areas the majority still live in the major metropolitan areas in Australia. What Fei is indicating in her comments is that some of the students
have had limited experience of interacting with foreigners, especially those with English as another language and this in turn impacts on the teaching and learning with students.

Chen highlights the usual challenges found on most university environments namely:

*Lack of research funding and face-to-face teaching and thus it is difficult to recruit and support research students.* (Chen, Q10).

Chen’s experience with teaching is similar to the other participants on this study in that there is little face-to-face teaching, which may also link with the difficulty of recruiting suitable research students. To maintain career prospects and promotion requires a focus on research and publication. While Yang and Welch (2008) previously highlighted that being unfamiliar with Western systems of research could be a disadvantage for Chinese academic, it can be seen that through working in postdoctoral programs and being involved with supervisors in Australia that most of my participants understand the importance of research and publication and are involved with this as part of their academic work. What is a disadvantage is the amount of time needed to deal with the teaching aspect, which happens to be a concern for most of the academics at regional university X.

Getting their research agendas running on and maintaining continuity in their publications has been a problem for some participants. Qin was quite specific about this issue:

*The first challenge in my work for me was the database resources were not adequate at Regional University X (substitute) for my study. But my friends in China gave me some help with the software for the database. It is not a problem now.* (Qin, Q10).
Qin has made use of his networks back in China thus demonstrating the presence of the Chinese diaspora in action (Singh & Han, 2010). Liu highlighted the double issue in not only maintaining publication but also doing that publication in English in order to get into the top tier of publication:

The challenge maybe while working here is to do some advanced research in English in my field and getting the academic outcome that I need. I hope the outcome will be getting published in world class journals, top journals. That is my main challenge, it's hard and it is very hard to do. Top journals are very strict in many aspects. (Liu, Q10)

Liu's job position requires an active research profile and he finds this aspect quite stressful. The participants in the study consistently highlighted that the main professional challenge was with the teaching delivery expected at regional University X. This is part of the university culture and as Saltmarsh and Swirski (2010) have previously shown, this is an area requiring both person and professional adjustment.

6.6 Living and working in regional Australia

The nine participants had various reasons for living in Australia. Some wanted to change professional career in Australia, one participant followed her family, and some tended to stay within the system where they completed their doctoral degrees. This study shows that there have been challenges in life in the local community. Pu was asked about why he came to Australia:

I have asked myself and also many people asked me why I came to Australia. I think first when I was in China, I wanted to change my career. Second, I just wanted to go outside to see the world and know what is happening in the world. After I came here in 1999, there was a guy who said to me: here you
can enjoy the good quality beer, compared to the quality beer in China; why should we go back to China, let’s just stay here to continue enjoying quality beer. So that’s why I chose to stay here. (Pu, Q8)

Pu came to Australia motivated by professional career ambitions and curiosity about this part of the world. Wen commented:

_I came to Australia because I wanted to work in a different and probably better environment._ (Wen, Q8)

Zhang also talks about his reason for moving to Australia:

_I went from France to America on a temporary visa. At that time, they only gave me a G1 Visa for America. So for the G1 Visa, they have a very complicated rule. You must go back to your own country every two years then you can come back. At that time, honestly, I don’t want to go back to China, so I chose Australia. Maybe, O.K., I will stay for 2 years then go back to North America. That’s why I came to Australia. But when I came here, my position was not good. I was just a Post Research Fellow- 2 years only, that’s fine._ (Zhang, Q8)

Zhang, Wen and Pu have all commented that they wanted to go overseas as their main reason for coming to Australia. For personal reasons they expressed a desire to remain overseas rather than returning to China in the near future. Chen saw coming to Australia as an opportunity to take up further study under a scholarship system:

_I came to Australia for my PhD at one of the Group of Eight universities on scholarships provided by Australian Commonwealth Government and the University._ (Chen, Q8)
Xiao came to Australia for the same reason:

... because I was offered a research scholarship by one of the Group of Eight universities to study my PhD here. It was a wonderful opportunity, I just took that chance. I came to Australia for my study of PhD in an Australian University that was the main purpose. (Xiao, Q8)

Xiao and Chen were supported financially to do research by their two Australian universities. Qin was able to do further research as an international link, he saw this as a good opportunity:

I wanted to do some research together with my international friends because in my research field, there are many famous professors. I wanted to learn from them. I came to Australia for my interest of research. (Qin, Q8)

