

HIGHER EDUCATION CHOICES AND DECISION-MAKING

**A Narrative Study of Lived Experiences of Chinese International
Students and Their Parents**

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which is a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning”

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates Chinese parents' and children's knowledge and understanding of decisions regarding higher education and the pathways and choice action patterns that emerged as the family histories and biographies of two or three generations evolved over time. A dialectically formulated Family-History-Narrative-Interpretive Method (FHNIM) is used to enquire and analyse the structural relations and connections (gestalt) of biography and family history, societal structures and changes, and Chinese families' HE choices and decision-making. In my analysis of phenomenology and in my application of the FHNIM method, I have innovatively amalgamated key insights from theoretical perspectives of Husserlian phenomenology and Gurwitsch's theme-thematic field.

Twelve biographic-narrative interviews were conducted with Chinese international students in Auckland, New Zealand and 12 with their respective parents, who now reside in Shanghai, China. Four of the students are originally from other Chinese eastern coastal cities (i.e., the provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang) and migrated to Shanghai in the 1990s. Nine family cases were selected and fully scrutinised using the five-step case reconstruction analysis. In the final stage of analysis, four family typologies were developed.

Findings from the structural comparison of the family cases are based on the latent structure reconstruction of orientation, choice action patterns and interpretations (theme-thematic field construction), in the context of family decisions, collective histories, and societal processes. Evidence provided by the case structural comparison of four family typologies also displays that, for the scholar-official families (modern professional middle class), the purpose of passing university-entrance examinations via a leading university to move into officialdom is to honour/worship one's ancestors by achieving the successes they experienced. For people with ambition, such as new tertiary-goers, the examination system either enables social mobility or competes with other recruitment methods. The method of recruitment of personnel and social mobility in society and in the bureaucratic government is undoubtedly part of the programs and policies or ideology pursued by every regime.

For Deng, in order to direct the country away from the calamities caused by the 10-year Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), his policy on economy which was encapsulated by his slogan throughout the period of the 1980s, "To get rich is glorious", formed a new direction. The impact of this policy is evidenced in the local practice scenes and the way of life of the

parents in the Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces. The restructuring of state-owned Enterprises (SOEs) has resulted in many changes in the lives of state workers and employees. The rise and fall of private enterprises and SOEs the parents had experienced has shaped their attitudes and concerns for the future prospects of their children. The HE decision to send one's child abroad is interpreted and judged in relative terms to parents' understandings and apprehension of these experiences. It is driven by the principle of familism.

The thesis demonstrates how a family-relational and biographical perspective can be a good venue for the future study of cross-cultural relationships, such as marriage or ageing issues, to enable researchers to compare and contrast cultural and social developments and individual biographies.

CHAPTER 1 SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the thesis *Higher Education Choices and Decision-Making: A narrative study of lived experiences of Chinese international students and their parents*. The general context of this study is first introduced. The empirical research on the factors and influences impinging on the higher education (HE) decisions made by the Chinese student subjects is then explored and analysed.

In the second part the account entitled “My Story” is presented, which is divided into two sections. The first section concentrates on experiences and reflections of my own HE choice to study abroad; the second focuses on the evolutionary direction of my research design, acknowledging the developmental process of my understanding of why and how to study the subject from a family-history and dialectic integration of society-individual perspective. The third part of this chapter includes significance of this study and an overall structure of the thesis is also previewed.

1.1.1 Some Observations on Recent Trends in Chinese International Students Choosing to Study Abroad

During the last two decades tertiary institutions from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries have witnessed a rise in Chinese international students. From 1978 to 2009 there have been about 1,391,500 Chinese students and scholars studying in 108 countries across the globe (Li, 2010, as cited in MoE, 2010). In 1994/95, the number of Chinese international students enrolled in UK tertiary institutions was only 2,295, as reported by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 2008. At the turn of twenty-first century, Chatham House data recorded an annual growth rate of 74% in the number of international students from mainland China within British HE institutions (Nania & Green, 2004). Near the end of the first decade of twenty-first century, the number of Chinese degree pursuers enrolled in UK universities had increased to 49,595, an increase of more than 20 times in just over a decade (HESA, 2008). New Zealand also saw the rapid acceleration of the numbers of Chinese international students in New Zealand tertiary

institutions. There were over 30,000 Chinese students studied in New Zealand in 2002. This number has increased steadily, peaking in 2003/2004 with nearly 65,000 Chinese students being issued a permit to study in New Zealand (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2010). A report published by the Ministry of Education shows that China remains the largest source country of overseas students in New Zealand, accounting for 21.7 percent of all international students, about 34 percent of Chinese students are studying in New Zealand tertiary institutes (Merwood, 2007). Proposed advantages for New Zealand as an educational destination are reflected not only in economic gains but also in the improvement of political and economic relations with China (Merwood, 2007). A similar view has been advanced by Hanassab & Tidwell (2002), the expansion of foreign students and mainland Chinese students in particular clearly brought financial benefit to British universities. Moreover, international students also have a significant impact on the development of institutional research and knowledge creation and innovation (Merwood, 2007). Hence, the phenomenon of the influx of Chinese students has attracted a great deal of interest in the nature of their decisions. That is, what motivates Chinese students to seek overseas study? The dominant view, which has developed on the back of empirical studies, has assumed the influx is the result of rapidly expanding socioeconomic developments in China (Chen, 2007; Chen & Zimitat, 2006; Lowe, 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Yang, 2007).

According to Hung, Chung, and Ho (2000), factors contributing to Chinese students choosing to study abroad can be summarised as follows:

- 1) The possibility of future migration opportunities after graduation;
- 2) Perceived higher quality of education, and;
- 3) Lower tuition fees and cost of living.

Similarly, Lowe's (2007) work has identified three factors relevant to Chinese students' choices and decision-making regarding overseas study:

- 1) Perception of higher quality of education;
- 2) Improved employment prospects with a foreign degree, and;
- 3) Perceived values of education.

The tendency to study abroad is also explained by the following factors: perceived barriers in

accessibility to elite universities within China (Lowe, 2007), the sustained economic growth, and increased household income in China (British Council, 2008).

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) found that choosing a particular country as a HE destination was often tied to the student's knowledge and awareness about the host country. Additional factors include the destination's reputation for quality and recognition of its qualifications in the student's home country; personal recommendations received from parents, relatives, friends, and other "gatekeepers"; and cost issues. Evidently, Ward and Masgoret (2004) noted that the principal factors attracting students from China and other Asian countries to New Zealand are the international recognition of New Zealand qualifications, the quality of the education available, and cost. Other reasons for Chinese students choosing to study in New Zealand were favourable visa requirements and a favourable exchange rate (Ho, Li, Cooper & Holmes, 2007).

Considering the growth of Chinese international students merely as a result of recent macro-socioeconomic changes in contemporary China seems problematic. As Lowe (2007) acknowledged in his study, the theory of rational action and the concept of human capital, which explains choice on the basis of economic returns, does not seem adequate to explain people's subjective judgments and values within their decision making in respect to an international HE destination. Hollway and Jefferson (2010) comment that survey-based research would do well to indicate frequencies or various kinds of average (such as mean, median and mode), and other easily measurable factors. But, with something complex and non-quantifiable characteristics such as personal values and subjective judgements, survey research has not been able to answer the "what" and "why" questions of a given person, community or society, decision for opting to pursue a HE overseas. In other words, why-obtaining degree from a prestigious university-is valued by particular groups of people or society, and what a prestigious university means for them, cannot be obtained.

While many teenage international students have been advised and supported by their parents in venturing abroad to study, the importance of parent influence underpinning HE choices, as already indicated (Chen & Zimitat, 2006; Education New Zealand, 2007; Lowe, 2007; Merwood, 2007) has not been incorporated into the empirical studies. However, there is little understanding about why these trends have occurred- the recent changes in the higher education (HE) landscape and the labour market in China, and how these changes have interacted with the lived experiences of parents.

With respect to the lived experiences of Chinese parents, the institutional regulations and criteria for determining university entrance and personnel appointments under the regime of Mao Zedong (1949–1976), which applied throughout the childhood and adolescence of the parents in this study, were very different to those in contemporary China.

Firstly, in the urban settings during the early years of 1950s, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Mao, went to great lengths to accommodate the former industrialists and foreign-trained specialists and their descendants to fulfil the state's goal of building a socialist society (Watson, 1984). After the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, members of this group and their families were subject to the purges of the revolution.

Secondly, the merit-based National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), which began in 1952, was abolished during the revolution and universities were shut down in many urban areas (Spence, 1991). Few voices could be heard advocating education throughout the ten years of the Cultural Revolution. In 1973, upon the reopening of the universities, students were only admitted from among workers, peasants, and soldiers through the *recommendations* from their work units and on the basis of their political loyalty and family, which had to be of proletarian origin (Unger, 1982). This selection mechanism continued until 1976. In 1977, this policy was abandoned and the NCEE was reinstated. University admission returned to merit-based enrolment, a system which has continued to the present day.

Given the movements of ideas and institutional reforms that characterised the Mao era and distinguished it from the Deng (Mao's successor) and post-Deng eras, I am interested in how the HE perceptions of parents who have lived through these macro-societal changes have changed during their lives. In order to capture the patterns of HE decision actions of parents and their respective outcomes in the 1970s and 80s, and the subsequent educational socialisation of their children, I applied the family-history-narrative-interpretive method (FHNIM) to interview both Chinese international students and their parents about their lived histories and families and to reconstruct the processual nature of social actions and patterns of actions and orientation in the context of family decisions, collective histories, and societal processes.

It seems appropriate at this point to offer an account of my HE choices and to reflect on where, when, and how I came to make the decision to pursue a higher academic degree in the UK and New Zealand and the context in which they occurred.

1.2 My Story

My interest in academia is genealogical. My father was a philosophy lecturer. When the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) was reinstated in 1977, after 10-years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) during the Mao regime, my mother sat the exam and went to university. All through her university study, I had been growing up into a little girl. Doing well academically is highly valued in my family and my community. I studied very hard in order to be selected into a key-point (elite) secondary school and a key-point university, which governs what is perceived by my family and myself as normality. Past institutions where I have acquired at reinforce the educational pathways I should remain on. It is interesting to note that there was never a question over why I should choose to go to university. It seems that my parents' own HE decisions (particularly everyday family interaction and communication regarding the pathways to my prospective HE and my education and career provisions) have been absorbed into my own decision-making practices when choosing my first university degree, and they are an integral part of my biography and collective traditions. It seems that people's understandings originate from their own culture, along with actions they choose to take. Generally, these understandings and practices are taken-for-granted and not even noticed. With the aid of hindsight, I think that like other Chinese, family and societal expectations influenced my family decision-making practices when choosing my first university degree. My mother's career was in international business, and the university I attended is the top one in this field in China. This doesn't mean a simple transmission of legacy. However, this study aims to capture how and through what mechanisms the biographical orientation, action and interpretation (HE decision) reproduces/fails to reproduce/ transforms in the process of socialization and family history, as well as collective history. In other words, how the mechanism of HE choice and HE institutions function in this reproduction and transformation.

Upon graduation in 1996 I was assigned to a post in a leading State-controlled foreign trade company (FTC). My mother was in the same profession. Throughout my childhood and adolescence, I have witnessed the magic-history of FTCs. That is, there was an enormous rise in activity, profit, and reputation in this industry during the 1980s and 1990s. In 2000 my most prominent client in the UK passed away. At the same time, the monopoly position that the FTCs had held was dwindling as a result of the reformation of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and many manufacturers were allowed to export their products themselves rather than through FTCs, as they used to. In response to the changing circumstances, I proposed to my

parents and ex-partner that I would study a master's degree in Arts (MA) overseas and then pursue a career in academia, as my father had done. Upon completing my MA I was not satisfied that this education platform was sufficient to begin my academic career. As a result, I attempted to go on to study a PhD and try to gain expertise.

What might have been the origin and inspiration for my decision to study an MA? Looking back at the time when I first started thinking about the study, I had adopted my family's orientation towards progression and developed my sense of institutional-political dynamics. It seems that parents' views and past family's choice action patterns against a backdrop of institutional norms and practices of temporal government and its continuity and changes are an important pathway in understanding the present phenomenon of Chinese international students opting to pursue a HE overseas. Accordingly, the integration of one's family's past and present decisions, actions, and subjective understandings (from the perspective of individual's lives and via their family biographies) is necessary.

Now I began to think how to study HE choices and decision-making from a family-relationship and biography-society dialectic integrated perspective within a united framework. That is, the focus is concerned with linking historically-evolving subjective knowledge construction and decision-action practices against a background of ideological and opportunity structures and processes that constitute the objective conditions of participants' chosen activities. To get these various aspects into a coherent whole is a real challenge; yet it is worth the effort to contribute to cross-cultural communication, human knowledge, and a deeper and greater understanding of the social phenomenon in question.

1.2.1 The Research Path Taken: Family-History-Narrative-Interpretive-Method (FHNIM)

In the early stage, when I was searching for an appropriate methodological approach to this study, I felt I had to listen to what the participants expressed about themselves. That is, what they did, do, and aim to do, and why and how, they think, feel, and aspire in their biographical decision situations. The direction of this study points me towards finding out the methodological approach best suited for my pursuit of a dialectic integration of biography-society and individual-family and structural relation between a lived experience and subjective understandings. At the same time, it is important that this pursuit lies within my overall endeavour to determine the established societal structures and changes, action patterns, and the correlative subjective understandings of participants, and holds them

together throughout the research process. Such an endeavour also intrinsically embodies my learning experiences and research training activities having been involved within Western HE institutions. My original research training is an integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches, and the treatment of the participants' views and learning behaviours concerns the design of the research study of my MA dissertation. The dissertation concerned Chinese international students' attitudes to and views of their learning experiences and learning strategies (self-regulation and self-efficacy) in Western tertiary institutions. The study integrated both the survey-based data and subjective view of the participants. The method adopted to investigate subjective viewpoints is the semi-structured interviewing probes, which have been commonly used in social science interview research over the past several decades. This kind of interview schema seems less adequate for engendering a holistic picture and providing a first-person description of the participant's areas of relevance and concern. As Jones (2001) argues, too often social science interview research has been based upon predetermined assumptions built into the researcher's questions and used to analyse the participant's responses with a standardized coding system.

My interest in psychology, human knowledge acquisition and development, and choice activities guided my early research into the terrain of quantitative approaches. Under the research supervision of Dr. Marcus Henning my understanding of motivation and self-regulation was sharpened. However, these survey-based research designs do not incorporate adequate information about a subject's knowledge of their lived world, particularly with respect to the knowledge of how a participant responds to a changing context, his/her choice habits, habitual thoughts and decision practices, and cultural values and traditions, which lie in his/her ideas and thinking. Consequently, my researching training and my thinking led to the decision to integrate subjective views and their lived experiences (from the participant's biographies and family histories; related to their HE decision) into the research inquiry and analysis.

The FHNIM seems to fit with my ideas of investigating HE decisions and the development of people's knowledge and understanding as a historically-evolving process in their biographies and family histories. For a qualitative research approach, as delineated by Volante (2005), the FHNIM appears to impart a clear theoretical perspective and corresponding logic to the process of data generation and analytical framework.

The fundamental of the FHNIM, which is adapted from Rosenthal's (1993) 5-step

hermeneutical case reconstruction and Wengraf's (2001) biographical-narrative-interpretive method (BNIM), was traditionally used in social science research that focused on life-story research (Hollway & Jefferson, 2010). It was derived by the interactionist and phenomenological research of Rosenthal (1993) and Fischer-Rosenthal (2000) in Germany, which developed a narrative interviewing technique and interpretive analysis (cited in Wengraf 2001, p. 112). These terms used here are detailed in the methodology chapter. In this study, I applied FHNIM to interview both Chinese international students and their parents about their lived histories and families and to reconstruct the processual nature of social actions and patterns of actions and orientation in the context of family decisions, collective histories, and societal processes. The difference between BNIM and FHNIM is that the latter draws on interview and analysis of two or three generations' lived experiences and families histories and their associated perspectives (both Chinese parents and students).

By using a minimalist interview technique and a single narrative-elicitation question (Jones, 2004; Rosenthal, 1993, 1998; Wengraf, 2001), the familial-biographic narrative interview was able to invite the participants to tell their life histories from their own perspectives and to select and organise relevant experiences from their thought association and memory connections. People's memory and emotional associations and thought processes, according to Murray (1936), Rosenthal (1993), Schütze (2007), and Hollway & Jefferson (2010), work better when their minds are relaxed, without imposing the effect of any direct questioning. When people's minds are allowed to drift with their lived experiences and family and when they are no longer required to monitor their own speeches as they normally do in face to face structured interviews (Labov, 1972a), often there is a constitutional tendency for people to construct their experiences in narrative story form, which are arranged to provide *a coherent and temporal or causal sequence* (Hollway & Jefferson, 2010; Jones, 2001; Rosenthal, 1993; Wengraf, 2001, *emphasis mine*). MacIntyre (1981) agrees with the statements above, conceiving that narrative is the most typical form of reporting human life, providing a rich source of insight. This is not simply because narrative construction needs objective spatial and temporal junctures and other related events; it also reveals historically conditioned perspectives, morals, subjective points of view, and emotional and affective responses (Graesser, Golding, & Long, 1991). Rosenthal (1993) believes that it is generally natural for people to remember things as a sequence of events and to provide causes, effects, and connections with respect to events. This is how people make sense of their lived-in-world.

At this point, an example for the understanding of the connection between narrated life story

and memory will be provided. Can we remember what we ate ten days ago? The answer is no, in all likelihood. It simply suggests that the food did not lodge in our memories and leave a trace or image. Consider this example; I was invited for dinner in a restaurant, where I was served Chinese food which I had not had for a long time. The seafood soup was so delicious which reminded me of my childhood. I used to long for seafood soup when I was little, and when I went home in winter, late in the evening, after school. At that moment, all the inter-related experiences and thoughts were recollected. It is not surprising that I could still have a vivid memory of what I had eaten 10 days earlier. From this observation, it appears that these related memories and thought associations are conditioned by the biographical events and occurrences and have deep-rooted, internal meaning for people (Murray, 1936; Rosenthal, 1993). It is also suggested that these past memories that are stored in our subconscious surface to our consciousness at the here-and-now moment have emotions and feelings that accompany them (Bolton, 2008). As Billig (1999) also points out, these memories surface or are delayed because there is something in the past that is unresolved and still has a deep impact on our emotional being.

Furthermore, the related experiences and thoughts that are selected and organised in people's narrative stories (i.e., the organization of story) suggest in what way and by what rule the interaction between the earlier experiences and thoughts of parents and families and later life decisions are connected and related, which in this case involves the parents' HE decision of university education for their children and/or themselves.

Secondly, the FHNIM approach also includes hypothetical-inductive reasoning and testing based on the principle of abduction developed by Charles Sanders Peirce in the 19th century (Rosenthal, 2004) and the reflective team approach. Studies on the relations between individual biography and changing society and associated perceptions and understandings through biographic narrative inquiries (Rosenthal, 1993, 1998; Wengraf, 2001) as well as the hermeneutic circle of case analysis of the lived history and life story (Rosenthal, 1993, 1998) have established the protocol for data collection and analysis of this work.

Thirdly, the lived history facilitates my investigation of biographical trajectories of family education and career decision patterns which were embedded within the contexts of family, collective history, and wider society. It also catalyses the cumulative and developmental effects of their decisions and choices on individual, familial, and societal levels. The manner in which parents and their families react to education and work opportunities as well as their

actions of choosing and bargaining with their children's educational provisions and themselves contributes to the understanding of the nature of a local work-education environment. The parents' value-orientation and intentions also emerged from the choice patterns that they particularly opted for in comparison with a range of possible alternatives that were available for them but which were ignored. The selected decision can be understood that some of possible options are favourable from the point of view of a given person or group and others unfavourable.

Finally, the use of story as an analytical tool explains how people understand and experience. That is, how the lived past is integrated into the current presentation of an individual's life story. In other words, the meaning of HE-related decisions in the past and how they are presented in the present will be reconstructed. It is important to find out what people experienced and what meaning they have ascribed to those events in the past and in the present. It is peculiar to the parents of the children who have accomplished their HE projects. Their prior decision-action had been apprehended earlier in connection with the perception of the accomplished outcomes and current life concerns with reference to perceived tensions in today's Shanghai, which were brought back to the present moment and recounted retrospectively in the interview. If the difference being perceived between the premise and the consequence of which the parents expect to develop, they may present the premise decision from a new angle during the here-and-now context of the interview. Hence it would be a grievous error if the present perception is not differentiated from the historical perspective.

Also included in the thesis are the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings that inform the FHNIM, such as Schutz's sociological phenomenology, Gurwitsch's gestalt coherence principle in theme-thematic-field analysis (Rosenthal, 1993, 1998); Peircean abduction (Rosenthal, 2004) and, Husserlian ideas of bracketing and returning to the essence of lived experience. Engaging in the practice of bracketing, as Wengraf comments (2013), is to try consciously to prevent both the researcher and reader unthinkingly and inexplicitly from taking any of the assertions or assumptions the teller makes. The account of telling should be explained and justified in the teller's patterns of actions and orientation, emerged through hypothetical-formulating and testing with a panel, future blind. These theories and concepts are explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Another function of bracketing is to help to avoid the researcher being a victim of her own

blind spots which come from her own history and prejudices towards particular types of persons and their lived experiences. Therefore, a panel is invited to participate in the analysis of lived experience and family history. When doing the reconstructive analysis of lived experiences, family history and collective history, it starts the process of blind-future interpretation with a panel, chunk by chunk, through hypothetic development and testing against subsequent revealed data.

This, in essence, engenders a deeper understanding of the contribution of the FHNIM in the investigation of biography and social institutions as an integral part of the whole HE choice and decision-making. I introduce some key insights from theoretical perspectives of Husserlian phenomenology and the Gurwitsch's theme-thematic-field into my enquiry and analysis of the developmental process, genesis, and constitution of the HE decision and perceptions. By doing this, I hope to contribute to and expand the application of the FHNIM for future research inquiry of the family-individual and society-biography dialectic.

1.3 Significance of This Thesis

In the introductory chapter, I have demonstrated that even though the importance of parental influence Chinese students' HE decision has been touched upon by many recent empirical studies, they have not incorporated the perceptions and understandings of the parents of Chinese international students. As a result, I questioned what are the psycho-societal conditions and dynamics behind differently-motivated parents' decision about their children's university education abroad and *what the genesis and developmental process of their beliefs and knowledge may be*. That is, how they came to what they believed and valued and how this belief is maintained—by what strategies and actions over the lifespan. Additionally, what the participants' concerns and needs are in relation to their understanding and belief of decisions regarding HE. Through my personal history I tried to highlight the need for qualitative methodological approaches to investigate HE choices and decision-making from a family-relational and biographical-society perspective. As Breckner (2007) argues, in the modern era, people are increasingly organizing their experiences and general patterns of orientation in a biographical framework, since other institutional contexts based on strong normative patterns —“class”, “State” and their interrelations — have been profoundly changing. Key examples in Chinese society are the diminished role of centralized planning system in the second decade of China's reformation era and the changing criteria for determining university entrance and official appointments during the Mao (1949–1976) and

post-Mao regimes, etc. In modern societies “biography” is regarded as a social concept at the intersection of the experiential world of individuals and societal reality. That is, the concept or model of familial and biographical work, does not produce theoretical and analytical barrier between HE decision-making and society, but instead capture the way that the structures and social actors can be “both causes and effects of one another” (Chamberlayne & Rustin, 1999, p.27). “Institutions as well as individuals increasingly relate to ‘careers’ as temporally structured sequences of activities which serve the functions of organizing participation in society and helping us make sense of what we have experienced” (Fischer & Kohli, 1987; Kohli, 1998; cited in Breckner, 2007, p. 116).

With this biographical work scenario, I have shown that the FHNIM belongs to a branch of qualitative methods that integrate the subjective understandings and objective action practice against a backdrop of institutional norms and practices into a unified framework to uncover the deep structures or latent rules of the story and action. Finally, I also argue the importance of integrating theoretical perspectives that support the philosophical or theoretical stance underpinning the FHNIM into the analysis and application.

The aim of the thesis is to explore HE choices and decision-making from a family-relational and biography-society dialectic perspective. Through the use of the stories of individual biography and family history, this study will investigate the parents’ knowledge and understanding of decisions regarding HE, in relation to its source and origins, pathways (evolving from the interactions between specific familial biographical experiences and institutional practices), and a variety of education and occupation decision action patterns that emerge as the parents’ family histories and biographies that have evolved over several generations.

Secondly, the use of the inquiry and analysis tools of familial and biographical trajectories of education and occupation decisions and their respective outcomes will illuminate the overarching unity of society and individual in the participants’ chosen activities and their trends, local HE and career practice scenes, and ideological and opportunity structures from an evolving historical and dialectic perspective. Therefore, my findings will illuminate and inform the educational career opportunity structures and potential options and trends by locating the data of actions and events of several generations and situations within the contextual continuum of institutional norms and regulations.

Thirdly, the aim will be to contribute to cross-cultural communication and human knowledge and a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon of Chinese choosing to study abroad through the biographies and family histories of Chinese parents and their children and the nature of HE decisions.

Finally, in the methodological area, the research endeavours to amalgamate some key insights from the theoretical perspectives of phenomenology into my analysis of a lived history and told story of a participant, which underpins the FHNIM.

The questions that the study explores and addresses are:

Primary research questions

How have the earlier experiences and thoughts of parents and families affected the generation and development of their knowledge and beliefs that influenced their decision to send their children abroad to study? What is valued by and of concern most to Chinese parents when they made HE decisions about the university education of their children and/or their own?

Secondary research question

What and how do Chinese students who have come to study in New Zealand understand about their HE decision-making? That is, what subjective perspectives emerge from their narratives?

1.4 Organization of This Thesis

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter One **SETS THE SCENE** for this study before Chapter Two **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE** lays out the relevant literature and empirical research on the intergenerational aspects of education and occupational choice. Alfred Schutz's phenomenological sociology of knowledge is considered. Schutz's endorsement of Weber's ideal type methodology by applying phenomenologically based epistemology and analysis is consistent with the theoretical attitude of this study. To reveal and delineate the intentional and attitudinal structures (Embree, 2006) of the research participants, the investigator cannot ignore its referential totality of lived experiences and events and the context of experience from which the perceptions and intentions are emerged and developed. To understand an actor's subjective meaning, Schutz (1972) argued that the investigator has to formulate the course-of-action of the person and to construct his/her life-worldly stocks of

knowledge and motives. When a global picture and general impression of an actor and his/her sequential actions and motives is observed, the historically-situated event or action is focused and the correlative statement, i.e., the historically and biographically conditioned perspective, is examined. This embedded focal examination against a backdrop of the global wholeness is congruent with Schutz's ideas of casual and meaning adequacy. Next, major events and developments that occurred during the parents' formative years are examined and their ideas and institutions are depicted. China's educational policies and institutions that conditioned the life experience of participant's parents and children between 1949 and 2011 are explored. The emergence and early development of Chinese HE institutions in the Republic era are also examined since they formed the historical contexts with which HE decisions of grandparent generation occurred. The literature on changing patterns of family formation and the cultural influence in appraisal of HE decisions within family context are also explored. The review of certain biographical and political events and ideas from the historical archives are investigated and included in the analysis in Chapters Four and Five. The starting point of the study is understanding the subjective viewpoints and meaning of HE decisions made by the subjects. In other words, I do not have a prescription for what part of the experience and events will and should be selected by parents as relevant in relation to their HE decision and it is highly dependent on the participants' own understanding of what is important and relevant. In order to understand the particular meaning of an individual's education and career choice it is necessary to look and think through the whole case history and case structure involving the history of the family over two or three generations.

Chapter Three **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS** is designed to concentrate on the methodological and operational considerations in order to best explore the investigation questions outlined earlier in this chapter. Phenomenological research underpinning the theoretical position of this study is explored and developed. The historical development of the biographical narrative interpretive method for the data collection and analysis is discussed. The enquiry and analytical strategies are explained. Following the focus on the familial-biographical data analysis in Stage 1, Stage 2 is all about the analysis of told story. In stage 3 I demonstrate the need to reconstruct the historical and biographical perspectives of HE-related decisions. Meanwhile, such a singular past perspective has to be understood against the backdrop of the participant's whole gestalt of overall biographical interpretation in his/her told story and decision action patterns and the course-of-action generated from familial biographical data in Stage 1. As such, it avoids fragmenting or categorising a single

biographical choice from its preceding conditions and succeeding biographical consequences and thus destroys the gestalt connections and memory associations of events, experiences, and self-presentations. There then follows a discussion on sample size, ethical considerations, and the access and selection process.

Chapter Four **PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSES OF INDIVIDUAL CASE** gives a full account of the analyses and the initial findings of nine single parent case studies, including four-step case reconstruction procedures: Sequential analysis of biographical data and family history from the interview transcripts of both parents and students, Told story of personal and familial experience, Reconstruction of case history as lived and detailed microanalysis of individual text segments, and The comparison of the lived history and told story.

Chapter Five **DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY TYPOLOGIES** focuses on case comparison and starts with the development of family typologies, which is already beginning to draw the thesis to the first stage of the conclusion. The final conclusion is set out in Chapter Six.

The overall aim is to understand and compare the biographical structures of decision action patterns and very meaning of the thematic foci (themes) that emerges from the thematic context of lived experience, which not only has governed the parent's own HE-decisions and that of her/his child but also structured and organised the diversity of lived experiences into the parent's here-and-now told story. This very meaning of the theme to the thematic field sheds light on societal rules and condition as well as on the way they are applied in the cases (Wohlrab-Sahr 1996, p.3, cited in Ackermann, 2002, p.114)" of the same kind (Lewin, 1927/1967; Rosenthal, 1993). The very meaning of the theme(s) and its associated perspectives and orientations are also used to present a unified answer to three interrelated research questions of this thesis which underpin the aims of this study.

Chapter Six **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** concludes the thesis. The contributions in the substantive and methodological areas are summarised, drawing together nine single family's themes and historical perspectives and their familial and biographical decision action patterns. The first part of this concluding chapter summarizes the relationship between HE choice, familial and biographical relevancy, and social-political institutions in light of primary research question one. The second part then discusses several aspects of continuity and changes in the children generation. Finally, the influence of the research design on the enquiry and analysis of family-history-narrative-interpretive method is discussed. Possible implications for policy and further work are highlighted.

This chapter first introduced the general context for the study and the existing empirical research on the factors and influences impinging on students' HE decisions. It then presented the researcher's story, and the research design of the study. The chapter concluded by outlining the structure of the thesis. The following chapter critically reviews the literature of parental influence on their children's HE decisions in order to develop a conceptual framework to inform the research design of this study.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I identified the importance of parental influence on HE decisions of their children's university education. Prior research has only touched upon but never incorporated these aspects in empirical studies (Chen & Zimitat, 2006; Education New Zealand, 2007; Lowe, 2007; Merwood, 2007). Subsequent literature reviews of the research have been directed at mapping the conceptual landscape for developing knowledge about researching intergenerational matters on education choice and pathways. I have sought to do this by introducing the key conceptual models, such as Jacobs and Eccles's expectancy-value model (2000), status attainment (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Featherman & Hauser, 1978; Sewell & Hauser, 1975; Moen & Erickson, 1995), and a life course perspective (Elder, 1975, 1992; Mayer & Tuma, 1990). Generally, the decision-maker or actor's actual understandings and beliefs are formulated through the investigator's previously-established conceptual schemes or models and these schemes cannot exhaust the concrete reality of the social phenomena under investigation. The next new cycle of research is then directed towards conceptualizing an approach with social phenomenology of everyday life. It will discuss Alfred Schutz's concepts of course-of-action and person types, life-worldly stocks of knowledge and motives. In Part Two, China's educational policies and institutions that conditioned the life experience of participant's parents and children between 1949 and 2011 are explored and the emergence and early development of Chinese HE institution in the Republic era are also examined. In order to understand the nature and application of contemporary China's university entrance examination, the National College Entrance Exam (NCEE), and the impact has on the structure of Chinese society, the review returns to its historical genesis, the imperial civil service examination system, or Keju, which dates back to the Sui Dynasty in the 6th century. Broader societal, educational, occupational, and policy context throughout Mao and Post-Mao eras are taken into account for the experiences of the family. The literature on changing patterns of family formation and the cultural influence in appraisal of HE decisions within family contexts are also explored.

2.2 Part One-Mapping the Conceptual Territory

2.2.1 Perspectives of Intergenerational Matters on Education and Occupation Choices and Decision-making

Traditional views on education and occupation choices are best represented by the expectancy-value model, which links achievement-related choices and behaviours to people's expectations of success, ability-related beliefs, and subjective values of the task (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). To address issues of family influences, the traditional approach on intergenerational transmission has followed one of three paths. Either it uses childhood socialization; the socio status attainment model; or a consideration of the relationship between socialization and family status that recognises the impact of parents' socioeconomic status upon the educational and occupational decisions of the child. This latter path also acknowledges the parental socialization process in the transmission of ideologies, orientation, and behaviour (Moen & Erickson, 1995).

2.2.1.1 From socialization to subjective beliefs and values

Socialization theory suggests the importance of home environment, early childhood experiences and social learning either in terms of role modelling, direct instruction, or verbal persuasion in the transmission of ideologies, orientation, and behaviour across generations (e.g., Bandura, 1982, 1989; Moen & Erickson, 1995). Based on the construct of the expectancy-value model (Jacobs and Eccles, 2000) it is suggested that parents influence children's task values in four ways: "1) the social-emotional climate and general child-rearing beliefs; 2) by providing specific experiences; 3) by modelling involvement in valued-activities; and 4) by communicating their perceptions of the child's abilities and expectations for performance (p. 416)."

The construct of expectancies for success model in a choice situation refers to the subjective beliefs and judgements about how well a child will do in upcoming tasks. Individuals' beliefs of competence, perception of task demand, and both short-term and long-term goals all contribute to what Eccles and her colleagues call personal expectancies for success. Theories adopting this view can be found throughout Atkinson's (1964) subjective probability of success; Bandura's (1977, p.193) efficacy expectation (defined as a person's belief "that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcome"); and Ajzen (1991) perceived behaviour control. Overall, these theoretical aspects emphasize

the operations of deliberations and rationalization in the process of decision-making.

The individual's value of the particular goals, in Wigfield and Eccles' (2000) expectancy model, has shown parallel importance in the perceived probability of success. The task value, is defined as an individual's perceptions and beliefs about the reasons why they might engage in a task whereby perceived importance or attainment-value, subjective interest, utility, and costs are incorporated into four components. The fourth and final component of task value refers to the cost being engaged within a choice element. It is defined as the perceived negative aspects of engaging in a task because it limits access to other tasks at the same time. It is assessed by the amount of perceived effort required to accomplish a task and the emotional cost involved, such as fear of failure (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992) or loss of face. What is being emphasized here, however, is that an individual's emotional cost is being considered rather than the perceived economic costs of the alternatives derived from the economic rational-choice model of decision-making. Accordingly, affective memories of earlier experiences and the importance of both current internal and external stimuli appear to influence goal activation. Other research studies investigate the relationship between emotion and goals, such as Higgins' theory of self-discrepancy (1987), which considers comparison between the actual, ideal, and ought goals emanating from either self or others.

Considering value and belief cultivation within this framework, I find the arguments offered by the expectancy-value model offers to conflict with the belief system in the framework of Confucian culture. First, Western children are socialized without a priori obligations of duty or loyalty to others based on a hierarchical social order and children are thus encouraged to develop their own interests and talents. Secondly, children's self-beliefs are judged mainly from their personal achievement. The situation is different in Confucian culture. Individual development is oriented toward a series of life goals. Any single education or occupation decision is seen not as an outcome but as a milestone toward a long process to achieve ultimate life goals. The doctrine of a hierarchical order is central to family socialization but the degree may vary from one family to another. With respect to the scholar-official families (or the so-called gentry class family during imperial times), children are socialised to regulate their desires and wants according to the rules of propriety (status) (Fairbank, 1998). In Chinese society, scholars are urged to utilise their knowledge to serve their community and society beyond their family (cf. Hwang, 2012, p.99-131) and such rules and beliefs are also absorbed into their own practices of child-rearing. These culture-bonded beliefs and child-training practices could be termed as social-cultural normative approaches, which means

parents' own conceptualisation and theorization of practices and aspirations in relation to their children's education and occupation prospects originated from their cultural traditions and established societal norms and structures. From Erikson's work (cf. Berk, 2005), these parenting practices and aspirations can be understood in relation to competencies and achievements valued and needed by the individual's society and life situations. Therefore, the normative elements of the expectancy-value model can be used as explanatory conditions rather than being used in a literal fashion. In terms of the ability-oriented belief system, Confucian doctrine holds the belief that man is perfectible, through education and is independent of inherited ability or status from the family of origin.

2.2.1.2 Status attainment

The status attainment model of educational and occupational achievement underlines the importance of both socioeconomic background and parental encouragement for educational, occupational, and economic success (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Featherman & Hauser, 1978; Sewell & Hauser, 1975; Moen & Erickson, 1995). According to this view, what may matter most for a child's acquisition of task values and beliefs and parents' educational and occupational choices parents makes for the child is her/his "family origin's location in the social structure, in the provision of resources and opportunities during, and following, childhood (Moen & Erickson, 1995, p.173)." The socioeconomic status of parents is typically used as a conventional expression for family origins in market-based societies (Zhou, Moen, & Tuma, 1998). It is usually based on a combination of occupational education, income, and prestige (Blau & Duncan, 1967). However, a characteristic of the state redistributive economy in China, as Zhou, Moen & Tuma identified, is the monopolistic role of the State in resource allocation and opportunity construction among different economic sectors, localities and social groups. It implies that different types of work organizations and city localities may have experienced different resources and opportunities based on their institutional links. It can be seen from later discussion and analysis in Zhou's (2000) own paper that work organization within state sectors is a privileged position from which to access better resources and opportunities, as assumed by the policies and regulation under a redistributive economy. A similar point could be obtained from Lin and Xie's (1988) study of occupational prestige ratings in Beijing. Occupations in state-owned or collective firms connected to the redistribution of the economy were rated quite high and constituted a goal that most people were trying to attain in 1983 (cf. Xu, 2001). Under these circumstances a link between work origins of parents and a child's socioeconomic environment at an earlier age is expected.

The emergence of a market economy, however, has resulted in altered opportunity structures, mechanisms of selection and reward systems in work organisations, and labour-market participation, as well as shifted societal norms and expectations. Xu's (2001) cross-historical comparative study of occupation prestige in 1987, 1992, and 1999 illustrates this point. First, the positions of city mayor and university professor emerged as top occupations in the 1987 National Survey and were still found at the top of the jobs pyramid twelve years later, in 1999. Second, the positions at the top of the prestige hierarchy in the 1999 National Survey were labelled as sitting in the middle of the prestige structure in the 1987 and 1992 National Surveys. For instance, these include leading cadres in government agencies (Communist Party or central/local governments); "industrial and commercial administrators/tax officers"; and "policemen" on the one hand, and "private entrepreneurs" and "translators/interpreters" on the other. These findings suggest political power is retained in positions of authority (such as the leading cadre) in the process of reformation. Also apparent in the non-redistributive economy is the relative weights in recent occupational prestige ratings such as that of private entrepreneurs and translators/interpreters. The emergence of private entrepreneurs and skilled translators/interpreters may demonstrate how self-actualization and functional specialism has driven the economy forward and has been perceived, valued, and adapted to the challenges of the market economy.

Along similar lines Xiang (Xiang & Wei, 2009) established a linkage between the "old political cadres" and the "new private entrepreneurs": the former mobilized their political privilege to gain private wealth and set themselves as private entrepreneurs of the new regime. Chen (2005) offers a similar diagnosis for newly-emergent entrepreneurs: unlike entrepreneurs in the early phases of the Chinese reformation, who were former small business owners and came from a lower economic and social stratum, nearly half of new entrepreneurs were former regulators of state owned enterprises during the third phase of reformation (1993-2000) and the proportion of these regulators reached sixty-three percent after 2000 (cf. Chen, 2005). It is clear that those who combined political capital and cultural capital (additional education) are better positioned to achieve positive privileges in terms of economic capital today.

What is notable about all of these changes is that there is temporal variation in parents' job shifts that relate to the timing of their career mobility and status at different points. Furthermore, the process and changes of job mobility and status are contingent on the prior, contemporary, and subsequent experiences of the persons. In effect, according to socio-

economic status (SES) theory, status change and job shifts may contour temporal patterns of children's socioeconomic environments and thus may provide the child with favourable opportunities and or conversely, unfavourable limitations to accumulated social, cultural, and economic resources and social positions in the larger social structure. This, in turn, shapes self-conceptions and social connectedness.

2.2.1.3 Life course perspective-Intergenerational connection in times, locality, and mechanisms of decision-making

The model of status achievement and socialization emphasizes the psychosocial resources, economic conditions, prior experiences, adaptive skills, and orientations people bring to their decisions. However, decisions cannot be understood without knowledge of the temporal context and historical effects on the development course of the individual (Elder, 1992; Mayer & Tuma, 1990) as well as mechanisms that link peoples' decisions and outcomes (Elder, 1992). Additionally, social timing also applies to the scheduling of decisions and obligations based on the cultural norms and expectations about appropriate time of studying, work, marriage, and childbearing (Elder, 1975).

The timing and place of large-scale societal events in parents' lives shape both their opportunities and constraints and their values and attitudes (Moen & Erickson, 1995; Zhou *et al.* 1998). Parents' birth cohort (Riley, Foner, & Waring, 1988) and cohort membership can be used to capture the timing of such changes. Determining an account of mechanisms of how families respond to a changing environment is important for grasping an understanding of the reciprocal influence between social and developmental trajectories (Elder, 1994).

Elder's approach has virtue in its incorporation of family decisions and actions with the spatial and temporal contexts, mechanisms and pathways. Additionally, the sequenced events and their outcomes have merit. However, Elder's methodological paradigm, which uses methods of family archival reconstruction and prospective and introspective surveys, provides inadequate treatment of an individual's knowledge of his/her social world in the constitution of action. On this point, Weber (1978) offers a method for understanding decision action from the subjective meaning the experiencer attaches to it. Thus, sociology as the science of social action as Weber (1978) defines it, has been bound to the issue of social actions and has encapsulated its inquiry to understand social phenomena in terms of subjective meaning. From Schutz's point of view, such a task does seem highly desirable and even urgent; however, these foundational assumptions in relation to the conception of

sociological discipline require further epistemological foundation. As a result, Schutz has developed the epistemological foundation of Weber's subjective meaning of human action by applying Edmund Husserl's phenomenology. The review ends the exploration of Schutz's phenomenological sociology as one of possible theoretical groundwork of Family-History-Narrative-Interpretive Method (FHNIM). It is of value in the study of specific historic social phenomena and its concern with the constitutive processes whereby how the society, subgroup and individual achieve its patterns and organizations.

2.2.2 Toward a Social Phenomenology of Lived Experiences

Phenomenology per se, is a branch of philosophy, which originated with the work of Husserl and later phenomenologists [e.g., Gurwitsch, Sartre, Schutz, and Merleau-Ponty] (Woodruff, 2011). It refers to the *study of lived experiences* and of how things manifest themselves in our *consciousness* as we engage with the world around us (Moran, 2000). Of fundamental importance to the phenomenological investigation, as Embree (2006) argues, is factual (empirical) and eidetic (intentional and attitudinal) description, Husserl refers to this as the description of Noematical and Noetic components of experience. Phenomenology can also play an explanatory role since the claimed beliefs can be examined and justified by means of reflective observation and analysis. Sass (2009) identifies such a role below:

“...the phenomenologists who eschew explanatory ambitions should not necessarily be understood as arguing for the casual irrelevance or casual independence of conscious experience: typically, they mean to imply a bracketing or setting-aside of all such questions in order to facilitate a purified description of subjective experience...Further, the possible forms of explanations need not to be restricted to causation alone: they can also involve other forms of relationships that reveal underlying unity or interdependence of a group of phenomena (p.636).”

2.2.2.1 Alfred Schutz and the phenomenology of the social world

Born in Vienna in 1899, Schutz studied law and the social sciences at the University of Vienna. His supervisor, Friedrich von Weiser, himself an eminent sociologist, criticised Weber's polemic position and drew into question the logical structure of his sociology. The logical problem was revealed through Schutz's reflections of Weber's methodological position. These reflections displayed an ambivalence in Weber's central concept of meaning and all its dependent ideas (Schutz, 1972, p.xiii).

By applying Husserl's method of phenomenology, Schutz was able to clarify Weber's concept of action and subjective meaning. It also allowed him to reformat his epistemological

grounding with an establishment of phenomenological foundation for his concept formation of a sociology of understanding. This resulted in Schutz's publication of *The Phenomenology of social world*, which was translated into English in 1967 (Schutz, 1932/1972).

Schutz defined the subject matter of social science as social phenomena or social reality. By social reality he meant, "the sum total of objects and occurrences within the social cultural world as experienced by *the common-sense thinking* of men living their daily life among their *fellow-men*, connected with them in manifold relations of interaction" (Schutz, 1954, p.53, emphasis mine). It is the world of cultural objects and social institutions into which we were born...and with which we have to come to terms (Schutz, 1977, p.289)." In Schutz's view, the social sciences should focus on (1) an analysis of subjective and intended meaning and action for a solitary experiencer who stands inside social relationships and environment, and (2) inter subjective understanding structures of experience and action from the viewpoint of the experiencer. To address these issues, Schutz's adapted Weber's methodology of Ideal typen in an effort to formulate ideal-type course-of-action and persons.

2.2.2.2 Course-of-action and person types

Given Schutz's (1972) ideal-type method, he has three main suggestions for investigators. It states that the appropriate move is first to formulate typical courses of action that would produce the events under investigation; and then to construct ideal types of persons equipped with life-worldly stocks of knowledge and motives. Thus a global picture and general impression of a person and his actions and motives is observed. Within the background of this whole picture, the historically-situated event and action is focused and the correlative statement, i.e., the historically and biographically conditioned perspective, is examined. When the investigator undertakes concept formation and typifies the experiencer's course of actions and worldly knowledge and motives of another subject, Schutz also emphasizes (1972) that the investigator's interpretive schemes must possess the postulate of causal and meaning adequacy and the postulate of rationality.

2.2.2.3 Causal and meaning adequacy

For Schutz, a causally adequate interpretation of sequenced events for a course-of-action ideal type is first capable of providing a probability and is likely to be repeated. Thus the requirement of causal explanation "depends on being able to determine that there is a probability, which, in the rare ideal case, can be numerically stated, but is always in some sense calculable. Similarly, that a given observable event(overt or subjective)will be followed

or accompanied by another event” (1972, p.230). Second, the prior features characteristic of the experiencer’s choice of possibilities has to be formulated and compared with his/her preference from which action follows. Thus, the experiencer’s choice of goals, according to Weber, is to select means to achieve the purposive end. *The criterion governing the experiencer’s selection of means has to be supplied* in order to apprehend his/her intention and motives. This second dimension pertains to adequacy on the level of causality. Third, the intentiveness acts of the experiencer’s consciousness are pragmatically determined and are modified by the experience of the immediate context and by the characters and constituents of such context, including his knowledge and re-action of the other in social interaction and communication. Thus the intersubjective constitutive process in its full concreteness of face-to-face situation must be accounted for in order to understand the interactive and communicative genesis of the interpretive schemes of the observed experiencer with reference to his fellowman.

