TRACKING CHINESE DOCTORAL EXPERIENCES OVER TIME: NAVIGATING THE DUTCH ACADEMIA

Master Thesis for obtaining the academic degree

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submitted by

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Abstract

External PhDs are those who are not employed by the university and may be self-funded or funded through scholarships – usually by foreign governments, funding agencies, or employers. In the Netherlands, empirical knowledge about the employment status, academic experiences, career path development and career choices of external doctoral candidates are hardly researched even though they make up almost 50% of the doctoral population, with Chinese being the largest group of external foreign PhDs from outside of Europe. Given their substantial contribution to the Dutch knowledge economy, understanding their doctoral experiences will be useful for the recruitment of, and full utilization of intellectual overseas Chinese. This qualitative study focuses on the doctoral experiences of external Chinese doctoral candidates funded by the Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC) in various disciplines through 10 narrative interviews. Results show that nine participants experienced positive doctoral supervision and increased intellectual confidence over time. However, the external PhD status inevitably excludes CSC-funded doctoral candidates from developing the institutional and networking strands in the Dutch habitus. The only link between the PhD candidates and the universities is their doctoral supervisors. The lack of institutional engagement is detrimental to the individual's formation of academic identity and led to an isolated doctoral education experience.

Keywords:

PhD students, PhD supervision, external, doctoral education, internationalisation, Chinese, academic identity, identity-trajectory, habitus, academic careers, scholarship, China Scholarship Council, Dutch academia

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Abbreviation	Explanation
CBS	Statistics Netherlands
CSC	China Scholarship Council
CWTS	Centre for Science and Technology Studies
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PhD	Doctoral education
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
VSNU	Association of Universities in the Netherlands

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> Even after all this time
> The Sun never says to the Earth
> 'You owe me'
> Look what happens with a love like that
> It lights the whole sky
>
> *The Gift: Poems by Hafiz*, translated by Daniel Ladinsky

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1. Introduction

Doctoral education (PhD) has moved to centre stage in policy-making and national innovation strategies around the world (Nerad, 2010). Graduate-level research contributes significantly to the production, expansion, and dissemination of national and international knowledge base, which play a critical role in the innovation and economic growth of a nation (OECD, 2016; Kehm & Teichler, 2016). Postdoctoral preparation, doctoral education, and Master programmes are considered as the pathways of educating scientific and technical innovators as countries with higher percentage of doctoral holders in the population signify higher rate of research and development intensity and activity (Nerad, 2010; OECD, 2016).

The Chinese government is actively pushing for a stronger knowledge economy to establish China as the future leader of research and innovation (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2018). Chinese scholars are actively mobilized to spend their education or training abroad with financial support from the China Scholarship Council (CSC). CSC is the national funding agency embedded within the Chinese Ministry of Education, which provides scholarships for Chinese citizens to study abroad, and for foreigners to study in China. In 2018, CSC offered 32,300 funding places for Chinese citizens in various study types and program categories to study abroad (see Table 1). Doctoral and joint doctoral programmes make up one-third of the state-sponsored funding instrument for study abroad with 9,500 funding places. Doctoral education and training is no longer exclusively regarded as the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, but as generation of new knowledge that has become both an important strategic resource and instrumental factor in a country's economic and social progress (Kehm, 2006).

Table 1: Overview of CSC funding types, duration, program category, and funding places

Study type	Funding duration	Program Category	Funding Places
Senior Research Scholar	3-6 months	(1) State-sponsored high level senior research scholar, visiting scholar, postdoctoral research fellow program	(1) 3500 (2) 500 (3) 3200 (4) 3100 (5) 500
Visiting Scholar	3-12 months	(2) Doctoral supervisors short-term exchange program	
Postdoctoral research fellow	6-24 months	(3) Higher education institutions and state cooperation program (Young teachers research training abroad) (4) Special projects for talent cultivation in the Western Region and local cooperation projects (5) Special projects for talent cultivation in the Western Region and industry cooperation projects	

Doctoral candidates (PhD)	36-48 months	National construction of high-level universities and colleges – CSC research program	9500
Doctoral joint programs	6-24 months		
Master degree	12-24 months	CSC Master program	800
Master joint programs	3-12 months		
Bachelor degree	36-60 months	Outstanding undergraduate program	4500
Bachelor exchange program	3-12 months		
Applicable to all study types		High-level foreign language personnel training projects and government exchange scholarship project plans	2300
		Special training program for Art talent	300
		Foreign cooperation project[1]	4100
Total			32,300

Table made by author, translation from source: CSC (2018, January 10)

1.1. CSC funding areas, content, and conditions

The Chinese government identified key areas of economic and social development that are urgently needed to facilitate China's research strategy. They are described in two policy documents, 'National Medium and Long-Term Talent Development Planning Outline (2010-2020)' (CSC, 2017a, December 7) and 'Outline of the National Medium and Long-Term Scientific and Technological Development Plan (2006-2020)' (CSC, 2017b, December 7). Identified key areas for economic development are: manufacturing, information technology and communication, biotechnology, new materials, aerospace, marine, finance and accounting, international business, ecological environment protection, energy resources, modern transportation, agricultural sciences and technology. Identified key areas for social development are: education, political science and law, propaganda, ideology and culture,

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[1] Projects that have signed agreements with foreign institutions and jointly reviewed and co-funded by Chinese and foreign parties, such as internships at International Organization (OECD, UN), China-US Fulbright project, Sino-British Joint Research Innovation Fund for PhD students, China-France Cai Yuanpei Exchange and cooperation projects, Sino-German cooperative scientific research projects, and scholarships cooperation with the Royal Swedish Institute of Technology.

medicine and health, and disaster prevention and reduction. Chinese scholars are encouraged to apply for funding in the above specified areas. The 'CSC-funded Scholars for Studying Abroad 2018 Rules and Regulations' (CSC, 2018, January 10) stipulate the following funding content and conditions. The CSC scholarship includes a quarterly allowance (amount differs per country) which cover meals, accommodation, visa fees, registration fees, transportation fees, telecommunication fees, book and materials fees, medical insurance, and one-time placement fees. Travel expenses and return ticket to study destination and home are included once a year during the funding period. Tuition fee is not included but assistance may be provided for some scholars.

All CSC-funded scholars are required to indicate that "this research/achievement/thesis has been funded by the China Scholarship Council" in their written, published, or publicized scientific work (CSC, 2018, January 10). According to the *'Funding Agreement for Studying Abroad',* every scholar funded by the CSC must return and serve the country for two years upon the completion of their study (CSC, n.d.). If the scholarship recipient breaches the agreement, the scholar and/or guarantors shall bear the guarantee amount specified according to the funding duration and country type as shown in Table 2. Table 3 provides a complete list of country type I and a brief overview of country type II.

Table 2: Average guarantee amount for CSC-funded scholars based on country type[2]

Unit: RMB – Renminbi (Chinese dollars)

Funding duration	Country type I	Country type II
4 years	550,000 RMB	400,000 RMB
3 years	410,000 RMB	300,000 RMB
2 years	280,000 RMB	200,000 RMB
1.5 years	220,000 RMB	150,000 RMB
1 year	150,000 RMB	100,000 RMB
6 months	80,000 RMB	50,000 RMB
3 months	50,000 RMB	40,000 RMB

Translated from source: China Scholarship Council (n.d.)

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[2] Due to differing guarantee amount per country, the table above can only be used as an average guideline. For the actual guarantee amount, applicants should refer to the "National Public Expenditure for Study Abroad" established by the Finance Department of the Ministry of Education.

Table 3: Complete list of CSC country type I and brief overview of country type II.

Country type I					
United States	Canada	Australia	New Zealand	United Kingdom	France
Germany	Italy	Sweden	Belgium	Austria	Switzerland
Netherlands	Denmark	Iceland	Norway	Finland	Spain
Portugal	Ireland	Greece	Japan	Singapore	South Korea
Luxembourg					
Country type II					
Russia	Ukraine	Bulgaria	Romania	Hungary	Poland
Czech Republic	Croatia	Slovenia	Brazil	Mexico	Malaysia
Thailand	Phillipine	Columbia	Cuba	Brunei	Indonesia
Armenia	Sri Lanka	Cambodia	Slovakia	Vietnam	Pakistan
Iran	Laos	Mongolia	South Africa	Kenya	Nepal
And 58 other countries					

Translated from source: China Scholarship Council (n.d.)

According to Shen, Wang & Jin (2016), the Netherlands lose out to top-ranked universities in the English-speaking world listed in the CSC specified Country Type I (Table 3) in the competition for student talent from China. Nevertheless, the Netherlands is in the third place among EU countries with the highest share of foreign PhD students, after the United Kingdom and France (OECD, 2016). While the British and French PhD system consider PhDs as students who must pay tuition fees, the Dutch doctoral education system does not charge PhDs tuition fees. This originates from a system in which PhDs paid by the university are employed as junior staff members of the university with duties, rights, and salary. Yet, the employee status of PhDs in the Netherlands is not applicable to all PhDs (and in fact not to CSC-funded PhDs either), as the following section explicates.

1.2. PhDs in the Dutch context the Netherlands

In general, two PhD appointment types can be distinguished in the Netherlands: (1) internal PhD candidates known as 'assistant-in-training' ('*assistent in opleiding'*, in Dutch) who are employed by the university, and (2) external PhD candidates who are not employed by the university (Waaijer, 2016). There are three groups of external PhDs in the Netherlands: self-funded PhDs, scholarship PhDs who are funded through government, funding agencies or

employers (such as the CSC-funded PhDs), and those who do a PhD next to a job. It is important to consider these three groups separately within the external appointment type, as they are situated in different social and economic circumstances which may affect their doctoral experiences. As opposed to internals, externals are not employees of the university, so they do not receive salaries, benefits, and legal protection through collective labour agreements regulated by the Dutch higher education policy framework.

Figure 1: PhD system in the Netherlands
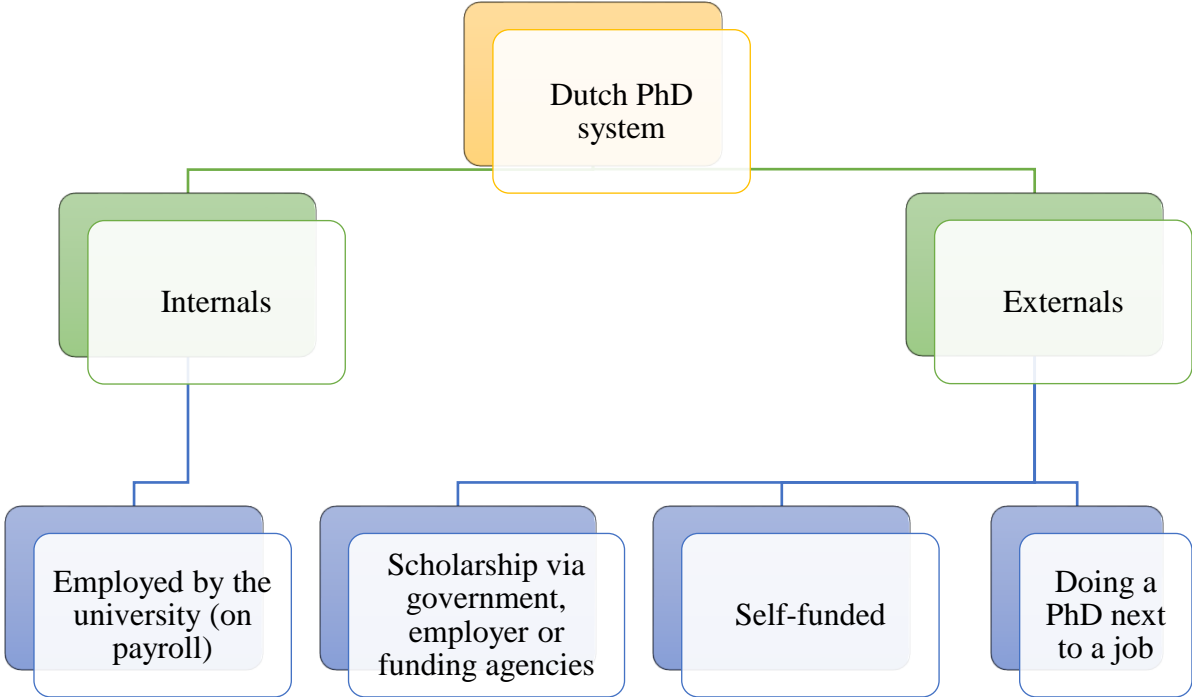
Figure made by author

For Dutch universities, externals are an attractive source of knowledge labour as the university pays little or none in terms of wages, and they get a premium of 95,434 euros for every successful PhD completion from the Ministry of Education (Government of the Netherlands, 2014). In other words, every doctorate conferral will yield universities a net flow of income given that the PhD ceremony takes place in the country. Since externals are not employees, their status varies depending on the university's administration policy. An external PhD may be regarded as student, visiting scholar or guest researcher at a Dutch university. In any case, an official and consistent institutional recognition of the status of external PhDs at universities is absent in the Netherlands.

The lack of institutional recognition of externals may suggest an unequal distribution of presence and participation between the internal and external PhDs at Dutch universities. Difficulties during the PhD may lead to attrition (i.e. termination of the PhD trajectory). PhD termination can be detrimental to both the individual and the institution, as it can lead to individual stress, a loss of valuable time and resources invested in the training and supervision of the candidate (Sonneveld et al., 2013). While delays in PhD trajectories are not inevitable, this study set out to investigate further the reasons for successful completion and steps that

could be taken individually and institutionally to minimize this delay. According to Sonneveld et al. (2013), financial stability often led to successful completion of the doctoral trajectory within the pre-set time. Externals PhDs funded by the China Scholarship Council (CSC) at Dutch universities are thus selected for this study. CSC-funded PhD candidates has a stable funding source for a period of four years (CSC, n.d.). Since the financial factor is accounted for, other factors for a successful and/or satisfying PhD trajectory can be identified on the individual and institutional level.

1.3.   Research Gap

A major implication of the distinction between internal and external PhDs in the Netherlands is that we know very little of the latter. The precise figure of internal PhDs can be determined since internals are registered university employees. However, it is unknown how many external PhDs are working at Dutch universities due to inconsistent institutional recognition and the lack of central PhD registration. The difficulty in identifying the presence and position of external PhDs make them a difficult population to reach for doctoral education and academic career research, which prevent further investigation of this group. It is estimated that external PhDs make up 50% of the doctorate population in the Netherlands, with Chinese being the largest group of external foreign PhDs from outside of Europe (VSNU, 2013). According to Statistic Netherlands (2012), the most common countries of citizenship of non-citizens with a doctorate in the Netherlands are German and Chinese.

Recent studies (van de Schoot et al., 2010; Maas, Korvorst, van der Mooren, & Meijers, 2014; van der Steeg, van der Wiel, & Wouterse, 2014; Waaijer, Heyer, & Kuli, 2016; van der Weijden, de Gelder, Teelken, & Thunnissen, 2017a) on careers of doctoral candidates and graduates in the Netherlands had an over sampling of internal and Dutch PhDs, and their income and careers in the Dutch labour market. There is scarce quantitative knowledge on external PhDs, and whenever data is available, there is an underrepresentation of external PhDs and sampling bias towards those graduates who stay in the Netherlands (Sonneveld et al., 2010; van der Steeg et al., 2014; Maas et al., 2014). Qualitative studies of external PhD candidates and graduates in the Netherlands cannot be found as of writing. This suggests a substantial knowledge gap and under sampling on the doctoral experiences of external doctoral candidates in the Netherlands.

When compared to internals, externals are found to be at a disadvantaged position with respect to financial situation, offered facilities, and experienced work stress (Waaijer et al., 2016). It is likely that external CSC-funded PhDs experience different dynamics in their academic, social, cultural, financial and career experiences than internal PhDs in the Netherlands. Contemporary career studies of doctoral candidates and graduates in the Netherlands were designed with labour market concerns within the context of knowledge economy (Sonneveld et al., 2010; van der Steeg et al., 2014), but not on understanding the diverse developments of individuals within the intersection of their private lives, institutional, and societal forces (van der Weijden et al., 2017a; McAlpine, 2012; Nerad, 2010). As such, this Master thesis hopes to validate the findings of Waaijer et al. (2016) and contribute to the internationalisation and doctoral education discourse at Dutch universities by conducting the

first qualitative explorative study on the realities and experiences of Chinese external doctoral candidates funded by the CSC.

1.4.   Research Problem and Purpose

While much attention has been paid to increase international collaboration and exchange in doctoral education, relative research is done on the process itself (Nerad, 2010). There is scarce research on how the PhD candidate is being repositioned by the Chinese government funding body, and the receiving Dutch university. According to Nerad, Rudd, Morrison & Homer (2009), doctoral candidates come from mostly poorer nations to study in richer nations with well-established research and university systems. Yet, host institutions do little or nothing to bring international and domestic students together in ways that enhance students' learning of cross-cultural skills (Nerad et al., 2009). As nations and higher education institutions set strategies to attract international students, they must also consider the educational and cultural experiences of these students in the destination country (Robinson‑Pant, 2009).

The purpose of the current research is to explore how CSC-funded candidates experience doctoral education at Dutch universities and examine its impact on their sense of agency and academic identity formation, using McAlpine, Amundsen & Turner's (2013) notion of identity trajectory and Bourdieu's (1990) notion of habitus. Identity-trajectory (McAlpine et al., 2013) addresses how the intentions of individuals guide their career histories (past – present – future) and their broader lives depending on circumstantial factors. Since this study focuses specifically on the Chinese PhDs, it is important to consider how cultural aspects situate the individual within earlier experiences, which shape their intentions and future imagined careers. Thus, habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) is introduced to the identity-trajectory framework to help explain how Chinese PhDs adapt psychologically and socio-culturally when navigating between the Chinese and Dutch habitus throughout their doctoral trajectory – whether successfully or not. The combination of these two theories will provide a comprehensive analysis to understand how Chinese PhDs engage in the Dutch academic practice and link these present actions to past experiences and future intentions when navigating their doctoral trajectories.

1.5.   Research Questions

The main research question of this study is: **How do the Chinese and Dutch habitus shape the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhDs over time?**

This question is further broken down into the following sub-questions:

1.   How does the Chinese habitus shape the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhD candidates over time?
2.   How does the Dutch habitus shape the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhD candidates over time?
3.   To what extent does CSC-funded PhD candidates exercise agency over time in their doctoral trajectories?
4.   How is academic identity formed during the doctoral trajectories of CSC-funded PhD candidates at Dutch universities?

1.6. Significance of the Study

The absence of quantitative and qualitative study on the doctoral process and the lack of empirical data of external doctoral candidates in the Netherlands is the most important reasons for conducting this research. Given the changing and competitive context of the research environment, it is highly worthwhile for both the individual and and host institution to understand how CSC-funded candidates value and perceive their doctoral experiences. This study will be the first to question whether the ambiguous institutional status of the present Chinese doctoral students in the Dutch higher education system has an impact on their academic identity development and doctoral process. This understanding is critical because it is expected to be highly related to the PhD candidates' sense of self-worth, academic success, and research throughout their doctoral trajectory. Further, the thesis should add to the existing body of higher education studies in the field of doctoral education, academic identity, and research career. The study considers the scholar's nationality, disciplinary profile, PhD phase, and contributes to the meagre body of literature on PhD appointment types and its implication on doctoral experiences in the Dutch higher education system (Waaijer, 2016; Waaijer et al., 2016; van der Weijden et al., 2017b).

The theoretical significance of this study lies in its development of a novel analytical framework for the analysis of Chinese state-funded scholars in Dutch universities. Its advantage is that it utilizes sociology to examine both the societal and institutional perspectives in shaping the doctoral experiences of individuals and the formation of academic identity, which has hitherto been almost entirely overlooked in large-scale quantitative studies of doctoral candidates and graduates in the Netherlands. Both the identity-trajectory framework (McAlpine, 2012) and the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) are based on agency theory. They facilitate explanation of attitudes towards various pressures encountered by Chinese doctoral candidates in Dutch academia, and of their choices of practices which determines their actions as rooted in the underlying structures of the society.

While both theories have been applied for various studies in doctoral education (McAlpine, 2012; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009; 2011; 2015; McAlpine et al., 2014; Thomas, 2002; Sheridan, 2010; Walther, 2014), they have not been adapted and combined for further research. The thesis will be the first to combine and apply both theories to illuminate the role of Chinese doctoral candidates as social agents in the construction of social reality and experiences throughout their doctoral trajectory. The combined theoretical framework has a clear motive to move away from assumed cultural differences to explain the 'problems' of Chinese students (Dervin, 2009) and seek to relate to them first and foremost as individuals, and not treating them as a homogenous group (Grimshaw, 2007).

Finally, the thesis aspires to bring practical value to Chinese scholars regarding intellectual, institutional, and networking strategies which could be undertaken to better understand and transition into Dutch academia. Improvement suggestions for welcoming and international services at Dutch universities will also be offered to facilitate the socialization of both domestic and international PhDs, in addition to the critical examination of doctoral appointment types on the realities and experiences of CSC-funded PhDs.

1.7.   Structure of the Study

The thesis is organized in six chapters. The present chapter introduces the study, describes the research gap, research problem, and the research questions. The CSC funding content and motivations, as well as PhD system in the Dutch context locate the research significance and purpose of this study. The second chapter is a literature review of recent approaches and research highlights on studies which consider doctoral appointment types and international (non-Dutch) doctoral candidates and graduates in early career research experience in the Netherlands. The third chapter presents the theoretical framework for the study that is developed from identity-trajectory theory (McAlpine et al., 2013) and habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). In chapter four, the description of research method, data collection procedure, characteristics of the participants, and data analysis will lead to the discussion of validity, reliability, and limitations of this research. Chapter five presents the analysis of interview data aiming at answering the research questions posed in chapter one of this study. The organisation of findings follows the theoretical framework stipulated in chapter three. The final chapter summarizes research findings and referring them back to academic literature, discusses their implications for individuals and institutions, and concludes with suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review

This chapter contains an overview of recent approaches and research highlights on studies which consider doctoral appointment types and international (non-Dutch) doctoral candidates and graduates in early career research experience in the Netherlands. The findings of the following studies will be referred to and validated in chapter five, to supplement the limited body of literature on PhD appointment types and its implication on doctoral experiences in the Dutch higher education system.

Sonneveld, Yerkes & van de Schoot (2010) conducted a quantitative exploratory study in 2008 among four Dutch universities: Utrecht University, Delft University of Technology, Wageningen University, and Erasmus University Rotterdam, to provide an overview of the initial employment outcomes of recent PhD recipients in the Netherlands (n = 565). According to their data, 65.9% of international respondents are internals, and only 34.1% of international respondents are external PhD candidates, who are either self-funded, employed, or a scholarship recipient. Firstly, the academic reputation of the institute or supervisor was found to be the primary incentive for international PhD candidates to come to the Netherlands. Secondly, external PhD candidates are more likely to be employed under a permanent contract than internals in academia. This survey study (Sonneveld et al., 2010) has provided a comprehensive knowledge and understanding about the transition from doctoral education to employment in the Netherlands. However, there is an underrepresentation of external PhDs and sampling bias towards those graduates who stay in the Netherlands.

The number of PhD conferrals in the Netherlands has increased for more than 70% since 2000 (van der Steeg et al., 2014). The sharp rise of PhDs has led van der Steeg et al. (2014) to investigate the financial value of obtaining a PhD to the individual. Their study compared the individual returns of PhD education to Master education over the first twenty years of their career. While this study does take into consideration the PhD appointment types as a factor in the income level, career preferences and perception of career prospects of doctoral holders, they were only able to address PhDs living in the Netherlands at the time of the study, with 95% of respondents who having been born in the Netherlands. In relation to doctoral appointment types, their analysis showed that external PhDs – those who self-funded, on scholarships, or employed elsewhere during their PhDs, continue to do much better in terms of annual income than internal PhDs. The authors speculate that external PhDs may demonstrate higher capability than internals due to their scholarship status and employment outside of academia. This may suggest a selection effect whereby employees with a high ability could be more likely to pursue a PhD in combination with their career (van der Steeg et al., 2014). However, this explanation could not be applied to the CSC-funded PhDs as they are required by the state to conduct their PhD full time, with no employment on the side.

In another survey study administered to PhD candidates at Leiden University (Waaijer, Heyer & Kuli, 2016), participants were asked about their career preferences and perception of career prospects in Dutch academia. This research has a representative sample of non-Dutch PhDs, with 47% of respondents (N=218). The authors found that external PhD candidates are at a disadvantaged position with respect to financial situation, offered facilities, and experienced

work stress. Since most external PhDs in the sample are non-Dutch PhDs who are funded through scholarships, who are likely to conduct their PhD full-time such as the CSC-funded PhDs, it is surprising that many have limited access to important aspects of research infrastructure (Waaijer et al., 2016). Yet, international PhD candidates are reported to have a higher overall satisfaction with their experiences as a PhD student even though they receive less financial and infrastructural support. As such, nationality may play an important role in the career perception of doctoral holders. Likewise, Wasburn-Moses (2008) found that external PhDs with a grant are more satisfied with their doctoral experience and are more positive with regards to career prospects in academia. International PhD candidates may feel that their situation is better as compared to the situation of PhD students in their home country, leading to higher satisfaction levels (Waaijer, 2016).

External PhD candidates are found to have significantly fewer meetings with their supervisor as compared to the internals (de Goede et al., 2014). This may explain lower satisfaction in research climate and infrastructure of externals when compared to internals in the study of Waaijer et al. (2016), as PhD students who meet their supervisor frequently complete their PhD sooner, and are more satisfied with the overall experience (Heath, 2002; Harman, 2003). Both Chinese external PhD candidates and their Dutch supervisors are non-native English speakers. Whether the lack of frequent meetings, the language barrier and cultural differences could negatively impact external Chinese doctoral candidates' experience will be explored in this study.

Levecque et al. (2017) examined the effects of PhD appointment type on mental health problems of PhD students in Flemish universities. The sample of PhD students (N=3,659) was drawn from the total population of 12,191 junior researchers in Flemish universities. Source of research funding was used to determine the type of appointment. Results showed that as compared to assistant lecturers who are hired by the university, PhDs who are employed through scholarships, project funding and those not knowing their funding resources showed significantly more psychological distress and higher risks of having or developing a common psychiatric disorder. Van der Weijden et al. (2017b) conducted a follow-up study at Leiden University and found that 38% of the PhD candidates surveyed had an increased risk of mental health problems. International, non-Dutch PhD candidates were identified as those who are particularly at risk. They must adapt to a new social environment and cope with stressful challenges such as language barrier, immigration problems, culture shock, social differences, and homesickness. However, the study showed that having an employment contract – whether a PhD candidate is employed by the university or not – has no influence on mental well-being.

3. Theoretical Framework

The goal of the present study is to understand the factors and dynamics impacting on the important decisions which shape the doctoral trajectory of an individual. To achieve this, a combined framework of identity-trajectory theory (McAlpine et al., 2013) and the notion of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) is employed. Below, justification and explanation for choosing these two theories for analysis will be discussed. However, this chapter will first begin with the explanation for why Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), a theory often used in quantitative studies of research careers is not selected for this study.

SCCT (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2002) is frequently cited in quantitative studies of research careers (Ochs & Roessler, 2004; Hazari, Potvin, Tai, & Almarode, 2010; Mueller, Flickinger, & Dorner, 2015; Curtin, Malley, & Stewart, 2016) to explain three aspects of career development: (1) how academic and career interests develop, (2) how educational and career choices are made, and (3) how academic and career success is obtained. The theory uses three interrelated variables – self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals – in explaining PhD graduates' work and educational satisfaction, performance, and career choice. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs about his or her capabilities to perform a task or a course of action. Outcome expectations refer to beliefs about the consequences or outcomes of performing a task or a course of action. Personal goals refer to an individual's intention to engage in a particular activity or to attain a certain level of performance. SCCT posits that people tend to set goals that are consistent with their views of their personal capabilities and of the outcomes they expect to attain from pursuing a particular course of action. Therefore, success or failure in attaining personal goals becomes important information that helps to confirm or diminish self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations.

This theory neglects the personal and environmental factors which affect the exercise of agency and the eventual course of action. Career decisions are made over time considering all inputs, which lead to the evolution or transition of research careers. SCCT posits doctoral holders as rational actors formulating goals and seeking to maximize opportunities through self-efficacy and outcome expectations, whilst neglecting the collective, emotional, and sociocultural-constrained phenomena in research careers. SCCT thus fails to consider doctoral candidates as active actors who shape their own reality, not just passively shaped by the context in which they are acting (Woolley, Cañibano & Tesch, 2016). Hence, the perspective of agency – humans as active agents, must be included and is central to contemporary studies of academic identity and the development of research career.

Agency theory asserts that individuals are intentional in their formulation of goals and pursuit of action. A person who is 'agentive' therefore is proactive in the process of creating the reality in which one desires (McAlpine, 2012). Doctoral candidates may act as positive agents in improving their own doctoral experiences (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009). The conceptual understanding of an individual's career trajectory thus requires the exploration of identity. Agency theory considers constraints and structural issues which may negatively impact one's sense of agency. Incongruent academic values which led to the rejection of an academic field they thought they want to be part of, tension reconciling academic demands and

family needs and desires, and structural conflicts for instance being treated as a student at an institution and as an academic at a conference, are all unseen circumstances beyond the control of individuals, which may constrain their desired course of action (Tonso, 2006). To interpret the distinct and diverse experiences amongst Chinese external doctoral candidates, the identity trajectory framework developed by McAlpine et al. (2014) will be used to analyse how Chinese external PhDs engage in the Dutch academic practice and link these present actions to past experiences and future intentions when navigating their doctoral trajectories.

3.1.   Introducing identity-trajectory

The conceptual framework of identity-trajectory has been employed in multiple studies (McAlpine, 2012; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009; 2011; 2015; McAlpine et al., 2014). Identity-trajectory has been successful in addressing both domestic and international doctoral experiences in the Canadian doctoral education context as it emphasizes that an individual's present intentions, goals, and actions are influenced by the past, which in turn inform and influence the future (McAlpine, 2012). The learning processes of doctoral holders thus emerge from a multitude of contexts, both past and present through informal learning experiences, not just only through work but also one's reflection on work. In this view, learning and identity are intimately linked. Doctoral and academic experience are situated within the broader personal lives of PhD candidates (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2011). The identity-trajectory begins with the individual's doctoral journey and follows the individual's career development through time which is rooted within personal-past-future circumstances (McAlpine et al., 2014). Figure 1 shows that doctoral-academic work experience is conceived through intellectual, networking, and institutional strands that are interwoven but develop somewhat independently across time.

