Mobility of Chinese students in France
Challenges and issues for career development

Yuanfei HUANG, Laurent SOVET, and Anne-Marie COSTALAT-FOUNEAU

Context

- Transnational educational mobility (TEM)
  (Amendola & Restaino, 2017; Arthur & Flynn, 2011; Bryla, 2015; Waibel et al., 2017)
  - Internationalization of higher education
  - Various potential benefits on both individuals and societies
  - Effects of TEM on career development remain unclear
  - Role of individual differences and contextual factors

- Two main research questions
  - Understanding the acculturative and identity processes
  - Identifying the influence of these processes on career development

Study 1: Empirical evidences

- The current study examines Chinese international students' acculturation strategies under the influence of psychosocial variables and identity dynamics they developed in the host country (Huang & Costalat-Founeau, 2018).
  - Combination of 2 methods:
  - Quantitative research: MIRIPS (Mutual Intercultural Relations In Plural Societies) questionnaire (Berry, 2003, 2010)
  - Qualitative research: IMIS (Multistage Social Identity Investigator) ego-ecological exploration (Zavalloni and Louis-Guérin, 1984; Zavalloni, 2007)

China: the world's biggest source of international students (544,500 studying abroad and 432,500 returnees in 2016)

France: the fourth most attractive country in the world for international students (325,000 international students in 2016)

Chinese students in France: The second largest group of international students (28,043 Chinese students in 2016)
Theoretical background

- **Acculturation** is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members (Berry, 2005)
- **Acculturation strategies**:
  - AIMS (Berry, 1997, 2001)
  - **Identity**: A complex notion (Erikson, 1978; Lipiansky, 2005; Tap, 2005; Costalat-Founeau, 2008)
    - Individual or collective?
    - Stable or changeable?
    - National or ethnic?

### Method & Results - Quantitative

- **MIRIPS questionnaire** (Berry, 2003, 2010): discover the correlation of acculturations and psycho-social variables
- **4 acculturation strategies** (N=86):
  - (significance level of *p < 0.05 and **p < 0.01)
  - **Assimilation** (adopt the new culture)
  - **Integration** (Biculturalism) (Cn + Fr)
  - **Marginalization** (neither identify with their heritage culture nor with the new culture)
  - **Separation** (maintain connection with the culture of origin)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assimilation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Marginalization</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Separation</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anxiety</em>*</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
<td>-0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marginalization</strong></td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>French identity</strong></td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese level</strong></td>
<td>-0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese identity</strong></td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-esteem</strong></td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact with French</strong></td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anxiety</strong></td>
<td>-0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-esteem</strong></td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Method & Results - Qualitative

- **IMIS ego-ecological exploration** (Zavalloni & Louis-Guérin, 1984; Zavalloni, 2007) : highlight the relation between these adaptation strategies and identity dynamics.
- Analysis of a Chinese student (3 years in France):
  - **Integration** profile

#### Cora

- Independent
- Sociable
- "According to me, study is a personal thing, we need to be consciente and take it seriously."
- Since I’ve been in France, I learnt to cook, learnt to fill in the administrative forms and so on, it’s hard, but I always try my best, ...
- "I am always interested in different cultures. We need Chinese friends, indeed. But we are in France, it’s necessary to make friends with local person."
- "I don’t understand why other students like to lock themselves at home, because I think an active social life can help solve adaptation problems."

### Study 2: Systematic literature review

- Numerous studies examined adjustments of international Chinese students to their academic and sociocultural environment (Zhu, 2016).
- The distance between the home and the host countries may facilitate or obstruct such adjustments and have significant impact on various individual outcomes including career development.
- A systematic literature review may help to visualize how these outcomes were examined among international Chinese students in France.
Corpus description

- Sixty references published between 2000 and 2017. Articles represented 42% of the total references.
- The final corpus included 22 references ($N = 366$).

Sample

- 366 college students
  - 44% of men and 56% of women
  - Age ranged from 20 to 39 years old
  - Various grades and majors
  - Average duration of stay in France was 2.47 years ($SD = 2.25$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than six months</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between six months and one year</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between one and two years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than two years</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Results (1/3)

- Main motivations to study in France for Chinese students ($k = 6$)
  - Linguistic and cultural attractiveness ($k = 5$)
  - Personal and professional development ($k = 3$)
  - Quality of education in the host country ($k = 5$)
  - Educational and societal pressure in their home country ($k = 3$)
  - Employability ($k = 4$)
  - Financial constraints and support ($k = 3$)
  - Parental influence and pressure ($k = 3$)
Results (2/3)

- Main acculturative stressors experienced by Chinese students in France ($k = 22$)

Results (3/3)

- Before the TEM
  - Career projects connected to France or French language
  - Better job opportunities
  - Skills development

- During the TEM
  - Various adjustments’ issues
  - Questioning and confirming the initial career choices
  - Alternative academic and career perspectives
  - Staying in France or coming back to China?

- After the TEM
  - Retrospective views of the international experiences and meaning-making
  - Dealing with a bicultural identity

Discussion

- Implications for researchers
  - Longitudinal studies of international students’ trajectories
  - Connect acculturative processes and career development
  - Examine the long-term effects of TEM

- Implications for practitioners
  - Develop intercultural competencies
  - Anticipate and facilitate international students’ transitions
  - Foster career awareness and skills development of international students

Thank you!

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