Moreover, Schutz argued that the ideal type of stocks of knowledge and motives which are attributed by the sociologists has to assure the interpretive adequacy on the meaning level. It has to be coherent with the experiencer’s course-of-action type which is the starting point for the inquiry. Secondly, it has to be consistent with his/her habitual thoughts and feelings. Based on the principle of causal adequacy, there is consistence between the type construct of an experiencer’s action with the total context of his past experience. Accordingly, an experiencer’s historical concrete action can be obtained by ordering it within an *objective context of meaning*, that is, *the course of actions* (Schutz, 1972, p. 230-235, *emphasis mine*). At this stage, the investigator can go further and make a general statement, which in this case involves a causal interpretation of a concrete course of action and typical action.

“A correct causal interpretation of a concrete course of action is arrived at when the overt action and the motives have both been correctly apprehended, and at the same time the relation has become meaningfully comprehensible. A correct causal interpretation of typical action means that the process which is claimed to be typical is shown to be both adequately grasped on the level of meaning and at the same time the interpretation is to some degree causally adequate ”(Schutz, 1972, p.233).

2.2.2.4 Life-worldly stock of knowledge

Considering the role of the stocks of knowledge according to Schutz’s method in constitution of ideal-type person, I may raise the question of what form knowledge takes for Schutz. According to Schutz, experiencing the life world, people and events is a process of

typification, categorization and generalization. We employ a corpus of recipes and rules to navigate in our life world and to pursue our goals and ends. These recipes and rules constitute an entire system of practical knowledge or know-how and are acquired mainly through three ways. Our biographically-determined knowledge and typical assumptions, expectations and prescriptions, which are acquired and learned in the process of upbringing and socialization through interactions with those who are closest to us, are by no means inherent to specific members within their own groups and inaccessible to others. This form of typification and recipes serves as the basis of the common-sense thinking within the group and warrants interchangeability of perspectives and positions with our fellow-man or consociates, that is, the temporal assumption of partial congruence of the “system of relevancies” between yours and mine in the so-called We-relationship and the world of fellow-man or consociates. Bestowal of reciprocal We-relationship and belonging to some groups thus excludes us from others, including other’s recipes and established rules.

Apart from the informed knowledge and rules of groups and communities, we also have standardised recipe of knowledge at our disposal, which is characterised by the taken-for-granted most of us know, including “the whole world of cultural objects, from artefacts to institutions and conventional way of thinking (Schutz, 1972, p.182).” This kind of knowledge presupposes Schutz’s idea of *natural attitude*, and by this attitude, the knowledge is given, from the outset, “by simply accepting the existence of the social world as it is always accepted in the attitude of the natural standpoint (Schutz, 1972, p.97).” Gurwitsch summarizes Schutz’s view of the socially standardised character of rules and recipes in the following way: “The overwhelming majority of the rules and recipes are complied with as a matter of course, and are hardly ever explicitly formulated, still less reflected upon. They define the modes of procedure and conduct regarded as correct, good, and natural by the society in question; they are the ways in which ‘one’ does things (1974, p.272).”

At this point, the experiencer’s stock of knowledge of past decisions, of lived experience and of life world, is merely preserved in the form of passive content and can be taken for granted and thus ignored. Once the experiencer enters into a face-to-face situation and is asked to answer the question, in this case, of his/her lived experience and his/her family, the passive form and taken-for-granted knowledge of the past experience can be activated through a reflective glance in the Here-and-Now moment.

Such a reflection leads to not only subjectivity but also to intersubjectivity. The latter point will be discussed in more detail later.

During the narration of one's biography up until the point when the experiencer made the decision to send his/her child abroad to study, he/she has to think simultaneously of how this decision will impact on the realization of his/her final goals or deeds, and of the causal determinants of the executed choices and decisions. It is necessary that he/she has to select past experiences that are regarded as relevant for all family HE- related decisions and order them within the total context of the lived-through experience. Such a selection and ordering arrangement, as Schutz argues, is to be understood as voluntary. Furthermore, the selection and ordering of past events and situations pertains to Schutz's (1972) terms "because" and "in-order-to" motives and systems of life relevancy, thus denoting particular meaning relevant to those events and situations and to the system of relevant pursuits.

2.2.2.5 The selection and ordering structures of experience as the "Because" and "In-Order-To" Motives

Motives in biographical accounts are often asserted in a way that explains why something happens and what it is that people value about their choices and actions. Motives are of two sorts: "those that occur earlier in the stream than the encountering that is explained by them, which are called "causes"; and those that occur later if they occur at all (i.e., they may never be actualized, which does not preclude their being pretended to), which are called "purposes," "ends," "aims," or "goals" (Embree, 2006, p.157)". The concerns with causes or purposes lead to what Schutz calls "because" or "in-order-to" motive.

Thinking of the process and the specific meaning of the HE decision from the perspective of a become-motive experiencer at the moment Here and Now, the events and concatenation which he/she dwelled upon refers to preceding events that took place temporally prior to the decision. The decision appears and is experienced as continuing from the previous happenings, as if it is being motivated by or is resulting from them. The previous events (the motivating ones) that are engrossing the experiencer's attention are presented in the pluperfect tense and structurally they are felt from within the memory.

At the beginning of telling the story of life and HE decision from the perspective of in-order-to-motive experiencer, he/she attempts to consider what his/her aim is in the future perfect tense. This "begin-with-the-end" attention is directed toward the just-completed lived experience, in this case that will be the HE decision about the experiencer's children's university education and, simultaneously, the total context of his/her lived experience. The

ordering and organising of the concrete experience of the HE decision within the total context experience is oriented on the basis that his/her in-order-to interpretation renders the synthesis of apprehension of the lived-through experiences and present life situation and here-and-now interview context. Since all the subjective motives are life-worldly pragmatic to the experiencer himself/herself and thereby the in-order-to motive of self-interpretative schemes are organised by the experiencer with reference to the solution of his/her personal practical problem. The constitutive process of the in-order-to motive of self-interpretation, according to Schutz, is the formulation of the problem itself, which “takes place as a result of a genuine because-motive, which can be pictured only in the plupresent tense” (Schutz, 1972, p.96). For example, the experiencer might illuminate this kind of problem by attributing his preference for a particular tertiary institution with his/her concerns toward his/her environment, such as Shanghai’s socio-economic development or perceived competition for high skilled jobs. In this context, choosing a leading HE institution is explained to endorse the child’s knowledge and skills in order to gain positional competition for elite jobs, through which the experiencer formulates his own theory (proposition) and establishes his subjective meaning of *how important one’s platform is for an individual’s success*. The experiencer’s interest and concern towards his son’s education platform is now considered to be the in-order-to motive, provisionally. For phenomenological investigation, the investigator is satisfied with neither this self-evidence nor the mere interpretation of texts, but as Embree (2006) calls on us, to seek knowledge about things and to engage in what can be called “reflective analysis”.

2.2.2.6 Reflective analysis and its evidence

How can the proposition/interpretation of what the purpose is (or has been) be verified? One can begin with questions of what “a better platform” means and where “the platform” is concerned by the experiencer. With respect to the father example above, it is apparent that the argumentation the experiencer expressed does not carry the context with it and he could be asked why he believes in the importance of a platform. If I am to succeed understanding the meaning of this interpretation adequately I must acquire some relevancy to the term “platform”. I must also understand the circumstances in which the term platform has been constituted or established and its meaning in its lived-through situation. Furthermore, the father refers to the experiences of worker-peasant-solider (WPSs) students and state-owned enterprise (SOEs) workers when, the SOE restructuring was launched in the 1990s. In this context, I encounter the term “the platform”, in which the connection between the platform

and the institutional pitfalls experienced by WPS students and SOEs workers has been experienced. More importantly his concern for his son's future prospects, where term "platform" is correlated, is recognised phenomenologically.

Thus far I have considered the selection and ordering of relevant experiences and apprehended the experiencer's because and in-order-to motives. The former involves the process of remembering and is directed to objects in the past, whereas the latter is in the future. I also inquired into the subjective meaning of the sign and its establishment pointing to the preceding experience. The analysis of the subjective in-order-to motives, or of the motives intending to the purposes or ends of their future-goals accounts for one-side. Besides the question of how the interpretation is originally established, the body of other interpretations also constitutes evidence for me. It could be comprehended by way of expressions like gesture, postures, and reactions. The stratified structure that the experiencer places his objects and its contexts within are concerned with differentiating relevance of his life concerns and interest. All these points offered here should be analysed and confirmed and, corrected if needed (Embree, 2006).

The recollection of how the father's motives to support and advise his son to study at a leading university were constructed in a way that allowed him to organize the positional competition for his son's future livelihood. This signifies how the decision is social-cultural and historical. It exemplifies its belief characters and values. The decision has the values of the father for the sake of his son's future. It is also valued positively with the notion that his son "could become a useful person who will make a contribution to the society", that is, the value in the process of becoming something else and something better. He would be proud of himself being useful in the society and ashamed of himself if he were marginalized, such as, for example, the later lives of SOE workers and WPS students. The phenomenological reflective triggered me to raise the question of why becoming a person useful in society is valuable and is important from this father's perspective who was a WPS graduate. In answering this question I had to go back to his history and story and the historical archives to explore why, when and how this father has come to the position he articulated and what cultural value and tradition lies in this idea.

The navigating of the key concepts and major concerns from social phenomenology has provided the conceptual background, and there is strong evidence that what people know about their choices and actions derives from the links between their past actions and

circumstances and their understandings, believing, typifying assumptions and motives for actions in concrete situations. Narrative biography is seen as a representation close to those actions and interactions and as a means of disclosing subjective concerns and relevancies by enabling those researched to speak for themselves – to tell their own story of lived experiences (Gergen & Gergen, 1997). Narratives also represent storied ways of knowing and communicating. I will turn to narrative biography as an element of inquiry and analysis later in the methodology section. To research on Chinese parents and children's lived experience and HE-related decisions in the Chinese society, section three will be organised by journeying through shifting system and practices of HE institutions and National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) over 99 years from 1912 to 2011.

2.3Part Two-Parents and Children in China's HE Institutions 1912-2011

To facilitate an exploration of parents' experiences and ideas about how they influenced their children to study abroad the review is organised into four parts. **Part 1** is an overview of the emergence and development of HE systems in the Republic era (1912-1949) and its function in Chinese society. Within this context, some general accounts of the imperial examination system are provided, which marks the historical genesis of the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) which appeared in 1952. **Part 2** provides both context and subjective viewpoints experienced by parents during their formative years. The contextual aspect begins with a background of historical information about the main socio-political events and changes in the enrolment and participation of HE throughout the parents' childhoods and adolescence. In dealing with historical social conditions and factors that push and pull parents' HE-related decisions and practices, I will also include the corresponding subjective aspects that involve personal reasons and subjective feelings and perceptions for HE-related experiences in their own socio-historical context. This provides an avenue for capturing parents' understandings of HE and their decisions about (non-) participation in HE within their own historical and socio-cultural contexts and experiences throughout the Mao Zedong era and the transitional period of Post-Mao. **Part 3** builds upon the knowledge established earlier to consider China's HE system during a time of rapid socio-economic changes in China during the reformation era. These changes characterise both the context and experiences of the children's adolescence and a distinct phase of parenthood within their parents' biographies. **Part 4** concerns cultural influences in appraising HE decisions within the Chinese family context.

2.3.1 General Accounts of Imperial Examination and the Structure of Chinese Traditional Society

Before Sui dynasty (589-618), and more particularly the Tang dynasty (618-960), a merit-based examination system (Keju) had never been a principal pathway to officialdom; official positions were gained through recommendations or kinship relations (Elman, 1991). Inspired by the policy advocated by the Western Wei statesman Su zhuo, Emperor Sui adopted the Keju in 589 as a way to eliminate the influence of royal clans and the families of high-ranking officials (i.e., the protection system). This created to a new state bureaucracy whose members were selected by examination on the basis of their talent and education.

Under the reign of Empress Wu (655), the Keju was broadened and an increased number of examination graduates joined the government ranks. In addition to staffing the civilian bureaucracy, the Keju also functioned as “a useful countervailing force to the power of entrenched aristocrats in capital politics” (Elman, 1991, p.9). Another function of this selection system was made office accessible to men from less privileged families to rise to the higher rank of officialism.

In early imperial China, low-level licentiate degree holders formed the bottom tier of the gentry. In later dynasties, as Fairbank (1987) has suggested, emperors used this tier as a mechanism to raise state funds, selling positions to the sons of merchants and landlords. However, high-level officials were always those who had passed the highly selective tripartite examination system-at the provincial, Peking (capital), and palace levels. Candidates who passed these exams became provincial graduates (Juren), metropolitan graduates (Jinshi), and few prestigious honours. The metropolitan graduates were ranked in three tiers according to their performance, the highest being Zhuang yuan. These imperial degree holders equated to those who receive the top honours in the contemporary NCEE which began in 1952. According to Song practices, men who passed the Peking exam were eligible for selection for officialdom (Kracke, 1947). These exam elites formed an upper gentry society of great influence and prestige. In the absence of a professional class in imperial times, passing the Keju became crucial for gentry families as there were no alternative career options. Sons were trained on a corpus of Confucian classics and works on statecraft so that they would eventually pass the exams and become literate and cultivated degree holders. Success in the Keju became the determinant of family status.

Consequently, the imperial examination bifurcated the old Chinese society into a classically

trained gentry elite and comparatively illiterate commoners. The former was comprised of officials who had won their positions by merit; the unofficial gentry who were low-level licentiate degree holders (i.e., scholars and those whose positions had been bought) and who also perform the role of the local authorities. The latter consisted of peasants, artisans, and merchants (who made up the respectful good common people), and the bottom tier of society: slaves, prostitutes, entertainers, government runners who merely served or entertained others, and others operating outside the organizing structures of society such as drifters and beggars (cf. Fairbank 1987; Qu 1965).

2.3.2 The Emergence and Early Development of Modern Higher Education Institutions in the Republic Era (1912-1949)

With the collapse of the Qing, the last Chinese dynasty, and the abolition of the Keju in 1905, the new generation of examination elites studied for their degrees abroad during the Republic era (1912–1949) with the support of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program (Spence, 1991). In Chinese society before 1949, overseas-educated returnees totalled some 20,000, which is comparable to the number of imperial Metropolitan Graduates during the dynasties (Sun, 1986). Many of these pursued PhDs in scientific and humanistic education in the leading universities of Britain and America (Fairbank, 1987). The new generation of foreign-educated scholars not only created modern China's higher education institutions (HEIs), they also simplified written Chinese so that it could be used by everyone, not just the elite (Sun, 1986). The HEIs were designed to produce knowledgeable experts and new upper-class leaders who would “think like statesmen on behalf of the whole society, rulers and people alike. The general philosophy behind them was that HEIs constituted an indispensable component of the larger task of the national reconstruction and development, since it would be the training ground for future leaders (Sun, 1986, p.370).”

In 1922 foreign-inspired national universities were concentrated exclusively in the coastal cities, such as Shanghai, Peking (Beijing), Tianjin and Nanjing. Between 1922 and 1949 the number of such institutions increased significantly from 6 to 23, however this expansion was largely confined to Shanghai and Peking (Table 1). Apart from these cities, Zhejiang and Guangdong each had two national universities. The geographical locations of the pioneer HEIs coincided with those of the academies that emerged in the late dynasties and the treaty ports, where international commerce had been initiated and factory industry existed. Thus, the pioneer modern-style schooling and commerce reinforced the dichotomies between coast–

hinterland and city–countryside.

Table 1 Higher education in the Republic of China (1922-1949)

Universities and colleges	Numbers	Shanghai	Peking	Others
National	23	7	6	10
Provincial	31	2	2	27
Private/Technical	51+5	15	8+1	32
Total	110	24	17	69

Source: based on E-TU Zen Sun's account of the growth of the academic community 1912-49 (1986)

2.3.3 Current Students' Parents and Their Education Experiences – Education Systems 1950-1970s

2.3.3.1 Technical and managerial ethos–the 1950 HE system in perspective

After 1949 the entire system of higher education was reorganized along the Soviet model. American-style liberal arts colleges ceased their operations; the old larger universities were reformed into two comprehensive universities - Peking University in Beijing and Fudan University in Shanghai and the remaining universities were converted into twenty new polytechnic colleges. In addition to reorganization of the existing HE system twenty-six engineering institutions were established. The college students, while being primarily trained in engineering, medicine, science and agriculture under the Soviet system, reoriented their careers towards highly specialized fields rather than public service (Pepper, 1987). The consequences of the technical and managerial ethos were that university graduates reoriented their primary careers (Pepper, 1987).

2.3.3.2 Revolution in education and mass mobilization– HE in the decade of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)

In the early stages of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1972) classes were suspended; the college entrance examination was abolished; and universities were shut down altogether in many urban areas (Spence, 1991). Intellectuals at that time were politically vulnerable and sometimes harassed. Learning was instilled in the form of 'fighting' by revolutionary Red Guards, which were formed initially by students in the secondary schools and at the

universities. Groups labelled as so-called ‘black’ or ‘bad class’ (landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements, and rightists) were critically damned and humiliated. The classroom was like a ‘battlefield’; full of the violence and struggles during the early years of the Cultural Revolution (Spence, 1991). The country was in a state of continuous chaos and mass campaigns.

The entrance examinations that had governed admission to junior secondary school, senior secondary, and university were abolished. Overall, industry in most provinces suffered a severe disruption from the launching of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 through 1967 and 1968. Slow industrial growth made continued demands for labour impossible to satisfy. Thus, the avenues to university and work were blocked for most of the junior and senior graduates of 1966–1968. This period constituted the so-called “three years of graduating juniors and seniors”(*Lao Sanjie*). Accordingly, the large number of urban school graduates became a pressing problem for the Chinese Communist Party leadership. The mass mobilization of urban youth to the countryside can be best understood as an alternative for a dispersal of employment from the socio-economic conditions within which the movement had operated (Jin Dalu & Jin Guangyao, 2009).

Before December 22, 1968, urban middle-school and high-school graduates could be assigned to factories, shops or farms to work, or to a university. Another possibility was recruitment in the People’s Liberation Army, which was one of the most highly sought-after placements; only very few graduates were given this opportunity however. On December 22, 1968, Mao issued a directive urging the urban educated youth to be sent to the country for re-education by the peasants. Under Mao’s directive, cadres and urban residents were persuaded to send their sons and daughters who had completed junior high school, college or university to the countryside. It became obligatory to follow this directive from December 1968 onwards (Jin Dalu & Jin Guangyao, 2009). Families were typically allowed to keep one child in the city but other children of appropriate age were sent to the countryside. In the next 10 years millions of urban youths of middle-school, high-school, and early university age were forced to go to the country and learn from peasants. Learning for these “sent-down cohorts”(*zhiquing*) consisted of a combination of incessant indoctrination (e.g., self-evaluation and the study of Mao’s works) and hard labour (Spence, 1991).

2.3.3.3 Cohort of ‘worker-peasant-soldier (WPS) students’

In 1973, upon the reopening of the universities, students were admitted based on

recommendations from their work units and on the basis of their political loyalty and family background, which had to be of proletarian origin (Unger, 1982). They constituted a cohort of ‘work-peasant-soldier’ students (Broaded, 1990). As Pepper (1997) pointed out, there was no opportunity for children with parents who had a ‘bad’ political class background to be admitted. Even children with a neutral political background were constrained by quotas favouring children of ‘poor peasants’, ‘workers’, and those with ‘revolutionary’ backgrounds (many of whom were children of high-ranking officials). This selection mechanism continued until the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. The cohort of ‘WPS students’ was characterised by variations in age and academic level and by their unified high levels of political loyalty and commitment to collectivized development in a socialist direction. The Chinese press at the time gave a great deal of favourable attention towards these students and they were proclaimed to be the true revolutionary successors.

2.3.3.4 Cohort of examination-era students in the transitional post-Mao era (1977-1978)

In 1977 Mao’s policy of enrolling university students from among workers, peasants, and soldiers through the recommendation of their work units or communes was abandoned and the university entrance exam was reinstated. There was no limit on the age and official educational background of examinees. People who had not been favoured by the recommendation policy were now given an opportunity to sit for entrance examinations. In addition to high school graduates, “young people who had been working in factories and ‘intellectual youths’ who had been sent to the countryside before or during the Cultural Revolution decade were allowed and encouraged to sit for the examination” (Broaded, 1990, p.87). These people included *three years of graduating juniors and seniors* as discussed previously. The opportunity of a new future for many people resulted in such keen competition in the first two years of university entrance examinations that it caused the first major social fever of the post-Mao era – “study fever”. In 1977, the first year in which entrance examinations were taken, some 5,700,000 candidates took the exams, with 273,000 being admitted to universities. Candidates increased to 6,000,000 in 1978, with 402,000 being actually enrolled (Broaded, 1990), which was not only a history-making event but also a crucial turning point in the life cycle of most of the students who took the test.

In contrast to representations of WPS students as being at a lower cultural level and lacking academic competence, examination-era students were regarded both by society and by themselves as being extremely talented (Broaded, 1990). Such perceptions should facilitate more engaging and effective HE learning experiences and contribute to higher levels of

confidence. Apart from this social-politically shared biographical process structure, I might ask: What motivated and still motivates the cohort of “WPS students” and “examination-era students”? Do the cohort of examination-era students and the cohort of WPS students have the same reasons for and perceptions about choosing their HE?

As Broaded commented (1990), the WPS cohort was inspired by “the transformation of Chinese society in a socialist direction (p.82)” and this coincided with the cohort of examination-era students’ orientation to modernize of society through technology and sciences. It represents the students’ recognition of their obligations, inherited from Confucian scholarship, to aim to put societies’ needs first.

After four years of university study the ‘Class of 1977’ (qiqi jie) and the ‘Class of 1978’ (qiba jie) entered into society in a triumphant mood (Broaded, 1990). Their entry was followed by good jobs, advancement opportunities, respect, status, and social success in a post-Mao world (Li, 2008). In contrast, “marginalization and rejection” were experienced by the cohort of WPS student and “feelings of betrayal and defeat, of resentment, anger, and depression” were expressed in their accounts (Broaded, 1990, p.88). In the popular imagination this disparity in HE outcomes between WPS students and examination-era students might symbolize the rewards and suffering most Chinese must face in their educational pursuits. The association of objective rewards and punishments with educational attainment might result in the widespread belief that education sifts and sorts people into different social, economic, and occupational positions in society, which in turn means that these rewards and punishments might be likely to enhance the subjective value of educational attainment.

The motivational orientations relating to HE participation and later perceptions of work has been illustrated from the perspective of the parental cohorts of “WPS students” and from the Classes of 1977 and 1978 (Broaded, 1990). What about those parents who have not managed to get into the HE system (those who did not attend university)? At this stage, the literature tells us little about those non-participants’ experiences and their perceptions of HE. Thus the question is raised “Do the parental cohort of HE participants (the cohort of examination-era students and the cohort of WPS students) and the cohort of non-participants have the same reasons and expectations for choosing New Zealand as a HE destination for their children?

Hereafter, I explore the education institutions and policies that condition choices and pathways of Chinese students.

2.3.4 HE Characteristics after 1978

2.3.4.1 Massificating HE admission

Higher education enrolment rates increased from 1.56 percent in 1978 to 10.5 percent in 1999 (MoE Age Group, 2007). The greatest increase came in 1999 and 2001 with the expansion of HE within the National Ninth Five-Year Plan period (1996-2000). In 2001 students totalled 4.6 million in China's 1022 regular HEIs, 11.5 times more than the total number of students in 1978 (402,000). 4 percent of the 18-22 year old age group enrolled in HEIs in 1999. The gross enrolment rates had increased to 22 percent by 2005 (MoE Age Group, 2007).

2.3.4.2 The role of “211 Project” & “985 Project”

The quantitative goal of rapid massification of tertiary admission for the masses and raising technology skills for societal development was energetically promoted and pursued by Deng and Jiang (Deng's successor). Equally important was raising the quality of HE and developing top level universities. This was reflected in the implementation of 211 and 985 Projects. In the first place, the 211 project aimed to build a network of 100 key universities for formation of the high level skills needed for future economic development (OECD, 2009) was launched in 1995.

Second, the development of first-class Chinese universities and the cultivation of top-level talents was officially stipulated. This was announced by Deng's successor, Jiang Zemin, in May 1998 (Project 985). In the first stage the top nine universities were identified for world-class university status and were granted subsidies of 14 billion RMB. The project concentrated on professional man-power for the purpose of social and economic development as well as China's overall capacity and international competitiveness (CERNET, 2007a).

2.3.4.3 The “Top Four Obsession” in Shanghai perspective, 1998 and beyond

The Chinese system of regular HE institutions (HEIs) divides the institutions into three hierarchical divisions. A student's score in the NCEE determines which type of HEI they can enrol in. HEIs in the first division offer four-year bachelor degree programs. Second-division HEIs run two-or three-year non-degree or diploma programs. HEIs in the third-ranking institutions include vocational colleges and polytechnics. At the apex of university rankings are Qinghua and Peking (Beida) in Beijing, and Fudan and Jiaotong in Shanghai, which are universally referred to as “the top four Chinese universities”. The public's preoccupation with the leading universities and elitist orientation (national or local) can be seen as the result of

the huge expansion and massification of admission to HE during the first decade of the 21st century. In Shanghai, over 80 percent of the city's HE age cohort is admitted into HEIs, whereas the nationwide average is 24 percent (Ding, 2010).

The widespread public perception of the importance of university rankings is reflected in key slogans among the Shanghai local populace: "a first class city and first class education (OECD, 2009)." This theme of a globally reputed city driven by a matching education institution is of importance among socially conscious citizens who are seeking to make Shanghai a first class city. The movement has driven a perceptible increase in the popularity of universities involved in the 985 Project. Ultimately, degree certificates from non-elite tertiary institutions are likely to become further discredited.

On a national basis, the number of universities involved in the 211 and 985 Projects is 100 and 36, respectively. In Shanghai, two universities, Fudan and Jiaotong, maintain their positions in the "top 9" list, along with 4 institutions in the 985 Project and 10 in the 211 Project.

2.3.4.4 Key-point system—The secondary school in Shanghai

Shanghai secondary schools are divided by 3 hierarchical categories, 33 municipal key schools, and 18 district key-point schools and non-key comprehensive schools (Zhongkao, 2011). The entrance examinations that govern admission to junior secondary school and senior secondary mainly determine which type of secondary schools students can enrol in. At the lower stage of education system, such as junior secondary school, parents can pay for their children to be enrolled in an elite, key-point school. However, university entrance is determined by students' scores in the NCEE. The key system orientates students to aim for university enrolment, followed by a prestigious job. The 51 key-point schools account for around 5 percent of the "total 1120 secondary schools (Wong, White & Gui, 2004, p.6)" and are regarded as provisional university preparation. It is common knowledge or standardised recipe of knowledge termed by Schutz that students from key-point schools have a better chance of gaining university acceptance than students from mediocre ones.

2.3.4.5 Studying abroad after 1977—from State project to mass overseas mobility

When Deng Xiaoping's regime began to plan the modernization and opening up to the outside world of China in 1977, the National College Entrance Exam (NCEE) was reinstalled, and selected researchers began to be sent to the West (Spence, 1991). Following Deng's directive of 23-June 1978, state-sponsored overseas education and training in science

was sedulously propagated by the regime (Xinhua News Agency, 2008) and this continued throughout 1980s and 1990s. The State's objective was to increase China's wealth and strength.

Up until the late 1990s, the internationalization of education had proceeded on the small scale and was mostly State funded. By 1999, however, the State was actively encouraging individual-initiated and self-financed overseas education. The massive overseas mobility of teenage students (advised and financed by their parents), particularly from the southern and eastern coastal regions of China, has now become a widely recognized phenomenon (Cheng, 2002; Xiang & Wei, 2009). The number of students studying abroad peaked at 117,000 in 2002 (Xiang & Wei, 2009). The significant institutional changes in domestic higher education (HE) policy and regulation partly explain of the answer of the 2002 phenomenon. Simultaneously, the State opened up domestic university enrolment to the masses in 1999. The HE system of Chinese HE in 1999 was on the threshold of accessing by mass enrolment, not just examination elites.

2.3.5 Mobility, Identity, and Belonging in Shanghai's History and Today

Before the treaty port settlement of 1843, the image of "Shanghai" was only conveyed in terms of territory and physical definition. In comparison with the dominant agrarian-bureaucratic order of China's heartland, the maritime-focused Shanghai remained a comparatively peripheral county town and lacked distinctive culture and history. During Taiping's capture of Nanjing in 1853, a flood of homeless people from neighbouring Jiang Su and Zhejiang Provinces flocked to Shanghai. This marked the earliest migration wave in the modern history of Shanghai (Xiong, 1997). The scene of migration has soon been broadened and has been accompanied by the expansion of international commerce and factory industry as well as the emergence and early development of China's modern higher education institutions. The development and migration transformed Shanghai into the largest metropolis in China in 1949. Another striking feature is the size and growth of the local population. Before 1843 Shanghai had a registered population of 200,000. The records from the census of 1949 put the figure at 5.46 million (Xiong, 1997). The identities of these residents, as Xiong (1997) suggests, were at the time far from uniform. They thought of themselves as Shanghainese and yet remained attached to and identified with their origins. Before the People's Republic era, the Shanghai society cultural was not considered to be foremost, not as it is now.

The creation of a collective sense of Shanghainese identity seems to rest upon the imposition of Mao's household control police (*Hukou*) in 1958. With the heightened social control and immobility under the centralised planning system, solidarity among regionally heterogeneous migrants was allowed to form and consolidate to some extent. Gradually, Shanghai society developed its own internal identity and stereotypes. To the Shanghainese, people from other parts of China are perceived as outsiders (*Waidiren*). Shanghai dialect performs "a supreme role in forging an exclusive identity" (Pitts & McCrohan, 2010, p. 33). For Shanghai natives, Shanghai was once divided into what were called the Upper Corner and Lower Corner. Traditionally, the former French Concession in West Shanghai was regarded as the Upper Corner, whereas the northern area of Zhabei—home to poor immigrants and the lower working-class—were regarded as Lower Corner. According to Yu Qiuyu (1992), a Shanghai-based scholar, "the nearer an area is to Xujiahui, the more Upper-Corner it becomes". In terms of this definition, the Upper Corner includes Xuhui, Jing'an, Luwan and Huangpu districts, while the Zhabei and Yangpu districts form the Lower Corner.

The first major stream of settlers in the post-Mao's era consisted of returnees who had been sent down to the villages during the 1950s and 1960s and the children of rusticated parents, who remained outside of the metropolis (White, 1998). The children of ex-rusticates moved into the urban grandparents' households with little previous experience of Shanghai.

The middle of the twenty-first century followed new patterns of migration. In the past, most settlers or migrants came from other regions of China or consisted of those who had lived in Shanghai before. In the middle of the 2000s, one of the most significant migratory streams came as a mass of overseas returnee graduates, who established their own businesses or joined the senior managements at leading foreign companies (Liang, 2012). The changes in the division of labour caused by the returnees led local Shanghainese to consider this group of elite outsiders as New Shanghainese. The above charting of the literature on Chinese parents and children's experiences is completed. The last part of this section concerns the social order within the Chinese family context, noting the use of the concept of filial piety in the application in family life and decisions.

2.3.6 Cultural Influences in Appraisal of HE decisions within the Chinese Family Context

In Chinese culture, the parents play an integral role in the process of education (Ho et al., 2007) and career decision-making of their children (Xu et al., 2005). This relates to the

Chinese concept of filial piety, which emphasizes the role demands of parents and children, and the values associated with these role perceptions. Such perceptions of roles are grounded at the heart of Confucian ideas and organizational principle of Chinese society and are important aspects in understanding the meaning attached to the choice and decision-making context. Before I discuss the concept of filial piety, let us first look at the recent structural changes in Chinese urban families.

2.3.6.1 One-child families in urban China

As a relatively new social phenomenon, the one-child family structure among urban Chinese families emerged in the late 1970s and occurred largely as a response to the institutionalized regulations of One-Child family planning (one family, one childbirth). In consequence, “two-generations, three-member families” were found to make up 80% of urban Chinese households by the mid-1990s (Sussman & Hanks, 1996).

It is important to note that the implementation of the one-child policy coincides with the emergence of China’s open-door policy and the start of economic reforms. Consequently, the era of the only child is identified by a period of increasing prosperity and sustained economic growth in China. In recent cohorts of Chinese international students, the majority of students from urban areas come from such one-child families (British Council, 2008).

2.3.6.2 Filial piety: Cultural implications in perceived roles of parents and children

Chinese children are socialized with the values of filial piety toward their parents when they are young, which includes honouring and respecting family, not disgracing them, and caring for elder parents and responding to their needs. In terms of reciprocity, the concept of devotion to the child is central to perceived parental roles when fulfilling parental duty: to sacrifice for and support their children throughout their lifespan (Bond & Hwang, 1986). When educational decisions for their children are to be made, parents will sacrifice family income to ensure that their children get the best education possible. Concrete statistics might make it easier to see what this perceived role and its associated beliefs mean: In 2001 China’s National Bureau of Statistics showed that more than 60 percent of Chinese families invested one-third of family income in their children’s education (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Chinese sociologist Li Peilin (2009) has observed that in the average Chinese urban family, the educational expenses of the child represent the single largest proportion of household spending. This is driven by Chinese parents’ belief that a good education will guarantee a better future (Ashley & Jiang, 2000; Li, 2001). A Chinese student with a foreign degree,

particularly from a prestigious university, is valued by parents and society (Lowe, 2007).

2.3.6.3 Decision and the meaning of face and family honour

Confucius' *Classic of Filial Piety* (or *Xiao Jing*) defined filial piety as "raising one's reputation in order to exalt one's parents" (Yu, 1996, p.232, emphasis mine), a definition that underscores the importance of face-maintenance and family honour (Gabrenya & Hwang, 1996) and embraces one of the significant aspects of face (*mianzi*) in Chinese society and in social relations (Hu, 1944; Redding & Ng, 1982). *Mianzi* and the meaning of face carries with it the idea of *one's reputation or social prestige*, which is earned through *success* in life, by achieving a high or respected social position. It is used as a cognitive and emotional filter for Chinese people making sense of themselves and who they are; that is, their positions in the larger social structure. That in turn may shape *relational self-evaluation and conception*. The socio-psychological value of face is presumed to be a driving force for both familial and self-recognition in social relations among the Chinese, and success in showing *mianzi* brings pride and self-esteem, while failures bring dishonour and shame to one's family and oneself, and to other significant relationships (Gabrenya & Hwang, 1996).

Having failed to attain HE qualifications, as Li (2001) suggested in her study, the parental cohort of non-participants in HE has experienced discrimination in Chinese society within the post-Mao era. As a result, the experience of the perceived discrimination not only has impacted upon everyday family interaction that oriented child toward academic achievement (Li, 2001) and necessary growth, but also might imply the embedded meaning and feeling attached to the parents' expectations in the educational choice and decision making of their children.

Given the traditional Confucian value of filial piety – "the collectivist cultures of relatedness" (Kagitcibasi, 2002) and the shared pride and shame – and the important role of Chinese parents in HE decision-making, it is surprising that the motivations, expectations, and perceptions of Chinese parents have so long been ignored by researchers in studying the decision-making of Chinese international students choosing to study abroad. Furthermore, people are historical beings, retaining part of themselves gained during their previous experiences (Polkinghorne, 1995). Hence, the point of interest here is what parents know about their own HE decisions and the ones that pertained to their children's university education in light of their biographical experiences? To what extent parents' own HE decision-making about university attending or not has been expressed in current decisions to

send their children to study abroad? How did they come to what they believed and what they know about HE decisions, that is, what is the genesis and further development of HE decisions and their referential knowledge and belief within individual families?

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

The purpose of this summary is to bring the topics covered in this chapter. The review first situated intergenerational education choice and decision-making by introducing the key conceptual models, such as the expectancy-value model, SES status attainment, and a life course perspective.

The construct of expectancy-value model in a choice situation is developed based on the assessment of the subjective beliefs and judgements about how well an individual will do in upcoming tasks, and perceptions about the reasons he might engage in a task. Considering value and belief cultivation within this framework, I argued that the expectancy-value model offered is contrast with the norm system in the framework of Confucian culture. In terms of the ability-oriented belief system, Confucian doctrine holds the belief that man is perfectible, through education and is independent of inherited ability or socioeconomic status from the family of origin.

Surely Elder's approach has virtue in its incorporation of family decisions and actions with the spatial and temporal contexts, mechanisms and pathways. However, Elder's methodological paradigm provides inadequate treatment of an individual's knowledge of his social world in the constitution of action.

On this point, Schutz's phenomenological sociology as one of possible theoretical groundwork of Family-History-Narrative-Interpretive Method (FHNIM) is provided, including his concepts of course-of-action and person types, life-worldly stocks of knowledge and motives. In part two, China's education system's policies and institutions that conditioned the life experience of participant's parents and children between 1949 and 2011 are explored and the emergence and early development of Chinese HE institution in the Republic era are also investigated. Broader societal, educational, occupational, and policy context throughout Mao and Post-Mao eras are taken into account for the experiences of the family. The literature on changing patterns of family formation and the cultural influence in appraisal of HE decision within family context is also explored.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced Schutz's (1972) social phenomenology in order to facilitate understanding of the phenomenon of HE-related decisions in the context of people's everyday interactions and communications, using social-culture normative practices and standards as data. The focus of this research is HE decision processes in the biographies and family histories of Chinese parents and their children and associated perceptions. This study is concerned with how biographical experiences of individual and familial HE decisions and institutional regulations interact with each other. Familial biographical structures of the individual family are also examined to discover what it is that makes some families prefer a particular type of tertiary institution or a degree program. The study also explores what their children perceive and understand their parents' HE decision. In order to understand and explain the process, development and genesis of the phenomenon of the parents of Chinese international students making decisions about their children's education abroad *and* its associated perceptions, the following research questions, which underpin the aim of the study, were formulated.

Primary research questions

How have the earlier experiences and thoughts of parents and families affected the generation and development of their knowledge and beliefs, which in turn influenced their decision to send their children abroad to study? What is valued by and of most concern to Chinese parents when they make HE decisions about their own and/or their children's education?

Secondary research question

What and how do Chinese students who have come to study in New Zealand understand about their HE decision-making? That is, what subjective perspectives emerge from their narratives?

This chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical and philosophical positions that inform the methodology adopted in this research. It then outlines the Family-History-Narrative-Interpretive Method (FHNIM) and the data collection and analysis techniques employed. FHNIM is shown to be informed by the philosophic and theoretical positions

adopted by this research. How I went about operating the design into action implementation is presented in the third part of Chapter 3. Attention is also drawn to the ethical issues involved when conducting this kind of research.

3.1.1 Research methodology and design

Within this section I attempt to convey how I created a coherent research design, showing the philosophical basis, theoretical perspectives, methodology and method that I used. I also hope to overcome the criticism that designs of research are often unreflective of philosophical and theoretical positions in relation to the specifics of the enquiry (Koch, 1998) and thus might lead to the incompatibility between philosophy, theory, methodology and method and inappropriate application of the method in the data collection and analysis (Koch, 1998; May, 2002a; Munhall & Chenail, 2008). According to Munhall & Chenail (2008), in the domain of qualitative research inquiry, there are three significant ‘traditions’ or theoretical perspectives – symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, and phenomenology. It is important to differentiate these various positions and associated methods in order to maintain the integrity of the research design. The central importance of subjective meaning can be found not only in the methodology of symbolic interactionism but also in phenomenological research; however, the meaning in this case is accessed through what Gurwitsch calls, the structure of “life-worldly practical consciousness” (Embree, 2004, p.216) that is derived from and leads to the context of lived experience for the experiencing individual. The term of life-worldly practical consciousness (how things manifest themselves to our consciousness as we engage us around the lived world) is well articulated in Gurwitsch theme-thematic-field analysis and Gestalt principle of unity by coherence and relevancy, within the field all our conscious efforts to better ourselves are occurring, which has not only given a shape of our lived life and also a direction towards future expectations and orientation. To understand the functional meaning of a particular event, situation, or action at the time it occurred, it is necessary to place it in its sequential order of existence, that is, how it is embedded in preceding and succeeding biographical events in a participant’s whole gestalt of biography and family history. As such, it should avoid fragmenting a single biographical experience or choice action from its whole into varied factors or variables (Wengraf, 2001; Rosenthal, 1993) and thus destroy the gestalt. The same is true for text segments of a told story, which should be analysed in the context of their overall biographical interpretation and construction. Rosenthal’s definition (1993, 1998) of gestalt phenomenology is understood as the structural relations of events, experiences, memories and self-presentation. As Rosenthal (1993) suggests, life story and life history

always come together. They are continuously dialectically linked and produce each other; this is the reason why we must reconstruct both levels, rather than single out an event or a choice action and represent it in as an abstract theory or variable.

Thus, when designing research, research students are not only concerned with approaches and methods; they pay equal or more attention to the philosophical and theoretical roots where the methods or approaches are derived and developed. As Munhall and Chenail, (2008) argue, the philosophy or theory of the method itself that gives direction to the research should be applied in a manner congruent within the whole research design and aims. Inconsistencies between philosophical or theoretical underpinnings and methods would certainly not lead to a good proposal for a master's dissertation, a doctoral thesis, or a grant application for qualitative research (Munhall & Chenail, 2008).

Research Procedures

Family-history-narrative-interpretive-method (FHNIM)

This research used the dialectically formulated FHNIM to study the phenomena of HE choices and decision-making in the context of social institutions, societal changes and transformations through enquiry into and analysis of both the biographies and family histories of the participants and their associated perceptions and understandings.

The FHNIM approach, which is adopted from Rosenthal's (1993) 5-step hermeneutical case reconstruction and Wengraf's (2001) biographical-narrative-interpretive method (BNIM), was derived from the interactionist and phenomenological research of Rosenthal, Fischer-Rosenthal and others in Germany in the early 1990s. It was also influenced by Schütze's method of story and text analysis; Gurwitsch's theme-thematic-field structure; Peirce's abduction method; and Oevermann's objective hermeneutical case reconstruction. In 1995 BNIM was introduced in the UK by the Berlin Quatext School and has gained considerable ground since then (Ackermann, 2002). The leading English experts, Chamberlayne and Wengraf, have employed the method in several research projects. Their major publications are on cultures of care; a comparative study of biographies of carers in Britain and the two Germanys (Chamberlayne & King, 2000); an exploration of origins and development of the turn to biographical methods in social science (Chamberlayne, Bornat, & Wengraf, 2000); biographies and social policy in Europe (Chamberlayne, Rustin, & Wengraf, 2002); and

Wengraf's work on qualitative research interviewing, which provides a bridge to the method for non-German researchers (Wengraf, 2001).

Within this emerging milieu, a variety of individual PhD projects have been undertaken in the UK and New Zealand in the last decade, indicating the rising popularity of BNIM. According to Wengraf and Chamberlayne (2011), some 63 PhDs theses and Master's dissertations incorporating BNIM had been completed. The trend is rising sharply, 24 were submitted in the eight years between 2001 and 2009; 33 more were submitted just in the three years between 2009 and 2011.

FHNIM, with its minimalist interview technique and single narrative-elicitation question, is fast becoming the principle means by which qualitative and subjective construction of data about people's lived experiences and societal changes and transformation is collected (Jones, 2001; Wengraf, 2001).

FHNIM goes beyond the single-individual focus of BNIM to illuminate the reproduction and transformation of patterns of biographical actions, orientations and interpretations over two or three generations. This family history-societal process integrated enquiry and analysis paints a much more detailed picture of interrelations and connections between agency and different structured institutions such as family, school, university, and organisations (e.g. SOEs, public institutions, and private enterprises, etc.), their continuity and changes, and how they impact on life choices and decisions.

3.2.1 Familial-Biographical-Narrative Interview

The familial-biographical-narrative interview is composed of two interrelated sessions or stages. In the first session, the interviewer asks a single initial question designed to elicit and facilitate a full narrative. This guarantees that there will be no interruptions and only attentive listening and note-taking on the part of the researcher (Wengraf, 2001). It is important not to interrupt the follow of narration of the participant, as the narration takes him/her right back to the events in the past, often triggering the reliving of a meaningful experience (Ackermann, 2002). There is normally a 10–15 minute break between sessions 1 and 2. At this time, the researcher reads through the notes taken from session 1, looking for topics and phrases that could be expanded on and used as probes.

During the second session, the interviewer "asks for more stories about the topics that were raised in that initial narration, following strictly the order in which they were previously

raised and using the words of the interviewee in respect of those topics” (Wengraf, 2001, p. 120).

According to Wengraf and Chamberlayne (2006),

the BNIM of narrative interviewing is one which, if followed, will provide you with a relatively coherent ‘whole story’ or ‘long narration’ with a relatively large number of recalled ‘particular incident narratives’ (PINs) inserted within that long narration. . . . To work at its best, the BNIM method of narrative interpretation requires such long ‘Whole Story + Particular Incident Narratives’ improvised narrative material. If you have narrative interviews in which there is a lot of *guidance and a lot of structuring by the interviewer* at the beginning and/or during the course of the interview, then such material is not best interpreted using BNIM procedures (which is not to say that no value can be gained by using them). In BNIM terms, the text is too much of a co-production of the interviewee and interviewer to be a clear guide to the expression of the interviewee on his/her own. (p.3)

With regard to asking external questions about omitted aspects of participants’ lived experiences and ethical issues, there are important cultural and ethical considerations involved. For example, I did not ask questions about the omission of details regarding the marriage and husband of my first participant, Mrs. Su, at the time of interview. The marriage might have been one of political convenience or have been influenced by her past life experience; that is, her lack of a father figure. If I consciously pointed out this conflictive aspect, it could potentially have eroded their relationship in the future. Due to this cultural and ethical consideration, I did not explore this omitted aspect in the follow-up interview.

The telling of the story is also regarded by Atkinson (1998) as a way of answering the question of who we are as “persons, as role occupants, and as group members” (Burke, 2004, p. 6). In support of this argument, Bruner (1990) stated that the way we tell our life stories is of particular relevance to the construction of our identity. Our perceptions about who we are and where we fit in the world are understood as the framing of memory. As Fisher-Rosenthal and Alheit (1995) have noted, one’s biographical account is one’s identity construction. Here, identity is seen as a dynamic socially constructed production through the interaction between societal structures and social processes that constitute the social context and the social memories of shared histories (Bolton, 2008; Breakwell, 1983, 1996).

