

Université de Montréal

**The Educational Experience of Students of Chinese Origin in a  
French-Speaking Context: the role of school, family, and  
community**

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## **Dedication**

*This dissertation is most sincerely dedicated to my parents for their love, encouragement, and prayers through this doctoral journey.*

## Acknowledgement

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## **Abstract**

This study seeks to document the educational experience of students of Chinese origin in Quebec French high schools and to examine the dynamics influencing their academic achievement. More specifically, it explores the impact of school context, Chinese immigrant families, and the ethnic community on the socioeducational integration of these youth in a French-speaking context.

Data were collected mainly through semi-structured in-depth interviews with students of Chinese origin as well as different actors holding educational roles (immigrant parents as well as school and community practitioners). Other instruments, such as document review and media content analysis, were also adopted to provide background information and to enrich the interview data. Data were analysed according to an open and inclusive framework evaluating the academic achievement of immigrant students with a main focus on the influence of the proficiency in the language of instruction, cultural and social capital of the immigrant family and community, and systemic factors at the school level.

The research findings show that students of Chinese origin in the three target schools generally have positive school experience, especially in terms of their performance in mathematics and sciences. However, some of them, new arrivals in particular, seem to encounter some difficulties in learning French and social integration.

Indeed, the process of socioeducational integration of Chinese youth is influenced by diverse milieus that they occupy. Regarding the influence of school dynamics, the results of this study indicate that positive teacher-student relationships play an important role in the educational success of Chinese origin students. Nonetheless, the insufficient learning support services diminish the linguistic and social integration of newly arrived Chinese immigrant students.

The research data highlight in particular the role of immigrant family and the ethnic community in shaping the school experience of Chinese youth. On the one hand, with the impact of family dynamics, including migration project, Chinese culture, as well as pre-

and post-migration experiences, Chinese parents are involved actively in their children's schooling, in spite of their language and cultural barriers. On the other hand, to overcome the negative effects of loose connections with mainstream French schools, Chinese parents rely largely on ethnic community-based resources, such as Chinese language media, ethnospecific immigrant service organizations, Chinese supplementary schools, and ethnic religious institutions. These ethnic social institutions contribute to support cultural values, exchange information, establish role-modes for the youth, and provide culturally as well as linguistically appropriate services.

**Keywords: educational success, socioeducational integration, Chinese community, immigrant students, French high school**

## Résumé

Cette recherche vise à documenter l'expérience scolaire des élèves québécois d'origine chinoise à l'école secondaire de langue française et à examiner les dynamiques qui influencent la réussite scolaire de ces élèves. Elle s'intéresse plus précisément aux impacts des facteurs relatifs à l'école, à la famille immigrante, et à ceux de la communauté ethnique sur l'intégration de ces jeunes dans un contexte francophone.

Les données ont été principalement recueillies à travers des entretiens semi-structurés approfondis auprès d'élèves d'origine chinoise et de différents acteurs du paradigme éducatif (parents, acteurs scolaires et intervenants communautaires). D'autres instruments, tels que l'analyse du contenu de documents et de médias, ont également été utilisés afin de fournir des informations contextuelles et d'enrichir les données d'entrevues. Les données ont été analysées selon un cadre théorique ouvert et inclusif où la réussite scolaire des élèves issus de l'immigration est mesurée en mettant l'accent sur l'influence de la maîtrise de la langue d'enseignement, du capital culturel et social de la famille et de la communauté immigrante, ainsi que des facteurs systémiques au niveau de l'école.

Les résultats de cette étude dans trois écoles cibles montrent qu'en général les élèves d'origine chinoise connaissent une expérience positive, surtout en ce qui concerne leur performance scolaire en mathématiques et sciences. Cependant, les nouveaux arrivants ont tendance à éprouver des difficultés dans l'apprentissage du français et pour leur intégration sociale.

En effet, le processus d'intégration socioscolaire des jeunes chinois est sous l'influence des différents milieux qu'ils fréquentent. À propos de l'influence des dynamiques scolaires, les résultats de la recherche indiquent qu'une relation maître-élève positive joue un rôle important dans la réussite éducative de ces élèves. Toutefois, l'insuffisance du soutien à l'apprentissage défavorise l'intégration linguistique et sociale des élèves nouvellement arrivés.

Les données de cette étude soulignent notamment le rôle de la famille immigrante et de la communauté ethnique dans l'expérience scolaire de ces jeunes. D'une part, sous l'impact des dynamiques familiales, notamment ce qui à trait au projet migratoire, à la culture chinoise et à l'expérience pré- et post-migratoire, les parents immigrants chinois s'impliquent activement dans les études de leurs enfants, malgré des barrières linguistiques et culturelles. D'autre part, afin de surmonter les effets négatifs des faibles liens entretenus avec l'école de langue française, les parents chinois ont largement recours aux ressources au sein de la communauté ethnique, tels que les médias de langue chinoise, les organismes ethnospcifiques de services aux immigrants, l'école du samedi et les institutions religieuses ethniques. Ces institutions sociales ethniques contribuent à soutenir les valeurs culturelles, échanger des informations, établir des modèles pour les jeunes et à fournir des services appropriés en matière culturelle et linguistique.