Figure 2: The interweaving of trajectory strands
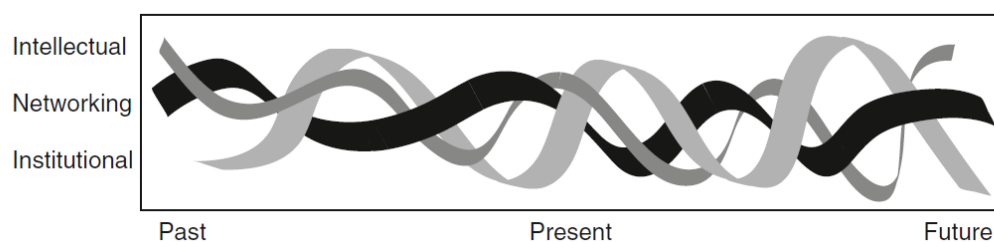
Source: McAlpine & Amundsen (2011, p.178)

The intellectual strand represents the written and oral contributions to the field leading to recognition, the networking strand represents present and past relationships which serve as resources as well as responsibilities, and the institutional strand represents organisational responsibilities and resources. Individuals exercise agency by putting conscious mental effort to be intentional, to plan, to construct a way forward when faced with expected or unexpected constraints (Engeström, & Miettinen, 1999; Roth, 2004). As such, two constructs link the personal and the academic life according to McAlpine (2012, p.39): (1) opportunity structures – what is understood or known the best available career opportunities at any point in time, and (2) horizons for action – the options for action seen as personally viable at any time. The daily life of doctoral candidates as active agents is thus determined by an infinite amount of

interactions (e.g. discussions, negotiations, or conflicts). While identity-trajectory illuminates individual doctoral experiences through the temporal dimension, the inclusion of the spatial dimension, specifically the Chinese and Dutch habitus, would contribute to understanding the circumstances and the place where these interactions are produced. According to Bourdieu (1990), agency is relative as fields are embedded in a social space that implies unique rules and conditions. Through socialisation with members within the field, the agents internalised these implicit field-specific rules to demonstrate appropriate practices and strategies which allow them to anticipate future tendencies and opportunities (Walther, 2014).

3.2. Introducing habitus

Bourdieu's (1990) habitus is strongly connected to the field (Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus stems from our position on the social field leads to the doxa, (i.e. taken for granted knowledge in a field that sets social boundaries and limits the agent's social behaviour). In this respect, the habitus limits practices and strategies and ensures conformity of the agent according to his or her relative position on the field. The habitus thus drive agents to act in accordance with the field specific rules as all agents tacitly recognize "the value of the stakes of the game and the practical mastery of its rules" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 117). This also ensures that agents are competitors for positions within the field as they pursue the same objective in the game. Bourdieu (1984, p. 101) expresses the interplay between field, capital, and habitus in Theory of Practice (1977) by the following equation:

$$[(habitus) (capital) + field] = practice.$$

Theory of Practice (1977) does not constitute a unified theory within itself, but rather represents a flexible theoretical approach whose main elements must never be considered detached from one another (Walther, 2014). As such, it is important to take *academia* as the field in the analysis of doctoral experiences to understand the implicit rules of the game that have been internalized by the agent, CSC-funded PhD candidates within the Chinese and Dutch habitus. Habitus represents attributes associated with sets of personal psychosocial competencies in negotiating their ways in the social space — especially in the absence of tangible cultural guidance and social norms. Bourdieu (1990) describes the opposition between the dominant habitus and the dominated habitus in terms of orthodoxy (possessing the capital relevant to set the rules of the field) and heresy (not possessing the relevant capital). The fields set the stage for struggle and direct the actors towards specific forms of struggle through the deep structure (doxa) that is the agreement between all participants in the field. In this regard, CSC-funded PhDs are constantly struggling the dominant habitus, or orthodoxy which is the Netherlands, and their dominated habitus, or heresy which is China. According to Bourdieu (1977, p. 72), habitus is "the strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations". Therefore, the habitus guide the agent's strategy (the unconscious practice) that aims at achieving one's objective by investing the appropriate types and amounts of capitals on a social field. Each field values particular resources (social, cultural, symbolic and economic) that Bourdieu (1984) termed capital.

The notion of habitus thus allows the researcher to sketch the conditions and objective mechanisms which sets up and conceal the relations of dominance in the habitus in her analysis.

The Dutch academia is considered as the dominant habitus in the context of this thesis as CSC-funded PhDs have to learn and practice the Dutch way of being in order to be considered as a legitimate member of the university. The Dutch university is able to determine what values, language and knowledge are acceptable, and therefore ascribe success and award qualifications on this basis. However, CSC-funded PhDs also carry with them the obligations and practices which are required by the Chinese habitus. As such, habitus should be understood as more than the culture of the educational institution; it refers to relational issues and priorities, which are deeply embedded, and sub-consciously informing practice (Walther, 2014). This process ensures that the values of the dominant class are perpetuated and individuals who are inculcated in the dominant culture are the most likely to succeed, while others are penalized (Thomas, 2002). Habitus is thus a system of dispositions which "produces practices in accordance with the schemes engendered by history" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 82). At the core of habitus, the agent always has the tendency to act the same way in similar situations (Walther, 2014).

Bourdieu (1972) stresses the dialectic relationship between structure and agency that is manifested in the habitus. On the one hand, the habitus is the result of social structures, more precisely of the social class (doxa) and the rules of the game on the academic field that have been internalized. On the other hand, the habitus also structures practices and reproduces social fields (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000) since individual strategies and practices are products of positions and rules. This concoction inevitably assures the economic and social conditions for reproduction. As the product of our environment, the habitus seems to be a never-ending restructuring internal structure that is constantly reinforced and modified by life experiences (Walther, 2014). Bourdieu's (1990) habitus is hence durable but evolving and is continually adjusted to the current context and reinforced by further experience (Mayrhofer et al., 2007). A famous example is the generation conflict where the habitus of agents has been developed at different points in time leading to different understandings of which practice is 'reasonable' for one generation versus 'ridiculous' or 'unthinkable' for the other generation.

According to Accardo (2006), when one is acting in conformity with the structure, the structure is confirmed and reproduced. But what happens when one does not have the knowledge nor resources to act in conformity with the structure? CSC-funded PhD candidates who feel that they do not fit in, that their social and cultural practices are inappropriate and that their tacit knowledge is undervalued, may be more inclined to withdraw early. This can be contrasted to Dutch PhDs from the dominant social class who, in Bourdieu's words "encounters a social world of which it is a product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.127). Conversely, CSC-funded PhD candidates from a non-traditional background may therefore feel like 'a fish out of water', and thus inclined to return to their familiar habitus. Thomas (2002) argues that when the dominant habitus is inclusive and accepting of difference and does not prioritize one set of characteristics, but rather celebrates and prizes diversity and difference, candidates from diverse backgrounds will find greater acceptance of and respect for their own practices and knowledge, which will in turn promote positive interactions and experiences.

McAlpine et al. (2014) have articulated a robust conceptualisation of identity, termed identity-trajectory, in which the influence of individual agency and personal lives is central to

decisions related to investment in academic work and careers. Since personal lives are inherently social and cultural in nature, habitus will make a distinct scholarly and methodological contribution in explaining how Chinese doctoral candidates learn through experience and navigate their journeys as external PhD candidates at a Dutch university. It is essential to consider how personal responsibilities and cultural expectations may constrain an individual's time, intention, and decision-making in doctoral work (McAlpine, 2012). By attending to agency and habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) the doctoral experiences of external CSC-funded PhDs offer a developmental perspective – how individual experience the feeling of being able to negotiate or draw on resources across time and space, when dealing with the construction of the intellectual, networking, and institutional strands of identity-trajectories (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2011). The hybrid theoretical framework of habitus and identity-trajectory (see Figure 2) allows the more subtle, invisible, and insidious inequalities at play in higher education (which are always connected to wider social relations and contexts) to come to view, and to be linked to the level of subjectivity, emotion and the embodied context of action and practice of the PhD candidates.

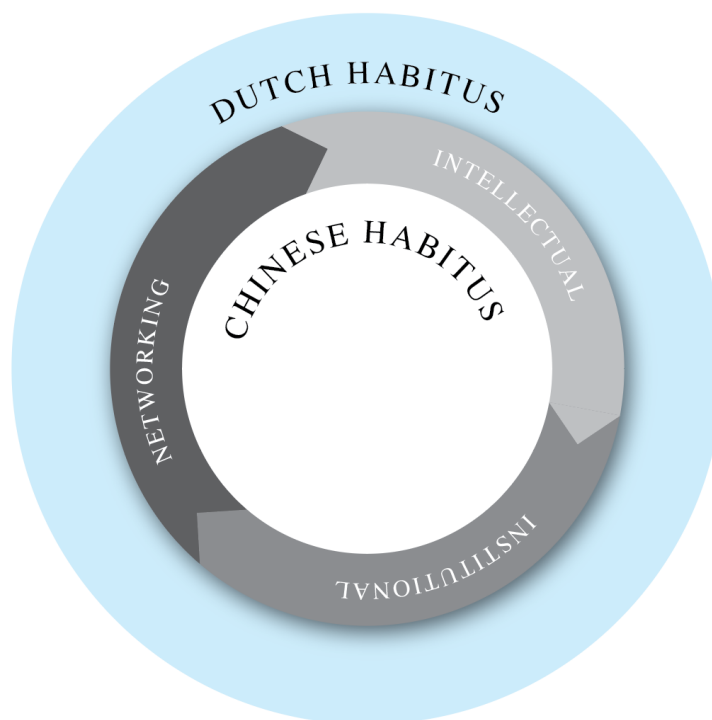*Figure 3: Identity trajectory and habitus theoretical framework*

Figure made by author

4. Research Method

A qualitative research design is called for to study the experiences of the Chinese external doctoral holder in their career perception and doctoral trajectories in the Netherlands. The focus of qualitative research is on participants' perceptions and experiences, and how they make sense of their lives (Creswell, 2013). The researcher embarks on an investigative process to gradually make sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing, and classifying the object of study (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Thus, multiple realities are understood instead of one as the researcher enters the participant's world through on-going interaction. The researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and must rely on tacit knowledge (intuition and felt knowledge) to seek the participant's perspectives and meanings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.1. Procedure

Data was collected from June to August 2017 during the researcher's internship at Leiden Centre of Science and Technology (CWTS). 60 to 90-minute recorded interviews with two participants were scheduled per week. Interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese as interviewees were more comfortable in sharing their life stories in their mother tongue, thus providing for thick and rich description. To facilitate the data collection phase, observations of each participant was kept in a bilingual field diary (see Appendix II), to chronicle the researcher's own thoughts, emotions, experiences, and perceptions throughout the research process (Creswell, 2013). This step aided in the development of qualitative data analysis, as it progresses concurrently with other parts of the study, namely the data collection and the write-up of findings (Creswell, 2013).

Since there are many different forms of qualitative analysis of interviews (Creswell, 2013), narrative analysis is chosen to present interconnected themes and constructs outlined in the identity-trajectory theoretical framework (McAlpine et al., 2014). Narrative interview focuses on the oral communication which reframes the historical past of the individual (Hyvärinen, 2008). In other words, using narratives to understand academic identity construction and agency focus on the individual rather than the group. This historical construction of reality considers the past, present and future potential of the individual (Muylaert, Sarubbi, Gallo, Neto, & Reis, 2014). Since a particular voice of the narrative can only be understood when situated in relation to a larger context, external doctoral appointment type and Chinese nationality allow us to consider both the socio-historical and cultural context when studying the careers of doctoral holders. However, narrative is biased towards the what is experienced by the storyteller. They do not reproduce the reality of the world outside themselves, but they propose representations or interpretations of the world, render it difficult to judge as true or false (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). As such, who establishes the truth, and how do we know whether a story is loyal or distortive of events?

The answer lies in the full task of the researcher to consider the stories of participant on the one hand, and the materiality of the reality. The materiality of reality refers to whether the interpretation of the story can be found somewhere else, and in some way, respected by others

(Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). The social researcher – as a listener and an observer – thus always consider a story to be two-sided (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). According to Hyvärinen (2008), narrative research can be summarised in three separate but successive moments. The first moment was characterised by using narratives as factual resources. The study of narratives as texts with a framework represents the second moment. And the third moment considers narratives and storytelling as a 'polymorphous' phenomena in context. Thus, information is organized from different sources as researcher collate secondary material and review literature about the careers of doctoral holders in the Netherlands. These additional materials will equip the researcher to understand and make sense of the stories she gathers (Muylaert et al., 2014).

The narrative interview process follows the five steps as outlined by Jovchelovitch & Bauer (2000):

1. Preparation
2. Initiation: start recording, and present the initial topic
3. Main narration: no questioning, only non-verbal encouragement
4. Questioning phase: additional discussion and elaboration on final topics
5. Concluding talk: stop recording and continue the conversation as it comes

4.2. Instrument: Narrative Interview Guide

The interviewer begun the interview by introducing herself and her research and proceeded with the following interview script as adapted from Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber (1998, p. 25-26).

"Every person's life can be written as a book. I would like you to think about your life and all its experiences in this metaphor. First, think about the chapters of this book. I have here a page to help you with this task. Write down on the first column—from zero, from the day you were born to the age where you want the first stage to end. Then go on to the next chapters and write down the age that each one begins and ends for you. Go on till you reach your present age. You can use any number of chapters that you find suitable to organise your life stages. Please think of a title or short description for each life stage and write it down on the second column."

Table 4: Life stages outline

Stages and Ages	Title / Description
Stage 1:	
Stage 2:	
Stage 3:	
Stage 4:	
Stage 5:	

Table made by author

When the interviewee had completed the stage outline, the interviewer placed it where it would be visible to both and said, "Please describe each one of these life stages. Then, I will be asking you several questions about each one of the stages you proposed." The interviewer then led the narrator to focus on four questions/directions for each stage:

1. "Tell me about a significant episode or a memory that you remember from this stage."
2. "What kind of a person were you during this stage?"
3. "Who were significant people for you during this stage, and why?"
4. "What is your reason for choosing to terminate this stage when you did?"

The narrative of the interviewee flowed through various perspectives and without specific directions of the interviewer. When the entire stage outline is worked through, three final topics were introduced to achieve more clarity in the stories or to encourage the narrator to continue: (1) additional elaboration regarding memories of studying and working in the Netherlands as a PhD student; (2) exploration of future life expectations of the participant; (3) cultural experiences, questions regarding memories of encounters and relationships with Dutch persons during their time in the Netherlands. Mechanical or formal attitude were avoided during the interviewing process, the interviewer was open and flexible toward the teller's line of narrative so that an authentic life story would be obtained. Due to normal individual differences among the interviewees, one can expect different interactions that emerge in each conversation, which might be a monological, undisturbed narrative, or, dialogical, consisting of some question-answer transition. Whether the interviewer should be very precise in pursuing the four questions for each chapter or let herself be carried away by the teller's stories are highly dependent on the context. As such, variations are to be expected whenever strict formality is limited for the sake of authenticity.

4.3. Participants

External Chinese doctoral holders at six Dutch universities: Delft University of Technology, Eindhoven University of Technology, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Utrecht University, Leiden University and Tilburg University were contacted to participate in this study. Externally-funded Chinese doctoral students were difficult to reach because they were not employees at the universities. Reaching them depends entirely on the PhD student data provided by the graduate school or university (Sonneveld et al., 2010). Fortunately, this qualitative study only requires a small number of participants. An email consisting of both Mandarin and English messages (see Appendix I) was sent out to the graduate school of the abovementioned six universities to communicate about the research and invite external Chinese doctoral candidates to be a part of the study. However, this method might not be very useful to reach out to PhD graduates since they are no longer enrolled in their graduate school. Hence, purposive snowball sampling defines the sampling strategy of this research as acquaintances of existing participants were recruited for the study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

Since the study might run a risk of insufficient recruits, all Chinese doctoral candidates who responded to the email request and accepted the invitation, including those who are CSC-funded, self-funded and internal PhD candidates were interviewed. In total, 10 out of 15

participants were CSC-funded PhD candidates and thus specifically selected to be included for this research. All participants come from various disciplines, gender, and age to ensure diversity of histories. While there is no specific answer to the number of participants in a qualitative study, Charmaz's (2006) saturation approach was adopted, whereby the researcher stops collecting data when the categories (or themes) no longer speaks new insights or revels new properties.

4.4.   Data Analysis

The categorical-content perspective in narrative research developed by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber (1998) is employed for this study. Categorical-content is a method which processed the narrative materials of the life stories analytically, by breaking the text into relatively small units of content and classifying them to either descriptive or statistical purposes. This is similar to content analysis, which is the classical method for doing research with narrative materials in psychology, sociology and education (Riessman, 1993). All interview data were fully transcribed in Mandarin. The complete transcription of Mandarin and English of a participant is provided in Appendix III and Appendix IV.

The steps taken for analysis is as follows:

(1) *Fully transcribe interview data*. Initially, the researcher intends to fully translate all Mandarin transcription to English, however, upon fully translating one interview, English translation of all other nine interviews were put to a halt as this time-consuming process may jeopardize the completion of this thesis.

(2) *Classify interview data into content categories*. The categories are three interrelated strands: intellectual, institutional, and networking strands predefined by McAlpine et al. (2013). The data is sorted vertically through identity-trajectory strands, and horizontally through time (past-present-future) and space (Chinese and Dutch habitus). The analysis of the data is presented in Appendix V. This process is a circular procedure which involves careful reading and sorting the data into categories using theoretical knowledge and common sense.

(3) *Translate the processed interview data*. In this stage, all quotes relevant to answering the research questions were translated from Mandarin to English for inclusion in the results chapter.

(4) *Drawing conclusions from the results*. The quotes selected for each content category were used descriptively to formulate the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhD candidates. To ensure anonymity and sensitivity of data, individual participant in this study were given an alias, RP, which stands for research participant and a sequence number to ensure anonymity.

Table 5 presents the characteristics of research participants of this study, which discloses the participants' age, gender, PhD phase, faculty, and university. Drawing on the research experience of Levecque et al. (2017), the PhD duration (e.g. number of months) is not specified given the signification variation of time-to-degree between disciplines. Instead, the PhD process of a candidate is classified into three phases: initiating, executing, or finishing. As participants were in different phases of their PhD, those who experienced difficulties or

delay in their PhD trajectory has overcome them at the time of the interview, while others have yet to experience them.

Table 5: Characteristics of research participants

Alias	Age	Gender	PhD phase	Faculty	University
RP1	29	Female	Finishing	Faculty of Humanities	Leiden University
RP2	33	Male	Finishing	Faculty of Law	Utrecht University
RP3	29	Female	Executing	Faculty of Social Sciences	Erasmus University Rotterdam
RP4	29	Male	Executing	Department of Industrial Design	Eindhoven University of Technology
RP5	28	Male	Executing	Department of Industrial Design	Eindhoven University of Technology
RP6	26	Female	Initiating	Faculty Mechanical, Maritime, and Mechanical Engineering	Delft University of Technology
RP7	28	Female	Initiating	Department of Applied Physics	Eindhoven University of Technology
RP8	24	Female	Initiating	Faculty of Social Sciences	Erasmus University Rotterdam
RP9	31	Female	Executing	School of Humanities and Digital Sciences	Tilburg University
RP10	26	Male	Initiating	Centre of Science and Technology Studies	Leiden University

Table made by author

4.5. Evaluation of reliability and validity

After analysing the transcripts and field diary notes from the interviews to identify themes in the identity-trajectory and habitus pertinent to each story, the full Mandarin transcription and English translation of an interview, as well as the preliminary categorising of quotes were sent to both the primary and secondary Master thesis supervisors for validity checks. A Chinese PhD candidate who are not included in this study, is invited by the researcher for respondent validation (Noble & Smith, 2015), to verify the authenticity of the interview data by reading the preliminary analysis (Appendix V), to examine whether the themes and quotes were mirrored in his doctoral experiences. Next, this study drew on the literature review in chapter 2 to consider the implications for the doctorate experiences beyond the context of this research. As such, triangulation of data or the use of multiple sources such as interview data, existing body of literature, and field notes ensured the internal validity of this study. Further, the

researcher has ensured that her interpretations is in line with that of the participant's narrative in the questioning phase to ensure the truth value of the data. In the analysis phase, similarities and differences across accounts were identified to ensure different perspectives are represented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The research has positioned herself as a Master student who is curious about the realities and experiences of Chinese doctoral candidates, as this population shares a similar cultural heritage and mother tongue as herself. Born and raised in Malaysia, the researcher is foreign to the Chinese habitus. This fact relieves personal biases which may have influenced the findings. Rich and thick verbatim descriptions of participant's life story is provided to ensure the truthfulness of the data. However, the selection of quotes maybe biased towards the negative aspects of the doctoral trajectory to provide insights regarding the participants' sense of agency and academic identity formation. Further, the English translation of quotes may contain grammatical errors as Mandarin uses neither tenses nor singular and plural nouns. The translation of quotes may miscue the feel for the person, and not conveying the experience of having known him or met her. Despite the imperfection of this study, the researcher hopes to deepen the reader's empathy for the research participants, and effectively portray the historical and social world the CSC-funded PhD candidates are living in.

All participants filled in and signed the consent form (Appendix VI) after the interview was conducted. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 applies to this research as it is prohibited to share the data if individuals can be identified, whether the identification is direct (by name, address, date of birth, etcetera) or indirect (from data items or the combination of data items). Given the small sample of population, and information on the participants is in the public domain, identification from data items is almost always possible. Therefore, the law prohibits the release of the interview recordings. However, all Mandarin transcription in this study remains assessible to interested parties and may be obtained upon request.

4.6.   Limitations of the study

The choice for categorical-content perspective, or content analysis in narrative research means extracting parts of the life story out of the whole and disregarding some contextual factors (Lieblich et al., 1998). If time permits, the researcher would have opted for the holistic-content perspective, whereby the life stories of participants can be analysed in full and presented as profile cameos. The current analysis is problematic because the researcher's interpretations are presented along with the selected quotes. The length, detail, intensity, and emotional tonality of utterances, and how it relates to previous life experiences of each participant's story, is hidden from the non-Mandarin speaker. This exposes the shortcoming of a bilingual study. Finally, the characteristics of research participants (see table 5) must be taken into consideration to conceive the richness and depth of the narrative material. Given the qualitative nature of this study, the findings are not expected to be generalisable and applicable to other Chinese PhD candidates in the Netherlands.

5. Results

This thesis is an exploration of the doctoral experience of CSC-funded PhD candidates and of their immersion within the academic and socio-cultural contexts in the Netherlands. The goal of the empirical work was one of gaining an in-depth understanding of these PhD candidates' experience from a holistic perspective – structural and agentive, spatial and temporal. To answer the first two sub-research questions, interview data regarding the system of dispositions – "a past which survives the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82) – in the Chinese and Dutch habitus identified by participants will be presented accordingly. To answer the third sub-research question, each participant's challenges and responses to the structure and logic of power relations in the Dutch habitus will be discussed to capture how agentive they are in their doctoral journey. Finally, the fourth sub-research question on formation of academic identity of Chinese PhD candidates will be explored through quotes regarding experiences of seeking, belonging to, or feeling excluded from the Dutch habitus, and the range of emotions that such experiences can produce (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2001).

5.1. Chinese habitus

Nine CSC-funded PhD candidates were born, raised, and educated in China from primary school to university, up to Master level of education. All participants have their local dialect as mother tongue and Mandarin as their second language. Institutional and disciplinary culture that are gained and ingrained over time, formulate the candidate's own practices and expectations around teaching and learning. This section will focus on answering the first sub-research question: **How does the Chinese habitus shape the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhD candidates over time?** The internalised mental structures of Chinese academia rooted in the past, and how it influences the individual's present doctoral experience at a Dutch university and their intentions to navigate the future in relation to the three interrelated strands: intellectual, institutional, and networking will be discussed.

5.1.1. Intellectual Strand

5.1.1.1. *Low self-confidence and inferiority*

Most participants reported to have low self-confidence and express dissatisfaction when it comes to the intellectual strand which represents one's oral and written contributions to the field during their bachelor's and Master degree (RP1, RP4, RP5, RP7, RP8, RP9, RP10), as RP1 admits: *"Well, coming to Holland. Yes, how do I put this… Well, we must go back to the issue of academic self-confidence, because during my Masters, I had a lot of self-doubt: why can't I excel academically? So, I told myself, if I didn't do well in my Masters (laughs), then I can do better during my PhD, and at the same time I really want a change of academic environment."*

Parents and teachers were identified as the cause of individual's low self-confidence, with 9 out of 10 participants describing strict upbringing at home and educational institutions. RP10 calls himself a 'victim of the educational system': *"I would describe myself as a very obedient person, in other words, a good boy. I always followed the instructions of my parents*

and teachers. If you are not a good boy then you wouldn't be appointed as class monitor, right? So, I am a very obedient person, on the one hand you might think that's a very good characteristic. On the other hand, it can be a very bad characteristic. Why? Because it supresses my personality, and that's why I think I might be the educational system's... hmm allow me to use a rather extreme description, victim, right, because my individuality was severely repressed."

A sense of inferiority can be discerned amongst Chinese students in general, according to the Law PhD candidate, RP2: *"We were educated in such a way "the West was better than us" at university. Before the market reform and the opening of China, our country was at a very underdeveloped stage. After our country was opened to the world, we begun to have contact with the West, and we discovered that the West has progressed very far and is indeed better than us in many ways. We start to feel inferior and we begin to develop a sense of self-abasement. And this inferiority stays with us until today. Even though we have made so much economic and social progress, we still feel inferior, and in academia we only remember that we are the inferior minority, and we only noticed the things that we did worse than the others, but we neglect all our efforts and achievements, and the major progress we've made over the past 30 years. So, this cultural inferiority, is also reflected in academia. So, we would presume the European legal systems are better than us before we write our thesis or paper."*

Nonetheless, it is from the support and encouragement of parents and, especially Master thesis supervisors, that Chinese students gained the courage to pursue their doctorate abroad and apply for the CSC scholarship. As the only son, pursuing a doctorate degree for RP2 was no surprise as this was expected of him by his parents: *"When I was younger, my world was all about getting good grades, going to good schools, but when I reached these stages, there were some changes in my world view. That is, I need to get a good job, or at least a stable job, so I don't have to worry about unemployment, hmm, it was such a stage. This is natural because my parents have very high expectations of me in terms of education, they hope I could study Master and then pursue a PhD."*

5.1.1.2. *Gender inequality*
RP7 expressed differences in support between male and female family members in her decision to pursue a doctorate degree: *"My dad and brother were very supportive of my decision to pursue my PhD abroad, but my mom and sister-in-law were very worried that getting a PhD will decrease my chances of getting married and having a baby in the future, I can tell when they voiced their concerns that they are not supportive of me doing a PhD and going abroad. Yet, I made my own decisions, and they listened to my opinion."* For RP3, her grandparents thought it was inappropriate for her to receive such high level of education, as it is not in line with their traditional values: *"My grandparent's generation were still very old-fashioned, they believe in the patriarchy and that males are worthier than females, so I always wanted to prove them wrong. My parents did not share the same sentiments, and to excel academically is to fulfil my parents' expectations of me, and to show my grandparents that females are not only worthy of education but could excel as well."*

RP6 went against her mother's advice and applied for maritime engineering for her undergraduate study: *"My parents are both engineers. But my mom told me not to be an engineer, she said that this is a niche industry with severe gender discrimination. I told her if she can do it, why can't I? So, I went ahead and chose maritime and mechanical engineering instead of the arts or sciences."* Dejectedly, she experienced gender discrimination first hand after graduation: *"I worked as a salesperson for 6 months after graduating from my bachelor's degree and attended many career fairs. But it felt like a defeat as many companies would just hang out signs that says 'no female hires'. So, it was extremely difficult for a female to get a job in this industry, because they think that we do not have the physical strength to work on the ferry."*

5.1.1.3. *Master thesis supervisor*

It was because of this negative experience with the labour market that led RP6 to come to the Netherlands for her Master degree as a self-paying student and subsequently pursue her doctorate degree: *"All my classmates chose to take the GRE exam to further their studies in the United States. But I'm too lazy for that, so I just look at the countries which accept students without GRE. At that time, my university had a collaborative research project with TU Delft, so I just applied here. After graduating from my Master, my Master thesis supervisor asked if I would be interested in doing a PhD, and I thought well, I don't have to look for a job again, so I agreed, and he mentioned I should apply for the CSC scholarship."*

RP1 acknowledges her Master thesis supervisor as the one who pushed her intellectual strand, and that being a PhD candidate abroad with the CSC scholarship would be the most direct way to meet up to his expectations: *"I think my teacher and parents are important in my decision to pursue a doctorate degree. Right. Mainly my Master thesis supervisor, I think maybe this sounds negative, (giggles), well this is because, hm, he has a lot of expectations, the type that has a lot of expectations (for his students). And he makes me feel like I must demonstrate my academic abilities, I must have something to show for, yes in such a way."*

RP3, who became the first Master graduate to represent her university to pursue her doctorate abroad as a CSC-scholar, describes her relationship with her Master thesis supervisor and her academic community: *"Well, my Master thesis supervisor has supervised many students. And to him, all his present and past students are "family members of Lee" [the Master thesis supervisor's surname]. It's like a big family, and all his Master students consider each other as brothers and sisters. My Master thesis supervisor encouraged all of us to do academic research and stay in academia. So, when you graduate from your Masters, he will encourage you to pursue a PhD locally or abroad. I am the first student that he supervised who received the CSC scholarship, and the first to go pursue her doctorate abroad from our department".* The academic community as well as her parents, view CSC scholarship as a wonderful opportunity to grow intellectually and broaden one's horizon as RP3 highlights the positive emotion emerging from her successful application: *"We felt that it was such an honour to be given such opportunity to study abroad, at least at our university and the schools surrounding our area, this is unheard of. This opportunity is available so that you can continue to work hard and achieve more, so we are very grateful and appreciative. And I, myself felt that I will have a brighter future and more opportunities ahead of me because of this scholarship."*

The Master thesis supervisor of RP10 was central to his final decision to pursue his doctorate abroad and not in one of the best universities in China: *"I told my Master thesis supervisor that I have registered for the doctorate intake examination at Peking University, because I really wanted to go, it's like a dream for every student in China. But when I shared this with him, he told me that I would have a problem. If I want to do a PhD, it means that I will be inclined to work in academia, but there are changes to the recent national higher education employment policy. If you want to work at the university as a teaching staff, you must have educational experiences abroad. So, he explained that even if I would graduate from Peking University as a PhD, I would not be able to work at the most prestigious higher educational institutions in the country. He advised that I do my PhD abroad to be more competitive and accessible to the labour market… So, if it weren't for my Master thesis supervisor, I wouldn't be pursuing a PhD. If it weren't for him, we wouldn't be speaking here today, I would be doing my PhD in China."*

5.1.2 Institutional Strand

Institutional strand represents the responsibilities and resources that come with formal affiliation with a higher education institution. Access to seminars, workshops, supervisors, managers, mentors, and alumni were central to participants' deliberation to pursue their doctorate degree abroad. In some cases (RP2, RP5, RP7, RP4), the institutional strand affected participants' decision to choose the Netherland specifically.