The discussion now turns to how the researcher analyses the data, based on the framework

constructed originally by Rosenthal (1993, 1998). This is divided into the following sub-sections:

1. Analysis of biographical data and family history – dialectic integration of society and individual
2. Analysis of life story-theme and thematic field analysis and modes of presentations
3. Reconstruction of case history and microanalysis-past perspectives
4. Reconstruction of biographical case structure –contrast and comparison of lived history vs. life story
5. Development of family typologies with contrast and comparison

3.2.2 Analysis of Biographical Data and Family History

On the level of analysis, the biographical case reconstruction involves mutual investigation of the narrative content of what happened to whom and the forms of lived experiences in order to reconstruct the developmental course and genesis of both decision actions and the biographical meanings subjects attribute to the actions. In practice, it emphasizes the separate analysis of the “*lived life history*” and the “*told life story*” (Wengraf, 2001, p. 45, emphasis mine).

3.2.2.1 The principle of sequentialization

In order to account for the sequential order of existence and the relations between the lived events, researchers first need to set aside all preconceived notions and judgements of the participant so that only factual accounts of events, places, and people are retained, such as birth details, number of siblings, education and employment history, changes of work organizations and residential places, illness events, etc. The biographical data of all family members is extracted from interview transcripts and then sequentialized in a chronological order.

This sequentialization process is also part of what Rosenthal (1993, 2000) calls the latent structure of biography, the processual nature of social actions. The underlying premise is that every decision action constitutes a selection between the different possible alternatives the participant faces at a particular decision situation. The sequential analysis is therefore based on these questions: what possibilities are available for the participant; what are the actual

selections he/she makes or excludes; and what are the consequences for the future (Ackermann, 2002). This is why it is necessary to reconstruct the course of action through lived life and family history before analysing and describing the subjectivity of the teller of the told story. In the process of doing the sequential analysis it becomes apparent whether the participant systematically left out possibilities of action, and rules or principles that determined decision-making might also be detected and apprehended (Ackermann, 2002; Rosenthal, 1998; Wengraf, 2001).

3.2.2.2 Peircean hypothetic-inductive analysis: Datum-by-datum interpretation

The biographical structural hypothesis of the meanings of a participant's lived life starts at the biographical data analysis stage, incorporating the approaches of a reflective team and Peircean hypothetic-inductive reasoning and justification. This is congruent with Husserlian idea of bracketing and returning to the essence of person's lived world, and Fischer-Rosenthal's (2000) and Rosenthal's (1993) notion of society-individual dialectic integration. The theoretical roots of FHNIM integrated approach can be traced back to the Chicago School and it has been the ground-breaking work by Isaac W. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki on the 'Polish Peasant' in the late 1920s. These two sociologists sought to explain social phenomenon by examining the relation (Breckner, 2007) between individuals and their surrounding society, how processes of personal and societal change were connected and how the changes on the personal and societal levels were interrelated. As Breckner (2007) argues, this personal and society integrated procedure nearly disappeared in post-war sociological research but was revived in the 70s and 80s. Meanwhile, a variety of biographical approaches was applied to diverse social phenomena.

Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal apply Peirce's hypothetic-inductive approach for clarifying Husserl's phenomenological bracketing and analysing the constitutive order/structure of the lived experience as both a methodological device of analysis and as a dialectic integration of society and individual. The society-individual dialectic integration is understood as a relationship that is founded upon the interdependence between lived events and the corresponding social normative standards and practices that form the necessary conditions that enable or constrain the participants' decisions and choices in objective and concrete historical time and space, through a process of change and development of society, family history and biography. Thus, biographical familial data analysis and case history reconstruction does justice to the challenge of understanding and explaining both societal

established structures and changes. The latter is achieved through examining history of action in individual cases which is contextualised in family histories, collective histories and societal processes, making it possible to reconstruct the individual's genesis of decision actions and distinguishing manifest self-interpretation from latent structures of meaning (Rosenthal, 2000).

Abduction or hypothetical-inductive reasoning was originally introduced by Aristotle, but it was the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–914) who developed it into an explicit theory of inference to complement inferential modes of induction and deduction as a third model of reasoning (Svennevig, 2001).

Instead of using traditional inductive and deductive procedures in which the text elements are examined and categorised in accordance with their frequency, I have used the method of abduction in the reconstructive analyses of lived experiences, family histories and collective histories of my participants and the societies they lived in.

The abduction method is a reasoning process that begins with consideration of facts rather than pre-established theories. It involves extracting an observed event, fact or concatenation from the interview transcripts rather than applying for pre-established theories from the outset. In this case, facts are produced from the participants' actual lived events or instances within an objective spatial-temporal situation, consisting of the existential condition in which actions and decisions are embedded. The participants' explanations and interpretations, such as the reasons why they sent their child abroad to study, are not included. These observed facts then give rise to a hypothesis or analogical reasoning, which relates them to normative socio-cultural rules and practices at the time. Any hypothetical reading, according to Peirce, should explain the observed fact and should be capable of being subjected to further tests.

The datum-by-datum unveiling process of hypothesis generating better construes the observed phenomenon and offers "a best interpretation" from which to develop understandings of the contexts of lived events and their connections. In this case, these are the opportunity structures and local education and policies and practices which constitute the conditions of the participant's action. Hypothetical reasoning can be seen as selecting one explanation as *more possible* than the others for any intriguing observed phenomena. Put another way, hypothetical reasoning gives a satisfactory explanation of a given phenomena or sets of phenomenon.

3.2.2.3 Formulating hypothetical contexts from the observed phenomenon

The interpretive process of reasoning seeks to bring understanding and disclose the contextual and structural information from the observed phenomena. Hypothetical proposition development, in this respect, puts the observed phenomenon into the overall hypothetical contexts of family histories, collective histories, and social processes. In other words, how patterns of actions and behaviour were reproduced and transformed in the process of socialization and family history is analysed. The starting question for the first datum of an individual's family history should be: In which family situation or constellation was he/she born and which future horizons will thus be open for him or her? (Ackermann, 2002). Breckner (1998) suggests asking the following questions to generate hypothetical reading:

1. How could this event, situation, or concatenation which shows up in interrelated sequences be experienced in relation to the context of age, personal development, family, generation, historical period of a society and milieu?
2. How could this set of events back in these historical circumstances shape the later life of the individual and family development?

What is then reconstructed, according to Rosenthal (1993, 1998), is the context of an event the participant was confronted with at the time it occurred, so that question concerning orientation and action alternatives facing the participant can be outlined in a thought experiment in the form of hypotheses.

3.2.2.4 Progressing from hypotheses to follow-up hypotheses and empirical testing

Next a range of follow-up hypotheses are developed to predicate what could happen in the later life of a participant and her/his family development if the hypotheses generated earlier are right. While formulating and developing a hypothetical interpretation via a mind experiment about an observed event, situation or concatenation is important, it is more important to generate follow-up hypotheses and test them against the subsequent data. Only hypotheses that are supported by the subsequent empirical data will gain support.

3.2.2.5 The reflective team approach

The reflective team approach is crucial to biographic data analysis. It is a rigorous method of

establishing credibility as the imposition of the researcher's bias and judgements towards particular types of persons and their actual biographical experiences is controlled. It is also an essential vehicle to collect a multiplicity of perspectives.

The reflective team approach is based on the 'similar+ heterogeneity' policy (Wengraf, personal communication, 2013) and having a mix of academics and non-academics is important. There should be at least one person like the interviewee and an interdisciplinary character in order to approach the interpretation from many different perspectives (Ackermann, 2002). Fischer-Rosenthal (1996, cited in Ackermann, 2002) also acknowledged that the hypothetical construction of someone's life in a specific society or culture, and in a particular period, also requires good background knowledge. The broader and deeper the knowledge the researcher and her/his reflective team possess, the more precise the background context against which the case structures gain perspective.

The reflective team members were approached and recruited via the researcher's network and snowballing techniques. The team was involved in the biographical data and family history case analysis and consisted of:

- Three Shanghainese, Mr Huang, Mr Xue, and Mrs Xue, who live in Shanghai and who were in the same age cohort as the Chinese parents in this research. Their children had also had overseas education experiences.
- Mrs Ma, a former Beijing-born scholar at the Chinese Academy of Science who had moved to Auckland with her daughter's sponsor.
- Professor Gu, who was born in the 1968 in Tianjin and completed his doctoral studies in finance in the State. He teaches MBA at an American university. He has produced significant works in the fields of history and military history. Professor Gu's parents were originally Shanghainese and after completing their university studies in the 1950s, they were assigned posts by the State to Tianjin.
- Miss Zhong and Mr. Mao. Miss Zhong is a Canton-born solicitor in Auckland who immigrated to New Zealand when she was 13 with her maternal uncle and Mr Mao, a Shanghai-born businessman. Both Miss Zhong and Mr Mao were in the same age cohort as Mrs Emily (Case 6).

Sessions with the reflective team were conducted individually via telephone and lasted on

average 1.5 hours. Each member of the team analysed the lived life and family history of the individual family cases. The constitutive elements of those analyses were original data (events and concatenation) extracted from the participants' interview transcripts of all family members and historical archives. All the hypotheses generated by the individual team members were written in Chinese and subsequently translated into English by the researcher. The seven members did not meet together (three live in Shanghai, three in New Zealand and one in the States) and their individual hypotheses were combined by the researcher herself.

Hypothetical readings of an observed event or concatenation which shows up in interrelated sequences are developed by the researcher and the team members. The hypothetical interpretation includes not only how this observed event, situation, or concatenation could be experienced in relation to the context of age, personal development, family, generation, and historical period of a society and milieu, but also how this set of events back in these historical circumstances could shape the later life of the individual and family development (i.e. what might happen subsequently to the subject and his/her family development), so that questions concerning how the participants would respond to them can be developed in the form of follow-up hypotheses (FHs).

More importantly, these hypotheses and follow-up hypotheses are tested against subsequently revealed empirical data, and this sequential analysis involves verifying or disproving hypotheses once a subsequent datum is revealed, which makes it possible to narrow the initial wide range of hypotheses. The procedure of hypothetical reading and testing also reveals which of the hypotheses are more probable and which less probable. Through the exclusion of the latter it is possible to limit the analysis in the process of revealing datum after datum.

The team are invited to formulate and develop a variety of contradictory and different possible readings in order to formulate hypotheses about all the possibilities that are available for the participant in a certain historical situation. These are then contrasted with the actual selections he/she makes or excludes and with the team's FHs as to what the consequences of these selections are for the future of the subjects and his/her family. As the sequential analysis proceeds, whether the subject systematically ruled out or ignored certain possibilities of actions becomes apparent, and rules or principles that determined their selection and actions might be discovered.

Testing of these hypothetical readings and follow-up hypotheses was carried out by checking

them against the forthcoming empirical data. If the material was not consistent with the hypotheses, the hypotheses were weakened or falsified by the evidence of the subsequent empirical data.

Take the example of Mrs. Su. When the team members were told Mrs. Su was assigned a position at the library of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences upon graduation, in accordance with the 1982 social context in China the team hypothesised that Mrs. Su would have been happy and content in her job because a university job was a very attractive option in the 1980s. Furthermore, people with HE degrees were few and far between at that time, and were highly prized. A follow-up hypothesis from this datum was that she would continue to be happy with her job and would focus on her son David's upbringing. As the analysis proceeded, however, this hypothesis was weakened and eventually falsified by the evidence of subsequent data. Mrs. Su decided to go to Australia in 1989 and qualified as a registered valuer in her forties. Her subjective historical perspective is analysed in third step of the method:

"The job is good, but I feel restless at the moment. In 1989 I resigned from my job, even though it was a good workplace."

Being a filing clerk at the bottom of a hierarchical state organization hindered Mrs. Su's ambitious goals in her life – being honoured by the state and continually aspiring to progress.

This is how the abductive interpretation distinguishes itself from traditional inductive and deductive analysis, where the initial hypothetical readings which are formulated by the researcher and team members are tested against the empirical data from the subjects' own actions and interpretations. If there is no linkage from subsequently revealed empirical datum to support and falsify established particular FHs, then there is no point in reporting the FHs in the final writing-up (Wengraf, 2013).

Table 2 Biographical data and family history analysis

Biographical data and family history analysis – **Future-blind datum-by-datum hypothesis generating and testing along the lived history by the reflective team**

At the end of the analysis of a participant's biographical data and family history, certain *structural hypotheses* were raised on the meaning of a participant's lived life at the individual and familial level. These include insights into the overall pattern of biographical orientation and behaviour of a particular type of person or family. The biographical structural hypotheses

also include familial and individual habitual choice patterns for or against certain types of education and different types of careers, as well as action patterns developed for coping with impacts and effects (Rosenthal, 1998) of institutional changes and pitfalls.

Additionally, a biographical structural hypothesis of a subject's lived life allows us to develop an insight into ideological and opportunity structures of temporal government.

The development process and genesis of HE-related decision actions is also revealed.



Hypotheses formulation and testing cycle (abduction): each biographical datum gave rise to the generation of hypotheses, which 1) involves explaining observed phenomenon and disclosing the antecedent of the phenomenon (from known consequent to antecedent).

2) It also involves predicting what would follow. Testing these hypotheses against subsequent data elements.

Hypothesis is confirmed or rebutted from what evidence follows in the subsequent emerging data which is produced from the participants' lived life.

3.2.3 Analysis of Told Story: Theme-Thematic-Field Analysis and Modes of Presentation

The aim at this stage is to reconstruct the participant's life story and move towards an overall understanding of his/her biographical construct and present perspectives on the past events through the identification of a theme-thematic-field structure and mode of presentation and then development of a structural hypothesis about the way the story was told (Rosenthal, 1998). The reconstruction of the life story is based on Gurwitsch's theme-thematic-field analysis, Schütze textual analysis, and the Gestalt principle of coherence and relevancy (whole-part).

Gurwitsch started his journey of phenomenological study in the same manner as Husserl, whose conception of consciousness can be defined by *intentionality*, that is, the "cognitive reference of acts or their reference to what [William] James calls the topic" (Gurwitsch, 2010, p. 306). According to Gurwitsch (2010), "the reference to a topic is an essential and necessary constituent of the object (of thought), and is only conveyed by the *means of a meaning*. Hence, no meaning can be apprehended unless it refers in some ways to its topic" (p. 309, *emphasis mine*). In the context of the told story, Gurwitsch's theme-thematic-field analysis informs the subjective meaning and significance and gives shape to later life choice

actions and future expectations; that is, the participant's major life needs and overall biographical construct, which cannot be obtained if the concepts of topic and theme are confused with one another. The perspective or orientation under which the topic (the theme) is produced, as well as the organization of the lived experience and its sequential order, depend upon the *topic's thematic field* or contexts within which it appears. The thematic field is the thematic link between the individual sequences of the main narration that structures the life story.

Theme-thematic-field analysis, according to Rosenthal (1993), "involves reconstructing the subject's system of knowledge, their interpretative pattern of their lives, and their classification of experiences into thematic fields. Our aim is to reconstruct the interactional significance of the subject's actions, the underlying structure of the subject's interpretation of her or his life, which may go beyond the subject's own intentions" (1993, p.61).

3.2.3.1 Definitions of theme and thematic field

Both the distinction and connection between the topic and the object of thought (the theme) can be illustrated through Case 1 in the present study. The first topic Mrs Su presented in her story was her father's overseas study. She stated that he was, "held up in honour by the state upon his return". Through this statement, other related facts and thoughts were remembered, selected, organised, and presented to Mrs Su's mind and entered the here-and-now told story: the prominent position his father held; the family's privileged treatment during the three years of famine from 1959 to 1961; and the considerable support from the State. When a given topic appears and is experienced as *a theme*, it not only engrosses a participant's mind at the moment of story-telling, it also determines the organizational principles of selection and ordering of the relevant events and facts in the thematic field and how depth/detail is distributed.

Having dwelt on the theme of "my family in relation to the State" and associated perspective "being honoured by the State", Mrs Su's mind focused only on correlative and compatible facts, events and thoughts: her other family members who were thematically unrelated were only briefly described and even omitted, including her husband, Mr Su. Such (ir)relevancy did not appear at the manifest level but was experienced in and through the thematic field (context).

This organizational process synthesizes the whole lived experiences into a unified object through a configuration of meaning (Schutz, 1972). The unified object is constituted in the

participant's thematic focus of the told story.

According to Gurwitsch (2010), "the appearance of a theme, must be described as *emergence from a field* in which the theme is located *occupying the centre* so that the field forms an experiential background with respect to the theme. The theme carries a field along with it so as not to appear and be present to consciousness except as being in, and pointing to, the field" (p. 311, *emphasis mine*).

The thematic field thus contains the *totality of items* to which the perceived object chosen as thematical focus points and refers. So the field forms the context within which the theme presents itself through a given act of experiencing in the now, in the past, or in the future. The structural relationship between theme-thematic-field is also expressed in the spirit of the Gestalt principle of wholeness. The main idea of Gestalt theory of the told story and lived experience is that in the realm of conscious experience wholes explain their parts. *The historical-biographical meaning of a specific choice action depends on the thematic field to which it belongs*. Rather than the mere fact of being experienced together, the totality of items (the events, people and objects) with which the participants are dealing with at the moment of life-story-telling are formed by the system of references. The "whole" is precisely the system of mutually interdependent and cross-referential "parts"; it is the whole of these complex references or significance. The mutually referential constituents reflect the Gestalt principle of coherence (Gurwitsch, 2010).

This encountering and the correlative believing, valuing and willing denote how the objects are experienced and internalized as intentionality by the participants, which gives direction to their later decisions, such as HE decisions concerning their children and/or themselves. The events are selected and organized into the thematic field of being honoured by the State and this correlates with the *past perspective* of Mrs Su at the time, that is, "even though my father has passed away, everyone in the family has an aspiration to progress." From "my father was held up by the state" to "even though my father has passed away, everyone in the family has an aspiration to progress", the function of the positional index (Gurwitsch 2010) denotes the characters of thematic context. Mrs Su is, referring back to her father's being honoured by the State and is deriving from this her family's aspiration to progress. "The theme appears within the field, then, but more specifically it has a certain 'position' within the field and thus 'orients' the field" (Gurwitsch, 2010, p. xxxii).

Gurwitsch (2010) cautioned that the positional index (the participant's perspective,

orientation, or position) can and will vary as the thematic field varies, depending on the point in time from which the act of decision-making is being observed. That is, whether 1) the act is still on its way to being fulfilled, or 2) the act has been accomplished and what is being looked back upon is what actually resulted, compared to what was intended (Schutz, 1972). In the case of 2), if the difference between the premise and the consequence of which the participant expects to develop, he/she may present the premise decision from a new angle during the here-and-now context of the interview. For example, claiming to earn more money pertains to Mrs Su's current perspective from which the topic concerning the past HE decision to send her son, David to study in New Zealand is presented. This assertion appears incompatible the theme of her father being honoured by the State and her family aspiring to progress and also does not correlate with the experiential material items (events, situations, or instances) of the established thematic field. As "everything is vanity, making money is more important" represents Mrs. Su's present perspective, thus, it would be a grievous error to take present perspective as the representation of past experiences.

3.2.3.2 Mode of Presentation

The first point of the told story analysis focuses on its telling and the organization principles of selection and ordering of events into self-chosen **themes or topics** (Rosenthal, 1993). The second point is to note what mode of expression the participant adopts when they communicate such topics or themes and how much **detail/depth** is distributed. The underlying premise is that the **modes of expression**, and **argumentation versus narration**, correspond to the distinctive modes of the participant's encounter with the world and origins of knowledge, whether it's in directly from personal experiences or indirectly from anonymous experiences (Schutz, 1972), as well as varying perspectives. The distribution of detail or depth and these modes of expression (argumentation vs. narration) belong to modes, or manners of presentation.

In the narration mode knowledge about the world is acquired through face-to-face interactions and contextualized with a temporal and spatial dimension. This is referred to as "experience-near". According to the degree to which the details of events are elaborated upon, the mode of narration is further divided into two sub-modes: the *report* and *narrative* modes of expression.

In the report mode the story of a sequence of events is told in a very 'thin' way like a bare police report of dates and behaviours (Wengraf, 2001). However, as Smith (2001) points out,

there is a significant difference between a report and a narrative. In a report, what advances the text is not the dynamism of events but the position, orientation, or perspectives of the reporter towards different aspects of society.

When subjects tell a story of lived experience in the narrative mode, they either *sequentially or consequentially* organise events, by which the event Y followed event X, and event Z followed event Y (Firkin, 2004). The narrative mode is usually divided into three parts: 1) *orientation* (time, setting, characters): *characters have goals and motives for performing actions*; temporal and spatial placements in which the events and instances take place; 2) *complications and major goals of the main characters*; 3) *resolution or evaluation of any complications, affect patterns (emotions and other responses), points, morals, and points of view and perspectives* (Graesser, Golding, & Long, 1991).

The function of Evaluation, given before or after a Narrative or a Report, is usually to provide the explicit ‘moral of the story’ that the narrator wishes drawn. It also provides information on “the consequences of the event for the needs and desires” (Labov, 1997, p.5) of the story teller. This is conveyed from the *past perspective* of a participant at the time that the event occurs and the correlative attitudes, i.e., “believed in, valued and willed (Embree, 2006, p.92)”.

The mode of argumentation, or the biographical global evaluation, is generally in stand-alone form and is able to be generalised. It functions as an interviewee’s ‘biographical concepts and beliefs as well as a sense of self and identity’ and his/her present perspectives on the past events and experiences or future expectations, in the form of generalising, arguing or theorising about a specific event. Conversely it can function as dominant public discourse or “ideas of [the] dominant, ruling class” (Kress, 1985, p. 29) – that is, “the knowledge and opinions of a type of group” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 48). Knowledge in the mode of argumentation is presented and transmitted as if it were context-free. In this mode the interviewee is dealing with socially shared typifications and assumptions and expectations or prescriptions in connection with identity construction.

On the basis of these classifications of varying manners of presentation one can discern the *varying perspectives* or positions through which the discussion of the distinctive modes of presentation belongs to. It has also been noted that the organization principles of story structure correlates with the intensive process of the interviewee and in that process objects are encountered (by the interviewer) as intended to (Embree, 2006). By the organization

principles of story structure, I mean how the objects (events, instances, situations, and people) are positioned or give themselves from different sides, under different aspects, or in certain orientations or perspectives. To recognise an interviewee's HE position phenomenologically is to analyse the nature of his HE choices and decisions. That is, the indication of his/her HE position against a backdrop of overall biographical interpretation and pursuits, identity construction, and predominant life attitude.

3.2.3.3 Reflective analysis of self-observation and observing other individuals within the context of interview

The reflective analysis of the interviewer (the researcher) is seen as more critical in the process of understanding the interactional significance of the participant's presentations and the underlying structure of overall biographical interpretations of the participant's life. If one precedes the analysis stage with consultation the reflective team panel who do not know or if the interviewer does not supply and describe, the process of occurrence and interactions in the context of interview which is recorded in the post-interviewing briefing and the biographical structural hypotheses, then the analysis will be less likely to be comprehensive. Jones (2001) noted this in his study and eventually altered this stage of his analysis. Meareas (2007) also found the analysis of the told story with the reflective team panel less productive in comparison to working on the analysis of biographical data. The missed reflective analysis is accounted for by the research attained through the act of the researcher's direct encounter with his/her participants, that is, the dynamic of interview process and interactions. The reflective team only reflects on the participant via the produced story text; they do not meet them in person. Therefore, the intensive process and intended objects that the participant believes in and values are less accessible to them. It was the interviewer direct encounter with the participant with its societal contexts that produced the data to be scrutinized in order to reveal the interactional significance of the participant's telling. This reflective analysis of the interviewer and "self and other" observation has its roots in phenomenology, ethnography, and interactionism. The reflection analysis explores the I-You relationship within the realm of inquiry into interaction (personal, family, group), states of feelings, continuity of the participant's lived experience (past, present, future), and situation (interview context). On this point, it is necessary for the researcher to go back to the philosophical assumptions behind method and to explore its origination and source. As Koch (1995) claimed, "the notion of method carries implications of a particular philosophical or epistemological perspective. It might be argued that method-bound research is unsound research practice as it ignores the

philosophical, ontological and epistemological framework which procedures are housed” (p. 828).

Remembering and describing encounters that occurred in the context of the interview in the post-interview debriefing is one thing; reflecting on how the intended object (the object as encountered) presents itself to another (the interviewer) is another. Reflecting not only refers to perceiving and encountering objects as presented in the topics or themes. It is also refers to the way in which objects are intended to be presented (by the interviewee) and how they are encountered and observed socio-culturally by the interviewer (Embree, 2006). The reflective analysis in the present study should focus on whether the interviewee is oriented to recollecting the past, reflecting on the current life situations in Shanghai and holding expectations for the future, or oriented in the here-and-now. It should also reflect on what past, future, or present things the participant focused upon and how they thematized them into the thematic field. In this way, the image the participant is trying to establish and maintain throughout the intersubjective interaction in relation to their sense of self and family can be also apprehended.

To reflectively assess the participant’s recollected, expected, or perceived objects as belonging to the past, future or present intensive processes, one needs to develop explanatory hypotheses from the observed data. At this point, the observed data gives rise to hypotheses that no longer concentrate on the effects an event is having on the participant’s later life and family development and biographical experiences themselves. Rather, it is “aiming to interpret the nature and function of the presentation in the interview” (Rosenthal, 1993, p. 70).

Table 3 Told story analysis

Told Story Analysis –

The analytical interest in this stage is at a participant’s thematic focus (theme) in the told story and associated attitudes and perspectives in the thematic field.

Hypotheses formulation and testing cycle (abduction) (Rosenthal, 1993):

Each text segment of a participant’s told stories gave rise to hypothesis generation and

testing. Hypothesis is developed on

- 1) To what extent a participant's choice of presentation is influenced by his/her here-and-now perceptions that pertain to the topic under investigation and what influence might the interviewer herself be having? To what extent is orienting to his/her own relevancy, or to the both?
- 2) Which topics are addressed and which biographical events or experiences are covered, and what is left out or not elaborated on and why?
- 3) Why she/he started talking about the topic or the theme using this kind of manner of presentation, that is, narrative or argumentative mode.
- 4) To what extent is the choice of the topic and respective manner of givenness related to the interviewee's identity construction; his/her past perspectives; concerns and prospective reflections about present life situations in Shanghai or Auckland?
- 5) In which details/depth are the single experiences or themes distributed and why?

3.2.4 Reconstruction of Case History and Detailed Microanalysis of Individual Text Segments

The overall aim at this stage is to reconstruct both the past and the biographical meaning that past experiences then had for a participant at the time it is occurred (Ackermann, 2002; Rosenthal, 1993) and search the historical perspectives of each parent's own HE decisions and that of her/his child. It is essential to consider the function and meaning of a biographical experience for the whole gestalt of the life history and avoid fragmenting the latter into single biographical experiences (Rosenthal, 1993, 1998). This step prompted the researcher to trace out parents' past perspectives on each salient event, action, or experience that had been reported and narrated in their personal biographies and which had been constructed in the first step of the biographical and familial data analysis. The question here is: how could the participant experienced a particular event in the past; that is, when and how he/she went to university and what other things happened in his/her life at the time. In the first analytical step, a range of familial-biographical structural hypotheses about the participant's orientation and action patterns have been developed without incorporating the subjective interpretation. In the third analytical step, the biographical structural hypotheses of each familial-

biographical datum formulated earlier were checked with its respective perspectives of the participant. Past perspective were traced out in evaluation elements of each given narrative. It is important to approach the perspective of a lived experience at the time when it happened, and determine possible causes and consequences that might be embedded in other lived experiences (Ackermann, 2002). For Mrs. Su, her apprehension of and biographic orientation towards “being honoured by the State” and her past perspective of “an aspiration of progression” are determinate education and career decisions of the Sus, including the actions of her HE decision to attend university in 1977; her career development abroad in 1989; her decision to take the IFAA course and become a registered art valuer when she was in her 40s; her rejection of the offer made to her son, David, for a place at a university below the top-four line; and deciding to send him to an elite university in New Zealand.

It is important to note that if one has not captured the structures of the life history and life story, it is impossible to do the reconstruction of the life history (Rosenthal, 1993; Wengraf, 2001). The reconstruction of the case history is the stage where it becomes clear why the participant selects out of his or her memory certain specific lived experiences and leaves out others. In other words, it is attempted to discover the relevant experiences of such a ‘hidden’ biographical layer that could have played a decisive role for the ensuing life phases (Ackermann, 2002; Rosenthal, 1993).

In the microanalysis stage the researcher explored parents’ and children’s opinions and perspectives on the education choices and decisions made at various points in their biographies. The process of tracing past perspectives through detailed microanalysis allowed the researcher to look past participants’ knowledge and beliefs about HE in general and focus on particular HE decisions within families in the historically-situated context. This stage also involves the checking of hypotheses formed in the previous analytical steps, that is, taking into account both the biographical meaning of events and the present viewpoint of the participant in relation to such events (Rosenthal, 2004).

3.2.5 Comparison of the Lived History and the Told Story

The comparison of lived history and the told story is mainly concerned with the parents of children who had completed their HE study in New Zealand. Their prior decision-action had been apprehended earlier in connection with the perception of the accomplished outcomes and current life concerns with reference to perceived problems and conflicts in today’s

Shanghai, which were brought back to the present moment and recounted retrospectively in the interview. The example of case 1 discussed above, and the presentation of cases 1, 2 and 7 below, will help the reader understand the rules that generate differences between the past and present perspectives of the parents of children who had completed their HE studies.

By contrasting and comparing life histories and life stories, I gain information about the mechanism of recalling experiences and their respective presentation, about differences between the past and present perspective and, directly linked to the latter, about the difference between the order of experience and order of presentation/recollection (Rosenthal 1998, 2006). In other words, it becomes possible to show when and how the specific structure of self-presentation in the present emerged and to pinpoint the lived experiences which were decisive for its constitution. It is also discovered how past events are significant for the present and, inversely, how the present perspective – as well as future expectations – determines the presentation of past events (Ackermann, 2002; Breckner, 2007). The question of what biographical experience – that is, the genesis of present perspective – brings to different past perspectives is also pertinent here.

3.2.6 Development of Family Typologies and Issues of Generalization

In the final stage of analysis, the aim is to construct typologies which can be theorized as “general” concerning their relevance to the cases of similar kind. This kind of cases of similar kind was formulated by Lewin in 1927, when he discussed the conflicts between Aristotelian and Galileian modes of thought (Lewin, 1927/1967). Instead of patterns of frequency of occurrences, it is the rules that generate the type of similar familial biographical pursuit and life action and orientation patterns (within the frame of the lifetime of a social agent and its context) and organise the diversity of its parts of lived experiences into similar thematic focuses (themes) in today’s self-presentation that are determinant (Rosenthal, 1995, cited in Ackermann, 2002). Family typologies also illustrate how “members of society specifically react to social problems in their authentic life contexts” (Breckner, 2007, p. 115).

In the here-and-now interview context, this apprehending activity through the present phase is directed towards objects as intended to by the participants. The intended objects apprehended by the participants early on their lives are retained as could be still be apprehended by them in the present. Such objects are developed and presented themselves as the theme(s) of the told story through which the HE decision points and refers to. These are

often in the form of cultural symbol representations and are the driving forces for future development on both individual and familial levels. The characters and facts of these events cannot be experienced without reference to traditions and customs; nor can the practices, norms and opinions of the specific times and places that the participants belong to. Thus, the theme per se and its associated perspectives should be considered as a representation of a participant's overall patterns of life orientation, pursuit, and interpretation.

The relation of theme to thematic field is correlative and indispensable. Every thematic field includes: a) a theme and associated perspectives, orientations or positions; b) the totality of facts and thoughts that co-present with theme and are experienced as having experiential material relevancy with the theme; and/or c) margin that merely co-present with theme but has no material relevancy. Every fact entering into the field is interdependent of other experiential facts or parts and is connected by the Gestalt principle of coherence (Gurwitsch, 2010).

Four structural parameters are applied to the structural relations between the theme-thematic-field and the lived history and to family typology development:

- 1) The meaning of a particular theme is ascribed by a participant from his/her perceptions and has its significance and relevancy to the participant him/herself. A given theme and its associated perspectives in a thematic field reflect the participant's subjective organization and interpretation of the lived experiences within the contexts of current life situation and past memories. That is, a lived story and a lived history continuously dialectically condition and produce each other.
- 2) The theme and its associated perspectives or positions within a thematic field encompass a whole set of dispositions (habits, norms, values) and orientations of a particular type of person, family, or society that is represented in their selectivity of choice action patterns and can be conceived as *general patterns of social practices of the particular type of person, family, or society* (Oevermann, 1991, cited in Maiwald, 2005, p.10). That is to say, the theme and its associated perspectives in a thematic field shed light on the rules or principles underlying those concatenated choice actions which are generated from the reconstruction of case history. "Being honoured by the State" and the associated perspective in the thematic field of "aspire to progress" is thematical focus of the Su family. The apprehension of and orientation towards "being honoured by the State" are determinate education and career decisions of the

Sus relative to the determinable properties of being honoured by the State. The theme and associated perspective is therefore considered as an internalization of intentionality, giving *direction* to later life choices and decision-making and associated perspectives (Brown, 2001; Gurwitsch, 2010).

- 3) The principles or rules that select and organize relevant experiences in the told story are implied in the structure of theme-thematic-field.
- 4) The theme and associated multiplicity of perspectives cannot be appreciated irrespective of their socio-political and historical context from which they derive and within which lived history is embedded. The researcher found Mrs Jia's theme of "the need for institutional recognition/sanction" to be identical to Mrs Su's theme of "being honoured by the State". Mr Shi's theme of "the approval of authority/the people governed" was also identical. With regard to Mr. Shi's own HE decision to not attend university, it is crucial to consider the social and historical context and his family origins. Joining the Communist Party and the army (to secure political capital) signified more for the military elite than having an HE degree under the Mao's regime and his own HE decision thus should not be seen as contradictory to the main theme of his told story.

When the cases of Mrs Su, Mrs Jia, and Mr Shi are grouped, we can see the rudiments of an "elite family" typology that is an intersection of the participants' topics of biography, Chinese society, and HE decisions within the same thematic field of "**my family and my experiences with the State**". These participants' biographical orientation to the State and their families' interdependent reputation and identity all speak to the core of their HE-related choices and decision-making. Their HE and career decision actions embody State's ideological structure and recruitment methods of regimes of Mao and post-Mao. Biographical case reconstructions, as Rosenthal (2002) suggested, make it possible to construct a continuum of types that offer rules about the genesis, that is, explanations for how it all came about, which refer both to the life history and life story.

At the end of hermeneutic cycle of interpretation, the meaning of institutional recognition with relation to the functions of university-going and the examination system and its origins to these pre-1949 elite families as well as wider Chinese society will have been explored and explained.

3.2.7 Delimitations

Because the FHNIM method employed in this thesis required extensive interviews with both parents and children as well as in-depth and time-consuming analytical work with the research team, this necessitated the limiting of the number of interviews and subsequent analyses sessions. Efforts were made, nonetheless, to insure that the selection of subjects for interview included a diverse range of subjects with varying demographic and family backgrounds. Additionally, the case typologies were developed to understand the biographical structures of decision action patterns and associated perceptions. The longitudinal nature of the socio-biographical method enabled an analysis the genesis and developmental courses of both individuals' biographies and social institutions that intricately interface with the participants' lives. Such an analysis also shed light on how institutional settings and ideological shifts brought about by pre-and post-1980 policy environments in eastern coastal cities of the Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces and Shanghai led to different organization of patterns of actions and orientation, as well as sense of identity.

Furthermore, the high cultural sensitivity of FHNIM must be emphasized. Future researchers employing this analytical tool in psycho-cultural studies will have contexts which are different from the present researcher's. An research team comprised of people from the same cultural background as the participants is also recommended.

In response to my single, initial narrative-inducing question, all of my participants began to describe their lived experiences and the families relating to the HE decision. My use of participants' whole stories instead of a direct and thematised "HE decision story" alone was intended to capture the genesis and developmental course of the decision actions and associated perceptions (how these were developed, reproduced and transformed in the process of biographies and family histories). This notion of wholeness, or gestalt, is one of the main theoretical principles of BNIM and FHNIM and ensures the minimal role of the interviewer in the first interview session. "This apparently simple request ["Tell us the story of your life"] has led to a quiet revolution in social science practice. For it even to be seen as a legitimate query required a shift in paradigmatic viewpoints about the nature of the social scientific enterprise" (Miller, 2000, p. 1).

One exception is Emmet (Case 6), who began his narrative with stumbling speech. I was able to direct him to the early-life precedents of his HE decision by using the strategy of Particular Incident Storying (PIS), which is embedded in BNIM and FHNIM. The researcher uses the PIS strategy to elicit richer narratives by asking for more particular examples and details, e.g.

Could you tell me more about what that time was like? Could you remember any more details about how all that happened? This allows the particularities of the participant's memories to slowly emerge.

3.2.8 Conclusion

In this section, I have provided the philosophical and theoretical framework upon which the method and research procedures of the FHNIM are based. I have also applied Husserlian

eting, Peircean abduction, and Gurwitsch's theme-thematic-field to my data analysis. In the process of familial and biographical data analysis, the reflective team approach, sequential analysis, and Peircean abduction has been included and is conceived of as a rigorous method of establishing credibility and reliability and elucidating the nature of the individual dialectic relationship with its society. The familial and biographical data analysis also portrays the process, the development, genesis of HE-related decisions at individual, familial and societal levels. The importance of reflective analysis of self-observation, observing others, and hypothetic reasoning is seen as core to understand the processes and context of the interviews, under which the text of told stories and dialogical and interactional processes are produced. A dialectical movement between the whole of the lived history and parts of those historical meanings the interviewee attributed to the education and employment decisions he/she made is involved in the stage 3. The contrast and comparison of the lived history and told story can solve and eliminate the contradiction between the past points of view and those of today' and their connections. Finally, family typologies have come into development coalesce with one another with the unity of rules that not only have generated actions of decisions but also correlative understandings, attitudes and intended objects which are concerned and valued, from the points of view of interviewees.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

3.3.1 Sample and access

In accordance with the aim of the study, the potential sample set out to include Chinese international students who meet four criteria of this research: that they originally came from mainland China, they were from China's large coastal cities like Guangzhou or Shanghai, or the capital city Beijing, (almost half of the total Chinese international students in New

Zealand are from these three areas (Statistics New Zealand, 2008)); that they were aged 20-plus; that they were currently undertaking, or had just completed their graduate studies at an Auckland university at the time of their interview; and that they were happy for me to do the follow-up interview with their parents. The time and costs related to carrying out the field interviews with Chinese students' parents in China and the researcher's familiarity with locality and local customs and culture was another reason for focussing on students from Shanghai, Beijing or Guangzhou.

To access this population sample, three main strategies were initially adopted: 1) international student offices and the Chinese student centres across three universities in Auckland were contacted; 2) advertisements were put in Chinese skykiwi BBS forum; and 3) by personal contacts.

It has been previously acknowledged that none of the participants were obtained through academic or community-based organisations. It is of note that the least effective recruitment strategy for biographical research among Chinese-origin groups was the use of flyers and posters through international student offices, the Chinese Student Centre, and the New Zealand Chinese Students' Association (NZCSA). Chinese lecturers at University of Auckland (UoA) and Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and staff at the Asian Institute were also contacted. Potential participants were reached through word of mouth of university staff, unfortunately they did not fit the sampling criteria with geographical areas concerned or they did not agree for their parents to participate in the subsequent interviews. Consequently study participants were identified through a process of snowball or chain sampling as Patton (1990) suggests. This purposive sampling method identifies cases of interest via people who know which cases are information-rich, i.e., good examples for study and good interview subjects. This process involved consulting my personal network and participants who had already been interviewed for the study, who worked as "entry point contacts" tended to be the most effective recruitment strategy for enrolling Chinese international students from Shanghai. Consequently, this meant that five participants were supported through these "entry point contacts". Through these five participants, another seven Chinese international students from Shanghai were recruited. The recruiting process also indicated that social networks from other regions had few contacts in those region-groups.

All potential participants who responded to the forwarded emails through “entry point contacts” and indicated their interest in this study were replied to or contacted by phone to answer any concerns or problems about the project. In the initial meet or talk I asked each potential participant whether I could contact their parents and interview them in the second stage. Only those who were happy for me to do the follow-up interview after checking with their parents were finally recruited for the study. The details of the contents and processes of how the study would be conducted were outlined with each participant before the initial interview.

Access to the parent cohort was made via the students who as “entry point contacts” were interviewed in the first stage. Meanwhile, I wrote parents of each individual family by email, explaining my research. I also followed up the emails with telephone calls after my arrival in Shanghai to arrange an appropriate time to conduct interviews and to answer their concerns.

3.3.2 Ethical considerations

Prior to commencing the recruitment process, ethical approval was sought and obtained from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). Due to the fact that the research method incorporates lengthy interviews about the participants’ real life experiences, the interview process was often time consuming. It was critical that all participants in the study indicated their willingness to participate in the lengthy interviews including a possible follow-up interview and that they were happy for the interview to be tape recorded. The individual interview time ranged from one to two hours in length, approximately. Those who were willing to take part were given ample time to review their decisions and to consider when and where the interview would take place and how long it would last, putting them in control of the process.

Interviewees were informed that pseudonyms would be used in all reporting and publication. Concerning the question of anonymity, a full written document of each participant’s told story, which contains what participants said (in their exact words), was made available to each participant to check for accuracy after the data collection had been completed.

Duty of care: because some of the recollection or discussion of experiences potentially could make participants uncomfortable or upset, the participants were allowed to decline answering any questions and stop the interview at any time without adverse consequences. Efforts were

made for support to be available to participants, should it be required. Arrangements were made to refer student participants to the AUT Health, Counselling and Wellbeing (HCW) in the event of any of the above issues arose. HCW also refers Mandarin speaking clients to suitable counselling by Mandarin-speaking staff at Auckland agencies such as Youthline. The psychological clinic centre at East China Normal University in Shanghai was contacted and consented to provide free counselling for parents if further assistance was required during or after the interviews.

3.3.3 The interview

Once agreement was secured the interview dates and places were arranged. Twelve interviewees were conducted with Chinese international students in total and 12 with their respective parents. The interviews were all tape recorded, which did not seem to intimidate any of the participants. The interviews were carried out in two main stages involving two sessions of interviews with students and parents consecutively.

Stage 1 In terms of the interviews with student cohort, ten interviews out of twelve were held at my apartment in Auckland and two others at the participants' residencies. Soft drinks and snacks were prepared for each individual interview session. Every effort was made to ensure it was a relaxed environment and that the thirsty of each interviewee were quenched over several hours talking. The drinks and snacks also function, as Meareas suggests (2007), as an expression of thanks to each participant for giving his/her time to help the researcher with her research.

I modified the probe question after the first interview and began all the interviews with the following probe: "I would like you to tell me the story of your life, your family, and all the events and experiences that have been important to you till now. Take as much time as you like and start from your childhood. I won't interrupt you but I'll be taking some notes. When you are finished, we will take a break for about 10-15 minutes. When we resume, I will be asking you for a few more details based on my notes of what you have told me."

The probe question was originally as follows: "Please tell me the story of your life and your family... ending with when you and your family decided to choose Auckland as your higher education destination." The modification allowed me to establish and maintain biographical continuity and the completeness of the participant's report. It also focused on the relationship between the historiography of the family, the intensity, of recent social change in Shanghai,

and current life experience and concerns of the participant. Rosenthal (1993) and Wengraf (2001) support this decision, pointing out that, if the interviewer does not set a specific topic but asks the participants in a general way to tell their life story, the participants themselves will select those topics that are relevant and important for them.

Except for confirming utterances, eye contact, and so forth, no further interruptions were made by the interviewer in the first session of the interview. Once the interviewees finish the narration of their life stories in session 1 (it usually lasts from forty-five minutes to two hours), we took a break for 15-20 minutes. At this time, as Wengraf (2001) and Johns (2004) suggest, I read through the notes taken from session 1, looking for topics and phrases that could be expanded on and used as probes. At the start of session 2 the narrative-seeking questions were used to encourage students to talk more about stories that related to the topics raised in session 1; the sequence and words used by the participant was followed. The examples of probing techniques are outlined below:

- Techniques for probing

You said “_____”, do you remember anything more about...

- ✓ that period of time?
- ✓ that particular incident?
- ✓ that event?
- ✓ that experience?
- ✓ specific examples?

Session 2 generally lasted forty-five minutes and ended with the interviewer asking if there was anything that the participant would like to add. If not, as Jones (2004) suggests, the participant was then thanked and the session ended. Due to the fact that all the topics and experiences with the HE-related decisions were interwoven through the told story, the third interview was not necessary. At the end of session 2, a post-interview debriefing was implemented immediately.

Stage 2 In the second stage biographical-based interviews were carried out with the parents in Shanghai, China. In one case, with a Chinese mother, the interview was conducted in Auckland while she was on her one-month visit to New Zealand. All of the parents were residents of Shanghai, and four of them originally came from other coastal cities (Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces) and migrated to Shanghai in 1990s. Emily (Case 5) became head of the Muo household and was the carer of her aging parents and her younger brother after her father's (Mr. Muo) family-owned business went bankrupt in 2000. In 2009, Emmet Muo (a

Chinese international student) was advised and financially supported by her sister, Emily, to study abroad. For the follow-up interview with the parents, Mrs. Emily Muo was nominated by Emmet and participated in the interview.

Two interview sessions over one day were conducted with all the participants. Six out of twelve interviews were conducted at the homes of parents in Shanghai. With respect to my own practice, the participants' homes were considered to be the most conducive place to carry out the biographical narrative interview and recollection. One case took place at a city-centre Starbucks. During the interview process the father's recollection was frequently disturbed and interrupted by an argument between a couple at the next table. The interruptions seemed to prevent him from generating a narrative flow. Secondly, because the time allocated for individual case analysis for the reflective team was two or three hours, I decided the number of cases that were finally chosen for team analysis was nine out of the twelve. It also seemed that in contrast to the devotion the panel member put into the first two case analyses, after working over three or four family cases, they became somewhat less enthusiastic to explore the case further. The individual parent who was nominated by the student to participate in the follow-up interview seemed to be the exemplary figure the students identified with and this could be felt from listening to the told stories of the children. In three cases (Case 1, 4, 7) both the participant's mother and father participated in the interview. Typically the father played the lead role in the interview which was supplemented by information added by his wife. The exception to this rule was case 1, Mrs. Su. In the Su's case, Mrs. Su was the leading speaker, however, Mrs. Su's husband chipping in with reference to their son's HE choice, which contributed vitally to the analyses of historical attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives at the time the family made the decision to send David abroad and eliminated the contradiction between the surface doubting perspective at the moment the interviewing was carried out and past perspectives.