**Mots clés : réussite scolaire, intégration socioscolaire, la communauté chinoise, élèves issus de l'immigration, école secondaire de langue française,**

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## List of Symbols and Abbreviations

CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CSDM	Commission scolaire de Montréal (Montreal French School Board)
CSMB	Commission scolaire de Marguerite Bourgeoys (Marguerite Bourgeoys French School Board)
EHDAA	Élèves handicaps ou en difficulté d'adaptation ou d'apprentissage (Students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties)
MELS	Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sport)
MEQ	Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (Ministry of Education of Quebec)
MCCI	Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration (Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration)
MICC	Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities)
SES	Socioeconomic status

## **Introduction**

It is an undeniable reality that immigration plays an important role in the development of Canada and Quebec, but it also poses important challenges, especially regarding recognition of diversity and integration of immigrants into the mainstream. More specifically, in Quebec, these challenges include using immigration as a means to respond to a demographic deficit and to contribute to economic growth, while ensuring the vitality of French as the common language in a context of globalization. Since the late 1980s migration flows have increased significantly in the province. With a selective policy, the immigration population has highly diversified in terms of language, culture, religion. The integration of immigrants as well as their descendants and the equitable participation of various ethnic communities are vitally important for the development and prosperity of the province.

Given the important role of education in the socialization and placement of young people in the society, schools are expected to make a valuable contribution to dealing with the challenges related to the integration of immigrants. Indeed, in many societies with non-selective immigration policies, immigrant students seem to project a more negative educational trajectory. However, one observes a great variation in the educational outcomes of various ethnic groups in other immigrant-receiving societies, where the selective immigration policies are adopted based on various objectives which result in diverse socioeconomic profiles among populations. It is therefore important to understand the school experiences and pathways of immigrant youth of diverse ethnic groups as well as the factors that explain the variation in their educational success.

In the worldwide literature on minorities and education, the Chinese community is often perceived as a “model minority”, as they are academically successful. In the English-speaking world, especially in the United States, many studies have been carried out to explore the educational experiences of the youth of this group and the factors that influence their school outcomes. However, some of these studies reveal that the label of “model minority” is not always true. Many Chinese students experience communication

difficulties as well as social and emotional problems in the new society. Also, their high level of academic achievement has not always been transferred to a successful socioeconomic integration.

Notwithstanding the large body of research on Chinese origin students in the international context, the knowledge of their school experience and pathways remains limited in Canada. This is especially the case in Quebec, where the language of instruction is French. As a fast growing group in Quebec, the integration of Chinese in this French-speaking context needs to be better understood. The current research, therefore, aims to document the socioeducational experience of Chinese youth in French public high schools. Meanwhile, it also seeks to provide a better understanding of the influence of the school context, family dynamics, and the community-based resources on their academic achievement.

The organization is as follows. Chapter I presents the problem statement, outlines the purpose of the study and provides contextual information on the educational success of Chinese youth in Quebec.

Chapter II surveys the literature relevant to the educational success of immigrant youth in various contexts and specifies the research questions. This study attempts to understand the school success of students of immigrant origin with a multidimensional theoretical framework; therefore the literature review includes socioeconomic status, language proficiency, cultural capital, social capital, systemic factors, and individual characteristics. The chapter concludes with a critical review of the factors examined and the general and specific research questions.

Chapter III explains the qualitative research design undertaken. It describes the research sites, data collection, and analysis process. In the data collection part, the instruments and the characteristics of the participants are illustrated in detail. Further, the role of the researcher is also discussed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the validity and reliability as well as some ethical considerations.

Chapter IV presents the findings on the school pathways and performance students of Chinese origin in the target French public high schools as well as the social integration and psychological wellbeing of these students. Chapter V examines the impact of systemic factors at school context level. Chapter VI reviews and discusses the influence of the dynamics of Chinese immigrant families on their children's school career. The last chapter of analysis, Chapter VII, explores the role of community-based resources in the promotion of socioeducational integration of Chinese immigrant students in Québec.

Chapter VIII highlights theoretical and empirical contributions by recapitulating and discussing the major findings. Following the discussion and conclusions, this chapter proposes some policy implications in terms of receiving newly arrived immigrant students, educational involvement of the immigrant family, and community-based organizations. Finally, as a conclusion statement, directions for future research are provided.

## **Chapter I Problem Statement**

With a particular focus on students of Chinese origin in French public high schools, the main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of certain dynamics on their educational success in a French-speaking context. To bring out this highly debated issue, this chapter attempts to describe the particular context in which it has been raised. First of all, the major migration flows and immigration policies are illustrated with an emphasis on the challenges of integration of immigrants and visible minorities. Furthermore, I present the Chinese community in Canada and Quebec in terms of their migratory history and integration. The role education plays in the integration of immigrant youth is then discussed. Finally, I center on the existing research to present the school experience of Chinese youth in various Western societies, especially in Canada and Quebec, to highlight the objectives and relevance of this research.

### **1.1 Immigration in Canada and Quebec**

It is well known that Canada is a country built largely by immigrants. As the site where the first significant wave of European settlers founded the colony of Canada, Quebec has played a special role in the history of Canada. This section presents a brief review of the major waves of immigration to Canada and Quebec as well as the process of integration of immigrants.

#### **1.1.1 Immigration policies and major immigration waves**

As mentioned above, the ethnic composition and demographic structure of the Canadian population largely results from the past influx of immigration (Hiebert, 1994). Immigration to Canada started after the presence of indigenous populations and the settlement of two groups (English and French settlers) which successively colonized the territories, with the coming of immigrants mainly from France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland. However, it was not until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the recruitment of immigrants increased in the objective of nation building (Ninette & Trebilcock, 2010).

