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CHINESE MIGRANTS LIVING IN SPAIN

PALOMA ROBLES-LLANA

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**Beyond Categories :
Cultural Identity Practices of Children of
Chinese Migrants Living in Spain**

Paloma Robles-Llana

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

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Paloma Robles-Llana

Abstract:

This dissertation is positioned in the field of migration studies and uses an ethnographic approach to explore the cultural identities of 14 children of Chinese migrants living in Spain. Chinese migration to Spain is a relatively recent phenomenon that has received little scholarly attention to date. Studies conducted in other parts of the world have discussed the cultural identities of migrants and their descendants by stressing cultural tensions and compatibilities, metaphors of mobility, and by drawing on identity categories such as dual, transnational, or in-between. Against this background, my goal and main contribution to knowledge has been, (1) to fill a gap in the literature about Chinese migration to Spain, and (2) to demonstrate how the complexity and diversity of my participants' cultural identities could not be accurately captured by the identity categories predominantly used by migration scholars. Cultural identity is here defined as a self-reflexive process (Giddens) that is best explored through an engagement with the participants' identity *practices* (Hobart), that is, with the specific and dynamic ways in which they reflect upon, engage with and articulate their cultural identities from the perspective of their individual life histories and situated experiences. The use of life narrative interviews as a primary methodological tool was adopted in order to comply with this theoretical perspective. Findings revealed that the participants express cultural identities that resist categorization or bestow upon existing identity categories a much greater degree of complexity than what previous literature has suggested. The first chapter shows that aspects such as attitude, context, power dynamics and opportunities play a more important role in the participants' development and understanding of their cultural identities than metaphors of mobility. The second chapter shows how the factors that shape the participants' identities are very diverse and reach beyond cultural dichotomies. It also reveals how dual or in-between identities acquire shifting meanings throughout the participants' life histories and are better understood not as fixed outcomes but as dynamic responses to their changing environments. The third chapter shows how despite dominant discourses on mobile and fragmented identities, the participants also express fixed Chinese identities that are deeply embedded in both the Spanish context and their individual perceptions. Altogether, these findings suggest the need to approach the cultural identities of children of Chinese migrants living in Spain by transcending categories and cultural dichotomies and through in-depth engagement with their identity practices and individual biographies.

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Narratives of minorities ... are one place to begin to acquire the knowledge needed to dislodge both hegemonic narratives and the oppressive binaries that they perpetuate. This is crucial to the development of plural societies that are accepting of difference, and that even celebrate it... [T]hese narratives articulate positions that challenge hegemonic constructions of identities, histories and traditions and enable us to think in new ways about both past and present about who –in our diversity—we are, how we became what we are and what we want to be.

—Chris Weedon, *Identity and culture*, p.159.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. First Encounters: A Story in the Making

It was a cold winter morning and it took me more than one hour to reach the Children's Welfare center which had requested a Chinese interpreter. I was there very early in the morning, before 8, and I waited for fifteen minutes at the gate before someone walked me through a neglected garden and into the reception. The place, built in the middle of a residential area, looked like a private detached house with a garden. The social worker was a young man whose blue eyes were disproportionately big for the size of his unshaven face. He was alone in a spacious office with psychology books scattered on a large desk and a few plants on the window sill. He was one of the two psychologists in charge of the case, he explained. He talked slowly, with graveness and concentration, as if munching his words, struggling to find the right sentences to articulate the complexity of the situation. "The appointment is with one of the residents of the center, a 16-year old Chinese boy, and his parents", he said. The parents lived in a private residence, and the child had been admitted to the center as a result of behavioral problems: visions, delusions, breakdowns, refusal to speak, and what they referred to as identity crisis. The child had been residing at the center for three years now, and the staff held regular appointments with the family. This time, they were gathered to discuss the possibility to release him. Given the importance of the matter, they had requested an interpreter. "Where will he go if you let him go?" I asked. "Back with his parents".

The parents were the first to arrive. The father was a fidgety, dark-skinned man with metallic-rimmed glasses who shook my hand, smiled nervously and immediately congratulated me on my Chinese (before hearing me speak more than a couple of words). He spoke fast, with a strong accent from Zhejiang, and did not take the time to listen to what others, myself included, had to say. It was a difficult interpreting session because he kept

interrupting the conversation and did not focus on the questions he was asked. The mother, overshadowed by her husband's presence, was a long-haired middle aged woman dressed in black who smiled to me when she was introduced but did not utter one single word throughout the session. The preliminary conversation was empty small talk: the weather, the business (they had a grocery shop and were complaining about Spain's economic situation). After this transition, the psychologist (his name was Rubén) reminded them of the reason for the appointment. I could feel their nervousness as Rubén pronounced those words. "Yes, we are very happy to have him back", the father said, matter-of-factly, but fidgeting with his fingers, trying to sound as if his son was just coming back from a long vacation. "Tell me the reasons why you think Dawei should go back home, just as if you needed to convince me", Rubén said in order to test him. At this point, I remember that the father just uttered words like "he is our son", "his brother misses him", "his mother will cook for him and he will be better cared for at home".

I had been previously warned by Rubén, but It did not take me long to understand by myself that the father refused to acknowledge the fact that his son had a mental condition. He was in total denial about his son's breakdowns, his delusions, and regardless of Rubén's attempts to change the phrasing of his questions and comments, it was impossible to talk him out of his belief that the only matter with his son was that he had had problems with classmates and teachers at school.

"They used to call him names, he couldn't make any friends", he said over and over again. Rubén had mentioned this issue to me before their arrival. Dawei had been admitted at the center after a mental breakdown at school. At some point during his long months of treatment, he had confessed to staff at the center that he looked at himself in the mirror and did not want to be Chinese.

This complex enough scene acquired an additional level of complexity after Dawei's arrival. In some ways, he was the typical teenager: pale skin, acne, unkempt hair. He was dressed in a tracksuit and, as he said hello to me, I

became immediately aware of his lack of social skills. He smiled shyly, took a seat, did not even greet his parents. Usually, Dawei was not present during the interviews, but Rubén explained that they had arranged this particular meeting between parents and son in order to observe their interaction. He asked my opinion but I didn't know what to say. Dawei's father made dramatic efforts to perform a sense of obviously non-existent familiarity between himself and his son, patting his shoulder (Dawei's automatic reaction was to shy away), asking questions as if they had met the evening before. However, the most remarkable thing was that he spoke to him not in Chinese but in some form of most elementary and incomprehensible Spanish. He was, literally, not able to make three-word sentences in Spanish. Dawei did not answer. He could not understand either, and seeing the lack of response, his father switched again to Chinese. Here, Dawei remained even more silent and indifferent, and Rubén told me that he simply did not speak or understand Chinese. After a short time, I was given an explanation: Dawei's father could only speak a few words of Spanish but still had always insisted on speaking to Dawei in Spanish. "When he began school, his teachers said, you have to make an effort and speak to him in Spanish, otherwise what he learns in school will not be enough and he will never be able to make progress academically, so that's what we did. We were told not to speak to him in Chinese", he said.

At this point I remember feeling a vague sense of pity and dismay. I looked at Dawei shaking his legs (his legs did not remain still throughout our two-hour conversation). I saw a young withdrawn teenager, deprived of self-confidence and self-esteem, unable to speak any language fluently (his Spanish was very limited) and totally stranded in a no man's land. It was hard for me to imagine a happy ending to his life back with his parents, living in a house where he would not be able to communicate and make himself understood. Eventually, I never found out what happened to him and his family. It was the only interpreting session we held, as the center never requested a Chinese interpreter again.

I witnessed several more comparable situations which developed my intuition of the complexity of Chinese children of migrants' experiences and

identities. I remember in particular Ting and Tong, a 12 and 14-year- old brother and sister who were summoned with their parents to the welfare institution. In this case, the parents had lost custody of their two children on charges of parental neglect. The children had been raised by their neighbor, a single woman they spent most of the time with outside their school hours, because their parents were too busy working in the family business and were largely absent from home. Ting and Tong now lived in a child care center, awaiting a trial that would determine their future and custody rights. Ting and Tong were native Spanish speakers and could not speak Chinese. Their parents could hardly speak any Spanish.

The children received their parents at the welfare center with a mixture of aloofness and indifference. They looked at them as if they were strangers— which, in a way, they probably were. Their situation was different and yet similar to Dawei's. They were also symbolically trapped between a Spanish and a Chinese world, but as opposed to Dawei, Ting and Tong knew very well what they wanted: to go back and live with their neighbor, whom they regarded as a mother. They wanted a complete disconnection with their biological parents, and also, interestingly, with their younger sister, who was at the time 4 years old, and able to speak Chinese. The younger sister had received a different family education. She had not been raised by the neighbors and was visibly more emotionally attached to her parents. I saw Ting, Tong and their parents several times at the welfare center. After a few more interpreting sessions, which left me with a similar impression of hostility and impasse, the social workers stopped requesting a Chinese interpreter and I never heard from them again.

I have worked for three years as a community interpreter for Chinese migrants in Spain, and besides a long-standing passion for China, Chinese culture and its people, I believe it was glimpses into the lives and struggles of people like Dawei, Ting and Tong that gradually sparked my interest in this PhD research. While realizing that these were extreme cases, the question that emerged from these experiences and that has become the leading thread of this PhD thesis is: where do children of Chinese migrants locate their cultural

identities? Do they, and to what extent, identify with the host society? And how are their feelings of belonging and cultural identities being shaped by their lives and experiences in Spain?

The question of Chinese migrant children's experiences and cultural identities appeared to me as particularly relevant considering the scarcity of available information about the Chinese community in Spain. Not only few academic studies have been conducted on this topic, but also media representations of the Chinese community have been at best partial, and too often misguiding or based on stereotypical representations. Previous research on Chinese migration in Spain has not devoted particular attention to the question of cultural identities, or has done so by regarding it as a static outcome and by borrowing from theoretical categories prevalent in other parts of the world. These discourses have largely drawn on the metaphor of mobility, described the identities of migrants and their children in terms of cultural compatibilities and incompatibilities (Liu, 2015) and coined terms such as transnational, diasporic, hybrid, dialogical, dual or in-between.

I soon realized that none of these categories accurately described the identities of the people that I met. The complexities that unfolded through my interpreting sessions shaped my conviction of the inadequacy to classify cultural identities as fixed outcomes and verbal categories, as well as the need to adopt instead a more processual and ecological perspective that would privilege personal biographies. It was by then clear to me that it was not enough to describe Chinese youth's identities as Spanish, Chinese, neither or both, in the same way that any simple and straightforward answer to the question of Dawei's cultural identity would have failed to do justice to who he was if removed from his biography and personal circumstances. My job as an interpreter was thus able to generate not only a deep interest in the topic of Chinese children's experiences and cultural identities, but also an intuition of the approach that I wanted to adopt to carry out this research.

On the other hand, Spain has had a short immigration history (Arango, 2000; 2002; Cachón Rodríguez, 2002, 2009), an exponential growth of the migrant population in the last few decades, and a second generation of

migrant children that is only now gaining visibility and coming of age (Portes & Celaya, 2009). These, together with other features, make Spain very different from other immigrant-receiving countries. Therefore, I believe there is even greater need to approach the study of children of migrants' experiences and identities from a fresh and situated perspective, because existing categories and discourses in the field of migration are often removed from the specificities of Spanish realities and do not necessarily connect to the experience of being a child of Chinese migrants in Spain.

Arango (1998, 2012), for example, has drawn attention to some peculiarities of Spain as a migration country. He first established a distinction between European countries and North America and Australasia, where the majority of studies on second generation children have originated (Arango, 1998). In Europe, he noted, nationality is primarily an ethnic concept, as opposed to North America or Australasia, where it is primarily a legal one. Europe has developed a close association –real or illusory—between territory, ethnic group, language and national identity (Cordeiro 1997, p.109), and this ideal correspondence has likely conditioned attitudes towards migrants.

Second, Arango (2012) established a distinction between Southern European countries (Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal), and Northern Europe (Germany, France, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, and Austria). The latter received large numbers of immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s, whereas the former became immigrant-receiving countries in the final quarter of the twentieth century. The experiences of these two groups differ not only in terms of the number of years that have constituted them as immigrant countries but also on account of the historical context and the structural differences that characterized their periods of immigration. Arango (2012) noted that the first group became immigrant countries at a time when informal employment was much less widespread, when industrial relations were more regulated and when "the welfare states were developing and expanding rather than called into question, as they are today" (p.55). By contrast, countries in the South of Europe became countries of immigration in the globalization and informalization eras (p.56).

All these particularities have likely resulted not only in structurally different migration patterns but also in different attitudes towards migration and different migration realities and experiences for migrants and their descendants.

The aim of this dissertation has thus been not only to explore the cultural identities of children of Chinese migrants living in Spain from a perspective that focuses on their personal voices and individual sense-making of the processes through which these identities have come into being, but also to situate these voices within the Spanish context where they live. It is through this approach that I aim to fill an important gap in the largely undocumented field of Chinese migration to Spain and make my original contribution to knowledge.

The main research questions that I address and that guide this dissertation are:

1. How do children of Chinese migrants perceive and articulate their cultural identity orientations? What are the conditions and processes through which these cultural identities have come into being?

2. How do the cultural identity practices of the participants illuminate different aspects of their processes of adaptation and/or lives in Spain?

What I argue through this dissertation is that the identities of the 14 participants whose life histories I present cannot be accurately contained within traditional identity labels that stress cultural contrasts and dichotomies and which have widely been used in the field of migration studies. Although these participants certainly inhabit dual, transnational or in-between realities, close attention to their personal narratives reveals that the constitution of their cultural identities is shaped by many other aspects, such as choices, disadvantages, real or imagined perceptions, power dynamics and opportunities, that span beyond culture and cultural mobility, organically

intersect with one another and break the dichotomy between China and Spain.

Before I proceed to the main contents, I will briefly describe the core components of this study. I will provide a working definition of the notion of cultural identity, define my participants, methodology and theoretical framework, and provide an outline of each remaining chapter in this dissertation.

1.2. Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is a form of identity and contains the idea of culture, a notion that has been as contested and debated as the term identity itself. Edward Hall (1966) defined culture as "those deep, common, unstated experiences which members of a given culture share, communicate without knowing, and which form the background against which all other events are judged" (p.x).

Since then, the notion of culture has been widely discussed across academic disciplines. Geertz's (1973) definition of culture was "the fabric of meanings in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action" (p.145), while Rogers and Steinfatt (1999) referred to culture as "the total way of life of a people, composed of their learned behavior patterns, values, norms and material objects" (p. 79). However, as pointed out by Liu (2015), an important commonality shared by these hundreds of definitions of culture is the notion of group boundaries: "every culture marks a territory whether it is physical, or symbolic, and this territory separates locals from foreigners" (pp.37-38). It is awareness of these boundaries that produce people's identities.

In the context of this research, cultural identity is therefore understood as an "identification with and perceived acceptance into a group that has shared systems of symbols and meanings as well as norms/rules for conduct" (Collier & Thomas, 1988, p. 113). Cultural identity locates an individual within a group and differentiates him or her from other groups. For children of Chinese

migrants, the issue of cultural identity raises questions such as whether they identify with China or Spain. If so, to what extent? And if not, what type of boundaries do they draw between themselves and others?

Moreover, in order to underline the complexity, dynamism and situated character of cultural identities, I have chosen to refer to the term "cultural identity practices" instead of cultural identities. The notion of practice functions as a framework that emphasizes how identities are not simply possessed but rather the dynamic and situated product of different forms of articulation and social exchanges (Hobart, 2010).

As to the development of cultural identity practices, Kim (2001) has noted that through continuous contact and interaction with the cultural environment, (which crucially involves interactions with other social agents as well), the individual interiorizes as valid and acceptable a series of cultural values, ideas and behaviors that enable him or her to function and relate to others in society. This process is known as enculturation:

> It is culture that programs a society's members to interpret verbal and non-verbal messages by defining what is real, what is true, what is right, what is beautiful, and what is good. Culture conditions individuals to certain patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving in varied social transactions (Kim, 2001, p.47).

It is the largely unconscious process of incorporating cultural patterns into individual psyches that results in the development of cultural identity practices (Kim, 2001; Liu, 2015). While these internalized cultural beliefs and cultural identities remain unquestioned and unconscious when one is exposed to one single cultural environment, they become more salient and a matter of choice when individuals move to a new cultural environment, or are exposed to and interact with two or more cultural milieus (Kim, 2001; Arnett Jensen, 2003; Liu, 2015).

1.3. Participants

This study is primarily based on the exploration of the life histories of 14 children of Chinese migrants living in Spain. In the very first stages of this research, I considered focusing on children of Chinese migrants who had migrated to Spain in childhood or adolescence (commonly referred to as the 1.5 generation). I assumed that, having had more sustained contact with their heritage culture, this group would likely have more identity issues than people born in Spain, whom I regarded as more likely to develop local identities and attachments. However, I eventually decided against this division, not only because my preliminary immersion in the field suggested that experiences were very diverse and that age at arrival was not a decisive or determining factor that conditioned people's cultural identities, but also because I did not want to fall into the trap of pigeonholing my participants' identities before having even started my research. Therefore, my only criteria for recruiting participants has been to be a child of Chinese migrants either born in Spain or having arrived in Spain via family reunification and having spent at least part of one's growing-up years in Spain.

I encountered a large number of people during the field stage of this research. The majority were children of Chinese migrants from China's province of Zhejiang, who make up the majority of the Chinese migrant population in Spain. Some were born in Spain, others had migrated in childhood or adolescence. Although not all the people that I met and interviewed as part of this research had stories as dramatic as the stories of Dawei, Ting and Tong, their biographies, personal experiences and the cultural identities that they expressed were always full of complexities and discontinuities and well beyond the limits of simple verbal categorizations.

1.4. Methodologies and Theoretical Framework

This study positions itself in the discipline of migration studies and uses an ethnographic approach to address migrant children's identities. Ethnography was chosen as the medium and practice through which to

conduct my research for its methodological flexibility and its ability to provide thick descriptions of individuals and their life worlds. In particular, my choice of life narrative interview as the leading tool to gather data has enabled me to better account for the complexities in the participants' experiences. By weaving past, present and future into meaningful coherent stories, personal narratives resist categories and generalizations and allow for an understanding of experiences and identity practices from a bottom, organic, situated perspective and in the participants' own terms.

My ontological and epistemological assumptions are grounded on two ideas. First, that the cultural identities of individuals who are routinely immersed in more than one cultural environment are self-reflexively constructed; and second, that they can be best grasped and apprehended by engaging in a critical dialogue with the ways in which individuals talk, reflect, enact, justify and self-reflectively construct their identities (that is, with their identity practices). Through this process, I as a researcher will gain a proximity with my participants while simultaneously gaining a better understanding of myself. Meaning is thus created not only through the voices of the participants but also through the interaction between these voices and my interpretation as researcher in a dialogical exchange.

1.5. Outline of the Study

In order to better contextualize this research, the following chapter will introduce an overview of the history of Chinese migration in Spain. It will present a chronological account of different waves of Chinese migration to the Spanish territory, followed by the demographic characteristics of the Chinese migrant population in Spain. It will provide a description of different migration profiles and of the life conditions of Chinese families and their children. It will discuss the social conditions of Spain as a migration country and the attitudes of Spanish locals and the media towards the Chinese community.

The second part of this chapter will provide an overview of the literature on the topic of Chinese migration in Spain, as well as of the literature on migrants and migrant children's cultural identities. More specifically, I will argue that studies on Chinese migration in Spain remain scarce, have not addressed the issue of migrant children's identities in depth, or have done so by borrowing from concepts that largely draw on the metaphor of mobility and have been used in other parts of the world. Against these bounded models of identity, I will suggest the need to focus more on micro-narratives of identity in order to both give voice to the participants and to unravel the dynamism and complexities of their life stories and processes of adaptation.

In the last section of this chapter, I will explain my ontological and epistemological assumptions and the theoretical framework adopted for this research. I will first draw on Giddens's theory of identity in order to illustrate my understanding of cultural identity as self-reflexively constructed. I will then borrow from Hobart's ideas to argue for a dialogical approach to the study of cultural identities based on exchange and critical engagement with the participants' identity practices.

The third chapter will explain my choice of ethnography as a guiding practice to carry out this research and will give an account of my process of immersion in the field, the difficulties that I encountered and the different stages of the research. I will then provide a description of the characteristics of my participants as well as of the methodological tools that I used to collect and analyze the data, in particular the use of life narrative interviews. Finally, I will discuss issues of validity, translatability from field to paper and a self-reflection on my position as researcher, my relationship with the participants and the implications of this relationship for the interpretation of results.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters contain the empirical findings generated by this research. The fourth chapter, "Beyond Identity Labels", will introduce the narratives of three participants (Mona, Binbin, Carlos) who described their identities as resisting categorization. Vera's narrative, who identified as Chinese, will also be introduced in this chapter as a contrast to

Mona's identity practices and experiences. The narratives of Mona, Binbin and Carlos blur, contest and transcend conventional cultural identity labels and metaphors of mobility. Instead of relying on categories, these participants emphasized the importance played by attitude, context, power dynamics and opportunities in the constitution of their identities and suggested the need to understand these from the perspective of their personal evolution and situated life histories.

The fifth chapter, "Here and There: New Forms of Dual Identity and Identities in Between", will introduce the narratives of four participants (Sara, Yun, Mimi and Qi) who described their identities as dual or in-between. The chapter will try to illustrate how the different cultural identity practices that these participants engaged in encompass a much more complex and diverse form of dualism and in-betweenness that what previous literature on the topic has suggested. The chapter will argue that there is much more than cultural and linguistic dichotomies in the lives of the participants, and that their dual or in-between identities must be understood as material or symbolic spaces of belonging that are constantly changing and are dynamically created in response to their personal realities.

The sixth chapter, "New Forms of Chinese Identity", will challenge current discourses that emphasize the mobility and cultural dualism of migrant children's identities by presenting the narratives of six participants (Changkun, Duna, Lili, Chun, Lu, Yiyi) who felt unambiguously Chinese. What this chapter will seek to demonstrate is that these cultural identities are both experienced as fixed and as inextricable from the Spanish context where the participants live. The narratives will first reveal how Chinese identities were constructed through othering processes that forced the participants to embrace their Chinese identities as a result of society's prejudice and discrimination. Second, by constructing Spanish people as Other, the participants also demarcated and reinforced their Chineseness. Their identities were thus construed through patterns of interaction between Chinese and Spanish societies and the meaning that the participants

attributed to their Chineseness was uniquely situated and embedded in their Spanish realities.

The main findings will be summarized in the concluding chapter. This chapter will provide a detailed answer to my research questions, and will highlight again the complex, multilayered, dynamic, and contextually determined character of the participants' identities as revealed through their personal narratives. It will stress the importance of focusing on individual biographies when approaching the participants' cultural identity practices. It will discuss the study's limitations and will provide suggestions for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present chapter has two objectives. On the one hand, it will describe the history and main characteristics of Chinese migration in Spain and the attitudes of mainstream Spanish society towards the Chinese community. The purpose is to contextualize the lives and circumstances of my participants from a broader social perspective and to show some of the features and specificities of Chinese migration to Spain.

On the other hand, this chapter will locate my research against the existing literature on Chinese migration in Spain and against the debate on migrant children's identities. The literature on migrants and migrant children's adaptation and identities is so extensive that it would be hardly possible to cover all that has been written before. Therefore my aim is not to provide an exhaustive review, but to highlight how a significant body of literature has drawn on cultural dichotomies and metaphors of mobility to produce and reproduce discourses and theories on migrant children's identities. My intention, expressed in the third part of this chapter, is to locate my research against these perspectives, show some of their limitations, and propose a more individual, intersectional and situated approach based on reflexive processes and situated practices.

2.1. The Chinese in Spain

Timeline

Apart from some anecdotal evidence dating from Spain's colonial era, and a few hundred convicts who were sent from Cuba to serve their sentences in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla in the middle of the nineteenth century, the first significant wave of Chinese migrants in Spain goes back to the 1920s and 30s (Beltrán Antolín, 1997). These earlier pioneers were peddlers from Wenzhou and Qingtian, in China's Southeastern province of Zhejiang, who

traveled around Europe selling hand-made trinkets (Beltrán Antolín, 1997; Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002; Nieto, 2003).

In the same decade, the first Chinese circus was established in Madrid and a few of its acrobats, from Zhejiang Province, settled in the country (Beltrán Antolín, 1997; Villarino, 2012). A number of Chinese are also believed to have joined the International Brigades during Spain's Civil War (1936-1939), but very few remained in the country (Beltrán Antolín, 1997; Nieto, 2003).

As pointed out by Beltrán Antolín (1997), the second wave of Chinese immigration can be traced to the 1950s, after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). During this period, a group of Chinese Christian priests arrived in Spain through Hong Kong. Franco's regime also established diplomatic relationships with the Kuomingtang in 1953, a situation that attracted a number of Taiwanese students who arrived in Spain on cultural exchange programs. Some of them eventually opened businesses and settled in Spain. However, after the PRC joined the United Nations in 1973 and was recognized by Spain as the official representative of Chinese people, embassies were established in both countries, and relations with Taiwan came to an end (Beltrán Antolín, 1997).

Despite those scattered waves of immigration, Spain offered fewer economic resources than other European countries and as a result was never an immigrant destination (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002). It was not until the 1980s that it changed from a largely migrant-exporting into a migrant-importing country (Izquierdo, 1996; Martínez Veiga, 1997; Arango, 2000).

Nieto (2003) has noted that a number of converging circumstances fostered the arrival of people from other countries, and in particular of Chinese. First, the influx of Chinese migrants rapidly increased after Spain joined the European Economic Community in 1986 and initiated a democratic transition that boosted economic development. The 1980s coincided with China's era of opening and reform, which made migration to other countries easier for Chinese citizens and raised Chinese people's economic expectations.

This decade saw the emergence and expansion of the Chinese restaurant business. The popularity of Chinese restaurants first increased in countries like Belgium, the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom after the Second World War, and it was in the 1960s that overseas Chinese living in those countries began to expand their businesses in Spain (Beltrán Antolín, 1997; Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002).

Spain was regarded as relatively poor compared to other European countries, but had the advantage of few Chinese settlers, little competition and lax immigration laws, including frequent amnesties and few controls (Beltrán Antolín, 1997; Villarino, 2012; Arango, 2013). This, combined with the saturation of the Chinese restaurant business in other European countries (Pieke, 1992; Beltrán Antolín, 1997; Benton, 2011), and the rise of the tourism industry in Spain's Mediterranean coast, gradually established Spain as a new land of opportunity (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002). At the same time, the family and descendants of some of the peddlers initially landed in Spain in the 1920s began to open restaurants as well. As a result of the need for manpower to operate their businesses, they encouraged and helped relatives and friends to migrate to Spain (Beltrán Antolín, 1997).

According to Villarino (2012), in the beginning, the most common strategy to migrate was to obtain a family loan and to sign a work contract with a friend or relative already established in Spain. This person would provide the newcomer not only with a job but also very often with a roof over his head. Yet this practice, which began as a favor, soon turned into a business. Chinese people would pay large amounts of money in exchange of a work permit and an airplane ticket. Those who could not afford the package had the option of working for an employer for a period of time, earning little or no money, until they covered their debt. However, the implementation of more strict controls since the year 2000, and in particular since the onset of the economic crisis, has made it more difficult to carry out these practices, and the opportunities to enter Spain with a work visa are very limited today (Villarino, 2012).

In the 1990s, the accelerated arrival of Chinese gradually led to the expansion and diversification of economic activities. On the one hand, the restaurant business, predominant in the 1990s, soon reached a point of saturation, a phenomenon that set the transition toward other types of activities: gift shops, textile businesses, hairdressers, retail shops, wholesalers, etc. (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002). Marco Martínez (n.d) has pointed out that restaurants and textile were predominant activities among the Chinese community until police crackdowns targeted illegal textile businesses between 1995 and 1998. This led to the emergence of new businesses, such as wholesalers belonging to large Chinese import-export companies, dollar shops, small groceries (*tiendas de frutos secos*), and more recently hairdressers, as well as fruit and retail shops (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002).

On the other hand, as the number of Chinese migrants increased, and their profiles diversified, new opportunities emerged to cater for the needs of the members of the community, and new businesses such as karaoke parlors, law firms, clinics, etc. targeted at Chinese began to proliferate (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002).

In addition, Chinese newspapers, schools, and associations were created. Grouped according to place of origin, economic activity, or targeted at specific segments of the Chinese population, associations are usually founded and run by Chinese people who have lived in Spain for many years and have acquired a certain economic status and prestige, and are characterized by their pluralism and instability (Nieto, 2001).

Today's Figures

Chinese migration to Spain has increased dramatically since the second half of the twentieth century. While only 167 Chinese were registered in Spain in 1961, this figure increased exponentially in the following decades, raising to 4,090 in 1990, 9,158 in 1995 and 28,693 in 2000 (Sáiz López, 2004).

Between 2008 and 2012, as a result of the economic recession that hit European countries in 2008, Spain's National Institute of Statistics (INE) recorded a decrease in the overall number of immigrants. However, this phenomenon, did not seem to affect Chinese migration, which has continued to grow.

In 2018, the total population in Spain was 46,7 million and the number of foreigners had reached 4.7 million (10 percent of the total population). Among these, 215,748 were Chinese, but this figure excludes illegal immigrants and those who have adopted the Spanish nationality (INE, 2018).

Today, the Chinese have presence in all the regions of the Spanish territory and have become the second largest non-EU immigrant community in Spain behind the Moroccans (INE, 2018). According to Tébar (2011), their pattern of distribution has been characterized by a parallel process of dispersion and concentration. While newly arrived Chinese migrants usually concentrate in big cities, longer term residents usually try to look for smaller cities with a lower concentration of Chinese in order to expand their business and minimize competition by co-ethnics.

Demographic structure

The demographic structure of the Chinese migrant community is characterized by a majority of working-age population (73,57 percent), gender parity (47,73 percent are females), a large number of children under 16 (24,57 percent), and few people older than 65 (1.85 percent) (Masdeu Torruella & Sáiz López, 2017).

The median age of the Chinese immigrant in Spain is 31 (INE, 2018b), and the family remains the main unit of mobility, as opposed to other immigrant communities, like the Filipino, where it is usually females who emigrate, leaving their families behind (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2004; Sáiz López, 2004).

Diversity of profiles

Entrepreneurs from Qingtian and Wenzhou

Approximately 70 percent of Chinese people who migrate to Spain do it for economic reasons and come from China's Southeastern province of Zhejiang, more concretely Qingtian (Beltrán Antolín, 1997, 2008; Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002) and from the surrounding urban municipality of Wenzhou. Qingtian is a prefecture-level city belonging to the administration of Lishui. It covers an extension of 2,492 square kilometers and is made up of 21 villages or rural districts (*xiang*) and 10 urban districts or towns (*zhen*). Hecheng Town is the main urban center and symbolic capital of the area and commonly referred to as Qingtian (Masdeu Torruella, 2014).

The environment in Qingtian, with scarp mountains and frequent floods, does not provide enough to satisfy the basics of its inhabitants, and as a result many have seen the necessity to migrate to other places (Sáiz López, 2006). People from the area are often credited with endurance as a result of having been born in a very hostile environment, and have a reputation for their ability to set up businesses (Fernández-Stembridge & Fisac, 2013). The surrounding municipality of Wenzhou is a big and prosperous city whose inhabitants are well-known for their talent to do business. In fact, they are commonly labeled as the "Chinese Jews" (Villarino, 2012).

People from Zhejiang reproduce their social and family customs, and their Confucian traditions in Spain. They usually work towards opening their own businesses and bring a strong adaptability and capacity for sacrifice that ultimately guarantees their survival and their place in the new society (Villarino, 2012).

Today's predominance of migrants from Zhejiang can be dated to the first peddler immigration wave in the 1920s, and to the arrival of Chinese already established in other European countries who were originally from the same area (Beltrán Antolín, 1997). As pointed out by Villarino (2012), people from Zhejiang form a unique community and their entrepreneur spirit is well-known in other Chinese regions. Zhejiang is one of the most developed and dynamic regions in China. Eleven of its cities range among the 30 cities with

the highest disposable income in China. Moreover, since 2006, none of its cities are under the threshold of extreme poverty. However, its structure, based on small family businesses which continuously compete among each other, has raised concerns as to the possibility for the region to develop larger firms that may one day become competitive in their sector. The mentality of these entrepreneurs, caught in a spiral of low prices and little desire to invest in productivity and added value, has equally raised concerns as to the economic future of the region (Villarino, 2012).

Students

Since the 1990s, the increase in the flow of Chinese immigrants landing in Spain has gradually diversified traditional migration profiles. On the one hand, there is a much larger number of Chinese university students. Beltrán Antolín and Sáiz López (2002), who have documented the evolution of the Chinese student population in Spain, have noted that during the 1980s and 90s, the Japanese were the largest group of Asian students in Spain. However, since the year 2000, the tendency has been reversed. At the end of 2009, the number of Chinese students reached 3,485, compared to only 698 Japanese (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002). The increasing visibility of Chinese university students is replacing the dominant pattern of rural Zhejiang Chinese migration that characterized the first waves of migration. As pointed out by Villarino (2012), recent data from the Spanish consulate in Beijing revealed that the number of student, tourist and business visas to Spain was 38 times higher than the number of work and family reunification visas. The first type of visas was experiencing an annual growth that ranged between 10 and 35 percent, whereas the second was decreasing by more than 40 percent.

Although the majority of students eventually return to China after graduation, a few of them choose to stay. Highly educated and able to speak Spanish, they often take up qualified jobs or build their own companies, and marry locals (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2004, p.367).