	Case1	Case2	Case3	Case4	Case5	Case6	Case7	Case8	Case9
Chinese international students	David	Michael	Richard	Steven	William	Emmet	Daniel	Stevie	James
Parents	Mother Mrs. Su	Father Mr. Shi	Father Mr. Xue	Father Mr. Kong	Mother Mrs. Jia	Sister Mrs. Emily	Parents Mr. & Mrs. Wu	Mother Mrs. Zhu	Father Mr. Fei

The results of the analyses are presented in the chapters following this one. In Chapter 4, a detailed account of the four-step case reconstruction procedures is given along with nine

single parent case studies in order to acclimatise readers and prospective BNIM/FHNIM researchers to the four separate analytical levels of the FHNIM interpretive process. The structure or gestalt of the interviews with their children is also explored. The writing up of the student cases is presented in condensed form due to the limitations of space. In Chapter 5 the family typologies are developed.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSES OF INDIVIDUAL CASES

4.1 Introduction

Following the analytical framework involving biographic-family lived history and told story analyses with case history reconstruction, and the comparison of the lived life and the told story, as outlined in the previous chapter, in this chapter, I will first present the analysis process of the lived life and family history of nine single family cases (both parents and their children) and a table with two columns is drawn for illustrative purposes. The left hand column contains the chronological chain of events, places and situations, and people that were extracted from interview transcriptions of both parents and their children and historical archives. The right hand column illustrates how Peircean abductive reasoning and testing cycle is applied by the reflective team. That is a process of reconstructing contexts (in relation to the age, personal development, family, generation, and milieu) of an event the participant at the time it was occurred, so that questions concerning orientation and action alternatives facing the participant can be outlined in a thought experiment in the form of hypotheses. Simultaneously, follow-up inductive reasoning is developed to predict the possible outcomes of the present happenings on the individual and familial level. The objective is to reconstruct hypothetically both the whole gestalt of the lived life and family history and the functional meaning of its individual parts (Rosenthal, 1993; 2004). The idea is to embed lived experiences in biographical structures of orientation as well as patterns of actions and behaviour, considering how they developed in the process of socialisation and how they were reproduced and transformed during the life course. Secondly, nine single told stories of the subject's parents are presented subsequently. The reflective analysis of the told story focuses on reconstructing the parents' system of knowledge, their interpretation of their lives, and their classification of experiences into thematic fields. It also includes analysis of what past, future, or present events and experiences the participant focused upon and recollected and how the participant thematised them into the field of lived experience in relation to their HE decisions of their children and/or themselves. In other words, it becomes possible to show when and how the specific structure of self-presentation in the present emerged and to pinpoint the lived experiences which were decisive for its constitution. Thirdly, reconstruction of case histories and microanalysis of the narrative texts

produced by the parents is also provided, including the meaning of HE decision in the past at the time it occurred. Ultimately, the contrast comparison between lived history and told story is developed. In other words, both the meaning of HE decision in the past and how they are presented in the present interview are compared and contrasted. The question of what biographical experience – that is, the genesis of present perspective – brings to different past perspectives is also pertinent here.

4.2 Reflective Team Analyses of Biographies and Family Histories

Starting with either a family member's (grandparent/parent/child) observed event or action, or an interrelated and concatenated series of experienced events, a tentative interpretation began in a form of hypothesis. All the possible alternatives available to the individual in their social and historical contexts were formulated in the form of thought experiment, the question concerning orientation and action alternatives was also relevant here. Follow-up hypotheses were developed with respect to what an individual might do or think in situations that will likely arise in his or her future. Then, the follow-up hypotheses were tested by comparing them to the actual choices that were made by the individual family member. The hypotheses were developed and tested across multiple educational and career situations involving a two or three family history, and those that were supported in the subsequent results were confirmed and highlighted with italic, scarlet coloured font.

4.2.1 Case 1: Mrs. Su and her son, David

The hypothetic-inductive work on the biography and family history of Mrs. Su and her son, David (a Chinese international student), was performed by a panel. The panel members consist of: Mr. Huang and Professor Gu¹.

	Lived Life & Family History	Propositions/Follow-up Hypotheses
1949-1953	Before 1949, Mrs. Su's father went to America to study. Upon his return to China, he was appointed by the State to a position in the engineering industry where he became a prominent figure.	<p><i>1. Because of Su's father's occupational status and background (chushen), life will be hard for Su's father after the outset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.</i></p> <p>Follow up hypothesis (how this event could affect her subsequent life and family development)</p>

¹ CF. The reflective team approach pp.50-51.

		<p>1.1 Because of the family's status and political background, Mrs. Su' opportunities later in life will be limited. She will not be admitted into university until 1977. Life might become harsher for her as well.</p> <p>1.2 She will end up becoming one of the common masses.</p>
1953 -1959	<p>Mrs Su was born in an old garden house on Taiping Lu, Shanghai -an area where Government officials live and is one of the most prestigious residential areas in the city. She is the youngest child in the family, and has two brothers and two sisters.</p> <p>In 1954, Su's father was rapidly promoted to China's largest heavy engineering plant, where he became the chief engineer. This promotion required her father to move from Shanghai to the Northwest.²</p>	<p><i>2.1 Wealthy family, comfortable economic circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>2.1a. Mrs Su will enjoy material advantages throughout her childhood.</i></p> <p><i>2.2 Being a technical specialist will have a negative impact on Su's father after 1966, and consequently, he will not be able to survive the purges of the Cultural Revolution.</i></p> <p><i>2.2a. The family will go downhill from there and their financial prospects will disappear.</i></p> <p><i>2.3 She is proud of her father and is conscious of the very privileged background and status that her family enjoys.</i></p> <p>2.3a. It will be recommended to her by her father's influential contacts that she should become a "peasant-worker-solidier" university student; otherwise <i>She will go to university after 1977.</i></p> <p>2.3b. Or she will be assigned a job.</p> <p><i>2. 4 Identification with her father will have a strong effect on her choices later in life.</i></p> <p>2.4a. She will probably become another elephant in their clan.</p> <p><i>2.4b. She might set same goals for her</i></p>

²During the 1950s, the Party needed both the technical skills and managerial expertise of the former bourgeoisie to build a socialist society. Mao himself went to great lengths to accommodate the urban bourgeoisie and their descendants.

		<p><i>children and this might influence her role in her children's academic and/or martial choices.</i></p> <p>2.4c As a mother, she will be a strict disciplinarian.</p> <p><i>2.4d Because of their modest level of achievement, her children will not make her happy.</i></p> <p>2.5 The physical separation from her father might 2.5a lead to her emotional needs being unfulfilled.</p> <p><i>2.5b This separation might inhibit her from developing an orientation towards the kind of diligent and rigorous scholarship her father possesses.</i></p> <p>2.5c. This separation might only foster an attitude of attachment to privilege, money and pleasure.</p>
1953-1966	<p>While people in general struggled to survive and did not have enough to eat, there was a regular supply of food on the dinner table at home (1959-61).</p> <p>Her father was often sick and following instructions of Zhou Enlai, the former Prime Minister, well-known doctors were often called to treat him.</p>	<p><i>3. 1 As a technically sophisticated expert, her father is supported by and under the protection of the State Council.</i></p> <p>See follow-up hypotheses 2.3 & 2.4</p> <p>3.2. Counter-hypothesis His father's health indicates the vulnerability of the family to the fate of the masses.</p> <p><i>3.2a. The privileged status of the family won't endure for long.</i></p>
1966-1969	<p>After the onset of the Cultural Revolution, her father was accused of being a "revisionist" and "bourgeois".</p> <p>All the time, her father's health was getting worse, resulting in him having to be brought back to Shanghai where he self-medicated at home.</p> <p>In 1969, he was dragged back to the Northeast and, soon after, he died there.</p>	<p>4. This event provided her with a major lesson.</p> <p>Hypotheses 2.2 and 3.2.a are strengthened.</p> <p>4.1 She will rebel against the authorities. 4.2 She will be becoming cynical. 4.3 The family will be in financial difficulties. 4.4 She will be humiliated at school by her peers. 4.5 She will lose faith in the institutional system.</p>
1973	<p>Wang Daohan, the former mayor of Shanghai, arranged for her, when she was 20, to work in a temporary job in a street factory.</p>	<p><i>Hypothesis 2.3.b gains support.</i></p> <p>5. She won't be content with her current life situation and will try to find a way out.</p>

		<i>5.1a Going to university is a way out of this dilemma.</i>
1978	After the entrance examination was reinstated in 1977, she went to University.	<p>6. 1. She was hoping university would change her life.</p> <p>6.2. She was hoping this experience would enrich her knowledge.</p> <p>Hypothesis 2.3 & 5.1 gained certain support.</p>
1981	Upon graduation, she got a library job with Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.	<p><i>7.1. She will be happy and content with her job because a job at university is still a very attractive option in 1980s (Falsified-see analysis of Mrs. Su's told story and case history reconstruction).</i></p> <p>Furthermore, people with HE degrees were few and far between, and were highly praised at the time.</p>
1983	<p>She stayed for 2 years but, after the birth of her son, David Su, she moved to Shanghai's Second Military Medical University library.</p> <p>Some of her schoolmates went to Australia at the time.</p>	<p>8.1. In the 1980s, good jobs, such as working in a university library, were still rare, and the competition for these positions was very high. It is possible that her father's background and network were also helpful in securing her new job.</p> <p><i>8.1a. She is happy with her current life and will focus on David's upbringing (falsified).</i></p> <p>Counter hypothesis</p> <p>8.2. She is aware that it is possibly not seem feasible to reach a higher university political post without (1) a noteworthy academic achievement; or (2) without being the daughter of a highly ranked cadre.</p> <p>8.2a. The effects of these pressures are being felt, which motivated her to go to Australia to study for a Masters degree.</p>
1989	<p>She went to Australia.</p> <p>She learnt Chinese acupuncture and massage before she moved to Australia.</p>	<p>9.1. High political awareness.</p> <p>She is very interested in politics and pays a lot of attention to state policy changes.</p> <p>9.1a. The repression of student unrest leads her to recall memories of her father. She is going to become radicalised in her</p>

		<p>thinking and won't trust the state.</p> <p>9.2. Her acquisition of skills in acupuncture and massage before her departure seems to reflect that she is attempting to construct a new avenue to status attainment.</p> <p>Anticipated- becoming gold-plated- through trip to Australia.</p> <p><i>9.2a. She will accumulate a lot of money (falsified).</i></p> <p><i>9.2b. She will take David to Australia as well (falsified).</i></p> <p>9.3. Her separation may indicate that her husband may not be very supportive.</p>
1992	Upon her return from Australia, Mrs Su worked for the Fine Art Valuation Company in China, after which she took a FAG course and became a registered valuer.	<p><i>10.1. She will earn good money and send David to college abroad. (falsified)</i></p> <p>Counter hypothesis</p> <p><i>10.2 If she is just a salary-earner, she will choose a domestic university for David.</i></p>
1996	David started his secondary school at Shanghai High School (SHS)-the best secondary school in Shanghai ³ .	<p>11 Studying at such as prestigious high school means that David is a definitely an intelligent student – the entry perquisites are academically demanding.</p> <p>11.1. Being a SGH student seems a safe passport to many elite universities.</p> <p><i>11.2. He will set up high goals for his own future.</i></p> <p><i>11.2a. He is conscious of the fact that elite status depends on merit measured by the university entrance-exams.</i></p>
2001	<p>The redevelopment of Shanghai led to the forced relocation of David's family.</p> <p>During his final year of college, David had to move between living in his aunt's home and</p>	<p>12.1 For David's mother, moving out of such a distinguished estate suggests a step down in the world.</p> <p><i>12.1a. Her obsession with elite status will</i></p>

³SHS was founded in 1865. Within Shanghai, this school has a very high level of academic achievement. In 2011, 92 percent of its students went on to enrol in elite universities in China. In 2005, 37.5% graduates entered top 20 universities in the US.

	his own chaotic home.	<p><i>make her try something else to maintain the family features that were once regarded as respectable and to which such a family was accustomed, that is, her son's academic or marital choices.</i></p> <p>12.2. If they are rich enough, David will go aboard for his undergraduate studies; otherwise he will find a place at a domestic university.</p> <p><i>12.3. Movement and an unsettled environment will disrupt David's preparation for the competitive national university entrance examination and affect his results.</i></p> <p>The parents seem to lack real affection and care for David.</p>
2001	David did not get a place to study information systems at one of top four universities in Shanghai; even obtained an offer from a second-tier university.	<p>13. 1. He should go to that second-tier university.</p> <p><i>13.2. He refused to go to that university and, as a consequence, felt frustrated and disappointed.</i></p>
End of 2001	David passed the IELTS exam and went to ACG to do a foundation course. This cost was covered by the compensation gained from the demolition of his home. In 2002, he began his undergraduate course in New Zealand.	<p><i>14. Failing to enter a top university led to a sense that both his personal and the family's expectations had not been fulfilled.</i></p> <p>14.1. He might feel less negative about his academic status if he chose to study abroad.</p> <p><i>14.2. The decision of studying abroad might be seen as a combative pattern in terms of maintaining the social standing of both David and his family and continuing family's past.</i></p>
2005-2007	<p>David comfortably passed all his exams and obtained a degree in IT.</p> <p>After that he secured a position at a food processing factory, where he worked as an assistant warehouse manager.</p> <p>Later, before his former manager resigned from his position, David began taking over the training of staff. However he was eventually replaced by a newcomer hired from outside</p>	<p>15. It might be very difficult for David to accept a role in the junior position.</p> <p><i>15.1. He won't settle unless he finds a managerial position or becomes the head of a service.</i></p> <p><i>15.2. The argument David has with the new general manger is symbolic how persistent a sense of institutional identity</i></p>

	the company. David resigned from the job after an argument with the new general manager.	<i>could be for a well-educated Chinese person to recognise the hierarchal distinction between ruler-the ruled, the managers- the producers, elite –masses, and the brain workers versus the muscle-workers.</i>
2007-2008	A boutique restaurant at Ponsonby is advertised for sale on Trade-me. Despite having approached the owners and after having done a lot of preparatory work with solicitors and accountants, the landlord refused to transfer the lease. .	<p>16. 1. It seems that being a peripheral member in the company frustrated him. The heritage style of the Ponsonby restaurant, with its upmarket products, might reflect the style that David identifies with in terms of the social position he desires for himself.</p> <p><i>16.1a. He is quite depressed, feeling rejected and discriminated against by society.</i></p> <p><i>16.1b. His evaluation of his experiences in New Zealand might have been critically effected by the experience of having experienced repeated failures.</i></p>
2008	David returned to China. He took a job, as a quality control technician, with the second largest Japanese life insurance company in Shanghai.	<p><i>17. Faced with the prospect of having to do purely administrative work in the insurance company, he finds the job boring and unfulfilling.</i></p> <p><i>17.1. He might think his knowledge and training has not readily converted him to higher managerial and professional positions.</i></p> <p><i>17.1a. Awareness of the need to update his knowledge as well as better prepare himself for the demands of higher positions, he will embark upon postgraduate studies.</i></p>
2009-2011	<p>He married a Shanghai girl, who did her undergraduate studies in Australia and has a wealthy father.</p> <p>In 2010, David and his wife came back to New Zealand, where David began his postgraduate studies in IT.</p> <p>His parents did not support his latest educational choices and decision-making.</p>	<p>18.1. His parents don't understand what he really wants and, apparently, they don't believe the scholarship will help him elevate his future social position in Chinese society.</p> <p>18.2. He will return home and eventually take over his father-in-law's business.</p>

4.2.1.1Case 1

4.2.1.1a Mrs. Su's told story

The interview with David's parents took place in their Shanghai house. David's mother, Mrs. Su, played the lead role in the interview. Her husband, Mr. Su, apparently was not informed by his son, David, that the interview would take place. He only chipped in occasionally and gave his account of 2002 when David's university-entrance examination was approaching. As argued previously (see Chapter III sample to illuminate points), Mr. Su's interruptions seemed to disturb the gestalt (wholes-parts) of Mrs. Su's told story. When the story was later analysed and compared with David's story, the importance of Mr. Su's recollectional account is apparent. Namely, his account not only contributed to a fuller and more complete understanding of the wholeness of this collective story, it also brought out the historical perspectives of the decision regarding sending David abroad to study. Of particular importance is the revelation of the interactivity between Mr and Mrs. Su and David and their attitudes and emotions towards this particular decision.

When I had finished the initial question, ("tell me the story of your life and your family"), to which Ms. Su first responded to the initial question with a remark- "my story could be very long". She then queried what other parents had said in their biographies. I mentioned, as an example, a parvenu parent with reference to the 'the first bucket of gold', which inevitably mediated Mrs Su's thoughts and associated memory to the beginning of her told story.

In the opening line of Mrs. Su's story, she begins with a narration, with reference to her father's experiences studying abroad.

'My family was once wealthy. My father went to the States and, upon his return, he was held up in honour by the State and was appointed to a position in the engineering industry, where he became a prominent figure. During 1950s, (.hmm), or 1960s, at the time I was in nappies. He was promoted to the China's largest heavy engineering plant as the chief engineer. His new appointment required him to move away from Shanghai to the Northwest. The plant is known as xx''

At this point, we will not concentrate on what effects this event had on her later life. Rather, I want to ask why she acted in this way and how this choice was related to what she was experiencing at this point in her life. To what extent is this declaration related to Mrs Su's biographical concept, her lived experience, her present life situation in China, public

discourse, or/and the interviewing situation (including the interviewer's influence)?

Following Mrs. Su's opening remarks, consider the hypothesis,

1.1 Do her father's overseas studies, with reference to "the value that placed on it by the State", still have great relevance to Mrs. Su today? If hypothesis 1.1 is correct, I would expect this theme to be repeatedly referred to in the later interview and, as such, could become the theme in the subsequent section of text. It has formulated a follow-up hypothesis for the continuation of the text (1.1.a).

Alternatively, I can ask whether there is a need to emphasise her father's overseas education.

1.2. I might hypothesise that this statement is mainly a reflection of Mrs. Su's past perspective, and it originates from her father's overseas studies and his subsequent distinguished career as a technocrat.

1.3. I might state, furthermore, that this account delineates Mrs. Su's identity construction of herself and her family. She attempts to convey that David's decision to study abroad is not a new decision for members of her family. Accordingly, she might try to establish a certain image that she and her family have both a fairly cultured and privileged background and status.

Mrs. Su's next revelation is introduced with a global evaluation, "*Happy family before the Cultural revolution began in 1966.*"

2.1. I might interpret that this global evaluation pinpoints her initial evaluation that being honoured by the State defines her understanding of what a happy family is.

A brief description: "*Family members: grandparents, father and mother, two brothers and two sisters. She was the youngest child.*"

I may ask why her presentation of her other family members is so brief! An explanatory hypothesis could be:

2.1. She describes so little about the other family members because there is nothing in their lives that can add to the glory of her family, that is, there is nothing they had done with reference to the theme she presented – valued by the State. This brevity is also in accordance with the self-and-family images that she is attempting to establish and maintain (hypotheses 1.2a and 2.1).

The next revelation in Mrs. Su's story is a 2-line argumentation: "*While many people in*

China during the years of famine between 1959 and 1962 did not have enough to eat, which resulted in many people dying of starvation; our family (the Sus) enjoyed a regular supply of food.”

4.1. This message first adds an evaluative component to the claims she made, i.e., that her family ‘enjoyed a regular supply of food’ (it was not common in that particular period of Chinese history) connotes to the image of a privileged life which she tries to establish and maintain (hypotheses 1.2., 2.1, and 3.1). At the same time, this event is still embedded in the field within which the theme of privileged treatment from the State is pertinent.

4.2. This evaluation is also due to her historical perspective in which she points out that her identification with her father primarily relates to his prestige and privilege, which itself came as consequence of her father’s occupational status. This is supported by the fact that the early physical separation from her father might have been influential in shaping her formative life and the interpretations she has made of her experience. (hypothesis 2.5 in life history)

“The year 1966 marked a dramatic shift in my family. By the time I was a little girl (.)ern, I am the youngest. At that time my father was accused, uhm, that’s a period of China’s history, against institutional authority.”

5.1. At this point, a hypothesis can be formulated that the selection of these biographical and familial experiences and the sequential order (that it was initially happy but disrupted by the outset of the Chinese Cultural Revolution) are *also due to the context of interview*. She has perhaps made assumptions about me, as I am from a New Zealand’s university, and the family’s history is what I want to hear.

Following this dramatic change, Mrs. Su then continues with a narrative report:

“My father was often sick and before 1966, following the instructions of Zhou Enlai (the former Prime Minister), well-known doctors were often called out to the Northeast to treat him. After the Cultural Revolution, no attention was provided by the State for his illness. At first, he was brought back to Shanghai, where he was treated at home. Then they dragged him back to the Northwest and, soon after, he died there. The sequence ends with a remark-*“the circumstances around my father’s death remain unknown to the family*

today.” That is, they do not know how their father died. She paused for two seconds and then switched to an argument: *“But everyone in the family [...] realises that we have to be self-reliant and that there is no one to depend upon.”*

While expressing the importance of her father’s status concerning “who looked after her father during his illness”, Mrs. Su also expressed the contrasting situation concerning “who did not” look after him after 1966. The orientation relates to the dispossession as disclosed by the statement: *“But everyone in the family [...] realizes that we have to be self-reliant and that there is no one to depend upon.”*

The prevalence of her belief and her sense of herself and her family identity, that is, her identification with the state system is also clear. All of this is made reference to by the position her father held, his achievements, the privileged treatment during the three years of the Chinese famine, and the considerable care given to him by the former Prime Minister. The selection and organisation of these historical events is thematised within the context where the theme is: *my father was valued and honoured by the State upon his return from his overseas studies; at the time, my family was integrated and happy.*

The report of her family history and the temporary job in the street factory (see life history in 1973)⁴ ends with *“but all the family members aspire to progress.”* She then reports briefly about her educational and occupational career, and about raising her son, David, connecting the two with her aspiration to progress.

Following the brief report on her own education and career and her son’s childhood, she provided a 19-line narrative of her journey to Australia in 1989. This finishes with a long argumentation, *“how can I say? Only a few people could enter into higher education institutions in 1979. The connections among our classmates are still kept. Not like these days, where everybody can go to university. It was a period when few people thought to study at a university; and even of those who aspired to it, fewer still would have managed to pass the examination and enter the system. Eventually I got through to the end of my university studies”*

“But after I came back, [...] (big sigh) the first bucket of gold, as you mentioned,[...]I

⁴ See literature review Mao’s 1968 direct.

found my life was really hard. I have never owned a bucket gold (we are both laughing). After I returned Shanghai from Australia, I felt that everything was just vanity; as if making money was the most important thing. So my thinking today is just this: the most important thing is to earn money. You see, in today's China, it's impossible to live without economic support. When I realised this, I decided to take David to Australia, but that plan didn't succeed. So the thought remains there."

6.1. Telling a life story is always a lived experience, and so my earlier briefing at the outset of the interview inevitably mediated Mrs Su's present thoughts. I wonder if her aspiration to earn more money could be a replacement for her unfulfilled aspirations of social and political progression. It is hard to ignore the fact that in present-day China the emergence of a vibrant new rich community and the change of home-ownership could have had a considerable impact on Chinese consciousness about classification by status.

Let me look at how Mrs. Su's story progresses. The biographical data in her next revelation is about her son and centres on the topic of 'his disobedience' and 'his educational trajectory'.

7.1. In recounting her son's story at the time of the interview, I hypothesised that Mrs. Su was speaking from her present perspective and current concern for the future trajectories of her family. From the Su family history, I know that Mrs Su does not agree with David's recent decision to pursue his postgraduate studies in New Zealand.

David's father eventually chipped in with reasons for sending David to study in New Zealand. He then plunged into a detailed narrative about David's final year at college. The chaotic environment in which they focused on packing and making preparations, and the demolition of their house occurred as the national university entrance examination arrived. Subsequently, he painted an anecdotal picture of 'political corruption in the tertiary institutions' and referred to the notion that privileged parents use their power to arrange for their children to enter elite universities. David's grade was 10 points lower than the university entrance requirement, meaning that he didn't get a place and precipitating the decision to send him abroad.

Mr. Su then steered into a lengthy argumentation of how much money they have spent on David's overseas study at a so-called elite university, and how they expected him to have a distinguished career and a glittering life. However, in reality, David's successive junior posts in New Zealand and China suggest that he is moving to a standardised biography. It's not

what they want for his life. They feel that it's certainly not worth what they have paid for.

8.1. It becomes clearer that the impact of David's experiences on his parents' perceptions of the value of studying abroad has formed their key perspective at today's interview situation. This perspective has guided their organisation of the event to send David abroad to study pertains to this perspective.

Finally, David's mother speaks about her job when she returned from Australia. She attended courses prescribed by the IFAA and became a registered fine art valuer, despite her husband's disapproval of undertaking such an expensive course and licensing examination.

She then explained, *"well, I thought these qualifications are essential to my rise and progression in life. At that time I was in my early 40s. I am now in my 60s and am not be aspiring to progress any further. Now I just think of earning more money. I regret that David doesn't share my aspiration for progress."*

Mrs. Su's told story

There are three emerging strands in Mrs. Su's told stories. They are "[her] father's overseas study and the acquisition of position of influence", "[her] decision-making about education and occupation pathways" and "[her] son's educational pathways and work trajectories", which are woven together throughout.

These three strands are embedded in the interpretation of Mrs. Su's overall biography which constitutes the thematic field of her life story: "studying abroad is nothing new in my family, my father went to the States and, upon his return, he was held up in honour by the State with a privileged position. Unlike my father, neither I nor my son have a glittering aspect in our biographies or "a bucket of gold" from our HEs. I have lost my father and my estate. Soon I shall lose the family's status, and even the aspiration to progress. All that is mine, ours, is gone. Earning more money seems more important to me now." The need to earn more money seems to be the chief concern in Mrs. Su's present perspective and future orientation in order to aid her in her family's restoration.

Reconstruction of life history and microanalysis

I will now consider what Mrs. Su's past perspectives were at the time of her family's HE choices and decision-making. In practice I will be moving through the lived biographical experiences in Mrs. Su's lived history and examining all the evaluative statements made by her on each event.

In the first passage, Mrs. Su revealed her identification with her father and her integration into the state system, exemplified in her initial evaluation on her father's appointment and promotion.

In her account of the job she held at the Fine Art Appraisal and Authentication Company in China, she describes how she had been favourably assessed and was given the opportunity to develop to her full potential (interpersonal skills, university diploma and English language). Her apparently strong party and state identification, which was evident, indicates her aspiration towards progress, that is, a continuing progression towards socio-political superiority.

Mrs. Su also considers that a place at an elite university would act as a pathway to further her son's goal of a distinguished career and a "glittering life", which will ultimately succeed in restoring prestige to her family status. Later in the interview, Mrs. Su discussed her friend who went to America, where she took the bar test and became a renowned lawyer. From Mrs. Su's perspective, it is assumed that her friend's elite university background helped her to be promoted to privileged posts. Now her friend, who is in her 60s, travels the world and enjoys her life. Her successful career and life-style that typifies an elite life is regarded as respectability by Mrs. Su's social circle. This is what distinguishes her from those people who graduated from a second class university. The report about Mrs. Su's lawyer friend pinpoints her perception about the hierarchy of universities and her earlier argumentation about the mass HE participation.

The relationship of Mrs. Su's told story and life history

The question that arises, at this point is an obvious one: what is the relationship between the past and present perspectives of Mrs. Su? Which biographical experiences have led to this particular presentation in her present perspective of needing to earn more money? What does this concern mean for the Su family?

At the life history level, Mrs. Su's case displays her identification with the State system and her desire to integrate into Chinese society, which was partly due to her early childhood experiences, where big houses and abundant resources were made available for her family even during the Chinese famine years. Such life experiences have fuelled a great sense of superiority and a belief that her father's overseas studies and access to scarce technical skills, determined the privileged status and wealth her family once possessed. Her friend's life

situation confirmed her belief that elite university qualifications are essential in accessing an elite status and bureaucratic influence.

At the conscious level in the present moment of the interview, past decisions about sending David to study at a New Zealand university are devaluated by reference to her son's latest decision to pursue his postgraduate studies in the context of today's system. Mrs. Su believes there are too many Chinese people going to university and many returning from overseas back to China, chasing too few prizes. Unlike Mrs. Su's father, David's experience of securing nothing more than junior posts in both New Zealand and China suggest that he is moving to a biography that is typical of non-graduate men of his age or that of graduates from second-class universities. It is worth noting that Mrs. Su tried to persuade her son to stay in Shanghai and to take over his father-in-law's business or to pursue other opportunities. David's father-in-law is one of China's so called "new rich". Mrs. Su feels that her son's overseas HE degree will no longer enable him better access to privileged status and influence. The alternative venue, as she sees it, is to ally with the new rich and to earn more money in order to restore the Su's former glories and cope with the threatened family identity, and to get ahead in present-day Shanghai China.

4.2.1.1b David's told story: Fear of stopping progression

David started his told story by introducing, with a mix of description and report, his family members in the context of his mother's overseas studies in Australia. We can speculate on why David highlighted his mother's overseas education. This highlighted the fact that he had a close bond with his mother and considered that he has been doing what his mother did, and that in reality experiencing the current decision of pursuing his postgraduate studies which is devalued by his mother.

The next part of David's presentation was a lengthy narration concerning secondary-school entrance examination. The narration is closely connected to his past perspective "*from the beginning of my primary school, I was constantly under the pressure of preparing for exams and competing for entrance to the most prestigious secondary school. Because such schooling will give you a betterment in later life.*" After indicating his concern about the success in the admission to the best key-point school in Shanghai, he draws back from the past and moves to the present perception: "*my goal for this part of my life has been fulfilled.*" From the second session of the interview, we gained that the belief of only a good school resulting in a betterment in later life is acquired through his parents. We can assume

that his parents played a significant role in this setting. For the Sus, college preparation starts from an early age. With entrance into the most prestigious college-preparatory school, David is seen to be on his way to fulfilling the wishes of his parents. The thematic field **'my family and my schooling in relation to entrance examination'** seems to be plausible for this stage of David's life story.

David then moved on the topic of schooling and related it to a brief report of his life in Shanghai Middle School, he steered his recollection to the final year of his college. He remembered he had to move between living in his aunt's home and his own chaotic home. When the university-entrance exam was approaching, David became anxious, and as a result, he had difficulty falling asleep during the three days of examinations. He explained to me, *"if my parents had told me not to think about going to a prestigious university so much; if they had told me I would have other alternative options, I would not have become so anxious and suffered from insomnia for three nights."* The Sus then declined the offer from the second-tier university as they felt it was demeaning for David not to be at one of the top four universities. It can be felt that both his parents' views and his own concern seemed determinant in the decision situation relating not to go a domestic second-tier university, which represented a threat to his personal and familial goals in achieving **'a glitter life and distinguished career'**. Failure to gain a position in a top university, combined with **a sense of felt guilty** towards David, the parents decided to send David abroad for his tertiary education. From this point, David can see in his parents the main people who are responsible for what has happened to him and their defined roles towards him. All this can be organised into the thematic field of **"my family and my future life in relation to the HE decision"**.

Next David discussed his life in New Zealand with a short report with reference to his studies. This is followed by a narration of his job history in the context of introducing a new manager to the factory (see life history 15 on page 80). The failure to reach a managerial position shattered his aspiration and orientation towards a distinguished career and glittering life. As he expressed: *"I was completely shocked by their arrangement."* When talking about his later life in New Zealand, the theme of shock and upset continued. He seems very confused and frustrated. David then went on to talk about his return to Shanghai and his routine job. In the last sequence of his story, he summarises his current life situation with "I thought I need to upgrade my knowledge and qualification and that might offer access to a better future."

David shows ambivalent feelings towards his current decision. The ambivalence for David is not only related to his current life situation but also bounded with the familial value which was instilled in his early age - only the most prestigious schools and universities can produce advanced learning and knowledgeable experts; and that offer access to a distinguished career and a glittering life.

4.2.2 Case 2: Mr. Shi and his son, Michael

The team looking at the biographies and family history of Mr. Shi and his son, Michael (a Chinese international student), are Professor Gu and Mr. Xu, who was also involved in the interpretation of the lived life and family history of Case 1.

	Lived Life & Family History	Propositions/Follow-up Hypotheses
1948-1966	<p>Mr. Shi's father was born in Wuxi and joined the army in 1948. Later, he was promoted to the Shanghai police force where he worked in the Appointments and Nominations Bureau until his appointment as District Commissioner of Police.</p> <p>Mr. Shi was born in 1950. He is the eldest child in the family and has two brothers.</p>	<p>1.1. His father's political background and occupational position indicate a promising future for Mr. Shi.</p> <p>Follow up hypotheses:</p> <p>1.1a. Because of his father's political status and occupation, the Shi family would have been able to avoid the purges of the Cultural Revolution.</p> <p>1.1b. He will become one of the 'peasant-worker-soldier students'.</p> <p><i>1.1c. Mr. Shi's father's influence and networks will result in Mr. Shi getting a good job.</i></p>
1966-1971 In the army	<p>Mr. Shi finished his junior high school studies when the Cultural Revolution commenced in 1966.</p> <p>He started his military service in the army in 1968, and was the first one in the army to join the Party.</p> <p>On the last day of finishing a local collaborative construction project, Mr. Shi worked 24 hours without a break, in order to ensure that he could out-perform his hard-working comrade who had worked two shifts consecutively, these being 16-hour days.</p> <p>Although his comrade was publicly praised by</p>	<p>2.1. Joining the Party and winning the silver award will facilitate his progression to senior positions in the army.</p> <p>2.1a. He will be promoted to an officer's position.</p> <p><i>2.1b. He will be posted to favourable workplaces (e.g., government agencies or public organizations) upon the completion of his military service.</i></p> <p>2.2. He has an overwhelming desire to compete with others and to impress others with socially recognised</p>

	the leaders for repeatedly working sixteen-hour days, Mr Shi won the silver award.	achievements.
1972	After national service in the army, Mr. Shi entered the police force.	<p><i>3.1. His father's power and influence will give him an advantage in job placement and the consequent acquisition of detective skills and knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>3.1a. He will acquire a lot detective knowledge and skills from his father.</i></p> <p><i>3.1b. His father is his role model.</i></p> <p><i>3.2. He will strive to pass the national university entrance examination when the entrance examination gets re-installed in 1977 (falsified).</i></p>
1973-1983	He was presented the Highly Commended Award for his assistance with the investigation of a particular case of organised criminal activity, which resulted in a seizure of 30,000RMB and the arrest of 3 people, at a time when the average monthly wages of a Chinese urban worker were 30-40RMB.	<p>4.1. The award will help him in accumulating political capital.</p> <p>4.2. He will develop a wide variety of techniques with which he conducts his investigations.</p> <p><i>4.3. The development of bureaucratic and professional police force during the late 1980s means that Mr. Shi might no longer be able to get promoted there. He might pursue a new avenue for his career development.</i></p> <p><i>4.3a. He will try something different when economic and political policy frees up greater business opportunities in the late 1980s.</i></p> <p>4.4. In many ways, Mr. Shi is an ideal police functionary; he is courageous and determined.</p>
1983-1989	<p>Mr. Shi married a woman who made her living selling fish in the local open-air market. The marriage did not gain his father's approval.</p> <p>They moved out to live with Mr. Shi's parents-in-law when Mr. Shi's father cut off his relationship with him.</p>	<p><i>5.1 Because of this traumatic life history, Mr. Shi will strive to cultivate his son to become an HE-degree holder.</i></p> <p><i>5.1a. He will have high expectations of Michael.</i></p> <p>5.2 The move means Mr. Shi is no longer</p>

	<p>When his son, Michael, was born in 1985, Mr. Shi did some sewing-work as a sideline at nights, in order to make a bit of extra money.</p> <p>Mr. Shi and his wife stayed on with his parents-in-law to help them to look after Michael.</p> <p>In 1989, he started his own business and became a small business owner.</p> <p>When Michael was four years old, his grandfather's brother brought him to visit his own grandparents and introduced Michael as his neighbour's grandson.</p>	<p>advantaged by his father's power and influence.</p> <p>5.3 Mr. Shi will accumulate a lot of money.</p> <p>5.3a. He will send Michael to study in college abroad.</p> <p>5.4. As Michael grows up with his grandparents, he will probably identify only them as his family members.</p>
1989-2001	<p>Michael started his high school in a local school and remained there until the start of his first year at college.</p> <p>His school work did not run smoothly apart from English and Maths.</p>	<p><i>6.1 Michael's academic performance seems unlikely to be sufficient to pass the university entrance examination.</i></p> <p>6.1a. His parents are unable to help him with his school work.</p> <p><i>6.1b. The family will consider sending Michael abroad to study.</i></p>
2002	<p>Michael went to ACG to do his IELTS course. He took the exam after three months of study, achieved a 6.5 overall score and shifted to the fast-track foundation course.</p> <p>In early 2003 he was offered a place at xx university.</p>	<p>7.1. Michael will complete the degree.</p> <p><i>7.1a. His father will be proud of his son's achievement.</i></p> <p>7.2. Michael's HE achievement might give hope to Mr. Shi, concerning the possibility of repairing the relationship breakdown with his own father.</p> <p>Counter hypothesis</p> <p><i>7.3. Because of his past academic performance, Michael's experience at university won't be without difficulties.</i></p>
2004	<p>After his first semester, Michael decided to go back to China during Christmas break. During his return in China, he visited his paternal grandparents, where he was turned down (Michael's grandparents declined to meet with him). He left a message and some New Zealand-made health food on the door-</p>	<p>8.1. This will be a turning point for the Shi, in the form of family reunion and renewed cohesion.</p>

	mat. He told his grandparents that he was now doing his undergraduate studies at a New Zealand university.	
2004-2011	<p>During the second year of his study, Michael was unprepared to comprehend a wide range of subjects, which resulted in him stopping going to lectures. He has still not told his father about this.</p> <p>Later, he enrolled at a private institute, where he obtained a business diploma.</p> <p>Mr. Shi's father passed away in 2009.</p> <p>To celebrate his remarkable achievements, in 2010 his father spent 1million RMB on Michael's wedding ceremony at a five-star hotel.</p>	<p>9.1 Failing to complete his HE degree might panic Michael into not returning to China.</p> <p>9.1a. He will try to stay in New Zealand.</p>
2011	Michael and his wife opened a pet shop in Auckland	

4.2.2.1Case2

4.2.2.1a Mr. Shi's told story

Mr. Shi was the only parent interviewee who greeted me at the Metro station. On the way to his home, he asked me about my travel schedule. I told him I was staying with my cousin and her son, my nephew, who was planning to study abroad, and they wanted to talk to me about the destination country and which programme might be right for them. Mr. Shi continued to ask me about which district my cousin lives in. I replied that they used to live in Xuhui district (an affluent residential area), but have recently moved to Hongkou (a less well-off area), after my nephew failed, to get a place at a good college in Xuhui due to his entrance exam results. What is more, my nephew's apparent dislike of his new school and his under-achievements in English may also result in him not being able to pass the university entrance examination.

From what I gathered from his son, Mr. Shi cut off the relationship with his father because his father did not approve his marriage to a woman, who, at the time, was selling fish for a living in the local open-air market. I came to the interview with an interest in what would be

revealed by Mr. Shi about his broken relationship with his father. I wondered whether my prior knowledge of the entanglement between Mr. Shi and his father would affect the way in which how I carried out the actual interview and what I expected from the interview process.

When I asked the initial question, (“Will you tell me the story of your life and your family?”), to which Mr. Shi first responded:

“Sending Michael to study abroad is our wish as his parents.” Mr. Shi then described himself as being a member of one of the *three years of graduating juniors (the classes of 1966, 1967, 1968)*, who lost his chance of fulfilling his wish of gaining higher education. He also explained that the pressure induced by his poor English performance prevented him from sitting university entrance examinations.

1.1. Mr. Shi wanted to convey that he was supposed to go to college and university; however, as a member of *the three years of graduating juniors*, he was unable to go to university as he should have. He wanted to legitimate that his HE non-participation was mainly due to political circumstances, and his unfulfilled HE pursuit was the main reason to send Michael to study abroad.

1.2. Could the small talk about my nephew on the way home have encouraged Mr. Shi to bring out this inspired excuse for his unfulfilled HE goal? According to university admission policies, English was not a compulsory subject in university selection examinations in 1977 and 1978, so this is evidence that the explanation Mr. Shi provided me for his HE non-participation is mainly a result of the context of my interview (hypothesis 1.2 is confirmed) and is not related back to his past perspective and actions at the time when examinations were reinstated in 1977.

Mr. Shi then related his own unrealised hopes for his son’s future, and his determination to cultivate his son to become a university student. There followed a report about a situation that harked back to the days before 1966, when migrant graduates who were originally not native Shanghainese were encouraged to stay in Shanghai and were assigned jobs, in order to fit better with Shanghai’s needs and development strategy. Under this policy, Mr. Shi recalled that 24 non-Shanghainese graduates were hired at the Appointments and Nominations Bureau, where he worked. Mr. Shi remarked that, at that moment, he had made up his mind to make his son become a member of this highly educated group. Mr. Shi then talked about his son’s schooling, with which he did not involve himself too much, nor outsource it to private tutors.

The next global evaluation was presented: *“My family is traditional; my father is Zhabei District Commissioner of Police, so I was the first one in the army who joined the Party. So whatever we did, we had no choice but to be sure to do our best. It was a fundamental principle of morality - first of all, to win glory for my father; the second, to win honour for myself; and the third, I should set a good example for my son. That’s the fundamental principle of being human.”*

2.1. The situation in Shanghai that Mr. Shi recalled could have been the 1980s case, rather than one before 1966; however, he indicated a reluctance to talk about this instance further. It could be hypothesised that this displacement arose because Mr. Shi did not consider an HE degree as socially and politically necessary but only an alternative instrument for further official advancement. As a son of the privileged military elite, education credentials were less significant at that moment.

2.2. The global evaluation through which Mr. Shi first presented his father, with reference to his occupational status, related to his immediate association with his father through his own activity in the army. In this association, Mr. Shi uses a word (‘so’), on which is pinned, presumably, his past concerns. From this, the hypothesis is formulated that joining the Party at that time signified more than having an HE degree. Evidently, hypotheses 1.2 and 1.3 that arose from the first segment of the text have gained support in this second segment of the transcript. At the same time, this proposition leads to and is compatible with the global evaluation of the Shi’s principle.

2.3. Up to this point, a theme running through Mr. Shi’s biographical construction and interpretation is that: being a member of the Class of 1966 he missed his chance to achieve a university education, but, as the eldest son of the District Commissioner of Police, he would strive to do his best to cultivate his son to be an HE degree holder, in order to fulfil the wish he had missed out on. The patriarchal triangular relationship forms connections between his father, himself and his son which is his concern about the fundamental principle of the Shi’s, that is, *whatever we did, we had no choice but to be sure to do our best. It was a fundamental principle of morality - first of all, to win glory for my father; the second, to win honour for myself; and the third, I should set a good example for my son.”*

3.1. Mr. Shi’s next revelation was introduced with the topic of ‘Michael’s schooling’, with reference to the status of the key-point (prestigious) high school and college his son attended.

However, it is important to note that the school his son attended was actually not a key-point one. After wondering why Mr. Shi refers to the prestigious status of the school, it is suggested that the content and organisation of this sequence follows the preceding theme, and that the importance of being a ‘key-point school’ student is underpinned by both his concerns with the elite status of his family of origin and social positioning, and the identity Mr. Shi is trying to construct for himself and his family.

Mr. Shi then changed the topic to ‘the selection of programmes and courses’ and ‘reasons for choosing the programme of City Planning’. The driving force behind this choice comes from his knowledge associated with the recent development of the Shanghai Pudong New Area, and this affected his belief that graduates with modern planning qualifications would gain an advantage in the job market in Shanghai and will be recruited by **first-tier work organisations**. In rationalising his son’s educational choices and broken promises regarding higher education and its consequences for securing a respectable job in a first-tier work organization, Mr. Shi claimed that privileged government officials mobilise their influence and resources to maximise the chance of their own children getting a better occupation. Compared to them, children without this ascribed status (parental status), are outside this privileged system of being able to access and attain stable and middle-class jobs. As he comments, “*you must have guanxi (connections) to gain access to privileged jobs in well-known institutions, or you come up with nothing.*” He then switched from the issue of inequality in opportunity straight to the side effects of economic reforms –the heavy loss of state assets converted into personal property, and unprecedented numbers of overseas Chinese returning to join the competitive job market.

4.1. These accounts are not necessarily incompatible or mutually exclusive. It can be suggested that Mr. Shi seems to have incomprehensive and unresolved issues around his son’s job-seeking and current-life situation. These are in contrast with his beliefs and knowledge about the qualification his son gained from such a prestigious university, and particularly from one of its specialised programmes. It is a fact that the highest qualification Michael acquired is a business diploma from a private tertiary institute, which he attained after failing his studies at university.

4.2. It could possibly be suggested that Mr. Shi’s argumentation about the influence of privileged parents in controlling entry to ‘above-average’ job opportunities and advantageous positions might refer to the past, in which he personally experienced preferential treatment in

the People's Liberty Army (PLA) in 1968, and through his father's connections gained privileged access to positions in the most important areas of the police force.

4.3 A further hypothesis could be made that the break-up of Mr. Shi's family of origin and its connected social ties made him unable to resolve the problems his son had encountered in the context of today's recruitment system.

Unlike the lengthy argumentation in the account of his son's life, Mr. Shi used different narrative devices in presenting his own life. The first narrative reflected his experiences in the Police Force in the 1980s, where he worked for the Personnel and General Division. The leader thought Mr. Shi's age made him appropriate to carry out the work of looking after the administration of the Police Force's civilian personnel.

According to Mr. Shi, he was respected in his dealings with strained family relationships and local delinquent gang members in the community. This led him to recall another instance of being respected. He used large monetary incentives to recruit blood donors, thus reducing reluctance and negative emotions which most unit leaders had encountered when soliciting voluntary blood donation. It is extremely noteworthy that Mr. Shi was able to use 300 RMB as an incentive to donors, as monthly incomes rarely reached above 40 RMB for city workers in the 1980s, and this clearly indicates the power of Mr. Shi's position. In effect, he not only met the task's quotas assigned by higher local authorities to his unit, he also used 50 percent of the incentives intended for the blood donors (even though it was done with mutual consent from the donors) to fund a number of banquets for his work unit leaders in restaurants along the Shanghai Bund.

5.1. What does seem certain is that the practices behind this instance mirror to some extent, the mode of practice concerning the purported influence of privileged people in their acquisition of positions of power for their connections, as argued by Mr. Shi in hypothesis 4.2.

5.2. The above argumentations, to some extent, echo the current prevailing public discourse. *This is an era in which one's father's rank held in the Party, government, or army matters and determines accessibility to and acquisition of privileged posts.* People whose fathers are prominent leaders in the various national, provincial and municipal bureaus have an immediate advantage in the market, in comparison with the children of 'have-nots'.

While reporting on the life change of getting into his garment business in Nanjing Road (one

of the world's busiest shopping streets), he makes a link between people talking about the first generation of roadside entrepreneurs and the reasons for his resignation from his former organisation.