Research cooperation with international peers was the driver for Qin to come to Australia, similarly for Liu:

The first time I came to Australia in 2005, I was invited by a professor to have a visit to do some research. (Liu, Q8)

The main drivers for coming to Australia were to take up opportunities to go overseas and to do research as part of an international group. Yang (2005) found that since the Open Door policy was implemented that many Chinese academics have travelled to other countries. Zhang (2003) also noted that this could be seen as draining human resources from China. Yang (2005) also highlighted that Chinese academics would be marginalised if they were not prepared to join the international academic community. With travelling to Australia and regional Australia the participants on this study have taken up opportunities and joined research teams. This demonstrates the growing
Chinese diaspora and international links between global institutions that Singh and Han (2009) also see as opportunity to gain new knowledge.

6.7 Becoming a local in regional Australia

Five participants have lived in Australia for over 10 years. Most of that time has been spent in the local community where they are working. Three have been employed by their current university for 10 years; two for around 5 years; two for 2 years; and, two for 1 year. Most of them have families in the local community. Their academic positions, and the fact that their families like living in the local community are the two factors which keep them working in their current university.

In addition to the challenges of a new workplace the participants pointed to other significant aspects of their more general experiences in Australia. Issues with personal, cultural and social networks, often associated with depression, accompanied their careers in a regional Australian university. Gao reported:

_I must say, I was pretty depressed at the first when I came here. There are few Chinese students and Chinese scholars here. It is very difficult to blend in, you know, to socialize with people. It was difficult to meet different people, you know to start a new job and socialize with people; but things are getting better._ (Gao, Q10)

Gao felt unhappy when he started to work because it was difficult to find other Chinese to talk with in such a small community. While Gao’s comments refer to adjusting to everyday life in an Australian regional university, the issue he raises is likely to be a common experience amongst others moving across transnational borders. Liu, for instance, describes his experiences both within and beyond the university:
Maybe my English is not good enough to communicate with other people. I mean other people are people at the university. And after work, I am hard to communicate with my neighbours and others. (Liu, Q10)

Liu is referring to talking with other local people, therefore, he sees his oral language proficiency as a perceived challenge work his interaction with English native speakers. Liu mentioned that he found his oral language proficiency a challenge when interacting with native speakers. He found it difficult to talk to other people and put this down to his lack of English communication skills. While some participants mentioned examples of advice or practical assistance from supportive colleagues, in the main they had to make personal connections in the current university.

Qin spoke about cultural differences between Australia and China that make adjustments difficult:

*Cultural difference is another challenge. In Australia we have few opportunities to talk informally with Australians. Topics for conversation are a problem and the communication is a bit difficult and hard with the locals.*

(Qin, Q10)

Qin felt adjusting to Australian life was difficult because there were not many opportunities to talk informally to Australians. Furthermore, because he did not really know any Australians, it was hard to start conversations with local people and feel part of the community. Similarly Zhang felt he had difficulty understanding different accents. His challenge is listening as Zhang experienced difficulty with the accents of local native English speakers:

*The first thing is the language issue. I am used to American accent. When I first came here, it took me 2 weeks to get used to Australian accent. You know,
we can't speak very well and we got wrong accent, you know, this is the issue.

(Zhang, Q10)

While Zhang had difficulty with the accents Gao pointed out a more fundamental issue of understanding meaning in different contexts:

If you don't have a Caucasian or Western base, understanding why they laugh at jokes, or something else, you find that you can't understand. It is a language barrier, if you know what the meaning behinds the joke, you will laugh. But if you don't, that is a problem. It is a language issue. (Gao, Q10)

Gao has pointed out how language can be an issue, but more specifically sophisticated language use where humour and colloquial language is used. This can be something more prevalent in a smaller community. Qin emphasized difficulties with the food:

The second challenge living in Australia is the different food ... very different from China. If you first come to Australia, maybe you cannot deal with it.

(Qin, Q10)

Diets are important for Chinese people in their daily life. In feeling challenged by Western food Qin shows that Chinese people need to make further adjustments to Australian food. Xiao commented on the difficulties of finding transport in the university and town compared to the normal situation in big towns or cities in both China and Australia:

When I just arrived in this city, it is very different from the previous cities I have lived in. Those were metropolitan cities, with very good transportation. I don't know how to drive, so I just felt the lack of buses, so it is a bit difficult to
get around. So at the early stage, I mean, a lot of local friends and colleagues just helped me, drove me around and gave me a lift (Xiao, Q10).