Second wave of migrants

Spain has recently seen the emergence of new waves of economic migration from other areas, such as the provinces of Anhui, Jiangsu or Fujian, and more recently from Northeast China (Lianoning, Heilongjiang, Jilin). There are also small Chinese communities of people from Beijing or Shanghai, and from other areas (Henan, Hebei, Anhui, Yunnan, etc.) (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002; Beltrán Antolín, 2008). All of them have different group characteristics, and have been classified as the second wave of Chinese migration (Sáiz López, 2004). The immigrants from the Northeast in particular (Jilin, Liaoning, Heilongjiang) left their hometowns after big state heavy industries shut down in the 1980s during China's capitalist reforms (Ma Mung, 2005), and their migration project is different from that of migrants from Zhejiang. According to Sáiz López (2004, 2015), some have worked in urban areas in China before, and arrive in Spain with the intention of taking up paid jobs, saving money and then return to their countries. Some come alone, are more educated and have less difficulty to learn the local language, and are more willing to take up jobs in the local market, especially in the construction and industry sectors. In addition, there are migrants from other provinces in China, but the numbers are not significant.

Overall, Chinese migration patterns, traditionally restricted to a very specific type of labor migration oriented towards family business, or family reunification, with little migration from political or academic reasons, have gradually changed. Today, we cannot talk about one single type of profile or Chinese migration pattern in Spain.

One of the purposes of distinguishing between the several existing immigration profiles in Spain is to better circumscribe the characteristics of the target population of this research. Different profiles and backgrounds are also particularly significant because they will partly condition the migration and adaptation experiences of Chinese regardless of their age.

Children of Immigration

This particular study will focus on the children of first generation migrants, who have become the fastest-growing segment of Spain's migrant population (Portes & Celaya, 2012). With the exception of one participant, who was originally from Beijing, and another from Fujian, the rest were all descendants of the first and dominant wave of Chinese migrants from Zhejiang Province. As explained in the previous section, these immigrants are generally characterized by a lower socio-economic background, the aspiration to own a family business and poor integration in Spanish society. Their migration project usually starts working as employees for other members of the Chinese community. This situation lasts until they have saved enough to establish their own business, which, if able to generate large enough profits, will expand with time (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2009).

In order to achieve these objectives and speed up the process leading to autonomy and self-employment, Chinese migrants from Zhejiang lead a life of sacrifice and self-abnegation. At least in the beginning, it is common for them to devote their time almost exclusively to work, and leave their young children in China under the care of grandparents, relatives, or boarding schools (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2001). This is a usual practice, not only for those who migrate overseas, but also among rural migrants inside China who move to the city in search of better opportunities (see, for example Chang & Dong, 2011; Jingzhong & Lu, 2011; Wen & Lin, 2012). A large number of children born in Spain are sent back to China within their first year of life, and only return to Spain after conditions for the family have improved, a circumstance that, in the eyes of Chinese parents, serves to reinforce the children's ties with the homeland (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2001; Torruella & Sáiz López, 2017).

This particular event is critical for children born of migrant parents, and has significant repercussions, since "how the children experience this separation, their social conditions back home, and their perceptions of what is going on plays a critical role in their subsequent adaptations in the new land" (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 67). After reaching school age, or

later depending on the family circumstances and the legal process of reunification, children join their parents and are enrolled in Spanish schools, where they initiate their socialization into the norms and culture of the host society.

The family business plays an important role in the work mentality of Chinese migrants from Zhejiang. It is considered a unit of production, distribution and consumption (Sáiz López, 2015), and its establishment and operation require the effort and collaboration of every member of the household. The reality is often harsh: long working hours, low hourly wages and poor working conditions (Sanders & Nee, 1998). Yet the need to provide financial stability and autonomy and to sustain all family members (Harrell, 1987, p. 94, in Beltrán Antolín, 2000) explains the effort, resilience and in many cases self-exploitation that defines the work dynamics of most Chinese migrants. It also explains their commitment to saving and frugality, so different from Western consumer societies (Beltrán Antolín, 2000).

The family business as a central element of the migration project has consequences for the children of the first generation. First, migrant parents often have to work long hours in order to provide for the material needs of their children and are as a result less available to meet their children's emotional, psychological and academic needs (Qin, 2006, 2008; Marsden, 2014).

Second, the children in Chinese migrant families are often required to run errands, serve at the family restaurant on weekends or tend the family shop. As they acquire Spanish language skills, they are usually requested to act as translators, mediators, and consultants for their parents in order to facilitate communication with mainstream society. Their roles may include mediation with business suppliers or translation during medical appointments or meetings with school teachers. They may mediate in outside disputes, play the role of baby-sitters for their younger siblings, or act as financial consultants for issues related to the family business (Valenzuela, 1999; Yeh, 2003; Park, 2005; Orellana, 2009; Chung, 2013). This position is particularly important because the majority of migrant entrepreneurs from Zhejiang speak

poor Spanish, have little contact with Spanish society and must rely on their children for these tasks. Their children's role as "cultural brokers" (Hall & Sham, 1998; Kim, Brenner, Liang & Asay, 2003; Hua & Costigan, 2010; Chung, 2013) for their family has been said to reverse the traditional parent-child relationships by infantilizing the parents who become dependent on their children and turning children into adults by burdening them with responsibilities that in many cases do not seem appropriate to their age (Park, 2001; Chung, 2013) and that most likely increase their levels of psychological stress (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez Orozco, 2001).

Besides helping with the family business, the children of Chinese migrants seem to have more household responsibilities than their local peers: cooking and housework, looking after younger siblings and sending them to school or helping with their homework (Yeh, 2003). This is especially true of older siblings who often have to juggle all these responsibilities because their parents need to devote most of their time to running the family business. This older generation of children often have to navigate their way into the new society with little or no support from other family members or members of society (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2001; Sáiz López, 2015). Some children of Chinese and Asian migrants have reported feeling closer to their parents' values and developing cultural tensions with younger siblings who, as a result of having had fewer responsibilities within the family, tend to achieve better integration in the host society (Song, 1996, 1997, 1997a, 1999; Pyke, 2005; Sáiz López, 2006).

Finally, a large number of studies have defined Chinese immigration overseas as diaspora, a concept that has been applied to Chinese migrants in Spain, in particular to the first wave of migrants from Zhejiang (Beltrán Antolín, 2000; Lambea Ortega, 2015).

According to these studies, diaspora Chinese are characterized by the strong ties that they maintain with other overseas members of the ethnic community and with China. Their economic success largely depends on those ties, as they often engage in international trade and a large number establish businesses in different countries (Cohen, 1997; Lie, 1995; Uña Juárez,

Clemente, Espinosa & Fernández-Antón, 2011). As explained by Beltrán Antolín (2000), the relationship with other diaspora members is sustained by an ethic code of loyalty and reciprocity that operates at all levels of interaction. It is a dynamic of give and take essential for the attainment of economic prosperity, as it helps obtain information, manpower, credits, and favors from other members of the community. This network, Beltrán Antolín (2000) noted, is equally important for finding marriage partners. It partly explains why a large number of first generation Chinese speak and understand little Spanish, as the extensive ethnic network makes it possible for them to operate daily without recourse to services from mainstream society. The ties with their places of origin, where parents and relatives look after the children and manage the properties and interests of those who have left to other countries, constitute an important element of this diasporic network.

Chinese Migrants in the Eyes of Spanish Society

Cachón Rodríguez (2002) has distinguished three phases in the constitution of Spain as a migration country. In the first period, before 1980, Spain was largely an immigrant-exporting country. The second period, between 1980 and 1999, was characterized by the gradual arrival of immigrants and Spain's transition to an immigrant-receiving country. Finally, the period of consolidation that began after 1999 was characterized by a rapid increase and diversification in the migrant population.

During the first period, the immigrant population in Spain was predominantly composed of Europeans (65 percent in 1981), but there was also a minority of people coming from Latin America (18 percent) and North America (7 percent). Immigrants from Africa and Asia represented less than 10 percent of the migrant population and immigration in that period was largely motivated by political reasons (Cachón Rodríguez, 2002).

The most significant change that took place in the second phase was the arrival of immigrants from Africa and Asia in the 1990s, the beginning of migration for economic reasons, and, from an institutional perspective, the approval of the first Immigration Law (1985) and the establishment of

immigrant quotas. This period was also characterized by the emergence of a second generation of migrants who were either born in Spain or arrived through family reunification (Cachón Rodríguez, 2002).

The third phase coincided with Spain's entry into the European Union and with a period of sustained growth at the beginning of the new century. It was a period marked by a diversification in the profiles and countries of origin of the immigrant population (Cachón Rodríguez, 2002). It was at this time that the phenomenon of Chinese immigration in Spain acquired visibility, not only through an exponential increase in the number of migrants, but also because the distribution of Chinese immigration in Spain moved from dispersion to concentration (Sáiz López, 2015).

In the first decade of the twenty first century, the word "invasion" was commonly heard among Spanish residents living in neighborhoods where a high concentration of Chinese lived and worked (Sáiz López, 2015). This "invasion" was also a phenomenon in schools, as a consequence of the massive enrollment of children of Chinese migrants who joined their parents via family reunification.

As a result of being more "visible", the practices and behaviors of the Chinese community became more subject to judgment and criticism, as well as the object of stereotypes. This phenomenon was complicated by the homogeneity that state authorities, institutions, and in general mainstream society, attribute to ethnic groups. In this sense, no matter how much Chinese differ in terms of class, resources, place of origin, generation, length of residence in the host country, states and mainstream societies in Spain and across the world routinely ignore this segmentation, a phenomenon that has led to the misunderstanding and alienation of migrants and their descendants and the reinforcement of simplistic and stereotypical views (Benton & Gómez, 2014).

The Media
Spanish media reports on Chinese migrants have played an important role in both spreading and reinforcing stereotypes by insistently covering

marginal or sensationalist aspects of what has often been identified as characteristics of Chinese culture (Petit, 2002; Nieto, 2003a; Beltrán Antolín, 2008). The Chinese community, on the other hand, has persistently voiced complaints about the tendency of the Spanish media to only report on negative stories about China, such as natural disasters, scandals or criminal activities (Villarino, 2012).

In the 1980s, for example, the Spanish media often reported on the non-hygienic conditions of Chinese restaurants. In the 1990s, the focus shifted to Chinese mafias, which were associated with exploitation, money laundering, and illegal practices (Beltrán Antolín, 2008). Emphasis has been placed on expired or counterfeit products, or on the depiction of Chinese people as industrious competitors that pose a threat to the Spanish economy. Chinese businesses have for example been held responsible for the economic crisis of the textile and shoe industry, an accusation that led to serious racist attacks in the city of Elche in 2004 (Beltrán Antolín, 2008).

Today, references to insalubrity and illegal practices are still common. A very recent example has been the Emperor Operation, a massive money laundering and tax evasion police crackdown targeted at Chinese people that took place in Madrid in 2012 and that grabbed front page headlines across Spain. These stories are often interspersed with superficial news about Chinese folklore and cultural celebrations, or with representations of the Chinese as "wealthy and irritating tourists" (Hughes, 2014, p.31).

Local Perceptions

Today, the Chinese are widely regarded by Spanish society as a hard-working, mysterious, unapproachable, and closely knit community (Beltrán Antolín, 1997; Petit, 2002), and this is the result of the image spread by the media and the very little contact that Spanish people have with the Chinese community.

In this regard, media portrayals of an ethnic group strongly influence the opinions of mainstream society, and as pointed out by Liu (2015), are particularly effective in activating and perpetuating stereotypes when the

audience "either has little direct experience of the ethnic group or lacks other sources of verification" (p.81).

One widespread belief, for example, is that Chinese migrants are not willing to learn the Spanish language and make no efforts to integrate (Beltrán Antolín, 2008). However, the reason why most first generation Chinese hardly speak any Spanish is more complex than just a simple reluctance to learn and is often more connected to language barriers and communication hurdles. The majority of Chinese who do not speak Spanish are first generation migrants from Zhejiang Province, with low educational backgrounds, and who regard learning a language so remote from their native tongue as an arduous and often unsurmountable task, even more so when the main goal of the immigration project in its initial phase is to earn as much as possible so as to be able to establish a business (Beltrán Antolín, 2008). These linguistic and socio-economic constraints explain Chinese people's low levels of integration from a more nuanced perspective than the perception of their cultural distance and their presumed unwillingness to integrate.

Connotations of exoticism also permeate the views that Spanish locals hold towards the Chinese. Evidence of this can be found in the large number of myths about Chinese culture that circulate and are perpetuated among mainstream society. An example is the emergence of urban legends such as the belief that Chinese people do not bury their dead and which originated from evidence of very few Chinese burials registered in Spain. The scarcity of burial registrations among the Chinese community is however mainly the result of a very young migrant population, combined with the fact that most Chinese choose to return to their homeland after reaching retirement age (Petit, 2002; Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2004; Villarino, 2012). These constructions resonate with Said's (1978) criticism of Western culture's representations of the East as a source of both fascination and danger. The combination of fascination and danger has been emphasized by Nieto (2013), who referred to the image of Chinatowns for the locals as "an internal, nearby, easy and cheap trip to the difference" (p.84) while stressing that the Chinese

are also feared and demonized for working long hours and posing a disloyal threat and competition to more traditional Spanish businesses.

Stereotypes Leading to Racism

Stereotypes and generalizations have in some cases resulted in racist behaviors against the Chinese community. The most significant incident were the violent protests against Chinese-owned shoe businesses that took place in the city of Elche in 2004, where Spanish shoe manufacturers accused the Chinese of disloyal competition (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2002; Cachón Rodríguez, 2005).

In the academic circles, racist statements have been voiced through Julián Pavón, a Spanish Economics Professor at Madrid's Polytechnic University, who spread his idea of the "Chinese parasitic model of economic expansion" through social media. The idea behind his theory was that the Chinese in Spain establish Chinese companies which only employ Chinese workers, to sell Chinese products made in China, and that the benefits obtained through Spanish consumers are wired to Chinese banks, thus contributing nothing to the Spanish economy (Villarino, 2012).

Conversely, stereotypes and essentialist representations also exist among Chinese with regard to Spanish people. Spanish society is often conceived as more lazy, chaotic, with higher levels of criminality, and suffering from a decline in family values such as respect for elders (Beltrán Antolín, 2008).

Regardless of all this, it has become increasingly complicated to determine exactly the real dimension of these views and stereotypes about the Chinese community in the social imaginary. As migration patterns are diversifying and new generations are emerging, views are changing, and it is difficult to appreciate the extent to which stereotypes are presently being contested, dispersed or reinforced.

Some scholars, for example, have argued that overall, discrimination in Spain is not a generalized attitude, and that blatant racism is confined to isolated cases in specific contexts and circumstances (Beltrán Antolín, 2008).

The study conducted by Martínez i Coma and Duval Hernández (2009) found that there was a tendency among Spanish people to want a reduction in the number of immigrants. Others, like Arango (2013) have claimed that Spain is not a racist nation, but rather a particularly receptive one for immigrants regardless of their nationality. This is attributed to the fact that immigrants have traditionally been regarded as beneficial and necessary for the labor market, as well as to the implementation of open immigration policies, which include several amnesties and the establishment of both the Permanent Observatory for Immigration and the Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants in 1994. The latter, composed of NGO representatives and immigrant associations, among others, must grant approval before any bill on immigration is adopted by the government. Moreover, unlike other European countries, immigrants in Spain are not required to pass language and culture tests as a pre-requisite to obtain a residence permit (Arango, 2013).

Arango (2013) has also pointed out that Spain's political transition towards democracy after Franco's dictatorship has resulted in the emergence of a culture that idealizes the values associated with democracy and consequently condemns derogatory public statements about immigrants.

2.2. Research on Chinese Migrant Children in Spain

Existing studies on Chinese migration in Spain have documented from a general perspective the history, demographic characteristics, patterns of incorporation and socio-economic activities of first generation migrants. However, fewer studies have been conducted among the children of the first generation of Chinese settlers, perhaps due to the fact that Chinese migration is a very recent phenomenon and the generation of young Chinese born of migrant parents has only recently become a visible group. In fact, with very few exceptions (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2001; Sáiz López 2006; Mancila, 2011; Song, 2014), no in-depth study has been conducted exploring the adaptation of young Chinese in Spain. Only recently, a few highly-educated Chinese children of migrants have begun to express their experiences and

those of other co-ethnics through artistic means of representation (see for example Zhou, 2015; Arregui & Espiró, 2016; Ye, 2016), but this remains an emerging phenomenon. In general, the data available on the adaptation experiences of Chinese migrants in Spain originates from the media and from a very limited number of scholarly studies, which have explored several aspects related to their adaptation that we describe below.

Clash between Family and School Values

The socialization of children of Chinese migrants into the mores and practices of Spanish society largely takes place through enrollment in Spanish compulsory education. School attendance makes possible Spanish language acquisition, contact with other local peers and familiarization with the values of the mainstream society. Beltrán Antolín and Sáiz López (2001) have documented all these aspects in the lives of Chinese children of migrants, and noted the existence of a clash between the mainstream values of Spanish society and the more traditional Chinese values instilled by parents in the context of the family. In particular, the traditional Chinese principle of hierarchy whereby children must show obedience and respect towards their parents is not observed or cultivated in Spanish society and this often leads to intergenerational conflicts.

Studies on children of Chinese migrants conducted in other countries have similarly emphasized the issue of intergenerational clashes (e,g. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Song, 2006, 2008; Choi, He & Harachi, 2008; Juang, Styed & Cookston, 2012) and observed that the transition from what they describe as a collectivist society to an individualist society often poses challenges that exacerbate conflictual parent-child relations during adolescence (Kwak, 2003; Le, Goebert & Wallen, 2009). Developmental, immigration-induced (parent-child separation, language barriers, lack of communication resulting from parents' need to work long hours in order to make ends meet) and cultural factors (clash of values between both societies)

have been identified as contributing to increased parent-child alienation in migrant families (Qin, 2006).

In the Spanish context, first generation Chinese have expressed fears that their son or daughter might "become too Spanish" (Villarino, 2012), as they associate Spanish behaviors with a loss of traditional values of respect and family obligations. The children of Chinese migrants have reported fear of disappointing their parents by showing an inclination towards the values of Spanish society (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz Lopez, 2001). Others have manifested disagreement with their parents' values, practices and work ethics. In a conversation with a child of Chinese migrants, for example, Villarino (2012) reported how his informant criticized his parents for working long hours. More specifically, he could not understand why they would accept clients past the restaurant's opening hours only to earn a little extra income. Beltrán Antolín (2008) has traced these differences to a clash between the more rural mentalities of the parent generation and the work patterns and mentalities of more advanced industrial societies where the children have grown up. In the latter, paid holidays and the reduction of working hours have become an end in themselves and have gradually displaced more traditional ethics of sacrifice, frugality and long working hours.

Beltrán Antolín and Sáiz López (2001) have stressed that the distance between family and school values generates pressure to conform to both worlds and communication problems between parents and children. Sáiz López (2006) indicated that all her participants had an awareness of belonging to two worlds, private-family-Chinese on the one hand, and public-school and society-Spanish on the other, a phenomenon that has been documented by other studies (Uña Juárez, Clemente, Espinosa & Fernández-Antón, 2011b). Sáiz López (2006) indicated that family values were acknowledged by the participants as extremely important in instilling, nurturing and sustaining a sense of ethnic identity.

In other cases, the existence of a dual cultural frame of reference results in hybridized cultural realities for the children. In this regard, Mehta (1998) has pointed out that conflicting values and expectations from family and

school may affect the individual and impose the need "to create 'a third reality', that is neither that of his or her parents' homeland nor of their adopted land, but uniquely and historically different. This third space spans the inner and outer reality" (p.137). In the Spanish context, the literature has reported cases of children who do not feel a strong identification with either Spanish or Chinese culture but rather a more nuanced sentiment or an estrangement from both (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2001).

Discrimination

Previous studies have indicated that Chinese children in Spain suffer from peer discrimination in schools, primarily due to stereotypes about their culture or inability to speak the language (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2001; Sáiz López, 2006; Mancila, 2011; Pérez-Milans, 2011). Discrimination may be overt or covert, and may be observed at different levels, including peers and educators in schools, mainstream society or media representations of the Chinese community.

According to Akhtar (2010), a number of factors affect the chances that a child of migrant parents might suffer discrimination from peers. These include anatomical and physiognomic differences with the mainstream group (height, skin color, etc.), socio-economic status or neurotic habits (tics, excessive shyness, etc.).

In this sense, the ability to speak the language does not always guarantee acceptance. In her life story of a second-generation Chinese in Málaga (Spain), for example, Mancila (2011) narrated how her respondent felt marginalized in school despite being born in Spain and having bilingual competence in Spanish and Chinese. The respondent reported greater affinity with other Chinese children who attended Chinese language school with her on weekends. Evidence from other studies has indicated that Chinese complementary schools play an important role as enclaves where young Chinese are able to find people with similar experiences with whom they can share a sense of belonging (Francis, Archer & Mau, 2010).

Similarly, other studies have pointed out that Chinese students in Spanish schools are often exoticized by their teachers and constructed as cognitively and culturally distant (Pérez-Milans, 2011), or as quiet, reserved, disciplined, lacking social and integration skills (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2001; Sáiz López, 2006; Pérez-Milans, 2011), a stereotype that complicates their adaptation to schools.

The study conducted by Song (2014) among children of Chinese migrants revealed a predominance of poor adaptation outcomes and strong feelings of marginalization. His participants reported a sense of mismatched expectations: they anticipated better opportunities and life conditions than their parents, but reality proved otherwise. They also reported perceived discrimination. They said that people looked at them differently, placed more demands upon them as compared to locals, and this in turn generated negative feelings (p.201). Paradoxically, while a majority (83 percent) felt integrated in Spanish society, 73 percent of them felt discriminated by mainstream Spanish society.

These findings confirm the observations of studies conducted among the children of Chinese immigrants in other countries, which suggest that Chinese (and Asian) students suffer discrimination by peers and society, often more than other ethnic groups. A study conducted in the United States by Alvarez, Juang & Liang, (2006, p.482) found that 90 percent of Asian American students reported having experienced direct racism and 99 percent had witnessed racism toward another Asian in the past five years. In their study among Chinese immigrant youth in San Francisco, Yeh, Kim, Pituc, & Atkins (2008) reported that their participants "experienced daily, frequent, microagressions that challenge[d] their self-worth and foster[ed] a climate of fear" (p.43). Other studies have documented similar findings (e.g Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Greene, Way & Pahl, 2006; Qin, Way & Rana, 2008; Benner & Kim, 2009).

At the societal level, some critics in other countries have identified identity denial and identity prescription as key discriminatory practices that affect children of migrants (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 1999; Wu,

2002; Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Benton & Gomez, 2014). Not necessarily an intentional act of discrimination, it is nonetheless often perceived as offensive. In those cases, due to phenotypical difference, Chinese born or having lived in the host society for most of their lives are seen as Chinese no matter how removed they may be from their ethnic origin. They are, by the same token, denied the identity as nationals and regarded as outsiders.

Regardless of this, other studies have suggested that Spain is receptive to migrant integration from a more general perspective. Research among 7,000 children of migrants in Spain conducted by Aparicio and Portes (2014), for example, revealed that less than 10 percent of the respondents reported frequent and consistent discrimination in the three years previous to the research, a figure that was very similar to the proportion of children of Spaniards who reported perceived discrimination.

2.3. Identity and Identity Practices

Identity Overview

Identity is a highly popular and debated term in academia, and it may seem that everything has already been said about it. The term began to gain resonance in the 1960s, rapidly spreading across national and disciplinary boundaries (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000), and in the 1970s, it was already referred to as a word "driven out of its wits by over-use" (Mackenzie, W.J.M., 1978, cited in Brubacker & Cooper, 2000, p, 4). Further, in the 1980s, with the emergence of notions of race, class, and gender, particularly in the fields of cultural and literary studies, the debate on identity continued to expand. Since then, a deconstruction of identity has been carried out from a variety of disciplinary areas to question the traditional definition of a fixed, unified identity (Hall, 1996). Hall (1996) has rightly summarized the main trends:

> The critique of the self-sustaining subject at the centre of post-Cartesian western metaphysics has been comprehensively advanced in philosophy. The question of subjectivity and its unconscious processes

of formation has been developed within the discourse of a psychoanalytically influenced feminism and cultural criticism. The endlessly performative self has been advanced in celebratory variants of postmodernism. Within the anti-essentialist critique of ethnic, racial and national conceptions of cultural identity and the 'politics of location' some adventurous theoretical conceptions have been sketched in their most grounded forms (p.1).

In a way, Hall (1996) argued, all those debates and new contributions have not supplanted more traditional conceptions of a unified identity with a truer, more valid definition, but have rather served as deconstructions or ways to de-totalize the notion of identity. As a result, identity has paradoxically become a blurred notion that nevertheless remains a key concept across scholarly disciplines, or "an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all" (Hall, 1996, p.1), or as pointed out by Levi-Strauss, "a sort of virtual center to which we must refer to explain certain things, but without it ever having a real existence" (Levi-Strauss, 2007, cited in Brubacker & Cooper, 2000, p.9).

Although Hall does not clarify what he means by "certain key questions", one can infer that identity often being understood as a "fundamental condition of the social being" and as something "deep, basic, abiding or foundational" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.8) it is likely to reverberate on most personal, social and political realms connected with the individual.

As seen in previous sections, cultural identity is a subset of identity that addresses individuals' perceptions of belonging to a group. However, we must be cautious about the use of this term because identity as a concept is mainly the product of Western scholarship that assumes a universality in the possession of identity (cultural, ethnic, social, personal) and the processes of identity formation (Rouse, 1995,). Rouse (1995, p.359) further argued that the conceptualization of identity relies on certain ideas that are not neutral but culturally and historically specific.

Interestingly, there is no straightforward term in Chinese to translate the word identity, and while some of my participants referred to the notion of cultural identity in their narratives, some others did not explicitly use this term and chose instead to adopt other forms of paraphrasing to speak about who they were and in particular where they belonged. A number of participants, for example, used phrases such as *"wo shi zhongguoren"* [I am Chinese], or *"wo juede wo shi zhongguoren"* [I think/feel I am Chinese], thus transmitting the idea of their cultural identity as a fact or state of being. Others, who spoke in both Spanish and Chinese, stressed the more relational aspect of their cultural identities, with expressions such as "I feel closer to [Chinese or Spanish]" or "I understand [Chinese or Spanish] better", while others emphasized the idea of boundaries between groups with expressions such as *"pertenezco a..."* [I belong to], or *"me siento más encajado"* [I feel I fit in better with...], or *"wo dui... mei you geli, bijiao shuxi"* [I don't feel any distance, I feel more familiar with...].

Cultural Identities in a Mobile World

Globalization is widely regarded as one of the most important changes in the world's socio-political, economic, cultural and structural dynamics since the 1990s (Albrow, 1990; Giddens, 1991; Appadurai, 1997; Castles & Davidson, 2000) and has greatly influenced theories on migrant identity in the last few decades. Broadly defined as "all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society" (Albrow, 1990, p.9), and driven by key forces such as the emergence of global economies, the revolution in communication and information technologies, and convenient long-distance transportation, globalization has introduced a new order of social relations and transactions and created an increased sense of interconnectedness among individuals (Mau, Mewes & Zimmermann, 2008) as well as of space and time compression (Harvey, 1989).

The constant motion of people, objects, images, ideas and cultures that characterizes the globalized era has led to the formulation of metaphors of movement and flows aimed at capturing this new social reality (see for

example Appadurai, 1990, 1996; Urry, 2007, 2008; De Fina & Perrino, 2013). Whereas in the past, cultural homogeneity, social integration and the bond between people and places was regarded as the norm, in today's global society, corporeal, imaginative or real mobility (Urry, 2003) is equated with normality and regarded as a fundamental aspect of social life (Easthope, 2009; Salazar, 2010; Salazar & Smart, 2011). This mobility usually evokes positive connotations and is associated with the ability, ease and freedom to move. Physical mobility also entails cultural mobility, despite the fact that culture has never been static but the product of numerous boundary-crossing processes and intersections (Salazar, 2010).

This new paradigm of mobility has greatly influenced the ways in which people think about identity. The absence of socio-cultural homogeneity and the abundance of symbols and meanings made available by the new global reality have been regarded as opening up endless possibilities for the formation of new fluid and hybrid identities (Adler, 1982; Featherstone, 1995; Rapport & Dawson, 1998; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Rapport and Dawson (1998) have talked about a new form of "journeying, modern consciousness" (p.23) and pointed out that fixed senses of belonging have been displaced as one is increasingly seen as "moving between homes, erstwhile to current...; or as moving between multiple homes...; or as being at home in continuous movement" (p.27). Citing Clifford (1986), they added that as a result of the increasing interconnection and overlapping between life words, "there are not specifically fixed, spatially and temporally bounded cultural worlds from which to depart and to which to return: all is situated and all is moving" (Rapport & Dawson, 1998, p.23).

In the field of migration, new ideas of mobility have problematized traditional acculturation theories which viewed immigrants' journey into their countries of destination as a rather straightforward and unidirectional process leading to assimilation, integration, separation or marginalization (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987; Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1997). These new ideas have suggested the creation of more complex interconnections, relationships attachments and modes of incorporation. With regard to identity, studies have

moved away from notions of identity as bounded (either to "territorially rooted cultural differences" or nation-states (Glick Schiller, Darieva & Gruner-Domic, 2011, p.405) and now conceptualize the identity of migrants as a dynamic, shifting and multifaceted process in constant evolution (see, for example, Glick-Schiller, Basch & Szanton-Blanc, 1992, 1995; Kearney, 1995; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998; Vertovec, 2001; Bhatia & Ram, 2009).

New terms such as "*bricolage* of identities and cultures, hybridity, creolisation, fluidity, multi-locality, and diaspora" have emerged to conceptualize and discuss these immigrant experiences (Labelle & Midy, 1999, p.216). Vertovec (1999) has referred to "individuals' awareness of decentred attachments, of being simultaneously 'home and away from home', 'here and there'" (p.450). Hannerz (1996) referred to individuals living in different "habitats of meaning" (p.22) not restricted to geographical territory, each of which accumulate, form cultural repertoires and condition the construction of identity, and similar expressions have been coined, such as the "deterritorialization of identity" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p.9).

While these new paradigms have rightly pointed out the fluidity and multiple elements from where cultural identity is constructed, my contention is that this idea has not been sufficiently developed or applied beyond the theoretical level. While relying on the notion of the multiple intersections through which cultural identities are constructed, empirical research has nonetheless tended to portray this fluidity as a dichotomous oscillation between cultures, or as tensions and compatibilities between aspects that strictly pertain to the cultural domain.

In many cases, a true intersectionality that would more deeply engage with individual biographies and that would take into account cultural factors, but also individual motivations, choices and agency towards one's circumstances and environment, among other elements, has not been sufficiently explored. The following section will further illustrate how depictions of the cultural identities of second generation children in particular have largely relied on dichotomies and binary structures restricted to the cultural domain.

Migrant Children Identities and the Metaphor of Mobility

Similar to research on the first migrant generation, studies focused on the cultural identities of children of migrants have also largely drawn on the metaphor of mobility. They have referred to children of migrants' identities as hybrid and dialogical (Bhatia & Ram, 2004), fluid (Benton & Gomez, 2014), transnational (Somerville, 2008), or in-between (Roberge, 2009; Buster & Baffoe, 2014; Bratu, 2015).

The notion of dialogical identities applied to the second generation, for example, postulates that traditional notions of self and culture fail to explain the acculturation processes that these individuals undergo in a world where cultures are continually blending, merging and developing new contact zones (Hermans, 2001, 2007; Bhatia & Ram, 2004). The dialogical selves that originate from these processes are "shaped by multiple, contradictory, asymmetrical, and often shifting cultural voices of race, gender, sexuality and nationality" (Bhatia & Ram, 2004).

Hybridity in the context of the second generation is understood as the process through which migrants "adopt aspects of the host culture and rework, reform and reconfigure them in production of new hybrid culture or 'hybrid identities'" (Kalra, Kalhon & Hutynuk, 2005, p.71). Although hybrid and dialogical selves arguably result in loose and open-ended forms of identity, these still heavily rely on dichotomous cultural combinations.

The literature on second generation migration has often stressed that migrant children are located at the interface of cultures. They are expected to comply with the socio-cultural norms of the society where they live while at the same time maintain a degree of closeness with their families and ethnic communities and meet their different expectations (Min & Kim, 2000; Li, 2001, 2009, 2010; Ngan, 2008; Wang & Collins, 2016). This is true of individuals who were born in the host society, but even more of those who migrated in childhood or adolescence, because they retain memories of their country of origin while simultaneously beginning their socialization in the host society.

The term "in-betweenness" has been used by scholars to refer to the "dual living realities (two cultures, two languages and identities)" (Wang &

Collins, 2016, p.2780) of children who migrated in childhood or adolescence, and different manifestations of this duality or "in-betweenness" have been identified in their everyday realities. Bartley (2010), for example, has pointed out that:

> Many find themselves in between the host community and their communities of origin –manifested clearly in their work as cultural brokers for their parents, mediating for them with many daily activities such as shopping, banking, even translating their own school reports. As adolescents, they are in-between childhood and adulthood, required to contend with the significant, sometimes traumatic, upheaval that comes with crossing national and cultural borders, while also navigating all the tensions that adolescents face, in terms of beginning the transition to young adulthood and renegotiating boundaries in relation to parents, communities, other adults and authority figures, and also their sexuality. Additionally, they must also manage these processes while being in-between languages (p.387).

The idea of dual practices and dual identities has also been emphasized by the literature on transnationalism, defined as "a process of spatial movements where migrants are not necessarily disconnected from, but continually remain connected to their place of origin while living at the site of migration" (Ip, 2008, citing Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton-Blanc, 1994). Transnationalism refers to a new type of immigrant experience that stresses the "dialectical interplay between homeland concerns and receiving realities and the impact this interplay has on migrants" and their identities (Kivisto, 2001, p. 553).