6.1. The street traders were, at that time, mostly from marginal backgrounds, such as ex-prisoners. This explains why it is that he distanced himself from his former organisation. Although he speaks of ending his relationship with his organisation for these reasons, it is probable that there is a link between immediate termination of his kinship tie with his family of origin, and his father's disapproval of his marital choice. The social and economic costs for Mr. Shi's marital choice were considerable. He lost his relationship with his father, and his post at the Police Force also ended.

6.2. Perhaps Mr. Shi's strained relationship with his father might pertain to the likely negative identity generated by public discourse about the roadside entrepreneurs during the economic reform period.

6.3. There is also his wife, whose family and occupation background might be regarded as degrading and inferior by the standard of his family of origin.

Mr. Shi then begins a five-page account of his son's childhood. Topics ranged from 'feeding nutritious food' to 'diverse verbal interaction and stimulating toys through his son's infancy and toddlerhood.' He continues on his son's educational history from 'dropping him off every weekend at the English tutoring class' to 'finally sending him abroad to study.' Mr. Shi concludes that *"the most important skill in securing a decent job in Chinese society, as the importance of possession of a specialised technical skill, is skill in handling interpersonal relationships."* He characterises and theorises this skill as the science of human relationships.

7.1. These caring acts and educational efforts expressed in Mr. Shi's child-rearing practices represent, on the whole, Mr. Shi's endeavours to do his best for his son, within the means available. They show his concern in bringing up his child in terms of good health and education, practices that were thought proper for securing his son's future career, that exhibit 'delicacy and decency', and that would evoke a sense of admiration and respect, where he himself was eased out of the privileged group of civil-servants.

7.2. This could encapsulate Mr. Shi's own patriarchal belief of what a father's role is. To Mr. Shi, a father should take responsibility not only for his children's material support but also for their intellectual and spiritual guidance. A father represents his family in the community.

7.3. Inherent in the topic of his son's childhood and education is Mr. Shi's proposition, that apart from the importance of possession of a specialised technical skill, the most essential skill is the one in handling interpersonal relationships.

To explain his 'delicate interpersonal relationship' thesis, Mr. Shi refers to his four former colleagues when they were employed at the regional Crime and Security Department. Now they all hold positions at the level of superintendent, despite the fact that Mr. Shi's detective skills and analytical abilities are far more superior. He then provided an example in which he solved a case while other investigators had failed to obtain a confession from the suspect (see life history 1973-1983).

Mr. Shi summed up his perspective by recounting the case of this offender *"I think the cohort of three year graduating juniors, just as what is believed in our folklores, is most competent generation so far. Many of those have become Chinese senior officials from sitting for university entrance examinations in 1977 and 1978 (the cohort of examination-era students) and from acquisition of a HE degree."* However, he believes that the simultaneous increase in the corruption of governmental officials is also caused by this cohort. He feels that it is just the result of smart people manipulating state assets and policies in their smart way. *"In many cases, the Party usually just employs the stupid not the smart. If you are outsmart your leader, where they place a future for themselves? There is no justice. Leaders are known to give their ears only to the flatterers; if you are smart but disobedient, you will not be ennobled and become a favourite subordinate."*

"Everyone has an aspiration for an ideal job. Once the ideal job is solved, a fairer work environment cannot be guaranteed, the promise of job is only an illusion."

Mr. Shi then recounted an event that happened at the time when he served in the army, of how he won the silver award, not by his hard-work but by his trickery (see life history in the army 1966-1971).

The perspective and orientation under which the topics and events of winning the silver medal in the army and the Highly Commended Award for his assistance with the investigation of a particular case of criminal activity in the police were remembered, selected and organised in a field where the theme refers to and derives from the Shi's fundamental principle of morality: *"My family is traditional; my father is Zhabei District Commissioner of Police so I was the first one in the army who joined the Party. Whatever we did, we had*

no choice but to be sure to do our best. It was a fundamental principle of morality - first of all, to win glory for my father; the second, to win honour for myself; and the third, set a good example for my son." In the same thematic field, the theme with reference to the decision of cultivating his son to become a university-goer, surfaced.

Mr. Shi's told story

Mr. Shi's has told a story of attempts to merge his biographical conception of what HE meant for him and for his family, and his knowledge in the realm of personal relationships. The theme permeating through Mr. Shi's story is *"he missed his chance of fulfilling his HE pursuit, as a consequence of chaotic socio-political circumstances, but, as the eldest son of the District Commissioner of Police, he would strive to do his best to cultivate his son to be an HE degree-holder, in order to preserve family prestige and elite status, that is, to win glory for his father, to win glory for himself, and to emulate example for his son."* At the same time, Mr. Shi is convinced that *"possession of a specialised technical skill, however, is not sufficient in securing privileged jobs and prestige. The youth are facing differentiated opportunities primarily depended upon the extent of influence of parents' ranks and networks."*

Reconstruction of life history and microanalysis

What were Mr. Shi's past perspectives, at the time when his family made their HE choices and decision-making?

Mr. Shi's own father's elite status and his own experience during the 1980s (when the government was actively promoting young cadres with a college education to positions of power) personified Mr. Shi's wish to cultivate his son to be a HE degree-holder.

He also grasped the linkage between educational attainment and pathways to positions of power and authority, as he mentioned the association of his four former colleagues and their upwardly-mobile positions in the bureaucratic hierarchy.

The act of sending Michael abroad to study appeared to be constructed from Mr. Shi's sense of duty to the father's role, and because of his patriarchal orientation. Mr. Shi's response shed light on this feeling of responsibility, *"for Michael today, as his parents we have actually done a lot in life; finally, I have completed my task as a father."* At this point, everything seemed natural to Mr. Shi and his life seemed back in his control again. Michael's educational attainment may have been seen as a natural solution to the problem of uniting his

father, himself and his son together.

He went on to evaluate his decision to send Michael to study overseas. He mentioned how proud he felt at Michael's achievement. Unlike Michael, Mr. Shi's two younger brothers (this was the first time in his lengthy life story that he mentioned his siblings) attended only second-class universities. Apparently, Michael's educational attainment at a first-class university is the highest level among the Shi's extended family.

It can be concluded that Mr. Shi's need to renew the respectability of his immediate family and his need for the continuity of his family of origin may have been fulfilled, through the sought-after educational status achieved by his son. This educational status is defined by Mr. Shi, in the end, as positions of influence and prestige which manifest throughout his story as his identification with his father the 'District Commissioner of Policy', as a label and as an identity.

The relationship between Mr. Shi's life history and his told story

What is the relationship between past and present perspectives held by Mr. Shi? Which biographical experiences have led to this purported statement that "the youth are facing differentiated opportunities primarily dependent upon the extent of influence of their parents' ranks and networks"?

As an offspring of a previously-privileged government official, Mr. Shi's past life experience illustrates how his father's bureaucratic position contributed to greater opportunities for Mr. Shi in accessibility to and acquisition of positions of authority and prestige under the regime of Mao.

His son's employment situation at the time of my interview appears to re-create and reinforce Mr. Shi's belief in the old system: it is the interplay of informal, personalised, and socialised formats of arrangements that structure one's prospects in Chinese lives, as opposed to formal, bureaucratic and legal processes of opportunity and resource distribution. Perhaps this is the only excuse that Mr. Shi could conjure up for his son's lack of acceptance by first-class and well-known work organisations.

4.2.2.1b Michael's told story: A need to repair the relationship between his father and his paternal grandfather in order to perform his filial duty

With extraordinary complexity of relations within his family, Michael started his life story.

The hero, his father, whose own father was in a commanding position in the Police, loved a fish-seller, his mother, and who encountered strong discontent from his family as a result. Finally his father abandoned his original family and career; at which point all relations were cut off. Michael used the complex family relations as a framework for the start of his biography, we might speculate on this relationship between father, mother, and grandfather would throw light on the HE decision. In the first sequence of the interview, he presented this family history being told by his mother. In the next sequence of the interview, he repeatedly argued that he is a profoundly shy person and has difficulties in recollecting things and experiences. Many people never think him as a shy person that he actually feels himself of to be. This explicit argument could be attributed to negative outcomes of his studies at university (see family history 2004-2011). The thematic field of "my life relating to my complex family relations" could be forward.

In the next sequence, Michael focuses on the theme of his father in the context of his roadside business in the 1990s. He remembered to refuse to lend assistance to his father when Mr. Shi carried bulk goods from Shanghai railway station to his shop on Nanjing Road on his tricycle-rickshaw. Michael felt stigmatised by the judgements from neighbours and observers on the road. This detailed memory-based narration clearly refuted his early argumentation concerning his difficulties in his recollections. He then changed to the topic of his family's decision to send him abroad to study. He started this sequence by saying: "my academic performance is really bad in high school, apart from maths and English", presenting himself incompetent in other academic subjects, which, in his today's introspection, resulted in his failure in the western university system. Within this context, he presented his difficulties in completing the university courses and explained that to study abroad was mainly arranged by his mother in the hope that he would successfully achieve university entrance overseas. This decision was largely due to the fact that he was unlikely to gain a domestic university entrance. In this context, his mother's decision and efforts were in fact parallel with that of his father's. Mr. Shi strives to fulfil a delayed duty of filiality, that is, to win glory for his father and for himself. In turn, Michael's defence of family essence of filial compliance was eventually realised through gaining admission into a prestigious university.⁵ In the last

⁵In Western societies, it is easier for students to get university admission than it is to graduate from university. In China it is vice versa. It is much easier to graduate from university than it is to pass the NCEE and gain university admission. The defining examination for Chinese is the NCEE examination.

sequence of the first session of his interview, he repeated his difficulties in remembering things because he doesn't care. "Unless something has deep-meaning for him, he can remember it."

With my question of "do you have any particular memories about your grandfather?", Michael started the second session of his interview. It is interesting to note that he started a vivid narration concerning the time when he was 4 years old. His grandfather's brother brought him to visit his own grandparents but introduced him as his neighbour's grandson. He then continued with the theme of his grandfather and this time is in the context of his attempt to visit to him with news of his university offer. He asserted that "*I fulfilled my duty.*" With all duties performed, the social orders and relations within the family were expected to return to normal. This second session of interview suggests the opposite of his claim to having a poor memory- only something has deep meaning for him, he can remember it.

4.2.3 Case 3: Mr. Xue and his son, Richard

The team involved in the analysis of Case 3 are Mrs. Ma and Mr. Xu.

	Lived Life & Family History	Propositions/Follow-up Hypotheses
1951-1972	<p>Mr. Xue was born in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province in 1951.</p> <p>Upon his graduation in 1969, Mr. Xue was encouraged to stay at his college where he started his teaching, due to his performance at school and his family origin.</p> <p>In 1972, Mr. Xue was assigned to a post in a state-owned factory, manufacturing garment accessories.</p>	<p>1. Considering the social and historical effects on the '4050s' generation, if Mr. Xue will not be able to gain access to a university after 1977, his later life will be very hard.</p> <p>The '4050s' commonly refers to the generation that spent their teen years toiling in the countryside, and were laid off in their 40s and 50s. This generation failed to regain employment, due to their low skills and lack of competence.</p>
1975	In 1975, Mr. Xue was admitted to university as a 'worker-peasant-soldier' student.	<p><i>2.1. If Mr. Xue is capable, he will become an entrepreneur when economic and political policy frees up greater business opportunities in the late 1980s.</i></p> <p>2.2. Mr. Xue will not be assigned to a scientific post or a position in government where examination-era students are favoured with their superior theoretical</p>

		and technical knowledge ⁶ .
1979-1995	<p>After completing his studies at university, Mr. Xue returned to the factory where he had come from.</p> <p>A joint-venture corporation affiliated to the state-owned factory received him as the manager of the technical department. His position focuses specifically on production design and quality control.</p> <p>Mr. Xue's son, Richard, was born in Yangzhou in 1984.</p> <p>In 1995, Mr. Xue and his two colleagues from the former factory opened a private company in Shanghai, manufacturing garment accessories.</p>	<p>Hypothesis 2.1. has gained support.</p> <p>3.1. Economic benefits of engaging in manufacturing garment accessories will be large enough for Mr. Xue to spend money on his son, Richard's, education.</p> <p>Counter-hypothesis:</p> <p>3.2. Given the limits of Mr. Xue's business scale and nature of the manufacturing industry, Mr. Xue will not make enough money to significantly fund Richard's education.</p> <p>3.2a. Mr. Xue will not be likely to send Richard to the elite American or European universities because he will not be able to afford the fees.</p>
2003	Richard received an offer from a second-tier university in China, which is on the list of 211 Project.	<p>4.1. Richard will go to that second-tier university.</p> <p>Counter-hypothesis</p> <p><i>4.2. Mr. Xue will not be content with his son enrolling at a second-tier university, and as a consequence, he will advise Richard to study abroad.</i></p>
2004-2012	<p>Richard started his undergraduate studies in City Planning at University of Auckland (UoA) in 2004.</p> <p>After his first year studying at UoA, Richard left for a place at a private institute to study a two-year diploma in Architecture, working as a part-time cleaner.</p> <p>In 2006, Richard returned to UoA to continue his studies in City Planning, working as a waiter in a hotel and running a small café to pay off the mortgage on an apartment that his father had put a deposit on. The café closed down in 2011.</p> <p>At the time of interview, Richard had just completed his undergraduate studies at UoA.</p>	<p>Hypothesis 4.2 is confirmed.</p> <p>5.1. Richard will go on to do further studies.</p> <p>5.2. Richard will try to find work.</p> <p>5.3 Or he will leave New Zealand and go back to China.</p>

⁶For details on cohorts of examination-era and WPS students see literature review, PARTII.

4.2.3.1 Case 3

4.2.3.1a Mr. Xue's told story

The interview with Mr. Xue took place at his office. By the time when I arrived to begin the interview, I learned that Mr. Xue had already listened to the recording of his son's interview with me, which was also recorded by his son's I-phone, three times.

Mr. Xue began his main narration session with reference to my research project: *"I am grateful to you for offering me the opportunity to learn more about my son and his life trajectory."* Then he explained why he advised Richard to study at a New Zealand university.

"One important reason I wanted to send Richard abroad was to provide him with an opportunity of becoming more independent and self-reliant. I think life experiences gained from living independently are relevant to one's competence in solving problems. It is as important as the professional and technical knowledge Richard acquired at university. In particular, an individual's platform is essential, and even more important, than the use of technical skills as a graduate enters the labour market. Even though Richard had received an offer from a Chinese university, it was not a particularly good university. It means his resume will not be able to gain the attention necessary to get interviews with globally elite companies."

1.1. In this initial statement, is Mr. Xue relating to me in the same way that a Chinese government official uses to manage a media agency? Mr. Xue might have made assumption that the materials he is volunteering are helpful to my research.

1.2. It could be suggested that Mr. Xue's opening remarks imply that he may be needing to raise his difficulties about things with his son experienced in New Zealand and would get into dialogue with me on his son, rather than his own childhood.

1.3. Mr. Xue's self-explication might be due to dominant contemporary discourse concerning education acting as a platform for young people who have lower levels of political capital. This means one's educational background from world-leading universities will enable them to compete for elite jobs.

1.4. The opening remarks might be due to Mr. Xue's past experiences. This perspective

accords with the stigma of being a ‘worker-peasant-soldier’- student in the post-Mao era. The stigmatised status most ‘worker-peasant-soldier’ graduates experienced along with occupational stress experienced throughout the later lives of the ‘1940s to 1950s (4050s)’ generation (see life history 1951-1972 & 1975) is perhaps connected to Mr. Xue’s concern for his son’s educational platforms.

Mr. Xue resumed his discussion by talking about the expectations he had of Richard; he described the importance he places on becoming a useful person who can make a contribution to society through educational and professional experiences. He talked also of the rules and concerns he has set up for Richard in coping with his life and studies in a foreign environment. Then Mr. Xue asked me what my impressions were of Richard, having just completed the biographical interview with his son.

2.1. His son’s welfare certainly plays an important role in Mr. Xue’s present concerns. Hypothesis 1.2 gains some support.

2.2. The expectations Mr. Xue holds for Richard to ‘become a useful person who can make contributions to society’ seem to reflect Mr. Xue’s sense of belonging to society. This social conscience still remains deeply embedded in his identification with the collective solidarity and membership of the idealised scholar-official.

2.3. The expectations might be linked to Mr. Xue’s concerns that are troubling to most of the ‘4050s’ generation.

2.4. What does Richard’s professional provision mean for Mr. Xue’s expectations? Will Richard’s professional prospects in New Zealand, in this instance, be followed by a familial plan of international emigration?

The next focus Mr. Xue discussed is two personal crises he has had in his life: one was the Cultural Revolution in his teenager years; the other was large-scale SOE reforms, which were launched from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s. In this context, I encountered the term “the platform”, in which the connection between the platform and the institutional pitfalls experienced by WPS students and SOEs workers has been experienced.

The effect of economic reforms, as what Mr. Xue pointed out, is the feeling of one’s survival being threatened, when enterprises were abandoned and workers were marginalised out of the labour market during the large-scale SOE reforms happened in the 1980s. “*At the time in*

Yangzhou, all the state-owned enterprises involved in manufacturing garment accessories were shut down and workers were laid off and forced to look after themselves. Among them, a large portion sunk into poverty.”

When Mr. Xue presented this painful aspect of SOE reforms, he recounted a dream that he at during a Chinese spring festival ten years after he had left the factory. He remembered that in the dream, as the manager of technical production, he was asked by the factory director, to give a speech to factory workers. He said he felt responsible for the enforced lay-offs, but, at the same time, he held a controversial view of the issue. He considered it the responsibility of policy makers to manage the process and post laid-off situations, and that it was not relevant to his role. However, later he came to a new understanding of the dream, because he was not able to forget his personal experience when the firm was forced to close. He decided he wanted to help the workers to go back to work and to earn a basic living.

3.1. This narration replayed the damaging effects that the SOE closures and laid-off staff had on Mr. Xue, and demonstrated the fact that the laid-off workers have stayed in Mr. Xue's mind for many years, and apparently remain there, the cause of dreams in which he repeatedly experiences the traumatic event. Hypotheses 1.4 & 2.3 are confirmed.

3.2. The theme of ‘Abandoner vs. the abandoned’, revealed through Mr. Xue's recounting, make it seem possible that the anxiety he felt about the reforms of occupational structure contributed to his decisions to send Richard to study abroad, instead of pursuing education in a non-985 University. This decision seems to have been oriented toward his expectations of his son- becoming employable and doing something worthwhile when he graduates from university and enters to the labour market.

In his final line of argument, Mr. Xue seemed to have moved away from his socialist sympathy of the workers of the SOEs in the context of last century. There was, however, a marked reformist tone underpinning his perceptions of the current and future ventures of private enterprises: the questions of the enterprises' sustainable development and continuation. ‘Although hard work and opportunity is important, an individual's platform vis-a-vis global integration is to have a profound impact on the future of his positional competition.’ He then linked this evaluative summary to the familial management characterised in local enterprises. Where the first generation of entrepreneurs are in their 60s, the future of these enterprises will be focused on the question of how their grown-up children will take over and carry on the business of family enterprises.

4.1. This evaluation reveals Mr. Xue's anxiety and concerns about the question of the sustainability of these local family-run private enterprises, and this situation generates his concerns about his son's future.

The relationship of Mr. Xue's Told Story and Life History

The contemporary perspective of Mr. Xue contained in his overall biographical construction and interpretation is addressed as follows:

Upon completion of his studies at university, Mr. Xue returned to the state-owned factory where he had worked before he was recruited and trained as a 'worker-peasant-soldier' student. He was fortunate in choosing to leave his work in the state sector and setting up his own business in Shanghai. In contrast, most of his university classmates were compelled to leave their state sector jobs or were persuaded to take early-retirement, under the persuasive pressure of the large-scale SOE reforms of the marketising economy throughout the last decade of twentieth century. As a permanent secretary of the national association of garment accessory enterprises, Mr. Xue's current entrepreneur-bureaucracy perspective is that future success depends on an individual's platform; that is the most important selling point one has when approaching elite enterprises for employment.

Which biographical experiences led to Mr. Xue placing so much importance on the necessity of building a platform to use for his son's future prospects? What does the concern with his son's platform mean for the Xue's family?

At the turn of the twentieth century, Mr. Xue observed the rise of private sector enterprises as the state sector firms declined and gradually vanished in Chinese society. Power will continue to reside in these successful, powerful, influential and wealthy entrepreneurs. Towards the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the first generation of these entrepreneurs ought to reach their late 60s; this requires would-be young entrepreneurs to take over the businesses. In effect, these positions will be filled by; their sons or son-in-laws, given the inextricable connection between familial management and continuity embedded in the practices of these enterprises.

Having a degree from an elite university is no longer a bonus but a prerequisite in today's highly competitive market. Successful and powerful entrepreneurs desire candidates with recognised qualities in both education and work experience in a foreign environment because they know these credentials will qualify a would-be entrepreneur to keep the promises held

for sustainable development and the reproduction of their enterprises. When Mr. Xue saw that Richard only got an offer from a non-985 university, he recalled the situation the WTS students had faced. He decided to send Richard abroad to study because he believed the reformers in the market system would only “pick the winners” (Kasper, 1982, p.166) in their recruiting measures.

Such platform diversity also indicates the reconfiguration and extension of existing social networks and relationships in the structures of collectivity. This collectivity structure and process is characterised by the pattern of family solidarity and reproduction in the Xue family.

4.2.3.1b Richard's told story: We have to separate in order to improve the future of our family

Richard's life story is organised from the outset via a short description with spatial reference to where he was born and where his early childhood was spent. This is followed by a report on his schooling in the thematic context of his father's job transition in 1995 to Shanghai. The separation with his father made him think of the family as disintegrated. Even his mother and he were reluctant but accepted his father's job shift when they realised that his migration to Shanghai would make a better future life for their family. In the absence of his father's presence, his mother exercised very stern discipline on his studies and life. As Richard puts it, *“I am a goody-goody boy. My mother is very restrictive, School and home are the main places where my life has been lived.”*

In the following sequence of three-page narration, Richard continues with the theme of separation, this time in the context of the decision to support him to study in New Zealand. He portrays his mother as unsure about the decision but finally relenting to his father's proposal. He wasn't sure of what to expect, studying abroad. To begin with, he was excited and full of anticipation. But when the time came to leave home, he was sad to leave his mother behind. **For Richard, however, separation is perceived as supportive for the reconciliation of education/work and family life.**

When he turns to the topic of a new life phase in New Zealand, he becomes active and shows enthusiasm for exploring his life in New Zealand: his part-time job, cafe store and his apartment. All these are linked with his father through his support, strategically and financially. In the ensuing sequence, a report on 'family reunion' continues and ends on a

argumentation about his future career prospects. Richard's father's migration to Shanghai and his overseas studies reconstructed their family history and his personal biography, leading him to conclude that separation is unavoidable for the sake of the whole family.

The HE decision for Richard could be read as his father setting the agenda and his mother and himself being upset about it but not resisting.

4.2.4 Case 4; Mr. Kong and his son, Steven

The team looking at the lived history of Mr. Kong and his son, Steven (a Chinese international student) is composed of Professor. Gu and Mrs. Ma.

	Lived Life & Family History	Propositions/Follow-up Hypotheses
1961	<p>Mr. Kong's father (Granddad) was born in Hunan in 1937.</p> <p>Mr. Kong's father joined the army in his teens and left his hometown in Hunan, in 1956, to go to Shanghai as a soldier. Later he took a role as a confidential secretary to his senior Communist Party leader in the People's Liberation Army (PLA).</p> <p>Mr. Kong was born in 1961. At the time, Mr. Kong's father worked in a Chinese newspaper agency in Beijing, while Mr. Kong's mother worked in Sichuan.</p> <p>Because of Mr. Kong's parents' separation, his hukou (place of permanent residence) was finally registered in Shanghai, where Mr. Kong's maternal grandparents live.</p> <p>Mr. Kong and his brothers grew up with their grandparents in Shanghai, and his youngest brother was born in 1973 and was raised by Mr. Kong's parents.</p>	<p>1.1 Given Mr. Kong's family background, the hypothesis could be made that Mr. Kong was not allowed to go as his father's companion to Beijing, which indicates that Mr. Kong's father was only a junior officer or a guardsman in the PLA.</p> <p>Senior party leaders are usually accompanied on their work allocation by their wives and children.</p> <p><i>1.2. There is no detailed information revealed about Mr. Kong's maternal grandparents.</i></p> <p><i>It could be further suggested that neither the families of Mr. Kong's father nor mother have a firm footing among the wealthy merchants, scholars, or highly-ranked cadres.</i></p> <p>Follow up hypotheses:</p> <p>1.2a. Because of his family's background, Mr. Kong will not be able to enjoy advantageous opportunities in his life.</p> <p><i>1.2b. Mr. Kong's youngest brother will enjoy education advantages compared with his two elder brothers.</i></p> <p><i>1.3. The physical separation from his parents might lead to Mr. Kong's emotional needs being unfulfilled. Without parental presence and protection, Mr. Kong will tend to become either quick-tempered or cowardice.</i></p>

1975-1979	<p>Mr. Kong started his high school studies in 1975.</p> <p>During the Cultural Revolution, most schools were closed and classes were stopped. It was books in the community library that caught Mr. Kong's attention and he used these to pass the time away.</p> <p>In 1977, the University Entrance Examination was reinstated.</p> <p>In the early of 1978, the girl next door to Mr. Kong was enrolled in the foundation course needed for entry to university.</p> <p>After having read the prescribed textbook for the foundation course and having prepared for three months, Mr. Kong took his diagnosis tests in Chinese and Maths.</p> <p>In 1979, Mr. Kong sat the university entrance examination, upon the completion of his foundation course.</p>	<p>2.1 Hypothesis 1.2 gained a certain support.</p> <p><i>2.1a. Absence of academic guidance from his grandparents on how to study and prepare for the university entrance examination means that the probability that Mr. Kong will be admitted into a bachelor programme at University is small.</i></p> <p>(During the Cultural Revolution, most scholars themselves continued to tutor their children themselves at home.)</p> <p>Counter-hypothesis:</p> <p>2.2 He will get a place at university.</p> <p>2.3 Mr. Kong has an inquisitive mind and ambition for his future life.</p> <p><i>2.3a. His knowledge of literature absorbed in the library will facilitate his future career.</i></p>
1979-1992	<p>Mr. Kong was admitted by a polytechnic institute and majored in Mechanics.</p> <p>Upon graduation in 1981, Mr. Kong was assigned to a state-owned manufacturing plant. Polytechnic graduates at that time could choose between 'front-line' production jobs or office jobs, according to their will and their interests.</p> <p>Mr. Kong did not take his first position as a junior officer, but stayed in a front line positions for 2 years.</p> <p>After two-years serving in the front line, Mr. Kong was promoted, out of a pool of more than 1000 employees to Youth League Secretary of the factory.</p>	<p>3.1.Mr. Kong's proven skill in mechanics and literature appealed to his superiors in the factory.</p> <p>3.1a. Mr. Kong will move to a trajectory that pushes him more toward the direction of bureaucratic career.</p> <p>3.1b. He will become an ideological assistant to his superiors.</p> <p><i>3.2 His promotion echoes state policy that young cadres with college education or professional training were favoured during the 1980s.</i></p>
1992-1999	<p>In 1992, Mr. Kong's son, Steven, was born.</p> <p>In 1995, Steven was enrolled at an independent kindergarten which charged 5,000yuan endowments per year.</p>	<p>4.1 Mr. Kong will move away from his normal career track to be involved in some sidelines, in order to get extra money to support Steven's education.</p> <p>If Mr. Kong is only a salary-earner, he will</p>

	<p>Steven also attended classes in drawing and calligraphy during his spare time. At the time, Steven experienced his father's anger and growing concern about his constant struggle to control being left handed when practising calligraphy.</p>	<p>choose a public kindergarten for Steven. An average monthly salary for a junior officer in 1990s was 100-200RMB.</p> <p><i>4.2 Mr. Kong has ambitious plans for his son's future life.</i></p>
1999-2003	<p>In 1999, Steven was enrolled at a foreign language primary school (it was run by a group of experienced foreign-educated scholars. The school emphasised a Western approach to teaching)</p> <p>Children in this school enjoyed advantages of being educated in English from Grade One. The core curriculum focused on Chinese, English, reading and mathematics, but also introduced students to ICT courses. Music and drama played an important part in the life of the school. Every student was encouraged to master a musical instrument. From Year 2, Steven started playing saxophone. His father first bought a second-hand sax from a local music school for him and then offered a new sax when Steven passed Grade-8 at Level 3.</p> <p>The financial commitment at this school was huge. A 20,000RMB endowment was paid in full before the start of the school term. The average termly fee was more than 3,500RMB, plus further fees, such as the school shuttles, clothes, and so on.</p>	<p><i>5.1. Mr. Kong believes his son, Steven, can be 'the best' student.</i></p> <p><i>5.1a. Sending Steven to study in such a school might be seen as an investment in better prospects for getting into the best public high schools and colleges, which, in turn will enhance opportunities to move on to enrol at elite universities in China.</i></p> <p>Counter-hypotheses:</p> <p><i>5.2 Basically, Steven's proven strengths are foreign language, Chinese, and music. His average achievement in mathematics means that he will not be as proficient as students from public schools.</i></p> <p>5.2a. Steven's enthusiasm and performance in music has relevance within the environment of the independent school, which is committed to the personal development of students' interests and welfare. This is contrasted with the existing environment of most public schools in China which are intended primarily to ensure that students are encouraged to become academic all-rounders, suited to the academic requirements of Entry Examinations to university.</p> <p>5.2b. Steven's interests in music and arts will clash with Mr. Kong's expectations of his son to aim in the direction of a bureaucratic career.</p> <p><i>5.2c. It seems unlikely that Steven will be accepted at the most prestigious public high schools in Shanghai.</i></p>
2004-2006	<p>Mr. Kong expected Steven to get a place to study at Nanmuo High School, ranked third</p>	<p>Hypothesis 5.2 is confirmed, but 4.1 is falsified. Apparently, investment in</p>

	<p>among Shanghai high schools. But Steven failed.</p> <p>At the time, there were two options for the Kong family: to move on to study at the Foreign Language Middle School; or to study at a modestly good public school.</p> <p>Finally, constrained by the family's economic circumstances, Steven started his high school studies at the public school; the position was secured as a consequence of using Mr. Kong's social networks and influence.</p> <p>The school has a strong sporting heritage in basketball and has achieved strong representation.</p> <p>Steven's mother was responsible for monitoring his study progress. In 2004, she resigned from her post at a state-owned enterprise, and took a managerial role in a private company, in which her father (Steven's maternal grandfather) is a share-holder. The latter post had problems with her involvement in Steven's education, as she was too busy to monitor Steven's study.</p> <p>Steven's academic performance dropped dramatically. In Year 9, Steven's mother was informed by his teacher that Steven's under-achievements would result in him not being able to go on to study at college.</p>	<p>Steven's education in kindergarten and primary schools was quite likely supported by Steven's maternal grandfather.</p> <p><i>6.1. Steven's parents will feel disappointed and ashamed about Steven's academic performance.</i></p> <p><i>6.1.a. As a consequence, they might plan to send Steven to study overseas.</i></p>
2007	<p>Steven's mother cut off all her responsibilities at the private company and became Steven's companion in his drilling academic activities.</p> <p>In Year 9, students were introduced to Physics and Steven was appointed as rep of Physics. In Year 10, Steven was appointed as rep of Mathematics. His average test scores in Physics were kept at 90 out of 100 points.</p> <p>Finally Steven got an offer from only a three-tier college, because of his mathematics achievement.</p> <p>Mr. Kong used his influence to help Steven to temporarily get a place at a prestigious college.</p>	<p>7.1. Steven studies for the sake of his parents. His aptitude and interest clashes with the mainstream Chinese education system.</p> <p><i>7.2. Steven's academic achievement might result in him not passing the university entrance examination.</i></p> <p><i>7.2 a. His parents will send him abroad in the near future.</i></p>

	<p>In Year 11, he was appointed as rep of Chinese and to the position of the school's broadcaster.</p> <p>Mr. Kong worried about Steven's under-achievements in biology and chemistry.</p>	
2009-2012	<p>At the time of my interview Steven had just completed his foundation course and started his undergraduate study at a New Zealand university.</p> <p>In order to support Steven's study in New Zealand, his father resigned from his role in the state-owned company and found a regional sales manager position in a private company in Zhejiang; his mother resumed her responsibilities in her father's company.</p>	<p>Hypothesis 7.2 gains support.</p> <p><i>8.1. The recent work adjustment of Steven's parents indicates that they are only salary-earners.</i></p> <p>8.2. Because of Steven's past academic achievements in maths, physics, and English, he will pass all exams at university and get his bachelor degree.</p>

4.2.4.1 Case 4

4.2.4.1a Mr. Kong's told story

In the opening line of Mr. Kong's life story, he declared that his childhood was characterised by very grim socioeconomic conditions. He was born in 1961, the last year of the 1959-1961 Chinese famine, which means that the food was extremely scarce. The Cultural Revolution started during his teenage years, meaning learning resources were both inadequate and in short supply.

At this point, I will ask why Mr. Kong started his story in argumentation mode by emphasising the generational differences between his childhood and that of young Chinese today. To what extent is Mr. Kong's decision to start his story in this way related to his biographical concepts, his lived experience, his present life situation in China, public generational discourses, and/or the interviewing situation between Mr. Kong and myself, including my influence on that situation?

- 1.1.** Mr. Kong assumes that membership of a generation has profound effects on people's life trajectories and outlooks. The critical events in the course of his life, combined with the respective public opinion about those events, are internalised by Mr. Kong

and inform his perception. The social implication is that Mr. Kong is likely to assume his identity as a member of the ‘born in the 60s’ generation in his biographical construction.

1.2. This statement could correspond to popular public labels that the Chinese use to distinguish generation-membership in mass media and pop literatures: ‘Born in the 60s’, ‘Born in the 70s’, ‘Born in the 80s’, and ‘Born in the post-90s’, based on the decade of their birth. The labelling of generational cohorts does not assume that these various characteristics of different generations are biographically determined, rather, that there is a powerful normative element in the popular understanding of generational cohorts, which is frequently associated with the corresponding social, economical, as well as political changes of the time.

1.3 The statement regarding cohort differences that Mr. Kong began his story with was due to Mr. Kong’s perception of differences between him and me. Mr. Kong thinks that because I grew up in different socioeconomic and physical conditions to him, I would have developed different values to his.

In connection with his statement on cohort differences, Mr. Kong then describes the life situation at the time when he was born: his father worked in Beijing, while his mother was in Sichuan, so he was put under the care of his maternal grandparents (i.e., his permanent residence was registered to Shanghai). He closed this description with an evaluation that *“Growing up with my grandparents, I was the eldest grandchild and I was the most spoiled, so my grandparents did not have very high expectations of me.”*

Humorously, Mr. Kong used a metaphor to compare the perceived differences in the childhood experiences of himself and his son, Steven. *“Although my generation (‘Born in the 60s’) were less well-off compared with the pampered generation of those who were born in the 90s, there was time for play and fun. It is unlikely that anyone of my generation looking back on our childhood would recall it as an unpleasant or unhappy experience.*

Admittedly, today’s children, they are pampered or indulged, but there is little time or no time for them to play. I felt I was too strict on Steven, but I was afraid to take the gamble of

not stressing academic success to Steven. They encounter more pressure from society to compete for their future life. If you are not trying hard, you are going to become worse and worse.” In order to illustrate this point, Mr. Kong talked about Steven’s kindergarten and primary school, and made reference to the types of schools Steven attended, as well as economic investments the family had placed (See life history 1992-1999 & 1999-2003). Mr. Kong then explained further why he invested so much in Steven, *“in my case, because I was deprived of having experienced them in my childhood. Today’s children are unhappy, because they are fulfilling their parents’ unfulfilled wishes.”*

2.1. I might interpret that this statement is mainly due to Mr. Kong’s awareness of current public discourse of generational differentials. He tries to convey that he grew up in a historical period and a household where education was not really appreciated. Mr. Kong tried to give his son a head-start in life by preventing him from losing right from the starting line. Mr. Kong assumed that, through his parenting and investment, success could be guaranteed in his son’s future.

2.2. A further hypothesis could be formulated that the emphasis Mr. Kong places on the generational differences between himself and his son pinpoints his biographical (see hypothesis 1.1 in his initial declaration) and familial constructions of what he is trying to establish. It was important to Mr. Kong that how and what I understood the reasons he had for sending Steven abroad, and furthermore how these reasons relate to his current perspectives.

Mr. Kong was now speaking of the situation in terms of his own HE choices and decisions. He started with a statement, *“During the Cultural Revolution, few voices could be heard advocating the virtues of education and the benefits for a person’s future career development and welfare. I felt that everything was a matter of a heaven’s will.”*

Mr. Kong recalled an episode which had also stayed with him.

“Only by chance, I found that my neighbour girl was enrolled in a foundation course (see life history 1977-1979). At the end of the Chinese Spring Festival in 1978, I even did not understand commutative properties for multiplications: $A \times B = B \times A$. I asked the girl what it meant. She told me that it meant that the change of number order doesn’t change the results, such as $2 \times 3 = 3 \times 2$. I found that it is certainly easy.” Mr. Kong announced that *“If*

she can go to university, so can I! [...] I was enrolled at a Polytechnic, but at the time my poly certificate was widely considered to be equal with a bachelor degree.⁷”

Upon recalling his own HE decisions, Mr. Kong tried to explain the reasons for sending Steven abroad. *“Why did I send my son to study abroad? I found that, although Steven was getting better and better now, he did not get into the state that I expected of him. So I had to take intentional steps to do preparation for him. Once he got into the state, he would be led to sudden shifts of insight. [Two-second pause] Success comes to those who make preparations, doesn’t it? I made success by myself. He is my son. I thought that he was going to be like me.”*

3.1 In today’s hyper-achievement oriented China, Mr. Kong hopes that his guidance and planning will help his son not fall behind the development of Chinese society.

3.2. As a self-made man, on the one hand, Mr. Kong remains proud of his consideration of applying to sit to university-entrance exam.

On the other hand, in contrast to Mrs. Su (whom we have encountered in earlier reports) whose father attained his elite positions through the acquisition of elite academic credentials, Mr. Kong does not grow up in a household where his family background could be boasted. Such credentials were firmly established in the Su family and it transmitted a sense of natural ability amongst the interlinked lives.

3.3. A counter-hypothesis could be formulated that Mr. Kong’s ambivalence towards his own HE decision, which he attributed to heaven’s will, is mainly due to the underachievement of his son (see life history). Rather than be depressed by Steven’s undesirable educational performance, Mr. Kong argues that heaven’s blessing is bestowed on those who have made preparations and effort.

⁷ There were 350 students in Mr. Kong’s college. In 1979, the two major HE sections, universities and polytechnics, each attracted 10 students out of 350. 35 students were admitted into vocationally-oriented programmes. Then the majority was entered to the labour market. According to the division of proportion, Mr. Kong considered his certificate to be roughly equivalent to a university degree.

Mr. Kong, who now works and lives in Zhejiang, returns to Shanghai once a month. He had taken a range of posts in the state-owned enterprise before an agent referred him to the current company. At this point, Mr. Kong commented that his personal experience has shown that people have to grab opportunities when they arrive. This, Mr. Kong argues, has led him to commit himself to creating a better platform for his son. The financial, social and cultural investments in Steven's kindergarten and primary schooling, Mr. Kong believes, would have improved Steven's relative chances of being prepared for the tough entry requirements of elite universities and jobs. His son, as described by Mr. Kong, should have got into one of the top four national universities: Tsinghua, Peking, Fudan, or Jiaotong. The irony is that his son's performance could only gain him access to a second or third-tier university, and Mr. Kong feels that in today's Shanghai, those who cannot access a top-tier university will struggle to scrape for a living.

Mr. Kong gave his evaluation of the social mobility over three generations of the Kong family: *“My father joined the army in his teens. The social status of the family followed a pattern of upward mobility, following my father's promotion to a position in the army, where he became a confidential secretary. But the social standing of my family has changed very little in my hands. I do wish my son could elevate a higher level of socioeconomic standing, relative to me, through studying at a world-class university. I believe that most parents you have interviewed hold similar expectations for their children, don't they?”*

This marked the end of the first main narration part of the interview, which lasted 35 minutes.

4.1 It became clear that the effects of Steven's academic under-achievements have raised questions in Mr. Kong's disposition towards education, even though he remains proud of his HE choice in today's interview.

Mr. Kong's told story

The main theme throughout Mr. Kong's biographical and family construction and interpretation is: “from humble farmer origins in Hunan, my father rose to a confidential secretary in the army in Shanghai, achieving a higher social status in society's hierarchy. My chance to further elevate the social status of my family was disrupted by the Chinese famine

years and Cultural Revolution. By a heaven-sent opportunity, I was enrolled into the foundation course for the university-entrance examination. I only achieved modest results in my university-entrance examination and failed to raise the social status of my family. By sending my son, Steven, to study in New Zealand, I am realizing my unfulfilled wish to gain access to a prestigious university and to elevate the social status of the Kong family.”

Reconstruction of Mr Kong’s life history and microanalysis

I will now consider what Mr. Kong’s past perspectives were at the time of his own HE decisions and his resolution to advise Steven to study at a university in New Zealand. In practice, I will be moving through the lived biographical experiences throughout the lived history of the Kong family and examining respective statements made by Mr. Kong on each event.

Mr. Kong evaluated the socio-economic rise his father attained by moving from the country to the city and from working as a farmer to a confidential secretary. This evaluation and the related expectations motivated Mr. Kong to pursue a certain level of social standing in the future occupations of himself and his son.

On account of his HE decision, the sense of ‘not being below average intelligence’ pervades Mr. Kong’s life story. Even though he was finally admitted to a polytechnic college, it was a period when China was recovering from the disasters of the Cultural Revolution, and few people went to university.

Mr. Kong’s grandparents did not push him much or expect too much of him, unlike what his parents did of his youngest brother, who graduated from one of the top four universities in China and is a chartered architect. The status and rewards that come with Mr. Kong’s youngest brother’s education have influenced how Mr. Kong perceives the role of parental supervision and aspirations for one’s children, which, in turn has informed Steven’s upbringing: through early socialisation in private schools and music and using his influence and networks to place Steven into a prestigious secondary school.

Let me look at the biographically determined situation of when Mr. Kong finally took action to establish Steven’s overseas-study project. Steven’s academic attainments limited his HE

opportunities to access a top university in China and further restricted the scope of his occupational choices. Sending Steven to study abroad may also have been mostly to do with Mr. Kong's focus on raising the social status of the Kong family. Therefore, the decision to send Steven abroad to study can be seen as a way of increasing his chances of entering an elite university and occupation. Additionally, it can be viewed as a means of securing greater opportunities to realise Mr. Kong's own expectations and goals to compete for their future life. His understanding of today's Shanghai pertains to the theme *"If you are not trying hard, your situation will become worse and worse."*

4.2.4.1b Steven's told story: Attending an overseas degree programme is a need to be 'above average'

Steven starts his told story in the context of his kindergarten. There is a notion of being *'above average'* and seeing himself distinctive from others. He then reports his primary school experience with reference to being a member of an *'elite school'*. His final evaluation of this report is dialogued between himself and his father in which his father stated that *"joining the class of elite citizens, when I am young (through the emulation of models) means that there is no chance for me to go astray or mix with vulgar people. Attending an elite school will teach me good tastes and manners that are required to participate within the upper spheres of society"*.

The driving force for Mr. Kong's decision to send Steven to the elite 'prep' school was to see his son to become a superior man by acquiring good conduct and education. This expresses the tensions brought on him by the past achievements of his family, that is, his reflection on his less restrictive upbringing to his family's current non-advanced status. He hopes to overcome this. These tensions structure Mr. Kong's attitudes and the ways he has approached raising his son. At this point, Steven did not fully grasp his father's expectations and concerns.

Steven continues his account of primary schooling in the context of the entrance examination of junior secondary school. He presents his father's expectation of him that he could secure a place to study at Nanmuo High School which is ranked third among Shanghai high schools. But Steven failed. "I was very disappointed in my grades." He remembered when he got the results *"emotionally I was cramped, I felt that as a son, I had an obligation to fulfil my father's expectations."*

After this sequence regarding the entrance examination he moves on and gives an argumentation relating to the non-elite school he was eventually enrolled in, comparing and contrasting his elite primary school and non-elite/average secondary school. He explains that the latter doesn't have expert teachers and the students don't play musical instruments. He portrays himself as someone above other students in the context of this average school. This sequence of presentation built on his previous elaboration of his father's expectations and connects back to the first sequence of his presentation in which he positions himself as someone who is 'above average'. All this can be organised into the thematic field of **“my family and my schooling in terms of desired goal of being above average”**.

The next sequence of his schooling is still centred in the context of examination in relation to his admission to the upper secondary school. He did not achieve as what his father had expected. He finishes with a global evaluation: *“When I received my exam results, my father refused to accept them. He maintained expectations in accordance with my past academic performance at primary school. After he had seen my exam results, he tried to move heaven and earth, through his contacts and money, to allow me to study at a local elite college. At this point, I think that for such an unworthy son, his sacrifice was worthless.”*

Steven then expresses his agreement with his father's idea of sending him abroad to study. During the second year of my college studies, my father said *“oh, I want you to study abroad.”* At that point, *“I didn’t want to go abroad, and I thought that Shanghai is such a fantastic place, why should I go abroad?”*

But in reality, my father meant that, *“I am just average and these days it isn’t an expected thing for me to be enrolled in a first-tier university. If I get my education from a second tier university (non-key university ranked in the 211 and 985 Programs); there is little hope for my employment prospects.*

Although I can go to a third-tier university, I will not be able to find a job upon graduation in Shanghai. Even if I could find a job, it is likely to be some sort of dead end, you know. It seems I am pretty hopeless.

I was persuaded by my father and I realized I needed to sort out the problem, so I agreed with his plan. Also my cousin was already studying in New Zealand at that time.”

Steven's presentation is structured by the thematic filed "my family and my average academic performance in the changing Shanghai society." The decision for Steven to pursue his HE studies with a three-year degree programme at a New Zealand university is a turning point for both him and the whole family in terms of the family's desired goal to be above average.

4.2.5 Case 5 Mrs. Jia and her son, William

The hypothetic-inductive work on the biography and family history of Mrs. Jia and her son, William (a Chinese international student), was performed by a panel. The panel members consist of: Mr. Huang, Mrs. Xue, Mrs. Ma, and Professor Gu.