Since Confederation in 1867, immigration policy has been a priority of the federal government of Canada. Before 1962, however, country of origin was a major selection criterion for the admission of immigrants to Canada, favouring those from European countries. In 1967, a new system for selecting immigrants –the point system–was adopted to remove discrimination and prejudice and to judge immigrants on qualifications such as language and skill. Influenced by this policy, immigrants since the 1970s were overwhelmingly visible minorities from developing countries. Currently, permanent immigration is categorized into three broad classes: economic class (skilled workers, business immigrants, and live-in caregivers), family class, and refugee class. Immigration is supposed to play an important role in responding to demographic challenges (such as aging population and falling birth rate), pursuing economic benefits, and fulfilling Canada’s international legal obligations regarding refugees.

Although immigration is defined as a concurrent jurisdiction between the federal and the provincial governments under Canada’s Constitution (Section 95), most provinces have not been involved in recruiting immigrants before 2001. Quebec was the first province that took an active role in this process because of its demographic decrease as well as its special linguistic and cultural characteristics. Despite the fact that many Canadian provinces have signed agreements with the federal government for a Provincial Nominee Program, their role seems to be less important in selecting immigrants.

The 1960-1980 period marks the emergence of the province of Quebec as a key participant in immigration policy (Ninette & Trebilcock, 2010). In 1968, Quebec established its own department of immigration (currently known as *Ministère de l’Immigration et des Communautés Culturelles*, MICC). Since the beginning of the 1970s, Quebec has negotiated several agreements with the federal government regarding immigration policy, criteria, and targets. However, Quebec experienced a low level of immigration during this period due to the economic crisis (Therrien, 2007).

In 1991, the federal government and the province of Quebec signed an agreement entitled the *Canada-Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens*.

Given the feared economic consequence of a demographic deficit and aging population, this agreement firstly aimed to guarantee that Quebec would receive 25% of total immigration to Canada (Mc Andrew, 2004). Meanwhile, it enriched Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction over the selection of independent immigrants (individuals who freely chose to settle in the province, selected based on their potential contribution to its economic or social development which are approximately 60% of its total movement), while the federal government performed health and security checks and conferred Canadian permanent resident status (Young, 1991; Mc Andrew, 2009a). Finally, Quebec's involvement in immigration was to balance competing selection criteria: the recruitment of French-speaking immigrants, the contribution of immigration to economic development, the promotion of family reunification, and the commitment to international solidarity (Mc Andrew, 2009a). As the province of Quebec is solely responsible for the selection of immigrants who desire to reside in Quebec (except for the family class and the recognized refugees in Canada), its impact is reflected in the selection of economic class immigrants and refugees recognized abroad, which represent 75% of the immigrants received in the province (MICC, 2011). The combined complexity of these objectives has led to a highly diversified immigrant population in terms of socioeconomic profiles, language skills, and country of origin (Mc Andrew, 2009a).

Based on the various objectives mentioned above, Quebec receives three categories of immigrants: 1) economic class-immigrants selected by Quebec because of their socioprofessional characteristics and their ability to make contributions to economic development –these immigrants are supposed to occupy an employment, run a business, or to invest in the province; 2) family class-immigrants sponsored by a close relative who is resident of Quebec (a permanent resident or citizen); <sup>1</sup> 3) refugees and other asylum seekers –this program allows non-profit organizations and other groups of Quebec residents to demonstrate concretely their solidarity with refugees and people in similar circumstances located outside of Canada and to respond to their needs for a given period.

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<sup>1</sup> A resident of Quebec can sponsor her husband or his wife, his/her common-law spouse or conjugal partner, dependent child, his/her adopted child, his/her ascendant (father, mother, grandfather, grandmother), or a fatherless and motherless child under 18, who is unmarried or without partner, and who is his/her brother, sister, nephew, niece, grandchild, son-granddaughter.

Regarding the sociodemographic characteristics of recent immigrants in Quebec (2008-2012), 70% of them are under the age of 35 years old, 32% are under the age of 24 years old, and 11% of them are under the age of 15 years old. The majority (63%) of these new arrivals have knowledge in French, and approximately 38% of them can converse in both French and English. 30% of those who arrived in Quebec less than five years have a very high level of schooling (17 years or more). Finally, over 77% of immigrants older than 15 years old intend to integrate into the Quebec labour market (MICC, 2013).

### **1.1.2 Policies aimed at the integration of immigrants and the management of diversity**

“Immigration is not just about numbers, it’s about people” (Caplan, 2001 p.3). The integration of immigrants into the socioeconomic, cultural, legal and political life of the host society is vitally important for the development of Canada and the province of Quebec. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration of Canada (CIC) has developed various services aiming at the integration of immigrants in the country, such as the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program, the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Program, and the Host Program. However, the federal government has not adopted a holistic approach towards the integration of immigrants. It has signed agreement with several provinces, including Quebec, Manitoba, and British Columbia, to deliver their own settlement services. For other provinces, government funding for the abovementioned programs are usually delivered to community-based multiethnic organizations.

Compared to the federal government, the province of Quebec seems to have a more clear definition of integration. In 1990, the Liberal government published Let’s Build Quebec Together (MCCI, 1990)—a policy statement to set out the main normative framework, goals, and action perspectives on immigration and integration (Mc Andrew, 2009a). In this policy statement, integration was defined as follows:

Integration is a long term multi-dimensional process of adaptation, distinct from assimilation. In this process, the knowledge and use of common language of Quebec society is a fundamental driving force. The process is consolidated in a society, where the participation

of all Quebecers is guaranteed and where immigrants and members of cultural communities find their place and are recognized as full members of economical, social, and political life of a pluralistic francophone society (MCCI, 1990, p.50).