Transnationalism theories were initially conceived as a critique of earlier assimilation theories. They argued that because immigrants sustained multiple ties here and there, it was impossible for them to assimilate to one place (Appadurai, 1996). Later, scholars recognized the importance of localities where people live their daily lives (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998) and

argued that identities and everyday lives became transnational or trans-local (Dahinden, 1998; Appadurai, 2003; Greiner, 2010; Smith, 2011). More complex models of assimilation were also developed (see segmented assimilation, in Portes & Zhou, 1992; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001), as well as theories that argued for the compatibility between assimilation and transnationalism (Murawska, 2002; Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

Although the notion of transnationalism has been widely used to refer to the lives of first-generation migrants, the extent to which children of migrants engage in transnational practices and embrace dual identifications has long been the subject of scholarly debate. A number of studies, for example, have observed that children born in the host society or having migrated in their childhood years are often not even fluent in their parents' mother tongue and sustain minimal or no ties with their families' country of origin (see, for example Kivisto, 2001; Portes, 2001; Levitt & Waters, 2002; Rumbaut, 2002; Levit & Schiller, 2004; Kasinitz et al., 2009;).

Other studies, however, have stressed that most children of migrants are exposed to the values, goods, memories, ideas, patterns of human interaction and transnational practices of their parents in their households on a daily basis (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Ngan, 2008; Somerville, 2008) and that this greatly affects their processes of identity formation. Ngan (2008) for example has pointed to the power of intergenerational memories and imagination in the shaping of identity in the children of first generation migrants: "through intergenerational connections, memories of the family become a part of daily life which continuously shape identities and establish a sense of attachment with the 'homeland'" (p.84).

In the case of Australian born Chinese, he noted that:

Nostalgic memories that are passed down from one generation to another within the family become a vital aspect in their construal of Chineseness. Their imagination of a notional homeland is often situated between

different generational and locational points of reference percolating from their own parents, grandparents and other relatives (p.86).

Moreover, children often establish contacts with other Chinese children recently arrived from China, or, with the expansion of Chinatowns, develop life practices in increasingly multicultural landscapes (Sáiz López, 2015). It has also been noted that transnational connections follow a pattern of ebb and flow and acquire different intensities depending on individual life stages (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004; Pries, 2004; Somerville, 2007; Levitt, 2009). In all these respects, as noted by Castles and Davidson (2000), the experiences of children of migrants in school and within the family are "rarely monocultural" (p.139) and develop out of local, global and ethnic influences.

The notions of dual identification and in-betweenness have been given positive and negative meaning. Rumbaut and Ima (1988), for example, were the first to use the idea of living in between to talk about the experiences of young South East Asian refugees in the United States. They referred to them as "marginal to both the new and old worlds, for they straddle both worlds and they are in some profound sense fully part of neither of them" (p.22). Other studies have described these migrants as "partial insiders in two distinct cultural worlds" (Ryer, 2010, p. 74) or have stressed their position of liminality as individuals trapped between two worlds (Roberge, 2009) but "not fully belonging to any" (Buster & Baffoe, 2015, p.16).

More recently, however, a large number of social scientists have rejected the idea of being "trapped" between two cultures and have begun to recognize the positive aspects of dual identification, such as adaptability to two different environments and cultures (LaFramboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993; Hutnik & Bhola, 1994) and the ability to shift identities according to the demands and cultural expectations of specific contexts and situations (Ballard, 1994; Song, 1997; Djao, 2003, in Liu, 2015; Liu, 2015a), thus assuming the dynamic and negotiated character of identities (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2012).

Overall, despite differences in terminology, the literature on first and second generation migrant identity has consistently stressed that individuals

shift identities depending on context, express multiple attachments and senses of belonging, or are caught between two or multiple cultural worlds and fully belong to none. Cultural dichotomies, as well as the metaphor of mobility and fixity have largely dominated the debate on identities, with a clear emphasis on the mobility of contemporary migrant identities and on the multiple material and emotional connections that immigrants and their children establish between host and heritage cultures and societies.

Ethnicity and Chinese identities

Amidst this plethora of discourses on the multiple, fluid and fragmentary character of identities, significant attention has been devoted to the question of ethnicity. In the context of Chinese ethnicity, definitions of Chineseness have traditionally been influenced by the Chinese state discourse. Reid (2009) has noted in this sense that Chineseness is different from other identities "because the Chinese state looms so large in its past and future imaginings" (p.197). According to Chow (1998, p.6), the main characteristic of this Chinese state discourse is a strong, self-centered affirmation of Chineseness that is the result of China's victimization under western imperialism:

> In the habitual obsession with "Chineseness", what we often encounter is a kind of cultural essentialism –in this case, sinocentrism—that draws an imaginary boundary between China and the rest of the world. Everything Chinese, it follows, is fantasized as somehow better ... The historically conditioned paranoid reaction to the West, then, easily flips over and turns into a narcissistic, megalomanic reaffirmation of China (p.6).

Wu (1991) explained that the sinocentrism proclaimed by the Chinese state has been legitimized through notions of race, history and cultural heritage and has reached the perceptions of many ordinary Chinese. He signaled that "to ordinary Chinese, the traditional view of being at the center

of existence has always been an important aspect of being Chinese" (Wu, 1991, p.160). Many Chinese people still identify their Chineseness with a feeling of patriotism and nationalism associated with "a sense of being the bearers of a cultural heritage handed down from their ancestors" (Wu, 1991, p.160), as well as to a sense of belonging to a same race, the *zhongguaminzu*. Chineseness is thus "based on a deep-rooted sense of belonging to a unified civilization that boasts several hundreds of years of uninterrupted history, of being essentially separate from non-Chinese" (Wu, 1991, p.160). These notions of identity are based on "cultural and historical fulfillment" (Wu, 1991, p.162) rather than on nationality or citizenship.

However, this Chinese state discourse did not play a significant role for the participants of this study. The majority of them paid few or no visits to China and were largely disconnected from the Chinese political context and the official messages spread by the Chinese Government. In this regard, as pointed out by some scholars, despite the deliberate efforts made by the Chinese Communist Party to reinforce a sense of Chineseness among Chinese people living in China and abroad, being Chinese today has increasingly become a contested experience that differs across places and individuals, especially in the context of the Chinese overseas communities (Wei-Ming, 1994). Ethnicity is thus no longer regarded as given but as fluid and as the product of constant negotiations (Kibria, 2000). According to Ang (2001):

> Chinese is not a category with a fixed context –be it racial, cultural or geographical—but operates as an open and indeterminate signifier whose meanings are constantly renegotiated and rearticulated in different sections of the Chinese diaspora. Being Chinese outside China cannot possibly mean the same thing as inside. It varies from place to place, molded by the local circumstances in different parts of the world where people of Chinese ancestry have settled and constructed new ways of living (p.39).

In this regard, Wei-Ming (1994) talked about breaking the rigidity of static ancestral definitions of Chinese as "belonging to the Han race, speaking Mandarin, and observing the 'patriotic' code of ethics" (p.vii). He called for the need for diaspora Chinese to redefine Chineseness and challenge and decenter its traditional meanings. For Chun (1996), it is not simply a matter of decentralization, but rather of contextualization. The goal, he argued, is to elucidate the meaning that Chineseness acquires in different contexts, step away from binary discourses that focus on dichotomies between center-periphery, and examine the reasons why specific forms of Chinese identity are developed and claimed:

> More important than the notion of multiple identities, which represents a loose code for counterhegemonic discourse of various sorts, in my opinion, is the need to articulate various contexts (of speech or practice) wherein facets of identity (such as ethnicity) are deemed to be *relevant*. That is to say, what kinds of contexts demand that one speaks from a position of identity, and what contexts do not? (pp.134-35).

Chun's (1996) argument is an explicit critique of postcolonial discourse:

> While postcoloniality appears to privilege the local by invoking the reality of multiple identities and make sacred indigenous truths to counter Orientalist fictions, there is, I argue, a huge gap in our understanding of the local historical-sociological framework that produces local cultural discourse. The very language of postcoloniality inherited from the modern world system, with its intrinsic concern with homogenization and heterogeneity, cores and peripheries … reflects a rather skewed vision of the "world" from the center of things" (p.138).

Chineseness must be in this regard not only broken down and deconstructed but situated in the particular circumstances and settings where it is embedded.

Studies carried out among children of Chinese migrants have heeded Chun's (1996) ideas, and efforts have been made to document the different manifestations of Chineseness expressed by individuals in different circumstances and locations. Louie's (2006) study on second generation Chinese living in New York City, for example, documented little emotional connectedness with parents among the people she interviewed, a phenomenon that was intensified by the loss of their ethnic language. She reported a "sense of foreignness" (p.376) towards China among her respondents, who felt closer to American culture but still voiced a Chinese identity grounded in the fact that they had grown up in ethnic enclaves. This identity was also generational because they emphasized how their Chineseness was different from their parents'.

Another study among children of Chinese migrants living in the Netherlands and Canada stressed how being Chinese was associated by the participants with a sense of biological identity, early socialization into Chinese families and possession of certain attributes such as the ability to speak Chinese (Bélanger & Verkuyten, 2010).

A large number of studies have also described Chinese identities as the result of a tension between individuals and society's attitudes and expectations, a phenomenon that was also voiced by my participants. In Kibria's (2000) study on second generation Chinese and Korean Americans, for example, the participants manifested pressures to both affirm and downplay their ethnic identities, in particular as forms of resistance to racialization. Thus, they downplayed their Chineseness as a way to avoid being perceived as foreigners, but also felt subject to mainstream pressures to conform to a normative or "authentic" Chinese identity.

Similarly, Tuan (1999) has stressed that no matter how much ethnicity has become a matter of choice for children of immigrants, the reality is that ethnicity remains a societal expectation, especially due to the visibility of

Chinese people's phenotypical traits. With regard to this, Ang (1998) referred to children of first generation Chinese who have grown up abroad and have had no direct contact with their heritage culture as being forced to adopt an identification as Chinese that is externally imposed by others who view them as Chinese, and that is substantiated through discrimination and perception of difference. These individuals are identified as Chinese by society, by a non-Chinese Other, and therefore this identity is "fundamentally relational and externally defined as much as it is partial" (p.238).

These examples show how the Chineseness of the second generation has largely been described as partial, embedded in dual or hyphenated identities, and constantly negotiated. Perhaps as a result of the dominance of paradigms of mobility, fluidity and fragmentation, the literature has seldom documented expressions of more essentialist and unambiguous Chinese identities among the second generation. This predominant conceptualization of the Chinese identities of the second generation as partial or embedded in different forms of dual identifications is relevant for this research because, as we shall see in later chapters, a number of my participants asserted a more fixed and unambiguous Chinese identity. Once more, their narratives raised questions as to the extent to which cultural dichotomies and paradigms of mobility and fragmentation adequately illuminate their identity practices and individual perceptions.

Cultural Identity of Children of Chinese Migrants in Spain

In Spain, the few existing studies on Chinese migrant children's adaptation have also largely drawn on the metaphor of mobility to refer to cultural identities. These studies have used the notions of transnationalism (Sáiz López, 2006, 2015; Masdeu Torruella, 2014; Masdeu Torruella & Sáiz López, 2017), in-betweenness (Beltrán Antolín & Sáiz López, 2001; Sáiz López, 2006) or the more simple dichotomy Spanish-Chinese (Sáiz López, 2006; Uña et al., 2011).

Beltrán Antolín and Sáiz López (2001), for example, referred to the cultural identities of their participants as hybrid or in between two worlds.

Many of these participants expressed their inability to identify as totally Spanish or Chinese. They were not able to regard themselves as Spanish because they received differential treatment in Spanish society due to the visibility of their phenotypical traits. At the same time, they regarded language as an important identity marker and could neither consider themselves or be considered as Chinese because they reported little or no competence in their heritage language.

Research conducted by Sáiz López (2006) on the socialization processes of children born of Chinese migrants in Barcelona pointed towards different experiences and patterns of adaptation. The identities of her participants were described as Chinese (with different degrees of intensity and a greater or lesser degree of inclination towards the values and mores of Spanish society); dual (with an ability to shift and accommodate to the demands of both Chinese and Spanish contexts); and transnational or "European" for those children who could not identify as Spanish or Chinese because they had spent their childhood in different European countries following their parents' search for better opportunities.

According to Sáiz López (2006), those who had arrived in Spain before the age of 12 reported better integration in the host society and more likelihood to adopt the values of Spanish society, whereas those who arrived in Spain and enrolled in Spanish education after the age of 12 tended to have more difficulties to function in Spanish society as well as few or no Spanish friends. This was largely ascribed to more difficulties to learn Spanish or Catalan (the second official language in the region) and to understand the social codes of interaction among their Spanish peers. In addition, those living in neighborhoods with a larger concentration of Chinese showed a greater tendency to group segregation in school and in society in general. Sáiz López (2006) thus signaled age of arrival in Spain and residential area as two main determinants of children's integration and cultural identity orientations. Similarly, Aparicio and Portes (2012) have suggested that the number of children born of migrant parents who called themselves Spanish is much more

significant among those who were born in Spain than among those who arrived at a later stage.

Sáiz López (2006) pointed towards a difference between the children of migrants coming from the South (Wenzhou and Qingtian in Zhejiang Province), and those from the Northeast, generally more highly educated, and perceived by teaching staff in schools as hard-working and having fewer problems to integrate. She indicated that social factors (educational background and socio-economic status) partly conditioned academic achievement, cultural identity and successful adaptation.

Another quantitative study (Uña et al., 2011), conducted in Madrid among 370 children born of Chinese migrants, drew on the Spanish-Chinese dichotomy and found that 72 percent of the respondents considered themselves integrated into Spanish society but still maintained very close ties with their heritage culture (through a large network of Chinese contacts, preference for Chinese over Spanish language internet use and frequent trips to China). However, this particular study being quantitative, it failed to explain the complexities of the participants' experiences, as well as the challenges of everyday life and the process through which those outcomes developed. Moreover, it provided no information about the specific background of the participants.

More recent studies have also highlighted the importance of transnationalism in forging migrant children's identities. Masdeu Torruella (2014) has studied different forms of mobility and transnational practices among children of Chinese migrants, in particular return migrations, their motivations and their effect on the construction of their identities. Her ethnographic accounts show how some children of migrants return to Qingtian to open businesses. She explained that return migration is for these children a way to search for better opportunities by commercializing their ethnicity and "European identities". She argued for the need to explore the complexities of migrant children identities by taking into account their patterns of mobility and from a transnational lens. In a more recent study, Sáiz López (2015) has observed that the plurality of Chinese social networks

that Chinese children establish in Spanish society played a vital role in the development of cultural identities that were no longer located in the heritage country but rather in a symbolic transnational space.

Overall, these studies show a tendency to describe the identities of Chinese migrants by using static, bounded and binary categories (Chinese, Spanish), or other labels such as transnational or in-between, which derive from the general metaphor of mobility that dominates the debate on migrant people's identities.

The problem with this approach, which is also prevalent among studies of migrant identities in other parts of the world, is first that it bounds and constrains migrant children's identities to these definitions. By doing so, it prevents these identities from revealing their complexities, contradictions and discontinuities. Second, this approach tends to focus on fixed outcomes and abstract categories instead of raising individual voices and engaging with the cultural identities of migrants and their children "in relation to the ever-changing situations and contexts where they emerge" (Ehrkamp, 2006, p. 348).

Liu (2015) has signaled in this regard that while the focus of most studies has been primarily placed on different acculturation outcomes and on the extent to which different cultures are conflictual or compatible, little has been said about the external and internal factors (personal biographies) that condition people's social behavior and negotiation of identity. An approach based on fixed verbal categories such as transnationalism, acculturation, Spanish or Chinese, she argued, is too focused on concepts and would fail to investigate these issues in depth.

Similarly, in his defense of the individual and particular over the general, Rapport (1997) argued that the essence of individual meaning and experience is lost through processes of generalization/typification/abstraction/categorization:

Once created, once objectified (made into something others can recognize as an object of exchange, an object for their own potential use), forms begin becoming independent of their individual creators.

Indeed, the forms become the very vehicles of sociality, the means by which individuals come together, interact and 'communicate' with one another; forms become synthesizing mechanisms. In the process of this synthesis, however, forms change their nature. No longer intimately tied to personal meanings, expressions and needs (in particular those of their creators), they can serve the expressive needs of many, and the interactive needs of all (p.16).

In the context of Chinese migrants and their children in Spain, listening to the voices of the participants and understanding the particularities of their biographies is of paramount importance, not only because not much has been written on the topic and we need first-hand information to understand more about this phenomenon, but also because the particularities of Spain's immigration history raise questions as to the suitability of existing parameters to illuminate the experiences of migrant children's identities in the context of Spanish society.

Overall, Spain's short migration history, the geographic and socio-economic specificities of Chinese families having migrated to Spain, with a great predominance of rural immigrants from Zhejiang Province, and the fact that the generation of Chinese migrant descendants is only now coming of age, suggest that the adaptation processes and patterns of incorporation of Chinese migrants and their children in Spain may be very different from those that have been documented in other parts of the world. This questions the usefulness of importing existing categories, theoretical frameworks and empirically observed patterns of adaptation established in other countries to describe the experiences of children of Chinese migrants living in Spain. It further stresses the need to examine Chinese children's experiences from their own voices and individual perspectives.

Summary and Objectives

This chapter has provided an overview of the main historical and demographic characteristics of Chinese migration in Spain and has reviewed

the current literature on migrant children's identities and on children of Chinese migrants living in Spain. First, a relatively short migration history, a predominance of rural migration composed of entrepreneurs from China's Zhejiang Province, and a Chinese community that lives largely on the margins of Spanish society are some of the distinctive characteristics of Chinese migration to Spain. Second, studies conducted among children of Chinese migrants in Spain are rather scarce, scattered in time and outdated (the latest comprehensive study about the adaptation experiences of second generation Chinese, by Sáiz López, dates from 2006). These studies have mainly addressed issues of discrimination, or the clashes between school and family values and experiences. Little attention has been devoted to the issue of cultural identity, and when it has, this has been done either from a quantitative approach or by adopting categories that stress the conflict or compatibility between Spanish and Chinese cultures and the metaphor of mobility. Whereas paradigms of mobility have conceptually described the construction of cultural identities as an open and organic process conditioned by a multiplicity of factors, however, empirical studies have seldom engaged with this multiplicity in depth. Instead, they have primarily restricted their approach to the realm of culture, and focused on to descriptions of cultural dichotomies, clashes and compatibilities.

The following chapters will address this gap by trying to demonstrate that the identity practices of Chinese children of migrants is complex and multilayered and cannot be accurately captured by terms such as transnational, Spanish or Chinese, or by similar categories derived from cultural dichotomies or metaphors of mobility that dominate current academic debates. Despite the strong emphasis that has been placed on the mobility of identities in today's globalized world, the narratives of my participants destabilize these assumptions by showing not only that mobility affects individuals in very different ways but also that mobility is neither the only nor the most important aspect that shapes their identities.

As will be explained in the next section, my aim is to explore the cultural identities of the participants by focusing on the reflexive processes

and situated practices through which these have been constructed and articulated. The emphasis on the participants' voices and on their own personal understandings and articulations of their cultural identities will try to shed light not only on the complexities and discontinuities through which identities have come into being but also on some of the contextual specificities in the lives and adaptation experiences of Chinese children of migrants in Spain.

2.4. Theoretical Orientation

The framework that I have adopted for this research draws on theories developed by Giddens and Hobart. Giddens understands the construction of individual identities as a process of self-reflexivity. As mentioned in the introduction, while the development of cultural identities has been regarded as an unconscious process when individuals are only exposed to one set of cultural values, it becomes a matter of making choices and taking decisions when people are exposed to more than one cultural milieu. For children of Chinese migrants living in Spain, whose realities span more than one cultural universe, the construction and negotiation of their cultural identities is here regarded as the result of a subjective process of self-reflexivity whereby they reflect upon their own experiences in order to create a sense of who they are and where they belong.

On the other hand, Hobart proposes to carry out anthropological research through a critical engagement with people's practices. Together, Giddens and Hobart address two important questions: First, how do individuals construct their identities? And second, how should we as researchers study these identities? The notions of practice and reflexivity are discussed in the next section in order to clarify the ontological and epistemological perspectives and theoretical framework that I have used for this research.

Giddens: Identity as Self-reflexive

Giddens (1991) understands identity as a self-reflexive process through which individuals try to make sense of their experiences and develop a sense of who they are. He posited individual subjectivity and one's ability to reflect on experiences as the core element in the process of identity construction and argued that "we are not what we are but what we make of ourselves" (p.81). Identity for him is not as a set of attributes and behaviors but a self-narrative that coherently connects an individual's past, present and future. It is "*the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography*" (p.53). This notion highlights the centrality of the individual as a cogent, knowledgeable agent who is responsible for creating and sustaining a sense of who he is through an on-going process of reflexivity: "a person's identity is not to be found in behavior, nor –important though this is—in the reactions of others, but in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*" (p.54).

According to Giddens (1991), this personal narrative is built upon individual experiences and the events that take place in the outside world:

> The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self (p.54).

Self-identity is here also regarded as an on-going process that must be continually reassessed in the light of changing circumstances: "self-identity has to be created and more or less continually reordered against the backdrop of shifting experiences of day-to-day life" (Giddens, 1991, p.186).

This notion of identity is set against the context of what Giddens called high modernity, an erratic and dynamic system characterized by multiple choices and channels of information but ultimately no authorities to orient those choices or provide definitive answers. Modern societies are characterized by risk. In risk societies, nothing follows a pre-established course and events are open to contingencies (Giddens, 1991, p.28). Conversely,

risk is also conceived as a sense of openness and malleability of future events which creates the possibility for individuals to shape certain aspects of their existence (Giddens, 1991, p.111). In this context, and in order to sustain a sense of ontological security and to ward off anxiety and all the existential questionings derived from an intrinsically uncertain and changing world, individuals develop "protective cocoons" made of habits, a practical consciousness and day-to-day routines (Giddens, 1991).

However, it is during the most radical changes or unexpected events that hit individual experience, identified as "fateful moments", that these "protective cocoons" and sense of ontological security come under threat. Fateful moments are described as "times when events come together in such a way that an individual stands, as it were, at a crossroads in his existence" (Giddens, 1991, p.113). Besides threatening our sense of security, fateful moments trigger a process of reflexivity which demands the reevaluation of our routines, practices, assumptions and ultimately our sense of self. It is where this process of reflexivity fails to generate a coherence that we find individuals whose sense of self is fractured or dysfunctional, who cannot sustain or lack a sense of biographical continuity and who feel anxiety in the face of events and may be even paralyzed from practical action (Giddens, 1991, p.53). At the other end of the spectrum, Giddens (1991) argued, "a person with a reasonably stable sense of self-identity has a feeling of biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively and, to a greater or lesser degree, communicate to other people" (p.54).

Self-identity is also seen as both robust and fragile:

Fragile, because the biography the individual reflexively holds in mind is only one 'story' among many other potential stories that could be told about her development as a self; robust, because a sense of self-identity is often securely enough held to weather major tensions or transitions in the social environments within which the person moves (Giddens, 1991, p.55).

Although perhaps not against the background of modernity, Giddens' concept of identity as an individual's reflexive narrative of the self, as well as the idea of fateful moments as transitions that challenge our assumptions and routines and make us question who we are, is a useful framework to understand the migration experiences and cultural identities of young Chinese in Spain.

In this sense, for Chinese children of migrants who were born in Spain, living at the crossroads between Chinese and Spanish cultures raises their awareness of their cultural attachments and makes cultural identity a conscious and reflexive choice. For those who migrated in childhood or adolescence, moving to a new place, with new people, a new culture and a totally new set of rules that will require new approaches and new ways of dealing with reality can be regarded as a "fateful moment" that will similarly raise awareness of who they are and where they belong. During fateful moments, Giddens argued, life has to be seen anew, and individuals are required to spend energy in order to come to terms and master the circumstances they confront. This is highly consequential for one's understanding of who we are because decisions taken at that stage will result in new lifestyles that will in turn reshape the reflexive narrative of the self (Giddens, 1991, p.143).

Here, lifestyles refer to "routinized practices, the routines incorporated into habits of dress, eating, codes of acting and favored milieu for encountering others" (Giddens, 1991, p.81). However, he warned that "the routines followed are reflexively open to change in the light of the mobile nature of self-identity" (Giddens, 1991, p.81).

Giddens has been criticized for over-emphasizing the agency of the individual in the construction of identity and for overlooking the interplay between social structures and the individual psyche (Loyal, 2003). But Giddens does not argue that the individual is the sole crafter of identity. On the one hand, he admits that the self is not entirely empty of content because "there are psychological processes of self-formation which provide the parameters for

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the reorganization of the self" (Giddens, 1991, p.75). On the other hand, the individual is not completely separated from social context. Quite the contrary, self-identity is made coherent through a reflexive use of the broader social environment (Giddens, 1991, p.148). Still, Giddens' notion of identity clearly focuses on a self-referential subject who does not live "by extrinsic moral precepts but by means of the reflexive organization of the self" (Giddens, 1991, p.153).

By emphasizing the centrality of the self-reflexive subject, Giddens opposes the postmodernist idea that the self has ceased to exist and is only a construct of the language structures that govern our thought. By focusing on the ongoing and changing character of the self-reflective narrative, he challenges more essentialist identity theories. Giddens' view is also a challenge to symbolic interactionists who suggest that a diversity of contexts of interaction prompt individuals to behave in different ways (Giddens, 1991). As individuals shift from one context to another, they adjust their behavior according the demands of a situation. This suggests that the individual has a multiplicity of selves, an idea which resembles the poststructuralist notion of the fragmented individual, yet from a different theoretical perspective (Giddens, 1991, p.190).

Giddens provides a useful framework to understand the cultural identities of young Chinese who migrate to Spain because he emphasizes the importance of reflexive self-narratives in processes of identity construction, in particular during fateful moments, such as migration, which often call for the need to appraise and redefine who we are and where we belong in relation to others and to a different environment. Instead of relying on abstract, homogenizing categories, and on identities as static outcomes, he stresses the importance of understanding identities as the product of psychological processes which emerge as a response to complex circumstances that are continually changing over time.

Hobart: Identity as Practice

The field of migration is, as we have seen, dominated by categories and theoretical frameworks that largely draw on the metaphor of mobility to label and pin down the cultural identities of migrants and children of migrants. These theories and categories reflect an attempt by scholars to represent these identities, or in other words, to grasp, objectify and explain what they are. Mark Hobart (2000; 2006; 2010; 2015) has written extensively to challenge this approach and more generally the ways in which anthropologists and cultural studies theorists make use of their own categories of judgment to represent their objects of study. He has criticized this approach as elitist, ethnocentric, and, most importantly, as failing to engage with and disarticulating the voices of the people we are trying to understand.

Hobart (2000) began by interrogating the relationship between anthropologist and participants. He first questioned the assumption that there is understanding, what he calls "commensurability", between the anthropologist and the people who are the object of research. Whereas some have proposed the view that culture is internally coherent, and that regardless of differences between people, there is a universal rationality that makes it possible to interpret and accurately explain other people, Hobart (2000) views this as ethnocentric, and argued that rationalism is an excuse to legitimize the researcher's categories on the people we study.

Hobart (2000) holds that, most often, the anthropologist does not truly understand people, but projects and imposes her own categories and research agenda on the people she is trying to study. The result of it is that "in place of understanding the subjects in their own terms we have multiple constructed understandings, blurrings and projection" (Hobart, 2000, p.27).

Drawing on his experiences with Balinese culture and society, he noted that:

> Euro-American categories of judgment replace, rather than engage, in a dialogue with the categories of judgment of the Balinese. It is a warning against selecting material that fits preconceived frameworks by

imposing a foreign discourse or metaphysics, which neatly

disarticulates what people say and do in the name of academic

authority (Hobart, 2015, p.17).

The categories that researchers use tend to be homogenizing and this is

problematic because "you cannot represent something as it is in its fullness in

all the possible contexts as understood by every one of the participants"

(Hobart, 2017, p.200).

Similarly, Bourdieu (1990) has also criticized researchers' tendency to

totalization, that he described as "the capacity to possess and put forward the

synoptic view of the totality and the unity of the relationships that is the

precondition of adequate coding" (p.82). He explained that totalization

cumulates and juxtaposes relations of opposition and equivalence, thus

compressing elements and situations over time, a process that is out of hand

for the informant who lives in the present.

Instead of relying on hegemonic categories that alienate our

participants and silence their voices, Hobart proposed to engage with what he

refers to as people's *practices*. Practices are defined as "those recognized,

complex forms of social activity and articulation, through which agents set out

to maintain or change themselves, others and the world about them under

varying conditions" (Hobart, 2010, p. 9).

According to this definition, and in the context of this research,

practices of identity would refer to the ways in which individuals talk, enact

and reflect on their identities in the changing contexts and life situations that

they engage with.

According to Hobart (2015), "studying people's practices involves

studying how they set about articulating their worlds" (p.16). Practices in this

sense are "not a natural object but a frame of reference that we use to

interrogate a complex reality" (Hobart, 2010, p.8). They also provide a more

nuanced way of engaging with how people "articulate and argue over how they

speak and what they do" (Hobart, 2015, p.16).

Focusing on practices is important because, "as human scientists, we are interested, not in what something is supposed to be, but in how people have thought of it to be and acted towards it under particular circumstances" (p.10). Practice is thus "not just historical and cultural, but situated and so partly contingent" (Hobart, 2010, p.7).

In his critique of the notion of culture, Hobart (2017) established a clear distinction between "culture as system or structure as against simply 'how we do things around here'" (p.208). He added that "while the former essentializes practices into a coherent totality by marginalizing or silencing whatever does not fit, the latter contextualizes and recognizes that different people articulate different accounts under different circumstances, so that 'here' is always situational. These two senses are antithetical and lead in quite different directions" (Hobart, 2017, p.208).

Hobart's overall argument can be applied to current mainstream perspectives regarding cultural identities in the field of migration. Thus, the prevailing metaphor of mobility and the use of fixed verbal categories to describe the cultural identities of migrants and their children can be regarded as constructs that describe these identities from the researcher's totalizing and hegemonic academic perspective. These terms carry a neat, well-demarcated meaning that not only silences the voices of these migrants and the ways in which they critically construct, reflect upon, articulate and engage with their cultural identities in context-specific circumstances, but also constrain and negate the changing nature and diversity of factors through which these identities have been constituted.

By focusing on practices, or on the ways in which people talk about their cultural identities and the activities they carry out to enact, sustain or change these identities, I not only intend to raise the voices of my participants but simultaneously to foreground the richness, non-linearity, complexity and contradiction inherent to their experiences and identities. Because, as pointed out by Hobart (2010), practices are devoid of the rigidity and roundedness of categories and "have the bad habit of not conforming to proscriptions and prescriptions" (Hobart, 2017, p.207). They "tend not to line up neatly. They

exhibit sprawl, mutual contradiction, often unplanned originality, undecidability –in short they exemplify everything that undermines system" (Hobart, 2010, p. 13).

The difficult task of engaging with people's practices entails not only allowing for the emergence of their own meanings and interpretations in their own terms, but also trying to understand their presuppositions and the reasons why they articulate these meanings in the first place. It is thus not enough to directly ask participants about their experiences. The researcher must at the same time critically analyze their conditions of past and present existence so as to better understand the perceptions and thoughts verbalized in dialogue (Bourdieu, 1990).

The process through which the researcher critically engages with the participants' practices and their presuppositions is likely to raise questions about our own personal assumptions (Hobart, 2000). Thus, by situating ourselves in the world of practice, one achieves the double goal of gaining familiarity with our subjects of research while simultaneously better appreciating the distance that separates us from them (Hobart, 2006). This process is regarded as a form of dialogue able to achieve a real proximity with our participants, or as noted by Bourdieu (1990), "a kind of solidarity beyond cultural differences" (p. 15) that will cancel the traditional hierarchy between the knower and the known. In Hobart's (2006) words:

> Ethnographic understanding involves appreciating how people judge and comment on their own practices, while simultaneously analyzing the circumstances under which such practices occur, employing current academic criteria. This understanding is critical in the strong sense that it is not only critical of the object of study, but of the practices and categories of the knowing subject, the analyst's own. It is in this encounter that the ethnographer is confronted by the Eurocentrism of her own thinking and presuppositions. It follows that, if research is not simply to reiterate hegemony, such cultural translation must be dialogic, again in the strong sense that academic

presuppositions and practice themselves are continually called into question and interrogated through the dialogue (p.497).

2.5. Summary

This section has tried to clarify this study's ontological and epistemological perspectives with regard to the question of cultural identity. It has addressed two fundamental questions. First, how are cultural identities constructed, in particular in the context of migration? Second, how to get access to and study these identities? With regard to the first question, I have drawn on Giddens' theory of identity to argue that the cultural identities of my participants are the product of subjective choices and self-reflexive processes which are in turn triggered as responses to their personal circumstances and environment.

I then argued that an in-depth understanding of the complexity of these cultural identities could hardly be reached by adopting categories of judgment established from an academic perspective. I proposed instead to engage with people's identity practices, that is, with how they talk, reflect upon and live these identities, and with the reasons why they act and talk about their identities in the ways they do. This critical engagement with people's practices will ultimately involve an engagement with the categories and presuppositions through which we undertake research. This form of enquiry results in a dialogue that breaks away from the hierarchy and distance between researcher and researched. It not only engages with the identity practices of our participants but ultimately turns our own ethnography into a practice as well.