In China, students who intend to pursue their doctorate degree would form their own study group, to prepare for the local doctorate intake examination, and to apply for CSC scholarships together. Students refer to each other as senior or junior, depending on one's academic year at the Master programme. *"Well, I was in a PhD study group in my university, and I wanted to pursue my PhD abroad since I was curious what the world is like. And my senior got accepted to a university in the Netherlands, and at that time CSC was providing many funding places for study abroad, about 6000 places each year. When she succeeded in her application, I thought I should try as well, since my English is not bad. Then I sent my application to UK, Australia, and the Netherlands, since she got accepted in Utrecht, I applied there as well, and to Erasmus University Rotterdam. The professor at Erasmus replied and gave me the offer first, so I came to Rotterdam. But then, it was a very difficult period for a year and a half, perhaps due to cultural differences. I think I have my reasons, and he has his. Another Indonesian PhD candidate and I were dismissed, and then I found a new boss in Utrecht."*

After graduated from his Master, RP5 was busy with job application and the CSC scholarship: *"There were few CSC applications from the design field, and I always wanted to go abroad. I got a job offer as a product manager for a GPS watch company in China, and I signed the contract. Yet, I still wonder if there could be other opportunities out there, so I told my company I am applying for a doctorate degree abroad. My boss told me if I could prove that I am indeed going abroad for my doctorate degree, then they are willing to let me go without any financial penalty for breaching the contract"*. Coincidentally, his friend who is PhD candidate at Eindhoven and informed him about a PhD opportunity: *"My friend was having lunch with my current supervisor one day, and he asked whether my supervisor need a*

recommendation for a PhD candidate because he heard of the vacancy in his research group. My friend sent my CV and portfolio to my current thesis supervisor, and he thought we could work together. My current thesis supervisor emailed me his research project description, and I replied enthusiastically that I would love to be his PhD candidate. He then facilitated the CSC application process with me, so I only applied to Eindhoven University of Technology."

All participants mentioned the professors in the Netherlands as the first to reply to their PhD application, and the first to offer them a position. 7 out of 10 participants identified the United Kingdom as their first choice for country of destination. However, many came to the Netherlands instead as they do not have to pay tuition fees for a doctorate education. For RP7, she had to settle for an unfamiliar topic in the Netherlands when the CSC scholarship deadline approached: *"I applied to many universities in the UK, I did receive a few offers but none of it provide tuition fee exemption, so I did not go to England after all because it's too expensive. An alum from our chemical engineering department who is working at Eindhoven University of Technology asked me if I would be interested in joining his professor's research group in plasma and materials processing, but I told him I am from the field of engineering, so I have no affinity and zero understanding on the topic. But since I have no tuition fee exemptions from England, and the CSC scholarship application deadline is approaching, I did not have time to apply to Germany and other countries, so I agreed to join the research group and proceed to submit the application for the Netherlands to the CSC portal."*

Master exchange programmes between Jiangnan University and Eindhoven University of Technology brought RP4 to the Netherlands for 6 months: *"There was an exchange programme between my university and Eindhoven, and I was so shocked during my time here in the Netherlands. I've got to realise how small my world was, and I discovered freedom. I was very conservative in China, I was afraid to act. Once you lived in a completely different culture, you realised you can act independently and do as you wish without excessive external considerations. Right, I find it difficult to put my experiences into words."* Once RP4 returned to China, he decided to apply for the CSC scholarship to do his PhD in the Netherlands: *"I decided to pursue a doctorate degree and found out that I did not like the Chinese PhD system. I was disinterested because it was unchallenging, and I fully understood what was being taught. So, I decided to drop out and pursue my PhD in the Netherlands instead because I think this environment has a great influence on me, far more than I could ever imagined. And I don't think I can understand a society fully in 6 months, and I don't think I have gained sufficient experiences to compare the Chinese and Dutch culture, so I decided to come back again because this experience abroad has helped me tremendously in my personal development."*

5.1.3 Networking strand
It is challenging to discern between the institutional and networking strands, as most participants discovered opportunities in the Netherlands through past and present relationships that has formal affiliations with the Chinese higher education institutions. McAlpine & Amundsen (2018) identified two types of networking strands: (1) interpersonal networking – individuals drawing on local, national, and international relationships for emotional and professional support; and (2) intertextual networking – strategic reading of texts which lead individuals to construct historical, epistemological relationships on which to build their own

ideas (McAlpine, 2012). Prior sections revealed that interpersonal networking was constantly entangled with intellectual and institutional strands throughout the narrative of the participants in the Chinese habitus. As such, this section will uncover the intertextual networking strand developed by two participants (RP8 & RP10), which affirms the Netherlands as their first choice for their doctoral education destination.

RP8 was determined not to use her Master thesis supervisor's interpersonal network for her PhD application due to a traumatizing experience: *"During my Master, there was a professor from abroad who came give us a lecture. I wanted to ask him a question related to my research, so I drafted an email and first send it to my Master thesis supervisor and ask him if it is well-formulated. He then asked me to remember my place, that I am only a Master candidate and I would bring disgrace to him for asking such stupid question. I was so upset and angry that he responded that way. I marked this incident as a major psychological trauma because (1) I have put in a lot of effort in drafting the email, (2) the question was important for my Master thesis and (3) the professor was researching a related topic, I am certain he could help me. My Master thesis supervisor then wrote an email to the professor, asking him to not respond to any emails sent by his students, because they are imprudent. I didn't send my email."*

When applying for a PhD position, RP8 contacted professors whom she admired from reading their publications and decided to ask another professor for help: *"I took a course on philosophy of linguistics and met a kind but critical professor who studied and worked in United Kingdom for 20 years. He helped with editing my research proposals, and I only sent it to professors who are related to my field of interests: language, philosophy, and psychology, I did not even look at their country of origin. Even though my Master thesis supervisor has a few collaborative research projects abroad for doctorate candidates, I did not want to be associated with him at all. I applied to the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Germany, and Canada."* RP8 shared that though she received offers from many universities, the professor in the Netherlands was the only one who requested for a Skype interview with her, to see if they could communicate smoothly in English: *"I told him that I am from linguistics and he's from psychology, and I am not very good at statistics and all that. He told me not to worry, my proposal was well-written, and our research interests were aligned. He trusts that I will pick up these skills when I am here, I can choose any course I like at Erasmus University. I thought, wow, since this professor did not despise my incompetence, I will do my best to learn the skills that I am currently lacking."*

In line with the findings of Sonneveld et al. (2010), the academic reputation of the institute is the primary incentive for RP10 to come to the Netherlands: *"Once you decided to pursue your doctorate abroad, you will be tasked to make many decisions, one of them is which country should you choose? I decided to apply for the Netherlands, Japan, Canada, and United States. Why? Because I choose according to my area of expertise, and that is altmetrics, or social media metrics in the field of information science. From the reading lists provided during my Master study, I was already very interested in Leiden University as Centre of Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) was leading the research in this area. After much deliberation, I only applied to the Netherlands given the population's high level of English proficiency and CWTS' reputation. I considered Université de Montréal in Canada as well, but I realised it's a*

French speaking region and I don't speak French. I don't speak Japanese either, so these two options are out. And the US requires GRE examination, I don't have sufficient time to prepare for it since the CSC application deadline is approaching. The Netherlands then becomes the only and final choice, because CWTS is one of the most prestigious research institutes in bibliometric and scientometric studies, as well as scientific evaluation."

When reflecting on the Chinese habitus, it is striking how only two individuals engaged in career exploration while others depended on their Master thesis supervisors and alumni for doctoral opportunities. Desirable options were influenced by past experiences, personal relationships, and opportunity structures available to individuals through examination. The most important examination for a Chinese student is the National Higher Education Entrance Examination, commonly known as *Gaokao*. All participants mentioned the period prior and leading to *Gaokao* to be the most stressful period in their lives. Once the students graduated from their bachelor's degree, they could either enter the labour market or apply for a Master degree. However, if one maintains a positive and consistent grade point average during their undergraduate study, such as RP1, RP2, RP3, RP5, RP7, RP8 and RP10, they will be invited to continue with a Master degree from their home university or be given opportunity to pursue their Master in another university of choice.

Those who did not have sufficient grade point average or desire to switch discipline to another field of study for their Master degree, for instance RP4 and RP9, were required to take the departmental examination administered by their university of choice. Given the abundance of bachelor's degree holders in China, all participants felt that they would not survive in the competitive labour market if they do not possess a Master degree. RP1 shed a light on the characteristics of students who applied for CSC scholarship in her cohort: *"Hmm, during my year, a lot of people who are very competitive and excellent were invited to pursue doctorate degree directly from their faculty, so a lot of people choose to remain in the same university. Direct doctorate means that you do not need to take an exam to be considered as a candidate, you can immediately pursue a doctorate after your Master at the same university."* However, considering recent higher education policy employment changes which requires educational or research experiences abroad, one can observe a concurrent increase of CSC study abroad funding places, and how these structural changes affect local talents, such as RP10 to forgo pursuing his doctoral degree at his dream university, Peking University.

5.2. Dutch habitus

This section will focus on answering the second sub-research question: **How does the Dutch habitus shape the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhD candidates over time?** Explanation of attitudes towards various pressures encountered by CSC-funded PhDs at Dutch higher educational institutions rooted in the underlying structures of the society, and of their choices of practices which determines their actions will be presented in three interrelated strands: intellectual, institutional, and networking. The life stories of the participants are unique but share many parallels, as 8 out of 10 participants in this study have never been abroad prior coming to the Netherlands for their PhD. All candidates admitted taking about 12 to 18 months to fully integrate to the Dutch academic system and get adjusted to living here. Many disclosed

that other Chinese PhDs who could not adapt within the period end up terminating their PhD or move to another university in another country to pursue their PhD (RP2, RP7, RP3, RP9).

5.2.1. Intellectual Strand

5.2.1.1. Politeness as weakness

For RP2, the termination of PhD at Erasmus University Rotterdam was inevitable as his politeness was considered as weakness by his doctoral supervisor: *"Hmm, I am not sure how it is in Malaysia, but in China, we are much more reserved. We are not as direct or blunt as foreigners. We are very humble when it comes to our achievements, we won't be like the Dutch or foreigners who proclaimed their achievements, in our moral value this is regarded as bragging and arrogant, and I did not get used to this in the beginning. During my first year of PhD here, I always apologise in advance for any mistake when I send my writing to my supervisor. Apologising in advance is something we [Chinese] consider as polite. But here, it is interpreted as a weakness, that you do not have the confidence nor competences to be an academic. So, the PhD process did not go well, and an Indonesian PhD who was my colleague and was also behaving apologetically, we both got fired. The Indonesian colleague transferred to the Faculty of Economics at Erasmus University and I went to Utrecht University and continued in the Faculty of Law."*

5.2.1.2. First name

There is a huge hierarchical difference between the Chinese and the Dutch culture, and RP10 explains the difficulty of bridging the gap of power distance: *"I simply cannot address my Dutch supervisor by his first name, even though he asked me several times."* RP2, who is the oldest participant in this study, consistently referred to his doctoral supervisor as his 'boss' throughout the interview (unlike all other participants who referred to their doctoral supervisor as 'supervisor', in Mandarin). Although RP2's word choice may signify a preference for hierarchical order, he is committed in adapting to the Dutch culture through learning the language: *"In the Dutch language there is a difference between you (je – informal) and you (u – formal). This is the same as what we have in the Chinese language. So, when we speak to our boss, we will use the formal you, right? We don't care how close you are with your boss, you will still always address him or her with the formal you. What does this mean? This means that our culture puts a lot of emphasis on the notion of hierarchy. But in the Netherlands, you can just use the informal you with everyone. What does this mean? This means that they focus less on social status and hierarchy. Every society will have some degree of hierarchy, but in the Netherlands this notion is much weaker as compared to China. So, it is from language, from the day-to-day speaking that I observed and learnt about their mind set, communication styles. During my second year of learning the Dutch language, I realised we have less and less differences, and I would say that I get along very well with my boss now."*

Similarly, RP7 refused to address her supervisor by his first name: *"Hmm, I think my relationship with my current (Dutch) supervisor is extraordinary, it's not a relationship between colleagues. He's also a bit like my supervisor in China, like a parent, but not fully, so he's somewhere in between. He also respects the Chinese culture, and I still address him as a Professor. I wouldn't call him by his first name, like the Europeans or Americans."* The PhD

supervisor of RP7 was not only aware but respectful of cultural differences, thus allowing her to address him as she would in her primary habitus, in the form of academic title and last name.

5.2.1.3. Curiosity-driven and market-orientation

According to RP3, the Chinese higher education system is fundamentally different from the Dutch: *"In the Netherlands, the higher education system is entrepreneurial or market oriented. So academic research has a project manager that is completely independent, and he or she must form a team or committee to determine the overall direction and management of this department. I think it's scientifically-oriented here, researchers have high social status as compared to China. Researchers are very respected here because they research out of interest and curiosity, so their sense of self-worth and the support available to them are better than academics in China."* Drawing on her previous educational experiences in China, RP3 goes on to describe the Chinese habitus to contrast it with the present Dutch habitus: *"In China, higher education is politically oriented, this is just how the entire country is structured. So, funding source and research outcome will be influenced by these factors, which led to some sort of a bias, because you want to capture the respective political agenda, when your research matches the political trend, you will have better recognition and exposure. So fundamental research is neglected, and in contrast, Europe and US are much more focused on fundamental research. They take a relatively neutral stance to provide critical and cutting-edge research."*

5.2.1.4. Encouraging and laissez-faire doctoral supervision

The supervision model in Dutch doctoral education generally follows the tradition of two supervisors per doctoral candidate. Each supervisor must hold a doctorate and at least one person must be a full professor (PhD candidates Network of the Netherlands, n.d.). 7 out of 10 participants mentioned positive experience with regards to doctoral supervision at their respective university. Especially for RP8 who was humiliated by her Master thesis supervisor, her doctoral supervision experience has proven to be cathartic: *"My first supervisor really leaves it up to me, if I have a question, I can always schedule a meeting with him. Otherwise we would meet once a month to talk about my research progress. And with my second supervisor, we will have lunch every two weeks to catch up, and I could discuss just about anything with him, so I felt that we have a very equal relationship and interaction, and that they both take me seriously."*

The laissez-faire doctoral supervision in the Dutch habitus has a direct impact on RP5's academic work: *"The Western society puts a lot of emphasis on a person's freedom, so the entire society is built according to this principle of freedom – everyone can contribute to the society in their own way, and everyone may rightfully convey their own opinion. But in China, I am so accustomed to the hand-holding style supervision, where my Master thesis supervisor would just help me to clarify my entire research process, identify problems, how to avoid them, how to plan my research and which research direction I should focus on etc. But my first and second doctoral supervisors in the Netherlands would do none of those, they would never make any decision on my behalf, and whenever I must decide, they would not exert any influence on me. This is completely new to me and I am still getting used to this form of supervision."*

Many participants realised doing a PhD in the Netherlands is an independent, do-it-yourself journey but still had strong desire to be guided, as RP4 explained: *"I think doing a PhD in the Netherlands is a very independent process, supervisors here gave us a lot of freedom to do what we want. But this kind of support is fundamentally different than of the support we receive in China, because you need to get a lot of things done by yourself here. My relationships with my doctoral supervisors are good in general, I wouldn't say it's particularly positive or negative, I just think quite good overall. But sometimes, when you wish that he could guide you in some matters, but he didn't, or that if he could offer you a solution, and he didn't, or his suggested method is not useful for your research, then you will feel slightly disappointed, right?"*

After a first unsuccessful doctoral journey at Erasmus University, RP2 who is finishing his PhD finds comfort with his new supervisor at Utrecht University: *"Hmm, if I were to compare my previous boss at Erasmus and my current boss, my previous boss is a very cold person, and my current boss is the complete opposite, he's very warm and encouraging. I am very grateful for my current boss, because when I first transferred to Utrecht, my energy level and mood was very low, and I was at the lowest point of my life. This has negatively affected my writing. So, when I submit my chapters to him, I was very insecure and full of self-doubt, and he would encourage me and said, 'hey, look at this section you wrote, this means that you took a big step towards your PhD and graduation.' So now, when I edit and piece together my previous work, I realised my thoughts and writing, as well as the language, were actually very bad and yet he still gives me a lot of encouragement. I would never have continued with my PhD or made it this far without his words of encouragement."*

5.2.1.5. *Language barrier*

RP9 was extremely upset and angry with her Dutch supervisor when he criticised the entire population of CSC-funded PhD candidates: *"I have two supervisors, they are both extremely direct. One of them told me: 'I think all CSC-funded PhDs did not meet the English language requirement, and the CSC selection standards are very low. I wonder what are the selection criteria? Anyway, I think CSC-funded PhDs do not only have low English proficiency, their academic standards are not up to par as compared to local PhD candidates, or even local Master students.' Perhaps he thought pointing this out would encourage me to work harder and improve my English level, but I was so disappointed that he would make such an unprofessional comment in the first place."* RP9 understands that her supervisors would like to offer a higher level of supervision that is not only limited to her language and academic writing skills, but comments that compare Chinese PhDs and local PhDs did not stop there: *"We have meeting every week to discuss my work, and they complained that my work requires a lot of changes and revision, and he would repeat the same thing about CSC-funded PhDs again. Thanks to their feedback and the help of others, I submitted my first article and it got accepted, but I wasn't happy at all. My confidence level is extremely low, and I don't think it can be easily recovered as they constantly disapprove of my ability as a CSC-funded PhD candidate."*

For RP7 who transferred from chemical engineering to the field of applied physics, her low English proficiency became a real problem when executing her PhD: *"Since I am not familiar with the subject and the field, I'd always approach my colleagues for questions. Even though they explained it to me, I still do not understand a word of what they said, and I felt like*

an idiot. Then I told myself, my low level of English proficiency and lack of basic knowledge in this field is indeed a real problem, so I am trying my best to improve my English language skills and learn about the field as much as I could every day, so my supervisor would see me as a worthy candidate who deserves to be cultivated."

Though English were taught at schools in China, all CSC-funded candidates were never fully immersed in an English-speaking environment prior to joining a Dutch university. Everyone is aware that proficiency in English is essential to their doctoral success and are taking concrete steps, such as academic writing courses to improve in this regard.

5.2.1.6. *Empirical research*

As for other candidates who do not have a language problem such as RP3, her solution-driven, theoretical-based thought processes were identified as an issue: *"When I first came here I had to submit some writings, and have regular meetings with my supervisor, I also submitted my dissertation draft. And he told me that my thought process and understanding is very different to that of the Dutch scholars. I was still in my Master student mode, where I try to draw conclusions from literature to verify the chosen theoretical framework. I had a very clear objective when I start writing or researching, that I must provide some explanations and practical recommendations. He told me that this is not the emphasis here in the Netherlands. I think these are his words: 'We should not concern ourselves with practical application yet. Instead, if we could improve or criticize the current theoretical framework, using previous knowledge and other prior studies, it is via this process that we can provide some insights to the problem at hand. Research can also be exploratory or descriptive, it doesn't always have to be about finding a solution.' So, I think Chinese academia tend to focus more on practical exigencies and less on academic, scientific questions."*

5.2.2. Institutional strand

The institutional strand represents the CSC-funded PhD candidates' resources and responsibilities that come with formal affiliation with their respective Dutch university. While all participants have full access to institutional resources, many participants did not clarify their status beyond 'externally funded PhD candidate' and did not know whether they were officially registered as student, guest researchers, or visitors at the university's administration. All participants only have one responsibility, that is to conduct research on their doctoral project full-time. Thus, participants rarely referred to the advantages of Dutch institutional resources, except for RP1 who received additional funding for conducting fieldwork on Korean migrants in China: *"I have a funding source from Korea. It's a one-year scholarship. And then my Dutch supervisor informed me of the fieldwork grant for PhD candidates at Leiden University. So, I received both funding to spend one-year learning Korean in Korea and another year of conducting fieldwork, interviewing Korean migrants in China. Yes, so that's the reason I remain in my doctoral trajectory until now. Because CSC scholarship is only for 4 years. But I took a long time to conduct my PhD, almost 6 years now. So, if weren't for that additional two years of funding, I would not be able to make it. I am very grateful for those two years."*

Sometimes participants did not investigate the institutional context before they accepted a position and found unwelcomed surprises, with implications that would potentially constrain

their work (RP1, RP4). In the case of RP1, she did not know China studies, embedded under the School of Asian Studies at Leiden University Institute for Area Studies is about sinology: *"I am here because of my doctoral supervisor, he does international migration, in the field of anthropology. But I didn't understand the institute and the department at the time when I arrived, you know? At that time, I thought, oh, China studies should be about the same as migration studies. But then, I realized that the differences are huge. Haha!"* After taking some coursework for a year at Leiden University, she became aware that the current resources available to her may not be as relevant to her academic work, and found Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development (MACIMIDE) through her own research: *"Then I discovered about Maastricht's research centre, they focus on migration and transnational family here, and on Africa and Europe. Yes, even if it's not on Asia, there are a lot of to learn from with regards to theoretical framework and research methodology, so I applied to be a visiting fellow. But it's just for 3 months, and then I will be back to Leiden."*

RP4, who applied to be a PhD candidate in a project realised there were major changes in the direction of the research project when he arrived: *"Initially, the research project matches my academic interest. But when I arrived, I was informed that the industrial partner had adjusted their demands, even though the project title remains the same, everything else were different. So not all research will proceed as you anticipated from the description, and nothing is truly set in stone. Our industrial project partner reformulated the project goals according to the updated European legal framework and added commercialization aspects for product design in the research description. So, there were major changes and no resources to support my research interest, and I am not sure whether to continue under such circumstances. This was a very awkward phase in my doctoral trajectory, and I am very glad that this problem is now solved through constant communication with my supervisors, as they respect my decision to pursue the research in a direction that is based on my own academic interests."*

RP7 who changes field for her doctoral degree experienced a demanding learning curve due to unfamiliarity. However, she praised that sufficient institutional resources and clear responsibilities have helped facilitated this transition: *"During my Master I had to help my Master thesis supervisor with organisational or administrative matters. Say if your supervisor needs to apply for project grants and need some documents, you will have to go to the university to get these documents in place. Here you have secretary for these matters, but not in China. Master thesis supervisors are overloaded with work and had to ask their students to help them carry out their tasks. So educational activities are much more organised and formal in the Netherlands. I can focus solely on my research here. Further, I think the teaching quality here is better, also I can claim all expenses related to my academic work."*

Drawing form RP2's personal living experience in the Netherlands, information regarding housing and transportation suggestions on the university's official website were hardly useful. He proceeded to offer a concrete yet simple solution to the problem: *"For every student, your priority is always accommodation. When you first arrived, it's important that you find a place to stay. Then, it's transportation. For example, in the Netherlands, all the cities in which universities are located, have higher housing prices due to high demands from the local and international students. And there are many small cities in the Netherlands, take Leiden for*

example, if there are too many international students, and insufficient housing for everyone, then obviously there will be a hike in housing prices. When this happens, university should provide the students with transportation advice, and tell them that they don't necessarily have to live in Leiden, but a small town close by. If the university can provide "door-to-door" information, that commuting would take about 30-40 minutes by bus or train, I think it would help international students to get cheaper accommodation, right?

RP2 mentioned that longer traveling time from home to university is a non-issue for Chinese PhD candidates as their goal is to find a reasonably priced accommodation which their scholarship amount could cover: *"I think if I knew prior coming to the Netherlands, that the railway and transportation system is so convenient, and that they have year subscriptions etc., I would have a broader perspective when it comes to finding accommodation. I was just looking at the centre of Rotterdam since I was going to do my PhD at Erasmus University. I think I would have considered outer regions and other cities even, if I knew there were stops in almost every small town of the Netherlands, that the Dutch train network can be so dense. I would have much more housing options if I knew back then, but I didn't know, and I couldn't have known."* Therefore, information regarding housing and transportation should be presented in tandem on the university's website to lighten the financial burden of the CSC-funded PhD candidates.

RP10 brought his CSC scholarship in cash and experienced some difficulty with bank notes upon arrival: *"The CSC gave me 3600 euros in cash, in six 500 notes, and a 100 note. This is the amount for three months' worth of scholarship, it was given in cash as we first need to report ourselves to the university and then the Chinese embassy in the Netherlands, before we could open a Dutch bank account. Then, the subsequent scholarship amount of 3600 euros will be transferred to our account every three months, over the period of four years. When I first arrived at the Schiphol airport, I used the 100 euro note to purchase a train ticket, but the receptionist rejected me and asked me to change it first with a money changer. Shortly after I went to Ikea to buy some furniture, and the receipt of the total was 512 euros. So, I took out the 500 euro note to pay, and the cashier was shocked. Luckily, my senior was with me and paid for me with his bank card."* The experience of RP2 and RP10 highlight that these PhD candidates, rely heavily on information such as accommodation, transportation, and money matters provided by the university to begin their doctoral journey.

5.2.3. Networking

All participants mentioned pleasant social interaction with their colleagues, but difficult to establish intimate friendships. RP1 described the difficulty to establish Dutch friendships: *"In the beginning, I made a lot of Dutch friends. I even live at an apartment with Dutch students, with a lot of room mates, they are all Dutch. Yes, and we get along quite well, but then I had to leave to do my fieldwork. Before I leave, they organized a farewell party for me, it was very warm and sweet. But when I returned to the Netherlands and looked for them again, they seemed very distant, and it wasn't like how it was before. Because I no longer live there, right. So yes, we became distant and I even texted some of them, and say: 'hey, let's meet up, shall we?' and the replies were very cold. Hmm, and at the end we did not meet up. So, this experience makes me feel that my interaction with the Dutch, is quite limited, how do you say this, it's quite situational. Do you know what I mean?"*

RP3 experienced the same discrepancy in social interactions with her Dutch colleagues as time passes: *"I think the good thing about my Dutch colleagues are that they are very nice. When I first arrived, because I was still new, they were very warm and friendly towards me. They always say hi and come talk to me and we would go get coffee together. Some Dutch colleagues even brought their photo albums to share their travel experiences with me. But at a later stage, I became more independent as I go deeper into my own research, and everyone started to seem very busy with their own research as well. So, we slowly drift apart. Even if it was someone who were very close to me before, we would rarely interact now. In events or activities organised by the university, Dutch colleagues also prefer to mingle in their own circle, and you'd realised that your friendship with them wasn't as deep as you thought."*

RP7 maintains that context is important in defining her relationship with others, and she was very happy that her department maintain a kind of networking ritual which ensures continuous engagement: *"Our research group has a tradition, and that is every member will gather together during lunch time to enhance interaction with one another. Because of this, my relationship with other PhD candidates and colleagues are quite good."*

Since CSC-funded PhDs had a contractual obligation to return to China, they could be more inclined to establish a Chinese academic network than a Dutch academic network, as RP3 explains: *"I participated mostly in activities organised by Chinese PhDs. We usually travel together or go out for dinner. And I also attended the PhD defence of my seniors and throw farewell parties for them. They usually got job offers like assistant and associate professors in China."* When RP1 considers her employment opportunities after her PhD, she admits that the Dutch academic network may not be helpful in securing a position in Chinese academia: *"Well, in terms of international network, I think being in the Netherlands has its advantages. So, my supervisors and researchers I met at conferences are certainly beneficial for my network. But if I were to search for employment opportunities in China, then the academic network in the Netherlands does not really have a direct impact on this."*

5.3. Agency

The structural assembly of elements in the Chinese and Dutch habitus which form the cultural, social, and physical environments in which individuals engage, including, for instance, the policies and practices that shape available actions during the doctoral trajectory, and influence interactions with others, were analysed in the previous sections. This section will focus on answering the third sub-research question: **"To what extent does CSC-funded PhD candidates exercise agency over time in their doctoral trajectories?"** Agency focuses on individual's sense of how and the extent to which they feel able to exercise degrees of freedom to achieve their desires and aspirations within the doctoral trajectory (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2018). The emphasis of agency in this study places the research subject, or narrator at the centre of their narrative, which is central to their identity development. It is a challenging to negotiate the roles of structure and individual agency in conceptualising doctoral experiences, as agency depends on the extent to which individuals believe they can influence events.