Despite the initial difficulties, the adjustment to Regional University X has been successful for the participants. Participants indicate that making the transition to Australia was made possible through supportive colleagues both in China and in Australia. The participants' educational journeys are closely related to the changing environment of educational and economic policy in both countries. The politics of research and education in the higher education sector have influenced how they adjusted to regional University X.

6.8 Discussion and interpretation of findings

The main findings of this thesis are recognisable as international phenomena. The participants follow the general pattern set out by Koser and Salt (1997, p. 293) in that they belong to a group of people recognised as highly skilled labour who found opportunities from the restructuring of the world economy. In the Australian setting they are a new element of the global division of labour, offered by the movement of expertise that is emerging in universities (Hugo, 2008b). As the data show, these Chinese academics are highly skilled with the characteristics of mobility, and identified as definitive of transnational skilled migration in the terms used by Hugo (2004, p. 73).

I now summarise the main empirical findings of this chapter. First, the formal educational experiences in the late 1970s, early 1980s, early 1990s and 2000s provided opportunities for the participants that were not available to Chinese people in previous generations. Despite growing up in the period of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, six participants were part of a lucky generation in having access to a
university education in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Regardless of the political events that happened through their primary and high school years, their educational journeys were without major difficulties. That is, before the 1990s higher education expansion, Chen, Fei, Zhang, Pu, Wen, Liu and Qin were already in elite schools where they took advantage of government policies. Moreover, they were hardworking, bright students who were academically above the masses (that is in the 6.6% successful students who sat for university entrance exams). From primary school to secondary school and to university, they benefited from the educational policies of that period in China.

Five of the nine participants began school in the Cultural Revolutionary period even though the political social and economic reforms shifted in the years of 1966-1976. There were educational environments in which the nine participants could progress in their education through the opening up and educational reform period (in late 1970s into the current period).

All participants attended accredited Chinese universities with six of the nine attending Project 211 universities while the others attended Normal Universities for Bachelor degrees. Those who obtained Masters and PhDs degree in China attended Project 211 and 985 universities. Four of the nine participants finished PhD degrees in China, four of the nine obtained PhD degrees in Australia and one participant in another Asian country. It could be said that their educational journeys were products of China’s political, economic and educational reforms over 30 years.

Learning English was a direct consequence of a Chinese education policy. Proficiency in English skills was compulsory for all nine participants whether at school or university. Learning English helped in enabling the participants to become global
academics. Career development, through completing a higher degree and employment opportunities were important outcomes of having strong social and professional networks. Like other international staff, they have challenges in their career development and daily life in the local community.

The data presented in this thesis suggest that when participants arrived at their new university posts they experienced culture shock and adaptation processes. All had had to work their way through a range of issues including personal issues with language, issues of professional isolation, and the challenges associated with learning the norms and practices of the institution (Koser & Salt, 1997; Hugo, 2008b; Jiang et al., 2010; Saltmarsh & Swirski, 2010; Green & Myatt, 2011). However, participants nonetheless spoke positively of their experiences of working and living in a regional Australian university.

In their comments the participants in the study appear to replicate the remarks of Saltmarsh and Swirski (2010, p. 291) that institutional cultures play a central role in the transnational experiences of academics working outside their country of origin. The processes of adapting to “Australian” cultural norms and behaviours, academic ways of doing things, unravelling the new academic culture, and dealing with the challenges of teaching and communicating in the English language all had an impact on the academic acculturation of these participants (Jiang et al, 2010, p. 155).

Jiang et al. (2010, p. 155) note the need for new academics to take active initiatives to orient themselves towards the new university academic culture. Distance education teaching styles are challenges for the participants who have had face-to-face teaching and learning programs in their previous universities.
Finally when viewed as a whole, the stories of these participants illustrate the effectiveness of the Chinese government policy to encourage free movement of the knowledge diaspora from and to China (Zweig, Fung & Han, 2008, p. 6). It remains to be seen if these particular participants serve China’s development by either establishing powerful ties with mainland Chinese institutions and academics or by returning to China as international academics (Yang & Qiu, 2010, p. 32). The literature reviewed also shows that there is little understanding of the impact of academic transitions on personal, family and professional lives or about their long-term implications for the sustainability of the international academic workforce (Saltmarsh & Swirski, 2010, p. 299). Hugo (2008b, p. 25) emphasises that family considerations are important, and in particular, Chinese and Indian skilled migrants use the family reunion component of the immigration programme more than most other birthplace groups. The participants in my study reflect Richardson and McKenna’s (2003, p. 782) comments that the family is an important influence affecting an academic’s decisions about life experiences and access or a permanent or tenured academic position.