METHODOLOGIES

In this chapter, I will discuss the different stages of my research process, my choice of methodologies, and the correspondence between these methodologies and my theoretical framework. I will first explain my choice of ethnography as a flexible, people-oriented approach able to provide thick descriptions of particular phenomena and therefore most able to comply with the goals and epistemological assumptions of this research. I will then provide a detailed account of my process of immersion in the field and the ways through which I recruited my participants, as well as a description of their characteristics. I will discuss the methods adopted to collect my data, in particular the rationale for using life narrative interviews, as well as the process of data collection and analysis. I will engage in a self-reflexive discussion of my positionality and raise several questions regarding the implications of this positionality for the overall research. Finally, I will describe the important transition from field to paper that characterizes all ethnographies and that resulted in the written version of this work.

3.1. Why Ethnography?

The first day I met Youya at the children's ward of one of the most important public hospitals in Madrid, I could not tell whether she was a boy or a girl. Hairless, propped up in a large white bed and with a sickly pallor in her complexion, she smiled at me and asked where I had learnt to speak Chinese. She was going to be released after two months in hospital and the medical practitioners had requested an interpreter because they wanted to make sure she understood all the things she was to do and not do at home. "No hairy fruit, like strawberries", they said, among a list of other proscriptions. Youya was a bright, optimistic 15-year-old. Her mother, always by her side at the hospital, looked like a middle-class woman from the North of China, who had migrated with Youya to Spain only two years before. Youya had enrolled in a

Spanish public school but her education had been abruptly discontinued. She had already missed one semester of classes as a result of her hospitalization and was very concerned with not being able to keep up with school. Youya's Spanish was remarkable despite having spent only two years in Spain. She was always asking me about new vocabulary and was very interested in being able to communicate with doctors about her condition. And yet, sadly, her language skills were greatly decompensated. She knew how to say red blood cells, lymphocytes, chemotherapy, but was confused when the doctors mentioned the word strawberry to her.

Youya died soon after a second relapse. Two days before her death, I was summoned by the doctors to deliver the news of her impending death to the mother. Her lymphocyte count has gone down to four, they said, the condition was irreversible, and they must start thinking of a farewell. The mother remained still. She said nothing. There were four or five doctors in the room. Her only reaction was a faint nod after a pause. At that point, one of the persons in the room said, in awe: "but do they actually feel anything at all?" This, of course, I did not bother to translate.

My interest in this PhD research partly emerged out of incidents like the one that I have just described, which raised my awareness of stereotypes and misconceptions about the Chinese community in Spain as well as of the need to counter these perspectives by giving voice to Chinese people. As mentioned previously, during my job as a Spanish-Chinese community interpreter, my task was to mediate between Spanish schools, hospitals, social services and welfare institutions and Chinese migrants and their children. Through my position in between two communities, I was able to better appreciate the discourses and views that many Spanish people held towards the Chinese. These often reproduced widespread stereotypes, and in many cases displayed little understanding of Chinese people's lived realities and processes of adaptation.

In the incident described above, the person at the hospital censored Youya's behavior and her contained manifestation of grief through a

projection of his stereotypical perception of the callous, enigmatic, unfeeling Chinese. This scene at the hospital was only one example among many others. In schools where I interpreted, children were also recurrently constructed as embodiments of difference by teachers and students. Teachers for example tended to refer to Chinese people as a collectivity instead of referring individually to the person that was being the target of their speech, thus implicitly stressing a dividing line between Spanish and Chinese. I often heard comments such as "Chinese children are very withdrawn", "they only want to hang out with other Chinese".

Stereotyping and constructions of difference were often exacerbated by ignorance of migrant children's background and their social conditions. In schools, for example, a lot of newly arrived Chinese children wore long johns underneath their trousers and several layers of clothes. The teachers would often ask: "why does (s)he come to school in his/her pajamas?", and "why is (s)he wearing so many layers of clothes?" Before I had time to explain that schools in South China did not have a central heating and that it was not a pajamas that they were wearing but a pair of long johns, teachers often voiced the suspicion that Chinese parents were neglecting their children (because they worked too many hours in the shop) to the extent of failing to ensure they changed into street clothes every morning before going to school.

As a result of these situations, the motivation for this research has been on the one hand, to give the Chinese community in Spain an opportunity to voice their experiences. On the other hand, should anyone be interested in reading this dissertation in the future, my aim is to provide those readers with an alternative, and hopefully more comprehensive and ecologic vision of one segment of the Chinese community in Spain.

Since the beginning of my doctoral studies and my first contact with anthropology, I regarded ethnography as the best means to achieve my goal of accessing and raising Chinese people's voices. Ethnography has been described as "the most basic form of social research" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.2), not only because it has a long history, but also because it is very similar

to the ways in which people routinely make sense of the world in their everyday lives (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

Ethnography has not been described as a unified paradigm but rather as "a diversity of approaches claiming to be ethnographic" (Hammersley, 1990, p.1). For Willis & Trondman (2000), ethnography refers to:

> ...a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its own terms the irreducibility of human experience (p. 394).

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) have said about ethnography that:

> ...in its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions - in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research (p. 2).

They have also highlighted the following important characteristics of the ethnographic approach:

> A strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon, rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them. A tendency to work primarily with "unstructured" data: that is, data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories.
> Investigation of a small number of cases, perhaps just one case, in detail.
> Analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the

form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998, p.110-111).

Ethnography has been described as a method that seeks in-depth understanding of individuals and "small life-worlds" (Luders, 2004, p.224). It focuses on "a particular culture and the nature and forms of knowledge embedded in it" (Luders, 2004, p.225) and investigates "the perspectives of participants, the nature and forms of their knowledge, their interactions, practices and discourses" (Luders, 2004, p.225). It is from this perspective that I regarded the ethnographic approach as able to provide more individual, situated, thick accounts of my participants' identities and processes of adaptation, and therefore as the method that better complied with both the goals and epistemological assumptions of this research.

3.2. First Encounter

Embarking on this ethnographic journey was, nonetheless, not devoid of setbacks and tribulations. To illustrate this, let me give an account of my first encounter in the field.

It was the second day after my arrival in Spain and I was still jetlagged and disoriented. It was a bright summer morning and I was walking around a park which is located in front of a traditional grocery shop owned by a Chinese family. I was spending a few days with my parents before moving to my apartment. The area where my parents live has a very small Chinese population, and that shop was probably one of the first to open a few decades ago. It was 10 in the morning, the streets were deserted (August is the national holiday month in Spain) and I saw the son in the family open the shop. It was a spontaneous decision to cross the road and see if I could have a conversation with him now that the shop was quiet and there were no customers. I thought (wrongly) it was the perfect timing. I remember feeling a bit nervous and

jittery but could not have expected the reaction that awaited me. I introduced myself, explained my topic of research, and asked the boy if I could have a conversation with him to learn about his experiences. Met with the boy's indifference, I quickly added that I would gladly help him and his family if there was anything I could do for them in exchange. The boy sized me up for a second, and returned to his cell phone as he totally ignored me and my words. I repeated what I said, but he still would not look at me or react to my words. Why? I felt more and more nervous. In the end, I asked: "have I offended you? I don't know if I have said anything wrong, but I did not mean to offend". He then looked at me for no more than a second with what I thought was the most disparaging and depreciative look that I had received in years, and said to me before turning to his cell phone again: "go look somewhere else" (*ni qu zhao bie ren*).

Admittedly, this was a rather naïve and clumsy approach. For a long time after that day, I reflected on that incident. As I recreated the awkward conversation in my mind, I asked myself what I could have done differently. Upon reflection, and after reconstructing the scene in my mind again and again, I came to realize the distance between myself and that young Chinese and the fact that the disparity of our social universes had greatly conditioned that reaction. Needless to say, this first encounter generated both questions and anxieties. Would I be able to find participants in the future? What was the impact of my identity as perceived and ascribed by my participants –my whiteness, my social class, my position as researcher—on their attitudes towards me, more particularly on their potential reluctance to talk?

Two important considerations emerged from this first encounter: first, the intuition that I would need to diversify and flexibilize my approach to find participants; second, a need to assess my positionality and the consequences of this positionality for my data collection and my relationships in the field.

3.3. Methodological Flexibility

With regard to the first consideration, I simply had to accept that I would not have freedom to choose the methods through which to find

participants, but rather that these would be conditioned by the contingencies of the field.

Ethnography is in this regard characterized by a methodological flexibility, where the methods adopted by the researcher are always subordinated to the practical demands of the field (Flick, 2014). Atkinson et al. (2001) have spoken of "fragmentation and diversity" and of "a carnivalesque profusion of methods, perspectives, and theoretical justifications for ethnographic work" (p.2).

According to Goffman (1989), the aim is:

Getting data, it seems to me, by subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situation, or their work situation or their ethnic situation, or whatever (p.125).

Commenting on Goffman's quote, Luders (2004) added that the methodology "has to cope with an abstract multiplicity and complexity of data-collection and field situations, which cannot be controlled in advance, and which render pointless any attempts at standardization" (p.226). He defined a flexibility of methodological approaches as the main characteristic of ethnographic research.

Luders (2004) has noted that "it is therefore no longer a question of the (correct or incorrect) utilization of a single method, but of the situationally relevant and appropriate realization of a general *methodological pragmatism*" (p. 227).

3.4. Immersion in the Field

After that first encounter, I devised multiple other ways of getting access to participants, some of which proved successful, some of which failed.

I soon moved from my parents' house to my apartment, located in a central district of Madrid (Tetuán) that is home to a large immigrant population, especially Moroccans and Latinos, but also Chinese. The area is interspersed with a large number of Chinese businesses (hairdressers, grocery shops, bazaars, clothes) and a Chinese street (named General Margallo) where almost all the shops, including two Chinese supermarkets, are owned by Chinese people. I spent my first few weeks observing people: the young Chinese who helped his father in the Chinese bazaar, the busy and rather curt cahiers at the Chinese supermarket, my young Chinese neighbor who took her 3-year-old to the square and who perplexed all the neighborhood because instead of bread she would feed rice to the pigeons. For a few weeks, and especially after my first failed encounter, I remained cautious and observant, until I came up with several strategies to meet people.

Figure 1 Chinese grocery in Tetuán

Figure 2 Chinese hairdresser in Tetuán

My initial plan was to offer Spanish language teaching or language exchange sessions to people willing to talk to me about their experiences. I advertised myself on several Chinese newspapers and on a Spanish website for students looking for teachers and teachers looking for students. This strategy proved largely unsuccessful. Besides one participant, Duna, who contacted me to improve her English (not her Spanish), and who read my posting on the Spanish website, and not on the Chinese newspaper, it was mostly first generation Chinese who contacted me and showed interest in my project (in spite of my clear profile specifications), or mothers of children who had just arrived through family reunification and needed to improve their language skills to keep up with school. These mothers had found me through the Chinese newspaper and were generally suspicious about my research, so in the end there was no follow-up to our initial exchange.

Besides that, I tried to organize performance and creative writing workshops aimed at exploring the experiences and identities of Chinese migrants in Spain. I distributed flyers at high schools with large Chinese student populations, and posted information about the activity on the Facebook page Chiñoles (a blend of the Spanish words for Chinese and

Spanish). This page was created by a young Chinese who arrived in Spain during childhood. The page, whose contexts are published mainly in Spanish, is specifically targeted at sharing views, information and experiences among children of Chinese migrants living in Spain. Only three people showed interest in those workshops, and one of them eventually did not commit. The workshops being largely based on group activities, I had no choice but to cancel them. However, I stayed in touch with two participants (Binbin and Yun), who had expressed interest in joining them and who eventually agreed to become my informants.

I developed the feeling from these partly failed attempts that children of Chinese migrants in Spain were a rather heterogeneous group, not organized as a "community" and without very specific needs from which to identify them as a group. Finally, it was only through more individualized attempts (instead of through organized activities) that I began to gain access to more people. My visits to a Buddhist temple in Madrid, for example, where I would hang out sometimes and attend celebrations, and where a friend of mine was a regular as well, yielded very interesting encounters, and through them I was able to meet and conduct interviews with a lot of young Chinese. I went there several times, spoke to people, attended events such as the Mid-Autumn Festival celebration.

Except for Lili, the people I met at the temple eventually did not become my main informants, but my conversations with them proved extremely useful to substantiate and triangulate my data.

Figure 3 Mid-Autumn Festival at the Buddhist temple

I also regularly visited strategic locations in Madrid's Chinatown district of Usera. I spent time in bars, cafes, billiards, streets alone or with friends, and I had long conversations with some of the people who became my participants (Chun, Lu, Yiyi, Mimi and Qi).
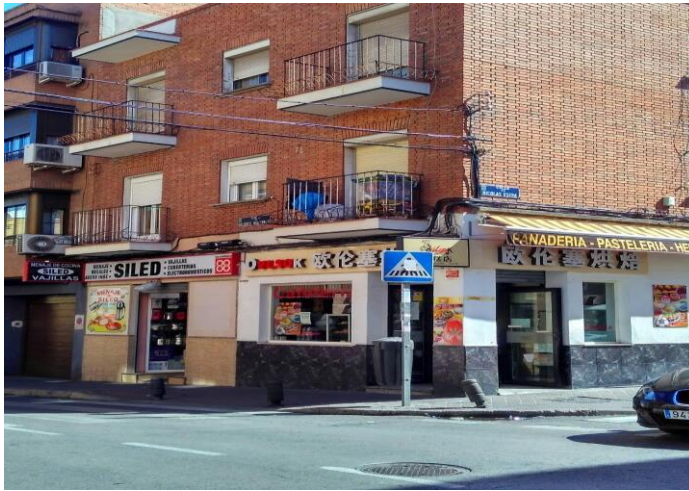

Figure 4 Street corner in Usera

Figure 5 Street corner in Usera (2)

I found some participants on the internet. In particular, I came across Mona's name while reading about young Chinese entrepreneurs in Spain. I

simply found her website, sent her an email and arranged to talk to her. Other participants were introduced to me, on occasions rather coincidentally, by people I knew, or friends of friends. Vera for example happened to be a student at the language school where one of my cousins taught. Sara was introduced to me by Carlos, one of my informants. Carlos initially contacted me through the Chiñoles Facebook page because he was interested in learning more about my workshops despite living in Valencia and being unable to participate. As for Changkun, his girlfriend contacted me because she had come across one of my advertisings in the Chinese newspaper. She contacted me via WhatsApp, explained that she was a university student in Madrid doing research on Chinese migration in Spain. We connected well, and later she introduced me to Changkun.

My process of immersion in the field was in this sense not straightforward. It involved failed attempts, trial and error, and my participants were eventually recruited through different channels and in very different contexts and situations.

I believe this description of the different stages of the field process, in particular strategies and obstacles encountered prior to gaining access to the community, or the process of building up of trust with participants, is particularly important because "the manner in which one gains access in most cases already reflects some of the main characteristics of the field" (Luders, 2004, p.226). Moreover, even when one fails to secure access to the community, the experience one gains is key because it sheds light on important aspects relevant to the organization and structure of the setting and community under study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

3.5. Participants

The main criteria for participant selection was to be a child of Chinese migrants either born in Spain or having arrived in childhood or adolescence. Age, or age at arrival in Spain, were not adopted as selection criteria because

my preliminary field observations had suggested that these two aspects were not decisive conditionings of people's cultural identities and experiences.

Although I met and spoke to a large number of people who met these criteria, eventually only 14 were selected as main informants. The idea behind this final sample selection was to recruit people with different characteristics, personal circumstances and occupations and from different contexts with the aim of orienting the sampling "towards collecting the heterogeneity in the field and towards allowing as much comparison as possible" (Maxwell, 2006, p. 89-90, cited in Flick, 2007, p.29). The participants that I selected as main informants were also the ones who shared with me the most detailed narratives about their experiences. Although I cannot claim that my sample is representative of all Chinese migrant children in Spain, I can at least say that it reflects a wide variety of experiences and backgrounds.

The main characteristics of my 14 main participants (as well as those of two other participants who are only briefly referred to in the third data chapter) are presented in the table below.

Table 1
Characteristics of the participants.

Pseudonym	Region of origin	Age	Gender	Family occupation	Age at arrival	Occupation
Binbin	Qingtian (mother), Wenzhou (father)	20	M	Restaurant and wholesaler	Birth	Hotel receptionist
Carlos	Beijing	36	M	Restaurant	9	Intercultural mediator, lawyer
Changkun	Wencheng	26	M	Grocery shop	12	Family shop
Chun	Wenzhou	21	F	Dollar shop	21	Chinese retail store
Duna	Qingtian	19	F	Grocery shop	6*	University student (BA)
Lili	Qingtian	22	F	Chinese bazaar	10	University student (Nutrition)
Lu	Qingtian	20	F	Chinese bazaar	Birth**	Recent school graduate
Mimi	Fujian	28	F	Grocery store	10	Import
Mona	Qingtian	19	F	Import-export	Birth	University student (BA) and entrepreneur
Qi	Qingtian	17	M	Chinese bazaar	5*	Waiter
Sara	Qingtian	26	F	Restaurant	Birth	Journalist
Vera	Qingtian	19	F	Grocery shop	10	High school student
Yiyi	Qingtian	20	F	Dollar shop	7	Computer technology student
Yun	Qingtian	23	M	Grocery shop	10	Consultant

*Participants born in Spain and sent back to China shortly after
**Born in Spain but lived in the Netherlands with her grandmother before moving back to Spain at the age of 5
BA: Business Administration

As shown in the table, six participants were born in Spain and eight arrived in childhood or adolescence through family reunification. Among those who were born Spain, two were sent back to China and one to the Netherlands shortly after birth to live with grandparents and moved back to Spain in early childhood. The majority of participants who had spent their childhood years in China had lived there under the charge of grandparents (Chun, Duna, Lili, Mimi, Qi, Vera and Yiyi). This was also the case of the participant who had spent part of her childhood in the Netherlands (Lu). Others had lived in China with their mother (Carlos, Changkun, Yun) before reuniting with their father (who had migrated to Spain earlier) at a later stage. While connection with grandparents in China or the Netherlands was usually limited to occasional phone calls, the participants often had contact with other members of their extended family (mostly aunts and cousins) who had also migrated to Spain.

The participants had a variety of occupations. Some were university students, others had qualified jobs (journalist, lawyer), while others were employed in service jobs or worked at the family business.

I met and interviewed all the participants in Madrid, but some had grown up in other regions: two in Barcelona (Duna, Mona), one in Valencia (Carlos), one between Madrid and Bilbao (Mimi), one between Madrid and Pamplona (Yiyi), one between the Netherlands and Madrid (Lu), and two had moved between different cities throughout their childhood and adolescence (Changkun, Yun). Residential mobility was thus a common experience among the participants.

Except for two participants from Beijing (Carlos) and Fujian (Mimi), all the participants were from families originally from Zhejiang Province, mostly from Qingtian or Wenzhou. Migrant families from Qingtian and Wenzhou make up the large majority of Chinese migration in Spain, and therefore the sample was largely representative of Spain's Chinese migrant population.

3.6. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection took place in Madrid and Hong Kong (the latter via email, WeChat and WhatsApp) and lasted from September 2016 to November 2017. Both participant and parental consent for respondents under 18 were obtained before the process of data collection. The participants were informed from the beginning that their identities would remain anonymous throughout the research. They were also informed of their right to stop the interviewing questions at any moment and to withdraw from the study at any stage.

A total of 12 life narrative interviews were conducted, which lasted between 40 minutes and three hours. The participants had the option to choose the venue the interviews. Some were conducted in bars, restaurants, cafés, in Madrid's Google space for entrepreneurs, in a language school, and via WhatsApp. One focus group was conducted in a café in the district Usera with participants who had not been previously interviewed. I initially did not plan to conduct a focus group, but the decision emerged because the three participants who too part in it had a close relationship and happened to be together at the time we met. The focus group proved very useful in stimulating discussion among the participants and encouraged them to contrast and further reflect on their individual experiences.

Participants had the choice to speak in Chinese or in Spanish during the interviews and focus group. Seven of those interviews were conducted in Spanish, four in Chinese, one in both Spanish and Chinese. The focus group was mainly conducted in Chinese, but with occasional shifts to Spanish from one of the participants (Chun). I was aware that the decision to speak in one language or another changes our disposition to the direction of a conversation. Language conditions our mood, our disposition to talk and our openness to the person we are talking to, and the way our statements are being phrased. For this reason, it is important for the researcher to provide several options so that the decision as to which language to use is made by the participant (Vanner, 2015, p.6).

I tried as much as possible to have informal conversations with the participants and get acquainted with them before arranging the interviews, so as to break the ice and make them feel at ease. Besides the interviews and conversations, I observed some of their everyday practices: I visited their workplaces, and shared meals with some of them. As Masdeu Torruella (2014) has observed:

> Timing, circumstances and mood cannot be controlled as if they were laboratory science, and everyday activity is the space through which one can understand and grasp realities that might remain undisclosed in a formal interview (p. 13).

I also had follow-up conversations and communication via email and/or WeChat with some of the participants throughout the duration of my fieldwork. In addition, I took photos and kept a field diary where I recorded thoughts, reflections, descriptions, and observations. Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) have described field notes as having "special—almost magical— potency" (p.177), and added that "they have the power to evoke the times and places of the 'field', and call to mind the sights, sound, and smells of 'elsewhere', when read and reread 'at home'" (p.176).

I used multiple sources of data besides the primary interviews that I conducted to enhance the validity of my research. Prior to my PhD research, I was engaged with the Chinese migrant community for three years via my job as community interpreter, an activity that I also volunteered for during part of my stay in the field and which allowed me to conduct observations and have conversations in many different contexts (schools, hospitals, welfare institutions, Chinese migrants' homes) and with a variety of social actors, which included not only children of migrants, but also parents and educators. As mentioned previously, during my stay in Madrid, I spent time in bars, cafés, shops, streets located the Chinatown district of Usera, and I visited weekend Chinese schools, where I had the opportunity to sit in classes and speak with teachers, students and Chinese parents.

I stopped collecting data when I realized that the themes were beginning to repeat themselves. The analysis of the data began as soon as the first interview was completed. I used a deductive thematic analysis approach that included listening and familiarization with the recordings, followed by full transcription and translation of interviews, manual coding and categorization. Every period of observation and every interview resulted in "processed notes and reflexive monitoring of the research process" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 191). As this memoranda accumulated, they provided preliminary analyses that helped organize the data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). I tried to follow the warning against the danger of "thinking as usual in the field" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.192). This refers to the need to constantly reflect on situations, and "question *what* one knows, *how* such knowledge has been acquired, the *degree of certainty* of such knowledge, and what further lines of enquiry are implied" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.192).

I read transcripts and notes many times. The purpose of reading and rereading transcripts is to help us notice passages that did not seem particularly revealing on first reading, and therefore to constantly expand our focus to new areas for attention. Schmidt (2004) has noted that:

> On first reading one often finds 'neat and fitting quotations' that seen to be ideal for a presentation in a final report, thereby overlooking parts of the text that fit less well with the researcher's own expectations. Repeated reading of the texts and, in particular, conscious and open dealing with these assumptions helps the investigator to notice not only parts of the text that correspond to these prior beliefs, but also those parts that accord less well (p.255).

3.7. Narrative Approach

Interviews were the primary source of data for this study. These interviews were designed to be as open as possible, in order to give freedom to

the participants to touch upon the aspects that were deemed most relevant in their experiences. Generally, my interviews followed a life narrative approach, which means that instead of asking specific questions framed in a conventional interview, I simply asked the participants to tell me about their life stories and experiences in Spain. The advantage of this life narrative approach is that it "allows people to describe *processes* of how things happened and came into being, how a subject was formed or influenced by a multiplicity of places and positionings, and how they dealt with experiences and developed a sense of self" (Lutz, 2011, p.350).

Moreover, the narrative approach achieves the important task of bringing participants to life by allowing them to describe their lives through particular events. As explained by Spradley (1979), "in order for a reader to see the lives of the people we study, we must *show them through particulars,* not merely talk about them in generalities" (p.207). A failure to focus on these particulars results in a form of "antiseptic" writing:

> Why, then, is so much anthropological writing so antiseptic, so devoid of anything that brings people to life? There they are, pinned like butterflies in a glass case, with the difference, however, that we often cannot tell what color these specimens are, and we are never shown them in flight, never see them soar or die except in generalities. The reason for this lies in the aims of anthropology, whose concern with the particular is incidental to an understanding of the general (Read, 1965, p.ix).

On the other hand, by integrating their experiences into a coherent narrative, individuals construct their identities. This process, called narrative identity, has been defined as "an individual's internalized, evolving, and integrative story of the self" (McAdams, 2008, p.242). Narrative identity is thus a sense-making tool that organizes all the different parcels of an individual's life into an integrated story (Somers & Gibson, 1993; MacAdams, 2008). Causal coherence is used to justify how things have come to be the way they are and

how events in one's life are meaningfully related to one another (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 2008).

This connectivity of different parts in a narrative, or what makes a story a story, is identified as "emplotment" and is opposed to a chronological or categorical sequence of events (Ricoeur, 1991). Emplotment presupposes a self-reflective and "selective appropriation" (Somers & Gibson, 1993) in the construction of narratives and aims at providing life with some sense of unity, purpose and coherence (McAdams, 2008 p.243). Ricoeur (1991) has affirmed that "knowledge of the self is an interpretation" (p.73) and that the narrative is the privileged tool through which this interpretation is mediated.

McAdams (2008) has indicated the centrality of narratives in processes of identity construction by stressing that "the self is storied" (p.244) or, in other words, that storytelling is fundamental to human nature. Storytelling is present from an early age, he argued, as children tell stories about their personal experiences, and this continues into adolescence and adulthood, especially through the filter of memory, which gathers remembered episodes and organizes them selectively and strategically, turning them into stories (McAdams, 2008). He added that memories are encoded and retrieved later in such a way that it serves a person's objectives, and that therefore "life stories are always about both the reconstructed past and the imagined future" (p.245).

Ricoeur (1986) also argued that all human experience is fundamentally a language experience. We are not transparent and directly accessible to ourselves but must undergo an interpretation or reconstruction –through language. It is through this reconstruction and interpretation that the meaning of experience is created.

According to McAdams (2008), narrative identity is an act of reconciliation between the self and the outside world, between "who we imagine we were, are and might be in our heads and bodies with who we were, are, and might be in the contexts of family, community, the workplace, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, and culture" (p.243). The individual constructs identity by situating himself in those emplotted stories (Somers &

Gibson, 1993). Thus, as pointed out by Ricoeur (1990) "the narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told" (p.175).

McAdams (2008) has highlighted three important characteristics of narratives. First, he pointed out, "stories integrate lives" (McAdams, 2008, p.244). This integrative character of life stories is both synchronic (how a person can be A, B, C and D at the same time, or for example how a person can simultaneously be both generous, selfish, understanding and self-centered) and diachronic (how a person moved from A, to B, to C in different stages of his life.) In this sense, integration would consist of finding meaning in things or experiences which may seem disconnected or antagonistic. Narratives are thus able to unravel and makes sense of some of the complexities and discontinuities in people's experiences.

On the other hand, he signaled, "stories are told in social relationships" (McAdams, 2008, p.245). In this sense, stories are social phenomena. This echoes some of the principles of dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986, 1986a), as it presupposes that any story must be understood in the context where it is produced. Very often, narrators shape their stories according to what they anticipate their audiences expect or want to hear (Wortham, 2001). Bakhtin (1981) has said in this regard that "every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates" (p.280). Thorne & McLean, (2003) have noted that audiences often push narrators to find meanings to their stories, often insisting in eliciting meanings which most likely were not originally there.

Finally, "stories change over time" (McAdams, 2008, p.246). "Factual errors in autobiographical recollection increase substantially as the temporal distance from the to-be-remembered event increases" (McAdams, 2008, p.246), a phenomenon that makes it easy for stories to change over time. Moreover, as people's lives changes, and their "motivations, goals, personal concerns and social positions change" (p.246) their memories and the meaning they attribute to past events may change as well (Singer & Salovey, 1993; Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000).

To sum up, the life narrative interview is a powerful methodological tool that allows participants to construct and articulate their cultural identities and express how these have come into being and have been mediated through their different experiences. This mode of interviewing stresses the processual, situated and ever-changing nature of identities, as well as people's own sense-making of their individual experiences. This approach effectively complies with my theoretical framework because, from a narrative identity perspective, narratives not only emerge from a process of self-reflexivity but presuppose an audience to listen to them (in this case the researcher), and therefore their construction is also inherently dialogical. I will therefore suggest that (cultural) identity is self-reflexively (Giddens) and dialogically (Hobart) constructed as well as narratively produced.

3.8. Positionality

Regardless of who we are and of the type of research that is conducted, there is always a distance between researcher and participants. According to Bourdieu (1990), the researcher is estranged from his subjects of research by means of a fundamental opposition between theory and practice, interpretation and use, intellectual discourse and pragmatics. This distance is further complicated by the constitution of research as an "inherently hierarchical process" (Vanner, 2015, p.3). The power dynamics in research include "participant selection, privacy, disclosure, interviews, observation, analysis and the (re)presentation of research participants and their communities" (Vanner, 2015, p.2).

Although this distance cannot be canceled, the most effective strategy a researcher can adopt in order to achieve greater proximity and validate the knowledge acquired through investigation is, as pointed out in the previous section, to objectify his position in the research and the distance that separates her from the observed through a process of reflexivity (Bourdieu, 1990; Hobart, 1996, 2000, 2006, 2010).

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) believe that the only aspect that differentiates ethnographic research from everyday life is perhaps the self-reflexivity that accompanies our actions and that ultimately becomes the ethnographer's "decisive competence" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, cited in Luders, 2004, p.227).

Reflexivity is identified as the process through which the researcher acknowledges and discloses her positionality, that is, who she is and the ways in which this self has influenced different aspects of the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002). The more the observer is willing to reflect on her own positionality, the more transparent her relationship with her participants and the greater validity to her research.

Positionality is acknowledged by locating the researcher in relation to three areas: subject, participants and research context (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). In the first section of this chapter, I have discussed my relationship with the research context by giving a detailed account of my process of immersion in the field. In the following section, I will discuss my subject position and my relationship with my participants.

Relationship with Participants

The way we come across to other people depends on a number of variables, which may be either fixed or subjective and contextual (Chiseri-Strater, 1996). Thus, while we purposely or inadvertently over-emphasize or play down some of our attributes in the course of interaction with others, to create a desired effect or impression, a great deal of elements remain beyond our control.

Gender, race, age, are important fixed categories, that together with dress, hairstyle, accent, manner of speech, or mannerism may be taken by interlocutors as markers of social positioning and may condition their attitudes towards the researcher (Orellana, 2009). Yet, even physical or social categories such as gender, age, or nationality are not unproblematic and may vary substantially. Thus, I may be perceived as Spanish, but being Spanish may

mean something completely different to different individuals and this meaning may change over time (Herod, 1999).

In my case, regardless of how much my perceived identity varied across participants, I believe I appeared to them to a large extent as a white, Spanish, female researcher, older than them, with knowledge of Chinese language and the Chinese community. As will be illustrated below, some of these markers located me in an ambiguous position that simultaneously created distance and proximity with my informants.

Chinese speaking Spaniard?

I often noticed an ambiguity in the fact that I came across to my participants as a Spanish person able to speak Chinese. This sense of ambiguity was complicated and intertwined with the complexity of the identities of my participants who in many cases saw themselves as neither Spanish or Chinese.

I generally introduced myself as a Spanish PhD student doing research on children of migrants in Spain. However, when I switched to speaking Chinese with some of my participants (in most cases at their own choice and because they felt more comfortable speaking Chinese), there was often a shift in attitudes towards me. In some cases, among participants who did not have a strong command of Spanish and did not feel very integrated in Spanish society, and who had initially shown a certain distance towards me, this automatically created a connection and a sense of trust. I believe that my ability to speak Chinese fluently generated closeness, but also a sense of relief at the sudden realization that they would be able to use their native language to express themselves.

The most telling example of this was Changkun, who had had negative experiences of discrimination with Spanish society. Changkun behaved suspicious and aloof when we met, but after realizing that he was able to easily communicate with me in Chinese, he emphatically expressed his gratefulness and satisfaction for having had his first opportunity to freely share his thoughts and experiences with a local.

In other cases, there was a reluctance to speak Chinese. Vera, for example, insisted on speaking to me in Spanish despite the fact that she had obvious difficulties to express herself. She was a bit nervous during our conversations and I believe she never really saw me as someone truly able to relate to her experiences, despite the fact that she spoke extensively about them to me.

For other participants, for whom Spanish was their native language, my being able to speak Chinese did not seem to affect our relationship or the way they viewed me. Those participants were often successfully socialized in the mores of Spanish society and had not had much contact with China or Chinese society beyond their family experiences. These participants (Binbin, for example) spoke to me from the assumption that I had grown up in Spain like them and was able to relate to them in some ways.

Luckily, in other cases, I was perceived as someone who spoke Chinese and had knowledge and experience about both Chinese and Spanish cultures, just like them, and this commonality was able to create several points of connection and affinity. With Carlos, for example, we had multiple conversations. We talked extensively, without fear or reservation towards misaligned perceptions, because we shared a common gaze developed through a familiarity with Spain, China, and the Chinese community in Spain.

Age

Another marker that proved significant during interactions was age. I admit it was sometimes difficult to emotionally reach and gain the trust of very young people, who saw me as an adult completely disconnected from their world. With some, I simply just accepted that they were talking and presenting their ideas in particular ways, and that they were not giving me access to some of their experiences (Orellana, 2009). In other cases, however, I found ways to bridge this gap and adjust power imbalances by organizing simple group activities or conversations where the tension of a one-to-one conversation with an adult completely alien from their universe was mitigated to a great extent. This was the case in some of the conversations I had with

young people at the Buddhist temple. I seldom intervened in their conversation and very often they would lose themselves in the conversation and forget that I was there. In fact, they were talking to each other rather than to me, and this allowed me valuable insights into their perspectives.