This policy statement, first, defined the respective rights and obligations of newcomers and the host society. For example, newcomers should have a notion that Quebec is “a society in which French is the common language of public life” (Mc Andrew, 2009a). Second, it proposed a “moral contract” as its new conceptual framework for applying provincial integration policy (Koji, 2009; Mc Andrew, 2009a). As the word “contract” implies, the integration concept was characterized by the notion of reciprocity: “Integration supposes in fact double consent: the one made by an immigrant to fully participate in the community, and the other made by the host society to open up itself to his or her participation and support it” (Koji, 2009, p.3). This principle also represented an expectation that the host society may emphasize in its dialogue with isolationist leaning communities (Mc Andrew, 1997).

In addition to policies targeting the integration and settlement of immigrants, the federal and Quebec provincial government have also applied their own approaches to define their normative positions on the management of diversity. The federal government developed its official policy of multiculturalism in 1971. In 1988, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt a national legislation of multiculturalism, known as the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (Smith & Donahue, 1999, p.91). By doing so, Canada affirmed equality for all Canadian citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin, their language, or their religious affiliation. To break down barriers to equal participation in society, this policy recognizes the cultural contribution of various ethnic groups and the promise of government support for culture (Banting *et al.*, 2007). Since the 1980s, the policy of multiculturalism has included an explicit antiracism component (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). During the 1970s to the 1980s, the success of the multicultural approach lay in the transformation of the perception and status of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, and later of non-European immigrants (Helly, 2004). Recent research also shows that government action has embraced the fight against racism as a priority, and during

recent years, the overall budget has been constantly rising to support initiatives in this regard (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2005).

In the 1980s, the Department of Cultural Communities and Immigration (MCCI) of Quebec published a plan of action respecting cultural communities, known as *Autant de façons d'être Québécois* (Quebecers: Each and Everyone). This plan of action rejected both the American melting pot and the Canadian multicultural mosaic, but set forth the vision of cultural convergence (*la culture de convergence*), which emphasized that the development of various cultural groups should occur through the collective vitality of French society (MCCI, 1981). Nine years later, the 1990 policy statement clearly indicated Quebec's approach in reaction to immigrant integration and diversity-interculturalism. As an alternative way to multiculturalism, it sought to reconcile ethnocultural diversity with the continuity of the French-speaking core and the preservation of the social link between them (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008, p.19). This approach can be seen as a third way between Canadian multiculturalism and French Jacobinism (Mc Andrew, 2010). For a long time, it seemed to benefit from widespread support, at least by political parties, opinion-makers, and other stakeholders who have been affected directly. However, in recent years, this approach has been questioned by people with two contradictory schools of thoughts: those who prefer the stricter French assimilationist approach, especially in terms of religion and those who want the traditional Quebec culture to be more in the centre of modern Quebec identity. This debate was particularly evident during the public hearings of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission<sup>2</sup> (Bouchard, 2011). Yet, it is worthy of note that on the ground, Quebec has a good reputation on the management of diversity. For instance, there has been no major occurrence of interethnic tension or violence and no overtly racist organized political movement against immigration and racialized minorities, and a spirit of tolerance generally prevails in most segments of Quebec society (Salée, 2007). Also, it is important to bear in mind that a more accessible and diverse French teaching program has been provided for allophone population.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It refers to the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences.

<sup>3</sup> Allophones refer to people who have neither English nor French as their mother tongue.

As the case of multiculturalism, Quebec's intercultural policy has been criticized for its weaker recognition of the persistence of interethnic inequalities and a lack of effectiveness in combating ethnic and social inequalities in spite of the visibility and credibility that it has gained (Mc Andrew et al., 2005; MELS, 2007; 2009a; Watt, 2006). For instance, notwithstanding the well established multiculturalist ideology of Canada, xenophobia exists, especially for immigrants from Muslim and Asian countries, though it does not impede their social integration as much as it does in Europe (Helly, 2004). Also, in Canada and Quebec, second generation youth from visible minority groups encountered great difficulties getting and keeping jobs-difficulties which are not attributable to insufficient academic qualifications or occupational skills (Banting *et al.*, 2007; Potvin, 2010). More specifically, the province of Quebec is confronted with the existence of a significant and growing divide between its Eurodescendant majority and its visible minorities (Salée, 2007). In terms of educational integration, a recent study on the school experience of black youth in Quebec clearly shows major difference in the graduation rates among students. On top of that, the status of "fragile majority" of francophone Quebecers makes the issue of integration of new immigrants more complex (Mc Andrew, 2010, p.139). With a history of socioeconomic and educational disadvantage, their majority status may be slower to develop than in the more clearly defined dominant groups (Mc Andrew, 2010). For instance, although Quebec adopted a more favourable and positive opinion on immigration in the past 20 years, there is less openness to religious pluralism in the public sphere in the province than the rest of Canada (Jedwab, 2010).

## **1.2 The Chinese Community in Canada and Quebec**

To present a clear picture of the Chinese community in Canada and Quebec as a context of the research, this section first illustrates briefly the history of Chinese immigration, and then describes the sociodemographic characteristics, integration, and settlement patterns of the community mainly based on the 2006 Census. Finally, grounded in previous studies, this section attempts to present the collective identity of the Chinese community and its relationship to other ethnic groups.