Teachers are someone whom you look up to and follow, is a sentiment deeply embedded in the Chinese culture and shapes the way Chinese PhDs interact with their supervisors. RP5,

who was used to the hand-holding supervision style during his Master degree, shared: *"I don't understand why my supervisor likes to answer a question with another question. When I asked should I do A or B, he asked me what I think. When I explained I would like to hear your expert opinion and that I will do whatever he decides, he asked me if I have considered option C, D, or E."* After two years of such interactions, RP5 learnt that he was afraid to take risks and suffer the consequences of his own decision making: *"Because no one was making any decisions for me, I wasted a lot of time considering all my options, but through time, I understood that there were no right or wrong answers. Every decision you make will have its pros and cons, and the most painful part is not having to decide, but to live with what you decided. Then I realised it does not matter what I decide as long as it remains a meaningful and valuable learning experience for me. After that I was no longer afraid."*

It is thus important for both parties to clarify expectations in PhD supervision. For example, the supervisor might expect independent decision-making from the PhD candidate, and the candidate should be informed that any decision may be accepted if it is well justified. While this may seem obvious, the lack of explicit articulation has caused a lot of confusion and has wasted a lot of time. Most participants anticipate guidance and feel like they are not up to the task of taking control and questioning the authority of their supervisor. Chinese PhDs are commonly stereotyped as shy, polite, and hardworking. While this may be true depending on the individual, self-doubt, language barriers and cultural differences undoubtedly play a part in reinforcing the stereotypes on Chinese PhDs.

As seen in the story of RP8, speaking up is frowned upon in the Chinese culture as one is seen as deliberately causing the other to lose their 'Mianzi' (this Mandarin word is translated as to lose your face; or '*gezichtsverlies*' in Dutch). Chinese PhDs are thus very sensitive towards expressing their opinion publicly or explicitly as they do not want to embarrass others, even though others may interpret this as lack of critical thinking. As such, supervisors are responsible in being approachable, available, and active in making his or her expectations explicit to engage them and help them in making sense of the Dutch academic culture.

Knowing when to reach out becomes part of the PhD learning process as RP10 came to realise after his first four months of working in the Netherlands: *"I think my biggest mistake when I first started my PhD here is that I did not dare to ask questions. There were so many times that I thought I could do and learn this on my own. For example, I did not know how to operate the research centre's database system when I first got here. So, I try to learn about it by reading this textbook manual. I studied the book for three weeks and try to operate the database using the exercises and instructions given in the book. After that I finally asked my colleague to demonstrate how to use the database for me, and I got it after spending an afternoon at it. So, I discovered that studying all by myself is not a very efficient way of learning, and that I should interact with those around me by asking more questions."*

RP3 mentioned that the external PhD status itself implies limited institutional involvement at a Dutch university, which has a negative impact on one's sense of agency: *"As external PhDs, we generally have no interest in the development of our department and could not join the departmental meetings because we are not involved in course design and teaching.*

So, any discussion related to educational activities and the students do not concern us. Yes, we automatically gave up the right to be involved as a CSC-funded PhD. The advantage of not being involved in educational activities is that I can have more time to do my own research, and the disadvantage would be the feeling of being excluded, as I feel like an outsider, that I do not understand the educational system of the country in which I am living in." The lack of sense of belonging to Dutch academia reinforced her identity as a CSC-funded scholar: *"I think it is important for CSC to remind the PhD candidates to have some self-awareness, that there will be cultural differences. And you, as the representative of CSC-funded scholars, should recognise that your identity is quite special. This means that you are an early career researcher, you are no longer a student, you are the member of a Dutch university, you represent your department as a staff, and often, you are the cultural ambassador and you are the bridge for intercultural communication.*"

All participants invested all their time in Mastering the English language, increasing one's research knowledge, and developing knowledge of the Dutch habitus for a successful doctoral trajectory. In the case of RP9, her doctoral supervisors have high expectations but have neither the patience nor the professionalism to support her: *"I don't think my English level can improve overnight. When I confronted my supervisors about their unprofessional comments about CSC-funded PhDs and low English proficiency, they replied: it's not personal, it's just work. But I am my work! They also told me to be grateful that the university covers my research and travel expenses, because that's not included in my CSC scholarship.*" After the confrontation, it was evident to RP9 that her supervisors will not change their egoistical and patronising attitude towards her, so she decided to take matters into her own hands: *"I joined the career orientation program for PhDs and the PhD network of Tilburg University to fight for the rights of CSC-funded scholars. I believe that we deserve better working conditions, facilities, and treatment.*"

"Part of the effective practice of agency is learning how to offer and ask for support, how to manage our emotional response to challenges, and how to deal with not succeeding, including a decision to stop trying or to try again" (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2018, p. 38). In this section, individual's effort to articulate and work toward personally chosen intentions and goals, and their ability to respond to unexpected challenges throughout their doctoral trajectory is presented. It is important to emphasise that one sense of agency is not a constant, fixed nor constantly increasing property (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2018). CSC-funded PhD candidates may demonstrate clear goal-setting or decision-making in some situations or points in time, but not in others. As such, the degrees of agency that an individual perceives and acts upon may vary. While the external PhD status excludes the participation of CSC-funded PhD candidates within their respective institutions, some have demonstrated the ability to decide which aspect of the work practices they will engage in, or modify in their doctoral trajectory, and through these negotiations, choose to engage in or resist certain practices.

The analysis correspond to the findings of Wasburn-Moses (2008), whereby external PhDs with a grant are more satisfied with their doctoral experience and are more positive with regards to career prospects in academia. All participants indicated desire to remain in academia and are positive towards their future employment opportunities in China. RP2 and RP1 are

actively looking for post-doctoral opportunities in the Netherlands as well as RP3 who is eager to get to know the Dutch society and labour market is looking for internship opportunities that matches her doctoral research. RP10 disclosed that if he was to pursue his PhD in China, he will receive a salary of approximately 3,000RMB (less than 400 euros). Thus, this study found that CSC-funded PhD candidates do feel that their situation is better as compared to the situation of PhD students in their home country, leading to higher satisfaction levels (Waaijer, 2016). Lower satisfaction in research climate and infrastructure of externals when compared to internals in the study of Waaijer, Heyer & Kuli (2016) could not be validated as there are no internal PhDs in this study, and all participants reported to have full access to institutional resources and facilities. Further, CSC-funded PhD candidates are satisfied with the frequency of meetings with their supervisor, and nine candidates are satisfied with the overall doctoral supervision (Heath, 2002; Harman, 2003).

5.4. Academic identity

This section will focus on answering the fourth and final sub-research question: **How is academic identity formed during the doctoral trajectories of CSC-funded PhD candidates at Dutch universities?** According to Calhoun (1991), identity results from collegiality, a common purpose and collective identity, in other words, imagining oneself as a member of a community. Communication of certain practices within that community develops commonly accepted traditions maintain member's identity. However, the current reality of CSC-funded PhD as illuminated in previous sections has shown that the lack of institutional recognition of Chinese PhD candidates is detrimental to the formation of identity. A PhD candidate typically spend four years working at the university, but they hardly participated in other institutional task such as teaching, to be recognised as contributing member of the university.

The only link between a CSC-funded PhD candidate and the university is through the doctoral supervisors, as RP10 reflected: *"I didn't even know what I didn't know. There were one or two leaflets about what I need to do to get registered in the city hall or get a bank account, but there was nothing about the university. How many faculties are there? How many departments? What does the university stand for? What do they expect from me? What are the resources available to me? Who can I contact for help besides my supervisor?"* Socialization between local and international PhDs is only mentioned by RP5: *"The fondest memory during my PhD trajectory is that our department has a team-building event for the staff members. It was an Italian-cooking workshop, ten of us were split into groups and had to prepare a three-course meal. It was so much fun, and I was very happy to get to know my colleagues."*

Though one could hardly claim the formation of academic identity, one could notice the change in intellectual strands in some of the CSC-funded candidates through time. RP2 who has no intention of staying in the Netherlands noticed: *"I find myself slowly influenced by the scholarly thinking here. So, when I start writing a topic, or comparing legal systems, I do not have a presumption of which national legal system is better than the other. Through my research process and analysis, when comparing the specific aspects of two legal systems, I will then draw a conclusion about which legal system is better than the other."* While RP3 have a strong preference for her present academic environment, she understands her external PhD status may constitute a disadvantage when it comes to the Dutch academic labour market: *"The*

ideal situation is being able to stay in Dutch academia, because then I can just research on a topic that interests me, and I can expand my knowledge. If I could stay in academia, that's the best trajectory. However, it can be very stressful and competitive here in the Netherlands. Sometimes it's not only about your research competences and skills, you also must take everything else into account. For example, CSC-funded PhDs do not have the opportunity to teach, so it all depends on our research success, so teaching is a skill that we do not possess and constitute a disadvantage."

The external status constitutes an equity problem as CSC-funded candidates feel that hardly establish their presence at their universities: three participants (RP2, RP9, RP7) expressed they feel marginalized while seven participants admitted a lack of engagement. As such, many PhDs turn to research for self-actualisation and intellectual recognition, and RP1 confessed that her social life may have suffer consequently*: "I usually just go from point A, my house to point B, the university. I did not join any social nor networking activities, and only see my house mates occasionally. I would advise any Chinese students to make Dutch friends. It's difficult but I wished I have done it, participate in more social activities."*

In the study of Levecque et al. (2017), PhD candidates' participation in the organisational decision-making process is presumed to have a positive influence on mental health. The social interaction patterns between university staff have shifted from a culture of collegiality to a bureaucratic culture, whereby academic staff are rarely consulted and invited to participate in the management decision-making process (Kinman, 2001; Biron et al., 2008). The exclusion of CSC-funded PhD candidates from organisational decision making and institutional participation and its impact on emotional strain, PhD dissatisfaction and intentions of PhD termination should be explored in future studies.

6. Conclusion

The final chapter summarizes the research findings, assesses their academic significance, reflects on the individual and institutional implications for both CSC-funded PhD candidates and Dutch universities. Suggestions for future research and how the current work can be expanded to a doctoral project will also be discussed.

6.1. Research Findings

The purpose of the study was to explore how CSC-funded PhD candidates experience doctoral education at Dutch universities and examine the impact of their experience on their sense of agency and academic identity formation. To achieve this goal, the research adopted a narrative approach and utilized a combined theoretical framework of identity-trajectory theory (McAlpine, Amundsen, & Turner, 2013) and habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) for the analysis of the participants' life stories.

The main research question of this study was, **how do the Chinese and Dutch habitus shape the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhD candidates over time?** The following table presents an overview of the answers to this question by contrasting the Chinese and Dutch habitus – implicit cultural and social norms and practices in relation to the three identity-trajectory strands: intellectual, institutional, and networking (McAlpine et al., 2013). Since so little is known about the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhDs, the goal here is to provide an extensive description on the unique rules and conditions of both the Chinese and Dutch habitus which structure the possible actions, practices, and strategies of CSC-funded PhD candidates throughout their doctoral trajectory.

Table 6: Identity-trajectory strands of the Chinese and Dutch habitus

Identity-trajectory strands	Chinese habitus	Dutch habitus
Intellectual	- Low self-confidence and inferiority due to strict upbringing at home and schools - Gender discrimination – female candidates were discouraged to pursue a PhD - Master thesis supervisor identified as the key person who pushes candidates to pursue PhD abroad - Harsh and 'hand-holding' Master thesis supervision - Focus on conceptual research	- Politeness as weakness – apologetic attitude associated with academic incompetence - Use of first names in addressing doctoral supervisors - Curiosity-driven and market-oriented research atmosphere - Encouraging and laissez-faire doctoral supervision - Focus on empirical research - Language barrier due to low English proficiency

Institutional	• PhD study group to prepare for the local doctorate intake examination and CSC scholarship application • Seniors and alumni's successful CSC application affect the candidate's study abroad destination • Exchange programmes and collaborative research projects between Chinese home university and Dutch university increase recognition and preference for pursuing a PhD in the Netherlands	• Dutch professors always the first to reply to email request and offer a PhD position • Lack of knowledge in institutional context which constrained one's academic work • Lack of useful pre-arrival information such as accommodation, transportation, and money matters • Socialization at workplace such as team building activity, social drinks and gatherings were minimal.
Networking	• Alumni from home university in China inform Master students of PhD vacancies in the Netherlands • Contact leading scholars in the field to be one's doctoral supervisor through strategic reading of publications during Master degree	• Difficult to establish Dutch friendships • Candidates who invested in learning the Dutch language reported to have better cultural understanding and improved relationships with their colleagues and supervisors • Due to contractual obligation to return to China, a candidate express preference for establishing a Chinese academic network than a Dutch academic network

Table made by author

6.1.1. Intellectual strand

All participants mentioned a strong desire to be guided throughout their doctoral trajectory, as teachers are central to the participants' intellectual development in the Chinese habitus. Master thesis supervisors were considered as the intellectual leaders and mentors who ultimately decide the research direction, purpose, and process of the participants. Four participants identified their Master thesis supervisor as crucial to their decision in applying for the CSC scholarship and doing a PhD abroad. Four female participants (RP1, RP8, RP6, RP7) reported harsh supervision and callous comments from either Master thesis supervisors, family members and potential employers in the Chinese habitus, which instigated low self-confidence and inferiority at the beginning of one's doctoral trajectory. The desire to be guided in one's doctoral trajectory was present but unfulfilled in the case of all participants in this study. Nonetheless, all but one

participant (RP9) mentioned positive doctoral supervision, and that the encouraging words of their doctoral supervisors have made a positive impact on their academic work. The freedom and laissez-faire doctoral supervision in the Dutch habitus implies individual responsibility to make their own research decisions. As such, nine participants noticed an increase in intellectual confidence over time, as the Dutch research practices communicate expectations of critical thinking and independent research ability for doctoral candidates.

In the case of RP9, her doctoral supervisors reportedly made unprofessional comments regarding the English proficiency of all CSC-funded PhD candidates and criticised the academic standards of CSC scholars, even though she tried her best to stand up to them in every meeting. What she considered as verbal and emotional abuse, was appropriate to both of her doctoral supervisors. All participants were aware that English proficiency is pivotal to their doctoral success, however, as RP9 noted, her English proficiency will not improve overnight. A sense of impatience and imprudence from her doctoral supervisors is evident in her narrative, which has a negative impact on her intellectual confidence. RP2 who had an unsuccessful doctoral trajectory at Erasmus University Rotterdam for a year and a half pointed out that his apologetic attitude was considered as academic incompetence in the eyes of his doctoral supervisor. After being dismissed from Erasmus University Rotterdam, he completed his PhD at Utrecht University with another supervisor, who was extremely kind and encouraging towards his academic work. The negative supervision experience of RP9 and RP2 in their doctoral trajectory, suggest that kindness and patience of doctoral supervisors towards PhD candidates may be underestimated in doctoral success.

From the interview data, the past Chinese habitus can be summarised as follows: political orientation, micromanagement supervision, and apprenticeship; while the present Dutch habitus is characterised as market orientation, laissez-faire supervision, and entrepreneurship. All participants were accustomed to operating in a collective and top-down Chinese habitus, admitted to taking a lot of time and effort to get used to the individualistic and independent research environment at their respective Dutch universities. In other words, CSC-funded PhD candidates' sense of agency develops over time throughout their doctoral trajectory. Agency is most prominent when conflict arises. In the story of RP4, he had to negotiate with his doctoral supervisors as well as an industrial partner about the research direction and objectives of his doctoral project. He decided to prioritize his own academic interests over developing the commercialization aspect of the doctoral project, which was preferred by the industrial partner. When circumstances beyond one's control emerges in the doctoral trajectory, a PhD candidate must draw on his or her own will and confidence to communicate their desire. Similarly, RP9 who felt disrespected by her supervisors decided to join the PhD Network of Tilburg University to represent the invisible group of CSC-funded PhD candidates and to safeguard their rights. For RP3, the conscious decision to address her supervisor in his academic title and last name, and his willingness to allow her to do so, is a sign of respect towards her Chinese background.

6.1.2. Institutional strand

The institutional strand represents the CSC-funded PhD candidates' resources and responsibilities that come with formal affiliation with their previous Chinese habitus during

their Master degree, and their current Dutch universities. In the Chinese habitus, Master exchange programmes, study abroad seminars, PhD study group and the academic network of alumni and Master thesis supervisors were identified as resources available to the candidates with regards to CSC scholarship application and PhD opportunities in the Netherlands. In the Dutch habitus, all participants have full access to institutional resources, but many participants did not clarify their status beyond 'externally funded PhD candidate' and did not know whether they were officially registered as student, guest researchers, or visitors at the university's administration. Since participants only have one responsibility, that is to conduct research on their doctoral project full-time, they rarely referred to the advantages of Dutch institutional resources, except for RP1, who received additional fieldwork grant at Leiden University.

While the United Kingdom was often mentioned as most participants' first choice for pursuing their doctoral degree, many could not invest in the high cost of tuition fees. Further, the high academic reputation of Dutch universities and the efficiency and eagerness of Dutch professors in replying to emails, giving a PhD offer, and facilitating the CSC scholarship application with participants made the Netherlands an excellent second-best choice of all non-English-speaking countries among the CSC-funded PhDs. In retrospect, three participants (RP1, RP4, RP7) realised that the haste in accepting the PhD position indicated a lack of knowledge in institutional context which led to a mismatch of academic interests in the beginning of their doctoral trajectory. Fortunately, sufficient institutional resources and having research as their only institutional responsibility, allowed them to gain knowledge and confidence to shape their doctoral trajectories according to their own academic interests in the Dutch habitus.

In the case of RP2 and RP10, the lack of useful pre-arrival information such as accommodation, transportation, and money matters provided by the Dutch universities caused financial burden and social anxiety at the beginning of their doctoral journey. Dutch universities can draw on their experience to help other international students to avoid similar situations in the future. Only two participants (RP7, RP5) mentioned institutionally organised socialization at workplace, such as daily departmental lunch gathering and team building activity. One participant, RP8, was often invited by her Dutch colleagues to informal social gatherings with alcohol ('*borrels*', in Dutch), while all the others reported to have pleasant yet minimal interaction with their colleagues.

6.1.3. Networking strand

In the Chinese habitus, only two participants (RP8, RP10) engaged in career exploration while others depended on their Master thesis supervisors and alumni for doctoral opportunities. RP8 and RP10 were agentive in the process of selecting their doctoral supervisor as they were both determined to work with the best scholars in the field. Potential PhD supervisors were identified through the strategic reading of publications available to them during their Master degree. In the Dutch habitus, participants rarely mentioned the networking strand. The only link between the CSC-funded PhD candidates and the Dutch university is their doctoral supervisors. Since all CSC-funded PhDs had a contractual obligation to return to China upon the completion of their PhD, RP3 mentioned her preference to establish a Chinese academic network than a Dutch academic network. Nonetheless, all participants express strong desire to establish Dutch friendships but find it extremely challenging due to language barrier. Two participants (RP2,

RP8) who invested in learning the Dutch language reported to have better cultural understanding and improved relationships with their colleagues and supervisors over time. Eight participants expressed the lack of will and time for learning Dutch as they must prioritise and invest in improving their English proficiency for the sake of their PhD.

Identity-trajectory theory (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2018) is structured around three interweaving strands: intellectual (contributing in various ways to the chosen field), networking (expanding connections, both interpersonally and intertextually), and institutional (negotiating the structural features to mediate the development of the other two strands). From the accounts of 10 CSC-funded PhD candidates, the external PhD status inevitably excludes them from developing the institutional and networking strands in the Dutch habitus. They were not involved in attending meetings, providing educational and departmental suggestions, nor creating structures. They were also rarely invited to socialize and participate within the Dutch university, nor provide any form of leadership, but to focus on their doctoral research. The lack of institutional engagement is detrimental to the individual's formation of academic identity and led to an isolated doctoral education experience. As such, all participants struggle to establish their presence and make their voice heard in the university in which they work. While nine participants reported positive doctoral supervision and increased intellectual confidence over time, all participants only frequently interact with their supervisors and feel like an outsider due to the lack of social interaction with the local PhDs and departmental colleagues.

6.2. Academic significance

This Master thesis is the first qualitative study on external CSC-funded PhD candidates in the Netherlands. The study of Waaijer at al. (2016), whose research found that externals are at a disadvantaged position with respect to financial situation, offered facilities, and experienced work stress when compared to internals may now be validated, for the sample of CSC-funded PhD candidates. Even though the scholarship amount for CSC-funded PhD candidates was lower than internal PhD candidates' salaries in the Netherlands, none of the participants disclosed financial difficulties. All CSC-funded PhD candidates has a stable funding source – they receive a scholarship allowance of 3,600 euros every three months, amounting to 1,200 euros per month – for a period of four years. All participants in this study also reported to have access to institutional facilities and resources at their respective Dutch university. Many participants suffered from anxiety and low self-confidence due to uncertainty during the start of their PhD and language barrier. However, the anxiety level decreased, and intellectual self-confidence increased over time through the narrative of the participants. Evidently, external CSC-funded PhDs experience different dynamics in their academic, social, cultural and career experiences than internal PhDs in the Netherlands. The narrative of CSC-funded PhDs demonstrate that host institutions do little or nothing to bring international and domestic students together in ways that enhance students' learning of cross-cultural skills during their doctoral trajectory (Nerad et al., 2009).

Since scholarship today is heavily dominated by publications in English, authored by native speakers of English, and written on the materials and from the perspective of English-speaking countries, the current thesis contributes to the understanding of doctoral education in the Netherlands through the Chinese perspective. Thick descriptions and the actual realities and

experiences of CSC-funded PhDs would not have emerged without the use of the mother tongue between the researcher and the participants. Finally, the theoretical framework rooted in agency theory suggests that identity-trajectory and habitus could be adapted and validated in other empirical settings beyond doctoral experiences in the Netherlands. Results of such studies could facilitate a refining of the framework and other analytical tools (typologies, models, methods) employed in this study.

6.3. Practical implications

The following table offers individual and institutional recommendations for improving the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhD candidates in the Netherlands.

Table 7: Practical implications for the individual and receiving Dutch university

Identity-trajectory strands	Individual	Institution
Intellectual	- Apologize only when a mistake is made - Increase English proficiency through asking questions and daily interactions (academic or non-academic) with others - Cultivate autonomy by learning how to make critical decisions for your research, together with the help of your doctoral supervisors - Read abundantly and mimic the writing and thinking process of Western scholars - Keep asking questions	- Encourage candidates to take English courses in academic writing and speaking skills throughout their doctoral trajectory - Provide a safe space which PhD candidates could confide their challenges with one another - Assign an official PhD advisor and psychologist for external PhDs so that they have other links with the university besides their doctoral supervisors - Remind doctoral supervisors that their words of encouragement and patience would have a lasting positive impact on the PhD candidate, and that being apologetic is a polite gesture in various cultural contexts
Institutional	Collect information on departmental mission, histories	Invite CSC-funded PhDs to participate and contribute

	and organisational structures, research, and educational activities through official university website to better understand the institutional context and its relation to one's academic interest and career ambition • Request contacts of other CSC-funded PhD candidates within department and establish friendship prior to coming to the Netherlands, which could facilitate the communication of relevant pre-arrival information	in educational activities such as teaching and curriculum development • Include external PhDs in departmental meetings and research seminars with local PhDs and Master students
Networking	• Invest time in learning basic Dutch (A1 level) to increase social interaction with others • Warmly invite a different Dutch colleague for lunch every day to get to know them personally	• Offer free Dutch language courses to motivate foreign PhDs to get to know the culture and increase social interaction • Organise annual team building activities and biweekly social drinks to encourage social interaction between the internal, external PhDs and other staff members

Table made by author

6.4. Suggestions for further research

This study has set out to understand the doctoral experiences of CSC-funded PhD candidates in the Netherlands. The life stage outline method adapted from Lieblich et al. (1998) allowed us to explore the participants' motives of coming to the Netherlands, perception of doctoral supervision, the doctoral process, as well as challenges of a CSC-funded PhD candidate. Career aspirations were underexplored in this study, as most participants are still in the early stages of their PhD.

All participants had travelled all the way from China and went through many hurdles to become a PhD candidate in the Netherlands. A sense of persistence and desire to succeed can be identified in their life stories. Nonetheless, most participants acknowledged major difficulty in acting as an independent researcher, given the distinct academic practices, expectations, and rules of the game in the Chinese and Dutch habitus. The development of autonomy and possible ways to educate autonomous research skills to non-Dutch PhD candidates thus require attention.

The current research is only able to focus on PhD candidates who are currently on their doctoral trajectory. It is not known whether all of them will succeed and complete their PhD on time. It is important to note that two participants who were in the finishing phase of their PhD at the time of interview, and both had two years of delay, are now doctoral holders. The current theoretical framework can be extended to CSC-funded doctoral holders, to explore their homecoming and career experiences in China. Additionally, the perspective of those who decided to terminate their PhD in the Netherlands should be included to examine the reasons for non-completion. However, this study may be difficult to conduct due to stigma and shame concerning failure. Further studies on doctoral supervisors and their supervision experiences of CSC-funded PhD candidates is called for, to ensure that stories from both sides are heard.

In conclusion, the current study is the first step towards understanding CSC-funded PhD candidates, and opens endless possibility for future doctoral education research in the Netherlands. The current Master thesis may be expanded to a doctoral research project entitled 'Global Chinese Knowledge Diaspora', combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitatively, a bibliometric comparative analysis of Chinese publications across various disciplines can be ran at CWTS to examine how Chinese scholars have contributed to English-speaking countries such as United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia. Other topics such as doctoral experiences, doctoral supervision, career aspirations and mental health of Chinese early career researcher can be done quantitatively through survey design or qualitatively through interviews and focus groups.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Email request in Mandarin and English

致博士研究生，

此函恳请所有通过奖学金（由政府，资助机构或雇主）或自行资助的博士研究生和博士们参加我的硕士论文研究 – 外部博士生的职业发展。鉴于中国博士生对荷兰知识经济的巨大贡献，了解他们的职业发展路径和就业经验将有助于中荷学术交流，提供博士生良好的学习与就业环境以及相关资讯。

这项定性研究将通过叙事访谈的方式探讨各学科外部博士生的职业发展及学术生涯。如果您有兴趣成为受访者，请回复您的姓名和联络方式（电话号码/电邮/Skype ID/微信）至 t.t.chan@cwts.leidenuniv.nl。我将进一步安排采访时间，地点和日期。采访预计需要 45 至 60 分钟。

若您是本地荷兰大学招聘的博士生，拜托将此函转发至您认识的自助或奖学金博士学者。

本人真心期待您的参与！谢谢！

陈彤彤 敬启

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to invite you to participate in my research of Careers of External Doctoral Holders (PhD) in the Netherlands. An abstract is provided below for your information:

External PhDs are those who are not employed by the university and may be self-funded or funded through scholarships – usually by foreign governments, funding agencies, or employers. In the Netherlands, empirical knowledge about the employment status, career path development and career choices of external doctoral holders are hardly researched even though they make up almost 50% of the doctoral population, with Chinese being the largest group of external foreign PhDs from outside of Europe. Given their substantial contribution to the Dutch knowledge economy, understanding their career paths and experiences will be useful for the recruitment of talented doctoral candidates. Through narrative interviews, this qualitative study will lend a voice to the invisible group of external Chinese doctoral holders in the Netherlands.

If you are interested in being a participant, **please send your full name, contact (phone number/Skype ID/WeChat) to t.t.chan@cwts.leidenuniv.nl.** The interview is expected to take about 45 to 60 minutes. Interviews will be conducted in Mandarin Chinese.

If you are a PhD candidate or graduate who are employed by the university, please forward this email to external PhD candidates or doctoral holders in your network who are here on scholarship, grants or self-funded.

Thank you and I look forward to your participation!

Appendix II: Bilingual field diary

Full name of participant in English and Mandarin
Date of interview: 13/6/2017
Time of interview: 15:30 – 16:30
University: Technical University Eindhoven (TU/e)
Department: Department of Industrial Design
Contact information: mobile number, WeChat, and email

Stages and Ages 人生阶段和年龄	Title 标题/描述
Stage 1: 0-6	爸爸妈妈和我 My parents and I
Stage 2: 7-14	我的学习学习成长成长 My learning and growth
Stage 3: 15-18	为未来奋斗 Fight for the future
Stage 4: 19-23	迷茫 Dazed and confused
Stage 5: 24-29	一直走 Keep going

Researcher's note:

- 在 15-18 岁这个阶段有转去不同的高中，但是因为融入的问题 （文化差异和没朋友），不能适应，所以转回去以前的学校。转回自己的学校后成为名人，当时感觉就是要考得比之前的学校的同学好。但是也没有。发现自己实力不够，意识现实的残酷。

- 24-26 读研究生，27-29 读博。有出过国，了解国外的情况。

- 形容自己在 19-23 岁时是个不安分的人，有大一病，想要急于证明自己。可能是因为第三阶段的缘故

- 本科是念工业工程，上研究生就换专业，做设计。虽然觉得本科浪费时间，也不喜欢，但是也是有用。大学时期放弃学生会去做广播，对 project management skills 来说很有帮助。也是此时发现喜欢做 ppt 和海报，同学们都说做得很好。自认为也不错。

- 读研考了两年，后来上了江南大学设计，是国内不错的设计学校。偶然，忧虑，当时觉得就业没有太大的问题，后来找到工作后觉得内地门槛太低了。

- 认为自己不是很功利的人

- 第一次出国是来荷兰当半年的研究交换学生 (24-26)，也有实习经历。

- 来到荷兰最大的冲击是以前的世界很小，顿时体会到一个人是可有那么大的自由性。中国很保守，以前是想就算，现在想就做。

- 没有人会为你负责，一定要有自信。

- 当时申请 CSC 的原因是不用找工作了！成本是 4 年的时间/人生。很开心可以在欧洲国家生活，成为更国际化的人。
- 荷兰人比较防范，没有真正可以玩的朋友。
- 学术差异：艺术 vs. 理工，这里强调要有科学研究。实证的。
- 荷兰导师尊重我的意见，但是博士研究还是有很多的挑战。
- 很多的挑战没有解决，对方积极性低，而自己的论文也没有得到学姐的认可，要先 publish 再说。
- 由于合作方的改变，研究方向也有所改变，所以要不断地沟通。Change of research direction due to decreased willingness/interest in the research from the funding collaborators, the motivation to supervise is also gone. This created an awkward situation which requires the student to be proactive in getting the support of his supervisor.
- As such, the student implies that organizational missions and goals need to be aligned with PhD's research interest and career goals. It is best to communicate this in advance, so students know their access to resources and network/opportunities that might be available for them.
- 如果你要顺利毕业，需要具备什么条件？一、要有学术修养，了解毕貌。二、组织论述的能力，比如学术写作还有 presentation.
- "我认为我就是属于导师的学生"，是导师的下属
- 访谈后有问我研究发现，还有以我的专业看法，应该怎么样去面对导师，达到目标和共识。

Appendix III: Full Mandarin transcription

TT: 非常好，终于可以开始了。真的不好意思，对。。对。所以我的课题就是关于中国博士生在荷兰的学术还有职业生涯的研究。

XM: 好，好。

TT:那今天呢，我就想要恩听你说一说你的人生阶段，还有你在荷兰的经验。那我这个访谈会用一个叙述访谈的方式。我会跟你解释要怎么去所做。你现在有纸和笔吗？

XM: 啊，有啊

TT: 恩，那你准备一下纸和笔

XM: 那我需要做什么？

TT: 哦，就很简单我跟你说。那每一个人的生命呢，就好像，就如同一本书嘛。我想你现在想想你现在的生活，就好像你正在写一本书一样。恩，首先你要想一想这本书的章节，就是你生命的章节，然后呢，你在你的纸上面呢写下，有两个，怎么说。。。两个 column. 呵呵。

XM: 恩恩， 好

TT: 明白吗？

XM: 对对对

TT: 第一个 column 写下人生的阶段和年龄。就是 Stages and Ages, OK? 你先别写下那个阶段和年龄。你先写下第一个 column 的标题是人生阶段和年龄。第二个呢就是这个人生阶段和年龄的标题。OK? 所以在第一列呢，人生阶段和年龄，第二列是一个标题对不对？所以呢，恩，现在在第一列，你丛零开始，从你出生的那一天到你想要这一个阶段结束的年龄。比如说，厄，从 0 岁到 10 岁，可能是第一个阶段。然后你继续写下下一章，写下第二个阶段的开始和结束的年龄。可能 15 到 25, OK?