6.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented findings drawn from the reported experiences of Chinese academics working at an Australian regional university. Eight participants in this study started work at Chinese universities after completing their tertiary education at different higher degree levels. Those participants who were academic lecturers took advantage of Chinese government educational policies in the early to late 1980s. All participants recognized and then pursued opportunities to undertake higher degree study or to work both in China and Australia. Gaining higher degrees and having previous work experience helped these participants find academic positions at the
current university. All of them found adjustment to the Australian university system, language and culture difficult but not insurmountable. Regardless of whether they commenced their careers early or late, there are many similarities in participants' academic experiences while working at the present university. In the next chapter I draw this thesis to a close by addressing the research questions posed in Chapter One and indicate further directions with research in this topic area.
Chapter 7  Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The intention of this thesis was to document the educational journeys of nine Chinese academics working at a regional Australian university and to explore their experiences as academics in a globalised environment of Higher Education. Therefore in Chapter One I set the scene for this research by outlining the significance, aims and scope of this case study. In Chapter Two I reviewed literature that established what is known in the areas of international migration, globalisation and internationalisation, academic mobility and Chinese academics in Australian universities. These broad areas all align to the educational journeys of the nine Chinese academics. In Chapter Three the methodological approach used within this research was documented. Specifically the multiple-case (embedded) study formats were used where I described and documented the individual narratives of my participants and then provided a cross-case examination of the data. These data were highlighted in Chapters Four, Five and six. In this chapter I now draw together the vignettes, cross case analysis, interpretation, literature and conclusions in order to answer the following research questions:

- What are the educational journeys of nine Chinese academics who now work in a regional Australian university?
- What are the academic experiences of these Chinese academics?

The underlying aim in addressing these questions of this thesis was to examine and document the experiences so that we may learn more about the lived experience of international academics who are living and working in educational environments that may be vastly different. Insights into the educational journeys of international academics can highlight some of the challenges they confront in terms of teaching and
learning styles, language and life in general, in the context of globalisation. This research also contributes knowledge about Chinese academics moving into Western countries for research work, gaining qualifications, and academic and cultural experiences.

This final chapter has four main sections. The first section synthesises the findings of the research to present an interpretation of the data. The second section elaborates this synthesis in order to directly address and answer the research questions that were driving this case study. The third section provides a summary of each chapter of the thesis so that the entire process of the research can be made transparent. Finally, possible future directions for research in this topic area are suggested. I now turn to an elaboration of each section.

7.2 Summary of Findings

In this section I highlight the major findings of the research. Individual vignettes were constructed based on the interview data provided by each of the participants. These vignettes showed the individual educational journeys of each academic. A cross case analysis was then done to look for similarities and differences within these journeys and the following broad points were identified.

There was a desire to move from temporary to permanent jobs in order to give their family a secure life. The desire was often facilitated by extensive social and academic networks, communication with previous supervisors, and the disciplinary reputation of the Chinese academics. Making the shift from previous face-to-face teaching styles, with direct interaction with students, to such modes as distance education is an enormous challenge. Initially, dedicating time to computer tools such as Moodle,
Webfuse and increased student email traffic, was considered a waste of time. Systematic institutional and individual support alleviated these difficulties.

Newly appointed staff found problems in maintaining and initiating research agendas because of the lack of disciplinary databases and separation from their face-to-face peer groups. Anxiety about maintaining their publication rates and research outputs due to the effort needed to adapt to the new work and living situations affected all of the participants. The lack of funding for research compared to previous work settings weighed heavily on some of them whose work requires robust funding support.

The culture shock of dealing difficulties with cultural differences in food, dealing with comparatively poor public transportation, an inability to understand the jokes of native speakers and their accents, and difficulties with socialising in the local community, affected all of the participants. The realities of culture shock are magnified when they found themselves teaching in English to local students who came from relatively isolated and unsophisticated backgrounds.