### 1.2.1 Migratory history

As one of the largest and oldest ethnic groups of Asian ancestry in Canada, Chinese Canadians have endured a long history of migration that dates back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Li & Lee 2005). However, massive importation of Chinese labour did not begin until the early 1880s when the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was built (Li 1979). Following the completion of the Trans-Canada Railway, many Chinese were left unemployed and were seen as a threat to Canada. In 1885, the Government of Canada passed *The Chinese Immigration Act* and a “*Head Tax*” system to restrict and regulate Chinese immigration (Chan, 1983). Since then, Chinese communities developed across the nation, and many of them moved to Eastern centres, such as Toronto and Montreal in search of employment opportunities and less discrimination (Chan 1983). With the contribution of Chinese Canadians in World War II and the fact that the anti-Chinese legislation violated the UN Charter, the exclusion act was repealed on May 14, 1947 (Li & Lee, 2005). In the exclusion era (1923-1947), the Chinese formed ethnic enclaves known as “Chinatowns” where they could live alongside fellow Chinese immigrants, due to the fact that most of them found it difficult to adjust and integrate into life in Canada (Chan, 1983). It was not until 1967 that Asians and especially the Chinese fell under the general act of immigration that was also directed at European immigrants (Chan, 1983).

A recent large influx of Chinese immigrants into Canada took place after 2001, with most of them immigrating to Canada under the point-based selection system. Today, as a fast growing ethnic group in Canada, the Chinese has become one of the largest visible minorities. According to the 2011 Census, there were 1,487,580 people who were identified as Chinese, approximately 4% of the total Canadian population. Moreover, among the people who have a mother tongue other than English or French, one in six (16.3%), reported Chinese languages <sup>4</sup> (Statistics Canada).

In the province of Quebec, the first Chinese immigrants arrived in the late 1880s, and the majority of them were poor peasants from southern China, the Guangdong province in

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<sup>4</sup> In the 2011 Census, “Chinese languages” were broken down into seven major languages: Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Taiwanese, Chinchow (Teochow), Fukien and Shanghainese, as well as residual category (Chinese languages not otherwise specified).

particular (Helly, 1987). Since the 1890s, as mentioned above, following the completion of the Trans-Canada Railway, many Chinese from British Columbia migrated towards the East to escape racism and discrimination. However, this eastward migration of Chinese people did not diminish the racism against them. Many of the Chinese in Montreal started their own businesses, such as laundries and groceries. Clansmen or friends were usually recruited as employees, and they usually temporarily returned to China to marry and have children. On the one hand, relying on ethnic networks for income was perceived as a means to avoid racism and discrimination. On the other hand, this kind of work did not require any language skill. Nonetheless, these kinds of arrangements resulted in a form of early immigration chain, as well as clusters of certain occupations around certain clansmen in Montreal (Hoe, 2003).

From 1923 to 1947, almost no new Chinese immigrants came to Quebec due to the restriction of Chinese immigration. It is also interesting to note that the majority of the Chinese community at that time were single men. For example, in 1921, there was one female for every 19 male Chinese residents, and in 1951, 34.5 % of Chinese residents in Quebec were over 55 years old, and most of them were male (Calderón, 2008). Over the years, although the immigration laws were modified several times, Chinese immigration was still restricted for a long time. For example, the entry of Chinese wives and children was banned until 1960. Then the situation changed radically from the 1960s to 1970s, when Canada adopted the point-system and Quebec took a more active role in selecting its own immigrants. In the early 1960s, there were less than 3, 000 Chinese in Quebec, while there were about 11, 000 and 25, 000 Chinese in 1971 and the late 1970s. Most Chinese immigrants who came to Quebec originated from the province of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Vietnam.<sup>5</sup>

Successive large waves of Chinese immigration to Quebec occurred after the 1990s, and most of them were from Mainland China. According to the 2006 Census, 64% of the Chinese immigrants settled in Quebec after 1990, while 32% during the period of 2001 to

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<sup>5</sup> Quebec received some 16, 5 % of Vietnamese refugees who entered Canada from 1979 to 1991, and most of them were ethnic Chinese (Sino-Vietnamese) (Chan *et al.*, 1998).

2006 (MICC, 2010). Today, China has become one of the top five countries of origin of immigrants. According to the 2011 Census, 101, 875 people in the province of Quebec declared to be Chinese.

### 1.2.2 Sociodemographic portrait

As mentioned above, large waves of Chinese immigration to Canada took place after 2001, and the large majority of these immigrants were born in China. For instance, in 2012, Canada received almost 33,000 new immigrants (permanent residents) from China, and this number made China the largest source country for Canadian immigration overall (Statistics Canada, 2011).

With respect to the age distribution, Table I shows that people of Chinese origin<sup>6</sup> in Canada are somehow more likely than the overall population to be young adults in their prime working years, while they are somewhat less likely to be either seniors or approaching retirement age. In 2006, over 47% of the Chinese Canadians was aged 15 to 44, compared with 42 % of the total Canadian population. In contrast, seniors aged 65 and over made up only 10% of the Chinese community, compared to 13% of all Canadians. Similarly, in the same year, 25% of Chinese Canadians were aged 45 to 64, nearly 3% less than the figure for the overall population.

Table I Married people among Chinese Canadians and overall Canadian population, 2006 (%)

Age group	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65 and over
Chinese population	17.3	15.4	31.7	24.9	10.7
Total Canadian population	17.9	13.5	28.1	27.5	13.0

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population

Furthermore, there are more women of Chinese origin living in Canada than men. Regarding marital status, Canadians of Chinese origin are more likely than other Canadians to be legally married. In 2006, 57% of people aged 15 and over in the Chinese community were married, compared with 48% of all Canadian adults.

<sup>6</sup> People of Chinese origin or Chinese Canadians refer to Canadian citizens who declared their ethnic origin as Chinese.