	Lived Life & Family History	Propositions & Follow-up Hypotheses
1920 -1950	<p>Mrs. Jia's paternal grandfather was admitted to Qinghua (Tsinghua) University in the 1920s, and then continued his bachelor studies in economics in the USA on a government-sponsored scholarship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qinghua University was originally set up in Peking to prepare Chinese students to study in the United States, where scholarships were provided from the Boxer Indemnity (Spence, 1991). <p>Upon his return to China Mrs. Jia's grandfather was appointed by the State to a position in the field of banking and finance, where he became a renowned banker.</p> <p>Mrs. Jia's father, born in Shanghai in the 1930s, enrolled at a Christian college in Hong Kong before the birth of the People's Republic in 1949, and later transferred to Wuhan to accomplish his undergraduate studies at Wuhan University in the early 1950s.</p>	<p><i>1.1 In social and economic terms, before 1949, the Jia family typified certain elements of the scholarly elite life in Shanghai, not just because they possess ambition and intellectual strength, but they also have sufficient funds to enrol in the new schools, whether in China or overseas.</i></p> <p>Calling Mrs. Jia's father back to China from Hong Kong and enrolling him at a university in the mainland after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 indicates Mrs. Jia's grandfather's commitment in support of building the new China.</p> <p><i>1.1a. Possessing rigorous Western knowledge and patriotic ambition, Mrs. Jia's grandfather will be ennobled and supported by the State Council, and his son will, in turn, be assigned to a key post.</i></p> <p>1.2 Due to Mrs. Jia's grandfather's occupational identity, the Jia's property and assets will be confiscated during the Five Anti campaigns, which were launched in 1952 and were designed as an assault against industrialists and businessmen in China.</p> <p>1.2.a In response to the harsh effects of</p>

		the Five Anti campaigns on his family, Mrs. Jia's father will not advise his children to pursue their educational and occupational careers in the business or finance field.
1960-1981	<p>Thereafter, Mrs. Jia's father worked as a lecturer at PLA Air Force Flying Academy in the north-eastern Heilongjiang province from 1951 to 1953.</p> <p>Mrs. Jia was born in 1964 in the Heilongjiang province and is the eldest of three siblings - she has a brother and sister.</p> <p>During the Cultural Revolution, Mrs. Jia split her time between school and a training school to practice basket ball (she is relatively tall). At night Mrs. Jia's father tutored three children by himself in classic Chinese and mathematics at his home.</p> <p>In 1981, Mrs. Jia's father transferred to Kaifeng Aviation in Henan, which is commanded by the Jinan military region (MR).</p>	<p><i>2.1. Mrs. Jia's father was appointed to a post at the defence industry, such as aviation, which is controlled by the Communist Party and the PLA, reassured of the importance of Mrs. Jia's father's role. This post arrangement provides ample proof of the trust the Communist Party placed on the Jia's family. The hypothesis 1.1 therefore has gained some support.</i></p> <p><i>2.2. Although Mrs. Jia's father was born in Shanghai, living with and probably ultimately marrying a north-eastern woman, his daughter, Mrs. Jia, is likely to grow up speaking a dialect that is quite distinct from her father and might not be able to comprehend the Shanghai dialect.</i></p> <p><i>2.3. Educated by her father, Mrs. Jia will absorb some of his father's westernised knowledge and outlook on life.</i></p> <p><i>2.3a. She will come to grips with the wealthy, sophisticated, and westernised Shanghai as her hometown.</i></p> <p><i>2.3b. Due to her birthplace and distinctive northern accent and figure, Mrs. Jia will feel a sense of identity ambivalence and of dislocation when she returns to Shanghai, later.</i></p>
1983-1990	<p>In 1983, Mrs. Jia was enrolled at Tongji University School of Medicine and completed her bachelor studies in 1988. Thereafter she worked in a hospital in Shanghai and married a surgeon from the same hospital who specialises in digestive system.</p>	<p><i>3.1. Jia family members have a strong sense of fulfilment towards their ancestry's prestige.</i></p> <p><i>3.1a. Stirred by the dream of restoring her family's prestige achieved by her grandfather, Mrs. Jia might suggest</i></p>

	<p>Mrs. Jia's younger brother and sister reside in the USA after attaining their Masters degrees in biochemistry.</p>	<p><i>that her child following her grandfather's footsteps to study finance and business for his/her future career.</i></p> <p><i>3.1b. Mrs. Jia will have very high educational and occupational expectations of her child.</i></p>
1990-2001	<p>In 1990, Mrs. Jia's son, William, was born in Shanghai.</p> <p>As a skilled engineer, William's uncle, immigrated to New Zealand in 1993.</p> <p>In 1995, Mrs. Jia's parents retired and moved back to Shanghai.</p> <p>Through kindergarten and primary school Mrs. Jia received frequent telephone calls from William's teachers, complaining that her ill-behaved son was doing things like running around at lunch time and being physically restless.</p>	<p><i>4.1. Mrs. Jia will be upset with her son's teachers' statements and criticisms of William.</i></p> <p><i>4.1a. Mrs. Jia will lecture William to be obedient and to avoid conflicts outside home. As a consequence, William in turn will come to hate his shout-out-it mom.</i></p> <p>Counter- hypothesis</p> <p>4.2. Mrs. Jia will just shrug off William's so-called mischievous behaviours, which she does not consider to be unusual for a child (falsified).</p>
2001-2011	<p>Lacking constant supervision and attention, William's academic performance was average during his high school years.</p> <p>In 2003, William enrolled at a district key-point college in Shanghai.</p> <p>At school, William was always blamed for being disobedient to the teachers' wishes. William brought his basketball to school to play, and was told it was not allowed at the school.</p> <p>William was more fond of humanities and social sciences, than physics and chemistry. William was advised to study in New Zealand under his uncle's supervision from Year 12.</p> <p>At the time of the interview, William was studying his bachelor's degree in economics at UoA.</p>	<p><i>5.1. Mrs. Jia would like William to be widely regarded as a well brought-up boy.</i></p> <p><i>5.2. She cares deeply about public perception.</i></p> <p><i>5.3. Mrs. Jia realises that it is not feasible for William to enrol at a prestigious university in China, due to his so-called under-achievement in science. Studying abroad is a way out of this dilemma.</i></p>

4.2.5.1 Case 5

4.2.5.1a Mrs. Jia's told story

Mrs(Dr) Jia preferred to be interviewed on an afternoon outside her consulting hours, in her office at a large hospital in Shanghai, where she is a diabetes specialist.

On arrival in the waiting room of the hospital, Dr. Jia greeted me, “you are Shanghainese, aren't you?” in a falling tone of voice. We then settled down opposite each other over a desk in her office. The room was quite long with a diagnosis bed arranged behind the desk, half surrounded with curtains, with no main light on. Dr. Jia signed the consent of agreement and then gazed at the title of the research project for two seconds before entering into the first session of interview.

After being asked the initial question, "will you tell me the story of your life and your family", Dr. Jia briefly described the story of her personal and family history in a 12-line report:

“Well, my parents are Shanghainese. Just because the Cultural Revolution my father was banished from Shanghai, so I was born in the Heilongjiang province during the 1960s. Both William's father and I belong to the cohort of ‘Born in the 60s’. This whole generation is characterised by widespread suffering and hard labour, due to punitive action taken against our parents by the State. Nevertheless, my parents were Intelligentsias so they made certain that we were appropriately educated. My father was enrolled at a Christian college in Hong Kong, just as earlier, in the 1920s, my grandfather was sent by the Tsinghua University to study in the USA, the western knowledge and culture which they was brought access to, was considerable. After finishing his college studies in Hong Kong, my father was back to China and attended Wuhan University for his undergraduate studies. Naturally enough, my father has received the influence of both East and West. Afterwards, he was sent down during the Cultural Revolution to the border Heilongjiang province, which was essentially a punitive exile.”

1.1 For the team (Professor Gu and me), beginning her story with reference to her parents' regional identity presumes a level of stratified regional division and indicates a self-consciousness concerning her role in society.

1.2 Predictably, Dr. Jia's regional consciousness also reflects social policies and dominant

discourses that generated the perpetuation of a set of tiered city systems. In China, urban cities could be distinguished by their economic scales, geographic and political positions, and international impact. The first-tier cities are Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou (Scheffler, 2010); the second-tier cities are mainly nestled in the region just south of the Yangzi River, where the cities are most prosperous. Below these upper tiers, there are provincial cities. Due to the progressive nature of reforms and periods of rapid change in industry structure, making any simple and static generalisation of the Chinese city tier system is risky, particularly the distinction between second and third tier cities. The apparently decline of the northeast provinces in line with the declining of SOEs should not be generalised either.

Additionally, Shanghai society has its own a set of internal identities and stereotypes. To the Shanghainese, Chinese people from other parts of China are perceived as outsiders (*Waidiren*). Some suggest this exclusiveness towards other Chinese may be slowly changing, due to the critical mass of expertise of overseas returnee graduates returning to Shanghai, to establish their own business or join in the senior management at leading foreign companies, in the middle of twenty-first century. The changes in the division of labour caused by the returnees may enable Shanghainese to consider this group of elite outsiders as New Shanghainese.

1.3. At the same time, the opening argumentative account of the so-called punitive exile of her father and her critical attitude towards her birthplace, the Heilongjiang province, therefore, helps to make sense of the coping strategies Dr. Jia attempted to use in her social encounters within her environment. From her family and life history, we know that Mrs. Jia's father was assigned a post in the air force. This posting provided ample proof of the importance of his father's role and the trust the Communist Party granted to the Jia family. Furthermore, Dr. Jia's father was transferred to the northeast in the late 1950s, not during the Cultural Revolution as argued by Dr. Jia at the time of the interview. At that time the Party needed both the technical skills and managerial expertise of the former bourgeoisie to build a socialist society (Compare details in the life history of Mrs. Su between 1953-1959). This denial strategy in relation to her birthplace helps us to understand why she greeted me like she did.

1.4. What we also learnt that professional status and her ancestor's overseas study served as foundations for constructing a social identity and image for her family. She is trying to

convey that studying abroad is nothing new for her family. In other words, we will expect that the follow-up topics concerning the reasons for supporting her son, William, to study abroad will come into play; against this background of her family's habitual choice of studying abroad.

Dr. Jia then reported briefly about her educational careers, and about her siblings who attended their undergraduate studies at top universities, and have since settled themselves in the USA after completing their Master's degrees there. This report ends with her statement, *“because of our family's environment and educational experiences, we felt that the Chinese education, in many ways, is too repressive to a child's personality.”*

She then argued that the reasons for choosing New Zealand as William's higher education destination were: *“The nature and approach of New Zealand college education, as suggested by William's uncle, is appropriate for William. Taken together, we decided to send William to study in New Zealand. Now he has just finished his second year of his bachelor studies in Economics at University of Auckland. That's why I sent him abroad. This is what you wanted to know, isn't it?!”*

Dr. Jia continued: *“William's father and I are salary earners and the total expenditure on William's education in New Zealand is considerable for us. We want him to return to Shanghai when he finishes his studies, not only because he is our only son, but also because I think Shanghai has developed very well in the past few years. We wanted him to study Finance rather than Medicine because if he went to medical school, he would have studied at a domestic university, like Tong Ji University, here in China. The reward of becoming a humble doctor in China won't be as much as that in New Zealand. It is not assumed that I will get a return on my investment. Look at it from another angle: if William had chosen to study medicine, it would be ideal for him to live in New Zealand. However, it is impossible for him to settle there; both his father and I are now professors and we don't want to retire at sixty five, or even before seventy, so if William is living in New Zealand, we won't be able to look after his children, if he has any in the future.*

In addition, we considered it a good idea for William to study economics and finance because my grandfather had been a pre-eminent banker in his day. My siblings and cousins of my generation all enrolled in technical and science-specialised subjects such as physics, medicine, chemistry, and biology. None of us chose to major in finance because at the time it was disesteemed in China. William is the eldest amongst the fourth generation

in our family and I want him to succeed in the field of finance, as my grandfather did.”

2.1. Dr. Jia obviously presented the reasons for sending her son abroad and her family history as mainly due to assumed relevance to the researcher's interest.

2.2. To what extent, might the theme of “*the Chinese education, in many ways, is too repressive to a child’s personality*” indicate Dr. Jia’s past perspective and her own experiences.

2.3. It could be possible that Dr. Jia tried to avoid a full-scale elaboration on this topic, as a detailed narrative would inevitably reveal her historical entanglements, which she has been obliged to repress. The revelation of her past perspective would, rather, reflect her self-contradictory position against her initial evaluation of the punitive nature of her father’s move from Shanghai to Heilongjiang.

I now emphasised the importance of the personally lived experiences and also brought up an example from what William recounted from his childhood; taking the train between Shanghai and Kaifeng to visit his maternal grandparents.

With this exemplification, Dr. Jia narrated her family’s period in Kaifeng, Henan. She started to explain why her parents chose Kaifeng instead of Shanghai when they left the Heilongjiang, because all her father’s comrades transferred from Heilongjiang to Kaifeng Aviation which is commanded by Jinan Military Region. Accordingly, she was enrolled in Year 10 at Kaifeng College. Following the national university entrance examination, she began her studies at Tongji University School of Medicine in Shanghai, and eventually she went back to Shanghai. Considering her role as a residential doctor and having suffered from acute myocarditis, William was sent to Kaifeng for a half year during 1993. At the end of this narration, Dr. Jia wondered “*at that time, William was only 3 years old. (Big sigh (2)). I don’t know he has still memory of that experience?*”

3.1. Clearly neither the period in Kaifeng, nor her father’s job involved in aviation has been mentioned before. This omission provides support to our hypotheses 1.1., 1.2., 1.3., and 2.3. She is trying to block out all her experiences of Kaifeng or northeast, as these experiences labelled her with an identity she wanted to get rid of.

The next narration is also concerned with the topic of her father’s education and William’s pre-schooling. At this point in Dr. Jia’s account, his father’s occupation as a lecturer was

disclosed. Some certainty of confirmation resulted in hypotheses 1.1., 1.2., 1.3., and 2.3.

In her following narrative passages, Dr. Jia presented her son, William's, schooling experiences throughout primary and college. She interpreted the experience has obliged William to repress his personality development, because William's teachers always complained that her ill-behaved son was doing things like running around at lunch time, being physically restless, and disobeying teachers' wishes not to bring a basketball to school. By this stage, the resentment of how her son was being treated in the school is becoming stronger.

4.1. These narrative passages could be interpreted as Dr. Jia perceiving the teachers to be against her son and seeing such situation as 'them and us' situations.

The relationship between the told story and the lived experiences of Dr. Jia

The thematic field in the main narration of Dr. Jia's told story is constructed and developed in relation to her decision to support William to study abroad: *"Well, my parents are Shanghainese. My parents were Intelligentsias. My father was influenced by both the East and West. During the Cultural Revolution, he was sent down to the border Heilongjiang province, which was, essentially, a punitive exile. Due to our family's environment and educational experiences, we felt that the Chinese education's style, in many ways, is too repressive to a child's personality. With the stifled institution of education, William can never receive appropriate recognition from his teachers."*

Central to Dr. Jia's current perspective and orientation under which these topics are produced and organised is "institutional sanction and recognition". This need for recognition depicts her sense of self pertaining to both her Shanghainese identity and her occupational role.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the rise of a business class and material gains were all well appreciated in China. Considering the overall biographical theme of Dr. Jia's told story – *with the stifled institution of education, William can never receive the appropriate recognition from his teachers* – two identities are being presented: one where middle-class occupations such as doctors are contrasted with business elite, with reference to her grandfather, and one where the criteria for judging subject options is not only evaluated under

the influence of economic rationalism but also a need to gain an institution's sanction and a need to defend the family's interests from institutional encroachments.

Mallee and Pieke (1999) report the movement to the Great Northern Wasteland, which took place from 1949 to 1961, didn't involve coercion (as what Mrs. Jia claimed) but was for the purpose of 'land reclamations' and 'opening the wasteland to plant grain.' Beyond these economic goals, a massive utopian movement to the empty land was viewed as "a veneer of patriotism and of service to socialism. Exile was transformed into glorious sacrifice (Mallee & Pieke, 1999, p.35)." Today, Dr. Jia's controversial stance indicates her refusal to accept her father's romantic and idealised reforming zeal and act of self-sacrifice.

Dr. Jia's ideological outlook mirrors a segment of technocratic specialists who, as Professor Xiao (2008) says, have moved away from traditional intellectuals "who represent a cultural and moral standard-bearer of Chinese society" (Fairbank, 1998, p.449) and 'social critics', and have moved towards a bureaucratic new system, guided by technocrats, that has evolved from the second generation leadership. This second generation leadership was guided by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s and the present reformation and modernisation is led by the fourth-generation leaders.

If we approach the family's decision for William to study finance in light of new twenty-first century Shanghai developments, why did they not want William to pursue medicine or history instead? If the hypothesis of the emergence of skilled professions as a distinctive occupational class is true, why did Dr. Jia refer to "humble doctors" and make comments like "[there's] little hope for a historian's future prospects"?

The controversial point indicates that in the post-Mao era of reformation, there occurred a progressive withdrawal of state intervention in production-related organizations, such as SOEs and collective enterprises. However, the state still maintains its administrative management over its functional organisations and institutions. The state's penetration has still rendered public-sector organisations, such as hospitals and schools, under the thumb of their official patrons and separated from market-based rewards. Since doctors' salaries and welfare are dependent on the local government revenue funds, the ratio analysis of Shanghai government expenditure may help in understanding its relative importance. The budgetary expenditure on public hospital and health systems in 2012 is forecast at RMB 69 billions (=NZ \$13.8b), accounting for 3.5% of total core sectors of government expenses

RMB1951billions(=\$390.2b). In contrast, the health sector in New Zealand made up the largest proportion of government expenditure at 19.9% in 2012/2013 (English, 2012). Such circumstances have been characteristic of in-institutional professionals and cultural elites, says a dentist who used to practice in New Zealand before returning to Shanghai in 2010.

“Ideologically labelled as “public” servants, it is assumed that we are not concerned with personal financial gains. Last year in Shanghai my pay rate was RMB 5,000/month, which is equivalent to a low-level clerk. When everyone became absorbed with being “rich and powerful”, being a humble dentist in Shanghai was not regarded highly; you would not hold yourself in esteem without wearing these luxury clothes.”(personal communication, 2011)

The dentist’s attitude arguably echoes Dr. Jia’s pervasive and repressive claim for institutional sanction. She holds the top specialist position at a top-ranked hospital. These factors led Dr. Jia to make a more pragmatic decision in relation to her son’s future.

4.2.5.1b William's told story: The need to maintain and reproduce family traditions and professional roles

William introduces himself by saying that he was born in Shanghai and his parents are doctors. *"I was under the pressure for the NCEE and my mother made the decision for me to study in New Zealand. As far as my lived life is concerned, I am just an ordinary student with an ordinary life, nothing really special."*

We could assume this argumentation reveals his understanding of the interview context. I assured him with "all the experiences and events that are important for you personally, you can start from wherever you would like to start."

William then starts his main narration with a brief description introducing his parents in the context of how and where they met each other, which was in the hospital where his mother worked as his father's assistant. They married and had him the following year. William then gives a brief report of his early childhood, remembering taking the train from Shanghai to Kaifeng to visit his maternal grandfathers in the summer. "I was praised as an **understanding and well-mannered child**." With reference to this imagery William had defined an "exemplary" childhood from his family's perspective.

He mentions his primary school with reference to his maternal grandfather and portrays him as a **highly cultivated and very learned man** who can, as he and his parents believe, give

William a good education. He spent much of his weekends and school vacations with his grandfather, listening to his stories (e.g., of the early history of Zhou Dynasty and the Warring States period). All this expanded his historical knowledge a lot and he is deeply interested in these. He likes staying with him more than his paternal grandparents. His maternal grandfather apparently gives him an educational and cultural orientation in which he has been raised that would have an impact on his later development. "So I was fonder of and good at humanities than of physics and chemistry, particularly I enjoyed history and English." He continued to another report on how his grandfather and he went walking together for exercises at weekends. Within this context, the thematic position of **"a well-behaved child"** remains.

After this sequence on his primary school a report on being **"blamed for being disobedient to teachers' wishes and the school's regulations"** constitutes the theme of his life pattern throughout his secondary school. The theme moves from "well-behaved childhood" to a problematic and conflictive one which is absolutely not a part of the dispositions that his parents' expected William to hold. This conflictive aspect in relation to his parents' expectations and values is implicated in the story structure of Dr. Jia. At the time, William's father was promoted to the director of the hospital and his parents became busier with night banquet socialising. From this moment William's orientation switched to emphasis on public sphere- sports activities with his school friends and this seems to have provided him with a new identity. But as we can understand from the analysis, William's 'disobedient' school life is not the real source of the decision for his overseas education which is emerged from this period of his life. The conditioning factor in the family's choice for William's overseas education lies in the relationship between William's average academic performance and his family's traditional values. The decision of opting for finance can be seen as a result of taking into consideration of the goals which are important for the family. Studying finance from Dr. Jia's perspective is the best way to guarantee the professional status of the family in today's Shanghai society and is also in accordance with the developmental needs of Shanghai government. Consideration of social status and institutional recognition is the determinant when making the HE decision for William to study in New Zealand.

"Well. Generally I was fonder of humanities, particularly I enjoyed history. However, my mother considered history not to be the right subject for me and did not want me to pursue it. She tried hard to persuade me to study finance instead and involved me in rounds of banquets with the bank governor. They helped me to formulate ideas on Shanghai's future

development and stressed the integral importance of finance in that development.”

Identifying the environmental strengths and resources, including access to experts’ views, William reframed his orientation again and accepted his mother’s suggestions. The expectations from his parents and his family history and traditions from his mother's side plays a crucial aspect in the decision. As Dr. Jia argues,

"William's father and I considered it a good idea for him to study economics and finance because my grandfather had been a pre-eminent banker in his day. My siblings and cousins of my generation all enrolled in technical and science-specialised subjects such as physics, medicine, chemistry, and biology. None of us chose to major in finance because at the time it was disesteemed in China. William is the eldest amongst the fourth generation in our family and I want him to succeed in the field of finance, as my grandfather did.”

4.2.6 Case 6 Mrs. Emily Muo and her brother, Emmet

The hypothetic-inductive work on the biography and family history of Mrs. Emily and her brother, Emmet (a Chinese international student), was conducted by Miss Zhong. Miss Zhong is a Canton-born solicitor in Auckland and immigrated to New Zealand when she was thirteen with her maternal uncle and Mr. Mao, a Shanghai-born businessman. The variance between Miss Zhong’s and Mr. Mao’s life experiences and demographical backgrounds informed and guided their distinctive interpretations of events and actions in Muo’s life trajectory. The inductive searching process is built upon from the unknown to the known for what Emily has decided will be in the successively pictured projects to prove or disprove a hypothesis developed about each instance.

	Lived Life & Family History	Propositions /Follow-up Hypotheses
1979	<p>Born in 1979 to a wealthy merchant family in a town in Jiangsu province, Mrs. Emily always wore soft leather shoes instead of canvas-and-rubber shoes.</p> <p>She was bright and achieved excellent academic results in her schooling.</p>	<p><i>1.1 .Among her peers, there will be admiration for Emily’s academic capabilities and her well-off father.</i></p> <p><i>1.1a. Emily will have very high expectations of herself.</i></p> <p>1.2. Emily will become a ‘Goody-Goody’ girl, attending university and attaining a well-paid, middle class job.</p>

1991	Emmet was born in 1991 when his mother was 37.	<p><i>2.1.Emily's father has a strong sense of patriarchal continuity.</i></p> <p><i>2.1a. Emily feels hurt by the immense power men hold over women, which is reflected by the persistence of her father in having a male child.</i></p> <p>2.2. Mr. Muo probably won a lottery, which allowed him to have enough money to pay for the heavy fine imposed for the birth of Emmet⁸.</p> <p>2.2a. Did Mr. Muo need a son to take over his steadily-expanding business?</p>
1995-2000	<p>By the late 1990s, Mr. Muo's business was steadily declining and was eventually bankrupted in 2000. At the time, Emmet was only a grade-3 student and Emily had just completed her third-year of study in commerce at a university in Shanghai.</p> <p>Emily had moved to Shanghai in 1995. The move was strongly opposed by her father and grandfather, seemingly because it threatened the traditional role of a woman as a housewife.</p>	<p><i>3.1. Emily will work hard to make sure her family copes during times of crises by providing economic assistance and to rebuild dignity and respect for her family in the community.</i></p> <p><i>3.1a. Restoring her family's dignity could be achieved by marrying a successful man.</i></p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p><i>3.1b. by securing a well-paid job.</i></p>
2000-2008	<p>Emily worked very hard to cover her household expenses, and to ensure her brother received the best education.</p> <p>Emmet moved to Shanghai to study and stayed on to live with Emily.</p>	<p><i>4.1. Emily has a strong sense of obligation to her family.</i></p> <p>4.2. Emmet will realise that there is no business or wealth to inherit and will</p>

⁸According to the Chinese birth-control programme, IUD insertion for women who had borne one child was compulsory. Those who had a second child were subject to heavy fine or, for those in rural areas, would have their land confiscated.

		<p>pursue a career as a scholarly elite, in line with Emily's expectations.</p> <p><i>4.2a. Emmet will manage to obtain academic excellence.</i></p> <p>4.2b. Emmet will be admitted to a top university in China.</p>
2008	<p>Emmet had very successful academic records.</p> <p>Emmet was admitted to hospital after a car crash. The incident occurred only 20 days before the commencement of the university-entrance examinations.</p> <p>He was in a wheelchair during the examinations and ended up failing to achieve his first option- to study a degree at one of the top four Chinese universities. However he was offered a place at a second-tier university to study economics.</p> <p>Emily's business steadily expanded. She became financially well-off, and married an influential and wealthy business-official in Shanghai.</p>	<p>5.1. Emmet will go to the second-tier university (falsified).</p> <p><i>5.2. Due to Emmet's past academic achievements and his sister's expectations, both Emily and Emmet will not be content with a place at a second-tier university in Shanghai and will attempt to send Emmet to study abroad.</i></p>
2009	<p>Emmet signed up with an agent in Shanghai and was enrolled in the SAT training course in preparation to begin his bachelor studies at a Singaporean university. They were told by the agent, that if Emmet passed with a score of 1,200 and he would be able to study a degree without undertaking a foundation course. After a two-month training course, Emmet sat the exams and achieved a score of 1,900 where the requirement is only 1,200. However, the agent did not keep the promise and revealed that Emmet would be required to sit the foundation courses first, before moving on to his degree studies.</p>	<p><i>6.1. Despite Emmet's disappointing university-Entrance exams results which was affected by the car accident, he will continue to be confident in his academic capabilities. He will consider the result to be a temporary blip on his pathway to otherwise standardised biography.</i></p> <p><i>The enforced foundation course will be viewed as waste of Emmet's abilities and time.</i></p> <p><i>6.1a. They will apply to study in other countries on the basis of Emmet's SAT scores.</i></p>
2010	<p>Emmet received offers from four New Zealand universities. UoA permitted Emmet to begin his degrees without undertaking foundation papers, provided he passed the IELTS test following a two-month language course. After one-month of the course, Emmet received three offers from the Departments of Engineering, Commerce, and Physics, respectively.</p>	<p><i>7.1. Both Emily and Emmet are academically ambitious.</i></p>

2010	During the Christmas vacation of Emmet's first-year studying commerce, he was informed that Emily had had an operation, after having received a diagnosis of carcinoma cancer.	<p>8.1. Emmet will be actively looking for part-time jobs when he returns to Auckland.</p> <p>8.2. <i>He will feel more insecure with the knowledge that he might lose Emily's support in the future.</i></p> <p>8.3. Emmet will stay in China with Emily.</p>
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4.2.6.1 Case 6

4.2.6.1a Mrs. Emily Muo's told story

The interview between Mrs. Emily Muo and myself took place in a café. Her five-year-old son accompanied her, but spent the duration of the interview out of the way playing on his iPad with a little girl whom he had met in the café. The interview encounter between Mrs. Emily and myself was very intense. Her story and her dedication to supporting her whole family moved me to tears even at the time of transcribing and analysing the data.

At the beginning of the first interview session Emily stated *“I am a New-Shanghainese (see reference in the section of Case 5-Dr. Jia's told story), my hometown is Yangzhou, Jiangsu province. Uhm, I was very successful time at school in terms of my academic achievements. Being an ethnically Chinese and sharing a common generational period- I was born in 1979- I think, there would not be many differences between you and me, in terms of life experiences. During our time in China, you know, there was a high preference for having male offspring. My parents attempted to have a son, erm, but my mother's health did impact the odds of having a child. At the time, my father ran his business smoothly, allowing me to enjoy material advantages: I never wore canvas-and-rubber shoes, but only soft leather shoes. Then pause (3) my brother was born. He was 12 years younger than me. I have very adored him since his birth. My father spent a lot of time on working, so, it was assumed in our family that it would be my responsibilities for caring and supervising early education. The business later started to go downhill at my father's factory and I left home and moved to Shanghai. In order to pay off my tuition fees and living expenses in Shanghai, I took a part-time job. I continued my part-time job as well as studying at university for quite a while. Eventually I settled in Shanghai: married a Shanghainese and launched my own business, so of course I became the carer of my brother. Because our family was no longer well-off but my father is a person with high self-esteem and is highly*

motivated towards achieving success. Pause (2 seconds)..In other words, the financial crisis had crippled his business and his self-confidence. And that, made him feel defeated. To me, I don't want him to see him to attempt to run a big business again, but rather, I would like to see him enjoy a peaceful and comfortable retirement for life. Given these circumstances, supporting my brother's education is my responsibility. It is my duty."

1.1. Starting out with the issue of 'her past academic accomplishments' and issues of 'male lineage ideology' when addressing her identity as a 'New Shanghainese', Emily seems to be trying to tell the story of her quest for identity- through her early academic accomplishments and later established social role in Shanghai- to prove her worth to her father and the men in her rural community.

1.1a. I also hypothesized that apart from her role outside the family, where her social profile was recognised through her academic and career credentials and through her marital connection, her home role inside the family also has great relevance for Emily's life today. This role is apparent in her views on duties towards the welfare of her aging parents and her brother's education and guidance.

1.2a. If the hypotheses 1.1 and 1.2 are true, we would expect these two themes to be repeatedly referred to in the later interview and, as such, they could constitute the thematic field of her told story.

1.3. In addition to those points, due to a perceived closeness between Emily and myself, both the readers and myself could be expected to experience a higher degree of intensity and intimacy of told story.

In the next passage of the interview, Emily reflected on her brother, Emmet's life, from his birth to the time, she decided to send Emmet to study abroad. Starting with the topic of Emmet's education, Emily, marvelled at Emmet's academic success in the school. However, the car accident obscured Emmet's chances of getting a place at a prestigious Chinese university. This incident in turn prompted Emily to decide to support Emmet in studying abroad, because she perceived Emmet as a person whose intelligence and educational accolades should have admitted him to an elite university. Topics of Emmet's education continued in the next two passages until the things returned back to their plans; Emmet was admitted to study his degrees at UoA without attending a foundation programme (life history 2009 & 2010). At the end of the passage, Emily announced, ***"I felt relieved and gratified."***

2.1. Emily's interpretation of Emmet's education success expressed her past perspective, which placed a high premium on achieving an education from one of the most prestigious universities in China.

2.2. It could be suggested that the idea of university segregation endorsed by those social elites who have already attained high skilled jobs and occupied relatively privileged positions through acquisition of educational credentials intensifies national norms of meritocratic competition and reinforce a persistent assumption of meritocratic faith. Such faith might have played some part in the formation of Emily's concerns and in her action of supporting Emmet in studying abroad, as it did Mrs. Su(case 1), Mr. Xue (case 3), and Dr. Jia (case 5).

Emily next spoke of the reasons that led her to choose to send Emmet to UoA, explaining that *“to study abroad is to acquire and develop knowledge and skills that prepare you to succeed in the development of society, and to function in the new economy.”* When describing other children with whom Emmet had contacted with University, she remarked that *“they all study very hard and they are all better than him.”* She then became slightly shuttered and paused for three second *“I mean their families' economic circumstances are better, [...] they are all better than him.”*

Emily's concern for self-worth emerges in what she told Emmet, *“your self-worth is not merely valued by your economic standing. I hope the economic superiority your friends have doesn't make you fell at a disadvantage.”* She added, *“You can only make yourself by living a fulfilling life.”*

According to Emily's opinion, the division of society falls into five groups. These are (1) a leading figure in all walks of life; (2) someone who is at the top of corporate ladder and who functions efficiently in line with the development of society; (3) someone who employs himself in non-creative and day-to-day activities of business; (4) someone who lives off his/her parents or welfare; and (5) someone who is regarded as despicable and dangerous. In today's world of work where the chances of becoming a leading figure are arguably very slight, being intellectually capable, and socially and technically competent is Emily's basis upon which her self-identity and her expectations of Emmet's future prospects are built.

3.1. Here sense of inferiority coupled with Emmet's peers and their affluent families suggests that past thoughts and threats associated with economical and the loss of social status following her father's business misfortunes are still preserved.

3.2. What we can see is that at the end of the era of market triumphalism: Shanghai has become much richer, and much grander, yet ever-increasing economic stratification is also evident.

The competence gradation across the five groups as identified by Emily is exemplified further with reference to the occupational choice of her stepson- the child from her husband's former marriage. *"Failing to enrol at a senior secondary school (college) and go on to university, he left his junior secondary school to study at a vocational training school."* Emily told her stepson, *"even you cannot go on to university but you won't become a useless person who lives off his/her parents. You can acquire and develop skills as well if you study hard."* However her stepson's underachievement at the vocational school meant he failed to qualify himself as a skilled worker. Emily then suggested her stepson join the army, but he had no desire to be in the army, and thought a soldier's life to be terrible and hard work. Emily went on to explain that *"you can choose not to go to the army. The reality is in Shanghai you can go for a range of low status and wage jobs until you reach 40. That is only because you will be able to take away opportunities from migrant workers. However, you won't be able to support a whole family and to get a 'good marriage', as urban elite people won't marry off their daughters to you. These labour jobs will be no longer available after you turn 40, so the only work available to you will be as a security-guard. Therefore, the way to drag yourself out of backward and to advance your career prospects is to join the army and upgrade your skill."*

4.1. It might be suggested that Emily's own HE pursuit and the support she gave to Emmet's studies and his HE decision might be used as a reparative yet constructive life strategy, which acts to avoid exposing them to the shame that could result from their economic disadvantage.

4.2. Emily's occupation gradation schema is, to some extent, paralleled by the role of university as promulgated by the Vice Chancellor of Shanghai Jiaotong University Xu Fei. Shanghai Jiaotong University is one of the top four universities in China. As Xu Fei (2011) puts it, second-tier universities produce graduates who fill in routine and low-skilled jobs; while the first-tier universities aim at providing not only technically capable graduates but individuals who know how to construct their occupational development by the choices and actions they make. The world's best universities produce graduates who will play a key role in establishing 'the rules of the game' and whose professional responsibilities dictate people's real interests and society's needs. These leading universities provide the hope for the future

of society.

The order of universities, as defined by Xu Fei is an ideology that undoubtedly means a lot in Chinese society.

4.3. In this scenario, advising her stepson to make a sound occupational choice further defines Emily's sense of purpose and socio-relational orientations.

At the end of the interview, Emily mentioned her cancer diagnosis, and at a crucial moment, she stated, *“the reason I made so much effort to encourage and support Emmet's education is, because I expected that he would have brighter future prospects than me and he would be able to fulfil my role of looking after my aging parents.”* She then brought up the diagnosis directly against the backdrop of “her moving to Shanghai”, and against her global evaluation. She once resented her parents and her grandfather for showing bias against girls' capabilities and potentialities and called for a more loving and tender approach to nurturing a daughter. At the same time, she expressed gratitude to her parents for their unfair care and lack of investment. Without such unequal treatment, she would not have fulfilled her action of moving to Shanghai.

Emily had demonstrated that it is possible for a girl to achieve as much as a boy. She was determined not to let an old patriarchal value system curtail her life's pursuits and define who she is. Inevitably, she achieved this. Her actions and achievements altered public perceptions and attitudes towards having girls in her rural community. In her hometown people learned to value girls as much as boys.

Emily's told story

The thematic field Emily constructed and developed for her life story in relation to her decision and action to support Emmet to study abroad is connected to gender bias and a quest for self-identity. As a child, Emily was resentful of her parents, who underinvested their time and effort in cultivating her. However, she found her strength in moving and settling in Shanghai and, accordingly, became a 'New Shanghainese'. At the same time, she fulfilled her obligation to her parents and her brother. In describing herself as a New Shanghainese, she constructed an image of an academically capable, socially competent, locally integrated, maritally successful, culturally cosmopolitan and economically better-off migrant entrepreneur.

For Emily, a New Shanghainese identity came from an amalgamation of five factors: a graduation from a top-tier university, economic success, family solicitude, local marital connection, and corporate positions.

It is the idea of 'family solicitude' and filial duty that units family together through collective family effort and intergenerational exchanged roles. This exchanged role seems to have governed her past actions into sending Emmet abroad and have carried over to her self-presentation today.

Life history

A prestigious university has definite cultural meanings that define it, yet, for the Muo's family, their pursuit seemed to exceed it. That is not only a desirable object but even a prescribed standard against which their social integration is judged, career path is targeted, and their biographical concept of a fulfilling life is evaluated. Therefore, in declining an offer from a local top university revealed the spontaneous attitudes of Emily and Emmet at that time. By switching to a top university abroad for enrolment in order to become desegregated, Emily attempted to reconcile the seemingly conflicting ambition of her pursuit of selfhood, and her concern for her family's future and welfare of her ageing parents.

4.2.6.1b Emmet's told story: A need to fulfil reciprocal return to his sister and filial obligation for his ageing parents

As we have observed from the analyses of Muo's family history and the told story of Mrs. Emily, the bankruptcy of the family's business had a great impact on the family trajectories. This has persisted and shaped not only Emmet's life and also affected today's told story as well as his plans for the future. The bankruptcy with associated painful experience is perceived as a '**shame**' and '**insecurity**', by Emmet, which caused him to stumble at the beginning of his interview. He found it difficult to describe his early life and there is a lot of tension in the early sequence. The next sequence is an argument over thirteen lines on 'having a better life with his sister after moving to Shanghai'. This leads to the car accident that obscured his chances of getting a place at a prestigious Chinese university and 'alternative plan for his university studies in Singapore and then Auckland (see family history).' The first interview session lasted only twenty minutes. The difficulty for Emmet to generate the flow of narration can be understood in relation not only to his early experience but also the current life situation with his sister, who has received a diagnosis of carcinoma cancer. The defence

mechanism seems to reveal Emmet's attempts to protect himself and his family from society's gaze and judgement. At this point, another factor is present, the effect of his family's shared (dis)esteem upon an interdependent individual in the family.

In the second session of his interview, Emmet speaks of his early years of hardship, I asked him to tell me a little bit more about that particular period of time. He reported “*with the business bankrupted there was a substantial decline in our living standards, particularly in the variety of food around the dinner table. I was also fearful of being disdained by schoolmates and my friends if they had known of our true circumstances.*”

From the analysis of the lived experiences and family history of the Muos, we have seen that Emmet received three offers from the Departments of Engineering (four-year degree), Commerce (three-year), and Physics (four-year degree), respectively. I asked him to tell me how that happened. Central to Emmet's perspective is an emotional debt-repayment to his sister and a need to complete his undergraduate studies as soon as possible and therefore take over his sister's responsibility in caring for their parents. Emmet considers that Emily's efforts in raising him have allowed him to do the right thing and orient himself towards what is expected of him. Thus, Emmet wants to return what his sister has provided for him to acknowledge what she has sacrificed so that his education success is of importance. Consequently Emily's extraordinary burden of looking after her ageing parents and her own family can be expected to be lessened at last. The mechanism behind Emily's decision for his brother's overseas education and Emmet's understanding lies to the Confucian reciprocal codes of responsibility within the family system. Failing to enrol into a domestic prestigious university is also seen as obstacle to with family expectations of Emmet to become a new Shanghainese. As a result of this both Emmet and Emily present the HE decision for Emmet's tertiary education not only in terms of family's future plans of migration integration but also perceived roles and associated duties within the family.

4.2.7 Case 7 Mr. Wu and his son, Daniel

The team looking at the biography and family history of Mr. Wu and his son, Daniel (a Chinese international student) are Professor Gu and Mr. Xu.

	Lived Life & Family History	Propositions & Follow-up Hypotheses
Before and after 1949	<p>Mr. Wu's adoptive grandfather was an industrialist in old Shanghai before 1949.</p> <p>Mr. Wu's maternal relatives lived overseas.</p> <p>Mr. Wu was born in Shanghai in 1955 and the youngest child of five.</p>	<p>1. By the mid-1950s, the socialist transformation was nearing completion and some capitalist industry and commerce had already been converted into state-private partnerships.</p> <p><i>1.1. The Wu family had significant material wealth, which was supported by government compensation payment given to former industrialists. They received an average income of RMB 100-200 per month.</i></p> <p>1.2. Mr. Wu will be aware of the privileged social and economic positions his family enjoys and will be proud of his family background.</p> <p><i>1.3. As a child of a former industrialist in pre-Liberation society, life would be very comfortable throughout Mr. Wu's childhood (1955-1966).</i></p> <p><i>1.4. There is no doubt that, Mr. Wu's life will be profoundly different after 1966.</i></p> <p><i>1.4.1. Opportunities for receiving education and job assignments will be limited.</i></p> <p><i>In other words, his family background will disadvantage him socially and economically after 1966.</i></p>
1955-1975	<p>After completing his second-year study at junior middle school, Mr. Wu was sent down to the countryside in 1969 and returned to Shanghai in 1975.</p>	<p>Hypothesis 1.4 is supported by Mr. Wu's 6-year banishment to the countryside.</p> <p>2.1. Due to his family's 'bad class' background, Mr. Wu's career choices will be limited and it will be likely that he will be assigned a job as a worker in heavy industry or as a sales assistant in a dairy</p>

		<p>shop involving low-end, manual work.</p> <p><i>2.2. Lacking intellectual activities and pursuits during his formative years, Mr. Wu will not be likely to consider going to university after 1977.</i></p> <p><i>On the matter of HE, Mr. Wu will not be aware of what is about to happen regarding the impact of university study and its relation to his future prospects. He will not be committed to becoming a member of Class 77 or 78.</i></p> <p><i>2.3. After shifting back to Shanghai from the harsh conditions of living in the countryside, Mr. Wu will feel content with his current situation in life.</i></p> <p>The ideals of future prospects for Mr. Wu will be focused on having a stable job, income, and a family.</p>
1975-1988	<p>Upon his return to Shanghai, Mr. Wu was assigned to a state-owned import company, which was derived from the business of packing and transporting export goods in 1974 and was initially founded in Beijing. In the 1980s, an import and export enterprise was established in Shanghai based on its former import Co., engaging mainly in foreign trade with Western countries and importing necessities for domestic production and consumption.</p> <p>In the 1980s, Mr. Wu was promoted to the head of administrative offices, supervising accounting, purchasing, sales, and other administrative activities.</p> <p>Mr. Wu married in 1981 and in 1982, Daniel was born.</p> <p>Mr. Wu's mother had a stroke and passed away when Daniel was five.</p> <p>With three adoring adults, Daniel is the central figure in a domestically constituted circle of caring, which is guaranteed to enlarge Daniel's physical and emotional welfare.</p> <p>When Daniel got up in the morning, breakfast</p>	<p>Mr. Wu's job assignment would not be seen as a surprise.</p> <p>Although jobs in foreign trade and commerce have become profitable and admirable from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, it would be not possible to find people who were willing to work in such work units before the 1978 reformation period. By comparison, people were more inclined to work in a secure job in factories.</p> <p><i>3.1. Mr. Wu's aspiration for a decent life has been realised and he will no longer ask himself too much and become complacent about his comfortable urban life.</i></p> <p>3.1a. The material conditions Daniel experienced in his childhood through his father's occupation and his grandfather's background will contribute to a sense of family pride regarding his family background.</p> <p><i>3.2. Mr. Wu's complacent attitude and his limited educational equipment will not be able to tend Daniel's intellectual upbringing or to help Daniel with his school</i></p>

	<p>was prepared. Apart from preparing three meals a day and nibbles between meals, granddad used to pick up Daniel from school every day.</p>	<p><i>work.</i></p> <p><i>3.3. As a result of generous affection and caring bestowed from his grandfather, Daniel will not be likely to develop a hard-work ethos when it comes to education.</i></p> <p><i>3.3a. Daniel will find school not easy but put minimum effort into his academic tasks.</i></p>
1988-1992	<p>In order to expand his chances of getting into a local prestigious secondary school, Daniel started using private tutoring in the final year of his primary schooling. However, his under-achievements meant that he failed his exam that would have enabled him to attend local elite schools, as had been intended by his parents.</p> <p>In order to support Daniel to enter at a top-ranking school, his parents and grandfather financed 5,000RMB endowments for the school.</p>	<p>Two Hypotheses on Mr. Wu's limited educational equipment (3.2) and Granddad's helicopter style –over-protection (3.3) suggested by Professor Gu are well supported by Daniel's struggle with his academic studies.</p> <p>4.1. Thinking of himself as a student who has obtained an 'approval permit for temporary schooling' at this elite school through money, may undermine his confidence and self-esteem. This may trigger further poor performance in school. Daniel may feel excluded at the school.</p> <p>4.2. Counter-hypothesis If Daniel manages to perform well once or twice, his academic successes will be deemed proof of his capacities amongst his peers, and he will be vindicated with reference to his potential (falsified).</p>
1992-2001	<p>By the time of the downturn of state-owned import & export enterprises in 1995, Mr. Wu transferred himself to a private company but retained his personal dossier in his original company. 9</p> <p>During his college year, Daniel started playing basketball. He played too much, neglecting</p>	<p><i>5.1. Every major step throughout Daniel's life is arranged by his parents and he is protected from having to navigate obstacles in life.</i></p> <p><i>5.2. Mr. Wu decided to send Daniel abroad to study, because many others had done it and he just followed the trend. He is swimming with the tide.</i></p>

⁹With the liberation of foreign trade during the late 1990s, the state has shifted its authority from just a few centrally controlled big import & export companies to thousands of small- and medium-sized enterprises with foreign trading rights.

	<p>school work, and in the end, he failed to get an offer from a Chinese university.</p> <p>Daniel found it too hard to meet the language requirements for studying in Australia and so the Wu's decided to support Daniel to study in New Zealand.</p>	<p><i>5.2a. Throughout his 7-year-secondary schooling, Daniel spent too much time playing, and not enough time studying. This is a study habit for him and it will be the same when he is abroad.</i></p> <p><i>5.2b. Daniel did not have high expectations for his scholastic abilities. It is easy for him to become complacent and to get satisfied with his academic achievements.</i></p>
2002-2010	<p>Daniel achieved a 5.5 overall score after taking a three-month -IELTS course at MIT. He went to the university but was informed by the university admission officer that there is no alternative and he has to achieve a score of 6 in order to study a degree.</p> <p>At that time, some of his peers suggested Daniel study a 1-year business diploma course with a private training provider. After the diploma, Daniel was not able to find himself a job but spent a lot of time going out with his friends.</p> <p>When his student visa was almost expired, Daniel and his friends visited the university again and were told that their academic credits with the private provider were not recognised by the university and he could not transfer them to bachelor studies.</p> <p>Daniel was at that point persuaded by one of his friends to do a two-year business degree course with another private training provider in the city.</p>	<p><i>6.1. Here we see Daniel chose to take an easy short cut with a private institution instead of university, as suggested by his peers. His decision to study abroad was equally influenced by his peers' suggestions. These decisions are not carefully considered and leave him with limited options.</i></p> <p>Two hypotheses on Daniel's study habits and his academic attitude (5.2a and 5.2b) are confirmed. This confirmation also gives support to the corresponding propositions of 5.2 and 6.1.</p> <p>6.2. Daniel will think hard about plans for his future, which might include considering returning to Shanghai.</p> <p>6.2a. It will not be difficult for Daniel to attain a decent job in Shanghai through his father's connections.</p>
2011	<p>At the time of the interview, Daniel was married and worked for a local food store. Mr. Wu took his early retirement in 2005 and his wife has been working for a private real estate company since 1998 when she resigned her post from Shanghai light industry engineering design institute.</p>	<p>Daniel's stay in New Zealand rejects hypothesis 6.2.a as evidence that his father lost his influence and connection to help Daniel to attain a decent job in today's Shanghai.</p>

4.2.7.1 Case 7

4.2.7.1a Mr. & Mrs. Wu's told story

Strictly speaking, neither Daniel nor Stevie (Case 8) fit the criteria for the sampling (that is, a

current university student or a recent graduate) but I felt that if I had said no to them, I would have missed an opportunity to hear a family history represented by a different HE decision practice pattern.