My research indicates that Western pedagogy presented difficulties for several of the participants. They all had some challenges in adapting to the work regime especially the current teaching and learning styles of Australian universities and students that differed from their previous universities. The data show that sympathetic and informative in-service support from the institution and departmental staff quickly overcomes initial difficulties.
7.3 Answering the first research question: What are the educational journeys of nine Chinese academics who now work in a regional Australian university?

In answering the first of the research questions set out in this thesis it can be seen that, although the nine participants grew up in different eras spanning the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, they had good formal educational backgrounds that included attending primary, secondary school and university, and then gaining higher degrees in China, Australia or other countries. Learning and subsequent ability to use English is one of the major factors in the educational journeys and career progress in China and is firmly marked in the journeys of the nine academics. Their Chinese educational heritage has enabled each of them to study and work in Australian universities and advance their careers. Gaining the PhD and prior academic experiences in China, Australia and elsewhere has helped them achieve their academic status at their current university. All nine participants now live permanently in Australia holding full-time academic appointments.

The broad pattern of their journeys is illustrated in the details of their education, coupled with the political environment within China at different eras. First, they all went to public primary and middle schools and passed the Gao Kao before entering university. University education ensured that they gained academic employment as China opened up and needed more human capital. In that time, education was emphasized by the Chinese government and by ordinary families as part of the Chinese tradition. Thus, the participants entered the academic workforce with higher education degrees. The careers of the participants reflected Chinese traditional values of education, namely that a good education leads to a better job and life.
7.4 Answering the second research question:
What are the academic experiences of these Chinese academics?

In answering the second research question set out in this thesis it can be seen that opportunities and a desire to travel beyond China were the key drivers for these participants to move to Australia. Their decisions to enter into Australian higher education also coincided with Australian government and higher education needs for human capital to staff universities. Australian universities had experienced a notable increase in Chinese students over the period in which the participants arrived. Furthermore, the competition in the global higher education recruitment market led to an increased interest in overseas appointments.

In summary, this thesis contributes to an area where there are few systematic studies, namely the international academic. It also contributes to the cultural optic of migration and diaspora studies by exploring the complexity of challenges when adjusting to new cultural environments both personal and professional. The findings of this thesis also highlight the ways that university structures influence knowledge production and transmission.

7.5 Summary of thesis chapters

Chapter One set the scene for this research by indicating the increasing trends of Chinese students and academics choosing to come to study or work in Australian universities. This discussion highlighted how Asian countries, especially China, are playing an important role in international education, especially in the higher education sector due to the expansion and development of the Chinese national economy. The Chinese government and its increasing number of middle class families encourage young students to go overseas to countries like Australia to obtain higher degrees.
Scholars, academics and researchers, move to Australia with their local experiences of teaching and their research expertise as part of an increasing international pattern of academic mobility. I also linked my personal experiences to this research project by documenting how I was able to visit a regional university as part of the scholarship scheme developed by the Chinese government for visiting Chinese scholars. 

Chapter Two provided a review of selected literature on international migration, globalisation and internationalisation, transnational academic mobility and Chinese academics working at Australian universities. The principal aim of the literature review was to map themes and identify gaps concerning international academics in the globalised higher education sectors. This review also showcased the emerging Chinese knowledge diaspora and Chinese academic immigrants in Australian metropolitan cities.

Chapter Three outlined the use of the case study as the methodology approach for this study. It demonstrated and justified the methods for data collection and analysis. A multiple-case (embedded) design was selected to capture the diverse experiences of the nine participants.

Chapter Four discussed the Chinese social and political and educational backgrounds which impacted on the generations growing up in specific periods under the first generation leader after 1949, Mao Ze Dong, and the second generation leader, Deng Xiao Ping’s reform on politics and education. Deng created a new era for China’s economic development. Even though some of the participants grew up in Mao’s time, they still had formal education. They also experienced the learning of English with this being an important factor across all fields to create opportunities for students and academic staff to successfully achieve their goals.
Separate vignettes, in the second major section of Chapter Four, described the personal stories of the nine participants. Vignettes were used to present individual single cases to represent different life stories of the participants' educational journeys and employment in Chinese and Australian universities and these are presented as the second major section of Chapter Four. These vignettes were situated within the context of the Chinese social, economic and educational policies since the founding of People's Republic of China in 1949.