When it comes to religion, Chinese Canadians are significantly different from the rest of the Canadian population. The majority of Canadians of Chinese origin report that they have no religious affiliation. In 2001, 56% of 15 years old and over among the Chinese declared that they had no religious affiliation, compared with 17% of the overall population.<sup>7</sup> Among the Chinese who reported a religious affiliation, 14% were Buddhist, and 25% were Christian.

In Quebec, as in Canada, the Chinese is a fast growing community. In 2001, there were 63, 000 people reported as Chinese, while in 2006 and 2011, the number increased to 91, 900 and 101, 875, respectively. According to the 2006 Census, a large majority (nearly 82%) of the Chinese in Quebec said they had only Chinese roots, while 18% said they also had other ethnic origins. In the same year, over a quarter of the Chinese community were born in Quebec, while 73% of them were foreign-born.

Table II indicates that, compared to the whole population of Quebec, people of Chinese origin are much more likely to be children of school age and young adults in their prime working years and less likely to be either seniors or approaching retirement age. In 2006, over 35% of the Chinese community in Quebec was aged 25 to 44, compared with 28% of the total Quebec population. In the same year, 25% of the Chinese, versus 17% of those in the overall population of Quebec, were aged 0 to 14. In contrast, seniors aged 65 and over made up nearly 8% of Quebecers of Chinese origin, compared to 14% of the whole Quebec population.

Table II Age distribution among Chinese Canadians and overall Quebec population, 2006 (%)

Age group	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65 and over
Chinese population	24.5	14.0	35.2	18.7	7.6
Total Quebec population	16.6	12.6	27.6	28.9	14.3

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population

2006 Census shows that there are more women of Chinese origin living in Quebec than men (MICC, 2010). With respect to marital status, in 2006, the proportion of legally

<sup>7</sup> The survey of religious affiliation is conducted every ten years

married Chinese compared to that of the whole Quebec population was 55% and 43% (MICC, 2010).

As for religion, the Chinese community is significantly different from other ethnocultural communities in Quebec. The majority of the Chinese in Quebec report that they have no religious affiliation. In 2001, half of the 15 years old and over among the Quebecers of Chinese origin declared as no religious affiliation, compared with 6% of the overall Quebec population. Moreover, 20% of the Chinese in Quebec were Buddhist, while 29% were Christian (MICC, 2005).

### **1.2.3 Linguistic and socioeconomic integration**

In terms of linguistic integration, the large majority of Canadians of Chinese origin can converse in one of Canada's official languages. In 2006, over 88% of them could carry on a conversation in at least one official language. Most, 80% could converse only in English, while 1% could converse only in French. Moreover, in the same year, 7% of the Chinese could converse in both English and French.

Although the official language of Quebec is French, people of Chinese origin are more likely to have knowledge of English. For instance, in 2006, nearly 69% of the Chinese in Quebec can converse in English, while 58% can carry on a conversation in French. In the same year, 38% of them could converse in both English and French. However, one can note a significant proportion (14%) of the Chinese in Quebec could not converse either in English or French.

Regarding the educational profile, the Chinese community in Canada have a much more positive profile than the overall Canadian population. In 2006, 33% of Canadians of Chinese origin aged 15 and over had a degree at the bachelor's level and above, 15% higher than the figure for the overall adult population. In the province of Quebec, this tendency continues. The 2006 Census indicates a higher proportion of people of Chinese origin aged 15 and over in Quebec who have a bachelor's degree or a post-graduate degree than the whole population of Quebec (35% versus 17%). It shows a lower

proportion of Chinese aged 15 and over who have not finished their secondary schooling compared with the whole Quebec adult population (22% versus 25%).

As a visible minority, the Chinese community in Canada has experienced difficulties in terms of economic integration. With respect to employment trends, adults of Chinese origin are somehow less likely to be employed than adults in the overall population. In 2006, 59% of adults of Chinese origin aged 15 and over were employed, compared with 65% of all Canadian adults (Statistics Canada, 2006). The employees of Chinese origin make up a high proportion of all Canadians employed in scientific and technical occupations. Meanwhile, their representation in other occupational groups, such as health and education, is proportionately much lower. For those who were employed in 2006, most worked in the field of sales and services as well as business. At the same time, they represented a relatively high proportion of those employed in financial, administrative positions, as well as natural and applied sciences.

In 2000, the average income from all sources for Canadians of Chinese origin aged 15 and over was \$25,000, compared with an average of almost \$30,000 for all Canadian adults.<sup>8</sup> Over one quarter of Chinese origin Canadians have incomes that fall below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-offs. In 2000, 26% of the Chinese population in Canada had incomes below the official low-income cut-offs, compared with 16% of the overall population. In 2005, the income gap widened. The average income from all sources for Canadians of Chinese origin aged 15 and over was \$28,816, compared with an average of \$35,498 for all Canadian adults.

In Quebec, the Chinese community projects a more negative profile in terms of economic integration. The 2001 Census indicates that the participation rate and employment rate of Chinese people aged 15 and over is lower than the overall Quebec adult population, while the unemployment rate is higher (MICC, 2005). However, over the years, the situation seemed to be improving. For instance, in 2001, the participation rate and employment rate of the Chinese adults were 58% and 51%, compared with 61% and 56% in 2006. The

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<sup>8</sup> For census, people report their income for the previous year.

unemployment rate of this community was 11% in 2001, while it reduced to 10% in 2006. For the Chinese who were employed in 2006, most worked in the fields of manufacturing (18%), accommodation and food services (16%), retail trade (13%), as well as professional scientific and technical services (10%). The main occupational categories of the employees of Chinese origin were sales and services, business, finance and administrative occupations, as well as natural and applied sciences.