The interview with Daniel's parents took place in their Shanghai house. Daniel's father, Mr. Wu, played the lead role in the interview, in collaboration with supplementary information added by his wife.

Instead of a narrative, Mr. Wu began his story with a global evaluation, asserting that the complex social relationships of his family limited his opportunities for social and political advancement.

1.1. In contrast to information that was obtained about Mr. Wu's family history, I speculated that Mr. Wu was trying to present his life choices, including his own HE decision to not attend a HE university, against this global construct where his 'bad family background' hindered his advancement. With such a background and his family links, his social and cultural expectations were affected and formed.

1.2. Could Mr. Wu be using this aspect of his family history as a defence- as a way of protecting his 'complacent' attitude towards learning?

In the next passage Mr. Wu reported briefly about the time he was sent to the countryside, and his job which he was assigned upon his return to Shanghai. In this passage, Mr. Wu presented himself as institutionally disadvantaged by his family background, which blocked his opportunities to join the army and the Party. Accordingly, a consistent point in his commentary about his aspirations for his future prospects was that he did not dare to aspire too much for his upward mobility. That point gave support for the corresponding hypothesis 1.1.

2.1. In relation to Mr. Wu's prospects for upward mobility, there seems to be a parallel today where Daniel has a low end and skilled job after a disappointing education at two private institutes.

Mr. Wu argued that they decided to send Daniel abroad to study because of the 'moral chaos' in contemporary China, the increasing economic inequality and corruption, and the poor outlooks for monetary and material success.

After he finished the reasons of sending Daniel abroad to studying, Mrs. Wu chipped in. She held the same attitudes as those of Mr. Wu- that a black mark stigmatized her family origins,

which she believed had hindered her chances of getting ahead in life. She went on to explain that for the sent-down youth that return to Shanghai after labouring in the country, party membership and good family origins are important factors in attaining a position at top work units (danwei) in the state sector. Examples of such danwei are giant corporations such as Shanghai Electrical and Electronics Engineering Bureau, and Electronic Instrument Bureau. With resentment and frustration gripping her family background, Mrs. Wu decided to develop her skills, instead of aspiring for social and political advancement.

Mrs. Wu then immediately narrated a situation when she was appointed as a skilled property evaluator by a Hong Kong real estate developer in Hong Qiao New Area. She recalled the workplace in her first visit: “a couple of offices and a few inches of space for each office, and few employees.” Mrs. Wu did not expect seeing graduates from top Chinese universities working in such a ‘simplified’ and undesirable work environment. It was the disparity she witnessed between the working lives of those educated at top universities and their respective simplified work environment and status elicited her opinions and expectations that she wanted Daniel to get a good education that would facilitate his later access to a position in a prestigious work organization. To Mrs. Wu, what does a prestigious work organization look like?

In the second session of the interview, Mrs. Wu’s described the company her husband worked for: a state-owned import and export company. It was located on Bund Street with views of Classic and Neo-Renaissance buildings, where European, American, and Japanese businesses build their banks, trading houses, consulates, and hotels. Managers have their own private offices and their offices are normally extraordinarily large and ornate. Like most state-owned foreign trade corporations (FTCs), Mr. and Mrs. Wu witnessed an enormous rise in activity, profit, and reputation in this industry during the 1980s and 1990s. It is clear that, to Mr. and Mrs. Wu, the foreign trade company Mr. Wu worked for typifies a top work organisation as well as signifies and represents the sense of identity associated with such work organization.

Told Story and the Lived History of Mr & Mrs. Wu

Told Story-In the main narration in the first session of the interview, Mr and Mrs. Wu constructed themselves as institutionally disadvantaged, which is reflected in their job assignments by the state. The black mark of their family origins, imposed by the system for being former industrialists, has left them with nothing but perpetual compliance.

Reconstruction of life history and microanalysis

What were Mr and Mrs. Wu's past perspectives at the time when they made their own HE decisions and when they made the decision of sending Daniel abroad?

Mr. Wu's comments on his own chance to go to university revealed how his orientation towards mobility and attainment was formed and institutionalised by his social and economic conditions at his post in the FTC.

“I was thinking about whether I should go to university, you know, because I didn't expect to find a good job like the one I had at that time. Even a university degree couldn't guarantee access to that kind of workplace. You know, during that time, FTCs were much better than most workplaces in terms of salaries, welfare, and occupational status. We were enjoying a monopoly in our respective industries within mandatory trade plans and we were able to benefit tremendously from the growth of China's exports to the international markets. Later I was promoted to the head of administrative offices and also in charge of import business.” At that time, Mr. Wu clearly did not see a university education as financially or socially desirable or necessary.

Mr. Wu also expressed his views with regard to Daniel's university education, which related to his future career prospects. A university education is seen as a precursor to the acquisition of a position in a prestigious corporation, like one located in the Shanghai CBD, with a similar 'magic history' of state-owned foreign trade corporations (FTCs). But such magic-history companies were either merged or bankrupted after a process of state-owned enterprise (SOEs) reformation. The remained FTCs are much more competitive now than at the time Mr. Wu started working in one when he was young. Expertise on information technology and strategic brilliance are more important than a paper certificate issued from a foreign institute.

The relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Wu's life history and his told story

What is the relationship between past and present perspectives of Mr. and Mrs. Wu? Which biographical experiences have led to this purported statement of his 'disadvantaged family origin'?

In summary, Mr. & Mrs. Wu did not wish to accept the reality associated with Daniel's undesirable job after a disappointing education, and they were trying to assign the

responsibility for Daniel's career outcome today to their own complacent attitudes towards studying at an HE university and their over-protective parenting styles.

However, there is nothing in the first narration session that accounts for this and there is also nothing that accounts for the fact that they gave Daniel permission to take a short and easy course with a private training institute, which Mr. and Mrs. Wu presumed most people including the interviewer, would have prohibited Daniel from doing that. The only way they could assign blame for their content, accepting, compliant, even passive attitude toward mobility and attainment is by blaming the institutional disadvantages that were imposed on them by their family origins.

4.2.7.1b Daniel's story: Institutionalised obedience and the impact of fitting in the development needs of Shanghai society

Daniel started a brief description of his family and how the family has still kept the Chinese tradition alive, his parents' care giving for his bed-ridden grandmother for years till last minute of life. I wonder whether Daniel was using this aspect of his family history as a defence - as a way of protecting his unsuccessful studies and subsequent lowly skilled and paid job in New Zealand and this contrasts with his parent's and his own expectations concerning his HE. His emphasis of the traditional filial behaviour can be interpreted as a kind of alternative social recognition compared with great career he would like to achieve but lacks of skills and determinations to accomplish.

The next sequence of the main narration is two-page elaborated narration in the context of the transition from his primary school to a key-point secondary school. It can be interpreted as an argumentation of the importance of a key-point school status for Daniel and his family as a pattern for local community integration and upward mobility socially and he sees it in accordance with the public discourse - students from key-point schools have a better chance of gaining university acceptance than students from mediocre ones. So "he was told by his parents that is the route he had to follow." He says:

"My academic performance at primary school was good but my examination grades were not sufficient for entry to an elite school. In order to prevent me from being upset, my father went to the school to negotiate. He agreed to pay RMB 5,000 endowments for my enrolment. It was a huge amount of money at that time. The school was situated in the concession of French, its human and material resources are as great as its prestige. At the

beginning, I had been determined to study hard but soon neglected my studies by playing too much.” This could be read as his parents setting the life agenda for him but their expectations clearly haven't been fully internalized in his socialization. The thematic context of Daniel's life is **education and examination** in relation to the agreement with his parents to study hard remains covert- **he had been determined to study hard but soon neglected his studies by playing too much, as he argues, he was still a kid.**

He continued the theme of education and examination in the context of a non-key point upper secondary school, this is followed with another agreement with his parents- to pass his NCEE. While he didn't. **He was playing too much and he was still a kid.** At that moment, there is a tone of deep-suffered depression in his voice. He kept smoking and sweating in a winter afternoon and this seems to be driven by his unconscious anxiety about his unfulfilled obligations towards his parents and unfulfilled dream of his own. In the next sequence of his interview, Daniel commented on the decision to study abroad, with reference to his parent's perspectives: “my parents did not set high goals for me to achieve, and they only expected me to get a degree and then a prestigious job... nothing spectacular” Clearly neither Mr. Wu nor Daniel has resources and courage to live a life true to themselves, but the one the mainstream expect of them. High education decision is institutionalised obedience and compliance towards politically-defined orientations. Both Daniel and his father show a lack of appreciation and evaluating opportunities and risky situations and their associated negative consequences. This is the main reason Daniel came to me and asked professional guidance for vulnerable 'kids' like him who lack sufficient preparation for the Western world.

4.2.8 Case 8 Mrs. Zhu and her daughter, Stevie

The team looking at the lived history of Mrs. Zhu and her daughter, Stevie (a Chinese international student) is composed of Professor Gu and Mrs. Ma.

	Lived Life & Family History	Propositions/ Follow-up hypotheses
-1955	Before 1949, Mrs. Zhu's maternal granddad owned a clock and watch shop in Suzhou, a city which is located in Jiangsu province, adjacent to Shanghai Municipality. Her grandfather's first wife died when Mrs. Zhu's mother was only 9 years old. He then married his first wife's younger sister as his second wife. The son, her mother's half-brother, from	<p><i>1. Brought up by her stepmother's rough parenting, Mrs. Zhu's mother will tend to become pugnacious and strong-willed.</i></p> <p><i>1.1. Mrs. Zhu will be strong-willed too.</i></p>

	<p>the second marriage was given more importance than the daughter from the first marriage. Cooked meat was always put in a bowl on top of the cabinet, hidden away. The meat in the bowl was a treat for her half-brother alone. Whenever there were no other people in the room, Mrs. Zhu's mother would drag a chair to the cabinet and get the bowl of meat from the top of the cupboard, quickly finish it and then leave.</p> <p>Mrs. Zhu's mother was a sales woman in woollen textile mill in Suzhou, while her father was factory electrician.</p> <p>Mrs. Zhu was born in Suzhou in 1959 and the eldest child of three.</p>	
1959-1978	<p>During the Cultural Revolution, Mrs. Zhu's mother, who was a revolutionary leftist, constantly had arguments over ideological issues with her husband, who was on the side of reactionary rightists. And frequently she vented her anger on her husband and her children.</p> <p>From the age of eight, Mrs. Zhu was responsible for all household chores, ranging from hauling water from the well to cooking for the entire family and washing their clothes.</p>	<p><i>The predicated pugnacious character of Mrs. Zhu's mother in the hypothesis 1 gains certain support.</i></p> <p><i>2. Disturbed by her parents' arguing and fighting, Mrs. Zhu will long for family harmony.</i></p> <p><i>2.1. Mrs. Zhu will place high value on having harmony in the home. The value for harmony will be stressed strongly not only for her own family but also in her preference for Stevie's marital choice.</i></p>
1978-1984	<p>Mrs. Zhu worked at a textile plant before being transferred to a large watch manufacturing plant in 1978. In the early 1980s, the average monthly wages of workers at the factory was RMB18 but Mrs. Zhu earned RMB99 per month for performance incentives.</p> <p>In 1982 Mrs. Zhu married. Her husband returned to Suzhou from his 4-year military service in a northern city, where he was a trained equipment repair technician and worked in aircraft maintenance and repair. Her husband's parents were high-ranking officials in the local government personnel bureau.</p>	<p><i>3.1. Mrs. Zhu is competent, has a goal of achievement, success, and superiority, in relation to her own standards and to others.</i></p> <p><i>3.2. Mrs. Zhu's husband will be impacted by his sister's business success and he will set future career prospects for his family accordingly.</i></p> <p><i>3.2a. Either Mr. or Mrs. Zhu will quit his/her job from the state-owned plant to pursue their family-operated business.</i></p> <p><i>3.3. Counter-hypothesis (Professor Gu)</i></p> <p><i>With skilled jobs in the state sector, there</i></p>

	<p>At the time, Mrs. Zhu's sister-in-law (her husband's younger sister) and her husband ran a successful, medium-sized local wedding shop and bridal Photoshop. Her sister-in-law's bridal business expanded at a phenomenal rate. As a winner of local bridal makeup competition, her sister-in-law integrated hair and makeup style services into her salon and it was very popular among the local soon- to-be-married. Soon her sister-in-law had two new salons in the city.</p> <p>Through the business, they became well off. Enough to allow them to be the first motor-biker owners in Suzhou, as well as, the first household to equip a modern washing machine, and to wear Italian-made clothes in the early 1980s.</p>	<p><i>is no need for Mr. or Mrs. Zhu to risk starting a private business. 10 The state-sector is more secure.</i></p> <p><i>3.4. With his parents' bureaucratic positions, Mrs. Zhu's husband has access to information that determines trends of market development and regulations.</i></p> <p><i>3.4a. The government connections will allow Mr. Zhu to seize future business opportunities.</i></p>
1985-1996	<p>In 1985 Stevie was born.</p> <p>In 1987 Mrs. Zhu resigned from the plant to open her own clock and watch repair store, while Mr. Zhu stayed in his original work unit. On her first day, Mrs. Zhu made RMB18, due to her watch-repairing skill and speed. This was equivalent to one-month's salary in her previous position at the plant.</p> <p>With more and more competitors emerging in the repair service, Mr. and Mrs. Zhu opened a print & copy shop with the funding they had saved from the success of their watch repair shop.</p> <p>In 1992, Mrs. Zhu's husband had a conversation with a friend who worked in publishing, who recognised that in the future, the print industry would inevitably change the types of seals used from traditional paste to atomic stamps. The conversation inspired Mr. Zhu to purchase an electric embossing press machine with a loan borrowed from the bank. His electric machinery knowledge and skill</p>	<p><i>Hypothesis on Mr. or Mrs. Zhu's career transfer (3.2.a) is confirmed and it can be assumed that the success demonstrated by his sister's business catalysed Mr. Zhu's decision and action to create his own business and to take necessary risks (3.2). Meanwhile, proposition 3.3 is rejected.</i></p> <p><i>4.1. Professor Gu was surprised by the couple's career shift and considers their decisions very entrepreneurial and very plucky.</i></p> <p><i>4.1a. Absorbing her parents' actions and material achievement, Stevie is likely to develop an entrepreneurial orientation and sense of purpose in life.</i></p> <p><i>4.1b. Stevie might recognise the importance of skills and specialisation for the future of her educational and occupational development.</i></p>

¹⁰As Professor Huang (2008) argues, Beijing and Shanghai were the most state-controlled and least reformed urban areas during the last two decades of the twentieth century.

	<p>meant that he was able to assemble the machine by himself instead of spending RMB 2000 to have a trained embosser to do it.</p> <p>As soon as he had assembled the machine, Jiangsu Administration for Industry and Commerce officially changed the seals they used from seal paste to atomic stamps.</p> <p>The Zhu's family made a dramatic profit working on a wave of government seal changes.</p> <p>During that time, Stevie developed her own way of looking after herself and solving problems.</p>	<p><i>Mrs. Ma hypothesises that it might be the application of practical skills or the value of skilful activities rather than high mental abilities and abstract thinking that will become valued by Stevie and her parents.</i></p> <p><i>4.2. Mr. and Mrs. Zhu will continue running their shops and may try a new way of doing business.</i></p> <p><i>4.2a. Mrs. Zhu will make some investments in property.</i></p> <p><i>4.2b. She will make money by buying and selling stocks on China's stock market or buying and selling houses.</i></p> <p><i>4.3. Life pressures on Stevie will be minimal.</i></p> <p><i>4.3a. Stevie's academic performances will not be of high quality and her parents will not be able to help her with her schoolwork.</i></p> <p><i>4.3b. The National University Entrance Exam will be a turning point for her. Of course, her parents will be able to afford to send her abroad to study even if she fails the exam.</i></p>
1996-2002	<p>Mrs. Zhu's younger sister, who had worked at a state-owned textile plant and was diagnosed with cancer due to exposure to dangerous chemicals, passed away six months after being admitted to the hospital.</p> <p>Selling bulk quantities of atomic official seals to the local bureaucracies kept expanding the Zhu's business. They were strongly entrenched in the field of seal production and service for local administration in the first half of the 1990s. However, the business began to stagnate during the second half of the 1990s, as other retailers began competing for business in the city.</p> <p>The business was additionally burdened by having to host banquets for bureaucrats and leaders needed in order to gain necessary selling licences and consents for his business.</p>	<p><i>5.1. The family's well-being and quality of life will have a special significance for Mrs. Zhu after her sister's death.</i></p> <p><i>5.2. A clean and beautiful life and environment might be the reason that drives Mrs. Zhu's desire to send Stevie to New Zealand to study.</i></p> <p><i>5.3 Business stagnation and competition made Mr. Zhu realize that continued expansion of the traditional way of business seemed neither possible nor profitable without a change in his business model. The appeal of escaping of the intervention of the local administration finally triggered Mr. Zhu's decision to move into a new line of business.</i></p>

	<p>After one year of market investigation and a small-scale pilot-test, Mr. Zhu eventually sold his business and joined a leading global sales organisation, specialising in nutritional foods and supplements.</p> <p>Mr Zhu rose to be one of the country's top market distributors within two years, following market expansion and a high growth-rate in the number of his downline distributors.</p> <p>During the second year of Stevie's studies at senior college, a friend of Mrs. Zhu, who worked for a local agent; assisting Chinese students to study abroad, recommended Stevie study nursing in New Zealand, as a friend's daughter was presently doing so in New Zealand.</p> <p>Mrs. Zhu and Stevie agreed that studying abroad was a good idea. The family believed that it would not be easy for Stevie to pass the university-entrance exam in China.</p>	<p><i>His new roles, which require dealing with foreign products and administrations mean that he has less interference from local administrations, whilst keeping his practices and status in the field of business.</i></p>
2002-2011	<p>In 2002, Mr. and Mrs. Zhu sent Stevie off on her trip to New Zealand.</p> <p>In 2007, Mr. and Mrs. Zhu moved to Shanghai. The move fostered an expansion of business.</p> <p>At the time of my interview, Stevie worked in a local hospital after obtaining a degree in nursing. She is thinking of doing postgraduate study in the near future.</p>	<p><i>6. Stevie will expand the business her father was involved in to the New Zealand market.</i></p> <p><i>She will become more confident in making life choices and decisions.</i></p>

4.2.8.1Case 8

4.2.8.1a Mrs. Zhu's told story

Mrs. Zhu was the first member of the parent cohort to be interviewed. The interview took place at Stevie's home, where Mrs. Zhu was staying, while on a one-month visit, to assist with Stevie's new house arrangements.

Initially I briefed Mrs. Zhu on my research purpose. Then I introduced the single initial probe.

At first, Mrs. Zhu introduced her parents and her siblings, as well as her childhood, which

was characterised by harsh living conditions. Following this evaluation of childhood hardship, Mrs. Zhu reported a situation that she had been frequently exposed to quarrelling and protracted arguments between her parents, owing to their contradictory ideas. These acts hampered the happy family atmosphere she felt she needed. ***“When I get married, I think it is of utmost most importance that, both my husband and I don’t quarrel or fight with each other. We will go to any length to maintain and sustain harmony and peace at home, because quarrels and grudges hurt children and adversely affect them.”***

This childhood experience could suggest that her concept of quality of family life –embodied by family harmony- has formed Mrs. Zhu’s core values and life orientation, according to which she is presenting her lived experiences.

In the next passage Mrs. Zhu talked about her younger sister who had worked at a manufacturing plant. The toxic chemicals that she was exposed to in her line of work were assumed to be a major contribution to her poor health and death (See life history 1996-2002). Mrs. Zhu moved on to discuss her husband, who was ‘farsighted’, and ‘strong-willed’. ***“My husband stressed that being a wage or salary earner was stable but with no future and that it was necessity to create our own business and worked to that end.”*** Her husband persuaded Mrs. Zhu to resign, although she expressed hesitation: ***“no labour protection or medical insurance would be provided; and the length of service (work) could be preserved”***(See life history 1985-1996).

Mrs. Zhu carried on discussing the evolution of their businesses: the success of the family-run clock and watch repair business generated not only capital but a drive in their search for growth and technical specialisation. The restraints of a traditional business model, profit-sharing, and bureaucratic intervention compelled her husband to seek employment and development in foreign companies.

At that time, they made the decision to send Stevie abroad to study. Simultaneously, Mrs. Zhu stated that she felt gratified with the outcomes of sending her daughter overseas: ***“studying abroad gave Stevie experiences that taught her to battle her own way through life unaided by her parents; she appears more mature and, at the same time, retains her filial respect and care towards her parents. I am pleased with our decision to send Stevie to study in New Zealand.”***

Immediately after she had said that, Mrs. Zhu returned to the topic of her childhood and her

disharmonious home environment. She was once concerned about the impact of their home life upon her daughter, but now she is relieved.

Told story and the lived history of Mrs. Zhu

In summary, Mrs. Zhu represented a microcosm of the advent and development of a new breed of entrepreneurs that emerged during the economic reformation era. By all accounts, she believes that she married an able and far-sighted man, who has committed himself to economic success, growth, a future model of free enterprise, and a better quality of life. This model grew out of his escape from the traditional model of business, which was heavily burdened by bureaucratic regulation and unhealthy price competition from other local retailers.

Central to Mrs. Zhu's told story is her motherly and wifely solicitude for the sake of her child and husband's well-being. The bedrock of this solicitude is the Confucian value of harmonious compromise, combined with normative ideals of domestic life and family order, which are derived from her early life experiences and the notion of the Confucianism's social order. That is: a wife's loyalty and respect to her husband and a parent's concern for posterity (Fairbank, 1998). Mrs. Zhu strives to maintain family harmony in order to reconcile potential conflicts and contradictory ideas between her husband and herself.

Reconstruction of life history and microanalysis

What was Mrs. Zhu's past perspective at the time when she decided to send Stevie to study in New Zealand?

Mrs. Zhu's hesitance with regard to her involvement in the early establishment of foreign direct-sales in China, into which she followed her husband in 1997, reveals her caution and uncertain feelings about the modern business model, as imported by foreign corporations, which clashed with her past experiences and her preoccupation with the old danwei system of a life-long welfare system. This preoccupation is exemplified in her concerns about the loss of labour protection, medical insurance and the length of her past work service when her husband advised her to quit her job in the state sector.

Sending Stevie abroad to study was an attempt to remove economic risks for her family's prospects and to eliminate potential conflicts and controversial ideas between her husband

and herself. The impact of this conflict concerns Mrs. Zhu with regard to her daughter, as she had been exposed to and experienced similar, conflict in her own childhood.

The relationship between Mrs. Zhu's life history and her told story

What is the relationship between the past and present perspectives of Mrs. Zhu? Which biographical experiences have led to her repeated affirmations of her husband's decisions and her emphasis of freedom and a better quality of life?

The promotion of economic development in the late twentieth and early twentieth-first centuries gave an impetus to the coast cities. Among these were the port cities surrounding the Yangzi and Zhejiang deltas, which had established their pre-eminence and brought about tremendous economic growth. These port cities, which sprang up after 1979 when Sino-West relations began to warm, escaped the intervention of central administration by becoming the foci of technological innovation and organisational reformation. The Zhu's family business reflected and further accelerated this developmental trend. The foreign ideas, techniques, and participation have further fostered maritime enterprises as well as economic and corporate governance development. Mr. and Mrs. Zhu experienced a period of economic boom and were able to participate in foreign corporate governance. This led to the development of Mrs. Zhu's focus on pursuing the promotion of a better life from her current perspective as well as a modern business spirit for the pursuit of free enterprise and growth.

4.2.8.1b Stevie's told story: The symbiosis of family orientation and market orientation

Stevie's had closed emotional bond with her mother but also identifies with her father's market capacities, of whom she was very proud. Unlike other Chinese students whose told stories are study- and examination- orientated, Stevie narrated different experiences, mainly in the context of her family business. Her narration clearly indicates that Stevie's experience in her family's business in eastern coastal city, Jiangsu, holds great biographical relevance for her. Her strong sense of entrepreneurship and familial value can be put forward as the core position of Stevie's presentation.

Her story reflects a progressive sequence of a new breed of reform-minded entrepreneurs in modern-day China, who have sprung up from small-scale and family-run businesses and who were once involved in the repair and services trades. Accumulated capital enabled a shift towards more technologically advanced trades and eventually away from the restraints of the

traditional business model. In many ways, Stevie embodies qualities of her father: she is independent, self-reliant, adventurous, and progressive. However, she also shares the family-oriented attitudes of her mother. Convinced that her future progression will be based on the specialization and professionalisation of business, Stevie accepted her mother's proposal to study nursing in New Zealand, something which she is not interested in. For Stevie, New Zealand is a potential market for her future business.

4.2.9 Case 9 Mr. Fei and his son, James

The team involved in the analysis of Case 9 are Professor. Gu and Mr. Xu.

	Lived Life & Family History	Propositions/Hypotheses
1951-1976	<p>Mr. Fei was born in Shanghai in 1951. His father was a cadre and his grandfather was a poor peasant.</p> <p>After completing his junior secondary school studies in 1968, Mr. Fei was recruited by Jiangnan Shipyard, which is one of the larger enterprises subordinated to China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC), with an estimated staff of 5,000.</p> <p>During the period of 1968-1976, Mr. Fei was occupied in the Carpentry and Painting workshop of the yard and he carried out tasks like hull painting and surface coating. Performing these tasks could be potentially dangerous due to welding fumes and poor ventilation.</p>	<p><i>1. Skilled factory workers enjoyed very high political and social status in the 1960s and 1970s.</i></p> <p><i>They were identified as preferential marriage choices (Croll, 2010). This advantage will allow Mr. Fei to not to look for other job options.</i></p> <p><i>1.1. He will probably consider pursuing an office job inside the yard.</i></p>
1976-1984	<p>In 1978, during the early period of the economic reformation era, Mr. Fei was referred to the Department of Labour and Human Resources, where he served until 1984 as one of the main committee members in the initial wage reforms for workers at the yard.</p> <p>In 1983 James was born.</p>	<p><i>2.1. Mr. Fei's job shift from the Carpentry and Painting Workshop to the Labour & HR Department indicates he is no longer a worker but a provisional cadre.</i></p> <p><i>The follow-up hypothesis 1.1 is confirmed and the proposition 1 is supported.</i></p>

		<p>2.1.1 If Mr. Fei is to have a successful bureaucratic and political career but to attain a senior position, a diploma or degree from a party school or a training institute will be required.</p> <p>From 1984 in principle no one could be promoted within bureaucracy unless they held an HE-related diploma or degree.</p>
1984	<p>In 1984 the staff of the Labour and Human Resource Department greeted two newly-arrived appointees to the positions of deputy head and head of department. Both appointees were university degree-holders.</p>	<p><i>3.1. The direct nomination of department heads will presumably lead to profound disappointment for Mr. Fei.</i></p> <p><i>3.1a. Seeing that greater opportunities are only available for men who hold a university education, he will come to regard his secondary certificate as a major hindrance to advancing his bureaucratic career.</i></p> <p><i>3.2. He will take an HE-related programme.</i></p>
1984-1987	<p>The School of Labour and Human Resources at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (SUFU) in 1984 launched a programme on Labour and Personnel Management for the first time. The course mainly helped lower and middle level cadres from non-formal academic backgrounds to access higher education, making progression to a college-diploma and a degree possible.</p> <p>Mr. Fei's highest level of qualification at this stage was a senior secondary school certificate, which he had gained through self-study over the previous 2 years in the subjects of Chinese, History, Politics, and Geography. The certificate qualified him to sit the entrance examination for higher-level education courses offered at SUFU.</p> <p>Mr. Fei at the time had a very supportive leader who encouraged him to take the programme and allowed him 3 months off work to sit courses in preparation for the entrance examinations.</p> <p>After taking the three-month-long preparation courses, Mr. Fei sat the entrance examination</p>	<p><i>4. Mr. Fei's intense admiration of, and commitment to a university education is self-evident. Hypothesis 3.2 is confirmed, Mr. Fei took the HE-related course.</i></p>

	<p>while simultaneously taking entrance exams for Shanghai further education college.</p> <p>Mr. Fei found the math section in the entrance exam for Shanghai FE college very easy and received a much higher mark in it (a score of 82 out of 100) than in the SUFE entrance exam (69 out of 100). The latter test was designed by the PRC Ministry of Finance.</p>	
1987-1995	<p>After graduating in 1987, Mr. Fei took a position at Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy, and stayed there for eight years.</p> <p>James was sent to study English three times a week during 1988-1994.</p>	<p>5. There is ample evidence that Mr. Fei achieved his advantageous social position due to his decision and action to study for a university-level programme at SUFE.</p> <p><i>5.1. Mr. Fei considers an HE-level education to be of high importance, as is shown by James' early English training. Mr. Fei has clear intentions of improving James's chances of gaining entry to an elite university.</i></p>
1995-2002	<p>Mr. Fei transferred to a comparable position at Shanghai Economic Times Press in 1995.</p> <p>James's maths performance began to get steadily worse. His underachievement in maths means that he failed to get into a domestic university for his degree studies.</p> <p>Massy University was operating its foundation courses in Shanghai in 2001 in collaboration with a Chinese study-abroad agent. James received a programme brochure. After consultation with the agent, his parents encouraged and financed James to do HE study in New Zealand. At the time some of James's school friends were already studying overseas.</p>	<p>6. James's struggle with mathematics seems in keeping with his father's difficulties with maths.</p> <p><i>Perhaps James associates his maths abilities with his father's opinion of what had happened to him in the entrance exam for SUFE, again suggesting that he is making links between his father and himself.</i></p> <p><i>James's parents are likely to be salary-earners and might not consider that sending James to study in New Zealand is financially desirable. However they will consider the alternative (not sending James abroad) even more undesirable, as Mr. Fei has a strong identification with HE and an eagerness for his son to have it.</i></p> <p><i>6.1. James will realise his parents' expectation and strive to get a degree. His relatively good English might help him fit into the HE model abroad, compared to the domestic version.</i></p>

		6.2. The fact that James's friends have successfully studied abroad will suggest to him that he will manage too.
2002-2011	<p>James gained his bachelor's degree in 2005. After that, he found a job at a large logistics company through his friends' connections in Auckland. He began working in inbound logistics and the primary tasks he was responsible for included heavy labouring as part of receiving, storing, and distributing cargos.</p> <p>In 2006 James participated in a four-week internal training course. With the help of the HR deputy manager, who had interviewed James when he entered the company, he was relocated to the Import Department and at this stage, the department began attempting to expand into the Asia market.</p> <p>In 2009 James returned to China. The Shanghai branch of the logistics company was much less successful in comparison with its overseas branches. The company had to compete with other domestic logistics companies in the deregulated market. In some cases, logistics companies deducted partial shipping and loading fees in order to gain customers' business. These companies usually charged higher costs at the destination port to compensate for the lost handling charges at the original port.</p> <p>James is now a manager at a large travel management company in conjunction with the corporate services of Goldman Sachs. In 2010 Mr. Fei's investment business, which he started in 2005, went bankrupt.</p>	<p><i>7.1. James' return to China in 2009 signals perceived unattainability for the upward mobility of his career in New Zealand and he is expecting to renew his career hopes in China.</i></p> <p>7.2. The job shift in China might suggest that the work ethics that James cultivated in the West caused him difficulties in accommodating business practices of Chinese companies.</p> <p>7.3 The practice model of logistics companies in China reveals the concrete business ethics norms of the small-and medium enterprises in a market where the key to business success comes from having a monopoly or from fierce competition. However, the declining number of small and traditional businesses reflects a sign of the result of China's efforts to develop and modernise the alternative markets and industries.</p>

4.2.9.1 Case 9

4.2.9.1a Mr. Fei's told story

My interviewing Mr. Fei and his son, James, occurred by chance. Initially, I had organised my last interview with Jeffrey, whose name was put forward by William (case 5) as a suitable

participant in my study. I phoned Jeffrey and explained my research briefly. Jeffrey agreed to be interviewed but rescheduled it to take place in Shanghai as he was to fly home three days later for his school vacation. I had no objections to his suggestion. I pencilled in a date for the interview upon which we provisionally agreed, and I wrote down his contact information in Shanghai. When I arrived in Shanghai and dialled the phone number he left for me I got an automated voice saying “The number is not in service. Please hang up and try your call again.” Perhaps he had changed his mobile number. As a result, I was determined to contact James and find out whether he was interested in taking part. I contacted him first by email to get his phone number.

I had met James in 2005 when I taught at an Auckland language school. He was my colleague’s friend. During the summer of 2005 he helped me teach my classes for three months when I was away in the UK for my Ed.D course. I rang him to explain my research. He said he was happy to take part but needed to discuss with his parents whether or not they would like to take part. I then emailed him a participant information leaflet. In the evening he rang me back and confirmed his father’s participation for the second stage interview. At that point a time and place for the interview with James were agreed upon.

Disappointingly, the café Mr. Fei and I had scheduled to meet up had disappeared and been replaced by a stock market. After Mr. Fei joined me, we walked miles in the August afternoon heat (in excess of 40 degrees Celsius) in an increasingly desperate search for a suitable place to talk. We eventually entered a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant.

Once we were seated at a table, I briefed Mr. Fei on the confidential issues and interview process. He saw the rash on my index finger when I checked the digital recorder was working and commented that it might be an inflammatory skin reactions caused by the air pollution or the weather in Shanghai, seeing as I have lived in a pure and clean environment for such a long time.

After this interesting yet unpredictable interchange, Mr. Fei began to talk about his investment in an organic fertiliser business in rural Shanghai in 2005 and in promoting a waste reduction, reuse and recycle system (From life history of Mr. Fei we came to know he did not succeed in this business). The 2005 rural project directed Mr. Fei to a scene in his childhood occurring on a ferry ride across Huangpu River to Pudong where he had spent his primary and secondary school years. People netting shrimp and fish always caught his attention. However, after he went to the shipyard in 1968 there were no signs of shrimp or

fish, Mr. Fei speculated that they were killed by the untreated waste water discharged by the shipyard.

1.1. The first sequence of Mr. Fei's interview, including the report of the biographical data and their sequential ordering arrangement around topics of air pollution and garbage disposal are mainly due to his experiences of current interview context. He hypothesized that pollution was the main cause of my red and swollen finger.

1.2. The first sequential arrangement also seems associated with the failure of his organic fertiliser business. However Mr. Fei avoided elaborating on this business failure because he was trying to convey the impression of a father and a male figure whose first priority is to achieve career success and to maintain the status of his official business.

Following the discussion of air pollution, Mr. Fei gave a three-page narration, highlighting the hard work conditions the yard workers experienced with reference to poor ventilation and the hazards of welding and lead poisoning from paint exposure. As a result, he said, many female workers attempted to leave the yard once they were 25 years old through marriage and child-bearing and rearing.

2.1. This narration clearly indicates that Mr. Fei's thirteen-year work experience in the yard still holds great biographical relevancy to him. In order to reinforce this theme, he reiterated that- *worker life was so hard inside the shipyard*. Only images and scenes that fitted into this theme were accepted into Mr. Fei's present thinking and then they were organised according to relevant biographical data.

2.1a. Confronted with this biographical experience, a possible hypothesis could be formulated that Mr. Fei will continue referring to his experiences at the shipyard.

2.1b. With respect to proposition 1.2, it could be hypothesised that Mr. Fei will endeavour to elaborate upon his educational and occupational career successes but speak only peripherally of the unsuccessful aspects of his career.

The following seven pages of narrated experiences are constructed around the period of 11 years from 1976 to 1987 in the Department of Labour and Human Resource, rendering two lengthy and detailed narratives.

The start point was his three month period in the shipyard's Party office and ended with him

doubting his skills with regard to political manipulation. He was then recommended to the Department of Labour and Human Resources. At this time he felt at ease, referring to the department as being ‘technical skill-focused’. Mr. Fei said in a self-deprecating way, *“The professional and technical way of personnel management distinguished it from the world of politics, which is dark and mysterious. I have never acquired their manipulative and personal skills.”*

By early 1983 the experience of seeing two degree-holders appointed as department leaders had made Mr. Fei realise that his secondary certificate was a major hindrance to his career advancement. His anguish and disappointment at this appointment had continued and was heightened on his business trip to Beijing that occurred 28 years ago. He captured the pathos of the moment by describing the scene of being alone at the Summer Palace on a chilly Sunday afternoon. The Palace was so empty. He felt so lonely. He began to feel nagged by a sense of dejection and anxiety that he was not achieving as much in his life as he had hoped to have at thirty years old. No longer measured by seniority and party loyalty, he was aware that he had to act decisively to change his situation.

By the time he returned to Shanghai, he was engaged in the preparation course for the entrance examination for higher-level education course offered by SUFC (see life history 1984-1987). Mr. Fei had similar experiences to that of many of his peers at the time- in 1968, upon completion of junior secondary school, he had to go to a factory or the countryside and had no chance to continue his schoolings. In order to pass his maths exam, in which success in the university entrance-exam depended, he prepared rigorously throughout a three-month training course.

As he recalled the time he was sitting the math examination, his memory was full of details, “a stressful atmosphere, a towel keeping the sweat off his face, anxious reading of questions to see whether he would be able to answer them or not”. Eventually he succeeded and passed the exam.

Upon graduating in 1987, Mr. Fei took a position at the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy where he stayed for eight years. At this point in his narration Mr. Fei deviated from narrating his own experiences. Instead he structured major historical events into his biographical trajectories so as to maintain a point of reference for the ‘manipulators’ and the ‘masters’ in the world of politics which he had established earlier. His later posting at the Economic Times Press did not render any narrative topics either, and it seemed these past

experiences were not story worthy. Proposition 1.2 (see above), did apply to certain images Mr. Fei was trying to convey at the time of the interview.

Told story and lived history of Mr. Fei

It is not clear precisely why Mr. Fei did not rise in the Party and bureaucratic hierarchy during his posting at the Economy Commission. However, his lengthy and elaborated recollection of his appointment and sitting of examination, which had happened more than 28 years earlier, indeed typify a man of his generation—from a worker or a person of peasant family origin who was trying to succeed in a bureaucratic and political career and integrate himself into Chinese society during the reformation era. Unlike those people who came from highly educated families, confident in their academic capabilities, his limited knowledge and training in maths once caused Mr. Fei considerable anxiety. The feeling of inability in higher mathematics in turn placed an unbearable burden on James's shoulders and consequently led to the failure of his domestic university-entrance examination.

Driven by his awareness of the importance of university education and professional knowledge in response to the reformation movement in promoting China's modernisation, Mr. Fei redirected James's career development abroad. This turned out to be more compatible with James's abilities because he was coached English from when he was only four years old.

Mr. Fei felt blessed by James's career successes as a comprador-manager in Shanghai, but he felt being aligned as well in the rapid pace of modernization in Shanghai. He had neither finance nor power or well-connected relations with which to change his situation, as he used to.

Mr. Fei's decision and action to send James abroad to study depicts a common Chinese family which is battling against the entrenched elites and their favoured children, and those highly educated families who once dominated university entrance examinations in order to advance their career and to fit into the development of Chinese society.

4.2.9.1b James' told story: The need to leave the 'average and ordinary me' in the past and continually progress

James started his told story by introducing his early years in the context of pre-school English training. We can speculate on why James highlighted his early language training, which

meant his parents had to accompany him on ferry rides three times a week across Huangpu River from Puxi to Pudong for his training: he appeared to see his contemporary success as a result of this particular experience. We might also hypothesise that this sequence of presentation is partly due to James' perspective on the past, the burden of his poor performance in maths and his subsequent failure to enrol in a domestic four-year degree programme. These factors, combined with his understanding of my research topic on 'higher education choices and decision-making' of which is noting relevancy with his current concern, were the main reasons why he finished his first session in six minutes.

Instead of getting generalisations, in the initial session 2 I asked for more details about topics and moments James had mentioned towards his past. After his summary of his whole pre-departure life in China: **"I cannot remember anything in particular about the time when I was in my primary and secondary school, that is just normal and ordinary life."** James' subsequent presentation was full of elaborated narrations and reports in the contexts of his foundation course and his university studies and life in Massey, his subsequent career in a New Zealand logistics firm, and his return to Shanghai in 2009. Within these contexts he presented himself as **'being more progressive and more non-ordinary'**. Overall, James' told story expressed a need to be above average through hard work and study, coupled with a need to continually progress.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the analytical procedures and results of nine single-case analyses of family histories of both Chinese parents and their children as well as the parents' and children's present construction of their experiences in present-day told stories. A labour-intensive effort was made, through the application of 'hermeneutical case reconstruction' together with Peirecean hypothetic-inductive work by reflective teams and reflective analysis, to produce, firstly, a full and chronicled account of the lived life and family history of the participants. This acted as a skeletal frame of objective life-events onto which each participant gave an account in their told stories in terms of what they apprehended and remembered within the frame of relevance: the decision to send their child abroad for HE study.

Each participant's told story was understood by considering their overall biographical interpretation, as well as their overall construction of the life decisions, which was

abductively derived. The former reflects an integrated representation of personalised ideas and beliefs, as well as subjective concerns and cares. They are usually articulated by themes in the form of propositions, which refer and point to all of the topics. The latter, refers to what the parent or child was trying to convey and how they establish a culturally and inter-subjectively valid identity for themselves or their family, which was compatible with their biographical interpretation.

Furthermore, specific education and career choices were analysed in their historical context of attitudes, feelings, and knowledge in response to the broader social and cultural situations of given times and places. It is important to note that the specification of the meaning of a given choice cannot be apprehended without the background of the overall biographical interpretation and construction, which is congruent with principle of biographical Gestalt and coherent wholeness.

In the next chapter, the family typologies will be developed.

CHAPTER 5 DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY TYPOLOGIES AND GENERALIZATION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5, by comparing and generalising, is beginning to draw the thesis to the first stage of the conclusion. The final conclusion is set out in Chapter 6. In this chapter, the nine reconstructed life histories and told stories will be discussed in their commonalities and differences. This leads to the development of family typologies which is done on the basis of the two research questions of this thesis.

The family typology developed in this section aims to understand the family and biographical structures of decision action patterns and very meaning of the theme (s) to the thematic field that a participant's parents ascribe to the lived experiences, which not only has governed the parent's own HE-decisions and that of her/his child but also structured the parent's here-and-now told story. The theme and its associated perspectives or positions encompass a whole set of dispositions (habits, norms, values) and orientations of a particular type of person or family that is represented in their selectivity of choice action patterns and can be conceived as *general patterns of social practices of the particular type of person, family, or society* (Oevermann, 1991, cited in Maiwald, 2005). This very meaning of the theme "sheds light on societal rules and condition as well as on the way they are applied in the cases of the same kind (Lewin, 1927/1967; Rosenthal, 1993). Instead of "a reference to the abstract average of as many historically given cases as possible, there is a *reference* to the full concreteness of the particular situations (Lewin, Adams & Zener, 1935, p.31, *emphasis mine*)". Lewin's definition of a law is based on the Galileian thinking that reads as follows: "The law is a statement about a type that is characterised by its so-being (Lewin 1927/1967, p.18)," and the type comprises cases of the similar kind. Familial biographical case reconstructions, as Rosenthal suggests, make it possible to construct a continuum of types that *offer rules about the genesis* process and developmental course, that is, explanations how it all came about, which refer both to the life history and life story (Ackermann, 2002; Rosenthal, 2002, *emphasis mine*).

5.2 Family typologies

5.2.1 Families with Grandparents of Pre-1949 Elites

A need of being recognised and honoured by the State and family convictions

From a perspective of reconstruction of family case histories and told stories, family concerns, proprieties for moral and cultural values, as well as the family history with reference to grandfather (or even great grandfather) shaped many parents' perceptions of HE and guided them in their own HE pursuits. In effect, many of the parents' major education decisions to do with their children (the cohort of current Chinese international students) grew out of this matrix.

Due to both the professional status and the social status of the grandparent generation, those who belong to it are part of a small group of elite stratum. However, the Westernised-education experiences and family convictions of the Su and Jia families were distinct from many from those in the Shi's. The former group can be classified as elite scholar-specialists while the latter group are police elite. This distinction characterises both the symbolic and the real division between civil (wen) and military (wu) officials, which can be traced back many centuries.

The grandfather in the Su family and great grandfather in the Jia family (Table 4) belonged to a small group of 'returned-scholar' elite, who studied abroad during the Republic (1912-1949) and whose careers as technocratic specialists and officials started upon their return to China. Many of this small group at the time were also the founders of China's modern institutions of higher education in 1928 after the abolition of the classic civil examinations in 1905. The family origins of these men were upper gentry in the imperial era. Similar to today's scholar-official elite, this upper-gentry community is based on familism and a sense of responsibility and shared concerns for the fate of the nation, while serving in government and public functionaries (Fairbank, 1998). This nation/society-oriented high purpose underscores the bedrock of this group of elite scholar-officials.

Moreover, Mrs. Su's idea of the HE institution owed much of its origins to the grandfather's overseas studies and his subsequent distinguished career. Essentially, she is highly elitist in her outlook. This elitism has been strongly recognised and internalized by David – from best primary to best secondary – resulting in his efforts to go to the best university and attain a glittering life. The idea of the glittering life can be gauged through a series of events that have

manifested throughout David's life story (for details see last section of family case analysis and lived history of Case 1): his worrying over the admission to a key-point secondary school and his rejoicing at the success of key-school entry; his concerns before the university entrance-exam; his disdain for and rejection of an offer from a university below the top-four line; and manifested panic when he suddenly realised he had not yet achieved anything distinguished. The belief David holds is that only the most prestigious universities can produce advanced learning and knowledgeable experts; acquired advanced knowledge and skills offer access to a distinguished career and a glittering life as well as ensuring conformity to the Confucian elite's emphasis on the standard of propriety, a means of preserving personal and familial prestige. This belief further motivated David to pursue postgraduate studies. Viewed this way, his pursuit was to conform to the government's call for prestigious institutions of higher education, which function, as Sun (1986) suggests, "[as] the training ground for future leaders", since these leading (top four) institutions constitute "an indispensable component of the larger task of the national reconstruction and development(p.370)." Here, society's goals and family institutions conspired to perpetuate a symbiotic relationship between the elite and the temporal government, thus enforcing cultural and familial ethical values.