I also remember another conversation I had at a Chinese weekend school. It was a rainy Saturday afternoon, and the principal of the school, a young, energetic woman that I had met through a friend, had allowed me to sit in her class and observe. I visited the school several times, watched students play around, and talked to them and to teachers and parents. On the first day, I introduced myself to the teacher before taking a seat. It was very early, but some students, mostly girls aged between 7 and 13, were in the classroom already. Two were leaning on their desks, seemingly bored, another one was staring at me and asked who I was, and two others were aimlessly walking around taking curious glances at me. I tried to speak to one of them, explained who I was, and asked a few questions, but she was obviously too shy to even respond. At that moment, the principal entered the classroom with a big pile of textbooks and asked if I could help put some stickers on the front and back covers. It was the beginning of the semester, and she was obviously stressed by all the work she had to do and the number of parents with questions that she had to attend. So she left us there with the books and without much ceremony. When I asked the girls if anyone wanted to help with the stickers, they all approached my desk. I considered myself lucky to have been given a task so appealing to young children. One of them, not older than 7, told me she was "very good with stickers". They began asking me what those stickers were for and taking turns to put them on the books. It was that practical, hands-on activity that broke the ice. We had a lot of books and a lot of stickers and a large task to complete. As they helped me, I asked about their families and their experiences in Spain, and the conversation unfolded naturally, with no strains. As pointed out by Orellana (2009), with young informants, asking direct questions does not work and the challenge is "to create spaces in which we could hear things that might not be said if we directly probed kids with questions" (p.136).

Researcher Status

My identity as a researcher in the participants' eyes was another aspect that in some occasions reinforced my outsider status and contributed to creating a distance that initially made it more difficult to achieve a genuine and sincere communication. Yet, again, my ability to speak Chinese, combined with my familiarity with both Spanish and Chinese cultures and societies, often mitigated this effect and allowed me to gain trust from the participants.

At other times, I strategized my researcher position. By this I mean that I consciously or unconsciously emphasized my position as an outsider or insider, depending on what I deemed would work best for that particular purpose, or in situations where I needed to establish trust. If I sensed feelings of distance or reservation in my participants, I would, for example, downplay my researcher status and stress the fact that I had worked as interpreter for Chinese migrants in the past in order to highlight my engagement and familiarity with the community. Although this type of behavior may give rise to ethical concerns, these strategic choices and performances should be seen as a natural part of our everyday interactions with others.

But my researcher status was not the only status through which I was perceived by my participants. In this sense, the different channels that I used to recruit my people and access the community resulted in very different situations that conditioned the different roles that I adopted and that made me appear in different ways in the eyes of my participants: as researcher, but also as interpreter, teacher, friend, or simply as a stranger they could relate to. I tried to be always aware of those positions, the ways I was perceived by participations, and the implications of those perceptions in terms of the types of narratives that were produced.

Overall, I was able to appreciate a continuous dynamic tension between my position as outsider and my position as insider. As a Spanish, 37-year-old researcher, I was unquestionably an outsider to many of them. Conversely, my personal background, in particular my ability to speak Chinese, sustained interest in China and previous engagement with Spain's Chinese migrant community, generated proximity and trust. The words Spanish and Chinese also

emerged as contested signifiers in the lives of my participants because many did not identify as either Spanish or Chinese. This helped them perceive me not as a Spanish person *like* (insider) or *unlike* (outsider) them but simply as an individual born in Spain and able to speak Chinese.

Other scholars have stressed that there are not clear advantages or disadvantages to being an outsider or insider, but that each position plays out differently or predominates depending on specific situations and the purpose of the research (Hammersley, 1993; Herod, 1999; Kusow, 2003). Merton (1972) has said that:

> …sociologically speaking there is nothing fixed about the boundaries separating Insiders from Outsiders. As situations involving different values arise, different statuses are activated and the lines of separation shift (p. 28).

Herod (1999) has noted that the categories insider-outsider are not so important and that the relationship between both terms is much more complex that what the simple dichotomy initially suggests. He stressed that it is of no use to consider whether an insider status grants or not a more legitimate version of the knowledge produced, and vice versa, because meaning in research is ultimately co-constructed between the researcher and the participants who both contribute and shape the process of knowledge creation in different ways.

Personal History

Besides identity markers, we as ethnographers must strive to understand how our personal histories and experiences shape our understandings and interpretations. In my case, although I or my parents have never migrated for economic reasons, and in this sense my situation greatly differs from that of my participants, my own physical and symbolic transcultural mobility, from being raised in a French educational institution in Spain, going to university in the United Kingdom, and then moving to

mainland China, and then to Hong Kong, somehow explains my interest in migration, and my desire to examine questions such as, what is home, or the significance of living in a place that is not home.

On a different level, I would say that my long-term life commitment to fiction writing has also shaped the perspective of this dissertation in several ways. First, this commitment is fundamentally connected to my interest in people, in different people, in their life-worlds, narratives and experiences. This has greatly conditioned not only my choice of topic, but also my choice of a narrative methodology, the style of this dissertation, the questions I asked, how and to whom I chose to ask them, and more generally the lens through which I view the world. I would say that fiction writing has, like this dissertation, the goal of "keeping alive and holding safe a world where the individual, his original thought, his inviolable private life, is respected" (Kundera, 1990, p. 165, cited in Rapport, 1997).

On the other hand, I have my own personal relationship with issues of belonging. I could say, for example, that I was born in Spain but I do not really feel Spanish in many respects because I was raised in a French education system with French education values; or that despite being a mother I do not really identify with some aspects of the mainstream discourse of motherhood because I am a single mother of twins; or that despite being an early-stage researcher I do not fully identify with the academic world. Overall, I do not feel that conventional categories accurately describe my personal situation and experiences (or anyone's, for that matter). This affects my everyday choices and my interpretations of the world around me and my participants in both trivial and decisive ways.

But the issues that my participants face with regard to belonging are very different from mine. Being the descendants of first generation Chinese, their presumed position at a crossroads between China and Spain is the outcome of forced relocation. Their parents decided to move to another country as a result of economic migration, in order to improve their living conditions, and this had little to do with them. Their immersion in Spanish culture was both imposed

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upon them and in many cases a difficult process complicated by language struggles or discrimination.

This stands in sharp contrast with my own sense of not-belonging, which is anchored in a white, middle-class background. I could say, for example, that my parents decided to send me to a French school so that I could grow up bilingual, and that I have come to know and understand academics and sinologists only because I could afford the privilege to go to university. From this perspective, my issues with belonging and non-belonging can be regarded as the consequence of privileges I have had and as largely the consequences of intellectual decisions.

These issues, which continuously emerged during my time in the field, raised important questions: was I judging my participants' experiences against the benchmark of my own personal experience and, if so, to what extent was I through my interpretations mediating the real voices of my participants? Was I looking in my participants for answers to my own personal issues? In this sense, was I becoming part of my own data?

There is, of course, no simple answer to these questions, other than to stress the crucial role played by my presence and identity in the field, which mediated the process of analysis and interpretation of my data no matter how much I tried to bring to the fore the voices of my participants. However, as pointed out in the previous chapter, this should not be considered as a limitation. If only we acknowledge our positionality and remind ourselves through reflexivity of the implications that our presence in the field bear upon our research, this will only help enrich our experience and reduce the distance with our participants.

3.9. From Field to Paper: Ethnographer as Translator

If it remains impossible for individuals who are immersed in a given system or mode of existence to explain the presuppositions inherent to this mode of existence, it remains all the more so for those situated outside this experience. As pointed out by Bourdieu (1990), "one cannot really *live* the

belief associated with profoundly different conditions of existence ... still less give others the means of reliving it by the sheer power of discourse" (p.68).

The ethnographer is thus faced with "the impossible task of entering the consciousness of his or her subjects" (Churchill, 2005, p.22) and the only thing that he or she can produce with his data is an interpretation. In this sense, Churchill (2005) referred to the ethnographer as "the self-embodiment of a transitional space" (p.5) that translates from the events or words of the field to the ethnographer's pen.

Bourdieu (1990) remained wary of the dangers of this interpretative task. Churchill (2005), however, talked about the interpretive task of the ethnographer in positive terms, as a craft that aims at shaping the data "as a potter shapes clay—not to change it into false material but rather to bring out of the basic material a truth or beauty already within it yet which depends on deft handling to bring it out more fully" (p.20). The task is to reformulate the text or action and "make into something new even as it remains the same" (p.6).

During this process, the ethnographer, just like a translator, formalizes, synthetizes, and systematizes the data collected in the field. She is always making choices about how and what to report. Thus, there are multiple version of the same story, and "every account is a translation for which there exist competing counter translations" (p.7).

Van Maanen (2011) has listed the countless mediations that field data undergoes before becoming fixed and frozen through pen and paper:

> Field data are constructed from talk and action. They are then interpretations of other interpretations and are mediated many times over-by the fieldworker's own standards of relevance for what is of interest; by the historically situated queries put to informants; by the norms current in the fieldworker's professional community for what is proper work; by the self-reflection demanded of both the fieldworker and the informant; by the intentional and unintentional ways a fieldworker or informant is misled; and by the fieldworker's mere

presence on the scene as an observer and participant (p.95).

From this perspective, the ethnographer, through her interpretative task, becomes an essential element of the ethnography. She is "an element within the field as well as its 'observer'" (Atkinson, 1990, p.158) and her voice is interwoven with the voices of the participants in a dialogical give and take that occurs via her interpretative task. Atkinson (1990) has signaled in his respect that:

> The voices in the text enter into relationships of echo and anaphora, dialogue and development. Sometimes the voices are those of the sociologist –as author of the text and observer/describer of the social scene. Sometimes the voices are those of the sociologist and the actors (p.92).

In this dissertation, I have not tried to conceal my voice as a researcher. I have been aware from the beginning of this project that as much as one of the priorities was to give voice to the participants through their narratives, these narratives, as they underwent a multilayered transition from field to paper, were partly re-appropriated and filtered by my interpretative lens, and that this lens was in turn shaped by the dialogical exchanges that took place within the field. Thus, the research process has resulted not only in the micro-narratives of their personal life stories but also, through the exchanges and conversations that I had with my participants, in a co-constructed sense-making that has become the distinctive 'voice' of this dissertation.

3.10. Validity

Validity refers to the inferences we make from out data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), in particular to the accuracy of these inferences in representing our participants' realities, as well as to the credibility they have for our participants and audiences (Schwandt, 1997; Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The issue of validity in qualitative research has been widely debated and has generated a multiplicity of confusing terms and procedures that stand for validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). However, rather than approaching validity in terms of instruments and procedures, I propose to look at validity as something organic to the research process, or "inherent in its relationship to those things that it is intended to be an account of" (Maxwell, 1992, p.281). Brinberg and McGrath (1985) have thus noted that "validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques ... rather, validity is like integrity, character, and quality, to be assessed relative to purposes and circumstances" (p.13).

From this perspective, I would say that I have tried to enhance the validity of my study by rendering accurate accounts of my participants' experiences and identities and making sure that their voices were well represented. I have done so from multiple perspectives, not only by providing long quotes and thick descriptions of their feelings and perceptions, locating them in concrete situations, and privileging their narratives, but also by long-term engagement in the field and prior familiarization with the community via my interpreting sessions. I have tried to engage with my data as systematically as possible, following Patton's (1980) dictate of returning to the data "over and over again to see if the constructs, categories, explanations and interpretations make sense" (p.339), and as described in previous sections, by an on-going process of reflexivity termed by Altheide and Johnson (1994) as "validity-as-reflexive-accounting" (p.489). I have triangulated my results and data obtained from my main participants by engaging in multiple situations and contexts with the Chinese community. These included the multiple locations that I visited as an interpreter but also for example my visits to weekend Chinese schools and street-level observations.

BEYOND IDENTITY LABELS

This chapter introduces the life histories of four participants: Mona, Vera, Binbin and Carlos. Apart from Vera, who was included in this chapter as a contrast and highlight to Mona's experiences, the remaining three participants did not use clear-cut categories to talk about their cultural identities. They did not feel Spanish. They did not feel Chinese. They did not feel Chinese-Spanish, Spanish-Chinese, transnational, or somewhere in between. These participants used their detailed personal narratives to weave a more interconnected, situated sense of who they were and where they belonged. They emphasized the importance of attitude, context and opportunities in the constitution of their identities, and referred to conflicting circumstances in their lives that created multiple and subtle forms of belonging and disconnection. The most salient characteristic of their cultural identities was precisely that it could not be contained within bounded verbal categories.

In the first section, "Opportunities", Mona explains how it was the opportunities provided by her socio-economic status and liberal family education that conditioned her identity as citizen of the world. Vera's narrative is introduced as a contrast to Mona's experiences to reflect how it was precisely lack of opportunities and low socio-economic status that resulted in the development of her Chinese identity. In the second section, "Attitude", Binbin explains how it was personal agency grounded in the desire to overcome rejection and discrimination that resulted in a form of cultural identity that blended elements of cosmopolitanism and ethnicity but that could not be contained by either of these terms. In the third section, "Context", Carlos talks about a complex cultural identity orientation, partly Spanish, partly bicultural, partly international, that he perceived as being the product of a multicultural and open environment where he grew up and of his minority status within Spain's Chinese migrant community.

Ethnicity, mobility, transnational attachments, were notions that were present in the participants' narratives, but not as overarching categories through which to explain their identities. Rather, what their narratives showed was the multiple, blurred and contested meaning that these words acquired in the context of their personal realities.

What this chapter tries to demonstrate is the importance of examining migrant children's identities as processes, rather than outcomes, and from their own personal and situated perspectives. Ultimately, this approach downplays the relevance of categories coined by academic debates, and stresses the richness and multilayered nature of cultural identity practices that resist categorization.

4.1. Opportunities: Mona, Vera

Mona, 19

Mona was born in Barcelona, Spain. Her parents emigrated from Zhejiang Province to Spain at the age of 17 but separated shortly after. Mona grew up with her mother, her mother's partner, and a step sister three years younger than her. Her mother started by running a textile industry, and later opened several import-export businesses, including export of Spanish wine.

Mona attended an international high school and was an outstanding student. She was awarded several honorary mentions and won a poetry contest. She described her education as both following traditional Chinese manners and etiquette, and as very liberal in terms of having open communication with her mother, freedom to make her own decisions and very few restrictions. After many years in Spain, her mother had now established a comfortable position. She was more integrated in Spanish society than the majority of first generation Chinese. She had developed friendships with locals and was able to speak Spanish. Moreover, unlike other children of Chinese migrants who go to Chinese schools to learn Chinese, Mona had a personal tutor at home, someone who not only looked after her through the years but who also taught her Chinese language, writing and cultural aspects of her

heritage culture, as well as other academic subjects. As a result, besides being a native Spanish speaker fully socialized into the values and practices of Spanish society, Mona was also a native Chinese speaker with a deep interest and understanding of her heritage culture.

I first met Mona at Campus, a co-working space operated by Google for entrepreneurs in Madrid. I waited for her outside the building as she walked down the stairs from the first floor, where she was working with her Spanish boyfriend. She was dressed in jeans, sneakers and a T-shirt. She spoke in a highly articulate way, and she looked extremely confident and decisive. I had contacted her via email after reading an online interview with her on the Chiñoles site, which, as mentioned previously, was aimed at sharing information among children of Chinese migrants living in Spain. "I didn't ask to be on that page, I am there by chance", she said early in our conversation, "they just posted that interview and added my contact to their Facebook group". At that time, Mona was taking a year out of university, where she was studying for a degree in Business Administration. She was taking a break in Spain from her six-month internship in Palo Alto, California, but was almost convinced that she would eventually drop out of university. She justified this decision by explaining that she did not see university as a very stimulating environment and complained about the reduced opportunities it provided for practical learning.

At age 19, Mona was already a very active entrepreneur. She was involved in several start-ups and was the co-founder of an NGO targeted at book donations for underdeveloped areas. The motto in her personal website was "I believe in brave, free, curious souls".

Mona made clear from the beginning of our conversation that she refused to be identified as either Chinese or Spanish. In fact, her initial reaction after I explained to her that I had found her through the Chiñoles Facebook page was to stress that she was a member of that group by chance, a comment that revealed her reluctance to be labeled or identified as second generation Chinese. At the same time, she made clear that she did not want to be identified as Spanish:

I consider myself much more liberal than most Spanish people. People here, compared to Chinese kids, are much more liberal, but I don't have any taboos, and if we are having a drink, for example, and you want to talk about sex, and you'd like to ask me if I want to do a threesome, I just don't have any problem talking about it, whereas a standard Spanish person would. So I am much more liberal.

She also voiced her openness and absence of loyalty to any form of national or ethnic community:

I don't consider myself as belonging to any specific place. I don't feel Chinese, but if I had to feel from a specific place in particular, I would say I feel more Western, in general, but I don't see this as belonging to a specific country or ethnicity.

Mona regarded her flexible sense of belonging in the world as a manifestation of her open-minded disposition. Thus, she described herself as "someone quite atypical", "very much against any type of barrier or limitation" and as "having had a lot of curiosity for things that other children did not feel curious about". She believed that this was "maybe due to my background or because I have received different stimuli, or maybe due to the type of education". In this sense, Mona referred to her family education as having granted her multiple opportunities and freedom to experience and explore.

First, she described her mother as being "more like a friend" and their relationship as emotionally close, non-hierarchical and based on open communication:

She is only 41 now, and the relationship is more like, if you have something to say, I will tell her, if she has something to say, she will tell me, but otherwise, we mind our own businesses, and it's always been like this, a relationship based on exchange.

She described her mother as having adapted to her personal maturation and development, gradually granting her more and more freedom to make her own decisions:

> My mother was quite strict, but she is also quite liberal, she came from what we call in China a feudal family, and she has tried to perpetuate certain traditions … She had to take her seat before me during meals, for example, this kind of thing, but only when I was small. As I grew up, she would say things to me like "you need to do well in school, to concentrate on your studies", but we reached a point where she realized I was growing up and was on my way to becoming independent. That was when I was around 16, and since then she has always supported my decisions. If I said to her, "I want to attend this or that event in Madrid", she would buy the ticket for me. So there was control when I was a child, but as soon as she began seeing me as an adult, she just began, "oh well, you can do whatever you like".

Interestingly, Mona consistently framed her family education and the open disposition that had resulted from it against the experiences of other Chinese in Spain. After describing her mother's liberal education, for example, she stressed: "and this is precisely what is different from traditional Chinese families, where you don't usually have the freedom to do what you want".

According to Mona, Chinese families, through different forms of pressure, were largely responsible for controlling and limiting children's social life, a circumstance that affected Chinese children's social abilities. She referred, for example, to the obligation to work in the family business:

> The problem is Chinese parents say, "you need to help with the business", and this way you are taking away from your son or daughter a time that they could be using for socializing, and this becomes a barrier, even more so if the kids already have problems to socialize.

Again, she contrasted that situation with her personal experience:

> In my case, for example, I have never worked at my mother's business, well, I did, during the last summer I spent in Barcelona, but only because I wanted to have that experience.

For Mona, working in the family shop was not a constraining obligation imposed by socio-economic conditions and the need to rely on the labor of family members in order to make ends meet, but on the contrary a typical middle-class experience aimed at expanding her horizons and experimenting with something new.

Mona referred to her cousin's experience to illustrate the controlling attitudes of Chinese parents and their power to shape Chinese children's cultural identities:

> My cousin ... for example, in the beginning, was someone like me, he would hang out with people from all over the world, it wouldn't make a difference to him, but now he has a Chinese girlfriend, he interacts a lot with the Chinese community ... and this change has largely been the result of family pressure, in terms of saying to him, "I want you to socialize with this or that type of people"... because Chinese people pay a lot of importance to what your family has, and in the end want you to socialize with people who are the same as you.

According to Mona, her socio-economic status also played an important role in setting the material conditions for her to acquire the intercultural competences –in the form of language skills and familiarity with different social norms— that made her feel comfortable dealing with difference. Once more, she contrasted this with the experiences of other Chinese children in Spain:

I also have to stress that my family is a well-off, privileged family, and this has played an important role. The majority of those who come here are people from the countryside, with no education.

In this regard, Mona attended an international high school, and had a nanny and private tutor who would teach her Chinese language and culture on a one-to-one basis, as opposed to other Chinese children of migrants who attend weekend Chinese language schools:

My mom has always wanted me to take the good things from each culture. I grew up with a nanny, and it was always the same person, she was the one who taught me Chinese, and I can read, write and translate Chinese; in fact I used to do quite a few translations. And all my education was Chinese. In Math for example I would follow the Chinese curriculum, so I was always ahead in school, but at the same time I went out to the park with my Spanish friends, so it's always been a mix of both cultures … I know both cultures in depth.

Mona displayed a remarkable self-confidence in dealing with cross-cultural encounters, in particular challenging ones that involved experiences with discrimination. Referring to this, she explained:

I think it's because I am someone very confident and straightforward, that's why I've never experienced discrimination, maybe only when I was very small and couldn't stand up for myself … maybe I've heard comments sometimes on the street, but I sort of don't even care because I don't even know you, so if you say something to me, I would just say, "well, this kind of comment is only reflecting your education, and I don't care at all".

Her comments above reveal how, while rejecting the constraints of identity categories, she still confidently and strategically asserted her right to belong to Spanish society.

Overall, Mona's narrative has revealed how her identity defied traditional labels and categorization. She regarded herself as neither Spanish, nor Chinese, or somewhere in between. At the same time, while claiming no loyalty to any particular culture or nation, she was able to effectively respond to discriminatory attitudes and claim her position in Spanish society. Her cultural identity was the product of a liberal family education and of a privileged socio-economic status which had granted her freedom and opportunities to explore, learn and experiment with the world. It was Mona's awareness of her privileged background and position, in particular as opposed to the majority of Chinese migrant children, that had led her to reinforce and reaffirm her identity as citizen of the world.

Vera, 19

Vera was born and lived in Qingtian with her grandparents before joining her parents in Spain at age 10. Her father and mother, rural people with a low educational background, had left China when Vera was 2 and 5 years old respectively, and now spent most of their waking hours at the grocery store they owned in a central district of Madrid.

Vera had a difficult adaptation in Spain. She described her life as marked by the struggle to learn Spanish and keep up with school, and by the daily obligation to work in the family business. She did not have many friends. She had a 12-year-old brother born in Spain who was now living in China with his grandparents in order to improve his Chinese. Vera contrasted the life of obligation that she led in Spain with her previous life and the life that his brother had now in China, more carefree and with no responsibilities:

> Everyone was saying that living abroad was great, things like that, but when you get here, you realize it is different. When I compare things with my brother, in China, you have time to play around by yourself

there, you have more free time, but here, children of migrants spend most of the time in the [family] shop, with a computer, or with the clients.

Vera only saw her parents once during her time in China, when they visited Qingtian to attend her great grandfather's funeral. They did not have a good relationship. The only line of communication with them were practical issues, restrictions and commands. She confessed that she did not know what her parents were doing in China before migrating to Spain. Her parents also imposed a large number of restrictions and granted her little freedom to socialize. She was never allowed to go out with friends until the age of 16.

I was introduced to Vera by my cousin, who was Vera's Spanish language teacher at a language school in Madrid. After having repeated two years, Vera was taking her last chance to graduate from high school, and was taking extra-curricular lessons to improve her Spanish in order to achieve that goal. We first met on a winter evening at the language school cafeteria after her class.

Vera's story offers a contrasting perspective of the different ways in which family dynamics and socio-economic status may affect the development of cultural identities. As opposed to Mona, whose cultural identity and openness to difference appeared as the product of opportunities generated by class and socio-economic status, in Vera's case, family relations and socio-economic status had negatively affected her flexibility to navigate different cultural contexts.

First, Vera identified as Chinese. When I asked her why she felt Chinese, she made clear that she regarded this outcome as the result of family pressure and restrictions.: "because I live with my parents, so I would like to do things the Spanish way, but I am not allowed to". Vera identified being Spanish with more freedom and flexibility to do things. She stressed that she wanted to go out with her friends, but faced many restrictions, as her parents always complained that she did not help enough in the family business.

As opposed to Mona's liberal family education, Vera reported not being encouraged or given opportunities and freedom to explore. She explained for example how she would have liked to travel to other countries but that her mother always dismissed this inclination by arguing that it was a financial waste. Her comments also suggest that she did have the inclination and open disposition to interact with people and engage with difference, but that this was often thwarted by parental control.

On the other hand, the family's lack of economic resources and low educational background resulted in fewer opportunities for Vera to acquire linguistic and intercultural competences. First, Vera's parents did not speak Spanish and were as a result unable to assist her with school work. Especially in the beginning, they did not have the means to afford private tutors, all of which complicated her process of Spanish language learning:

> I didn't like it here in the beginning. First thing here is you need to learn the language. My parents don't speak Spanish well, and of course they couldn't send me to a language school first to learn the grammar, no, you just go straight into school and need to start from scratch, there's nothing else you can do.

When I asked her how long it had taken her to feel comfortable speaking Spanish, she just laughed and said: "No, I've never felt that way. To be honest with you, I've never felt that way." Vera stressed her parents' lack of involvement in her academic life. She attributed this phenomenon to their inability to speak Spanish, and to the gendered education she had received. She explained:

> No, my parents have never shown any concern for my grades. One thing is they don't speak any Spanish ... because when it comes to my brother, they are extremely demanding. Even though my parents are here, but they have WhatsApp, WeChat, and my mother is able to supervise through these things. The teachers [in China] even have a

WhatsApp or WeChat group where they upload all the homework. And my parents have a way to find out about all your grades, whereas here, they don't have any idea.

Later, she added, referring to the little interest shown by her parents towards her academic life: "in China, there is still the notion that it is the man who need to be educated, and this still happens a lot in my family, on my mother's side".

Vera's parents lack of involvement in her academic struggles were also reflected in the fact that she was paying for her Spanish lessons at a language academy out of her own pocket. She explained that her parents would never understand her struggles to learn Spanish, let alone pay for Spanish lessons, given that she had been living in Spain and enrolled in Spanish education for nine years. As a result, she had to devise plausible excuses twice a week in order to be able to attend her lessons at the language school.

Eventually, months after our first interview, Vera dropped out of high school. The same situation was reproduced among other participants and Chinese people I met. The family's limited economic resources, lack of formal education and little involvement with school life limited children's opportunities to receive language and academic support. This in turn reduced their motivation to study, ultimately leading to school drop-outs. As a result of this, they began working in the family business or found jobs in the Chinese community. This situation reduced their opportunities to develop the linguistic and intercultural competences that enabled them to thrive in the host society and resulted in greater identification with their ethnic roots. In fact, at the time we met, Vera confessed feeling largely out of tune with her Spanish classmates, despite having tried to establish meaningful relationships with them:

When I was small, I never shared things with my Spanish friends, but when I entered third grade, I would share things, but they would just

go "ok", that's what they would say, they didn't understand what I was talking about.

When she referred to the only close Spanish friend she had at school, Vera stressed that "she is also a bit strange", thus revealing how she equally regarded herself as different and segregated from the majority. This contrasts with Mona's self-confidence in navigating experiences of discrimination, and her assertive role in changing the dynamics of exclusion.

Ultimately, although several factors made Vera's and Mona's lives very different and difficult to compare (place of birth and number of years in Spain, for example), there was nonetheless an interesting contrast and parallelism in the ways in which family relations and socio-economic status had shaped their opportunities and their cultural identities. Thus, whereas Mona, through family education and opportunities, had gained the confidence, cultural and linguistic competences to claim her position in Spanish society and to develop a confidence dealing with difference, Vera, on the contrary, seemed embedded in a circle of family dynamics, exclusion and low socio-economic resources that conditioned and restricted the range of choices made available to her for the construction of her cultural identity.

4.2. Attitude: Binbin

Binbin, 20

Binbin was born in Valencia, Spain, was enrolled in Spanish public education since kindergarten and was a native Spanish speaker. His mother, from Qingtian, and his father, from Wenzhou, owned a Chinese restaurant and a wholesale import business, and he had a younger brother aged 15. They spoke Qingtian dialect in the family but Binbin was also able to speak some Mandarin Chinese. Binbin reported having received a strict family education in terms of high academic expectations, curfews, and the daily obligation to help in the family business. He felt close to China not only because he was raised by Chinese parents, but also because the family had multiple

connections and constantly received visits from Chinese friends and relatives in their Spanish home. Regardless of that, Binbin had only visited the country twice: once when he was 1, and another time at age 17 to visit his parents' relatives.

At school, Binbin always felt different and marginalized by other Spanish classmates, and tended to socialize more with other migrant children from Latin America and Eastern European countries. His responsibilities at the family business and his parents' discipline left him little time to go out and socialize, and he described his personality as a child as insecure, solitary and withdrawn. At the time we met, however, he was a completely different person. Binbin was a strikingly attractive, confident and articulate young man who had participated in Spanish reality shows, worked as a model and who publicly labeled himself as "the sexy Chinese form Valencia".

After graduating from high school, dropping out from a vocational training course in International Commerce, and leaving his parents' home at age 18, Binbin lived in different Spanish cities and took up different jobs (receptionist, waiter, cook, public relations), before settling down in Madrid. He had spent years practicing his social and relationship skills and been through a long process of self-transformation that had turned him into the person he was now.

I met Binbin through the Facebook page Chiñoles. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I was trying to enroll second generation Chinese for a creative writing workshop aimed at exploring the topic of cultural identity, and he contacted me to express his interest to join. Eventually, we did not recruit enough people to run the workshop, but I remained in touch with him.

Similar to Mona, Binbin denied an affiliation with either Spanish or Chinese culture and stressed his rejection of labels and his openness to difference:

I feel Chinese born in Spain. I don't like saying that I am Spanish, because I am not, people look at my face and I am not, and I am not totally Chinese either, because I was born here, I was raised here, and

my habits are more Spanish than Chinese. I would say I am a human being, international, and I don't like being pigeonholed. So that's it. I am a human being, I am a Chinese born in Spain, and I like socializing with all sorts of people.

However, as opposed to Mona, Binbin's cultural identity was not the result of his family education but rather of a long process of self-transformation. That process had begun in early childhood, a period marked by feelings of marginalization at school:

> Every Chinese in Spain, most of us, in the beginning, they bully us a bit and they marginalize us, so you always try to socialize with the same type of people, those who are also marginalized and those who also come from abroad. So, in the beginning, I always felt much closer to people from Ecuador, Romania, Bulgaria, because they also felt rejected by Spanish kids.

Binbin spoke of marginalization and rejection at school as one of the most dominant aspects of his childhood years, and one that had deeply affected his personality and his ability to socialize. He remarked that "when you are rejected, and marginalized, and so on, it's difficult to maintain conversations and meet new people due to this feeling of rejection", and he added that "it also affects your sexual life, because you feel rejected, and it's hard to digest."

Binbin described his former self as someone "with no self-esteem, who doesn't talk to anyone and with difficulties to socialize with others", and stressed his feelings of invisibility:

> When you are a Chinese kid, and you feel a bit rejected by society in terms of school, friends, people your age, and so on, and you feel no one pays attention to you, you want to avoid drawing anyone's attention as much as possible so that people won't disturb you, you

want to avoid being jeered at, you are at the restaurant … you just want to watch television, be left alone, play videogames.

At that time, Binbin still retained strong emotional ties and identification with his Chinese heritage, but through his cross-cultural school friendships, he began developing a parallel sense of belonging to an international community:

I identified as Chinese, because my parents are Chinese, because we always had visits from relatives, we would also visit other Chinese, relatives, friends and so on, so I felt that I still had that feeling of Chinese culture in terms of my family, but in terms of friendships, I was more international, I would say.

Although Binbin reported that his identification as Chinese was partly the product of his family socialization, his story shows how, paradoxically, he was also trapped in his Chinese identity as a result of being subjected to the othering gaze of Spanish society. In this sense, his Chineseness was partly embraced by default due to racial discrimination.

Later, the situation changed. At age 17, Binbin watched a video on YouTube that marked a turning point in his life:

I watched a video with this man, flirting on the streets so easily, getting girls' phone numbers and kissing them after having met them for about two minutes, and this, for a man, regardless of where he is from, is quite surprising, right? So I began to investigate this world, the world of seduction, which is very much connected to the universe of social skills.

It was this video that opened Binbin's eyes to the possibility of crafting a new and more attractive self-image, or, in his own words, "an attractive lifestyle" that would no longer generate rejection. He explained:

There are a number of techniques, tactics and so on, in terms of how to create a more attractive lifestyle, not being shy, not being this or that, your tone of voice ... how to dress up, your physical appearance, in order to be more accepted, in particular by girls, and so as to have no difficulty making friends, make friends come to you ... So I began to experiment ... I left my parents' home at age 17-18, I went to Torrevieja, I practiced with foreigners, tried to get rid of this feeling of rejection, so I would actively look for rejection in order to practice how to be better accepted, how to achieve other people's acceptance of myself as a person, my physical appearance, my everything ... then I moved to Valencia, I was in Alfalfar, Torrevieja, Alicante, and then I ended up in Madrid, and this is where I practiced the most ... I began working as a public relations, promoting night entertainment on the streets, and that was by far the period where I improved the most ... because when you are offering night entertainment, people may or may not want to listen to you, but you get a rough idea about the personality of all the people that you come across, and so if something doesn't work, then you try to change, or correct it, or do it better the following time, and this is how you practice, you gradually improve your social skills. I kept doing it all the time and today I swear to you I never ever imagined until age 18 that I would end up being the type of man that I am today.

Binbin explained that a new confidence in who he was developed precisely as a result of this process that involved socializing with a large number of people and frequent encounters with difference:

I would go to night clubs, and so on, and you would begin to see the world, not only small-town people, but also people from outside, from Norway, Sweden, England, the United States, Black, White, Chinese, blue, red, green, there's everything, and you would realize that the whole thing is not about race, honestly, it's a matter of personalities because you can't generalize, but I think this was a very slow process,

although things were always getting better and better, in terms of interacting with all sorts of people, socializing, experimenting, sharing.