XM: 好。

TT: 那你就一直继续写，直到你今天的年龄。所以阶段的数量呢和每个阶段的年龄范围其实是随你个人的偏好或者决定。然后到最后你才考虑这每一个人生阶段的标题，OK? 所以，恩，明白吗？

XM: 恩 恩 我明白。。明白

TT: 我寄那个，等一下哦。我寄那个 table 给你，所以你可以看得更加清楚。

XM: 好好好，那这个是现在要马上做吗？

TT: 对，现在要马上做。

XM: 哦，就是现在要马上做然后再，再，然后我们再根据这个来谈，是不是？

TT: 对，对。所以我已经寄给你那个照片，然后你写好了之后，所以人生有多少个阶段哦，还有每一个阶段的年龄，是由你来决定。你写好了之后，然后有了标题，你再寄给我，可以吗？

XM: 哦，可以可以。那。。那就是行。那我们现在就是可以先挂掉。

TT: 对，可以!

XM: 等我写好了，再打给你。

TT: 对对，因为这个需要时间考虑。恩，所以你要记得每个阶段的那个年龄要有连贯性，比如说你丛 0 岁到 10 岁的话，你阶段二就是从 11 岁到 15 岁。你明白吗？

XM: 恩恩

TT: 恩，好，OK! 那你写好了我们再打电话。

XM: 我知道，我知道。然后一直到现在是吧？

TT: 对，到你现在这个年龄。

XM: 好，一直到现在是吧？

TT: 对对。

XM: 不包括未来？

TT: 对，不包括未来。

XM: 行，行。好的，好的。

TT: 好，OK, 我再打给你，恩，拜拜

XM: 好的，拜拜

XM: 哦，要拍照先是吗？

TT: 对你要拍照然后寄给我。

XM: 那我可以跟你说一下吧。

TT: 恩！

XM: 因为就是，因为我写得很轻，然后很乱。恩。。

TT: 那没关系你可以跟我说

XM: 很简单，对对对，我可以跟你说啊。然后就是，我就是按教育来分的。

TT: 按照什么？

XM: 就是第一个…教育，教育。

TT: 恩，教育。

XM: 就是从，对对对，就是从 0 到 6 岁，就是学前。

TT: 好。

XM: 然后从 7 到 12 岁，就是小学啊

TT: 恩恩

XM: 然后 13 到 18 是中学。

TT: OK

XM: 19 岁以后就是大学以及研究生酱子

TT: 19 岁以后？就是 19 岁到现在吗？

XM: 对啊，对啊。

TT: 所以你现在是几岁？

XM: 哦，我现在是 29 岁。

TT: 29 岁，OK. 所以 0 岁到 6 岁是。。你的标题是什么？

XM: 恩，就是学前啊

TT: 学前？好，可以，没问题。然后，7 岁到 12 岁是小学，13 到 18 是中学吗？

XM: 对啊对啊

TT: 所以 19 到 29 是什么？标题？

XM: 是大学以及恩…就是大学以后，大学以及以后吧，酱子

TT: 好，可以。大学以及以后。

XM: 对，我觉得就是很简单的一个分法吧

TT: 恩，好，没问题

XM: 恩恩

TT: 恩那我想问你，在你小学的时候，7 岁到 12 岁这个期间呢，恩你可以告诉我你在这段里面最深刻或者最重要的某个记忆吗？

XM: 恩，是什么都可以吗？还是...

TT: 对，什么都可以。就是对你来说，对你人生哦有很大的一个影响，或者最深刻或者最重要的某个记忆。

XM: 这样子哦，恩。小学... 可能第一个想起来的可能就是，就是小学二年级，参加作文比赛。知道作文比赛吧？

TT: 恩

XM: 然后呢，我们的那个老师对我很好，然后就在我比赛之前，他在我脸上亲了一下。呵呵，然后，后来我就得了二等奖还是一等奖吧。

TT: 恩

XM: 然后那是，那一次经历就是给我印象很深，然后所以一直到现在我都很喜欢写作嘛。不管是恩自己随便写东西也好，还是就是写一些学术类的文章也好，那我都很喜欢写。我觉得那个时候参加作文比赛，以及那个老师在我脸上亲的那一下很有关系吧~

TT: 恩

XM: 如果你要说最深的记忆，应该。。。就好像第一个想到的就是这个

TT: 恩，可以。那你觉得在这个人生阶段里面，这个小学阶段，恩，谁是最重要的人物？为什么？

XM: 啊，等一下。没听清，啊你说谁是什么？喂？

TT: 谁是，恩在你这个阶段里面，谁是最重要的人物？

XM: 哦哦，谁是最重要的人物？

TT: 恩

XM: 哦... 最最重要的人物应该就是我爸爸妈妈拉

TT: 恩。为什么？

XM: 对... 为什么？恩，因为第一个是我都跟他们就是住在一起。恩，所以就是我爸爸他是在外地工作，可能每周回家一次吧。

TT: 恩

XM: 然后我一直就是跟父母住嘛，我知道有些小孩是可能跟爷爷奶奶住啊什么的。然后我是一直跟父母住。然后他们，恩，为什么对我影响很大，因为就是天天生活在一起。然后可能在就是因为小学嘛，你想很多重要的决定恩，都是父母帮忙，就是说父母给建议，然后一起酱子去商量，然后再去做决定。然后像考试成绩什么的，父母也很关心啊。然后像是跟小朋友什么吵架啊或者玩得不开心，呵呵，通常也是跟父母说吧。恩，因为那时候还比较小嘛。

TT: 恩，对。所以对了，到了... 恩，所以我就往中学的这个阶段问。就是恩 13 岁到 18 岁，你觉得在这个阶段的时候，你是一个怎么样，什么样的人？

XM: 啊，什么样的人哦？

TT: 恩，就描述一下你觉得在这个 13 岁到 18 岁之间，恩，你是一个怎么样的人？

XM: 恩我想一想哦... 什么样的人...

TT: 恩！

XM: 在中学... 恩在中学就是学习成绩还不错啊，然后也有当干部。你知道干部吧？

TT: 恩，知道。

XM: 就是什么团支书以类的

TT: 对，你有多少个干部？就是哦有多少个学会？

XM: 我就记得我做过团支书，然后还做过什么委员来着。恩，就是，对对对，做过劳动委员，就是安排大家打扫卫生的你知道吗。哈哈。还有的就不记得了，大概就做过这两个吧。

TT: 恩，所以你会是形容你是个什么样的人？

XM: 反正入支书就是担任过入轻团，然后就带大家一起活动的酱子。然后这个时候就是说，算是典型的好学生吧。恩，然后成绩也不错，可是也不是最好的，但是还不错。然后活动很多…恩但是到了高中，就是中学的阶段也很长嘛，恩，那个时候比较活跃。然后到了高中以后，哦，特别是高一，因为我去的那个学校是重点。然后我去的那个班也是重点班，呵呵。然后到了高一以后就因为学业变得比较紧张…恩，然后班里的同学也都很强。

TT: 恩！

XM: 所以就是，恩恩恩，就是有改变拉。变得比较低调，然后更安静，然后也不会就参加各种事，也就是活动什么的，就变少了。然后可能就是哦，跟一个小圈子的朋友一起玩。酱子…恩，所以到高中以后还是有改变拉。

TT: 恩，所以高中。。。

XM: 也是跟我的学习环境有关系，恩。

TT: 所以你高中跟之前的那个中学是一样的吗？还是不同的学校？

XM: 啊，不一样的学校。哦，就是我们上初中是一个学校，恩，然后这个学校上完以后不是有中考嘛。

TT: 对

XM: 所以初中上了要中考，然后呢，中考，然后根据你中考的成绩，还有你报的那个志愿嘛。就像考大学一样，然后就是根据你报的志愿，恩，如果你成绩够高你就可以去你报的第一志愿酱子。然后后来就是去了第一志愿，然后那边在我们这个去就是最好的学校。恩，所以是不一样的，跟初中的学校是不一样的。

TT: 恩，那你觉得在这个初中或高中这两个阶段，谁又是重要的人物呢？

XM: 恩…重要的人，到这个阶段哦…我觉得你要说最重要的人物啊，我想一想…

TT: 哦可以有多位，也不一定说要最重要。

XM: 哦，可以多位是吧.恩恩恩，那其实到高中可能就是小孩想到中学的年龄（哈哈哈），我觉得可能就是恩怎么说，就接触的人和事都会对他有一定的影响。就我说如果你要讲高中阶段的话，我觉得父母啊，老师，同学然后还有其他的同龄人，恩然后都会有对我有一定的影响。恩，我觉得父母就变得不是最重要了，对，可能就是说大家都差不多然后对对对。然后会受到多方的影响吧。

TT: 那什么是你最深刻的影响或最重要的一个影响？

XM: 恩，在中学…最深刻的…恩，你说人吗？还是事？

TT: 都可以

XM: 都可以…在中学。恩…在中学，我想一想，有好多事情，诶这个想一想最重要的。恩。那你要说最重要的就可能讲高三罗。恩，对，因为高三高考嘛，高考也就是会影响到以后对对对，如果你要说的话，应该就是高考那个阶段。然后呢我觉得对我影响比较大的是我同班同学，恩，这个影响就是我现在想来是不是具体的影响拉，是有一点高极，就是因为那时侯大家的压力特别大，恩，然后就是有我比较好的朋友会经常找我，就是说哎呀，我的压力很大，什么什么的。然后我是很容易受到同龄人影响的人，呵呵。所以就是我被他说了之后，我压力也变得很大。恩，所以整个高三的时期都很焦虑，对。恩，然后高考之前特别地紧张，恩。

TT:到最后考得怎样？

XM: 就是如果现在想来，就是高中最...就考得还可以吧。但是恩不是，就是说有一点发挥失常，就是恩，考得跟我的平常模拟考试，相差将近 20 分吧。

TT: 恩，那你觉得这跟焦虑有关吗？或紧张。

XM: 恩，跟焦虑有关系的，我觉得有关系的

TT:恩好，那你在选择终止 18 岁的，终止这个阶段然后往下一个阶段发展的原因是什么？所以你就终止了从 13 岁到 18 岁，然后从 19 到现在嘛，那你为什么选择这个中学的阶段，而往这个下一个阶段发展，你的原因是什么？恩，为什么你会酱子的去分类还有你的看法？

XM: 就是说我划分这个年龄的（原因）。。。对，哦，酱子。哦，我就是很赞同你的看法，就是说高中阶段结束了嘛，然后我上了大学。因为我不是在我家乡上大学，我是到另外一个很远的城市。大连上大学。

TT: 对，你的家乡是在哪里？

XM: 我家乡是在福州，恩，就距离很远。然后那时候也是第一次恩比较长时间的离开家里，离开父母啊，离开小时候的朋友酱子。恩我觉得对我来说是一个，就是全新的开始吧。就不一样的生活。恩，觉得就是从这里分的话，还是，就是标志一个比较全新的生活的开始。

TT: 恩，对。那你觉得在这四个人生阶段里面，最重要的阶段是哪个阶段？

XM: 如果说，最重要的那当然就是 19 岁以后拉，一直到现在。恩，因为毕竟就是我还是在这个过程当中嘛，当下还是最重要的.

TT: 那你觉得在这，因为我觉得啊这个 19 到 29 噢，是一个很长的一个时间，十年。

XM: 对

TT: 对，那你觉得嗯在这十年里面，额，你可以描述一下，啊就是从 19 岁开始的时候，你是一个怎么样的人，那到今天你又是一个怎么样的人？你你怎么去描述你的变化呢？还有你的经历？

XM: 嗯嗯... 我想一想啊.

TT: 就是你可以跟我分享你开始是怎么样的？你开始的一个期望或什么等等的？

XM: 嗯嗯嗯，开始到现在... 恩，那很...嗯.. 总的来说还是... 但当然每个人都是在变化嘛.

TT: 对

XM: 然后对我个个人而言的话，噢我觉得,我想一想啊,变化最大的是... 可能是在自信感这个方面吧. 恩，就是大学刚开始的时候,嗯可能会因为一些事情不太有自信. 嗯，可能也是因为高考的事情，然后有一些就是,原来自己觉得可以上一个更好的学校啊，但是没有。嗯，所以可能大学一开始的时候是比较缺乏自信感的，嗯，然后呢。嗯，那后来就是在大学整个期间表现得不错啦。然后，嗯，似乎又回到那种（呵呵）干部的那种阶段，就是（可以）呵呵，大学还继续当干部这样子。啊，成绩也还可以。然后就是整个大学期间，也参加很多活动这样。嗯，所以就渐渐有点恢复了就是像，可能像就是初中高中以前的那样的自信吧。恩，然后到现在的话，就是大学结束以后继续读研究生啊，然后后来出国读博。嗯，我觉得就是自信感还是一步步在增强吧。

TT: 嗯

XM: 以前我们就是说可能，研究生的时候就读硕士嘛，硕士的时候，嗯你可能也有所了解... 呵呵，就是老师对学生培养方式都是那种家长式的嘛.对,就是呵呵,打是亲,骂是爱. 嗯,所以对我们要求都是嗯,有的时候很无力，你会觉得很无力.嗯为什么,对,你写的东西还不错，但是老师就

把你批得体无完肤... 好吧. 就是很严格, 呵呵.嗯嗯, 然后其实他们是希望你进步, 但是你就是觉得唉呀, 好挫败, 为什么为什么我写了这么久, 然后老师都觉得不好, 这样子. 嗯, 所以特别在学术上,嗯, 然后读了博士以后, 我觉得也是因为学术环境的改变吧. 嗯, 就是到荷兰来读博士, 就老师, 虽然他也是很严格的老师啦.

TT: 对

XM: 嗯, 但是就是非常鼓励学生. 然后一个很小的想法, 他说噢, 很有意思, 很好, 你可以多去想一想. 对, 然后就是鼓励式的嘛。噢, 对对我觉得嗯, 整个阶段下来可能在大学的时候是这样的, 就是这种社交啊. 然后还有呢, 嗯可能各种,主要是社交吧,主要是社交方面的自信感, 然后从研究生开始. 研究生的时候就是在学术上很有自信.

TT: 恩

XM: 然后到唉, 对对对, 然后到博士以后... 嗯, 就是渐渐地, 就是嗯, 学术上的自信感增强了很多.

TT: 对

XM: 这个有分成这两个方面的嗯. 嗯差不多是这样子吧. 如果要讲一点的话, 就是自信感.

TT: 嗯. 好, 那我想问你, 你是嗯什么时候就是在这个十年里面, 嗯你可以解释一下, 你是从第几年开始读你的学士到研究生到博士吗？啊对, 嗯就是年份.

XM: 恩,是我想一想哦. 这里...对对对, 2005 年开始读本科, 就是学士。然后到 2009, 嗯还有 09 到 11 是硕士, 嗯, 然后从 11 年以后就到现在, 是博士。我现在噢快毕业了, 但是还没有。嗯, 对。

TT: 嗯那是什么时候？就是从 11 年到现在嘛, 嗯, 到底是谁鼓励你呃念博士？还有到底期间嗯, 你是怎么, 额怎么来到荷兰的呢？

XM: 嗯, 来到荷兰. 当时是, 也是因为就是,嗯怎么说... 也还是回到那学术自信感问题, 因为在硕士的时候, 嗯, 比较受打击, 然后觉得唉为什么自己做不好学术, 然后后来就想尝试说嗯, 就是如果硕士阶段做不好（哈哈）, 然后我读一个博士, 我可以尝试在博士阶段做好, 啊同时也想换一个学术环境吧。

TT: 嗯

XM: 当时的想法就是说, 如果要读博我就出国读. 嗯, 因为我知道国内学术环境, 然后老师培养方式是怎么样的。

TT: 嗯

XM: 然后, 对对对, 然后我在这种环境下也感觉就是比较没有自信. 也感觉比较焦虑, 然后我就想, 嗯是不是换一个环境会不一样, 噢所以当时就是有出国读博的想法. 嗯, 然后呢… 然后当时呢, 您可能也知道啦, 就是有那个 CSC 奖学金。

TT: 嗯

XM: 嗯就是叫什么呀？国家留学基金委。

TT: 对

XM: 就是那个 China Scholarship Council. 它们, 它们那时候, 那时候啊已经有奖学金了. 就是支持出国博士的. 噢, 我觉得那是一个很好的机会, 所以就申请. 嗯而且就拿到奖学金嘛. 然后在联系学校的时候, 嗯, 也是经过一个教授的推荐, 然后认识现在的导师. 噢, 那导师他当时在牛津, 然后后来, 嗯, 他是荷兰人。

TT: 嗯！在中国认识的吗？

XM: 不是不是. 嗯, 就不是在中国认识的。就是说, 是通过一个老师推荐。然后我在网络上联系。把简历发他, 然后他觉得唉, 还挺感兴趣的, 然后他就说他回荷兰当教授了, 因为在牛津就碰不上教授了。噢, 就是问我愿不愿意就是到荷兰来读博士? 然后我说, 好啊好啊! 嗯因为我知道牛津那种地方嘛, 就是那种, 嗯压力特别大嘛。而且英国读博是很贵的, 嗯, 要交学费嘛。嗯, 嗯就是我们拿奖学金就是只是包括生活费, 如果可能要缴学费的话, 可能, 因为我们家也不是特别富裕的家庭, 恩。就是工薪阶层嘛, 一般般。嗯, 我不想就是给家里增加负担了。我想, 嗯, 来荷兰读博士也不错的。嗯, 然后, 就是来, 嗯就开始了, 呵呵, 然后就是跟着这个了。主要是跟老师联系, 然后就跑过来读博士。

TT: 嗯, 那你在这个硕士到博士这个转型期间里面, 你觉得谁是一个很重要的人物? 在你做决定的里面?

XM: 恩, 我觉得我硕士的导师和, 嗯, 可能我硕士的导师吧。还有就是... 我父母一直都是很支持我的。

TT: 嗯, 很好。

XM: 我觉得老师和父母, 都是我做这个决定的嗯很重要的人。对对对。我说是老师, 主要是那种啊, 对我有啊, 怎么说, 比如说这呢反向的, 哈哈! 因为他就是, 嗯, 很期盼啊, 很期盼的那一种。然后他就是有一点让我觉得, 唉我想要证明我的学术能力的这个样子。

TT: 恩, 就是说有点严师出高徒的那种感觉吗?

XM: 噢。没有啊, 我不敢说自己是高徒。

TT: 哈哈哈哈

XM: 呵呵, 嗯, 就是他是那种批判式的, 然后反而让我觉得我应该, 噢, 就是再努力, 恩, 证明给他看我是可以做好的样子。嗯嗯, 然后我父母就是说啊我出国的时候要做一些准备啊~ 然后比如说要考雅思啊, 然后要准备一些其他的东西, 然后他们都很支持。

TT: 恩, 那在准备过程的方面啊, 就是来荷兰, 你在申请奖学金的时候, 啊那个过程是怎么样的? 因为我不是中国人, 我是马来西亚华侨, 嗯, 所以我想了解一下你在嗯申请这个中国留学基金委的这个过程, 还有准备的阶段, 你的经验是什么? 如果你可以就是, 嗯, 假设我是一个想要申请的人, 你会给我一个怎么样的建议?

XM: 啊这个啊...嗯申请奖学金... 因为这个奖学金他大多数, 嗯噢, 就是分到学校的。它就是有 Quota. 恩就是比如说一个校, 它会给就是一百个名额这样。

TT: 恩, OK.

XM: 然后每个学校每年都不一样, 嗯嗯. 然后这个一百个名额呢, 还会分到每个学院. 可能每个学院会有 10 个 15 个, 就是都不一样嘛。嗯对, 然后申请的时候呢, 其实要, 其实我觉得是看运气啦。就是看跟你一起申请的人, 他们都是, 他们的背景... 然后他们的, 啊一些基本的情况, 然后学术的能力都不一样。嗯, 然后我申请那年是因为, 嗯, 比较优秀, 有很多优秀的人他都直博了。然后直博就是说你读硕士, 嗯就是, 硕士完不用考试, 不用考那个博士考试, 你就可以直接在本校读博士, 叫直博。

TT: 哦~

XM: 恩, 就是优秀的学生都直博了, 然后当时出国的名额就是排比较多, 然后~ 嗯然后就是竞争力, 竞争性不是很大。嗯然后我比较幸运吧。好像就是说第二年就比较激烈, 所以就有很多很优秀的人也想出国啊什么的, 那竞争就比较激烈。然后我那一年还可以。然后其实就是要

准备很多材料，就是你的 CV 啊，然后还有嗯你要联系导师嘛. 然后导师后，自己要写那个 Research Proposal. 然后还有嗯...

TT: 恩，所以全部都由学生一手包办吗？

XM: 学生，对啊，就是我们自己准备的，没有什么所谓的中介给我们做。就是自己做。特别是很多材料，有 10 几项的，还是 20 几项。

TT: WOW

XM: 然后都是要自己做。对。

TT: 所以过程还蛮... 是多长? 准备的过程...

XM: 对对对，很长吧我记得!

TT: 有半年吗?

XM: 就是... 有有有，至少有半年。

TT: 嗯

XM: 嗯嗯嗯

TT: OK 嗯，那你来荷兰之后呢的感觉就是嗯~ 符合你之前的期望吗?

XM: 嗯。你说是在？？

TT: 在学术方面与生活吧。那我们先谈学术方面，就是你的你的第一印象。对。

XM: 啊唉，第一印象.. 恩，在学术方面... 就是一开始，我觉得就不是说很，我就是很希望怎么样。一开始就是，觉得，嗯就是压力很大。因为我第一年啊，第一年上很多课嘛。噢，就是有专业课，有非专业课。嗯，嗯就是这边博士它是不需要修学分的。这是我们老师就是根据每个导师的要求，就根据我们导师的要求，我选了好像有，四个还是五个，我忘记了... 然后反正就是嗯搞得自己啊，就是每天都很忙这样子的。然后就像要修学分一样，就每天要上课，然后嗯，期中期末什么都要写 paper 这样子。嗯，就很忙的一个状态。

TT: 嗯，第一年哦?

XM: 也没有考虑到... 对对对，第一年。就没有考虑到什么，是不是符合我的预期? 就是每天的感觉就是说，唉你要赶紧完成这个东西，要赶紧完成那个什么东西。哈哈哈，你知道吧，根本没有时间去想，诶这个是不是我想要的。

TT: 恩，那这第一年你的社交生活是如何呢?

XM: 嗯嗯，啊社交生活... 恩社交啊，社交的话，嗯在这边我没有参加。好像，我想一想，对没有参加啊中国留学生啊，或者什么什么学生的一些活动，基本上没有。嗯嗯，主要还是就是跟比如说认识的朋友啊，或者是跟就是自己住的地方朋友社交这样子。没有，没有去参加什么学生组织，嗯。

TT: 那你在还没来荷兰之前，你在这里有朋友吗? 还是都是在这里交的? 新交的朋友?

XM: 啊来之前，只有一个特别远的亲戚在。嗯，然后后来也没有联系了。嗯，然后大多数朋友都是在这里认识的。

TT: 嗯，那你在这个就是，现在你快要结束了嘛。那你觉得在整个过程，念博士的过程里面，啊在这个阶段你又是一个怎么样的一个学生呢?

XM: 啊，可能可以分成两个阶段吧。

TT: 嗯

XM: 可能第一年，第二年的时候噢~ 噢就是还在适应的一个阶段，然后是一个不是很好的学生。呵呵。

TT: 恩

XM: 呃，因为读很多东西就是要读好多遍才能读懂嘛。然后呢，写 paper 的话也就是很清楚，而且他们就是嗯经常有 deadline，就很讨厌，然后就就很辛苦. 而且导师不是很满意，对。

TT: 嗯，所以你是有一个很清楚的 deadline 吗？

XM: 啊，就是在第一年的时候有吧。第一年的时候你要上课什么的，然后有 deadline. 恩，然后反正我说前两年不是一个很好的学生，而且就是总想着出去玩嘛。嗯，因为毕竟是在欧洲嘛，你也知道，就是总会想说出去玩，对。啊然后，然后从第三年开始，就会比较专注于学术。嗯，特别是这个我们的项目是有要求做那个 fieldwork，然后其实之间，有一年就在做 fieldwork，是在北京。然后还有一年，啊是在韩国做交换了。是学语言的那种，因为我这个项目是跟韩国人有关系。

TT: 噢那你可以跟我简单说一下你的研究吗？

XM:然后噢也就是关于那个北京的韩国人，嗯然后我的我的关注点是这个家庭的教育，嗯然后主要关注两个问题，一个是父母怎么给小孩子选学校的，嗯,然后还有一个关注点是韩国的学生，就是就是包括嗯移民家庭的子女，也包括国际生，然后他们是怎么样嗯通过什么样的途径上大学。恩，主要是这两个方面，嗯嗯。OK.然后从这个教育的问题，然后再引申看说嗯整个在中国的韩国人社会，啊它是一个怎么样的结构。就是说来就来中国韩国人他一般都是被定义为 middle class 嘛。恩，在韩国都是中产阶层，啊并没有很大的区别。嗯。是来中国以后，啊他们的社会内部的结构发生很大的变化，然后就有的人就你知道吧。有的家庭像那个它们它们说的是就是外派员，这样叫 Expatriate，然后就变得很富有。然后有的家庭可能经商啊失败啊，然后就会变的就是经济上注意别人。对对对，然后，就是学生之间、小孩子之间它们也会就是去区分嘛，啊，嗯，去互相区分。就比如说我是跟爸爸妈妈来的，噢我是，它们它们就说："我们是，我们并不是来这里学习的，我们不是国际生吗，我们不是留学生，我们只是啊跟爸爸妈妈来中国的孩子，我们没有选择。"所以他会这样子区分，第一次，对对对。然后就看说从这个教育的方面，然后看这个社会的结构以及嗯每个群体他是怎样去区分和被区分的。

TT: OK 嗯，那你说你第二个阶？

XM: 然后就回到。。你说上博士是不是？

TT: 对对，第二个阶段，比较好学生了吗？

XM: 对对对，后来就是说是一年的 fieldwork，然后还有一年学语言，然后这两年就是算是开始变挺好学生吧。嗯，因为最后就是你不学语言的话，你就很难跟他们去沟通，因为很多韩国妈妈那么中文都不太好的。嗯嗯嗯嗯，然后跟中文用中文跟他们讲话，他们也很累，然后我听了累，然后就直接用韩语讲了。嗯，然后呢噢对学语言就是非学不可嘛，嗯，你自己是学中文，你应该学中文英文，你应该也有感受，就是要很努力去学。啊然后做 fieldwork 也是要找很多人访谈啊，所以我很理解就是访谈人的心态。呵呵，就是找人啊做访谈，就是走你的啊。嗯然后，后来就是结束学业以后就回荷兰嗯开始写论文嘛。写论文阶段就是比较噢鼓励，是比较鼓励的一个阶段。就也不用上课啊，然后就是说自己看书，然后问一下，然后写东西这样。就是一个非常非常的努力的一个阶段，噢。就只能靠自己。对。啊这个现在就很痛苦了，但是嗯也是一个就是成长的很快的阶段，是吧。

TT:嗯那你觉得在这个成长里面,嗯你对未来的期望又是什么呢？就是在你你在这个独立的过程里面，嗯你对未来的看法，还有你职业的一个展望又是怎么样的呢？

XM:对对对，是是。其实有有一个变化的过程啊。啊一开始嗯学学术文章嘛，就是大家都有觉得写得很辛苦的时候，然后辛苦的时候，就会想呢，以后要不要再继续做学术？恩。然后其实

在我就是写得很辛苦的时候，我曾经有一段时间想过我以后不想做学术了。噢，那时候想的是，读博士只是一个过程啊。而在这个过程当中，唉，我学会了一门语言，然后我我学会了怎么样跟不同的人交往啊，然后啊怎么样就是把一个陌生人变成一个可以谈心的朋友啊。就是学会了各种技巧。然后以后可以我也可以做学术啊，我可以做别的 啊. 有时候去...嗯，其他的吧。比如自己曾经想做... 我一直是对比如说学生啊教育啊这块比较感兴趣的嘛。嗯。然后，但是后来就到后来吧，就是论文快写完的时候，我突然就觉得唉呀，觉得自己花了那么长的时间，然后写这个论文，然后我也很想把他发表出来。恩。然后，人总想自己可以留下什么，对吧，那如果我我读完博士我不做学术，我就根本没有机会发表他了，而且自己也不会想去改，想去看啊，就直接去工作，对不对？然后然后我就觉得太可惜了，我就不想噢我不想让我写东西，就这样子，这个只是一个 PhD thesis，你知道吗。然后我还是想就是更多人能够看到它，可以有发表的机会。

TT:嗯那你...