In Chapter Five, I presented the first part of my cross case analysis of the data that specifically highlighted similarities and differences among the participants, coming from their reports of their lived experiences. In other words, this chapter described the life path and destiny of all nine participants through discussion of their educational journeys from primary school to their Chinese university experience.

Chapter Six continued the cross case analysis where the focus was on the academic phase of their educational journeys and how they came to be at regional University X. This chapter also presented teaching experiences and research capacities that enabled the participants to obtain their academic positions and immigrate to live in Australia permanently. Chapter Seven drew this thesis to a conclusion. I now address the significance of this research.

7.6 Possible future research directions

This thesis has shown that further research is needed to better understand the international mobility of highly skilled immigrants in the Asia Pacific area, especially between China and Australia. This research has drawn attention to the growing number of Chinese academics moving internationally and the networks being formed across the globe. While there are numerous possible areas and approaches indicated
by the literature, based on the findings of this thesis, research could profitably focus on the following four issues:

1. The impact of and ways of adapting to, different Western pedagogy seen as different from the home countries of transnational highly skilled staff.

2. The relationships between Western conceptions of teaching and learning styles and those derived from the different traditions of China.

3. The cultural adaptation of transnational academics and their families to lifestyles at different regional universities and in different regional communities.

4. The future mobility intentions of particularly the younger generation of Chinese academic migrants in Australia in regard to: returning to China, remaining in Australia, or migrating to a third country.

7.7 Research conclusion

As indicated earlier, there are few studies like this one that provide accounts of Chinese academics working in Australia. In this respect, the study makes a contribution to the field. Moreover, the study provides evidence that cultural background, linguistic difficulties and capacity to take career opportunities restrain Chinese academics from reaching their full potential. That is, despite transnational mobility, Chinese academics face additional issues internal to universities. Australian universities could well engage with these matters to maximise the impact of qualified, experienced Chinese academics. I interpret these findings to be confirmation of the importance of cultural flows and scapes (Appadurai, 1996) that framed my remarks earlier in the thesis.
References


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Singh, M., & Han, J. H. (2009). Engaging Chinese ideas through Australian education research: Using chéngyǔ to connect intellectual projects across ‘peripheral’


Appendix A

Question Sheet

1. Research questions:
   1.1. What are the ‘educational journeys’ of nine Chinese academics who now work in a regional Australian university?
   1.2. What are the ‘academic experiences’ of these Chinese academics?

2. Information of the participant:

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Year of arrival in Australia</td>
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<td>Previous work experience in Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years in the present university</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualifications and where</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Years of living in Rockhampton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current position</td>
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</table>
3. Interview questions:

3.1. When and where did you start your primary school?

3.2. What secondary school did you go to?

3.3. When did you start to learn English? How did you learn English at school?

3.4. When did you go to university? Tell me about that university.

3.5. What major did you study at university? Why did you choose that major?

3.6. Did you obtain a scholarship at university? If yes, how did you get that scholarship?

3.7. Why did you choose to work at a university in China?

3.8. Why did you come to Australia?

3.9. Why did you come to work at Regional University X?

3.10. What challenges did you have when you first started working at Regional University X?
Information Sheet for Participants

Research Project: *Experiences of Chinese academics working at an Australian regional university: An Embedded Case Study.*

You are invited to participate in an interview as part of a research project for my Masters’ degree program study.

The project overview

This research is to explore the experiences of Chinese academics working and living at a regional Australian university. The academic literature demonstrates that while there is a body of research about the experiences of international students in Australian universities, there is little research about the experiences of international academics, especially Chinese. The objective of this research is to describe the phenomenon of ‘A Chinese Educational Journey to Regional University X’.

Two research questions will guide the study

- What are the ‘educational journeys’ of nine Chinese academics who now work in a regional Australian university?
- What are the ‘academic experiences’ of these Chinese academics?
The participants

The participants in this project are those:

- Chinese academics lived in Rockhampton for 1–5 years, born in China, and went to school in China.
- Chinese academics who are post-doctoral research fellows at CQUniversity.

Prior to the interview you will be provided with a Consent Form to sign.

The interview

The interview will take place on campus at CQUniversity. You will be asked to provide some information and respond to a series of structured questions based on the research questions. The approximate duration will be 45 minutes. The interview will be recorded and later transcribed. Following the interview, the transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one. Your participation is completely voluntary and will not affect your academic standing and you have the right to withdraw at any time.