Eventually, consistent exposure to difference led to Binbin's gradual acceptance of his own difference and to the transcendence of his negatively perceived Chineseness.

After some time, Binbin achieved a certain degree of popularity. At the time we met, he had participated in several Spanish reality shows and claimed having 30,000 followers on Instagram. Subsequently, his goal became to use his image as a confident, successful, attractive and well integrated Chinese to send a message to both the Chinese and the Spanish community. To the Chinese community, he wanted to communicate the message that it was possible to free themselves from stereotypes, and to Spanish society he wanted to bring home the idea that not all Chinese are the same:

> What I wanted, basically, was to break that stereotype, because not all Spanish people dance flamenco or practice bullfighting, and not all French are romantic, you know what I mean? I wanted to make people see that we are not all the same. For example, Black people used to be badly considered, right? Now Black people have become fashionable, girls wear braids and dreadlocks like the Blacks, they wear baggy clothes, tattoos, have this Negro style from the Bronx, Chris Brown is popular, the African Blacks here in [the district of] Lavapiés are fashionable ... even in the United States they've been showing these Black people's soap operas for quite a long time, hip-hop, basketball, everything Black is well considered, and Chinese? When will the time come for the Chinese? I tried to fight for this, it may sound too heroic for what it really is, but I wanted to project an image that would help us be well regarded ... I don't earn much money, but it's simply that I am a bit of a reference for some Chinese, in terms of, they can realize their dreams, they can overcome their own limitations, they don't need to be always hiding behind a counter, feeling shy, not socializing with

anyone. They see a good-looking Chinese, popular, able to socialize, and so on, and maybe I am bragging too much, but it's just that I see myself before and I see myself now, and really, it's such a huge difference, and all I wanted to do was the same thing that Black people have done, change this bad, inferior, vulgar image we have in the eyes of white Spanish people, show them that no, we are not less than them for being Chinese, not at all.

Binbin's story has illustrated how his cultural identity orientation, which, like Mona's, defied categorization, emerged out of a conscious desire to escape marginalization and challenge the stereotypes and prejudice of Spanish society. As opposed to Mona, it was not opportunities, in the form of family education and economic resources, that had shaped his cultural identity and sense of belonging, but rather his personal engagement with himself and his environment and his reaction against a society that made him feel rejected and marginalized. He achieved a move from invisibility to visibility. In this regard, he was not only entrapped in a negative and racialized identity that was the product of Spanish society's prejudice about the Chinese community and its power to define cultural values and standards. He was also excluded from relations and integration with the mainstream group and consistently signaled as different. It was his personal attitude and agency towards establishing meaningful connections that managed to reverse these power dynamics, generate inclusion and restore his position as a full member of Spanish society. It is in this sense that the meaning of Binbin's cultural identity could not be accurately captured without explicit reference to his personal life history. It is also in this sense that his cultural identity must be regarded as an imaginative device and as embedded in power structures and relations of inequality. In his case, his cultural identity was not given, as much as it was created.

Interestingly, Binbin transformation into a more open, confident person, and his rejection of identity labels did not automatically entail shedding his Chinese identity but on the contrary became a way of both

reclaiming Chineseness and creating a new form of being Chinese different from the Chineseness where he originally felt entrapped. Thus, Binbin's identity, while transcending categorization, also retained a strong personal and political identification with his ethnic roots. In a way, he could be seen as embodying a new and alternative form of "cosmopolitan Chineseness" which crystallized in the more open, confident, empowered Chinese image that he was trying to project.

4.3. Context: Carlos

Carlos, 36

Carlos was born in Beijing to an urban middle class family and arrived in Spain with his mother at age 10. His father had emigrated six years earlier, took up different jobs in Madrid, Cullera and Delia, in the Spanish Mediterranean coast, and like many Chinese, lived at subsistence level before he was able to save enough money to open his own Chinese restaurant. The first time we met in Madrid, Carlos poignantly reproduced the following conversation with his father:

> I asked him one day, I said to him, "didn't you feel like going back, in all those years", and he said to me, "yes, but one, I didn't have money to go back; two, I couldn't go back because of face [*mianzi*], I couldn't go back with nothing; and three, even if I had had enough money, I wouldn't have known where to buy the plane ticket".

Despite the family's difficult beginnings, Carlos had a smooth adaptation in Spain. He grew up in Jávea, a coastal town and tourist destination by the Mediterranean Sea where half of the resident population is composed of foreigners. Like many Chinese children who migrate in childhood or adolescence, he had to repeat one year at school and had difficulties with Spanish language in the beginning, but in two or three years he had already become a top student in his class. Carlos' childhood and

adolescence was divided between school life and life at the restaurant. He began helping out in the business from the age of 13, not out of obligation, but because he felt it was his responsibility. "It never crossed my mind not to help", he explained during our first conversation. His school had a large number of foreigners and only two other Chinese from Qingtian, and as a result he established a lot of international friendships. He did not experience discrimination and never felt rejected. He always felt comfortable in Spain and from the very beginning accepted it as his new home. In the year 2000, he moved to Valencia to begin his degree in Law. He would come back to Jávea in the weekends and help his parents at the restaurant: "I finished my last class at 3:30 on Friday, took the bus at 5, arrived in Jávea at 7, changed clothes and got to work", he explained.

After graduating from university, and having sent CVs to several law firms without success, Carlos decided to open a consulting company aimed at helping Spanish businesses establish a foothold in China. At the time we met (he contacted me via Facebook after seeing my post for creative writing workshops on the Chiñoles page), he had developed a multifaceted professional profile as lawyer, consultant, intercultural mediator and lecturer. His parents had closed the restaurant and retired and he now lived in Valencia with his Spanish girlfriend.

Carlos was a confident, outspoken individual, and a native Spanish speaker, who had managed to take full personal and professional advantage from living in between cultures. From the beginning of our conversation, Carlos emphasized that he identified as Spanish: "I feel more Spanish, for so many reasons, because my higher education was in Spanish, because almost all of my friends are Spanish, well, international".

However, he expressed a marked ambivalence between a Spanish, international and in-between identity. On the one hand, he consistently emphasized how, having grown up in a multicultural environment, he had developed a strong openness and inclination to interact with different people and engage with diversity:

I've never felt rejected and I've never rejected anyone ... when I went out [as a teenager], I would sometimes go out with the Spanish people from town, or with the foreigners in the districts for foreigners, and later with the Chinese ... My first girlfriend was a [Spanish] girl from town, my second girlfriend was British, I've also had Chinese girlfriends.

The way he referred to his international friendships revealed a certain pride in his status as citizen of the world:

My best friend, Australian, born in Abu Dhabi, he's had all sorts of jobs, he's toured the world, he's climbed Mount Kilimanjaro ... he's moved back and forth and the last thing he's done is take all his savings and open a bar in Thailand.

At the same time, he described himself as different from his international friends:

I grew up among foreigners but I was the most Spanish of all. When the school sent a note in Valencian, the foreigners complained but I didn't. They always complained about Spain and said that their country was better, but I didn't.

Carlos regarded himself as both more Spanish than his international friends, but also more open-minded and more willing to accept the cultural differences of the receiving society, thus suggesting that he felt both more Spanish and at the same time more open and international than them.

On the other hand, Carlos had strategically adopted an identity in-between cultures in order to navigate the world with greater ease and success. Professionally, he was aware that his distinction depended on his intercultural and bilingual profile. As intercultural lawyer, consultant, and cultural mediator, it was his ability to transcend cultural boundaries and bridge

differences between Chinese and Spanish worlds that he regarded as a "competitive advantage" and that he tried to exploit and project. He had, for example, a very strong social media profile which emphasized his bicultural identity, and often participated in activities aimed at bridging cultural gaps between both worlds. He had chaired multiple sessions to help Spanish businesses better understand Chinese practices and etiquette and therefore maximize their opportunities in the Chinese market. He had organized workshops at the Confucius Institute in Valencia targeted at the Spanish population and aimed at demystifying stereotypes surrounding the Chinese community.

At the more personal level of everyday interactions, Carlos manifested the flexibility to play with his identity and transcend cultural boundaries. Thus, for example, he had sometimes pretended to be Colombian in order to avoid the annoyance of being praised for his Spanish language skills; or he pretended to be a fresh-off-the boat Chinese when someone stopped him to conduct a survey on the street. The flexibility and ease to shift, play and negotiate with identities had nonetheless been the product of a long evolution. In this sense, Carlos explained that a few years after his arrival in Spain, he had been through a period of denial of his Chinese identity:

> It was when I was in high school, tired of people seeing me as Chinese and praising how well I could speak Spanish. I was being pigeonholed as Chinese but I wanted above all to be Spanish. This foolishness was short-lived, I soon realized that living between two cultures was a competitive advantage, and today I can say that I've benefited from this way of thinking, both in my personal and professional life.

Although Carlos implied that living at the interface of cultures was the product of his personal decision, his comment raises the question of whether it was also adopted out of an impossibility to reclaim his identity as Spanish. He stressed how Spanish people still praised his Spanish language skills and insisted on viewing him as Chinese, despite his efforts to "be Spanish". In this

regard, it may well be that the tension of this impasse had led to the negotiation of a bicultural identity.

As to the factors that had conditioned the development of his multifaceted, partly Spanish, partly bicultural, partly international identity, Carlos first pointed to a liberal family education that had granted him freedom and opportunities to interact with different people. Similar to Mona, he compared this education with that of other Chinese children in Spain:

> My parents haven't had an education but they come from a big city and in this respect they accept a lot of things that maybe people from a remote village like Qingtian would not … they are quite open, they have accepted all my girlfriends … they've never objected to anything, I mean, there must have been something, they probably made some comment that was out of place at some point, but I've never had this pressure, or received pressure to go out with anyone.

However, for Carlos, the determining factor that shaped his cultural identity was the environment where he had grown up. The two key aspects of this environment were an international school atmosphere with a predominance of foreign students, and his minority status within the Chinese community, as a Chinese from Beijing.

He explained:

> I grew up among foreigners. In Jávea, it was very international. Among 25 people in our high school, there were 15 foreigners. In fact, it was being from Valencia that was considered the weird thing.

Due to his school composition, Carlos stressed, he had never experienced rejection or felt as an outsider. Growing up in a multicultural environment had contributed to shaping his socialization patterns and his more open mentality. At the same time, his status as a regional minority did position him as an outsider within the Chinese community, and it was this

position that consciously or unconsciously shaped his inclination to socialize and identify with the Spanish and international community:

> You see, in Beijing, everyone is seen as an outsider, a *waidiren*, but once you get here, it's no longer your territory. People from Qingtian don't want anything to do with us. They don't even care to speak to us. They don't want to work with us, they only work with their own community. Same for those from Wenzhou, only with their community. People from Beijing, according to data, I think, only represent five percent of the Chinese population here.

Carlos expressed a feeling of marginalization from children of Chinese migrants from Wenzhou and Qingtian, who were perceived as different and difficult to befriend. He stressed the fact that little affinity existed among migrants from different areas in China with different regional specificities, despite the fact that they shared similar migration experiences. His perception was that of being regarded as the outsider by a community of outsiders themselves: "us people from Beijing, we are repudiated by the rest, by the rest from Qingtian, Wenzhou … because in the end we are the outsiders."

In fact, as pointed out by Nyíri (2014), the entrepreneur families from the Southern rural areas of Qingtian or Wenzhou tend to have lower socio-economic backgrounds and are more likely to have more family and transnational ties in Europe and therefore more networking resources than Chinese from more urban regions in the North of China or from Shanghai. The latter tend to have higher educational backgrounds, greater inclination to integrate and are sometimes less likely to expect their children to work in the family business. All these factors impact not only children's adaptation experiences but also the relationships among different groups. In this sense, when it comes to feelings of belonging, regional characteristics seem to prevail over a more global sense of being Chinese (Nyíri, 2014).

Overall, Carlos' narrative suggested that the construction of cultural identities is greatly influenced by ethnic composition both in schools and residential areas. In this sense, exposure plays a key role. This idea has been supported by previous research on second generation migrants. In her study about children of Chinese migrants in Catalonia, Sáiz López (2006), for example, documented that informants who lived in areas and attended schools with a high concentration of Chinese tended to socialize exclusively with members of their same ethnic group and were much more likely to identify as Chinese than individuals who lived in areas and attended schools with a reduced Chinese population. Her interviews revealed that in schools with a large ethnic concentration, newly arrived Chinese children tended to rely on veteran Chinese peers to communicate with teachers and classmates, a circumstance that posed barriers to their integration. As mentioned in the previous chapter, her study showed that neighborhood and school composition played a more significant role in children's cultural identities than age of arrival in Spain. In this sense, even Chinese children who were born in Spain tended to identify as Chinese if they resided in areas and attended schools with large numbers of Chinese.

4.4. Conclusion

Through the narratives of four participants, this chapter has tried to demonstrate the richness, multifaceted and multilayered character of Chinese children's cultural identities in Spain and how these cultural identities hardly fit into any labels or categorizations. The focus was on the voices and opinions of the participants, their articulation of their cultural identities and their own sense-making of the factors that had conditioned the development of these identities and the processes through which they had emerged.

For Mona, it was largely the freedom and opportunities to socialize provided by a liberal family education, as well as her socio-economic status, through which she was given the chance to acquire the cultural and linguistic competences necessary to develop an open and flexible approach to difference

that had shaped her open sense of belonging as citizen of the world. Vera's narrative, by contrast, stressed how family's low educational and socio-economic status limited her opportunities to acquire linguistic and intercultural competences and her flexibility to explore and develop other forms of identity that were not Chinese.

By contrast to Mona and Vera, the story of Binbin, who came from a lower-class family with little formal education, suggested that individual cultural identity orientations in some cases emerge from asymmetric power relations and inequalities. Thus, Binbin's cultural identity, which blended ethnic and cosmopolitan elements, was gradually created out of a determination to reverse his position of vulnerability within Spanish society. It developed out of an active engagement with the environment and the desire to transcend the racializing and othering gaze of a society that made him feel excluded. Binbin stressed the importance played by "practice" in shaping his perception of who he was and where he belonged. In this sense, his consistent and active engagement with difference in order to overcome rejection gradually reconstructed his own self-image and self-perception as well as the way he has perceived by others. It is in this sense that the constitution of his cultural identity could be seen as a reflexive manoeuver, as both imagined and created.

Finally, Carlos' cultural identity, which he verbalized as simultaneously Spanish, bicultural and international, was conceived as the product of having grown up in an international environment. A large foreign student population, together with a positive atmosphere with little discrimination, played a critical role in the development his openness to difference. At the same time, his position as minority among a majority of Chinese migrants from Qingtian and Wenzhou, also shaped his inclination to approach the Spanish community and develop cross-ethnic friendships. His story indicates the significant role played by social context in the construction of cultural identities. It also indicates that one's position with regard to the social and power dynamics of the ethnic community plays a role in processes of cultural identity

construction that is as important as the position occupied with regard to the social and power dynamics of mainstream society.

The participants' narratives not only revealed the different ways in which identities were perceived and articulated but also performed. Thus, by confidently confronting discrimination and other people's attempts to generate exclusion, Mona assertively reclaimed her belonging to the host society. Carlos achieved a similar goal by shifting identities and positioning to best accommodate the situations and interlocutors they engaged with. Similarly, Binbin's revamping of his personal image and his straightforward willingness to mingle with different people regardless of cultural or ethnic background revealed a performative effort to transcend his negatively perceived Chineseness and assert his right to belong.

Furthermore, the narratives foregrounded the importance of ethnicity. In this sense, it was from a tension with their ethnicity that the cultural identities of the participants emerged. Mona, for example, contrasted both her identity as citizen of the world and her family education to what she regarded as the more closed mentalities and traditional education of other children of Chinese migrants in Spain. It was from this dichotomy that she mentally constructed and articulated a sense of who she was and where she belonged. For Vera, being Chinese was also experienced as a tension, as it was largely perceived as the negative outcome of lack of economic resources, family pressures and restrictions. For Binbin, on the other hand, his cultural identity was inextricably tied to his ethnicity because it had evolved out of a negative relationship with his Chineseness and out of the need to transcend it.

Carlos had experienced rejection from the Chinese community in Spain, and had been denied an identity as Spanish among Spanish people, who still regarded him as a Chinese. It was perhaps this double impasse that had partly driven him to adopt a cultural identity that was simultaneously Spanish, bicultural and international. His decision to live in between cultures and his choices as to where to belong were in this sense partly conditioned by experiences of racialization in which ethnicity and Chineseness played a critical role. Carlos and Binbin's stories revealed that cultural identities are

often the result of self-reflexive processes embedded in struggles for integration.

For all the participants, an open and flexible sense of belonging was connected to both a sense of pride and to the freedom of having transcended what they perceived as the constrains of a more fixed Chinese (and Spanish) identity. This was evident for Binbin, but also for Mona, who saw the minds of her Chinese cousin and acquaintances as negatively shaped and constrained by the influence of their Chinese families. Similarly, Carlos expressed a sense of pride in who he was and at having transcended his desire to be Spanish and his impossibility to be Chinese in the eyes of the migrant community. These views were supported by Vera, who perceived her Chineseness as the negative result of an impossibility to be Spanish, since she said that she would have liked to do things the Spanish way but was not allowed by her parents. Chineseness was thus for all of them negatively perceived as a limitation.

Overall, these four narratives have suggested the importance of looking at cultural identities not only as mobile but from the perspective of personal evolution and individual life histories. In this sense, talking about mobile and fixed identities, about cultural dichotomies, about individuals being unmoored or tied to their countries of origin, shifting identities according to social context and the demands of different social actors and situations, is a lens through which one may talk about cultural identities, but one that appears too abstract and that leaves out important aspects that the participants themselves deemed critical to describe the processes through which their cultural identities had developed.

In other words, one may talk about cultural identities as mobile or fixed, Chinese or Spanish, transnational, or in-between, but the narratives of the participants demonstrated how these dualisms and categories did not have sufficient explanatory power to illuminate the nuances in their processes of identity construction. Mobility and fixedness, for example, two widely quoted categories in the literature about identities, had no clear-cut boundaries in the narratives of the participants and often overlapped. Thus, the three of them expressed feeling not bound to any cultural world, but their fluid, unmoored

identity was closely dependent on a strong awareness of their ethnicity. On the other hand, while currently expressing a fluid form of identity, all of them had experienced more tied and constrained forms of identity at previous stages in their lives. In this sense, as pointed out by Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Domic (2011) "rootedness and openness cannot be seen in oppositional terms but as constitutive aspects of the creativity through which migrants build homes and sacred places in new environments" (p.400).

Ultimately, rather than focusing on their cultural identities as an outcome, Mona, Vera, Binbin and Carlos emphasized the constitutive aspects of their identities and the processes through which these identities had come into shape. In this process, it was not specific categories that they highlighted, but rather the fact that their cultural identities had emerged as a blend of context, attitude, power dynamics and opportunities.

HERE AND THERE: NEW FORMS OF DUAL IDENTITIES AND IDENTITIES IN BETWEEN

The previous chapter introduced the narratives of four participants, three of whom voiced their identities as transcending national and cultural boundaries and resisting categorization. The participants in this chapter, on the contrary, voiced their identities in more specific terms, and referred to them as dual or bicultural, or as identities in between. However, as I shall try to demonstrate through four different narratives and three different perspectives, their expressions and manifestations of dual or in-between identities were much more complex and diverse than what previous literature on the topic has suggested.

In the first section, "Fluid Identities", Sara's narrative challenges the idea of in-betweenness as a stable category. It proposes an understanding of in betweenness as malleable, fluid and caught in an endless process of self-transformation. In the second section, "New Patterns on In-betweenness", Yun shows how some forms of identity practice do not fit into any existing pattern of in-betweenness. Yun's in-betweenness could neither be described as a feeling of partial identification as Chinese and Spanish, nor as a rejection of both, but rather as a disconnection from what he regarded as Spanish values and practices and a longing to be Chinese. The third section, "Dual Identities as Dynamic Engagements", introduces the narratives of Mimi and Qi, whose dual identities were dynamically molded and transformed by specific life events. This section proposes to reach beyond language and cultural dichotomies and looks at the dual identities of the participants as physical or symbolic spaces of belonging that were dynamically created and negotiated as responses to their personal circumstances and environment.

5.1. Fluid Identities: Sara

In his essay, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Stuart Hall (1990) challenged the idea of a stable, unchanging and continuous self. Instead of

"one experience, one identity" (p.225), he argued that cultural identities are fluid, never finished or completed, and that their meaning is in a perpetual process of transformation. Cultural identity is thus:

> ...a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being". It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something that already exists, transcending time, place, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything that is historical, they undergo constant transformation (p.225).

The majority of studies having documented the dual identities of children of migrants have referred to them as a given outcome stemming from these children's position at the interface of cultures. In general, these studies have asked *why* their participants feel in between cultures or have adopted dual identities, but few have examined in depth the processes through which these identities came into being. Some studies have signaled that the intensity of individuals' transnational, dual or in-between identities follow a pattern of ebb and flow and changes according to the particular events and circumstances of one's life course (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004; Pries, 2004; Somerville, 2007; Levitt, 2009). However, while acknowledging temporal changes in intensity, these studies have failed to document the changes in the meaning that individuals attribute to these identities.

Hall (1990) has stressed not only the temporal evolution of cultural identities but also, borrowing from Derrida's notion of *differance,* the constant self-repositioning of meaning that cultural identities undergo as they shift across circumstances and space. This section will draw on these two ideas to argue that the in-between identities of my participants could not be accurately captured by the largely static and one-dimensional category of in-betweenness that has been widely used in the literature. Sara's life history, in particular, will describe the internal and external processes that shaped her in-between identity and the diversity of overlapping meanings and connotations that in betweenness acquired as these processes unfolded.

I learnt about Sara (26) after watching a YouTube documentary that she had filmed about the experiences and identities of Chinese children of migrants in Spain. Sara worked as a journalist, and was a highly articulate and reflective person. After being introduced to her by one of my informants (Carlos), I contacted her via email and she soon agreed to tell me about her experience.

Sara's parents, rural people with no formal education, migrated from Qingtian to Spain in their early twenties. They met at a Chinese restaurant where they both worked, and soon after got married and gave birth to Sara.

The most determinant aspect of Sara's life, and the one that dominated her narrative, was that she had spent the first 11 years of her life with a Spanish family in Alicante and separated from her biological parents:

> In the beginning, and for many years, my parents saw the Spanish family as a baby-sitter, but the truth is they were more like a foster family, because my parents worked a lot, and then they had to leave Alicante because they began touring different cities to sell products in street markets, so the fact is I was raised and totally immersed in the life of this Spanish family for quite a lot of years. I spent my childhood with them, and when my parents' situation improved, I went back to them ... I stayed with the Spanish family because they got attached to me, they saw me as a member of the family and they didn't mind looking after me just as if I was another sibling in the family.

Sara emphasized the strong emotional connection that she had developed with her Spanish family and insisted on the fact that she had "two families": "I don't see them as my foster family, I call them my family, same as my Chinese family, I don't see it as my Chinese family, but as my family as well".

Sara stressed the sharp contrasts that existed between her life with her Spanish and Chinese families and the difficult transition she had experienced when she reunited with her Chinese family at the age of 11:

I was totally Spanish until age 11, I mean I hadn't had any contact with or received any influence from Chinese culture, and then suddenly, at age 11, I moved into a Chinese family, with a way of life, a type of upbringing that had nothing to do with what I had experienced so far ... [In Alicante] I had elder brothers and sisters, much older than me, there was a 15-year difference with the youngest, I was very sheltered, and then ... when I came to Madrid at age 11, then it was totally the opposite, because suddenly I became the elder sister, I moved from an environment where I spent all of my time with a mother who was a housewife, to an environment where my parents were never at home because they were working ... my adaptation was quite good, I had a period, I would say a transition period, where I had to come to terms with the fact that all the frames of reference in my environment had changed ... I mean I was in another city, with a different family, suddenly that was the situation, I changed from being a small child who was, I wouldn't say spoilt but at least yes, very sheltered, to being a girl who ... for example, my parents had always walked me to school and now I had to go to school alone ... and then having to create all those ties, so, everything was friendly and nice, but of course, it took me a lot of time to feel that I was at home again and to feel that this was my family and that was my reality, not so much emotionally, because I was quite balanced as a kid, but in terms of really coming to terms with the situation, right? In terms of saying this is my daily life now, in terms of interiorizing the situation, I would say, not only doing things as part of a routine, I come back home, do my homework, study, watch something on TV and go to sleep, and so on every day, no, but in terms of really feeling comfortable with all that and being able to say to

myself "this is my life now"... it was many years, I mean, I think I reached adolescence with all those identity issues, with that conflict of family belonging, with that sense of vital disorientation.

As hinted at by the last words in this passage, Sara's in between identity gradually emerged from her inability to conciliate her two family experiences and the conflicting identities they generated. She further elaborated on this idea:

I have had this inner conflict for many years, in terms of saying, I am Spanish, but I have a Chinese family, so I am Chinese as well, but I don't speak Chinese ... I have felt very self-conscious and insecure and have had huge identity clashes as a result of being in between two families, in between two cultures. And in my case, it was literally in between, it's not like other Chinese, young people, who have had baby-sitters, nannies, foster families as well for a while, but not as extreme as my case, because I was with them until age 11.

Sara's life and identity in between two worlds was thus for a long time perceived as a negative condition that was imposed on her by her personal circumstances and that generated inner conflicts and insecurities. Besides identity conflicts and adaptation struggles, she was confronted with more practical communication hurdles because her biological parents only had basic Spanish language skills, while she in turn did not speak Chinese. Despite all these difficulties, at the time we met, Sara spoke positively about her dual identity as both Spanish and Chinese. However, she stressed how this present position had been the result of many years of inner conflict and emotional upheavals:

For a very long time I've said straight out that I was Spanish, and I've said it very convinced, and I've said it even with anger at people for even dare doubt that I was Spanish, and I was even offended that

people considered me Chinese, because it was sort of, don't you see that I have grown up here, don't you see that I speak Spanish, don't you see that I don't speak Chinese and I am telling you that I don't, that if you ask me about Chinese culture or history I won't be able to answer you because I don't know anything, just like any other average Spanish person … and this has evolved into thinking that, "damn, I do have a Chinese family, and no, it can't be this way, this is not fair to my parents, my grandparents, regardless of the little contact that I've had with my Chinese family … No, it's not fair, it's not fair to them or even to myself to deny the evidence. I always say this, to the very few people I've shared my story with. And now that I'm beginning to open up more and more, because, as I was telling you, I'm beginning to feel proud of being who I am in spite of or thanks to all the things that I've experienced, I feel all the parts within myself deserve some recognition in the story of my life, both my Spanish family, which has been, is, and will always be a great source of support, and my Chinese family, with its culture and its way of looking at things. So I've shifted my identity to "I am Spanish but I have Chinese parents", this has been more or less the evolution, I am Spanish but have Chinese origins, and right now what I say is that I am Spanish and I am Chinese. I still consider myself as Spanish, very Spanish, very, very Spanish in terms of lifestyle, the way I see relationships, the way I see myself, but I think I am beginning to accept that the fact that I grew up with my Chinese family since the age of 11, no matter how much I say to myself that we have hardly spent any time together because they were working, and the fact that I haven't had the typical experience that other second generation Chinese have had with their families, I think I am beginning to accept, and to show, that, hey, I am very Spanish but I am also Chinese. And in fact, if I used to feel offended in the past if someone would even hint at the fact that I was Chinese, and I would, "oh, no, no, I am Spanish" and so on, now it's more like, if people point to something and say like, "you are Chinese, you must know this", instead of getting angry or feeling offended, or

saying "fuck, I am Spanish", now it's just, "yes, I know", or "I don't know", and I regret and feel bad for not knowing, why, because partly, I feel I have missed an opportunity, right? ... so I still see myself as quite Spanish, and you after all this talk, or other people who have a minimum interaction with me can easily see it, but it is true that I have Chinese things as well, and that having grown up with a Chinese family has also given me things as well, things that I am not even conscious about, or that for a long time I didn't want to see, because I thought this would make me less Spanish. And now, it's the opposite, I have these things as Spanish, and these things as Chinese, and the more the better, and it's not something that I feel I need to cover, to conceal, or that's making me lose out, or that's leading me to confusion, as it was in the past, no, it's more like, "this is good, and the more the better".

This passage illustrates the evolution of Sara's cultural identity. It shows her progression from a denial of her Chinese identity, to a gradual recognition of her Chinese origins, a struggle to conciliate her Spanish and Chinese selves, and finally a positive reaffirmation of her dual identity. Throughout this time evolution, her individual perception of her identity acquired different intensities and meanings as her context and circumstances changed.

Moreover, Sara's narrative suggests how the attitudes and perceptions of Spanish mainstream society were to a large extent responsible for her identity conflict. First, looking at her phenotypical traits, people expected her to "be" Chinese. Second, they assumed that being Chinese, she would be able to speak Chinese and know about China. Sara's feelings of inadequacy arose out of being unable to live up to those standards and projections and out of considering herself as not sufficiently or "authentically" Chinese. It was also this situation that triggered her denial of her Chinese identity as a reaction and stance towards people's expectations. In this regard, she explained:

It turns out that I don't speak Chinese, and this is the sort of thing that has also made me feel really self-conscious, it's the typical innocent question that you are asked by people who don't know your context, but that makes you feel insecure and uncomfortable. In my case, every time someone asked me "do you speak Chinese?", and I said no, they would say "what a pity, your parents should have taught you", and, in the beginning, I would give a generic reply, "oh, yes, we didn't spend much time together", and so on, but deep inside, I felt annoyed, in terms of saying, damn, so maybe I am a bad Chinese, after all?

When she began to come to terms with her Chinese origins, Sara made great efforts to substantiate her Chineseness based on the standards imposed by society and to live up to that essentialist idea of being Chinese. She made several attempts at learning Chinese. She traveled to China, read Chinese novels in translation, tried to learn about Chinese history from books. She also expressed regret and a sense of loss because her parents, working-class people with little education, lacked the time, competences and resources to pass on to her what she conceived of as "Chinese culture":

Unfortunately, and I really see this as a misfortune, I have missed a lot, and also my parents have missed a lot, because they come from a village, they don't have a high cultural profile, they are working-class people and as a result they haven't been able to pass on to me knowledge about what China is like, about Chinese culture.

Eventually, after many years and a long process of reflexivity, she accepted that her Chinese identity was not and need not be substantiated or legitimized by her ability to speak Chinese or her knowledge about Chinese culture, but rather by a positive embracement of her personal circumstances, a rejection of society's stereotypes, and a strong belief in the idea that it was possible to be Spanish by simultaneously being Chinese.

This narrative has revealed how Sara's in between identity was constantly being shaped and reshaped, questioned and contested throughout her childhood and adolescence years. Following this time evolution, in-betweenness emerged as a changing position in a continuous and dialogical process of self-transformation. Sara's feelings of in-betweenness were thus present throughout her life, but with different value and significance. In the beginning, she was assertively Spanish, but her Spanishness was dependent on a strong rejection of her Chinese identity, and therefore evidenced a form of in-betweenness. Subsequently, in-betweenness took the form of a dualism between not feeling completely Spanish as a result of experiences with racialization, and developing a sense of guilt towards her "lost" Chinese identity. Later, in-betweenness manifested as a strong desire to go back to her origins and simultaneously a downplay of her Spanishness (she was proud of having retained her Chinese passport and Chinese nationality, for example). Finally, at the time we met, her in-betweenness had taken the form of a balanced and more harmonious coexistence between what she perceived as her Spanish and Chinese selves. In betweenness for Sara was not only a matter of being in between cultures and languages, but also in between families, cities, lifestyles, parenting styles, in between guilt and self-acceptance, in between retrieval and loss. Moreover, her cultural identity at the time we met was only a specific positioning in between past and future with the potential and likelihood to change again. Thus, she spoke of her identity crisis as "more clear and resolved" than in the past but "by no means concluded". She acknowledged "the need to know, to reconnect, to keep reconstructing the [identity] puzzle". In this sense, cultural identity (and in this particular case feelings of in-betweenness) must be understood not as an outcome, but as a web that moves across multiple elements in a non-necessarily linear progression, "a web where lines can be added, broken, mended, forgotten, remembered" (Butler, 2017, para.7) in an endless process of becoming and self-transformation.

5.2. New Patterns of In-betweenness: Yun

The literature has often described the dual or in between identities of children of migrants as a simultaneous identification with two cultures, estrangement from both cultures, or as a blend of "cultural permeability and vulnerability" (Ang, 2001, p. 194), thus suggesting an ambivalent tension between both. All these descriptions tend to emphasize the dual relationship between host and heritage cultures and societies, between China and Spain. For Yun, however, who was caught between the incompleteness of his Chinese identity and a longing to be "more Chinese", an identity in between cultures meant none of the above.

<div align="center">***</div>

Yun (23) moved from Qingtian to Spain with his mother and younger sister at the age of 10. Yun's father was waiting for them in Madrid, where he had migrated four years earlier. Overall, Yun had an easy adaptation to school in Spain: there was a positive atmosphere with classmates and teachers, and he did not have much difficulty learning Spanish or adjusting to the academic curriculum. However, his childhood was subordinated to the demands of the family business and marked by constant residential mobility. The family spent one and a half years in Madrid, where Yun's parents took up different types of paid employment; two years in Mallorca, where the family tried their luck with several businesses; then four years in Málaga, before finally moving back to Madrid, where Yun began his degree in Engineering.

Yun described close ties with his family during childhood and adolescence. He helped at the family business from an early age, and regularly acted as translator for his parents who had very limited Spanish language competence. During his time in Málaga, the family opened two grocery stores. Yun would spend most of his free time with his father in one of the shops, while his sister helped his mother at the other. When he moved back to Madrid to start his university degree, his parents sold their two businesses in Málaga and the whole family settled in the capital again. Yun had never traveled back to Qingtian or other parts of China since migrating to Spain.