XM:恩所以我现在的想法有所改变，恩，还是想先尝试在学术界发展。噢，你想问什么？

TT: 所以你会继续在学术方面吗？就是你会嗯申请 post-doc 什么之类的吗？还是你嗯现在有一个怎么样的嗯,怎么说，planning?

XM: 我就是在找 post-doc 的机会。对，对，就是这样。还是想在学术界发展，然后以后怎么样的话，我就没有特别长期的计划。但是近期吧，这几年我还是想说做个 post-doc，然后在高校里面找一个教职这样。

TT: 嗯,那你有决定想说留在荷兰或者去世界各地还是回去中国吗？

XM:对对，这个其实有很多人问过我了。哎你想不想留在荷兰？嗯，反正我现在的想法就是说，嗯，就是国内和国外的机会我都会看，然后哪里有机会适合我，我就会去哪里。恩，就没有一个一定的限制。一定要在荷兰或者一定要回国。嗯现在还没有，对，主要是看机会吧。

TT: 嗯那你刚开始是来莱顿大学对不对？那你现在为什么会在 Maastricht 呢？

XM: 啊因为他们这边有个 visiting fellow 的一个机会嘛。嗯,比如说他们这边是，嗯有一个营运中心，就是在那个啊 *unclear* ,而这个中心呢它每年都邀 visiting fellow.然后有 Senior 和 Junior，然后就 Junior 就是指还没有毕业的。然后这个东西它有一个啊隐瞒，它们叫什么噢他就忘记了，就是他们有一个研究，就是专门做移民家庭的。然后就是根我做的东西很符合。因为在 Leiden 之前，我是在那个...

TT: 在哪里？不好意思。

XM: Area studies. LIAS - Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS). 然后我就是在那个叫 China Studies, 对，也叫 Chinese Studies。

TT: Oh, okay.

XM: 然后那就是传统的，就是那个你知道吧，就是 sinology，就是汉语学家嘛。

TT: 哦，对。

XM: 然后我做的东西跟它们都不太一样，所以它们都是做文学啦。

TT: 对啊，所以当初是怎么会选择到来到莱顿呢？

XM: 对对对，所以就是我导师嘛。就是我导师一个人，他是做国际移民的，然后他就是做那个 Anthropology 的.只是因为他嘛，然后其实我当时去，我对那个学院的情况并不是很了解，知道吧？嗯，那时候以为，哎，这是 china studies,啊应该都是差不多吧。但是后来发现是差很多。哈哈。呃，然后后来发现就是 Maastricht 这边的，他们这边的，就是专注于做 migration 然后还有 transnational family,然后就是他们就是关注 Africa and Europe.恩，但是就是在理论和方法论

上面有很多可取之处，所以就申请来这边做 visiting fellow.但是就三个月而已，嗯然后 6 月再回来莱顿.

TT:噢,那你会回来莱顿吗?

XM: 会啊，会啊。我会回去啊。

TT: 嗯,那，你当初是怎么发现 Maastrict 的这个 program?

XM: 噢因为那是我有关注他们的网站。因为已经有一个什么 newsletter.就是发布一些关于移民有关的研究，就是我有一直关注。他们也算荷兰比较知名的移民研究的地方。就是我从这知道这个机会。

TT: 嗯所以导师也有告诉你有这个机会?

XM: 噢导师没有，是我自己知道的机会。然后他也很支持，他说可以啊，你就去做访问这样。

TT: 嗯,嗯 OK. 那你过来荷兰已经几年了?

XM: 我在...嗯, 其实一共呆在荷兰的时间就三年多吧。因为之间有两年不在嘛。嗯我是（20）11 年开始的，然后到今年 9 月份。11 年 9 月开始，住到 17 年 9 月份就是六年，而其中我在就是荷兰以外的时间是两年。嗯，所以在荷兰以内的时间嗯应该是三年多。对。

TT: 所以在这三年以内,啊你跟荷兰人的交流，你会怎么去描述呢?

XM: 噢等一下，我刚才又没听清楚跟人交流，然后呢?

TT: 我说嗯你会怎么去描述你跟荷兰人的交流，还有你有什么一些深刻的体验或者记忆吗?

XM: 荷兰人交流嗯。。。有啊有啊，我其实，因为我是怎么说，嗯，我在荷兰的时间不是像很多 PHD 那样，是连贯的，你知道吧。恩，就是我只是一开始在这里一年半的时间，然后我就走了，两年以后又回来了，对吧，然后所以这个这个不连贯的时间呢，就是让我认识到一起，就是说跟荷兰人交流的话。噢，长期的，那我很难做。

TT: 有很难什么?

XM: 哦，怎么说呢，就是嗯在长期,就是很难做长期的朋友

TT: 恩，怎么说呢?

XM: 我解释一下是我解释一下，就是说噢,在一年半之前啊,前一年半的时候，因为我有很多荷兰朋友。我甚至是住在一个就是荷兰学生的一个那个公寓里面。然后有很多室友，他们都是荷兰人。呃。嗯然后呢我们相处得也不错，嗯当然，就是然后我就走掉了嘛。呵就离开了。那离开之前，然后他们还给我办一个 party，然后就欢送啊，这样啊。然后走掉两年以后再回来的时候，就是我还再去找他们的时候，他们就嗯，就好像就是变得很疏远，然后就不像以前那样。因为我也不住在那里了，是吧。噢对，然后就变得很疏远，然后很多人就是嗯可能给他们发一条信息，说："唉，我们要不要见面？"然后就是回应得很冷淡。嗯，然后最终还是没有见面嘛。噢会有这样的经历，就是让我觉得嗯，跟荷兰人交交流就是交往吧，可能就是还是比较，怎么说，就是比较情境化的。你知道什么意思吗?

TT: 怎么说?

XM: 就是说,是根据那个,对对,情境化的就是感觉，就是 situational.

TT: Ohhh

XM: 比如说你在那个 Situation 里面,唉你们就很好，比如说我跟他们住在一个公寓里，住在同一栋楼里面，噢然后就相处得很好。当我不住在那里以后，然后当就是离开了，然后再回来。

TT:嗯，对，我明白了。

XM:噢嗯，跟之间的关系就不像以前那样了。对，所以我觉得这种亲密关系都只是发生在特定的 situation 里面的，知道吧?

TT: 恩。对对。

XM: 对对，所以我这个我，我个人感触比较深吧。也主要是跟我这个经历有关系，对。

TT: 那你觉得在文化上有差异吗？或者你在来到荷兰的时候有开始的一年半，有很... 有一些适应期吗？还是嗯你都觉得都 OK 都还可以？

XM: 嗯,噢适应的话，怎么说...就开始，主要也是在学校里面，噢在学校里面的话啊,主要是适应的时候就是说啊上课的就是老师上课的内容啊上节奏啊好，思维的方式啊就比较学术方面的，主要是适应的话，噢主要是觉得学术方面的适应还是需要一段时间吧。噢然后可能过了几个月以后会觉得唉还可以。然后生活方面，觉得在荷兰生活，我不知道你自己有没有体会，我觉得还是很方便。啊嗯对，然后莱顿城市也很小啊，去哪里也都很近啊，就不像北京嘛。就是一站的距离也都很远，你知道吧？哈哈你也有体会，对不对？

TT: 对

XM: 啊，然后再回来就是去哪里都很方便。哦，虽然就是 NS 那个火车系统，啊有的时候会，会经常，呵呵。这个经常晚点什么的，但是其他生活方面，感觉嗯 没有什么困难的主要是。

TT: 嗯嗯那你是呃通过呃那个中国留学基金委而来的嘛。

XM: 对。

TT: 那你每个月的生活费还足够吗？经费上面来说，或者在嗯，对，你觉得够用吗？还有你在荷兰有没有呃需要出去打工的这个念头呢？

XM: 啊还没有。

TT: 嗯。

XM: 嗯我觉得都够用吧。每个月... 如果有家庭就不一样，有的是什么，啊一家三口那有可能有点紧张。如果一个人的话，那应该没问题。嗯对对。然后出去打工的话，嗯就是不会因为生活费不够出去打工，对。

TT: 嗯没有，暂时也没有这个必要，对吧？

XM: 就是说噢就是我们拿的那个啊 permit，就是 residence permit，它是可以的。它是要求，不是要求，它是允许一周工作十个小时，就是就是嗯很多学生是觉得不是对对，就是说不是很有必要或者是怎么样的。啊我自己个人，我是有短暂的在一个中文学校教过书啦。噢也是想要去了解，虽然荷兰小孩就是荷兰华裔嘛。嗯，他们学中文的一个情况啊，嗯就是家庭怎么教育小孩的这样子。啊我也想去了解一下，所以有短暂的教过一个学期。然后其他就没有过打工的经历。

TT: 嗯，那你知道教的那个学期呃有有付钱吗？就是有有薪水吗？

XM: 啊它们不叫薪水，它们叫车马费。

TT: Oh.

XM: 车马费的意思就是说交通.

TT: Stipend?

XM: 对对对，就是叫什么 Allowance 之类的。

TT: 嗯那多少钱车马费？

XM: 是给你交通补助嘛。

TT: 嗯 OK。

XM: 就是一个月两百，一次五十。呵呵。噢，就不是很多啦。如果你说你按小时算的话，噢你要按那个每个小时的话，就不止这么多嘛。对。

TT: 那你在那个嗯，奖学金你们是每个月发还是就是中国一次过给 one lump sum? 就是啊, 噢是到底是怎么样的情况呢?

XM: 每三个月。

TT: 哦，每三个月?

XM: 对。

TT: 所以每一年都是一样的呃奖金吗?

XM: 是的。

TT: 嗯 OK。所以那你方便告诉我那每三个月你是得到多少欧元吗?

XM: 噢三千六。

TT: 三个月，3600?

XM: 对对。所以是 1200。

TT: 嗯，所以是够用的?

XM: 嗯对对对。

TT: 那你中间还有就是嗯需要，因为你要做 fieldwork 嘛。然后你要去，啊可能说北京，又要去韩国。那经费上面，你都是用这个奖学金吗?

XM: 对对对。

TT: 嗯，所以就是没有其他更多的经费?

XM: 啊，是这样，因为那。有的有的。其实我的情况是有的。就可能其他很多博士生他们是只有这个经费来源。

TT: 对。

XM: 然后，但是我是有一个韩国的财管啊。噢资助，也是一个奖学金，一年的奖学金。对对对。然后北京那年是我导师，就是我们学院，有一个它叫什么那个 PhD fieldwork program, 就是说给大家做 fieldwork。啊我也得到这两个，噢。噢所以北京也有，然后韩国也有。

TT: 呵呵嗯，真的很好。

XM: 嗯那所以才能坚持到现在嘛。是因为那个 CSC 他是四年的奖学金。但如果我现在就是我现在其实都很长时间了，其实已经快六年了吧。如果没有那两年的资助的话，我是没有办法就是在经费上支持的，就坚持到现在。所以我还是很感谢就是那两年。

TT: 嗯原来是这样。嗯，所以你现在嗯预计什么时候得到你的博士学位呢?

XM: 噢我是嗯我现在很忙，就是因为下个月我要提交论文。

TT: 哦，下个月? 恭喜!

XM: 对，啊哈哈，太早了太早了! 噢然后运气就是希望在年底答辩吧。我不知道能不能到时候能那个台上噢，但是希望是能够排到年底，可以在年底答辩这样。

TT: 嗯那你，目前啊我想问你的那个嗯怎么说 Relationship status? 那你你是单身吗? 还是有男朋友吗?

XM: 呵呵, 有过.

TT: 有过是荷兰人还是，嗯，在这里认识的吗? 在荷兰认识的吗?

XM: 你是问是在这里认识的? 恩，不是的。嗯啊，那是在韩国的。

TT: 嗯，在韩国认识的荷兰人?

XM: 对对对! 很神奇吧!

TT: 对，很神奇，啊不过也很可爱! 嗯不过后来就结束了?

XM: 对对对。嗯，你是不是要问结束的原因？

TT: 对我想问结束的原因，呵呵

XM: 啊，不是不是因为性格不合。嗯嗯，是因为就是双方对未来的期待不一样。我觉得这点很重要。

TT: 恩，对我也觉得这点很重要。而且我，因为在这个研究方面我觉得嗯在做博士上面来说其实影响个人的有 Relationship 还有家庭，其实有影响很深，所以其实这个也是一个蛮重要的问题。就是说在你未来的方面，你在哪里工作，其实会影响你的个人的嗯方面，我觉得。

XM: 噢所以我觉得个人的 Relationship 的方面也会对未来的工作的啊考虑和选择有很大的影响。嗯现在有的博士生，他是有的拖家带口来的。就是说啊，有啊另一半，还有孩子都在荷兰。那这种情况下，他们很多人会选择留在这里，因为这小孩可能三年四年就已经适应了这边的教育的体系，对不对？啊如果再把他送回到中国小学或中学，他肯定适应是会很难的。

TT: 嗯那你在还没。。。

XM: 恩 所以我认识的人，他会选择留下来，然后像我就不一样。嗯我没有小孩。

TT: 我说那个，你说你说不好意思，你先完成你的句子

XM: 所以像我的话啊没有小孩，然后啊没有家庭的人，选择就会比较自由。恩，然后选择的范围会比较大。

TT: 嗯，对我想问的问题就是你还没呃读博士之前，你是有出过国的吗？

XM: 还没读博士之前。。。就是我有出过国。就是没有没有，就是我没有出国留学过。

TT: 那你有没有就是呃可能就是出国旅行的经验呢？

XM: 出国旅行。。唉，出国旅行。。我有没有啊... 我想想。好像大多数只是在国内旅行吧，然后就没有跑到很远，到欧洲美国或者什么其他的国家旅行，就是还是没有的。

TT: 所以是来到荷兰之后，所以才开始就是有去欧洲其他国家看看吗？

XM: 啊是的是的。

TT: 嗯所以是去了哪里呢？

XM: 噢，去欧洲，恩我想想，西班牙法国德国啊比利时卢森堡，就大概邻近的这几个国家吧。还有英国有去过啊，然后还有挪威。后来去的这些，也是因为是开会嘛。去开会就是嗯正好在在这些国家，然后就好去。然后有有的是因为自己去旅游这样。

TT: 嗯那你觉得在来荷兰读博士对你学术的一个怎么说，network 嗯来讲说呢有没有帮助呢？

XM: 学术的 network，那当然对于建立比较国际化的 network，我觉得肯定是有帮助的。噢不光是导师啊、还是开会认识的人呢、嗯就是是有帮助。但是对于如果我要回国找工作的话，啊对我国内的那个 network 其实并不是有直接的帮助。

TT: 嗯嗯那你觉得？

XM: 在国内找工作有很多就有机构

TT: 有中介吗？

XM: 他会看你的博士导师是谁，然后有什么？

TT: 中介，就是会不会有一些，呃中介就是找工作的一些中介，他们会觉得嗯可能就是出国读博的这个经验其实是啊在内地来说是很受欢迎的呢？就是我我不知道那个在内地的情况是如何？

XM: 嗯，现在高校的。啊现在找工作都要靠自己了。就是高校啊有那个啊发那个 announcement，然后你就自己去投嘛。噢，如果要找高校工作的话，不会有中介来帮忙。嗯好

几次，就是说现在国内的情况。嗯嗯，如果比如说在一个他们所谓的西方国家毕业的这样一个博士，有一个这样的开头，还是还是有一定的优势的啊。但是同时也要看你个人的其他的一些经历，以及比如说嗯硬件吧。他们所说的硬件就是说你发表文章的情况啊、然后还有一个嗯教育背景啊、专业啊、是否符合这个职位的要求这样。所以你说国外毕业的博士，这几年也越来越多，那并不是一个特别大的优势，我觉得。就是还要看很多其他方面。

TT: OK，嗯那我们的那个访谈就快要结束了，让我看一下还有什么剩下的问题。你有什么问题要问我吗？

XM: 啊对啊，其实嗯，我想一下哈。就是我，啊你就现在是在做 Intern?

TT: 对.

XM: 好，那我想问一下，就是说这个 Internship 这个项目，预计要达到一个目标是什么？就是什么啊，想要有一个什么样的假设，然后想到访问多少人呐，好想要的是一个什么样的结果？就是你对这个研究有什么样的预期？

TT: 恩对，所以我来荷兰主要的目的呢。因为我是一个... 嗯好，现在我们的访谈就结束了，因为我没有什么问题，然后我就可以跟你聊一下啊，我在荷兰的经验。那我是一个马来西亚华侨，然后我现在念的是喂... 喂，唉不知怎么了？

XM: 唉对，刚才怎么回事？

TT: 对，嗯我是马来西亚华侨，然后我是之前在荷兰住过呢六年的。啊我是来这里念学士。

XM: 哦，是在这里上学吗？

TT: 然后就对对我在这里念学士，然后就毕业了。然后就直接在大学教了一两年的，当 TA。然后嗯，之后我就回马来西亚啊，就跟爸妈在一起，就是工作一阵子，后来真的不习惯，然后我就继续嗯申请啊就读硕士。然后我申请这个硕士呢是欧洲赞助的，那我一定要去四个国家，我一定要去嗯奥地利、芬兰、北京中国北京、还有啊最后一个国家我可以自己选择，所以在两年内呢我要去每个不同的国家学习他们不同的高等教育管理。

Appendix IV: Full English translation

TT: Great, we can finally begin (after a series of technical issues). My apologies. So, my topic is about Chinese PhD trajectory and career perception in the Netherlands.

XM: Alright.

TT: I would like to hear about your life experiences in every stage, and your experiences in the Netherlands. I will use narrative interview as a method, and I will explain to you how we will do it. Do you have a pen and paper?

XM: Yes, I do.

TT: Yes, please prepare them with you.

XM: What do I have to do now?

TT: Well, I will explain it in simple terms. Imagine a person's life as a book. I would like you to think about your life, as if you are writing a book now. First, you need to think about the chapters of the book, which is the stages of your life. Draw a table of two columns, haha.

XM: Ok. Good.

TT: Do you understand?

XM: Yes.

TT: On the first column, you write down your life stage and age corresponding that stage. So it's titled Stages and Ages, ok? So that will be the title of your first column. Secondly, your write down the description or chapter title for that particular stage and age. OK? So the first column is stages and ages, and the second column is chapter title, alright? So now, on the first column, you start with age 0, and end with your age today. For example, 0 to 10 years old. And the next stage could be from 15 to 25, OK?

XM: Right.

TT: So you keep writing until your age today. So the number of stages and age range is completely up to your preference and choice, so once you thought through all the stages and age ranges, you may think of an appropriate title for each chapter, OK? So do you understand?

XM: Yes, I understood. Understood.

TT: Alright, now please wait a moment. I will send you a table, so you can see it clearer.

XM: Right, do I have to do this now?

TT: Yes, do it right now.

XM: Oh, so it means that I will do this now and then we will have our conversation according to this (what I wrote), is that it?

TT: Yes, yes. I have just sent you the photo. So once you written on the chapters of your life, and the age ranges corresponding each chapter, it's completely up to you. And once you give it titles to the chapters, could you send the table to me?

XM: Yes, sure. Then, then alright. I guess then we can hang up now? (So I can start writing)

TT: Yes, of course.

XM: I will give you a call once I am done writing.

TT: Yes, because you will need some time to consider this. Oh, please remember that for each stage, the age ranges have to be continuous or sequential, for example, if your first stage is from 0 to 10 years old, then your second stage would be from 11 to 15 years old, do you understand?

XM: Yes.

TT: Alright, great, OK! So let's call again when you're done with writing.

XM: I know, I know. So I stopped at now, right?

TT: Yes.

XM: Not including the future?

TT: Yes, not including the future.

XM: Right, right. OK. OK.

TT: Ok, I will give you a call later, ok, bye bye!

XM: Sure, bye bye!

XM: Oh, should I take a photo (of it) first?

TT: Yes, you can take a photo and then send it to me.

XM: I can also talk to you about it.

TT: OK!

XM: That's because I wrote very lightly and it's messy… Erm…

TT: No worries, you can tell it to me.

XM: It's very easy, yes, I can tell you. So, I actually divide it according to education.

TT: According to what?

XM: The first… Education, education.

TT: Yes, right, education.

XM: So, yes yes, it's from 0 to 6 years old, that's pre-school.

TT: Right.

XM: And then it's from 7 to 12 years old, that's primary school.

TT: Uh-hm

XM: And then 13 to 18 is high school.

TT: OK

XM: after 19 years old it's university and researcher, it's like that.

TT: After 19 years old? You mean 19 years old up till now?

XM: Yes, yes.

TT: So how old are you now?

XM: Oh, I am 29 years old now.

TT: 29 years old. OK. So from 0 to 6 years old is… Your title description is?

XM: Right, it's pre-school.

TT: Pre-school? Good, right, no problem. And then from 7 to 12 years old it's primary school, and then from 13 to 18 years old it's high school?

XM: Yes, yes.

TT: So from 19 to 29 years old? Title?

XM: It's university and… well, it's university and beyond.

TT: Alright. University and beyond.

XM: Well, I think this is a simple division of my life.

TT: Yes, no problem. Can you tell me, during your primary school which is 7 to 12 years old, can you tell me about a significant episode or a memory that you remember from this stage?

XM: It can be about anything? Or…

TT: Yes, it could be about anything. According to you, who were influential to you, or a significant memory that affected you the most.

XM: I see, hm. Primary school.. Maybe the first memory it's when I participated in the essay writing competition when I was in standard 2 (8 years old). Do you know about essay writing competition?

TT: Yes.

XM: And then, our teacher was very nice to me. Before I participated in the competition, s(he) give me a kiss on my cheek. Hehe (giggles), and then I won the first or second prize, I think. So this experience was very deep in my memory, and I think it is why I enjoy writing until today. Whether it's personal journaling or academic writing, I really like writing. I think this has something to do with the kiss on the cheek for that essay writing competition. If you are asking about the most significant memory, then, this is the first memory that comes to my mind.

TT: Alright. Who do you think is the most important person in the primary school stage and why?

XM: Sorry, I couldn't hear you.

TT: During this stage, who were the most important people in your life?

XM: Oh, most important people?

TT: Yes.

XM: Then, the most important people are of course my dad and my mom.

TT: Why?

XM: Yes… Why? Well, firstly it's because we live together. And secondly, my dad works abroad (or far from home), and he comes home for about once a week.

TT: Uh-hm.

XM: I have always stayed with my parents. I know some kids maybe have to stay with their grandparents. But for my case, I have always stayed with my parents. Their influence is the biggest on me because we live together every day. Since it's the stage of primary school, a lot of important decisions are made with the help of my parents, which means my parents will advise me and we will discuss it together, and finally make a decision. My parents are also very concerned about my test results. And if I have any issues with my peers like fighting or an unpleasant incident, I will usually tell my parents. Hmm, because I was quite small during that time.

TT: Yes. So let's move to the high school stage, which is 13 to 18 years old, what kind of person do you think you are?

XM: Ah, what kind of person?

TT: Yes, could you describe yourself during this stage between 13 to 18 years old?

XM: Let me think… What kind of person…

TT: Yes!

XM: In high school… well, in high school my grades were not bad, and I was in a committee. You know about committees?

TT: Yes, I know.

XM: I was a branch secretary (in the Chinese Communist Youth League).

TT: How many committees were you in? How many clubs?

XM: I only remember I was a branch secretary and then I was also a member of… Oh, yes yes, I was a labor member, which means I must coordinate everyone's cleaning schedule.

Haha. Maybe there were more but I don't remember them anymore, I think it's mostly these two.

TT: Ok, so how would you describe yourself?

XM: Well, branch committee means joining youth committee, and I have to lead everyone for activities. During this time, I would say I am a typical good student. My grades were not bad, it's not the best, but it's still good. But then it's senior high school, and well, the high school period is quite long, so I am quite active during that time. When I was in senior high school, especially in my first senior year, I went to one of the key performing schools in China. Hehe, so I was very nervous about my academic performance during that time. Hm, everyone in class were strong (intellectually).

TT: I see.

XM: So then, there were some changes of course. I became much more low profile and much quieter, and I stopped joining so much activities, so I was less active. And, maybe I only stick to a small group of friends… Hm, so there were changes when I entered senior high school.

TT: Yes, so senior high school…

XM: This has also to do with my learning environment, hmm.

TT: So is your senior high school the same high school as your junior high? Or was it different?

XM: Ah, they are different. Oh, and our junior high is different from senior high because after your junior high school (at age 15), you must take an exam.

TT: Yes.

XM: So after the junior high school graduation, you take the exam, and depending on your results, you will be allocated to the school of your preferences. So this works like university allocation as well, if you have a sufficiently high grade, then you can go to your first choice of senior high school stated on your preference sheet. And so I went to my first choice, and this is the best school from our area. Yes, so junior high school and senior high school are two different schools.

TT: Right. So during the stage of junior and senior high school, who were the important people?

XM: Well, important people… for this stage… Let me think who would be the most important person…

TT: It could be more than one, it doesn't have to be the most important.

XM: Oh, it can be a few, right. I think senior high school would be every child's dream age (laughs), I think this is because everything one is in contact with will have a certain influence on him/her. I think if I were to talk about the stage during senior high school, parents, teachers, students and those who were in the same age as me have important influence on me. Well, at this stage my parents are no longer the most important people, yes, maybe everyone has a bit of influence here and there.

TT: So who and what significant episode or memory you have during this stage?

XM: Hmm, in high school… the most significant… Hm, do you mean people or event?

TT: Could be any.

XM: Could be any… In high school… Well, there were many things, but let me come up with the most important. Yes. The final year of senior high school. Yes, because there was the college entrance exam during our final year, and so it has a major impact on the future. So

yes, the final year of senior high school was the most important event of that stage. Then I would say my classmates have a very big influence on me, but now when I think about it, this influence is not direct but abstract, because everyone was so stressed out back then about the exam, so then there are close friends who came to me and complained or expressed their stress etc. I am a person who is easily influenced by others, hehe (giggles). So after I heard about my friend's worries, my stress level also increased. Hm, So my entire final year was filled with anxiety, yes. And I was especially nervous the day before the exam.

TT: So how did you do in the exam?

XM: When I think about it, senior high school is the most… Well I did alright. But, no, well, I would say I did slightly worse than expected, I scored 20 points less than my mock examination.

TT: Hm, do you think this has to do with your anxiety and nervousness?

XM: I think it has something to do with that.

TT: Alright, can you tell me why do you choose to terminate this stage at 18 years old as you did? So you divided your chapters from 13 to 18, and then from 19 up till today, why do you choose to terminate the high school stage and went onto the following stage? What are your reasons?

XM: Well, my reasons of dividing the age as it is… Well, I agree with what you said and the reason why I separated them in such a way is because when I graduated from senior high school, I went to the university. I left my village to another university which was a city very far. My university was at Da Lian.

TT: I see, so where was your village?

XM: Well my village is at Fu Zhou, hm, it's very far. At that time it is my first time to leave home for such a long period, I had to leave my parents and my friends. So I think this period, in my view, is a whole new beginning. It's a different life. I think dividing it this way symbolizes the new journey or new beginning of my life.

TT: So amongst these four stages, which of them do you think is the most important stage for you?

XM: Well, that would definitely be 19 years old and beyond, which is now. That's because I am still in the process, so living in the moment or now is the most important.

TT: I think 19 to 29 years old, this stage, it's a very long time, it's 10 years.

XM: Right.

TT: So in these 10 years, do you think you can describe how you were when you were 19 years old, and how you are today? How would you describe your transformation and your experience?

XM: Hmm… Let me think.

TT: You can share with me how you were at the start (of 19 years old)? What were you expectations etc?

XM: Yes… From beginning to now… Well, that's… Hmm… Overall… Of course everyone is constantly undergoing transformation.

TT: Yes.

XM: In my case, I think the biggest change would be… my self-confidence. Yes, at the start of my university I was quite insecure about some things. Hmm, that's probably because of what happened at the college entrance examination, and then I thought I could get admitted to

a better university, but that didn't happen. Hmm, so I would say when I first started my university, I definitely lack self-confidence, and then. Well, and then during my whole bachelor or university period, my performance was good. Hmm, then I transformed back into old self once again, during that active period of joining committees, (giggles), and became a member of a club etc. Ah, and my results were not bad too. So I participated in many curricular activities during my university. So my self-confidence was slowly coming back, just like how I was during junior high school. So after my bachelor, I continued with my masters, and then I went abroad to pursue my doctorate. Hm, I think my self-confidence level is increasing every step I take.

TT: I see.

XM: Back then it's like, well, during my masters, you probably also understand this… (giggles), that the teaching style is similar to that of parenting style. (Giggles) It's like the saying: I only hit and scold you because I love you. Hm, so teachers requirements for us makes us feel very powerless. Hmm why, yes, when you write something good, but teacher will criticize it into pieces… Right, so it's very strict (giggles). Well, in reality they really want you to work harder and improve, but you will feel like a failure, why, why I wrote it for so long and then my teacher still thinks it's so bad, like that. Well, especially in academia, hmm, then once I started my doctorate, there was a change in the academic environment. Yes, now I came to the Netherlands for my doctorate, and my supervisor, well, he's also strict.

TT: Yes.

XM: Hmm, but he's very encouraging towards students. If I have a small thought, he would say: "Oh, that's interesting, very good, do spend more time thinking about it. Right, so it's very encouraging. Uhh, yes, so I think this whole period during university can be seen like this, during bachelor, social and other areas, well mainly social and networking aspect I have developed self-confidence, and starting from my masters, my academic self-confidence started building.

TT: I see.

XM: Then we are at, yes, at doctoral education and now… Well, I would say my academic self-confidence has increased a lot.

TT: Yes.

XM: Well, there are two aspects to this (academic and social). Yes, that's how I see it. If I have to say about one thing, that would be self-confidence indeed.

TT: Good. I would like to ask you, when do you, meaning during these 10 years, which year to which year did you pursue your bachelor, master and doctorate? Can you give me the concrete year?

XM: Yes, let me think about it. Here… Yes, I started my bachelor degree in 2005. Until 2009, and then 2009 to 2011 is Masters, hmm, and then from 2011 till now, is doctorate. I am going to graduate soon, but not yet. Hmm, yes.

TT: Well when (do you graduate)? That's from 2011 until now, hm, who encouraged you to pursue a doctorate degree? And how do you end up in the Netherlands?