Your identity and information of all participants will remain confidential in accordance with the CQUniversity Code of Conduct for research. The information provided will be anonymous and will be used only for the research purpose. It will be securely stored in the files and locked in the researcher’s office located at CQUniversity, Rockhampton campus for five years according to CQU policy.

The project outcomes

The data will be used for my Master’s Thesis. Data may also be used in journal articles or conference papers or book chapters. A summary of the research findings will be provided to you if you wish to see one. If you would like to have further information regarding this project to discuss any aspects of the project, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy (Lu) Jiang (Research Higher Degree candidate)

Building 34/G. 06, Faculty of FABIE, CQUniversity Phone: 4930 6975

**Principal supervisor’s contact details:** 4930 6944 Email: t.moore@cqu.edu.au

Counselling options are available for all participants via Lifeline, which has a freely available 24-hour service to the general public on telephone 1311114.

Please contact CQUniversity’s Office of Research (Tel: 07 4923 2607; E-mail: research-enquiries@cqu.edu.au; Mailing address: Building 32, CQUniversity, Rockhampton QLD (4702) should there be any concerns about the nature and/or conduct of this research project.
Appendix C

Research Project: *Experiences of Chinese academics working at an Australian regional university: An Embedded case study*

Consent Form for Participants

**Researcher’s name:** Lucy (Lu) Jiang

**Supervisors’ names:** Dr Teresa Moore and Associate Professor Bobby Harreveld

I consent to participation in this research project and agree that:

- An Information Sheet has been provided to me that I have read and understood.
- Any questions I had about the project have been answered to my satisfaction by the Information Sheet and any further verbal explanation provided.
- I understand that my participation or non-participation in the research project will not affect my academic standing or my employment.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty and that my identity will remain confidential.
- I understand that to preserve anonymity and maintain confidentiality of participants that pseudonyms of places and fictitious names will be used in any publication(s).
• I understand that the research findings will be included in the researcher’s publication(s) on the project and this may include conferences and articles written for journal and other methods of dissemination stated in the Information Sheet.

• I give permission for the interview being audiotape recorded and transcribed.

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Name (please print): ___________________________________________________________

Please tick where relevant:

☐ I would like to receive a plain English summary of the research findings. YES/NO

☐ I would like to receive instructions for locating the abstract and final thesis at the CQUniversity library. YES/NO

Please contact CQUniversity’s Office of Research (Tel: (07) 4923 2607 or email: research-enquiries@cqu.edu.au) should there be any concern about the nature and/or conduct of this research project.

*CQUHRE clearance number: PROJECT H11/12-185*
Appendix D

Ms Lucy Jiang
1 Hoffmann Street
Norman Gardens QLD 4701

Dear Ms Jiang

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL: PROJECT H11/12-185 EXPERIENCES OF CHINESE ACADEMICS WORKING AT AN AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY

The Human Research Ethics Committee is an approved institutional ethics committee constituted in accord with guidelines formulated by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and governed by policies and procedures consistent with principles as contained in publications such as the Joint Universities Australia and NHMRC Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. This is available at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/r39.pdf.

On 20 December 2011, the committee met and considered your application. The project was assessed as being greater than low risk, as defined in the National Statement. On 23 December 2011, the committee acknowledged compliance with the conditions placed upon ethical approval for your research Experiences of Chinese academics working at an Australian regional university: A case study (Project Number H11/12-185).

The period of ethics approval will be from 23 December 2011 to 12 October 2012. The approval number is H11/12-185; please quote this number in all dealings with the Committee. HREC wishes you well with the undertaking of the project and looks forward to receiving the final report and statement of findings.

The standard conditions of approval for this research project are that:

(a) you conduct the research project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments required to be made to the proposal by the Human Research Ethics Committee;

(b) you advise the Human Research Ethics Committee (email ethics@cqu.edu.au) immediately if any complaints are made, or expressions of concern are raised, or any other issue in relation to the project which may warrant review of ethics approval of the project. (A written report detailing the adverse occurrence or unforeseen event must be submitted to the Committee Chair within one working day after the event.)