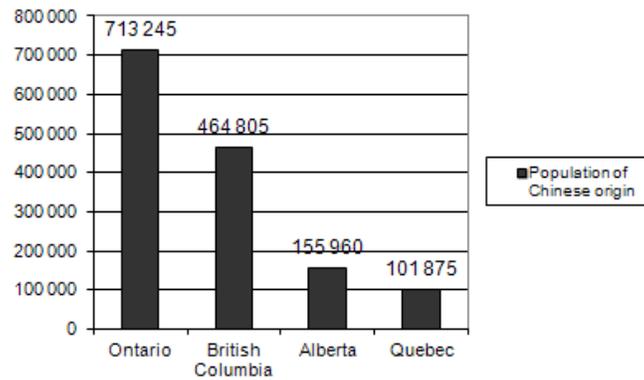
Most of the Chinese people in Quebec use English more often than French at work. A possible explanation for this is that there are much more Chinese who have knowledge of English than those who have knowledge of French. However, the proportion of Chinese who used French at work had increased from 2001 to 2006 (27% versus 29%).

During the period of 2001-2006, the average and median income of people of Chinese origin in Quebec were much lower than the overall Quebec population. However, the situation had been improved from 2001 to 2006 (\$20, 157 and \$ 13,384 in 2001; \$23,555 and \$15,196 in 2006) (MICC, 2005; 2010). Despite this increase, the average and median income of the Chinese community in 2006 were still lower than the whole Quebec population (\$27,125 and \$20, 665) (*Ibid*).

#### **1.2.4 Settlement patterns**

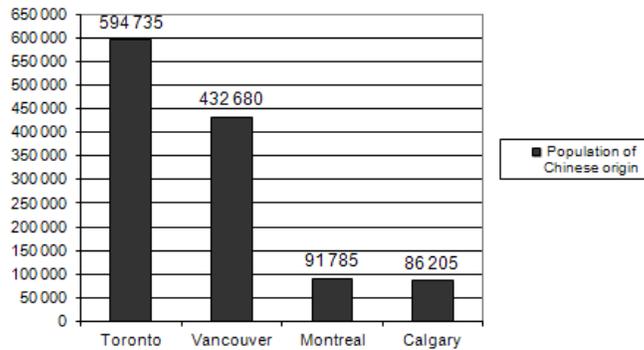
Since the 1900s, Chinese Canadians have chosen to settle in urban areas. As mentioned above, during the exclusion period, Chinatowns were established as ethnic enclaves and a safe bastion from the hostile and racist environment surrounding them. Today, although Chinese communities have developed rapidly all over the country, the 2011 Census shows that a large majority of Canadians of Chinese origin still live in Ontario and British Columbia, as well as smaller Chinese communities in other provinces such as Alberta and Quebec (Figure 1). In these abovementioned provinces, the Chinese community is highly concentrated in metropolitan cities, such as Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and Calgary, as well as their surrounding suburbs (Figure 2).

Figure I Population of Chinese origin in the four provinces of Canada



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population

Figure II Population of Chinese origin in the four Census Metropolitan Areas of Canada



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population

In the province of Quebec, the Chinese community is highly concentrated (85%) in the Montreal Census Metropolitan Area, and it has become one of the largest visible minorities in this area (Statistics Canada, 2011). In 2006, 69% of the Chinese community lived in the Montreal administrative region, while 17% lived in the Montérégie administrative region (MICC, 2010). It is interesting to note that compared to other ethnic groups, the proportion of Chinese who live in Montérégie is much higher. For those who lived in the urban agglomeration of Montreal, the large majority (87%) chose the city of Montreal as their home (*Ibid*). In the city of Montreal, people of Chinese origin mainly reside in four boroughs of Montreal: Côte-des-neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (CND-NDG) (17%), Saint-Laurent (13%), Ville-Marie (11%), and Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension (10%) (*Ibid*). In the Montérégie administrative region, the Chinese community is largely concentrated in Brossard, a relatively affluent suburban area. According to the 2006 Census, 11% of the residents in Brossard were Chinese. Compared to Toronto and

Vancouver, the Chinese in Montreal are more likely to be exposed to other ethnic groups (Apparicio & Séguin, 2008). However, according to Apparicio *et al.* (2006), the Chinese community in Montreal still have relatively higher rate of segregation in terms of the residential pattern.

### **1.2.5 Collective image**

Despite its long history in Canada, the Chinese community has only recently become the subject of academic research. As mentioned above, recent Chinese immigrants project a more positive profile, in terms of educational experiences and socioeconomic status, compared to the earlier settlers, and they seem to leave behind the bitterness associated with many years of exclusion. In contrast to the past, the cultural expression of a Chinese identity within a multicultural framework has been encouraged (Johnson, 1992). However, unlike ethnic minority groups which have not suffered from discriminatory laws, the Chinese Canadian community has not achieved a similar level of integration into formal institutions, such as the upper echelons of research and teaching in postsecondary institutions, popular media, as well as arts and cultural establishments (Li & Lee, 2005). It is also necessary to acknowledge that many new arrivals experience the “anti-Orientalist” attitudes and practices that have long plagued Chinese settlers in Canada (Hier & Greenberg, 2002).