XM: Well, coming to Holland. Yes, how do I put this… Well we have to go back to the issue of academic self-confidence, because during my masters, I had a lot of self-doubt, why can't I excel academically, and then I wanted to try and be like, if I didn't do well in my Masters

(laughs), then I can do better during my PhD, and at the same time I really want a change of academic environment.

TT: Hm.

XM: My thought process was, if I wanted to do a PhD, I must go abroad. This is because I know the academic environment and supervision style in China.

TT: Yes.

XM: And then, yes, I do not have any confidence in this academic environment. I feel quite anxious and I wonder if I change the environment, then I feel differently about academia and myself. So I have the thought to pursue my doctorate abroad. And then, you probably know about this as well, that we have the CSC scholarship.

TT: Yes.

XM: What was (CSC) it called again? Chinese Scholarship Council (in Mandarin).

TT: Yes.

XM: Yes it's China Scholarship Council. They provide scholarships to support those who wanted to pursue their doctoral education abroad. Oh, I think it was a good opportunity so I applied. And then I got it. And then when I was contacting the universities, I got referred to my current supervisor from another professor. That supervisor was at Oxford at that time, and hm, he is Dutch.

TT: Oh! Do you met him in China?

XM: No, no. Hm, we didn't meet in China. I knew him through another professor. And then I contacted him through the information I found on the internet and send my CV to him. And he thought it was interesting but he told me he's going back to the Netherlands for his professorship because Oxford could not offer him that. Then he asked me if I am willing to pursue my PhD in the Netherlands, and I said YES! This is because I know there are much more stress in Oxford as it's highly competitive, and it's much more expensive to pursue a doctorate there as we are required to pay tuition fee. Well, when we receive the scholarship, it's only sufficient to cover for living cost, and if I were to pay for tuition fee as well, then, because my family wasn't especially rich, hm. Yes, we are only middle class, so-so. And so I do not want to add financial burden to my family. I thought, hm, going to the Netherlands is not bad. So I came. (Giggles). So I mainly establish contact with my supervisor, and then I just come and do my doctorate here.

TT: Well, from masters to doctorate this transitional period, which people were important to you? In terms of decision making?

XM: Hmm, I think my master thesis supervisor and, well, maybe yes, my master thesis supervisor and… my parents are always supportive.

TT: Very good.

XM: I think teacher and parents are important in my decision to pursue a doctorate degree. Right. Mainly my master thesis supervisor, I think maybe this sounds negative, (giggles), well this is because, hm, he has a lot of expectations, the type that has a lot of expectations (for his students). And he makes me feel like I must demonstrate my academic abilities, I must have something to show for, yes in such a way.

TT: Well would you say then it's like the Chinese saying: "A strict master produces great disciples"?

XM: Oh no, I don't dare to say that I am a great disciple.

TT: Hahahaha.

XM: Hehe (giggles), hmm, yes he is extremely critical and he makes me feel that I should work harder, hmm, I should show him that I can do an excellent job. In terms of my parents, they helped me a lot in the preparations of going abroad, for example I need to take the IELTS exam, and do other things, and they were very supportive.

TT: Hm, then in terms of preparation of coming to the Netherlands, when you apply for the scholarship, how was the process? Because I am not a Chinese citizen, I'm a Malaysian overseas Chinese, hmm, I would like to understand the process of applying to the Chinese Scholarship council, and your preparation phase, what was your experience? If you could pretend that I am a scholarship applicant, what advice would you give me?

XM: Oh, about this… Scholarship application… Well this scholarship is mostly divided amongst universities. This means that they have a quota. For example, they will provide 100 places for one university, something like that.

TT: I see, OK.

XM: And then every university have different number of placement every year. Yes, so this 100 places, will be then allocated to each graduate school or faculty, amounting to 10 to 15 places per faculty, so it's all different. And then, when you apply, honestly, honestly I think it depends on luck. This means that it depends on the group of scholarship applicants you are competing with, and their background… And then their basic situation, for example academic performances and abilities. Hmm, during my year, a lot of people who are very competitive and excellent were invited to pursue doctorate degree directly from their faculty, so a lot of people choose to remain in the same university. Direct doctorate means that you do not need to take an exam to be considered as a candidate, you can immediately pursue a doctorate after your masters at the same university.

TT: I see.

XM: Yes, so all the excellent students chose to stay at my home university for their doctorate, and during that year the number of scholarship allocation for studying abroad was quite numerous, so there wasn't much competition. So, I am quite lucky. I heard that the following year there's a fierce competition, because those excellent candidates also wanted to go abroad. So it was okay for me that year (of application). And then you must prepare for many documents, like your CV, and you need to contact for supervisors, after establishing contact, you must write the research proposal. And then there is umm…

TT: Hm, so everything must be prepared by the student him/herself?

XM: Student, yes, it's our own preparation indeed, there is no agency that does it for us. You have to do it yourself. There were especially a lot of documents, about 10 or 20 items.

TT: WOW

XM: Yes, and all of them must be prepared by yourself.

TT: So the process should be quite long… How long was it? The preparation for the application process?

XM: Yes, yes, it was very long I remember!

TT: Did it took half a year?

XM: Yes… It did, at least half a year.

TT: Alright. Ok, so once you arrived in the Netherlands, did it fit your expectations?

XM: Which aspects do you mean?

TT: In academic and living aspect. Let us first discuss the academic aspect, what was your first impression. Yes.

XM: Ah, my first impression… Hm, in the academic aspect… Well, I did not begin with a hope or expectation of how things should go. In beginning, I feel, very stressed out. Because it's my first year, and the first year there were a lot of classes. There are some classes that belong to your discipline, or there are classes that are unrelated to your discipline. Oh, doing a doctorate here does not need study credits. But this is based on the requirement of each supervisor, and according to the requirement of my supervisor, I have chosen 4 or 5 classes, I forgot… And the point is that I have made myself very busy, everyday I'm busy. And it feels like I'm taking study credits, because I have to go to class every day, and hand it a paper during the mid and final term.

TT: Oh, so that was your first year (of PhD)?

XM: I didn't consider… Yes, my first year. So I didn't consider at all, does this fit my expectation? My everyday life has become this routine of, you must complete this task at hand as soon as possible, and then move on to that next task and get it done. Hahaha, you know, I completely did not have time to think about whether this (PhD) is what I wanted.

TT: Hmm, how would you describe your social life during the first year of your PhD?

XM: Hmm, social life… Yes, social life, I did not participate in any here. Wait, let me think, yes, I did not participate in the Chinese student association, or any student activity for that matter. Hmm, mainly I hang out with friends that I know, or those who live in the same area with me, that's my social life. No, I did not participate in any student activities, hm.

TT: Before you come to the Netherlands, do you already have friends from here? Or you make new friends here? Are they from here?

XM: Oh, before I come, there is a far relative here. But after that we were not in contact anymore. Yes, so most of my friends I met them here.

TT: I see, so now you are about to finish your PhD. So during this entire process of pursuing your doctorate degree, how would you describe yourself as a student?

XM: Well, I think it can be separated into two stages.

TT: Yes.

XM: Maybe during the first two years, hmm… It is still an adaptation stage, so I am not a very good student. Haha.

TT: Uh-hm.

XM: Well, that's because I need to read several times to understand some things. And then, you must be very clear when you write a paper, and they always have a deadline, it's annoying, and so it was an extremely difficult time. Thus, my supervisor was not satisfied with me, yes.

TT: So you were saying you have very clear deadline for everything?

XM: Ah, yes during the first year. Because I have classes during the first year, so there were deadlines for everything. Well, I said that I wasn't a good student the first two years because I always wanted to go out and have fun. After all, this is my first time in Europe, so you know, you'd always want to go explore and have fun, yes. From the third year onwards, I started to pay more attention in academic aspect. Especially in our programme there is a requirement to do fieldwork, so during these time, I spent one year of fieldwork in Beijing. And then I spent

another year going on exchange in Korea. To learn the Korean language, because my project is related to the Koreans.

TT: I see, so can you tell me briefly about your PhD project?

XM: Sure, it's about the Koreans in Beijing, and I look at family education, and mainly about the following two questions, one, is how do parents choose for a school for their children? And another is about Korean students, especially the children of Korean migrant families, including international students, what are the university selection and admission policies for these students? Ok. So from these educational issues I want to look at the Korean society of China, to examine the structure of this society. Usually Koreans in China will be defined as someone from the middle class. They are mostly from that social class in Korea. But once they came to China, their inner social structure started to have major changes, like for example, some families are expats or expatriates, so they became very rich. But there are also families that failed in their businesses, and they start to pay attention to others economic situation. Yes, so, then amongst primary school students, the children will start to recognize and classified their own social class, to differentiate themselves from others. Some will say, I come with my parents, and they say: "We are not studying here, we are not international students, we are here because of our parents, we do not have a choice." So yes they will distinguish themselves like that, so from the education standpoint I will look at a society's structure and how a group identify themselves and distinguish themselves from another group.

TT: Ok, so this refers to your second stage?

XM: So we are back to… You are referring to the doctoral journey, right?

TT: Yes, so you were a better student on the second stage?

XM: Yes, so it was one year of fieldwork and another year of language course. Hmm, because if you do not learn the language, it will be very difficult to interview with them, because most Korean mothers don't speak Chinese that well. Yes, so if I will speak to them in Chinese, they will be very tired, and then I will be very tired of listening, so then we just speak Korean instead. So, you are also someone who learns Chinese and English before, you should have the same feeling that, you need to put in a lot of effort in learning languages. Doing fieldwork means having to find a lot of people for interview, so I can understand the interviewer's feelings. Haha, to find someone for an interview, is completely up to your own (effort). And once I am finished with my study, I returned to the Netherlands to write my thesis. The thesis writing stage was quite encouraging, it's quite an encouraging stage. I didn't have to go to classes, so I did self-study and read books on my own, and ask some questions, and write my chapters. So it's a very hardworking state, oh. I only can count on myself. Yes. Now this stage is the most painful, but it's also a stage that makes you grow very fast, right.

TT: In this stage of growth, what are your future expectations? I mean during this process of independence, what are your views for your future and what is your career aspiration?

XM: Yes. It underwent a process of change. Ah, when you start to write academic articles, I think that everyone will have times that they feel very difficult, so during these difficult moments, I will wonder should I stay in academia? Honestly there is one time when I find it extremely difficult to write, I thought I want to never work in academia again. Oh, I was thinking then, PhD is just a process. And in this process, I learnt a new language, how to interact with different people, and how to turn strangers into friends, who could share their stories with you. So, I learnt a diverse set of skills. This is means that I could work in

academia or I could work elsewhere. Sometimes… Hmm, yes, do something else. For example, I have always wanted to do… I'm always interested in student and the educational field. But, at a later stage, and that is when I almost complete my thesis, I thought, Oh, I have dedicated a long time, to write this thesis, so I wanted to publish it. I think everyone wants to leave something behind, right, so if I do not stay in academia, I will not have an opportunity to publish it, because I will not edit it, or look at it because I need to go to work, right? I feel like it's such a pity, I don't want to feel that, everything I wrote, it's merely a PhD thesis, you know. I hope that more people can see it, and that it can have the opportunity to be published.

TT: Uhm, so do you…

XM: There is a change in my thought process, and so I would still like to stay in academia. Oh, what do you want to ask?

TT: So, you will stay in academia? That is will you apply for a post-doc position or so? Or what kind of planning do you have now?

XM: Yes, I am looking for post-doc opportunities now. Yes, it is so. I would like to stay in academia, but when you asked about the future, I really do not have any long-term plan. But I do have a short-term plan, I want to do a post-doc for a few years, and then find a teaching position at a university.

TT: Hmm, so did you decide to stay in the Netherlands, or will you explore other places, or will you go back to China?

XM: Yes, a lot of people have asked me about this. Do you want to stay in the Netherlands? I think my thought right now is to say, well, I will look at opportunities in China and abroad, and wherever there is a suitable opportunity for me, I will go there. Yes, so there is no limitation. There is no certainty that I will stay in the Netherlands or go back to China. Hm, yes, there is no such decision at this moment, so, it mainly depends on the opportunities.

TT: Yes, in the beginning you were at Leiden University, right? How do you end up in Maastricht?

XM: Oh that's because they have a visiting fellow opportunity here. Well, they have a center here, which at the *unclear*, and this center invites visiting fellow every year. There is senior and junior level, so junior means you have not graduate from your doctorate, and then they have something else, I don't remember how it's called, but they have a research especially on migrant families. This fits my study very well. Because previously at Leiden, I am at the…

TT: Where? Excuse me.

XM: Area studies. LIAS - Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS). And then I was at the China Studies department, they are also call Chinese studies.

TT: Oh, okay.

XM: So that was very traditional, you know, it's sinology, the study of Chinese language, history, customs, and politics.

TT: Oh, yes.

XM: So, this is entirely different from my study, and theirs is more on literature studies.

TT: Yes, so how did you choose to come to Leiden?

XM: Right, this is because of my supervisor. So my doctoral supervisor, he does international migration, in the anthropology field. Because of him, but actually I didn't understand the institute and the department at the time when I arrived, you know? At that time I thought, oh, China studies should be about the same as migration studies. But then I realized that the

differences is huge. Haha. So then I discovered about Maastricht's center, they focus on migration and transnational family here, and on Africa and Europe. Yes, even so, there are a lot of to learn from with regards to theoretical framework and research methodology, so I applied to be a visiting fellow. But it's just for 3 months, and I will be back to Leiden in June.

TT: Oh, so you will be back in Leiden?

XM: Yes, yes. I will go back.

TT: Uhm, so how do you find out about this fellowship in Maastricht?

XM: Oh, that's because I follow them on their website. And I signed up for a newsletter. They usually publish migration related studies, so I always pay attention to that. And they are one of the most famous migration research studies in the Netherlands. So, this is how I knew about this opportunity.

TT: Did you supervisor inform you about this as well?

XM: Oh no, my supervisor did not. This is something that I found on my own. And he was also very supportive, he said yes, you should go interview them.

TT: I see. Ok. So how many years have you been in the Netherlands.

XM: I am here… Well, I think it's about 3 years and longer in the Netherlands. Because there were two years that I was gone. Uhm I started in year 2011 until this year, September. From September 2011, to September 2017, it's six years, and there was two years I was out of the Netherlands. Hm, yes so the time that I was really in this country is about 3 years and longer. Yes.

TT: During these 3 years, how would you describe your interaction or relationship with Dutch?

XM: Oh, wait a minute, I couldn't hear you just now?

TT: I said how would you describe your interaction with the Dutch, were there any special experiences or significant memories?

XM: Interaction with the Dutch… Yes, yes, I think my case is quite different from most PhDs, who stays continuously in the Netherlands, you know. So in the beginning I was only here for one and a half year time, and then I left, and came back again after two years, right, so in this interrupted time, allow me to recognize my interaction with the Dutch. Uhm, it's very difficult for me to be long term.

TT: Very difficult to what?

XM: Oh, how do I put this, it's very difficult for me to make long term friends.

TT: Hm, what do you mean?

XM: Let me explain. I mean during the first 1.5 years, the beginning, I made a lot of Dutch friends. I even live at an apartment with Dutch students, with a lot of room mates, they are all Dutch. Um. Yes, and we get along quite well, but then I had to go, of course. So I had to leave. Before I leave, they organized a farewell party for me, but when I returned and looked for them again, they seemed very distant, and it wasn't like how it was before. Because I don't leave there anymore, right. So yes, we became distant and I even texted some of them, and say: "hey, let's meet up, shall we?" and the replies were very cold. Hmm, and at the end we did not meet up. So there is an experience like that, which makes me feel, my interaction with the Dutch, is quite, how do you say this, it's quite situational. Do you know what I mean?

TT: What do you mean?

XM: It means, well, yes, it means situational.

TT: Ohhh.

XM: It means that if you are both in the same situation, for example if I stay with them at the same apartment, the same floor, then our interaction is great. But when I left, when I am no longer a resident there, and came back.

TT: Yes, I understand now.

XM: Hmm, and our relationship just weren't as good as before. Yes, so I feel that relationship only occurs in a particular situation, you know?

TT: Hm, yes yes.

XM: Yes, so, personally, I feel very deeply about this. Because I have such an experience, right.

TT: So do you feel like there were cultural difference? Or when you came to the Netherlands, the first 1.5 years, do you have a (cultural) adaptation phase? Or you feel that everything is OK and manageable?

XM: Hmm, in terms of adapting, how do I say… Well in the beginning, it is mostly about getting adjusted to the university, such as the way classes are given here, teaching styles, content and pace of the class etc, in thinking styles as well, so it's more academic, mainly in terms of adapting, I think that takes quite some time to adapt to the academic environment here. But after a few months, I felt that it's manageable. And then in terms of living, on living in the Netherlands, I don't know if you have the same realization, I think it's very convenient. Yes, Leiden city is very small, it's very close to anywhere, it's not like Beijing. In Beijing, one stop is very far, you know? Haha, you have the same realization, don't you?

TT: Yes.

XM: Yes, it's very convenient to get to anywhere. Oh, even though the NS train, well sometimes, most of the time, (giggles). Are late. But in other living aspects, I don't feel like there is anything particularly difficult.

TT: Hmm, so you came here through Chinese Scholarship council right.

XM: Yes.

TT: Then is the scholarship sufficient to cover for your living cost? In terms of financial, do you think your scholarship is enough to sustain your living? Or have you ever thought about working part time?

XM: Ah, no.

TT: Yes.

XM: I feel like it's sufficient. For every month… But if you have a family, or something like that, for example if it's a family of three, then it might be very tight. But if you are only by yourself, it should be no problem. Yes, in terms of finding a part-time job, I will not find a job just to cover my living cost.

TT: So you did not work and there is no need to work, right?

XM: The permit that we received, which is the residence permit, it requires, sorry, it allows us to work up to 10 hours per week, so many students feel like it's not necessary to work, right. Personally, I did teach at a Chinese language school before. Mainly, I wanted to find out how do the Dutch Chinese families educate their children. So, I did teach for a semester to understand the situation better. I do not have other working experiences, no.

TT: Hm, so did you receive a salary for your teaching job?

XM: Oh, they don't call it salary, they call it transportation fee.

TT: Stipend?

XM: Yes, it's like allowance.

TT: So how much was your allowance?

XM: Yes, it's only for transportation.

TT: Ok.

XM: It's 200 euros per month, so it's 50 euros once. Hehe (giggles). Oh, so that's not a lot. If you compare it to hourly wages, then it's really not a lot. Yes.

TT: Yes, so your scholarship, was it given out monthly or did the Chinese government give it in one lump sum? So what is the situation?

XM: Every 3 months.

TT: Oh, every 3 months?

XM: Yes.

TT: Hm, ok. So would it be alright for you to tell me how much euros do you receive every 3 months?

XM: Oh, 3600 euros.

TT: 3 months, 3600 euros.

TT: Yes. So it's 1200 euros (per month).

TT: So it's sufficient to sustain your living?

XM: Yes, absolutely.

TT: Well during your PhD, there are other financial needs, for example you are required to do fieldwork. So, you must visit Beijing, and then also go to South Korea. Do you use the CSC funding source for these activities as well?

XM: Ah, it's like this, because, I have other funding sources. In my case I do have other funding sources, but maybe PhD candidates will have the CSC scholarship as their only funding source.

TT: Yes.

XM: I have a funding source from Korea. It's also a scholarship, for one year. And that year in Beijing, my supervisor, which is our institute in Leiden has a PhD fieldwork program, a program that provides funding for those who do fieldwork. I received both funding. So, there is one for Beijing, and another for Korea.

TT: Wow, that's very good.

XM: Yes, that is the reason why I can last till now. Because CSC scholarship is only for 4 years. But I took a long time to complete my PhD, almost 6 years now. So, if weren't for that additional two years of funding, I would not be able to make it financially. I am very grateful for those two years.

TT: Oh, I see. So when will you receive your doctorate degree?

XM: Yes I am very busy now because I will submit my thesis next month.

TT: Oh, next month? Congratulations!

XM: Yes, hahaha, it's too early for congrats now! If I am lucky, I hope to have my defence scheduled end of the year. I am not sure if I can have it then, but I really hope I can have my defence by the end of the year.

TT: Hmm, I wonder what is your relationship status? Are you single or do you have a boyfriend?

XM: Hehe (giggles), I had a boyfriend.

TT: Is he Dutch, do you know him from here? Is he from the Netherlands?

XM: You asked if I knew him from here? Hm, no. I knew him from Korea.

TT: Umm, so you know this Dutch in Korea?

XM: Yes, isn't that amazing!

TT: Yes, it's very amazing and lovely. But it ended in the end?

XM: Yes. So, you would like to know why it ended?

TT: Yes, I would like to know why it ended, hehe.

XM: Well, we broke up because we have different visions of the future, not because of differences in personality. I think having the same vision for the future is very important.

TT: Yes, I think so too. Because I think a doctoral journey do not merely contain the academic life, but also social life, relationship and family is also important issue to consider as they can have a major impact in your doctoral journey. I think.

XM: Indeed, relationship has a very big impact on the future career aspirations and the choices you make. There are some PhDs that I know, that bring their entire family with them here. This means that their partner and child(ren) are also in the Netherlands. In this situation, most of them will consider staying in this country because their child is used to the educational system here in the Netherlands. So, if you were to send them back to primary or high school in China, they will have a very hard time adapting to that system.

TT: Yes, so you have not…

XM: Yes, so the PhD I knew, he chose to stay, and of course it's different in my case, I have no kids.

TT: Oh… Sorry please finish your sentence.

XM: Yes, so I do not have a child nor family with me, so I have much more freedom of choice. And the range of choices are comparatively wider.

TT: Yes, I would like to ask if you have been abroad prior coming to the Netherlands for your PhD?

XM: Before my PhD… Yes, I have been abroad. Oh, no no no. I have never been on study abroad before.

TT: Do you have any travel experiences abroad?

XM: Travel abroad… Hmm, no, I didn't… Let me think. Well, I mostly travel within China, and it was never far, and traveling to Europe, America or other countries, I did not do that.

TT: So after you arrived and settled in the Netherlands, did you explore other European countries?

XM: Yes, I did.

TT: Where did you go?

XM: Um, in Europe, let me think, Spain, France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg, these countries that are close by. And I have also been to England and Norway. These two countries I went for conferences. When there are conferences in these countries, I will visit. And others are for personal traveling.

TT: Do you think doing your PhD in the Netherlands help you in establishing your academic network?

XM: Academic network, well in terms of international network, I think being in the Netherlands has its advantages. So my supervisor and people I met in the conferences are

definitely beneficial for my network. But if I were to search for employment opportunities in China, then the academic network in the Netherlands do not really have a direct impact on this.

TT: Do you think?

XM: There are a lot of job searching agencies in China

TT: Oh, so is there an agent for this?

XM: Well in China, it depends on who is your doctorate supervisor, and then what?

TT: Agent, is there any agent to help you to find a job, or head hunter. Since you pursued your doctorate abroad, that gave you a competitive advantage, is doctoral experiences abroad something that is welcoming in China? What is the situation?

XM: Well, in higher education you must find a job on your own. Each university will send out an announcement, and you apply yourself. There are no agents for jobs at university, this is the situation in China. And if you obtained your doctoral abroad, it gives you an extra edge. But at the same time, it depends on your experiences and some concrete criteria. So concrete criteria refer to the number of articles you have published, your educational background, discipline, and expertise, and how do they fit in the job description. There are many internationally-educated PhDs now, so this is not something special anymore. I think it still depends on many other aspects.

TT: Ok, so this is the end of our interview. Do you have any questions for me?

XM: Yes, so are you an intern now?

TT: Yes.

XM: Alright, I would like to ask what is the goal of this internship project? What is your working hypothesis, how many people do you want to interview and what is your expected outcome? That is, what is your expectation for this research?

TT: Well, the main reason of me coming to the Netherlands. Because I am… Ok, I will first announce that the interview is over, and now we can chat about my experiences in the Netherlands. I am a Malaysian Chinese, and I study… hello, hello, what happened? (connection problem)

XM: Oh yes, what happened?

TT: Yes you are back, and I am a Malaysian Chinese who lived in the Netherlands for 6 years. I did my bachelor here.

XM: Oh I see, you were pursuing your education here?

TT: Yes, I did my bachelor here and graduated. I taught in a university for one, two years, as a TA (teaching assistant). And then I went back to Malaysia to work, and then I really have a hard time readjusting back to life at home, and so I applied for a Masters degree. And this is a Erasmus Mundus Programme, which I have to pursue my studies in four different countries, Austria, Finland, Beijing China, and the last country I may choose from either locations. So in these two years I am going to study university management and governance.

--- end of recording ---

Informal chat with the interviewees continued and she was thanked for her participation.

Appendix V: Data analysis of three interviews

RP1

Trajectory	Past	Present	Future	China	NL
Intellectual (Initiating PhD)	Back then it's like, well, during my masters, you probably also understand this… (giggles), that the teaching style is similar to that of parenting style. (Giggles) It's like the saying: I only hit and scold you because I love you. Hm, so teachers requirements for us makes us feel very powerless. Hmm why, yes, when you write something good, but teacher will criticize it into pieces… Right, so it's very strict (giggles). Well, in reality they really want you to work harder and	Then once I started my doctorate, there was a change in the academic environment. Yes, now I came to the Netherlands for my doctorate, and my supervisor, well, he's also strict.	So after my bachelor, I continued with my masters, and then I went abroad to pursue my doctorate. Hm, I think my self-confidence level is increasing every step I take.	I think teacher and parents are important in my decision to pursue a doctorate degree. Right. Mainly my master thesis supervisor, I think maybe this sounds negative, (giggles), well this is because, hm, he has a lot of expectations, the type that has a lot of expectations (for his students). And he makes me feel like I must demonstrate my academic abilities, I must have something to show for, yes in such a way.	Well, coming to Holland. Yes, how do I put this… Well we have to go back to the issue of academic self-confidence, because during my masters, I had a lot of self-doubt, why can't I excel academically, and then I wanted to try and be like, if I didn't do well in my Masters (laughs), then I can do better during my PhD, and at the same time I really want a change of academic environment

	improve, but you will feel like a failure, why, why I wrote it for so long and then my teacher still thinks it's so bad, like that. Well, especially in academia, hmm…			
Institutional (Initiating PhD)	And then every university have different number of placement every year. Yes, so this 100 places, will be then allocated to each graduate school or faculty, amounting to 10 to 15 places per faculty, so it's all different. And then, when you apply, honestly, I think it depends on luck. This means that it depends on the group of scholarship applicants you are competing with, and their background… And then their basic situation, for example academic performances and abilities. Hmm, during my year, a lot of people who are very competitive and excellent were invited to pursue doctorate degree directly from their faculty, so a lot of people choose to remain in the same university. Direct doctorate means that you do not need to take an exam to be considered as a candidate, you can immediately pursue a doctorate after your Masters at the same university.			
Networking (Initiating PhD)	Yes, it's China Scholarship Council. They provide scholarships to support those who wanted to pursue their doctoral education abroad. Oh, I think it was a good opportunity so I applied. And then I got it. And then when I was contacting the universities, I got referred to my current supervisor from another professor. That supervisor was at Oxford at that time, and hm, he is Dutch. Hm, we didn't meet in China. I knew him through another professor. And then I contacted him through the information I found on the internet and send my CV to him. And he thought it was interesting, but he told me he's going back to the Netherlands for his professorship because Oxford could not offer him that. Then he asked me if I am willing to pursue my PhD in the Netherlands, and I said YES!			

Intellectual (Executing PhD)	In beginning, I feel, very stressed out. Because it's my first year, and the first year there were a lot of classes. There are some classes that belong to your discipline, or there are classes that are unrelated to your discipline. Oh, doing a doctorate here does not need study credits. But this is based on the requirement of each supervisor, and according to the requirement of my supervisor, I have chosen 4 or 5 classes, I forgot… And the point is that I have made myself very busy, everyday I'm busy. And it feels like I'm taking study credits, because I have to go to	The thesis writing stage was quite encouraging, it's quite an encouraging stage. I didn't have to go to classes, so I did self-study and read books on my own, and ask some questions, and write my chapters. So it's a very hardworking state, oh. I only can count on myself. Yes. Now this stage is the most painful, but it's also a stage that makes you grow very fast, right.		Yes, my first year. So I didn't consider at all, does this fit my expectation? My everyday life has become this routine of, you must complete this task at hand as soon as possible, and then move on to that next task and get it done. Hahaha, you know, I completely did not have time to think about whether this (PhD) is what I wanted.

	class every day, and hand it a paper during the mid and final term.				
Intellectual (Finishing PhD)	Yes. It underwent a process of change. Ah, when you start to write academic articles, I think that everyone will have times that they feel very difficult, so during these difficult moments, I will wonder should I stay in academia? Honestly there is one time when I find it extremely difficult to write, I thought I want to never work in academia again. Oh, I was thinking then, PhD is just a process. And in this process, I learnt a new language, how to interact with different people, and how to turn strangers	But, at a later stage, and that is when I almost complete my thesis, I thought, Oh, I have dedicated a long time, to write this thesis, so I wanted to publish it	I think everyone wants to leave something behind, right, so if I do not stay in academia, I will not have an opportunity to publish it, because I will not edit it, or look at it because I need to go to work, right? I feel like it's such a pity, I don't want to feel that, everything I wrote, it's merely a PhD thesis, you know. I hope that more people can see it, and that it can have the opportunity to be published.		Well in the beginning, it is mostly about getting adjusted to the university, such as the way classes are given here, teaching styles, content and pace of the class etc, in thinking styles as well, so it's more academic, mainly in terms of adapting, I think that takes quite some time to adapt to the academic environment here. But after a few months, I felt that it's manageable.

	into friends, who could share their stories with you. So, I learnt a diverse set of skills. This is means that I could work in academia or I could work elsewhere. Sometimes… Hmm, yes, do something else.			
Career aspiration		Yes, I am looking for post-doc opportunities now. Yes, it is so. I would like to stay in academia, but when you asked about the future, I really do not have any long-term plan. But I do have a short-term plan, I want to do a post-doc for a few years, and then find a teaching position at a university.	I think my thought right now is to say, well, I will look at opportunities in China and abroad, and wherever there is a suitable opportunity for me, I will go there. Yes, so there is no limitation. There is no certainty that I will stay in the Netherlands or go back to China. Hm, yes, there is no such decision at this moment, so, it mainly depends on the opportunities available.	
Institutional (Lack of institutional understanding)	So my doctoral supervisor, he does international migration, in the anthropology field. Because of him, but actually I didn't understand the institute and the department at	So then I discovered about Maastricht's center, they focus on migration and transnational family here, and on Africa and Europe. Yes, even so, there are a lot of to learn from with regards to theoretical framework and research methodology, so I applied to be a visiting fellow. But it's just		

	the time when I arrived, you know? At that time I thought, oh, China studies should be about the same as migration studies. But then I realized that the differences are huge. Haha.	for 3 months, and I will be back to Leiden in June.		
Networking	Hmm, social life… Yes, social life, I did not participate in any here. Wait, let me think, yes, I did not participate in the Chinese student association, or any student activity for that matter. Hmm, mainly I hang out with friends that I know, or those who live in the same area with me, that's my social life. No, I did not participate in any student activities, hm.	I think my case is quite different from most PhDs, who stays continuously in the Netherlands, you know. So in the beginning I was only here for one and a half year time, and then I left, and came back again after two years, right, so in this interrupted time, allow me to recognize my interaction with the Dutch. Uhm, it's very difficult for me to be long term.		Let me explain. I mean during the first 1.5 years, the beginning, I made a lot of Dutch friends. I even live at an apartment with Dutch students, with a lot of room mates, they are all Dutch. Um. Yes, and we get along quite well, but then I had to go, of course. So I had to leave. Before I leave, they organized a farewell party for me, but when I returned and looked for them again, they seemed

				very distant, and it wasn't like how it was before. Because I don't leave there anymore, right. So yes, we became distant and I even texted some of them, and say: "hey, let's meet up, shall we?" and the replies were very cold. Hmm, and at the end we did not meet up. So there is an experience like that, which makes me feel, my interaction with the Dutch, is quite, how do you say this, it's quite situational. Do you know what I mean?