(c) you make submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee for approval of any proposed variations or modifications to the approved project before making any such changes;
(d) you provide the Human Research Ethics Committee with a written "Annual Report" on each anniversary date of approval (for projects of greater than 12 months) and "Final Report" by no later than one (1) month after the approval expiry date, or upon submission of your thesis (Psychology honours students only);

(A copy of the reporting pro formas may be obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee Secretary, Sue Evans please contact at the telephone or email given on the first page.)

(e) you accept that the Human Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to conduct scheduled or random inspections to confirm that the project is being conducted in accordance to its approval. Inspections may include asking questions of the research team, inspecting all consent documents and records and being guided through any physical experiments associated with the project.

(f) if the research project is discontinued, you advise the Committee in writing within five (5) working days of the discontinuation;

(g) A copy of the Statement of Findings is provided to the Human Research Ethics Committee when it is forwarded to participants.

Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research may result in withdrawal of approval for the project.

In the event that you require an extension of ethics approval for this project, please make written application in advance of the end-date of this approval. The research cannot continue beyond the end date of approval unless the Committee has granted an extension of ethics approval. Extensions of approval cannot be granted retrospectively. Should you need an extension but not apply for this before the end-date of the approval then a full new application for approval must be submitted to the Secretary for the Committee to consider.

The Human Research Ethics Committee is committed to supporting researchers in achieving positive research outcomes through sound ethical research projects. If you have issues where the Human Research Ethics Committee may be of assistance or have any queries in relation to this approval please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics and Compliance Officer or myself.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Phillip Ebrail
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Cc: Dr Teresa Moore, A/Prof Bobby Harreveld (supervisors)
Project file

Application Category: A
## Appendix E

### Arrangement of National Matriculation Test

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<th>Text Subjects</th>
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<td>09:00 - 11:30*</td>
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<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>09:00 - 11:30</td>
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<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
<td>English</td>
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</table>

(Source: www.en.National Higher Education Entrance Examination)

(*24 hour time used in this timetable)
Appendix F

The Enrolment Rate of Gao Kao Since 1977 To 2011

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Numbers admitted to attend higher education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>5.7 million</td>
<td>273,000</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>6.1 million</td>
<td>400,200</td>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>4.68 million</td>
<td>284,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>3.33 million</td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>2.59 million</td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1.87 million</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1.67 million</td>
<td>390,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1.64 million</td>
<td>480,000</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1.76 million</td>
<td>620,000</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1.91 million</td>
<td>570,000</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>2.28 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2.72 million</td>
<td>670,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2.66 million</td>
<td>600,000</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>2.83 million</td>
<td>610,000</td>
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<td>2.96 million</td>
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<td>2.86 million</td>
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<td>Numbers admitted to attend higher education</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>10.5 million</td>
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<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9.46 million</td>
<td>6.57 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>9.33 million</td>
<td>6.75 million</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
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(Source: http://www.gaokao.eol.cn)
Appendix G

Project 211’ universities

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<tr>
<td>101. Xi’an Jiaotong University *</td>
<td>102. Northwestern Polytechnic University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103. Xidian University</td>
<td>104. Chang’an University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105. Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University</td>
<td>106. Shaanxi Normal University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107. Fourth Military Medical University</td>
<td>108. Lanzhou University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109. Qinghai University</td>
<td>110. Ningxia University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111. Xinjiang University Shihezi University</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(Names with * marks are the universities where participants attended and achieved degrees.)
## Appendix H

### Project 985 Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Beijing Normal University</th>
<th>2. Beijing Institute of Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics</td>
<td>4. Central South University *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Central University for Nationalities</td>
<td>6. China Agricultural University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chongqing University</td>
<td>8. Dalian University of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Fudan University</td>
<td>10. Harbin Institute of Technology *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Huazhong University of Science and Technology</td>
<td>12. Hunan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Nanjing University</td>
<td>16. Nankai University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. National University of Defence Technology</td>
<td>18. North Eastern University</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Ocean University of China</td>
<td>22. Peking University</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Renmin University of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Shanghai Jiaotong University *</td>
<td>26. Sichuan University</td>
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<td>28. Southeast University</td>
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<td>29. Sun Yat-sen University</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Tongji University</td>
<td>32. Tsinghua University *</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. University of Electronic Science and Technology of China</td>
<td>34. University of Science and Technology of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Xian Jiaotong University *</td>
<td>38. Zhejiang University</td>
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<td>39. East China Normal University</td>
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