Table 4 Families with grandparents of pre-1949 elites

Family	The Sus	The Jias	The Shis
<i>Grandparents</i>			
	Grandfather (1926-69)	Grandfather (1931-)	Grandfather (1923-2009)
Pre-1949	A pre-1949 returned-scholar from the USA	The son of a renowned banker who also studied at both Tsing Hua Uni and America in the 1920s. Grandfather studied at Wuhan University in 1949	An army cadre men
Post-1949	Chief engr. China's largest Heavy engineering plant (1952-69)	Lecturer at PLA Flying Academy (1951 – 53) Politically committed writer in addition to land reclamation at the Great North Wasteland (1953-85)	District Commissioner of Police (1965-2000)
<i>Parents</i>			
	Mother, Mrs. Su (1953-)	Mother, Mrs. Jia (1964-)	Father, Mr. Shi (1950-)

Mao Era			
	Street-factory worker (1972-78)	A secondary school student	Joined the army in 1968 after completing his junior secondary school 1972-Entered the police force 1974-a meritorious soldier
Post-Mao Era			
	Sat the exams and attended university in 1978 1981-University clerk Australia(1989-92) Registered Valuer(1992-2011)	Attended university in 1983 Assigned to a Shanghai hospital upon graduation in 1985	Appointments and Nominations Bureau (1978-83) Small business owner (1989-2010)
<i>Children</i>			
	Son, David (1982-)	Son, William (1990-)	Son, Michael (1985-)
Secondary School	Shanghai's best secondary school from junior through senior	District key-point school	Mediocre

William Jia's grandfather's position as an official existed only for a brief time; from 1951 to 1953. Suspicion of his loyalty to the Party had his position at the Academy suspended on the basis of his own father's exile to Canada in 1953. Consequently, he went down to the remote Great North Wasteland for the barren land reclamation in an attempt to demonstrate his unalterable loyalty. Mrs. Jia was later born there. During the decade of the Cultural Revolution, she spent half a day studying at school and the other half practicing at an athlete training school because her father thought it might be an alternative career option, in the hope that eventually his children might leave the stagnation of the Great North Wasteland.

In 1977 the university entrance examinations were revived. William's grandfather immediately removed Mrs. Jia from the athlete training school so she could devote all her time to preparation for the university entry exam. The academic subject Mrs. Jia chose for her degree conveyed a belief about and attitude to herself and her family and it was clearly revealed in the discussion in the last section of the family analysis of Case 5. In summary, as a middle class professional in the peripheral organization of the State-hospitals, Mrs. Jia felt both her father and herself were excluded from government benefits and recognition that was accorded to other classes and professions. Yet, she decided to let her son study finance and commence his career in the field of finance and commerce so that he might rise to prominence, as her grandfather had, as a pre-eminent banker. China's big four national banks

are still retained within a government instituted system. High officials in this field carry out important government functions in the vigorous commercial and political centre, Shanghai. Unlike David, William was not indoctrinated with a conception of a fateful route to the best school in Shanghai, but he has spent a lot of time with his grandfather. With his grandfather's guidance William is broadly read in history and Chinese literature and culture. In the course of this he has developed an interest in history but he chose finance as his field of study, at his mother's advice and persuasion. The Jias, through this decision, collectively expressed their family solidarity in order to gain greater political influence in the future. The ambitions and actions of the Jias will put them in a position to forge common interests between themselves and the goals of the Shanghai government – further internationalizing Shanghai's economy and technology as a first-class city.

In contrast to families whose ancestors were pioneers of modern Western education, familial ethical values and related patterns of behaviour in the families of pre-1949 military and political privileges were organized quite differently. Grandparents from the Cultural Revolution decade, like Mr. Shi's father, began their careers as pre-1949 revolutionary cadres. These pre-1949 veteran cadres were given priority when considering candidates for job promotions and were channelled into government personnel in the police system. So the families at the top were able to use their power and 'backdoor' methods to benefit their children with careers in the army and access to rewarding police force careers. Similarly, in the actual practice of recruitment of low-level officials, a candidate's political behaviour, class background, and practical abilities and knowledge were valued more than formal academic credentials. The government in the post-Mao era used a different system to organize society. Called the 'professionalizing' system of governance, the university entrance exam was revived and since 1982, technically educated graduates have been assigned to serve in the leadership positions within the police system. During this time, Mr. Shi's way of thinking was still firmly attached to the old system of elite status measurement. He saw education credentials as an alternative stepping stone for further official advancement but less significant as long as his father remained in the core of the upper echelon. As he asserted, *"possession of a specialized technical skill, however, is not sufficient in securing privileged jobs and prestige. The youth are facing differentiated opportunities, which primarily depend upon the extent of influence of a child's parents' ranks and networks."* Much of the new system of professionalization, as it has been noted, was not much valued by Mr. Shi at the time. It may, however, be assessed anew at a later time.

When Mr. Shi ended his relationship with his family of origin and became a man no longer advantaged by his family's power and privileges, he assumed that a university degree was necessary and the only path to access a bureaucratic career in the new opportunity structure of the post-Mao era. The prime duty for Mr. Shi was to train his son to become a university graduate who would qualify as a member of a culturally and ideologically esteemed elite class, because his acts with his father caused harm to the family codes. This spirit compelled his wife, Michael's mother, to heal the disintegrated family. When Michael was born, he was endowed with the long-established family convictions from his parents-*Whatever we did, we had no choice but to be sure to do our best. It was a fundamental principle of morality -to win glory for your father, to win glory for yourself, and to emulate example for your son.* In addition to this reciprocal code of responsibility, there is atonement on behalf of his parents for his grandfather. These family codes in the Shi family are defined as duties, rather than rights, to guide life conduct and choices. Because the miserable relationship was conditioned upon the inferior social status of Michael's maternal side to the family origin of the Shi, this inferior status has to be changed in order to compensate for the disintegration of the family. To change the status, Michael had to go to university, as his parents believed and aspired to. This idea was expressed in the messages after he had visited his grandfather (see the last section of Case 2 analysis). The Shi family, despite its extraordinary history, demonstrated the tenacity between the old style of China's patriarchal order and its normative ideals. Moreover, beliefs and practices where Mr. Shi's choices for his university attendance and that of his child corresponded the contrast of NCEE and HE-related policies and practices in Mao's regime and post-Mao's.

5.2.2 Families with Mentality of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs)

Decision-making as an escape-hatch and struggle for familial harmony or institutionalised disobedience and the impact of the fitting into Shanghai society

For those parents who are now in their fifties and sixties and who began work in state-controlled enterprises (Table 5) during the Mao era (1949-1976), experiences from the pre-reform phase have been of considerable influence on their core perceptions and knowledge. The presence of this influence is what led to the emergence of the work units (i.e., the danwei system) in the urban scene by the mid-1950s as part of the centralized state planning system.

Table 5 Families with mentality of state-owned enterprises (SOEs)

Family	The Xue (Case 3)	The Wu (Case 7)	The Zhu (Case 8)
<i>Parents</i>			
	Father, Mr. Xue (1951-)	Father, Mr. Wu (1955-)	Mother, Mrs. Zhu (1959-)
Mao Era	Completed senior secondary school in 1972 A state-owned factory worker (1972-75) A 'worker-peasant- solider' student (1975- 79)	A sent-down youth (1969-75) Assigned to a state- owned Imp. & Exp. Co. in 1975	Started work at a textile factory in 1976 where her mother had also been employed
Post-Mao Era	Returned to his former factory and was appointed as technical production manager (1979-1995) Self-employed (1995-99) Chairman of national garment accessory's association (1999-2011)	The head of the Administrative Department of the company (1985-1995) Self-employed (1995-2001)	Collective enterprise worker (1978-87) Owner of a family-run business (1987-99) 1997-Mr. Zhu sold the family business and joined a leading global sales organization, so did Mrs. Zhu in 1999
<i>Children</i>			
	Son, Richard (1984-)	Son, Daniel (1982-)	Daughter, Stevie (1982-)
Secondary School	Yangzhou's keypoint secondary school	Obtained permits for temporary schooling at a district key-point school through endowments	Non-keypoint school

Employees in these large-scale and capital-intensive work units fared well under Mao's regime and during the first decade of the Deng era. As Walder (1986) commented, the units not only provided housing, medical insurance, lifelong pensions, and welfare to the employees but also marriage and birth approvals as well as liaison for strained family relationship. SOEs perform the roles of welfare provision and moral guidance on behalf of the state, thus, taking responsibility for providing care and providing for the needs of urbanities, which historically had been performed by family members. Therefore, this danwei system created both institutionalized dependence and assumed obligations. It became an

enormous and intrinsic CCP institution for controlling the masses and maintaining centralized authority.

After Deng's 1992 south tour, state enterprise reform had been set in motion across China by 1993 and it can be viewed as the prelude to the final stage in the transition to a market economy. SOE restructuring has resulted in many changes in the lives of state workers, which was particularly significant to the "4050" generation. Many of this cohort joined the large state-run factories during their teenage years and had enjoyed very privileged social status under Mao's regime, but they faced lay-offs in their 40s and 50s. A fate similar to the 4050 generation was suffered by Mr. Xue's worker-peasant-soldier (WPS) schoolmates. The exposure to the SOE reformation and the consequent job-losses and withdrawn benefits for millions of state workers shaped Mr. Xue's decision to change his job and also his concerns for his son's future.

Related to this option is the security and the stable welfare-state permanent residency available in New Zealand and the importance of an education platform from a leading institution of higher learning for the Xue family and Zhu family. In other words, parents like Mr. Xue send their children to study abroad not only for educational and financial betterment and a socially integrated life – if their children acquire permanent residency in New Zealand, this could provide **an escape hatch** for their children and potentially themselves should unpredictable institutional change occur.

However, prior to this decision, Stevie had been exposed to the progressive private-enterprises throughout the Deng and Jiang era through her family business, during her childhood and adolescence. For this reason, it seemed she was well on her way to assimilating some of her father's enterprising spirit and reforming-mind that would be necessary not only to prepare her for later life and overseas study, but more importantly, to use to inherit and expand her father's business.

The Wu family tried to live as mainstream society expected them to. Daniel's HE decision, just as Mr. Wu's own choice to join the sent-down youth campaign in 1966 and acceptance of his job assignment in 1975, was defined by institutionalised compliance towards politically defined orientations and the perceived need to fit into wider societal needs. It also illustrates clearly why Mr. Wu thought a university qualification unnecessary in relation to his assigned job at FTCs (see family case analysis 7, Mr. Wu's beliefs and knowledge of his HE choice). Mr. Wu's assertion is a statement on the historical nature of FTCs. His long stable career led

him to conclude that the monopolistic position of the FTCs in the foreign trading world would not be jeopardised by the reformation. Consequently, he saw the necessity for his son, Daniel, to become a degree-holder so as to attain a prestigious job in a large-scale and state-run company, as he had been able to. The consequence of the over-centralized planning system has produced both inertial ethos and institutional dependence, which accordingly undermined Daniel's efforts and drive on education, though he had aspired to go university and gain honour for himself and for his family. The family's HE objective was to get a degree required for a good career rather than to pursue personal and professional development.

The rise and fall of private enterprises and SOEs has shaped the attitudes of Mr. Xue, Mrs. Zhu, and Mr. Wu and their concerns for the future prospects of their children. The HE decision to send one's child abroad is interpreted and judged in relative terms to the influences of these experiences. It is driven by the principle of familism, which is based around *the concern for posterity, respect for rank (status), and/or a wife's loyalty and respect to her husband*. Of these, the most important influence is the relationship between the SOE and its workers under the period of Mao and the early years of Deng as this relationship specifies the fundamental role of the SOE as caregiver of its employees. The impact of the role of caregiver on the operation of the authority based upon the principle of Three Bonds is unavoidable. The doctrine of the Three Bonds is embodied by two assumptions. The first assumption is the Confucian-based social system, which stresses the differentiation of the hierarchy of relationships in relation to the self. This social system assumes that the social order can be achieved only when people are organised in graduation of inferiority to superiority and when an individual performs to the best of his ability in carrying out his social duties that pertain to his place in society (Fairbank, 1998). Emphasis on the hierarchy derives from the fact that Confucianism proposes the ideal of a perfectly ordered harmonious society, which is achieved by the differentiation of social position or status. The second assumption is that the individual is organised in superior-inferior statuses between ruler and ruled, parents and children, and husbands and wives, which ties the individual into the family and the family into the state and hence, is subject to ministers' loyalty to the prince, children's filiality to their parents, and wives' chastity to their husbands (Tu, 1998). Overall, the HE choices and decisions, represent the three bonds and familism characters of Chinese culture and polity.

5.2.3. Families with New Tertiary-Education Goers in the Post-Mao Era

A need to keep the family's upward mobility pattern and keep progressing

Unlike families of pre-1949 elites, there was an absence of academic guidance towards university entry preparation and an absence of exemplary modelling towards future career prospects for Mr. Kong (Case 4) and Mr. Fei (Case 9)'s tertiary education attendance. Their university-going partly represents an orientation and practice established under Deng's reform programs in the personnel system. These programs included a call for professionalization of the cadre system and improvements in the quality of enterprise management. Additionally, like parents of SOEs workers, both Mr. Kong and Mr. Fei served long portions of their careers at state-owned plants (Table 6). However, neither of them shared the group of SOE parents' mentality that the emergent institutionalization of the danwei system functioned as a job and a welfare provider; nor did they possess the ideas of Mr. Xue in Group 2, bounded with a consequence of the extensive shake-up in the enterprise.

Table 6 Families with new tertiary-education goers in the post-Mao era

Family	The Feis (CASE9)	The Kongs (CASE 4)
	<i>Parents</i>	
	Father, Mr. Fei (1951-)	Father, Mr. Kong (1961-)
Mao Era	State-factory worker (1968-76)	A secondary school student
Post-Mao Era	State-factory cadre (1976-84) Sat the exams and enrolled in a programme on Labour and Personnel Management. Took three year's sabbatical (1984-87). Completed his associate degree in 1987 and was promoted to a government post at the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy (1987-95). Transferred to a comparable position at the Shanghai Economic Times Press (1995-2003).	Sat the exams in 1979 and was admitted to a polytechnic institute where he majored in Mechanics. 1981-Assigned to a SOE plant upon graduation. 1985-Mr. Kong became the Youth League Secretary of the factory (1985-2010) 2010-worked in private enterprise in Zhejiang province.
	<i>Children</i>	
	Son, James (1983-)	Son, Steven (1992-)

**Pre-school education
& Primary**
**Enrolled in a pre-school English
program three times a week
(1988-95)**
**Attended a key-point
kindergarten and primary school.**

As tertiary-goers, both Mr. Kong and Mr. Fei had a strong positive attitude towards their self-directed college decisions. That they have positive attitudes towards these decisions suggest they enabled them to break away from either the constraints of their upbringing or the social status of the family origins and thus engender a change in the social status by qualifying examinations and certifying tertiary education.

However, their attitudes varied when taking into account the levels of their qualifications and this variation is linked to the problem in the lack of fit between Mr. Kong's education qualifications and aspirations and the corresponding opportunities available. In earlier days, holders of four-year undergraduate degrees; three-year diplomas; or two-year full-time tertiary vocational or technical diplomas had been recruited as technical cadres by virtue of a unified job-assignment mechanism. These graduates were separated from the old veteran cadres who had joined the revolution before 1949. In the post-reform era, the recruitment for graduates among degree holders and above was unchanged. Regulation on assigning positions for post-secondary technical graduates and tertiary vocational graduates, however, was subjected to a new mechanism where they could choose between 'front-line' production jobs in the state sector or office jobs in the non-state sector. Cadre status for tertiary vocational graduates could be conferred, if they opted for a post in a non-state sector (i.e., a collective or private enterprise). When Mr. Kong chose to be posted to a state-owned factory, paradoxically, he was being denied access to his cadre status. The result of being transformed from a graduate to a factory worker had considerable implications for Mr. Kong. In this sense it meant that he brought education qualifications to a position that would normally be performed without access to such intellectual qualifications.

In the early 1980s the economic advantages the cadre status carried, in the amount of stipend and economic benefits, were not far different from that of a worker. However, the sense of psychological reward and social-esteem were much more significant and these impacts can be gauged in Mr. Kong's biographical construction –the awareness of maintaining and uplifting the status/social position of the Kong family is pervasive throughout his told story. The second-class status of his tertiary vocational diploma profoundly shaped Mr. Kong's attitudes

towards the tripartite division between degree, diploma, and technical-vocational programs of the tertiary system. Mr. Kong assumes that his grandparents did not have a high expectation of him so he only achieved modest results in education. He wishes his grandparents could have pushed and expected much of him as what his parents did of his youngest brother, who graduated from one of the top four universities in China and is a chartered architect. See analysis of Case 4 for details. The status and rewards that come with Mr. Kong's youngest brother's education in comparison with his own modest achievements have influenced how Mr. Kong perceives the role of parental supervision and aspirations of children, which in turn has informed Steven's upbringing. First of all, Mr. Kong ensured that Steven was exposed to the best education from pre-school and also stressed disciplined cultivation in calligraphy, see Family Analysis 4. Secondly, when Steven failed to gain admission to an elite secondary school, he tried to move heaven and earth, through connections and money, in an attempt to rectify this. He realized that Steven's chances of gaining admission to a four-year degree program in a Shanghai university were slight and worried that Steven's examination failure would downgrade the status of the Kong family. In other words, if Steven did not obtain a degree from a comprehensive university, Mr. Kong was concerned that Steven would be excluded from certain managerial positions upon graduation and obtain some routine and low-paid jobs which are seen as backward and ideologically disesteemed (Family Case Analysis 4). Mr. Kong believed that he needed to resolve such predictable consequences if he wished to maintain and improve the Kong's social status. The education choices and decisions he chose for his son conveyed this conviction. During his early childhood and adolescence, Steven repeatedly failed to respond to his father's appeals for greater effort in education. Eventually, Steven was moved by a sense of dutiful commitment his father showed towards him and accepted his father's concerns towards his future prospects. At that point, Steven recognized that getting a degree would improve his career prospects and opportunities in life and that this would win recognition for his social position. His social position and 'above-average' ambitions are Steven's core stances and constitute the main orientation of his told story. Family Case Analysis 4 contains the detailed perceptions and knowledge of Steven.

Unlike Mr. Kong, Mr. Fei benefited from his HE qualification and, accordingly, was designated as cadre. For an aspiring worker whose youth was indoctrinated by Mao's ideological movements and class differentiations, to become a cadre was most gratifying and was the most highly rewarding recognition in this period of Chinese modern history.

The status division between that of cadre and worker, essentially, reflects a key concept in Chinese social and political thought – the dichotomy between men who work with their minds and those who work with their muscles. This is born of a Confucian view of hierarchical order in the social and historical context. This hierarchical mind-set and mental-muscle dichotomy explains why advanced vocational and technical colleges have failed to become popular in comparison with university-level tertiary institutions. This controversy between vocational colleges and TSL for academic degrees is reported in recent OECD thematic review of China's tertiary education (OECD, 2007), but it did not develop clear arguments as to why vocational education, unlike degree programs, gained popular acceptance in China. The former teach students for craftsmen and is perceived to be inferior. Similarly, it explains why some university graduates refuse the jobs of lowly clerks and even prefer unemployment in the hope of eventually attaining a managerial position instead.

5.2.4 The Symbiosis of Traditional and Modern Values into a Family Typology of Four–New Shanghainese

Mrs. Emily Muo was born into a wealthy merchant family in a town in Jiangsu province in 1979. Her younger brother, Emmet, was born 12 years later, in line with her father's preference and persistence for patrilineal authority. The family business went downhill from 1995. At sixteen, Emily left home and moved to Shanghai. Emily has spent many years advancing her career in Shanghai (with her HE degree qualification and successful business). This career advancement has taken place alongside her marriage to a Shanghai business-official. Throughout this period she assumed responsibility for patronising her brother's education and her aging parents' welfare. All these achievements illustrate that Emily has been able to perform the roles traditionally attributed to men in China's patriarchal system of male superiority.

For Emily, the solution to her inferior status as a woman depends on the recognition of her status as a person who is endowed with the same qualities and rights as other elite Shanghainese. This modern status recognition, therefore, is premised upon her demonstration of objective qualifications. At the elite level, nothing is more illustrative of equality amongst women and men than the fact that she can attain the New Shanghainese identity. This identity consists of talented people from other regions across China, who possess credentials that qualify them for admission as skilled workers. Becoming a New Shanghainese is a synonym

for Emily's new status as equal.

Despite her pursuit of a modern identity and her embrace of city life, Emily is still an advocate of Confucian ways and values especially with regard to familism and her insistence on educational and cultural cultivation. These values, together with her socioeconomic accomplishments, led Emily keep the Muo's family morally and materially in order. Viewed from this perspective, the attainment of equality for woman and the strength of the Muo family do not appear to be contrary, but rather, they forge a link and nurture one another. Such linkage can partly be seen as a symbiosis consequence of Shanghai's international economic development and the growth of its elite migrants.

Emily's experience and outlook has profoundly influenced Emmet, who aspires to become a New Shanghainese one day as well and recognises education is an indispensable resource. The acquisition of this identity is inevitably intertwined with the policy approach of local government and current labour market needs. In the 1990s, the selection criteria for applicants were education qualifications, work experiences, and professional credentials. Many migrant graduates with bachelor degrees were encouraged to stay in Shanghai and were assigned jobs accordingly. When a greater number of trained overseas Chinese entered Shanghai at the same time as the abolition of job assignment mechanisms, few migrant undergraduates applying for Shanghai residency permits were successful. Overseas Chinese returnees have accounted for a growing share of the migration movement to Shanghai and the influence of this group will continue to have a significant impact. During the last year the Chinese national authorities reformed a special program to facilitate the entry of foreign-trained experts. This program is highly selective towards the 2,000 plus elite, who attained Ph.D. degrees and who are under 55 years old. Through this 'Thousand Talent Program' 340 qualified overseas professionals have recently been attracted to settle in Shanghai. At the same time, skilled personnel in finance, shipping, and commerce have been called upon to provide support and to contribute to Shanghai's economic development (Liang, 2012).

In light of the current competition amongst the returned-elite cohort, Emily assumed that only a few graduates from the top four domestic universities possess the appropriate credentials to get a job offer, which is a prerequisite for labour migration. Indeed, Michelle Wang (2012, personal communication), an associate professor from Jiao Tong University, acknowledged the existence of this prevailing perception and the top four accounting firms in Shanghai generally only recruit graduates from universities listed on the 985 Projects. This is possibly

the clearest manifestation of the top four university influence on the Muo's HE choices and decision-making. The car crash blocked Emmet from gaining admission to a leading university and consequently Emily changed the plan and proposed to send Emmet abroad. The most detailed account has been given in the Case 6 analysis. However, the option of studying at an elite overseas university in itself is intrinsic (not a contingent incident) for those who seek to achieve greater social integration and belonging and better self-actualization.

5.3 Conclusion

I have presented four typologies of family history and individual biography in connection with HE choices and decision-making. The genesis of education decision-making has been analysed and construed through the parents' thematical focus construction of their HE choice and their notion of self and their family, that is, the way how they perceive and formulate beliefs about other members of the family and/or wider social networks going to university and how they respond to it in accordance with their defined identity and life plans. These biographical orientations are apparent in the shaping of parents' beliefs and practices with respect to their children's education. Such beliefs and practices embody normative values and practices of China's temporal government and its ancient Confucian-based codes. From the children's told stories it is apparent that parental expectations and regulation has played an important role in the way how HE attendance and its outcomes have been interpreted and communicated in the family context. Through practicing and communicating these expectations children have mentally formed and developed their own capacities and life aspirations with reference to the exemplary parent figure. The specific conceptions of children about the decisions with respect to their overseas study are structured on the basis of how they make sense of their past experiences and in what manner they anticipate their future prospects according to their parents' beliefs and regulations. This anticipation of one's future speaks out in major life attitudes, values, and commitment of an individual and family as well as social norms and practices at both individual and societal levels.

As for Mrs. Su's (Case 1) present perspective, she did not seem to realize the role of China's top-four universities in creating a political network (such as the role of Eton College and Oxford and Cambridge universities in Great Britain) when she chose to send her son abroad. This might explain why David did not achieve what his family and he intended. Such outcomes are not due solely to the increasing number of overseas trained experts entering

Shanghai; the destination universities parents choose lack the political network to cultivate such success. The socio-political functions thus go hand in hand with the scholarship functions in China's top four or the world's big ten universities, where a great number of Chinese contemporary leaders' children study (see Xiang & Wei, 2009).

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to understand and contribute to our understanding of how HE choices and decision-making are influenced by the interaction between biographies and family histories of Chinese parents and their children and institutional regulations (the state's ideological and opportunity structure, and the recruitment methods of university entrance and personnel appointments) and sociocultural norms.

In order to understand and explain the process, development and genesis of the phenomenon of the parents of Chinese international students making decisions about their children's education abroad *and* its associated perceptions, I formulated the following research questions, which underpin the aim of the study.

Primary research questions

1. How have the earlier experiences and thoughts of parents and families affected the generation and development of their knowledge and beliefs, which in turn influenced their decision to send their children abroad to study? 2. What is valued by and of most concern to Chinese parents when they make HE decisions about their own and/or their children's education?

Secondary research question

3. What and how do Chinese students who have come to study in New Zealand understand about their HE decision-making? That is, what subjective perspectives emerge from their narratives?

With respect to the primary research question 1 and 2, how parents understand the HE decisions and organize their familial and biographical relevancy is discussed in the first two parts (6.2.1 and 6.2.2). The first part (6.2.1) of this concluding chapter summarizes the relationship between HE choice, familial and biographical relevancy, and social-political institutions in relation to the family typologies of pre-1949 elites (Cases 1, 2, and 5) and new tertiary-goers (Cases 4 and 9). The second part (6.2.2) of this concluding chapter discusses how parents' earlier life experiences with the Danwei system and the restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) affected parents' decisions to send their child to study abroad

(Cases 3, 7 and 8). Case 6, which involves a family type representing the symbiosis of traditional and modern values, is also summarized. The third part(6.3) then discusses several aspects of continuity and changes in the children generation, in relation to the secondary research question. Finally, the influence of the research design on the enquiry and analysis of family-history-narrative-interpretive method is discussed. The three concluding sections present thoughts on the future use of biographical case analysis in international student assistance and assessment programs; some limitations of the study; and future research possibilities.

The use of inquiry and analysis tools of family-history-narrative-interpretive method (FHNIM), which is adapted from Rosenthal's (1993) 5-step hermeneutical case reconstruction and Wengraf's (2001) biographical-narrative-interpretive method (BNIM), to reconstruct the biographical and familial history that develops from education and occupation choice actions and their respective outcomes illuminates the overarching unity of society and the individual in the participants' chosen activities. It also reveals the interaction between local HE and career decision-making practices and the institutional regulations that determine university entrance and personnel appointments in eastern coastal regions of China and the ideological and opportunity structures from an evolving historical and dialectic perspective. The manner in which parents and families react to education and work opportunities as well as their actions of choosing and bargaining over their children's educational provisions in turn contribute to an understanding of the nature and development of a local work-education environment. Therefore, the findings of this research can inform educational career opportunity structures and potential options and trends by locating the education, career decision and life experiences of several generations and situations within the contextual continuum of institutional norms and regulations, particularly with respect to the reconstruction of family history. This project also endeavoured to amalgamate some key insights from theoretical and philosophical perspectives such as Husserlian phenomenology and Gurwitsch's theme-thematic-field analysis in order to manage the rigor of analysis and contextual interpretation.

6.2 Inter-linking Family History, HE decision and Parents' Beliefs and Perceptions

6.2.1 HE Choices and Decision-Making, Biography, and Social-Political Institutions

This study focuses on how biographical experiences of individual and familial HE decisions and institutional regulations interact with each other. Chapters 2 and 5 showed how family education and career choices and their associated perceptions are continuously dialectically linked to the changing criteria for determining university entrance and official appointments under the regime of Mao (1949–1979) and in post-Mao China.

In order to understand the nature and application of contemporary China's university entrance examination, the NCEE, and the impact it has on the people and structure of Chinese society, one has to go back to its genesis, the imperial civil service examination system, or Keju, which dates back to the Sui Dynasty in the 6th century. As presented in Chapter 2, the whole apparatus of the contemporary selective mechanisms (i.e., the adoption of the merit-based examination system and the change to a system of recommendations or one that is constituted partly by recommendations or connections) are deeply rooted in Chinese customs, political values and institutions; the social structure of the traditional society; and the Confucian-based hierarchical social order.

Comparative analysis and family typologies of pre-1949 elites and new HE students in the post-Mao era reveal the different mechanisms through which parents and their families' lived experiences interact with each other. The examination system has been not only a means for emperors and today's state to staff the civilian bureaucracy but also a mechanism for members of the population to rise from low birth-status to the higher ranks of officialdom. China's current top four universities have been developed in line with the function of the imperial exam system; that is, the preparation of students to staff a government capable of directing China's future and governing the masses.

Through the reconstruction of family case histories, I have provided evidence that the huge competition for enrolment in China's top-four universities had a strong influence on the family histories of pre-1949 elites, giving shape to the preferential options and beliefs of Mrs. Su (Case 1) and Mrs. Jia (Case 5) have adopted for their children.

The analysis indicates that for the parents of Family Typology 1, their HE decisions for their children were determined by their orientation and biographical strategies, which were aimed at **securing professional status for their family and institutional recognition**. The best schooling, ambitious career aspirations and professional roles were important for them. Meanwhile, **maintaining upward social mobility** was the prerogative for parents of Family Typology 3. With their children enrolling in four-year degree programmes in New Zealand instead of non-degree diploma courses in China, their need to reproduce and reinforce their family's upward mobility can be fulfilled.

6.2.2 Familism and the Restructuring of the Danwei System SOEs

This research gains particular richness through integrating family- history and overall familial-biographical pursuits and plans into the enquiry and analysis of HE choice and decision-making. It illustrates how decision patterns and orientations have been reproduced and transformed in the process of socialization and life experiences. The rules or principles that determined the selection and decision-making in the historically-conditioned situations have also been suggested.

Essentially, a parent's aspirations and choices for their children embody the symbiosis of China's political and social institutions and the Confucian ethical virtues based on familism and the Three Bonds. HE choice and decision-making, however, also had relevancy and significance with parents' experiences of the Danwei system and the restructuring of SOEs in the second decade of China's reformation era. The relationship between the Danwei system and its workers under the period of Mao and the early years of Deng specified the fundamental role of SOEs as caregivers of their employees. It was held a way of a big family and a system of governance. The impact of the role of caregiver on the operation of the authority, based on the Three Bonds was unavoidable. The care-giving role of authority led to both compliance and inertia (see Case 7).

The restructuring of SOEs can be viewed as the prelude to the final stage in the transition from a centralized planning system to a market-based economy. The restructuring has resulted in many changes in the lives of state workers and employees. Not only has it broken the monopoly held by foreign import and export companies (see Case 7, the Wus) but it has also caused job losses and the withdrawal of benefits for millions of state workers (see Case

3, Mr. Xue). The rise and fall of private enterprises and SOEs shaped the attitudes of Mr. Xue and Mrs. Zhu (Case 8) and their concerns for the future prospects of their children. The extensive shake-up of the SOE structure in the late reformation era gendered considerable tension and intensive psychological pressure in Chinese society.

The decision to send one's child abroad is made by considering institutional changes and developments, combined with a felt responsibility for one's child future prospects and well-being (which includes whether one's child would have a safe and healthy environment to live in if there was an institutional shift or revolution in the future, and whether they can live a productive, meaningful, a socially-integrated life in the ever-changing Shanghai society). As a result of these considerations, the parents in this study chose New Zealand as a destination country. Related to this option is the security and the stable welfare-state permanent residency in New Zealand and the importance of an education platform from a leading institution of higher learning for some parents. For Mrs. Zhu, this immense tension and pervasive sense of insecurity caused by the social structure changes and her husband's career shift were related to the domestic disharmonious atmosphere she experienced in her early childhood. Unlike the types of Mrs. Su and Mrs. Jia, state needs and institutional recognition have less significant for Mrs. Zhu, yet most meaningful for the families of pre-1949 elites and new tertiary-goers. This difference can be explained with reference to Mrs. Zhu's concept of her identity, a traditional Chinese woman. Her normative ideals and concerns of domestic life and family order are derived from her early life experiences and the idea of the Confucian social order; that is, a wife's loyalty and respect to her husband and a parent's concern for posterity. Such concerns and needs are also manifested in her patterns of decision actions, orientation and interpretation. Her resignation from a state-owned factory and later career transactions are all framed with reference to her husband and his opinions (see detailed analysis of family history and told story of Mrs. Zhu).

China's patriarchal values are strong in villages and small towns and subordinate girls to boys within the family; this was a strong influence on Mrs. Emily's (Case 6) decision to migrate to Shanghai and her HE decision. For Mrs Emily, her own HE participation was an opportunity to negotiate and redefine her gender role. A car crash blocked Emmet's brother, Emmet, from gaining admission to a leading domestic university and consequently Emily changed her plan and proposed to send Emmet study abroad. Her actions to support her brother's overseas education were performed to integrate Emmet with the developmental course of Shanghai society. She also took her perceived responsibility, as the eldest child, to keep the Muo family

materially and morally in order.

6.3 Continuity and Changes in the New Generation of Chinese Students: A Comparison of the (Non)Transmission of Biographical Orientation and Decision Actions

The cultural transmission of orientation and patterns of decision actions can only be understood fully if we take into account people's personal biographies, family histories, and the institutional contexts and social practices that intricately interface with their lives. Social and cultural institutions such as family, school, university, and organisations (e.g., SOEs, public institutions, and private enterprises, etc.) structure people's aspirations, resources and constraints, and behaviour, including the transmission of socio-normative ideas about what is desirable.

For the children born into pre-1949 elite families (Cases 1 and 5), their families' decision to send them to New Zealand for their HE could be seen to compensate for their failure to qualify for the most prestigious domestic universities. Their told stories are those of children who have been socialised according to family traditions and professional roles. For David (Case 1), the institutions of family (his mother in particular) and his secondary school were the main sources of his orientation, identity, and academic skills. His patterns of orientation stem from the distinguished careers and glittering life his parents instilled him. William (Case 5) did not fully approve of both his mother's HE choice for him and her political orientation, but his early socialisation with his maternal grandfather and his parents' social status led to him preserving the cultural identity and professional status of the Jias.

Those children whose parents were the first in their family to receive HE (Cases 4 and 9) came from families who were keen to increase their upward social mobility. Their HE arrangements and future plans are in accordance with the developmental needs of contemporary Shanghai society and the state, and therefore embody Shanghai's aspirations of becoming a world-class city.

Cases 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 were strongly characterised by a reciprocal code of responsibility for their parents and/or as family members. With absence of acquired academic skills and knowledge and/or determinations to achieve and complete, the pre-departure socialisation of Cases 2 and 7 did not prepare them sufficiently to adapt to Western HE system. They ended

up experiencing deep moral conflicts, and their failure to live up to familial and social expectations forced them to stay in New Zealand.

As observed in Chapter 4, biographical orientations and story structures also varies between second-generation (Case 6) from private entrepreneur families in the eastern coastal cities and those whose grandparents and/or parents were public servants or SOE employees in Shanghai. The regional differences of Shanghai compared to other eastern coastal cities of the Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces also play an important role. Distinctive local historical culture and occupational and industry structures, and the post-1980 policy framework and accompanying public discourse, have created different types of orientation and ways of life. The local formation of different identities and aspirations is revealed not only through their narrative structures but also by their HE decisions.

6.4 Reflecting on the Enquiry and Interpretation of the Family-History-Narrative-Interpretive method (FHNIM)

One of this research's strengths is that some key insights from theoretical perspectives such as Husserlian phenomenology and the notion of society-individual dialectic are amalgamated in the analysis. In addition, I have attempted to establish symmetry between the epistemological position (i.e., phenomenological and interactionist) and the associated method and techniques, which consists of subjective-objective and society-biography integration. Finally, I have tried to use dialectically formulated family-history-narrative-interpretive-method to analyse biography, society, knowledge and action practices about HE choices and decision-making in relation to Chinese families.

This research indicates that to achieve subjective coherent unity between one's biography-family history and HE choices and decision-making, the investigator must acknowledge the system of relevancy held by the participants. To do this I used a minimalist interview technique and single narrative-elicitation question to invite the participants to tell their life histories from their own perspectives and outline their concerns. The findings of this elicitation technique show that Chinese parents may or may not see HE-related knowledge and experiences as relevant in connection with the decisions regarding their children's New Zealand tertiary education. The assertion is that if the "HE story" question alone, as opposed

to the “whole life story” question, were topicalized and thus thematized by the investigators, then this may not have elicited a “personal” system of relevancy which has been derived from the parents’ embedded social context and developed throughout their biographies, which in turn influenced their understandings, judgements, and actions during the decision-making situations. That is, the relevant connection between what is focused upon (thematized) and what are the real causes, reasons, and determinants of the decision, is missed.

This research suggests that family-history case reconstruction and the subjective perspectives of both parents and children allow extra levels of in-depth analysis. It has revealed how familial biographical structures of decision pattern and associated perceptions are developed and transformed in the process of socialization. By exploring the processual nature of social actions and their subsequent outcomes through biographies and family histories over several generations, the family-history-narrative-interpretive method succeeded in doing justice to the challenge of understanding and explaining both societal established structures and changes.

The encountering experience in the interview context of this study revealed the interactional significance of the interviewee’s presentations in the local scene. Theme-thematic-field analysis reveals what the participants are concerned about in relation to their HE decisions and those of their children and their associated variant perspectives and attitudes. The power of family-history-narrative-interpretive method to generate an understanding of the parents’ past and present perspectives of their HE decisions comes from the analysis of theme-thematic-field and the mode of presentation (argumentations vs. narrations), as well as the case history reconstruction. Without self-analysis in the process of interviewing by participants, one may not be able to distinguish between the perspectives regarding the HE-related decisions and the central focused themes, on the one hand, and the past or present personal beliefs and perspectives of the participants or those of the researcher herself on the other.

Findings from the family-case comparisons based on the biographical data and the correlative theme-thematic field construction elucidate how biographies and family histories construct a source of knowing and making sense of the life world that is incorporated into the participants’ knowledge of HE-related choices and decision-making and identity construction. Decision-making and choices impact directly on people’s biographies, that is, people’s biographies are constituted by their choices and their consequences. Biography thus

becomes an experiential reference of the subjective construction of making choices and of the constitution of choices. At the same time, the interactional sequence of making a choice and its outcomes constitutes an “independent variable” (Alheit & Dausien, 1999, p. 8) of the participant’s biographical construction of knowing and making sense of the enacted reality and self-fulfilling process of the individual. Thus, the knowledge does not go beyond its referential actions and decisions. At the closing of the hermeneutic circle of the explication of the intrinsic relationship among the mutual accord and correlation of biography-society; individual-family; and subjective knowledge-objective decision practices, a valid unitary meaning emerged. This meaning came from the internal unity of a lived history and a told story. Therefore, no additional interpretation was required.

6.5 Some Limitations

This study focuses on students and parents from Shanghai and Eastern coastal cities. It does not include families from other regions. Due to the fact that family-history-narrative-interpretive method analysis produces large quantities of data, the number of cases that were analysed by the reflective teams were limited by time. Furthermore, due to space constraints, I wrote up the students’ cases in a more compact and condensed form than the parallel accounts of the four-step analysis presented as thoroughly as possible in the cases of the parents.

6.6 Implications for Policy and Future Study

The challenge for Western universities, researchers, and policy-makers lies in the question of how to support the biographical fulfilment of prospective Chinese international students and how to open up learning opportunities and overcome constraints of individual biographies on those prospective students’ opportunities and choices. This study reveals that attention in the future should be given to the less privileged members of Chinese society lack the insider perspectives on and insights into Western university structures and processes, and thus, may be disadvantaged in their knowledge and belief constructions about university education systems in New Zealand. For example, Michael (Case 2) and Daniel (Case 7) appeared to need the support of external resources and advice to guide their decision-making and learning pathways and to assure compliance with university requirements. Based on the ongoing development of workforce and HE provisions in China, in particular in large cities such as Shanghai and Beijing, external experts in the participant’s home country might be

incorporated as a group of facilitators to improve the system of advice around enrolment, pastoral and academic orientation support, and selection processes.

Additionally, through my research and working experiences with Chinese international students, I have noticed some students choose an academic major based on very little information about what the curriculum entails and how their own strengths and limitations might predict satisfaction and success. They need specific information about the career possibilities in their fields, information about how to mount a job search, an awareness of the dramatic changes occurring in the workplace, and marketable skills. This is based on the fear of gaining an “unemployable” qualification. Advisors need to facilitate a more organised information search from which the advisor and student can collect and evaluate her/his options with regard to her/his abilities and family’s expectations.

The family-history-narrative-interpretive method could also be used to research the effectiveness international student assistance and assessment programmes. An experienced biographical researcher can quickly achieve a rapid appraisal of students’ past academic history and provide realistic insights into what learning strategies and action patterns they develop, and in turn what support and aid they may need to adapt to Western tertiary institutions.

In order to devise social policies and practices that are sensitive to Chinese students’ needs, policy-makers and frontline practitioners need to be sensitive to normative differences that are revealed by methodologies such as the one applied in this research.

Daniel’s parents’ (Case 7) intervention in getting their son a place to study immediately reflects a very common pattern in that generation of Chinese parents (also observed in Cases 1, 2 and 3). Such parents often expected their children to enter into university as soon as they had completed their high school education, so they would not “go astray”. Becoming unemployed or not going to university is not acceptable for these Chinese parents. In Western countries young people can take “gap years” to do voluntary work such as language teaching in developing countries or paid work for a year before going to university and doing part-time jobs during summer vacations.

Chinese teenagers like Daniel are most vulnerable when they are away from their parents, since good learning habits did not develop in adolescence and most vital decisions have been made by their parents. These young adults have to adapt to the absence of this mentoring role

in the Western countries, but they generally lack resources and skills to do so. This means they can be easily manipulated by private agents.

For most Chinese children, their pre-departure life was structured by competition – their performance in entrance examinations determined the quality of the education from primary school to secondary school to university. Teamwork and social skills are generally undeveloped in their early lives. If they choose to study some fashionable business or management course and had only accessed knowledge and skills through textbooks and papers, this would impact of their employability, especially that of boys who are generally slower to develop social and personal management skills. They lack basic competencies such as effective communication, interpersonal skills, decision-making and problem-solving skills, which are the core skills of business and management positions.

Chinese parents may consider organising work opportunities (through internship) for their children before their departure and/or summer jobs to help their children gain relevant social skills, interpersonal and problem-solving skills, as well as management and organisation skills.

The narrated life stories can also give an insight into what the future holds from both the student's and their parents' viewpoints. Uncovering lived experience and future goals and expected outcomes can result in the better planning of assistance programmes and policy-making to attract prospects international students.

The findings also show that the presence of relatives (Richard's uncle; Case 5) or extended family members (Steven's cousin was also studying at a New Zealand tertiary institute; Case 3) in the host country contributed to the parents' decision to choose an overseas HE destination for the child. Possession of a New Zealand university degree is sufficient qualification for some families, but there are variations in the parents' expectations that must be kept in mind. The phenomenon of HE choices and decision-making is moving and changing fast.

As indicated in Chapters 2 and 6, a social and cultural sensitivity must be present when investigating HE and career decisions with Chinese international students. As the whole apparatus of the selective mechanisms in education and personnel systems are deeply rooted in Chinese customs, political values and institutions, and the social structures of the Chinese society, it is instructive for Western policy-makers and researchers to consider this historical

and socio-political context and study its continuity and change from China's imperial times to the 21st century, through her people's biographies and perceptions. In this scenario, it is argued that seminars, conferences and workshops be held to develop closer ties between Chinese experts in politics and education and Western government policy-makers and scholars.

The intensification of ambition to become a world-class city and university is pervasive in today's Shanghai. Consequently, developing an international reputation as well as improving the employability of graduates in the changing society becomes central to host countries' future success in the international HE market. As Wildavsky (2012) argues, we are living in the era of the global brain race.

At the end of this section, possibilities for future study are identified. In this study the interviewees mainly belonged to the professional middle class, with some being private entrepreneurs. The lived experiences of the latter group and their HE decision to send their children abroad to study could be explored in future studies in terms of the changes in welfare policies and regulations in China over the last three decades. The influence of New Zealand's international reputation and its welfare system on their decision actions, orientations and interpretations could be investigated. FHNIM could also be applied to a cross-national comparative project researching the families of Chinese international students in other Western countries. The findings from such a project could be compared and contrasted with the present study.

6.7 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have shown that the family-history-narrative-interpretive method, which is adapted from Rosenthal (1993)'s 5-step hermeneutical case reconstruction and Wengraf's (2001) biographical-narrative-interpretive method (BNIM), belongs to a growing branch of qualitative methods that focus on the family-individual and society-biography dialectic and provide powerful analysis tools for understanding the nature of HE choices and decision-making, biography, and social institutions. These phenomena exist within a cultural matrix of social and collective constructs. In such a cultural matrix the interaction between social structures and individual biographies form a coherent thematic field from which the meaning and significance of the decision derives and develops. A biographical-narrative study of cross-cultural relations such as marriage or ageing, or women's identity and patrilineal

authority in contemporary Chinese society may be profitable avenues for future study to enable researchers to compare and contrast cultural and social developments and to integrate past and present on the biographical, familial and societal levels. In this way such developments can be brought to light, instead of being lost or forgotten as time passes by.

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APPENDICES 1-2

Appendix 1: List of Abbreviations

BNIM	Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method
FHNIM	Family-History Narrative Interpretive Method
FTC	Foreign Trade Company
FHs	Follow-Up Hypotheses
HE	Higher Education
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
MA	Master of Arts degree
NCEE	National College Entrance Examination
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
PIS	Particular-Incident Storying
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises
WPS students	Worker-Peasant-Solider students

Appendix 2: Ethics Application Approval Letter



MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

To: Dale Furbish

From: **Dr Rosemary Godbold and Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEC

Date: 27 May 2011

Subject: Ethics Application Number 11/65 **Higher education choices and decision-making: a narrative study of Chinese international students studying in New Zealand and their parents.**

Dear Dale

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. We are pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) at their meeting on 28 March 2011 and that on 10 May 2011, we approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEC's meeting on 13 June 2011.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 10 May 2014.

We advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 10 May 2014;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 10 May 2014 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research

does not commence. AUTECH approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTECH grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this. Also, if your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply within that jurisdiction.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at ethics@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of AUTECH and ourselves, we wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rosemary Godbold and Madeline Banda

Executive Secretary

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Vivienne J. Zhang soulmate_vi@hotmail.com, wzj0574@aut.ac.nz