Institutional (Funding helps with PhD completion)	I have a funding source from Korea. It's also a scholarship, for one year. And that year in Beijing, my supervisor, which is our institute in Leiden has a PhD fieldwork program, a program that provides funding for those who do fieldwork. I received both funding. So, there is one for Beijing, and another for Korea.	Yes, that is the reason why I can last till now. Because CSC scholarship is only for 4 years. But I took a long time to complete my PhD, almost 6 years now. So, if weren't for that additional two years of funding, I would not be able to make it financially. I am very grateful for those two years.	I will submit my thesis in 6 months.		
Networking	Academic network, well in terms of international network, I think being in the Netherlands has its advantages. So my supervisor and people I met in the conferences are definitely beneficial for my network. But if I were to search for employment opportunities in China, then the academic network in the Netherlands do not really have a direct impact on this.			Well, in higher education you must find a job on your own. Each university will send out an announcement, and you apply yourself. There are no agents for jobs at university, this is the situation in China. And if you obtained your doctoral abroad, it gives you an extra edge.	

		But at the same time, it depends on your experiences and some concrete criteria. So concrete criteria refer to the number of articles you have published, your educational background, discipline, and expertise, and how do they fit in the job description. There are many internationally-educated PhDs now, so this is not something special anymore. I think it still depends on many other aspects.	

RP2

Trajectory	Past	Present	Future	China	Netherlands
Intellectual (world view)	I went to the university, did my bachelor and then master, and this is the reconstruction of my world view. When I was younger, my world was all about getting good grades, going to good schools, but when it reached this stage, there was some changes in my world view, and that is, I need to get a good job, or at least a stable job, so I don't have to worry about unemployment, hmm, it was such a stage. This is natural because my parents have very high expectations of me in terms of education, they hope I	And then at the age of 28, I went abroad to pursue my PhD in the Netherlands, and this stage is the remodelling of my world view. This means that all my previous world views and prior knowledge etc, that is the Chinese societal norms and values, the way its structured and organised… When I arrived, I realised that this society is organised in a different manner…		During my time, for example, internet starts to be a common thing in China, and because I discovered that my English skills were good, I could read news and websites from abroad. And then I realised the world outside of China is really different from us, even though I do not know exactly in what way, but I know it's different. So then I had this desire to see other parts the world. I hope one day, I could go abroad and see what it's like, and then I thought, hmm, foreign countries is surely different from us (China), and that it must be a more	I'm not saying that the societies here (in Europe) is perfect, because no society is perfect. I can just say that it has its advantages, but in many other aspects they are not as good as us, but I am glad to see that a society can be organized and structured in a different manner, so this to me is the remodeling of my world view, as my previously re-constructed world view has been reconstructed once again.

			beautiful world. But after I have been abroad, I realised there are some places that are beautiful, and some that are not, don't you agree?	
Intellectual (Executing PhD)	For example in our field, that is law, I think the academic practices here are a bit more objective. Yes, much more objective. This objectivity can be observed from the starting point of research, you see that scholars here would try very hard to maintain some sort of academic neutrality or objectivity, of course one could never be absolutely objective. In a subjective sense, we could never be 100% neutral. Well, let	But when I arrived, I find myself slowly influenced by the scholarly thinking here. So when I start writing a topic, or comparing legal systems, I do not have a presumption of which national legal system is better than the other. Through my research process and analysis, when comparing the specific aspects of two legal systems, I will then draw a conclusion about which legal system is better than the other. Of course, when we claim that one is better than the other, it's only on certain aspect, and a system could also perform worse in other aspects. So in my comparison, I found that the Chinese legal system do have aspects that are better than the Dutch legal system. But I did not start with my presumption that the European legal framework is always better than China, and I will try my best to find evidence to support my presumption. Instead, I begin by putting both systems on an equal level, then study their legal systems,	So the conclusion of my PhD dissertation is that the European legal system and the Chinese legal system share many similarities. Even though the Chinese legal system was established much later, China adopted the most updated international legislative theory at the time of its legislative formation. So if we were to compare two legal systems on paper, I discovered that the Chinese legal system and the European legal system is the same, if	So I learnt about how to do proper academic research here, and that is I do not presumed that the European legal system is surely better than of China. If I did not go abroad for my PhD, my assumption or thought would be that China is much worse than Europe in legal systems, even on paper.

	me give you an example. Before coming abroad, and I would write my academic thesis or papers, we would always assume the foreign legal systems are always better than us, we should learn from these legal systems abroad.	compare their specificities, and then come to a conclusion.	not better. But where did we do worse than Europe? We are very bad in law enforcement. In the law enforcement system, due to corruption and cultural issues such as humanistic values, we are poor in law enforcement.	
Intellectual (Inferiority)	We were educated in such a way "the West was better than us" at university. Before the market reform and the opening up in China, our country was at a very underdeveloped stage. So after the opening up, and we begin to have contact with the West, we discovered that the West has progressed very far and is indeed better than us in many ways, so we feel inferior and we begin to develop a sense of self-abasement . And this inferiority stays with us until today. Even though we have made so much economic and social progress, we still feel inferior, and in academia we only remember that we are the inferior minority, and we only take note of the things			

	that we did less well than the others, but we neglect all our efforts and achievements, and the major progress we made over the past 30 years. So this cultural inferiority, is also reflected in academia. This is why we would presume the European legal systems is better than us before we write our thesis or paper.				
Networking	CSC provided a list of universities on their website. I knew that I would like to go to English-speaking countries, like England, Australia, US, so I only looked at the law graduate schools of these countries, and check whether they have something along my research interests. I applied to the Netherlands because of my senior, so I also looked in the Netherlands and send all my applications at once. Since the Netherlands were the first to reply and offer me a PhD position, I choose to come here and did not wait for the others.				
Institutional	I did everything myself when I first arrived. The university provided some information about housing, and when I		I think the university could use local staff. But these staff should consult international students often and obtain information	I think if I knew prior coming to the Netherlands, that the railway and transportation system is so convenient, and that	For every student, your priority is always accommodation. So when you first arrived, it's important that you find a place to stay.

checked I thought the housing prices were much too high. My scholarship is 1200 euros per month, and the rent prices provided on the websites were around 680-750 euros, that's too high. So I used the gogodutch.com which is a Chinese-Dutch website to find housing. Hmm, I think, the university's international desk staff members, mostly do not live in rented houses. They are not expats looking for rental properties, and the websites they provided are websites that they have never visited themselves, so they don't know the actual needs of international students.		from them, through surveys, for example. And then inquire the international students about their landing experiences, what difficulties they encountered, how did they solve these problems, and then inform the new batch of international students, so they don't depend only on their own (Dutch) knowledge and experiences.	they have year subscriptions etc, I would have a broader perspective when it comes to finding accommodation. I was just looking at the centre of Rotterdam since I am going to do my PhD at Erasmus University. I think I would have considered outer regions and other cities even, if I knew there were stops in almost every small town of the Netherlands, that the Dutch train network can be so dense. I would have much more housing options if I knew back then, but I didn't know and I couldn't have known..	Then, it's transportation. For example, in the Netherlands, all the cities in which universities are located, have higher housing prices due to high demands from the local and international students. And there are many small cities in the Netherlands, take Leiden for example, if there are too many international students, and insufficient housing for everyone, then obviously there will be a hike in housing prices. When this happens, university should provide the students with transportation advice, and tell them they don't necessarily have to live in Leiden, but a small

	On the contrary, the experiences provided by other international students were more practical and helpful, on where and how to search for a cheap rental property.				town close by. If the university can provide "door-to-door" information, that commuting would take about 30-40 minutes by bus or train etc, I think it would help international students to get cheaper accommodation, right?
Intellectual/ Cultural (Initiating PhD)	To be honest, I think I prepared very sufficiently as compared to the others. First of all, my English language skill is better than most, but of course when I arrived I realised there is a major difference between the English that we learnt at schools in China and the English being used here. But I didn't know that prior		I think an additional friend opens up an additional path, am I right? We (Chinese) don't reject the formation of relationships, right? In this regard, I think the scholarship provider – China Scholarship Council, have the duty to give us pre-departure training, because we can't possibly obtain and retain so many	Hmm, before I went abroad, I thought foreign countries are very beautiful, but when I got here, I realised there are beautiful places, and that their environment is indeed much better than China. China is currently at industrial age, so we have awful pollution in some places, but in the western region of China, there are still	So I feel that their environment is very good. And this is in line with my expectation before going abroad. On another note, I thought people were very nice and kind here, but I found out that was not the case after living here for a few years, of course there are good people and bad people too. Some people thought you are shy and

| | coming abroad, and I thought my English was very good, as I watched a lot of American movies and TV shows. I thought I understood the West, and I thought the Western cultures were all the same. So I thought the American and Dutch cultures were similar, but when I arrived, I realised they were very different, and that between European countries and cultures, there are also major differences. For example the Germans are less warm or friendly as compared to the Dutch. Though the Dutch can be very warm and friendly in the beginning, once you get to know them | | information at once, especially in terms of mental preparation. CSC should give candidates respective training depending on the country destination, so that you can understand the social and cultural state of the country, and the interpersonal communication styles. | some places that are not developed, and those places are still very beautiful. Since it's the post-industrial phase here, they managed to overcome most of their environmental problems, because if you look at history they were quite terrible too, but it's no longer the case for now. | repressed, so they discriminate you, right? |

	better, they will also maintain some sort of distance, right? So they are not really willing to (get close)… how do you say this, hmm, in their own culture they also have a term 'afstaand maken', translated in English it's disconnected. They do not really like to have excessive interaction with the others.				
Intellectual (Executing PhD)	When I was at Erasmus University I was doing health law…	Now, it's occupation, health and safety law. For my dissertation I am mainly dealing with the occupational hazards and dangers of factory workers, and the law and regulation in this area. I am comparing five legal systems, the EU, China, the Netherlands,	Next month I will hand in my dissertation, graduate and return to China!		

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		the United Kingdom, and Sweden.			
Networking (Executing PhD)	When I first started my PhD at EUR, I went to a lecture given by this professor, and we got acquainted after the lecture. When I was fired from my PhD, I told him about it and that I need to find a new professor to supervise me. And then he mentioned that he knew a professor in Utrecht that might be interested and his research interests are the same as mine. And this professor in Utrecht is now my boss, when I contacted him, he replied and wanted to work with me. At that time, I thought if I couldn't	Hmm, if I were to compare my previous boss at Erasmus and my current boss, my previous boss is a very cold person, and my current boss is the complete opposite, he's very warm and encouraging. I am very grateful for my current boss, because when I first transferred to Utrecht, my energy level and mood was very low, because I was at the lowest point of my life, and then this affected my writing. So when I submit my chapters to him, I was very insecure and full of self-doubt, and he		In the beginning there were some cultural differences. To be honest the first two years I was in the Netherlands, I didn't speak Dutch so there were major cultural differences. And then I realised, after my Dutch language course, that I was able to learn about many aspects of the Dutch culture through the language itself.	For example, in the Dutch language there is a difference between you (*je* – informal) and you (*u* – formal). This is the same as what we have in the Chinese language. So when we speak to our boss, we will use the formal you, right? We don't care how close you are with your boss, you will still always address him or her with the formal you. What does this means? This means that our culture puts a lot of emphasis on the notion of hierarchy. But in the Netherlands you can just use the informal you with everyone. What does this mean?

	find a professor to take me in, I would just return home, I was ready for that.	would encourage me and said, "hey, look at this section you wrote, this means that you have took a big step towards your PhD and graduation." So now, when I edit and piece together my previous work, I realised my thoughts and my writing, as well as the language, are very bad. So whenever I recall his encouragement towards me, I think that I would never have continued with my PhD or made it this far without his words of encouragement.			This means that they focus less on social status and hierarchy. Every human society will have some degree of hierarchy, but in the Netherlands this notion is much weaker as compared to China. So it is from language, from the day-to-day speaking that I observed and learnt about their mind set, communication styles. So in my second year of learning the Dutch language, I realised we have less and less differences, and I would say that I get along very well with my boss now.
Institutional (Financial resources)	CSC provides scholarship for four years. I came to the Netherlands in March, 2012 and was	So when I ran out of scholarship I had to use my own savings, haha! Even until today I have to use my own funds. I	Financially it was alright because I had my savings, and my wife sells Dutch milk powder to China, so		Since the Netherlands is a welfare country, they provide subsidies for rent, health and childcare. I applied for

	transferred to Utrecht in January or March, 2014. So even though I was fired in between the scholarship was continued, but since I transferred to Utrecht, I only have 2 years or more of scholarship funding.	got married after I arrived in the Netherlands for a year, I returned to China to marry my girlfriend. So she got here in July, 2013 and our baby was born on April 5, 2017. He is 7 weeks old now.	we get some side-income for the household.		all of them and recently apply for the childcare subsidy for my baby.
Institutional (language)	I think the Dutch government has an obligation to provide financial support in language learning. It was a coincidence that I learned Dutch, because I didn't expect to take the Dutch language course when I first arrived. My wife arrived later, and she wanted to find a job here so she took Dutch lessons, and I followed. And then I	After learning the Dutch language, it helped tremendously in my research because I had to study the Dutch legal system for my dissertation. So I could read the Dutch laws and read the government reports on the legal implementation process directly. Also in my field, I could attend the court hearing and understand			But no one mentioned it to me (the benefits of learning the Dutch language). So in my opinion, this should be encouraged or reminded by the Dutch universities. They should provide all information regarding Dutch language learning (offline and online), and provide financial support, right?

	realized I master the language better than her, haha! So I decided to keep learning the language. Looking back at that time, it's really a coincidence that I learnt this language.	most archive materials, so learning Dutch has been most beneficial!			
Institutional /Networking (Initiating PhD)	Well, I was in a PhD study group in my university, and I wanted to pursue my PhD abroad since I was curious what's the world like. And my senior got accepted to a university in the Netherlands, and at that time CSC was providing many funding places for study abroad, about 6000 places each year. Since she succeeded in her application, I thought I should try since my English is not bad. So I send my application to UK, Australia, and the Netherlands, since she got accepted in Utrecht, I applied there as well and Erasmus University Rotterdam. Since the professor at EUR replied and gave me the offer first, I came to EUR. But then, it was a very difficult period for a year and a half, maybe because of cultural differences. I think I have my reasons, and he has his. Another Indonesian PhD			Hmm, I am not sure how it is in Malaysia, but in China, we are much more reserved. We are not as direct or blunt as foreigners. So we are very humble when it comes to our achievements, we won't be like the Dutch or Westerns who said what they have achieved, in our value this is regarded as bragging and arrogant, and I did not get used to this in the beginning. During my first year of	Of course I am not like that anymore. I am used to their style now. I definitely had culture shock when I first arrived, because I was being so apologetic. And then my EUR supervisor thought I really had issues or incompetent, because he is such a selfish person even for Dutch standards, so you can see that the problems are from both sides. So the PhD process did not went well, and the

			PhD here, I always apologise in advance for any mistake when sending my supervisor my writing. Apologising in advance is something we (Chinese) consider as polite. But here, it is interpreted as a weakness, that you do not have the confidence nor competences to be an academic.	Indonesian PhD who was my colleague was also behaving in such a manner, and we both got fired. The Indonesian colleague transferred to the Faculty of Economics and I went to Utrecht and continued in the Faculty of Law.
and I were fired and I found a new boss in Utrecht.				
Career aspiration	I think I had to return to China in the end. First of all, this is not my country, Europe is not mine and it's not my continent, so I still have to go back. This is because I think I prefer the Chinese way of being, and to be honest China is undergoing major transformation every day. China is progressing so quickly, and the environmental problems will be solved sooner or later. Right, if we look at England in the 1950s, their environmental pollution was horrible, and it took them 30 to 40 years to solve. China is at a much higher technological level, I think we will probably solve this issue in 10 to 20 years, and I honestly believe that I have much more opportunities in China. I think I will stay in academia. I'm 32. At this age, it is not realistic to enter a new field or a new industry because you have developed a kind of lifestyle and occupational habits.		The entire economy is developing rapidly, like a high speed train. The (Dutch) society is now at its post-industrial stage, and the growth is at a much slower pace as compared to China. Rapid development means increased opportunities. On top of that, I have my doctorate degree and	Here in the Netherlands there are scarcely any academic positions, am I right? And if there is any position available, it's either part-time, contract-based for two or three years. In China, I could get a permanent contract in academia.

		that gives me an extra edge when I return to China. This is because a doctorate obtained abroad is highly recognised and appreciated in China, and this of course have to do with the inferiority we feel towards the West, as we discussed before, right? Since they think that the Western academia is better than ours, they very much recognised this doctorate degree.	

RP3

Trajectory	Past	Present	Future	China	Netherlands
Intellectual (Initiating PhD)	Well, my master thesis supervisor has a lot of students. And to him, all his present and past students are called "the family members of Lee". So it's like a big family, and all his master students are like brothers and sisters. So this is my master thesis supervisor, he encouraged all of us to do academic research and stay in academia. So when you graduated your masters, he will encourage you to pursue a PhD locally or abroad. I am the first student that he supervised that had a successful application from CSC, the first to go abroad	Hmm, I think my relationship with my current (Dutch) supervisor is extraordinary, it's not a relationship between colleagues. He's also a bit like my supervisor in China, like a parent, but not fully, so he's somewhere in between. He also respects the Chinese culture, and I still address him as a Professor. I wouldn't call him by his first name, like the Europeans or Americans.		This is an entirely new stage for me, because I have always lived in Hunan province until I was 26. I did my bachelor and masters in this province. So when my PhD application got accepted, I had the feeling that I will go abroad immediately, and realised that I have never been abroad before! So at that same year in May, I went on a trip to Thailand on my own. I wanted to know what it's like to be in a new environment, and I need to know how to interact and communicate with foreigners.	So when I arrived here in the Netherlands in my first year, everything felt so new and special, I participated in many events including the welcome ceremony for international students. In this ceremony I saw the King of the Netherlands, and he walked passed me, and I thought: "Wow, the King is so friendly and doesn't act like he's above us all, he could just enjoy the cultural activities in a university just like the rest of us." And I participated mostly in activities organised by Chinese PhDs. We went out for a trip or

	from our faculty to pursue her PhD.				dinner. And I also attended the PhD defence of my seniors, and give them farewell parties. They usually got job offers like assistant and associate professors in China.
Intellectual (Initiating PhD)	When I was applying for this PhD position here, I was encouraged by my parents and master thesis supervisor. We felt that it was such an honor to be given such opportunity to study abroad, at least at our university and the schools surrounding our area, this is unheard of. And since this opportunity is available so that you can continue to work hard and achieve more, we are very grateful and appreciative. And I	At that point I didn't have very concrete ideas about what lies ahead, I feel that I'm very lucky to be able to pursue my PhD abroad. And I am sent by the government, this means that the country is supporting you, so I feel that I am an excellent candidate to be able to go on this path and represent my country. So I didn't expect much and I didn't think any further, I thought I should just do my best.	Hmm, maybe the most direct impact (on me) is that lately, some candidates who were in similar positions (sponsored by CSC) left because they weren't interested in the study anymore, or, that they didn't get approved by their supervisors and were fired. During this time, I realized that we must choose our research study and	So I think it is important to remind yourself that during this phase, it is important to maintain your passion and interest in your research problems, and be independent and responsible in your conduct. Do not take your previous student experience and world view when you were doing your bachelor or master to guide your PhD experience. Right, so this is not so good because this increases your dependency.	Honestly in my faculty and research program, my seniors always remind me that PhDs are employees and not students. And we have a different ID than the students, so the institution also reminds us that we have a different identity than of a student.

	myself felt that I will have a brighter future and more opportunities ahead of me because of this.		supervisor, but also be chosen in return – this is a mindset or consideration that can only be understood if you are a mature and responsible adult.	
Intellectual (Executing PhD)	There are major differences in academia. In China, we like to go from theory to theory, meaning that we use theoretical framework to build the thesis and directly make policy recommendations from them.	But it's very different here, they emphasized a lot on empirical research, everything is evidence based and you must rely on data. Well, for early career researchers like us, we must test the theory with data, whether it's quantitative or qualitative, so that we can improve or modify the theory in a certain aspect. So this is how you make a theoretical contribution. They (Dutch) don't expect you to make practical or	So when my supervisor mentioned this, I became aware of the differences. So I adjusted my Chinese way of thinking, and try to integrate into the Dutch research environment. I try to read more English journal articles and books produced by scholars here, and then I write accordingly. I listened to my	When I first came here I had to submit some writings, and have regular meetings with my supervisor, I will also submit my thesis draft. And he mentioned to me that my thought process and understanding is very different to that of the Dutch scholars. I was still in my master's student mode, where I try to draw conclusions from literature to verify the chosen theoretical framework. So I was having a very clear objective when I start	

| | | policy recommendations to solve problems. They don't only focus on the thought that one must come up with functional suggestions. So this means that the value of my dissertation is the research process itself, and it realizes its own value. | supervisor's feedback and make the necessary adjustments, and this problem was solved at the later stage of my PhD. | writing or researching, that I must provide some explanations and practical recommendations. He told me that this is not the emphasis here in the Netherlands. I think these are his words: "We do not concern ourselves with practical application. Instead, if we could improve or criticize the current theoretical framework, using previous knowledge and other studies, it is through this method, we can provide some insights to the problem at hand. So it can also be about exploratory or descriptive research, it doesn't always have to be about finding a solution. | |

Networking	This is probably something I am very casual about in my second year. During my first year, my seniors haven't graduated yet so we always mingle together, so we are in this Chinese circle. In the second year, I am much more independent, and the supervisor also felt that I should develop a sense of independence and be able to conduct my own research. I think in this year culture shock was most pronounced, because I started to enjoy getting to know people around me, and have strong desire to know this society that I know nothing about.			When I first arrived I did try to learn Dutch. And then I realised we have quite some differences, not only in terms of food or eating habits, but also how people interact with one another, these are all different from China.	Hmm, with regards to eating habits, the Dutch mostly eat sandwiches, but sometimes I feel that I have some digestion problems, so I went to buy some meat. And then I had too much meat and my stomach was protesting. Sometimes I have to cook rice, and I still need to sleep. But this is not a major problem, I think the major problem is the department that I'm in. This faculty (public administration) is not very international, so there aren't many international students and staff. So my colleagues who are international mostly come from Belgium, Germany, these

					countries, and they share a lot with the Netherlands. So suddenly, this department has a new member which is me, a new Asian face who speaks Chinese, and China is a big country in the far east. So the Dutch can be very protective and defensive of their own culture, because they are proud of it. And we are from China, so this creates a subtle tension, because we are all curious and interested in getting to know one another. This creates a kind of communication problem, mainly caused by language barriers because I speak Chinese, and we can't speak Chinese at

				work. So that would be English, and since everyone took IELTS or TOEFL test, we can manage basic daily communication.
Networking (Executing PhD)	I think the good thing about my Dutch colleagues are that they are very nice. When I first arrived, because I was still new, they were very warm and friendly towards me. They always say hi and come talk to me and we would go get coffee together. Some Dutch colleagues even brought their photo albums to share their travel experiences with you. But at a later stage, I was more independent as I mentioned, and everyone started to seem very independent, so even if it's someone who were very close to me before, we would rarely interact now. In some public events or spaces, the Dutch colleagues will also mingle in their own circle, and you realised that your friendship with them weren't as deep as you thought.			I actually quite like the direct way of speaking and doing things. What I have difficulty with, is that everyone thought you are not capable of being direct, and try to repress themselves and their direct way of responding to suit you.	
Networking /Institutional	I did registered for an online Dutch language course, it's like workshop style and with a small group of people in class, but I didn't	I feel like I need to balance (academic and social) a bit, after all research is my main priority. And another thing is that, academia is	Hmm I am actually searching for internships online, just to get acquainted with the labor market here, I		To ideal situation is being able to stay in academia, because then I can just research on a topic that interests me, and I can expand

	have much time to follow the course, I just wanted to have more interaction with the others around me.	very mobile. There are a new batch of PhDs in my department lately, and they are so lively and full of energy, they remind me that there is something interesting to learn every day.	don't know if I will find something suitable. I'd like to try for a month or two, and if it's possible, I would like to do a post-doc here. Our identity (CSC-scholars) do not allow us to work here directly upon graduation, we have to go home and serve the country for at least 2 years. So if there is a possibility, I would like to do my post-doc here because then my position and status would be different. If there is no such possibility I will go home like my seniors and continue my job search.		my knowledge. If I could stay in academia, that's the best trajectory. However, it can be very stressful and competitive here in the Netherlands. Sometimes it's not only about your research competences and skills, you also have to take everything else into account. For example, CSC-funded PhDs do not have the opportunity to teach, so it all depends on our research success, so teaching is a skill that we do not possess and constitute a disadvantage.

Intellectual (Executing PhD)	In China, higher education is political oriented, this is just how the entire country is structured. So funding source and research outcome will be influenced by these factor, which led to some sort of a bias, because you want to catch the respective political agenda, when your research matches the political trend, you will have better recognition and exposure. So fundamental research is neglected, and conversely, Europe and US are much more focused on fundamental research. They take a relatively neutral stance to provide critical and cutting-edge research.	I really like the academic environment here. But there are less opportunities here because it's so competitive, after all there are so many PhD graduates, and if everyone wants to stay in academia, it's almost impossible. So you have to be extraordinary, you have to be very active, publish a lot, socially and academically active, and has many academic networks or contacts. These are popular PhDs that everyone wants. A lot of post-docs I know are mostly from other universities in Italy, Ireland or US, so the academic world is very mobile.		To be honest, I am not very familiar with the Chinese academia, but I just heard through discussions that the Chinese higher education system has a political orientation. In the Netherlands, the higher education system is entrepreneurial or market oriented. So academic research has a project manager that is completely independent, and he or she must form a team or committee to determine the overall direction and management of this department. I think it's science oriented here, researchers have high social status as compared to China. Researchers are very respected here because they research out of interest and curiosity, their sense of self-worth and the platforms available to them are better than in China.

Institutional (Executing PhD)	I think it is important for CSC to remind the PhDs to have some self-awareness, that there will be cultural differences. And you, as the representative of CSC-funded scholar, should recognised that your identity is quite special. This means that you are an early career researcher, you are no longer a student, you are the member of a Dutch university, you represent your department as a staff, and often times, you are the cultural ambassador and you are the bridge for intercultural communication. So this role is very important, you are spreading your own culture, and you are receiving the culture at the same time. We often	As external PhDs, we generally have no interest in the development of our department, and did not join the departmental meetings because we are not involved in course design and teaching. So any discussion related to educational activities and the students do not concern us. Yes, we automatically gave up the right to be involved as a CSC-funded PhD.			The advantage of not being involved in educational activities is that I can have more time to do my own research, and the disadvantage would be the feeling of being excluded, as I feel like an outsider, that I do not understand the educational system of the country in which I am living in.

	neglect and forget about the Chinese culture, but we have thousands years of ancient history, and many traditional Chinese values. We should communicate that and the actual social reality of China to our Dutch colleagues, because they are very eager to understand and learn about this. Yes, so the PhD candidate should be prepared to share such knowledge, and pick up skills that could help with making friends, such as language skills, social skills and communications skills.			

Appendix VI: Participant consent form

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of Tung Tung Chan, the researcher's Master thesis research entitled Tracking External Chinese Doctoral Experiences Over Time: Navigating the Dutch Academic Culture. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken from Danube University Krems, Austria require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information, and then sign this form at the end to certify that you approve of the following:

Consent to take part in research

- I ……………………………… (full name) voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview at any time, in which case the audio recording and transcript will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves 60 to 90 minutes of interview asking about my life stories and academic experiences in China and the Netherlands
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the researcher's master thesis dissertation, conference presentation, media articles, journal publications and academic papers.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in SURFdrive, a secure file storage cloud software of the researcher's institutional account at Leiden University until 31 December 2019.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained until 31 December 2019.
- I understand that under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679, I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact the researcher through her mobile or email address provided below to seek further clarification and information.

Tung Tung Chan
Mobile: +31626395029
Email: t.t.chan@cwts.leidenuniv.nl

☐ **I have fully read all of the above and consent to participate in this study.**

Please check the box before signing.

Signature of research participant

_____

Full name:

Date:

☐ **I believe the participant has given informed consent to participate in this study.**

Signature of researcher

_____

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