At the time we met, Yun had just finished his university degree and had recently taken up his first job at a Spanish consulting company, where he was in charge of finances. The idea was to gain a couple of years of experience before looking for a different job more in line with his qualifications.

My first contact with Yun was a WeChat message where he expressed his interest in joining the creative writing workshops that I was planning to run for young Chinese in Spain. His first comment, after introducing himself, was that it was "strange" to be a second-generation Chinese. Later, when we first met in person at a Chinese hot-pot restaurant where he had worked part-time as a university student, Yun explained –in flawless Spanish— that he did not feel Spanish, but that he did not feel completely Chinese either: "it is a complicated balance, because in the end you don't totally belong to either side".

Yun possessed strong intercultural competences and was able to comfortably navigate different cultural contexts: he was perfectly fluent in Spanish, he had worked for both Chinese and Spanish employers, he had translated and mediated between his parents and Spanish society on a regular basis. In this sense, in-betweenness for him could be regarded as a practical lifestyle or a "way of being" (Glick-Schiller & Levitt, 2004). However, this practical in-betweenness did not translate into an in-between identity, as he made clear from the very beginning of our conversation that he did not feel Spanish.

On the one hand, Yun explained that the specificities of his growing-up experience, in particular his responsibilities towards the family business, conditioned by his family's socio-economic status, had generated feelings of distance from Spanish peers and Spanish society:

Spanish, no, I don't feel Spanish, but Chinese, maybe half Chinese, generally, yes. Spanish, not really, almost never, only perhaps when I watch football and I support Spain, but not really, because in the end, it's very different. For example, judging from my own personal experience up to now, teenagers here, high school students and so on,

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17, 18 years old, their main entertainment is to go out drinking [*ir de botellón*], and chatting, and so on, and I've never had that, because at that age I had to be in the shop, helping out with things, so it is quite different.

On the other hand, Yun's feelings of non-belonging to Spanish society were also determined by aspects related to his family's socio-economic status. In particular, it was his residential mobility as a child, driven by the family's need to look for the best opportunities for the business, that had generated his lack of attachment to any specific place and his general sense of rootlessness within Spanish society. He described these moves as "funny periods, because you end up not really adapting to any place". He added:

> In the end, in my case, you don't really have any roots here, right? So you can afford to leave. I don't have any important relationships, and my parents, they don't even plan to stay here.

Residential mobility is in fact a common phenomenon among Chinese migrants from low socio-economic backgrounds, especially in the first stages of migration, when families have to endure hardship and enjoy little economic stability. In 2008, for example, roughly 20 percent of Chinese moved to another city, compared to only 2.8 percent of Spaniards in the same period (Villarino, 2012).

Traditional values acquired during his childhood years in China also accounted for his feelings of difference from Spanish peers:

> [Yun]: in the end, even though I have only spent four years in school in China, but the values you are taught there, it makes a really big difference, for example in terms of effort, the strong value that is placed on effort, here, it's like, it is not valued that much.
> [Paloma]: you mean, this is something that has stayed with you?

[Yun]: yes, yes, a lot, in terms of having to work hard, Spanish people, I would say, they don't have that, they are more, I would say, spoon-fed.

While failing to identify with Spanish people, Yun felt "only half Chinese". His perception of the partiality and incompleteness of his Chinese identity stemmed from the fact that he equated a "real" Chinese identity with conventional identity markers such as Chinese language proficiency and knowledge of culture, which he crucially did not possess.

This was hinted at during our first meeting at the hot-pot restaurant in Madrid. We chose a quiet table at the very end of the restaurant. As I was watching him write the order on a small piece of paper, I noticed how he paused for a moment and looked at me in hesitation. Then he took out his cell phone and confessed, embarrassed, that he needed to look up some words because there were several characters he was not able to write in Chinese.

Later in our conversation, when comparing himself with other Chinese people born and raised in China and with Chinese children of migrants having arrived in Spain in late adolescence, Yun described himself as lacking some of the competences they possessed:

They [Chinese having migrated to Spain in late adolescence] know more about Chinese celebrities, and you just stare at them, hum ... I, for example, am not much into celebrities, but if you ask me about Chinese celebrities, well, maybe I know some, but very few, whereas those who have come out a few years later than me are very interested in those things and follow them a lot ... and for example, I don't know much about Chinese history, and I am very interested in it, but it is a lot to study, and I don't really have such a good memory.

These examples reveal how Yun regarded language and knowledge about China as core components of a Chinese identity. Chineseness was thus seen by him as a measurable attribute, something that you may have more or less of, that you may possess (Louie, 2002), or as a "commodified form of

cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1984, cited in Louie, 2002, p.328). According to Louie (2002), this view is common among Chinese children of migrants, and is often the product of essentialist images and definitions of Chineseness that are spread by the media and popular culture both in and outside China. This phenomenon places Chinese children like Yun in a difficult and ambivalent position. On the one hand, they regard themselves as not having as much Chinese culture and as less authentic than other Chinese having grown up in China or migrated in late adolescence. On the other hand, they would be expected to "have more Spanish culture", for having migrated earlier, but their Chineseness in the host society complicates their "authenticity" as Spanish and makes them not Spanish enough. They thus see their practices as "diluted and inauthentic versions of 'real' traditional Chinese culture" (Louie, 2002, p.329), yet at the same time they cannot fully identify with Spain and feel inescapably Chinese.

Perhaps as a result of this feeling of incompleteness, Yun yearned for a connection with China. He longed to learn about Chinese history and culture, and to visit his hometown in Qingtian. In fact, the main reason why he had taken up his current job –he had received several offers from other employers—was that the company was setting up an office in China, and that there would most probably be opportunities for him to travel.

On the other hand, Yun not only made a clear distinction between himself and Chinese people born in China or having arrived in Spain in late adolescence, but he also established boundaries between himself and Chinese university students living in Spain, because he regarded their lives as totally estranged from his own life experiences:

> ...a lot of them, they are well off, because if they could afford studying in a Western country, so they've been well provided for. When someone calls them names, they make a big deal, they feel harassed, victims of racism, but in our case, we have grown up in the family shop, and we've seen these things all our lives, this is a normal thing ... but they just don't understand it.

All this suggests that in-betweenness for Yun was not a simple matter of feeling between Spain and China, but rather an internal struggle to find his personal way of being Chinese. He felt caught between his own imaginative perceptions of Chineseness and the representations of Chineseness circulated by media and society. He felt different from other Chinese communities (Chinese university students in Spain and Chinese born in China), and in this sense also in between. He experienced a more emotional form of in betweenness, as he was caught between the insecurity for not being "Chinese enough" and a longing to be "more Chinese". All this suggests that Yun experienced a very specific form of in betweenness that did not fit into the conceptualizations of in-betweenness that previous studies have proposed. Although his circumstances, in particular his cultural and linguistic competences and his professional integration in Spanish society, partly indicated a life in between China and Spain that matched the notions of in-betweenness previously documented in the literature, further exploration of his life history and narrative suggest a greater deal of nuance that resists such clear-cut binaries and categorizations.

Moreover, contrary to what previous literature has suggested, culture and language were not the only categories that shaped his cultural identity. In this sense, Yun's in-betweenness must be understood as multi-layered and intersectional. It emerged from an interplay of external and personal elements that crucially included socio-economic background (in particular his family obligations and residential mobility) and conflicting images and representations of Chineseness, all of which further demonstrates the uniqueness of his in-between experience.

5.3. Dual Identities as Dynamic Engagements: Mimi, Qi

Mimi, 28

I met Mimi by chance on a Saturday afternoon. She was having a cup of coffee with two Chinese friends in a small café located in Madrid's Chinatown

district of Usera, where she now run her own wholesale business and had established her residence.

Mimi was born in Fujian, where she spent her childhood with her grandparents and younger sister before joining her parents in Spain at the age of 10. Mimi reported a smooth adaptation and growing-up experience in Spain. The family settled in Spain's Northern city of Bilbao. She did not experience much difficulty learning Spanish, she was a very good student and she was able to integrate. As a child and adolescent, she was able to establish a large number of Spanish connections in Bilbao and she had a group of friends at university she regularly went out with. Mimi largely attributed her easy adaptation to having migrated at a young age:

> In my case, it was quite easy, because I was still small when I first came, I was a good student ... I did not have any sort of pressure ... but if I had arrived when I was in secondary school ... the people who arrive in secondary school, they already have their group of friends, their social life, but when you are only 10 or so it's okay, it's not a big problem.

Mimi balanced her social life with other obligations. Her parents, rural people with low educational backgrounds, owned a wholesale business and worked long hours every day in order to make ends meet. As a result of this family situation, Mimi and her younger sister were not only requested to regularly help at the family business, but also soon grew into independent teenagers: "I would finish school, and then basically had to look after myself, because my parents didn't have time to be with us".

At the age of 25, after finishing her degree in Business Administration, Mimi decided to move to Madrid to open her own business. At the time we met, living and working in the Chinatown district of Usera, and surrounded by Chinese friends, Mimi's life was very much turned towards her ethnic community. She had lost touch with all her Spanish friends in Bilbao.

Mimi felt Chinese, but she simultaneously expressed a strong attachment to Spain as a home and place to live. During our conversation, she

stressed how much the economic conditions and situation of Chinese migrants in Spain had changed over the years. Her words hinted at the way she perceived her own position within Spanish society:

> Compared to the past, conditions are not the same, things have improved, and people no longer see this place as a place to migrate, to work and make money, but as a place to live and to stay.

When questioned about her cultural identity, she explained:

[Mimi]: I do think I am definitely Chinese, this is something that can't be changed, but this doesn't mean that I don't like it here, and besides, I know it's impossible for me to go back to China, it's because the lifestyle is so different from here, and so many other things.
[Paloma]: for example?
[Mimi]: quality of life, life pace, too many people, I am not used to that anymore, and the way you interact with people is also completely different.

Mimi's understanding of her Chinese identity as "something that cannot be changed" suggested something primordial and immutable. And yet, at the same time, the Chinese identity that she claimed was not connected to any loyalty to China as a geographical location or to China as an ancestral land. In fact, she seldom traveled back to China. Mimi's home was in Spain, and Spain was the place from where she derived a strong connection in terms of lifestyle, life quality and codes of social interaction. There was, at the same time, no deep emotional connection to Spain but rather a sense of pragmatism in her decision to adopt and identify with the more practical aspects of life in the host society. She had also strategically maximized the convenience of living in Spain by moving to the district of Usera, where she could still enjoy the advantages of living in Spanish society while being surrounded by the Chinese community that she more deeply identified with.

Throughout her life, Mimi had thus taken multiple decisions that involved either getting closer or distancing herself from both the Spanish and Chinese communities. She befriended Spanish people during her time in Bilbao as a way to smooth her path to adaptation. She moved to Madrid in order to maximize her business opportunities. She decided to live in Spain and not in China to benefit from what she perceived as a more relaxed and convenient lifestyle. She chose Usera as her residence in order to feel closer to her ethnic roots. She dropped her Spanish friendships in Bilbao and turned to a new life in an ethnic enclave. In all these decisions, which appeared as practical and instrumental and derived from the need to adjust to different situations, there was an implicit sense of strategic juggling between two worlds. From this perspective, Mimi's dual identity must be regarded not only as a tension between her more primordial and pragmatic identities, but also as a series of shifting responses to the personal contexts and ever-changing realities that she inhabited.

The in-betweenness of other participants could be analyzed from a similar perspective. In the previous chapter, for example, Carlos gave a positive valorization of his Chinese-Spanish identity. Carlos believed that positioning himself at the interface of cultures had provided him with a personal and professional advantage. He also demonstrated his ability to strategically shift and negotiate his identity and to meet the demands of two distinct cultural worlds. However, while emphasizing the positive valence of his dual identity, his story unraveled a number of complexities and contradictions. In this sense, Carlos explained that while he saw living in between worlds as an asset, a way to successfully find his place and achieve recognition within Spanish society, this positioning in between worlds had partly been determined by his previous inability to claim an identity as either Spanish or Chinese. In the beginning, he was denied a Spanish identity due to the attitudes of Spanish mainstream society, which refused to see beyond his phenotypical traits. On the other hand, he was denied full membership into the Chinese migrant community as a result of being from a minority region

among a majority of Chinese migrants from Zhejiang. Thus, Carlos' story of successful incorporation into Spanish society mirrored a previous experience of marginality. Like Mimi and Sara, his narrative pointed at the need to view identities as processes rather than outcomes. Moreover, it indicated that his in-between identity must be read as a response to the pressures he encountered during his journey towards adaptation.

Similarly, the specific way in which Sara articulated her identity must also be read as a response to her personal circumstances. In this regard, her strong sense of connection with her Chinese origins and the perception of her Chineseness as a fundamental and primordial element of her identity must be understood in the context of her negative experiences of displacement.

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Qi, 17

Qi was born in Madrid, but was soon sent back to China where he lived with his grandparents before returning to Spain at the age of 5. His family owned a Chinese bazaar and lived in a working-class neighborhood with a fast-growing Chinese population at the outskirts of Madrid. Qi had a difficult adaptation after moving back to Spain with his parents and sisters, two years younger and eight years older than him. He attributed this to his difficulty to learn Spanish and to establish meaningful connections with people. He was the only Chinese student in his class and it took many years for him to begin interacting with peers:

> In the beginning, when I first arrived, I couldn't understand anything. I didn't speak or hang out with anyone, it was just from home to school and from school back home. Then, in fourth grade, I began to play football, and I could understand a little … but there was still a distance, in the sense that they were all friends and I was on the side. I was almost 10 years old at that time.

It was only at the age of 12-13 that Qi began to gradually engage in interactions with Spanish peers. According to him, his parents were largely responsible for his difficulties to integrate:

> I would say that the reason for this difficulty to integrate, besides the language, were my parents … If I had been allowed to go to the park and socialize, I would have been able to make friends more quickly.

In general, Qi reported a strong parental discipline and described his parents as "very traditional". He was never allowed to go out and was given a lot of housework responsibilities. His parents both worked long hours. He was mostly in charge of a Chinese baby-sitter who dropped him at school in the morning and with whom he spent most of his hours after school.

Qi repeatedly stressed his disapproval of the strict parental education he had received. Moreover, in several occasions, he mentioned that he supported a more liberal parental education. Talking about his parents' attitudes towards her elder sister, for example, who was forced to move out of the house at the age of 18 because her parents forbid her to have a boyfriend, he said: "if I had children, I would say you have to be careful with this, this and that, instead of forbidding".

Overall, he referred to his relationship with his parents as "not good":

> We don't understand each other and I don't approve of their traditional views. My dad always said, "this is my house and if you want to live in my house you need to do what I say".

At age 17, due to his family atmosphere, Qi decided not only to leave school (which he found too difficult) but also to leave his parents' house and earn his own living. At the time we met, Qi was renting a small room in the district of Usera, where he worked 12-hour shifts at a small recently opened café. The café specialized in Taiwanese bubble-milk tea and had a small menu written only in Chinese.

Qi visited his parents twice a month and spent a few hours with them. Since leaving school, and before taking up his job at the café, he had previously worked at a luxury Chinese restaurant, where they had over 100 clients every evening and only four waiters, a situation that had motivated his decision to quit.

Listening to Qi's narrative, I soon appreciated a sharp contradiction between the way he articulated his cultural identity and what was suggested by his life circumstances and experiences. First, Qi felt both Spanish and Chinese. "Well, in my case, I feel both Spanish and Chinese, I can be with both … I can understand both sides well", he said.

However, unlike other participants in this chapter, Qi had not received a very strong direct influence from Spanish society or developed ties with Spanish peers. At the time we met, and after having lived in Spain for 12 years, he had only established superficial Spanish friendships. Talking about his parents' prohibitions, he mentioned for example how he was only very occasionally and in special circumstances allowed to sleep at a Chinese friend's house. "What about Spanish friends?" I asked, to which Qi replied that "there has never been a strong friendship with Spaniards to the degree of being invited to their place". Moreover, Qi had experienced difficulties learning Spanish, had dropped out of school, and this had limited his contact with Spanish society and his opportunities for insertion in the Spanish labor market. He now lived in Usera with Chinese people and worked for a Chinese employer at a café especially targeted at the Chinese community. His practices and his social relations were dominantly Chinese. I was thus surprised to find out that someone who had very superficial connections with Spanish society and had experienced difficulties to learn Spanish could claim a clear understanding of what he regarded as Spanish society and felt both Spanish and Chinese.

Qi explained this paradox by stressing that he regarded his Spanish identity as the passive result of his cross-border mobility, which had shaped his receptivity towards what he identified as Spanish and Chinese mentalities. Thus, he said: "I think if I had grown up in China I would not be like this, I

would probably have the same mentality as my parents". However, his cultural identity, in particular his partial identification as Spanish, could also be read as a reaction to the traditional mentality of his parents, that he greatly opposed, and which he negatively identified as Chinese. This more nuanced reading of his identity is what his life practices, process of adaptation, and continuous reference in conversation to his negative feelings towards his parents seemed to suggest. This reading is also more able to account for the paradox between his Spanish identity and his general disconnection from Spanish society and provides a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the process through which his dual identity was generated.

To sum up, Carlos, Mimi, Qi and Sara all straddled different worlds. At both material and symbolic levels, their lives unquestionably blended elements from Spain and China, host and heritage cultures. And yet, their narratives have shown a dynamic interaction between different elements of their life histories that suggest a more multilayered and open-ended form of in-betweenness. Approaching their dual identities as personal engagements with their individual circumstances rather than from the perspective of linguistic and cultural binaries provides a richer and much more nuanced understanding of their identities and allows to see the participants as embedded in their personal life situations and relationships with others. Moreover, this perspective sheds some light into the intricate *processes* through which their dual identities were established and negotiated.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the narratives of four participants who claimed a dual identity or an identity in between. It has tried to argue, from different perspectives, that existing conceptual frameworks of dual and in-between identities, which have commonly been conceived of in terms of fixed categories, binary oppositions and symbolic or material back and forth movements between host and heritage cultures, fail to capture the richness, complexity and depth of the participants' identities and experiences.

As pointed out by Menjivar (2002), in order to "fully assess the analytical power of a concept one must also take into account circumstances where it does not apply fully or the factors that may in some way limit it" (p.549). In this sense, this chapter has tried to raise questions that refine and more clearly describe what is meant by dual and in-between identities in different contexts.

In the first section, Sara spoke of her in-betweenness as a shifting, malleable condition that acquired different shapes, meanings and intensities throughout one's life history and that was in this sense endlessly produced and never resolved in a definitive way. The second section argued that Yun's identity did not clearly fit into any of the patterns of in-betweenness previously described by the literature. His in-betweenness did not play out as feelings of dual belonging, dual exclusion, or as an ambivalent position between belonging and marginality, but rather as a simultaneous desire and inability to be Chinese. Besides, his particular form of in-betweenness encompassed a wide range of elements that reached beyond the cultural and linguistic in-betweenness that previous research has tended to focus on. These elements included residential mobility, socio-economic status and a conflict between external and internal perceptions of what it meant to be Chinese. Finally, through the narratives of Mimi and Qi, the third section proposed to look at dual identities as physical or symbolic spaces of belonging dynamically constructed and negotiated out of the participants' need to engage with different aspects of their personal circumstances and environment.

Overall, dual or in-between identities emerged throughout this chapter as fluid and multifaceted conditions that were both positive and negative, practical and instrumental, passively adopted, chosen, battled, performed and created. Like any other ethnic community, children of Chinese migrants are a heterogeneous group with different personal and social characteristics (Guarnizo & Smith, 1998). There are different stages in their lives, different migration and adaptation processes, different class and socio-economic backgrounds and therefore the potential and possibility for dual and in-between identities to manifest in different ways. The narratives thus suggested

the importance of approaching the participants as individuals rather than as children of migrants. In other words, although one cannot dismiss the fact that the participants inhabited dual realities and articulated dual identities, migration was sometimes not the central or most fundamental element of their experiences, or was simply embedded in other aspects of their individual trajectories.

Conventional notions of in-betweenness have also been criticized for their underlying ideological assumptions and power relations (Talmy, 2001; Benesch, 2008). Benesch (2008) has insisted that the two polarities that constitute the discourse of in-betweenness (in this case native and non-native, Spanish and Chinese) have been created from a monocultural and monolingual perspective. Positioning individuals as not belonging (or belonging) to the normative categories of native or non-native, Spanish or Chinese, pathologizes their identities and ignores the creative processes and social interactions through which alternative identities may originate. Similarly, the discourse on dual or transnational identities proposes to embrace the multiplicity and creativity of cultural identities that blend multiple elements. However, it paradoxically does so through an abstract and homogeneous celebration of the liberating character of these dual identities, and by framing this discourse within the categories and dichotomies that it is trying to reject.

NEW FORMS OF CHINESE IDENTITIES

The widespread theoretical conviction that identities are constructed, fragmented and not fixed has tended to overlook the fact that individuals often express their identities as whole, bounded and essential (Ang, 2001). Moreover, it has failed to grapple with the reasons why fixed identities are felt and expressed (Calhoun, 1994; Ang, 2001). This discrepancy is reflected in the field of migration, and in the present study. As mentioned in previous chapters, the literature has often emphasized the fragmented nature of migrant identities that move between here and there, however, six of my participants expressed an unequivocal Chinese identity.

This chapter focuses on notions of difference and will try to illustrate how difference as a site of hostility and as a site for self-representation bear on the constitution of the participants' Chinese identities. It argues that othering processes played a central role in how Chineseness was constructed, not only because the participants embraced their Chinese identities by default as a result of experiences with discrimination and exclusion from Spanish society, but also because they constructed Spanish people as other and this in turn shaped their own identities.

After a brief overview of the literature on Self-Other, the narratives of Changkun and Duna will first illustrate how experiences with prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination impacted the development of these participants' Chinese identities. It will show how these experiences limited their opportunities to blend with Spanish society and compelled them to negatively embrace their identity as Chinese.

The second section will describe how Lili, Chun, Lu and Yiyi similarly produced othering discourses by creating boundaries around their ethnicity and by over-stressing their difference with regard to Spanish people. Thus, while being subjected to the othering gaze of Spanish society, they also

constructed Spanish people as Other, and it was through difference that their Chinese identity was created.

Ultimately, through both processes, the Chinese identities of these six participants emerged as both passively and actively constructed, essentialist and capitalized, real and imagined. The assertiveness through which they claimed their Chinese identities challenged dominant academic discourses which have stressed the mobility and duality of migrant children's identities and the weakness of ethnic identities among the second generation (Rumbaut, 2005). At the same time, the narratives of the participants illustrated how their Chinese identities were inextricable from their mental constructions and perceptions and profoundly embedded in their Spanish realities.

6.1. Self and Other

The notions of Self and Other have a very long history in philosophy. Plato first used them to refer to the relationship between the observer (or Self) and the observed (Other) (Riggins, 1997), and Hegel, in his master-slave dialectic, advanced the idea that self-consciousness could not be achieved without recognition from another (Heartfield, 2005).

More recently, the term Other has been removed from its historical and philosophical context and has become a popular notion in the social sciences, especially among scholars in the fields of postmodernism and cultural studies (Riggins, 1997). It has been used in a more restricted sense to refer to "all people the Self perceives as mildly or radically different" (Riggins, 1997, p.3).

Othering, on the other hand, has been described as "the defining into existence of a group of people who are identifiable, from the standpoint of a group with the capacity to dominate, as inferior" (Schwalbe et al., 2000, p.777). According to Schwalbe et al. (2000), "this process entails the invention of categories and of ideas about what marks people as belonging to these categories" (p.422) and is aimed at creating or reproducing inequalities.

Riggins (1997) has pointed out that:

Others may be practically invisible if they conform outwardly and rebel inwardly. Others can assimilate in whole or in part. Others may be devalued but at the same time eroticized and envied. Others may suppress their differences and accept a devalued status—"colonize themselves," so to speak (pp.5-6).

Todorov (1982) has identified *value judgments, social distance* and *knowledge* as the three realms that define the relationships between Self and Other. Value judgments refer to whether the Other is represented as good or bad, social distance to the physical and psychological distance maintained between Self and Other, and knowledge to the extent to which the Self is familiar with the culture and history of the Other.

Essential to the othering process is the construction of difference, an ambivalent notion described on the one hand as "threatening, a site of danger, of negative feelings, of splitting, hostility and aggression towards the Other" (Hall, 1997, p.238), and on the other as "necessary for the production of meaning, the formation of language and culture, for social identities and a subjective sense of the self" (Hall, 1997, p.238). Individuals must therefore create discourses of difference and similarity, reject and embrace specific identities in order to define who they are. Sartre (1965) has thus noted that "I need the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being" (pp.189-90) and Hall (1996) has written that:

It is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its *constitutive outside* that the 'positive' meaning of any term –and thus its identity— can be constructed (p.5).

Finally, although most research has concentrated on discourses of Othering articulated by dominant populations, othering may also be a reverse process whereby majority groups are defined by a minority (Riggins, 1997).

6.2. Constructing Chinese as Others

A large number of young people that I spoke to during my field work reported a strong awareness of Spanish society's prejudice and stereotypes towards the Chinese community. The narratives of Duna and Changkun, that I introduce below, illustrate how being treated and perceived as Other by Spanish society shaped the construction of their Chinese identities.

Changkun, 27

Changkun was born in Wencheng county, a mountainous area southwest of the city of Wenzhou. He arrived in Spain at age 12 with his mother and elder sister. His father had migrated to France when Changkun was eight months old and later moved to Spain, where he took up different menial jobs before his wife and children joined him via family reunification. Changkun described his father as someone extremely serious (*yansu*) and distant and confessed having no emotional attachment with him:

> I didn't really see my father until I was 12 years old. Of course, he would come to visit sometimes when we were in China, but I haven't had any contact with him … We don't have any emotional bond.

Although the relationship with his mother was closer ("it is a bit better with my mother, we speak a bit more"), he reported very little dialogue and communication with his parents in general and a hierarchical relationship grounded in respect. His parents never expressed interest about his life in Spain, a life that was marked by feelings of exclusion and a difficult process of adaptation.

Changkun and his family first lived in Madrid's district of Usera, which at the turn of the century had not yet developed into the Chinatown that it is today. He recounted his feelings of being negatively perceived and treated as different and how this impacted his process of language learning and integration:

When I first came here, I had already been to school in China, and suddenly, being here, I had the feeling I was not able to follow, it was the language, and the lessons … At that time, there were few Chinese people, so, Spanish people, or people from other countries –because at that time there were also a lot of immigrants living in Usera— they would look at Chinese people in a strange way.

Later, he added:

They would call me *"chinito"*, and although the word is not always necessarily insulting, you could tell it was so from the tone and attitude of the people who said it. So, because of this thing, I would often fight with other classmates. At that time, I couldn't speak Spanish, and Spanish children have this habit, they won't tell the teacher what really happened, they would twist things so as to make it sound that they are in the right.

Changkun reported how his struggles to learn Spanish, together with his negative experiences at school undermined his self-confidence:

Yes, all these situations make you feel a sense of inferiority [*zibei*]. When you can't speak the language, every time you are going to speak, you are afraid of making a mistake and that people will laugh at you.

At age 14, the family moved to Valencia because the business in Madrid was not prospering as expected. The school atmosphere in Valencia was much more welcoming, and Changkun was lucky to have a very supportive teacher who tried her best to address his language difficulties, but this was not enough to mitigate the negative effects of his previous school experience. At age 15, soon after moving to Valencia, he dropped out of school and began working full-time at the family's grocery shop.

When I asked Changkun what exactly had motivated this decision, he said: "one thing was I couldn't follow, but also, there was the fact that I couldn't find anything in school that made me happy, that is, I had the feeling it was impossible for me to integrate."

At the time we met, 15 years after his arrival in Spain, Changkun had not developed any social networks with locals. He appeared to me as shy and introverted. He still showed a lack of self-confidence and little motivation to interact with locals. He commented: "if you were not able to speak Chinese, I don't think I would have had much interest in talking to you, because although I can speak Spanish, but I wouldn't be able to express myself."

Changkun identified as Chinese. In fact, this appeared so evident and incontrovertible to him that he was surprised when I explicitly asked about his cultural identity. Moreover, for a long time, he conceived of his Chinese identity as inherently deficient, and this was partly the result of his internalization of the negative representations of the Chinese community prevalent in the Spanish media. He said:

> In the past, when the Spanish media would talk about Chinese and say Chinese people this or that, I would feel a sense of inferiority, or maybe not as bad as a sense of inferiority, but a lack of confidence.

However, with time, he had been able to extricate himself from negative representations and develop a more positive Chinese identity:

> But now, I just think Chinese people haven't done anything wrong … we don't steal, we don't harm anyone, the only thing is we're a rather closed-up community.

Changkun reported very few connections with Spanish society. He spent his free time with his Chinese friends, going to Chinese restaurants or simply chatting. His girlfriend was a Chinese university student who was on an exchange program at a university located in the suburban district where he

lived. It was precisely through his girlfriend, who was studying Chinese people in Spain and had contacted me via WeChat, that I was introduced to him.

And yet, despite his lack of meaningful connections with locals, Changkun expressed contradictory emotions towards Spanish society. There was on the one hand dismissal and resentment towards a society that he perceived as largely responsible for his negative experiences and struggles for adaptation, while simultaneously a strong longing to connect.

During the long conversation that we had in a café in a central district of Madrid, for example, he simply confessed that "sometimes you don't really feel like making Spanish friends". Later, however, he said:

> I was really curious about the questions you would ask me … and also very interested … in all these years living here, I haven't met anyone who speaks Chinese … and when you ask me things like whether I have experienced discrimination, I think, oh, there are after all Spanish people who care about these things … and I have the feeling I can after all those years finally express and pour out all my feelings and experiences [*touru yixia*] with someone from here.

Changkun's narrative shows how being consistently treated and regarded as an outsider not only affected his process of adaptation and his opportunities to learn Spanish, but also undermined his self-confidence, generated fear of rejection, and in the long run weakened his initiative to engage in interactions with mainstream society. This situation had automatically led to stronger connections with co-ethnics and a sense of belonging to his ethnic community. Moreover, the negative perception that for a long time he had of his Chinese identity, shaped by negative media portrayals of the Chinese community, and his ambivalent desire to connect with Spanish society, evidenced the extent to which his Chineseness was partly the result of a negative interpellation.

Duna, 18

Duna was my first informant. She found me through a language exchange website where I had posted an advertisement hoping to find people willing to participate in my research. We agreed that I would help her improve her English and in exchange she would tell me about her experience. Duna was living in Barcelona, and I was living in Madrid at that time, so all our conversations were conducted via WhatsApp.

Throughout our conversations, Duna came across as a shy, discreet and extremely articulate person. She was born in Spain, sent back to China to live with her grandparents at the age of 1, and returned to Spain at the age of 6. She had spent her childhood in Barcelona, where her parents, from Qingtian, owned a one-dollar shop. At the time we met, she was about to start her undergraduate degree in Business Administration.

Duna had no doubt as to her Chinese identity, which she described as the product of a greater closeness and affinity with people from her same ethnic group:

> I have to say that I feel I am a Chinese person. That means that I identify more with Chinese culture, values, and habits, and I get on better and more easily with Chinese people because we share more things in common.

Through Duna's narrative of adaptation, however, I learnt that her identity had been the product of a long evolution and largely shaped by the negative attitudes and perceptions of Spanish society towards the Chinese.

In the beginning, having arrived in Spain at an early age, she did not have problems to adapt to school and had been able to develop meaningful friendships and connections with both locals and Chinese:

> It wasn't difficult for me to adjust, because, you know, when you are a child, and your classmates are also kids, they don't really have an idea about "ok you are an immigrant, you come from another culture", they

don't have those stereotypes in their minds, so I think when you are a kid it is easier to adapt, because all you do is play and talk about the kind of things kids like to talk about. My personality was shy, but I did have my friends and I met very nice classmates. I wasn't that kind of outgoing child who can speak in front of the class, but I had my own group of friends, people I could talk to.

And yet, despite having been able to establish connections and friendships with locals, Duna acknowledged from early childhood a strong awareness of difference:

There were cultural differences that I noticed and that made me feel a bit different, for example on Christmas holiday or Easter, when classmates shared what they had been doing, I felt different. But when you are so small you don't really understand these things and you don't know about cultural differences. It wasn't a big deal.

Gradually, this awareness of difference generated a lack of self-confidence in her relationships with locals and a greater affinity with other Chinese:

I had a lack of self-confidence because of the fact that you feel something different. With Chinese people I noticed that we had more things in common and more things we could talk about, so when I was with them, I felt more confident, I could be more myself. I felt more comfortable. With Spanish friends, of course I was able to be friends with them, but … there are things that you just can't share.

With time, Duna gradually developed a less abstract and more articulate understanding of what in the beginning had only come across as a vague feeling of difference and disconnection. Although she had never

experienced overt racism, she learnt to identify certain attitudes as the product of prejudice, stereotypes and negative representations:

> I started feeling that people had stereotypes in secondary school. Teenagers' minds start to change, they receive more influence from social media or the older generation, but I personally never suffered any kind of direct discrimination. I was aware that some people did not understand me, or were not so interested in me, but no one came up to me and said something negative, but they didn't show curiosity towards me either.

Duna also reported strong connections with other children of immigrants, among whom she felt neither excluded nor regarded as different. She had a very good Russian friend and very good friends from Latin America. She explained that "maybe immigrants get along more easily among them because they have more things in common and they don't have prejudice towards foreign communities. In general, I feel they are more easy-going than some Spanish people who are more conservative".

When reflecting upon the factors that had shaped her Chinese identity, she added:

> The fact, as I told you, that since you are small you feel a bit different from your Spanish classmates in many respects makes you feel out of tune in many respects, and more identified with everything Chinese. Also, the way society behaves towards you and your community is a very important factor, the fact that they have prejudice and don't treat you in the same way makes it impossible for you to integrate. And so you won't feel assimilated. It's obvious that if you don't feel totally comfortable, you won't feel part of them.

Changkun and Duna were ostensibly very different individuals with very different backgrounds. Duna was a university student fluent in Spanish,

whereas Changkun had discontinued education and was largely marginalized from Spanish society. And yet, they shared a strong identity as Chinese and the fact that this Chineseness had been largely shaped by feelings of exclusion and awareness of negative attitudes from Spanish society. Whereas for Changkun, exclusion was an everyday reality at school and had affected his ability to develop linguistic competences in Spanish and social connections with locals, for Duna, a sense of exclusion had developed more subtly via her awareness of people's prejudice and of the negative image of Chinese migrants circulated by mainstream discourses and media representations. In both cases, the ways in which they were treated and represented by others greatly affected not only their cultural identity orientations but more broadly their personalities and sense of self. In this regard, both described themselves as shy, introverted individuals and attributed their lack of self-confidence to experiences of rejection and to having internalized the views and discourses of a society that refused them the right to belong. In both cases, being Chinese was conceived not as an active choice but rather as a reaction to the inability to be Spanish in a society that overtly or covertly denied them the right to claim a Spanish identity.

And yet, at the same time, their identities could not be regarded as merely the product of a negative interpellation. In this sense, their narratives revealed how, with time, they were able to resist and contest external representations and develop a more positive and assertive Chinese identity. Duna for example referred to China as her home country despite being born in Spain. She spoke proudly about her ethnicity and had gradually nurtured a positive symbolic relationship to China via television and the media:

> I watch Chinese programs, series and Chinese TV, and these media spread what China is like today, so if you often watch those things you will feel quite familiar, there is no sense of distance with your home country.

Similarly, Changkun's Chinese identity had also undergone a positive evolution, from passive compliance and internalization of negative mainstream stereotypes to a contestation of these stereotypes and a positive appropriation of his ethnicity. This shows how despite having been subjected to othering processes and internalized negative racial representations, their Chineseness was also partly achieved through a form of resistance that urged them to define themselves against this othering gaze. In other words, negative social representations of Chinese migrants among Spanish society developed the assumption that it was impossible for them to belong, but this generated the need to find ways to feel comfortable with their Chinese identities.

Other participants, regardless of their cultural identity orientations, similarly described how othering processes often elicited positive reactions through resistance and capitalization (Jensen, 2011). Binbin, Carlos and Sara were all in this sense able to overcome the negative perceptions of their Chineseness by rejecting prejudice and stereotypes. They all embraced their own individual circumstances and found ways to create and negotiate a positive relationship with their ethnicity.

Pyke and Dang (2003) have noted in this respect that:

Racial subordinates live under the constraints of racial categories, meanings and stereotypes which effectively deny them the power of self-identity. Regardless of whether they construct identities that internalize or resist the racial ideology of the larger society, they are forced to define themselves in relation to racial schemas and meanings (p.151).

Finally, and paradoxically, Changkun and Duna's positive assertion of their Chinese identities could also be read as a reproduction of the binary categories and self-other dichotomy that originally generated their exclusion and that they attempted to resist. Duna, for example, repeatedly stressed how she always felt different from locals, and Changkun how he did not "feel like making Spanish friends", thus marking clear symbolic divisions between

Spanish and Chinese communities. When Changkun narrated the evolution of his Chinese identity, from acceptance to resistance of Spanish society's accusations and stereotypes, his comments reflected the reproduction of a strong symbolic and ideological division between both communities as well as the perpetuation of certain stereotypes, such as the image of the Chinese as a closed-up community. The ways in which Chinese identities were achieved not by transcending but rather by reproducing these binary categories will be further illustrated in the next section.

6.3. Constructing Spanish as Others

Lili, 22

"After leaving China, you have more awareness of your own country, you become more Chinese".

The words above were spoken by Lili, a 22-year old who had arrived in Spain at age 10 and who identified as unequivocally Chinese. I met Lili at a karaoke contest held during the Mid-Autumn Festival at the Buddhist temple in Madrid. She was the first contestant. After her performance, we moved to a quiet room at the temple to chat more comfortably. Lili was a quiet girl with long black hair and glasses. One of the first things she said to me was that despite not being the type to go out and party, she was passionate about dancing and performance.

Lili's parents had been migrant workers in China before migrating to Spain. Lili lived with them in the city of Tai'an from birth till she was 5 years old. When her parents migrated to Spain, she moved to Zhejiang, where she lived with her brother and grandparents for five years before the two siblings joined their parents in Spain. At the time we met, Lili had just finished her degree in Nutrition, and did not have any career plans yet. "I will help with my parents' business first, and then consider what to do", she said.

Lili had a smooth adaptation to life in Spain. She found the academic curriculum easy and her teachers were always willing to help. Regardless of this, she reported not having adopted any Spanish habits or customs.

On the other hand, despite loose ties with her homeland (she did not travel to China and had few connections there besides grandparents and other relatives), she closely followed China in the news, on the internet, and was not very interested in what happened in Spain. She also attended Chinese school on weekends, which she enjoyed, and where she made a lot of Chinese friends.

Lili's narrative suggested that it was perceptions, experiences and mental constructions of difference with regard to Spanish people and her Spanish surroundings that shaped and reinforced her self-awareness and Chinese identity. First, Lili generated feelings of difference from the moment she set foot in Spain: "Everything felt unfamiliar, foreigners all looked the same to me". Subsequently, she experienced and constructed difference in many different realms of her daily life. She first referred to a very strict family education that she described as very different from that of Spanish peers. She explained that, unlike Spanish people, her parents were strict "in pretty much every respect. When I went out with friends, or I was at home, they wanted to control everything". Only recently, her parents had begun to give her more freedom. Once more stressing the difference between herself and others, she regarded the new terms of her relationship with her parents as closer to what she believed was the education received by her Spanish peers: "I feel quite free now and I feel this is the same type of freedom that Spanish people have since they are very small".

Lili also reported several instances of discrimination:

There was a guy at the park who would say nasty things to me, but after a while I didn't see them again. And then when I went to Las Fallas, in Valencia, there were a lot of people, and there was also a group of people who were swearing at us, I guess they were drunk or something.

These incidents made Lili more alert and aware of hostility among people around her, while simultaneously strengthening feelings of difference, real or imagined. She thus remarked with regard to the negative attitudes of Spanish people around her that "there are details that you just perceive sometimes."

Finally, Lili observed a sharp contrast in communication between Chinese and Spanish peers. While she acknowledged having a minority of Spanish "average friends", these connections seemed to be acquaintances rather than friendships. She explained:

> I think communication with Chinese and with Spanish people is a bit different. With Chinese people, I feel closer ... well, we actually speak about the same things, but my most personal things, my secrets, I would only tell my Chinese friends.

Overall, despite what she described as a positive adaptation experience, Lili's words conveyed a strong awareness of difference generated by several aspects of her life in Spain. These included estrangement from her physical surroundings and experiences of discrimination, as well as differences in family relations, values, and communication. It was this awareness, resulting from experiences, interactions, but also mental constructions, that, as illustrated in her opening quote, marked a symbolic and psychological gap with the host society and generated greater ties and a sense of solidarity with her heritage culture.

Lili was not the only person I encountered for whom a Chinese identity had developed out of a contrast and relation to what it was not. Other participants equally expressed strong feelings of difference from locals, a difference that was both real and imagined, and which served to build or consolidate their Chinese identities while perpetuating imaginary binaries and barriers to communication.

Chun , Lu, Yiyi

I met Chun(21), Lu (20) and Yiyi (20) on a hot Sunday afternoon at a cafeteria in the district of Usera. The place was busy with groups of young Chinese sipping soft drinks, iced tea and coffee from large cardboard glasses, chatting, giggling, sharing videos and pictures on their cell phones. I was sitting at one of the tables, drinking a bottled beer with another Chinese friend of mine. I looked around and realized that I was the only Spanish person, but that did not strike me as unusual in a place like Usera. The table occupied by Chun, Lu and Yiyi was located in a corner near the bathroom. They were not really having a conversation, just idly watching time go by and looking at their cell phones. Yiyi was a soft-spoken, shy girl of 20 who had arrived in Spain at age 7 and was studying a vocational course in computer technology. Chun was a smiling and outgoing girl who was working as an assistant in a Chinese retail shop. She was 21, had arrived at age 9 and switched from Spanish to Chinese during our conversation. Her parents and friends insisted that she should take advantage of her fluency in Spanish and look for a more qualified job, but she said to me that she was happy where she was and did not have higher aspirations. Lu did not speak much. She was the youngest child in a family of five siblings, and the only one who had been born in Spain. She lived with her grandmother in the Netherlands until she joined her parents and siblings in Spain at age 5. She was Yiyi's cousin. Their parents were all from Zhejiang Province, and owned a one-dollar shop (Yiyi and Chun) and a Chinese bazaar (Lu). They all lived and had attended school in the district of Usera. They always hung together on weekends. Chun's Spanish was flawless, but Yiyi and Chun said they were more comfortable speaking in Chinese. All of them identified as Chinese and reported often hanging out together and having little contact with Spanish peers and Spanish society.

For these three participants, being Chinese was a matter of attitudes, where Spanish attitudes were perceived as different and totally opposed to the Chinese. These attitudes were regarded as the product of the family education they had received. Chun, for example, said:

Chinese education is very strict, and this is the reason why we are not so close to our Spanish friends. and the way we think, it's just like ... we are more mature, we always try to balance the good and the bad side of things, and it's like ... you try to explain to them, and they go, "whatever, it doesn't matter, you are old enough to do whatever you want"... but no, for us it's different, it's like, we still depend on our parents.

Lu corroborated this opinion and added that "we do things for our parents, and not for ourselves".

Chun and Lu thus portrayed Spanish people as unable to understand the values of filial piety, obligation and interdependence that governed their family relationships. They also believed that, as a result of these values, they had developed more mature attitudes and perspectives than those of their Spanish peers.

This perception of difference was clearly illustrated by their views on marriage. While the three of them stressed their wish and intention to marry a Chinese because a Chinese person would be more able to understand and share their values, this inclination was verbalized not as an active desire but framed against a conviction of the untranslatability of the Chinese values they possessed. Chun, for example, expressed her inclination to marry a Spanish local, but had eventually decided against it because she perceived an unbridgeable gap in mentalities:

I think I prefer Spanish people, I have the feeling that they don't place so much emphasis on your physical appearance, and I kind of like that ... but no, I think if I marry a Spanish person, maybe in the future, the way we think, our opinions won't be the same, and it would be more difficult.

Further into our conversation, the three participants elaborated on their perception of the differences between Chinese and Spanish attitudes:

[Chun]: they [Spanish and Chinese] have different behaviors. Spanish people are VERY open, we are more...

[Yiyi]: you can talk more openly with Spanish people.

[Lu]: yes, there are some Chinese girl who are just so...

[Yiyi]: I just feel talking to Spanish people makes you feel more comfortable.

[Chun]: to me, with Spanish people, I am so... they tell you everything, they can talk about anything.

[Yiyi]: right, right, right.

[Chun]: they have this way of, they share anything with you, they tell you anything.

[Paloma's friend]: but can you become very close friends with Spanish people?

[they all shake their heads]

[Yiyi]: very difficult.

[Chun]: I think it's just... although they are friends, but I don't feel so close as to be able to tell them my very intimate stuff.

[Paloma]: what do you think is the reason?

[Yiyi]: in my case it's maybe that I haven't had much contact with Spanish people.

[Chun]: I think it's a different way of understanding things. Spanish people are very open, and Chinese are very reserved.

[Yiyi]: I have a foreign friend, but it's a guy, but we have a very good relationship, because he makes me feel as if he is very different from other Spanish people ... he's a bit more girly, and I am a bit more like a guy, we can talk about anything, he's told me things he hasn't told anyone else.

This passage reveals how Chun, Lu and Yiyi relied on patterns of difference and similarity with Spaniards to construct their cultural identities. They conceived of themselves and Spanish people in terms of dichotomies

between open-reserved or spontaneous-reflective. Moreover, interestingly, Yiyi admitted having had very little contact with Spanish locals, but yet described the only Spanish friend she had as "very different from other Spanish people". The discrepancy between the fact that she did not have Spanish friends, and the knowledge she claimed of the characteristics that defined Spanish people evidenced the extent to which this knowledge was partly an imaginative representation.

This sense of unbridgeable distance with Spanish locals was not exclusive to my participants. In her study about the socialization experiences of Chinese children of migrants in Catalonia, Sáiz López (2006) reported a conversation where a girl having migrated at the age of 12 expressed similar feelings:

So you get in touch with your Spanish friends via the internet? *[¿Y te conectas con amigos españoles por internet?]*

Yes [laughs], I don't know, I find it easier in writing *[Sí (risas), no sé, me cuesta menos por escrito]*

Why? *[¿Por qué ?]*

I am very shy in front of them *[Soy muy tímida delante de ellos]*

And you are not shy with your Chinese friends? *[¿y con tus amigos chinos, no lo eres?]*

No *[No]*

You don't trust Spanish people? *[¿No confías en los españoles?]*

It's not about trust in them, it's about confidence in myself, I don't have much confidence when I am with Spanish people *[No es cuestión de confianza en ellos, más bien en mí misma, tengo menos cuando estoy con los españoles]*

Why? *[Y ¿ por qué?]*

Because I don't understand what they think, with Chinese people I know, I know their lives are similar to mine and if they tell me something I understand, but it doesn't happen to me sometimes when I am with Spanish people *[Porque no entiendo lo que piensan, con los chinos yo sé,*

sé que su vida es parecida a la mía y si me cuentan algo yo lo entiendo pero a veces con los españoles no me pasa] (p.118)

As illustrated by this passage, estrangement from Spanish peers was not only generated by awareness of differences in personal attitudes and values, but was also the result of different life experiences. In the previous section, Duna supported this view by simply noting that with Spanish people "there are things that you just cannot share". In the preceding chapter, Yun explained how his family obligations had generated feelings of distance towards his Spanish peers. He identified with the hardship that characterizes the lives of many Chinese migrant families in Spain. He constructed Chinese people as attaching more importance to the value of effort and sacrifice and Spanish people as more spoilt and "spoonfed" (*se lo dan ya masticado*).

Moreover, many of the people I informally spoke with during the months I spent in the field reported family separation and reunification, domestic obligations, language brokering, negative encounters with prejudice and discrimination as common experiences that served to create a sense of solidarity and a feeling of belonging to an imagined community. This sense of solidarity also created margins of exclusion with Spanish peers.

All the people I spoke with, for example, reported having been treated as different or having experienced prejudice and discrimination at some point in their lives. Suli, a 26-year old who now worked in the family's grocery store and had migrated from Qingtian at the age of 9, described being bullied by Spanish classmates at school. She explained to me that this experience not only sharpened her awareness of being different but also contributed to creating stronger bonds with other Chinese people at school. They all shared awareness of having been through similar experiences and this fostered a strong sense of solidarity.

A large number of people I met also expressed common family dynamics: their parents had poor Spanish language competence, and as a result they had to assist with family matters (visits to hospitals, translation of Spanish documents...) on a regular basis. These responsibilities were often

frowned upon by school teachers because they were believed to impose too large a burden on the children. Moreover, they were perceived by the participants as different from the family responsibilities of other Spanish peers. All this created boundaries with Spanish society and reinforced a sense of solidarity and belonging to a community.

A similar sense of empathy was derived from having been through similar processes of family separation and reunification, and the emotional and psychological adjustment they entailed. Ting, a 26-year old who had grown up in Mallorca and joined her parents in Spain at age 14 after having lived with her aunt and grandparents in China since birth, expressed distance and estrangement from her parents. She identified this situation as a common experience that often generated trust and mutual understanding among other children of Chinese migrants in Spain.

Overall, this section has illustrated how the participants understood their Chinese identities as the result of values, customs, attitudes acquired through family education, and also as the result of their shared experiences as children of Chinese migrants in Spain. There was, however, in these articulations of Chineseness, an emphasis on fixed dichotomies and on self-other structures that reproduced the essentialist representations of Chineseness circulated by mainstream society.

The values, customs, attitudes and growing-up experiences that the participants identified as the constituents of their Chinese identities were given substance through a continuous comparison with the values, customs, attitudes and experiences of Spanish locals. This process was reinforced by their belief in the impossibility to bridge the differences between the two. The participants' accounts thus seemed to overlook the fact that there are many ways of being Chinese or Spanish, and that Chineseness and Spanishness are constructed historically and change over time (Abu-Lughod, 2008). Moreover, in some cases, their ideas underpinning the meaning of Chinese and Spanish identities were not grounded on personal experiences but on imaginative perceptions.

In this sense, while their Chineseness was largely situated and tied to their specific circumstances as children of Chinese migrants in Spain, it was also paradoxically conceived as bounded, essential and discrete. One may question whether this was the result of their material and symbolic distance with China, which had given way to a more idealized perception of Chineseness, Chinese "culture" and Chinese values as monolithic categories with frozen characteristics (Abu-Lughod, 2008).

6.4. Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has illustrated how the Chinese identities of the participants were constructed out of an interplay between socially determined and subjective processes and were inextricable from their experiences as Chinese people in Spain. First, the narratives of Changkun and Duna showed that the attitudes and perceptions of Spanish society acted as a form of interpellation that fixed their identities as Chinese through various forms of prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. However, Changkun and Duna did not merely adopt these negative Chinese identities passively or by default, but were also able, with time, to reject or contest the negativity of these images or capitalize their Chineseness through pride in their ethnic heritage and positive connections with China.

On the other hand, the narratives of Lili, Chun, Lu and Yiyi demonstrated how the othering process through which these participants were negatively constructed as Chinese was mirrored by a similar process whereby they constructed Spanish people as Other. This process not only served the purpose of defining and consolidating their Chinese identities but also reproduced stereotypes about both communities. Chinese and Spanish were thus constructed in the voices of these participants as fixed, monolithic and normative categories and as binary constructs that prevented a real engagement with the complexities of difference.

Awareness of difference, real or imagined, was a central aspect in the participants' narratives and in the constitution of their cultural identities. As

shown in the narratives of Changkun and Duna, this awareness was constraining, as it generated self-consciousness and a lack of self-confidence that weakened their initiative to communicate with locals. This led to a reduction in the amount of interactions between both communities and to a situation where both Chinese and Spanish were created by reproducing rather than transcending binaries and stereotypes.

The question that arises from this is whether these perceptions of difference were the result of previous experiences with members of Spanish society that had reinforced the participants' awareness of an existing gap between both worlds, or whether they arose out of what Ang (2001) has termed a self-orientalization and subjectively generated "inward-looking aloofness" (p.32) (which in turn may have been generated by negative experiences with locals). In either case, what they reflect is the lack of meaningful interactions between the Spanish and Chinese communities.

Interestingly, most of the participants did not express strong material or symbolic connections with China beyond their families and the Chinese community in Spain. They seldom or never traveled to China and there was no specific aspect of China that they felt proud of or strongly connected with, a fact that somehow reinforced the idea of a largely imagined Chineseness.

Overall, the Chinese identities of the participants appeared as essentialist, relational and both contained within and constrained by dichotomous structures and patterns of difference and similarity. And yet, at the same time, the ways in which Chineseness operated in the minds and lives of the participants and the othering processes where it was inscribed evidenced the extent to which being Chinese was profoundly embedded in the social context that they inhabited. In this sense, their Chineseness was construed and determined by a pattern of little interaction between mainstream Spanish society and the Chinese community. It was molded by experiences of discrimination by Spanish society, by certain perceptions of the values and practices of the society where they lived. It was relational, imagined, partial, both actively constructed and passively embraced. It could

not be measured against any other paradigm of Chineseness, and it was crucially inextricable from the experience of being Chinese in Spain.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly for the purposes of this research, the narratives of the participants did not resonate with current discourses that emphasize the mobility, duality and fragmentation of migrant children's identities. Instead, my participants spoke of their identities as fixed and unambiguously Chinese, and yet and understanding of this Chineseness was only possible through an examination of their life histories and identity practices. Once again, what this idea highlights is the need to question abstract categories and overarching academic debates and to pay more attention to the situated narratives and circumstances from where individual people voice their identities.

CONCLUSION

7.1. Overview

This dissertation has explored the cultural identity practices of 14 Chinese migrant descendants living in Spain. The notion of cultural identity practices was defined as a dynamic and self-reflexive process whereby individuals reflect and engage with themselves and others in specific contexts in order to construct and articulate a sense of who they are and where they belong.

The methodology adopted for this research was the practice of ethnography, which was conceived as the most appropriate means of providing thick descriptions of the participants' identity practices and their individual life worlds. This ethnographic approach primarily relied on interviews, focus groups and observations. The interviews were conducted from a life narrative perspective and sought to delve into the personal biographies of the participants and privilege their own sense-making of their experiences and identities as they unfolded and were mediated through dialogue with the researcher.

The study was framed within current debates on migrants and migrant children's identities in the scholarly field of migration. By referring to these identities as dual, transnational, or in-between, these debates have overwhelmingly emphasized the fluid, mobile, or dual character of these identities which are constituted out of connections and tensions between host and heritage societies, between here and there. Against this dominant paradigm, my argument throughout this research, presented in the three main data chapters and through varying perspectives, has been not only to show that this approach is not necessarily applicable to the realities and conditions of children of migrants in Spain, but also, and most importantly, to demonstrate that the cultural identities of my participants presented a degree of complexity and diversity that could not be accurately captured by existing categories coined within this contemporary debate.

In order to prove this point, my first data chapter illustrated how Mona, Binbin and Carlos expressed cultural identities that defied bounded categorizations and that blurred the meaning and relevance of conventional terms and dichotomies, such as mobility-fixity, or Spanish-Chinese. For these participants, the processes through which identities were constituted and the role played by opportunities, attitude, power dynamics and social context were more important to an understanding of their cultural identities than the conventional labels that dominate current migrant identity debates. Mona emphasized the importance of a liberal family education and of opportunities arising from family's educational and socio-economic status in shaping her openness to difference and a cultural identity that resisted categorization. By contrast, Vera's narrative illustrated how it was precisely low socio-economic status, strict family education and lack of opportunities that shaped and constrained her cultural identity choices. Binbin, on the other hand, emphasized how it was his agency and desire to resist marginalization by Spanish society that shaped the development of his identity, which blended elements of ethnicity and cosmopolitanism. Carlos stressed the role played by the multicultural environment where he had grown up and his minority status within he Chinese community in shaping his open-mindedness and a cultural identity that equally transcended boundaries and categorizations.

The second data chapter focused on the narratives of Sara, Yun, Mimi and Qi, who expressed their identities as dual or in-between, but whose dualism and in-betweenness meant much more and was much more diverse than the cultural and linguistic dualism and in-betweenness that the literature has portrayed. Sara's feelings of in-betweenness acquired different intensities and meanings as her circumstances changed, and her story therefore suggested the importance of looking at in-betweenness from the shifting and situated perspective of individual life histories. For Yun, in-betwenness meant disconnection from Spanish society and values with a simultaneous longing and desire to be Chinese. Yun's story exemplified how aspects that reached beyond culture, such as family dynamics and relations, residential mobility and pressures to conform to a stereotypical ideal of Chineseness conditioned

his cultural identity practices. Also in this chapter, Qi and Mimi's narratives revealed how the meanings of their dual identification should be conceived not as fixed states but as dynamic responses to their changing circumstances and environments.

The third data chapter illustrated how some participants expressed a bounded and essentialist Chinese identity that challenged current debates on the mobile and fragmented nature of identities. Changkun and Duna first demonstrated how experiences with stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination shaped the development of their Chinese identities. At the same time, they both proved able to contest negative images of Chineseness and positively appropriate their Chinese identities. Lili, Chun, Lu and Yiyi, on the other hand, showed how being perceived as different was mirrored by perceptions of difference towards Spanish people and Spanish society, and how these perceptions substantiated and reinforced a Chinese identity. Altogether, these narratives demonstrated how Chinese identities emerged out of othering discourses and practices, and were also inextricable from both Spanish realities and from the perceptions and mental constructions of the participants.

It is important to clarify that the claims that I made throughout this research did not aim at completely denying the relevance or applicability of labels and categories such as transnational, dual, in-between, applied to people's identities, or of other binaries, such as Spanish or Chinese. My contention has been instead that these categories too often, and in the case of my participants, were only partly able to represent their cultural identities. I have tried to suggest that by taking another detour, that does not place so much emphasis on cultural clashes and compatibilities and that engages with individual lives and practices as an integrated whole and from a bottom perspective, one may arrive at a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences and cultural identities. It is this approach, combined with the new insights that this study has shed into the largely undocumented lives and identities of Chinese children of migrants living in Spain, that I regard as my original contribution to knowledge. Thus, although

each chapter has had its own leading thread and research question, they were all tied together by the idea that the cultural identities of my participants were embedded in a multilayered and intersectional complexity that resisted strict verbal categorizations.

In the remaining pages of this concluding chapter, I will provide a description of my major findings and detail how these findings answer my two research questions. I will highlight the contributions that my research makes to specific scholarly disciplines and point out some limitations and directions for future research.

7.2. Answer to Research Questions

Question 1: How do children of Chinese migrants perceive and articulate their cultural identity orientations? What are the processes and conditions through which these have come into being?

My initial question was to elucidate the cultural identity practices of my participants, or, in other words, the ways in which they perceived, articulated and engaged with their cultural identity orientations. Although the main point of this dissertation has been precisely to highlight how these cultural identity practices resisted categorization, it was nonetheless possible to distinguish a number of features through which the participants described and talked about different forms of identity. I have listed these features below for the purposes of answering the research question, while being aware that they are not able to fully describe or contain the identity practices of my participants.

a. Identities beyond labels (Mona). Mona refused to identify with any category of identity, in particular with the categories "Spanish" or "Chinese". She spoke of her identity as the result of a liberal family education, socio-economic status and opportunities that shaped her openness to difference and ultimately her identification as citizen of the world.

b. Chinese cosmopolitan (Binbin). Binbin claimed an individualized form of Chineseness that blended pride in his ethnicity, cosmopolitan openness to difference, and active resistance to racial stereotypes. This form of identity was the product of negative experiences of rejection and shaped by the need to claim and create a positive Chinese image that would challenge and transcend society's negative perceptions and attitudes towards the Chinese community.

c. Spanish-international, and Spanish-Chinese (Carlos). Carlos described his cultural identity as an openness to difference coupled with an identification with Spanish lifestyles and values. He also strategically embraced his Chinese ethnicity as a means to create a bilingual and bicultural profile that would help him enhance his professional profile and career opportunities. These cultural identity practices were the result of a welcoming growing-up environment, personal ambition and the inability to claim a strong position within the Chinese community due to his minority status among a majority of migrants from Zhejiang.

d. Shifting and malleable in-betweenness (Sara, Mimi, Qi). This form of in-betweenness was characterized by its flexible connotations and changing emphasis throughout the life course. Conditioned by family circumstances and society's expectations towards her Chinese identity, Sara first rejected her Chinese self and capitalized her Spanish identity. She then felt the need for a reconciliation with her Chinese heritage and downplayed her Spanishness, while in the end, she was able to positively embrace and strike a balance between both.

Mimi, on the other hand, consciously shifted the balance towards a more Chinese or Spanish identity as she was confronted with different circumstances throughout her life. Thus, she emphasized her Spanish side in the first stages after migration, as a strategy to better adapt to Spanish society, and her Chinese self when she saw the need to make lifestyle choices and maximize her career opportunities. Similarly, Qi stressed his Chineseness as a choice of lifestyle and social connections

while his identification with Spanish values was developed as a reaction to a negative perception of his parents' Chinese mentalities.

e. In-betweenness as disconnection from Spanish values and practices, longing to be Chinese (Yun). For Yun, a Chinese identity was conceived as both a limitation and an aspiration. While experiencing disconnection from Spanish society due to a combination of aspects such as family obligations, or residential mobility, he was caught in a strong desire to be Chinese and in the impossibility to live up to standards of Chineseness imposed by society.

f. Chinese identities adopted by default (Changkun, Duna). Changkun and Duna's Chinese identities were embraced by default as a result of the negative attitudes of Spanish society but also transformed through mental processes of positive appropriation that ultimately made them proud of being Chinese.

g. Chinese identities as imagined communities (Lili, Chun, Lu, Yiyi). Lili, Chun, Lu and Yiyi's Chinese identities were constructed, substantiated and reinforced through perceptions and experiences of difference with Spanish people and society.

h. Chinese identities as constraining (Vera). Vera perceived her Chinese identity as the product of a strict family education and a low socio-economic status that limited her opportunities to improve her Spanish language competence, interact with difference, and ultimately develop meaningful attachments to Spanish society.

Question 2: How do the cultural identity practices of the participants illuminate different aspects of their processes of adaptation and/or lives in Spain?

The narratives of my participants revealed that there was no single or clearly identifiable pattern to describe their lives and experiences of adaptation in Spain, and that there was no single way of being a child of Chinese migrants in Spain. Growing up in Spain as a Chinese migrant descendant thus emerged as a heterogeneous, not generalizable experience,

and certainly not one that could easily group everyone under one or a few categories. It was an experience that changed and evolved over time along with the cultural identities of the participants and that was shaped by a multiplicity of factors, including personal choices, attitudes, real or imaginative perceptions, all of which were embedded in and intersected with the participants' circumstances and environments and shaped their cultural identities in different and often contrasting ways. From this perspective, we may argue that the participants must be viewed not solely as the product of their or their parents' migration, but through the lens of their individuality, and as embedded in a complex matrix of circumstances and connections. The best (and largely utopian) way to explore their cultural identity practices and experiences would then be by striving "to tell the whole story of everything that ever happened to every individual, everything that every individual caused to happen" (Rapport, 1997, p.26).

Despite this, one commonality among the participants was that none of them unambiguously identified with Spanish society. This was in sharp contrast to the more local identities and attachments that have been reported among descendants of Chinese migrants, particularly in North America but also in other parts of the world. Interestingly, studies conducted in other South European countries with migration histories similar to Spain's have also documented little identification with host societies among children of Chinese migrants, although, in these cases, this was often coupled with significant hurdles to integration (see, for example, Li, 2012; Gaspar, 2018, for Chinese descendants in Portugal, and Marsden, 2014, for Chinese in Italy). Still, as much as lack of identification with Spanish society may point to a common feature in the growing up experiences of my participants, the motives and complexities behind this lack of Spanish identification could not be fully accounted for without reference to individual biographies.

7.3. Implications

This study, positioned in the discipline of migration studies, has several implications and recommendations for future research in this field. First, I

have suggested that by using anthropological methods that privilege life history perspectives and the researcher's dialogical engagement with the voices of individual people, it is possible to solve some current problems found in studies of migrant people's identities. More specifically, the use of these anthropological methods has proved able to transcend the limitations of adopting more abstract academic categories and thus arrive at a more thorough and complete understanding of migrant children's cultural identities. More broadly speaking, this perspective has suggested that migration studies should approach the cultural identities of migrants and their children not solely from the perspective of their migration journey but rather from a broader angle that addresses their identity as individuals.

The field of migration studies has also consistently stressed the material and symbolic mobility of migrants and their descendants, but this dissertation has highlighted instead the importance of transcending abstract binaries of mobility-fixity and of unraveling the diversity of concrete forms and overlapping that mobile and fixed identities acquire in the lives of individual people. This idea is also applicable to the field of identity. While identity scholars have often underlined the mobility of cultural identities and the multiplicity of factors through which these identities are constituted, these ideas have remained largely theoretical and have not been sufficiently engaged with in empirical studies.

As for the specific field of Chinese migration, my research and particular approach have suggested that the experiences and cultural identities of Chinese migrant descendants cannot be measured against the same yardstick as those of Chinese migrant descendants in other parts of the world. It has stressed the need to adopt new approaches that engage with the specific characteristics of the Spanish context without relying on existing identity patterns and patterns of adaptation prevalent in other geographical locations.

Finally, by suggesting the heterogeneity in the cultural identity practices and experiences of Chinese migrant descendants, this study has challenged the simplistic representations of Chinese migrants made by the

Spanish media and mainstream society, who have often depicted the Chinese community as complete outsiders and the second generation as both overwhelmingly and unproblematically assimilated (Hernández Velasco, 2006).

7.4. Limitations

While my research has focused on the diversity of cultural identities voiced by young adults from a broadly similar age group, future studies could further explore the impact of spatial and temporal dimensions. One possible direction could be to focus on younger people having migrated more recently. The experiences of these children may have been very different due to aspects such as the development of social media and digital communication technologies, different attitudes from Spanish society as a result of the presence of larger numbers of migrants and their greater visibility, or the more favorable conditions (social networks or economic resources) that Chinese migrant families in Spain enjoy nowadays. Moreover, China's economic rise and its growing influence in the world economy may have transformed people's attachments and perceptions of their heritage culture, and the ways in which they make sense of their cultural identities. From this perspective, Chinese migrants and their descendants in Spain are a dynamic community undergoing constant changes and evolution, and it would be interesting to establish relevant contrasts between cultural identities and life or adaptation experiences of individuals having migrated at different moments in time.

Moreover, as suggested by Carlos' narrative, different geographical locations and social environments impact lives, identities and processes of adaptation. A comparison between the adaptation experiences of children of Chinese children having grown up in different geographical locations in Spain could be another direction for further research.

Finally, some of my participants reported a strong residential mobility during their childhood years, and moved both between Spanish cities and internationally. It would be interesting to explore the ways in which

residential mobility, national or international, affected the lives, experiences and cultural identities of Chinese migrant descendants. Whether mobility leads to more cosmopolitan identities or to more uprooted identities, as Yun seemed to suggest, are only some of the questions that could be addressed.

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