In Quebec as in other Canadian provinces, the Chinese community was also subjected to discrimination in the past. For example, Derouin (2004) demonstrates that 32% of the Chinese in Montreal report that they have been victim of discrimination and prejudice because of their ethnicity. In this regard, a more recent study also indicates that many new Chinese immigrants have experienced discrimination due to their low level of French proficiency (Curt-Christiansen, 2009). Although the Chinese were perceived as “model immigrants” characterized as hardworking and apolitical, they were also criticized as “unwilling to learn French language and culture”. Today, nonetheless, the media seem to present a more positive image of the younger generation of Chinese Quebecers. For instance, Winston Chan’s article described the Chinese young people as

“more likely to live in French, and they usually speak two, three, or even four languages very fluently”.

*Aujourd'hui, les jeunes Sino-Québécois sont nombreux à vivre en français. Plusieurs parlent couramment deux, trois, voire quatre langues. Leur défi: bâtir des ponts entre la communauté chinoise et le reste de la société québécoise...*

*-Winston Chan « Être Chinois au Québec » Le Huffington Post : Québec, février, 12,2013*

However, as mentioned in the article above, the younger generations have to make more effort to bridge the gap between the Chinese community and the wider Quebec society. Despite the fact that the Chinese community is one of the largest visible minority groups in Canada, they remain “invisible” in the society and at the periphery of the unofficial and official discourse on ethnic relations. In 2013, an article entitled *Voici les nouveaux Sino-Québécois* can better describe this situation :

*Ils sont 100, 000 au Québec, soit presque autant que les Maghrébins et les Latinos, autant que les Haïtiens et deux fois plus nombreux que les Vietnamiens. Mais les Chinois du Québec demeurent méconnus...*

*-Julie Barlow « Voici les nouveau Sino-Québécois » Actualité juin, 15, 2013*

As a fast growing but under-researched ethnocultural group in Quebec, the socioeducational integration of the Chinese youth in the French sector needs more scholarly attention, especially when the profile of the community seems unfavourable for the promotion of their academic achievement. For example, as mentioned above, many Chinese in Quebec have more knowledge of English than of French, their average and median income is lower than the overall Quebec population, and they have a relatively high rate of segregation in terms of the residential pattern. However, as will be presented in Section 1.4, students of Chinese origin in Canada and Quebec seem to project a positive educational trajectory. It is therefore necessary to better understand the social reality of their school experience.

### **1.3 Education and Integration of Immigrant Youth**

In Quebec, as in Canada, with the rapid increase of migration and cross-border settlements, great concern has been expressed over the integration of immigrants, especially new arrivals. Education (especially formal schooling), as an institution that contributes to preparing individuals for participating in their social lives, is widely considered to be a trump card in dealing with the challenges related to integration and ethnic relations. Indeed, if immediate labour market inclusion is more crucial for the adult immigrants, the very success of the migration project hinges on the quality of the long term relationship that their children are able to be integrated into the school system (Anisef *et al.*, 2004). In this section, I firstly discuss the role that education plays in the integration of immigrants. Furthermore, based on this discussion, I attempt to define the concept of educational success, and then present the main educational programs adopted in Canada and Quebec aimed at the integration of immigrant youth. Finally, the academic achievement of immigrant students in Quebec is discussed based on previous studies.

#### **1.3.1 Role of education**

As in the life of all young people, education plays an important role in the integration of immigrant children. The role of schools is often fulfilled through two functions: socialization and qualification, which is also named as “selection” by some authors in a more critical perspective of sociology (Mc Andrew, 2003a). According to Ballantine and Hammack (2009), the socialization function of schooling refers to the maintaining of society’s values and its cultural heritage, part of which includes transmitting skills and knowledge. Furthermore, schools are supposed to prepare young people to live in a future society which is full of change and challenges. This is particularly important in a pluralistic context where schools also play an important role in the creation of a new hybrid culture which celebrates diversity (Mc Andrew, 2003a). In this regard, education can be perceived as a key agent in social transformation (Inglis, 2008).

It is obvious that in a pluralistic society, there is an inherent tension between cultural transmission and social transformation. First, schools are expected to help youngsters

adapt to the normative structure of the economy and of mainstream society by complying with fundamental social norms, values, and psychological qualities. Meanwhile, in order for minority individuals to be considered on an equal basis in terms of social inclusion, schools are also supposed to maintain the potential of minority individuals' culturally and socially distinctive contributions (Bornschieer et al, 2005; Inglis, 2008). Yet, for the whole student body, educational institutions play an important role in building and developing a national identity which is transformed by the presence of immigrants.

The qualification function of education refers to the instructing, selecting, and placement of individuals in society and its sociostructures (Ballantine & Hammack, 2009; Tondreau & Rober, 2011). In a multiethnic and multicultural society, the possibility of attending formal institutions, particularly those within the school system, is a potential point of socioeconomic integration for immigrant students (Inglis, 2008). More specifically, for newly arrived immigrant adults, education and training play a major role in their integration into the new labour market. These services help them overcome language barriers and facilitate the transmission of the norms and values that provide a basis for social cohesion and the transformation of ethnic boundaries (OECD, 2010).

Through the fulfilment of its qualification function, the school system is expected to offer equal opportunities for youth of various ethnic groups to be equipped with knowledge and skills which facilitate their occupational career. The occupational success of immigrants and their descendents not only narrows their income gap with respect to those of dominant groups, but also increases their chances of using education as a means for socioeconomic integration. In this regard, education is seen as a way to increase social efficiency and mobility, as well as to promote social equality. However, there is no consensus on the function of schooling in this regard. Some authors perceive education as the driver of economic and social success for people drawn from various groups (Machin, 2006; Alexander & Thompson, 2008). They even believe that education is the only route where people, especially immigrant or minority students, can escape from disadvantaged family backgrounds and climb up the social ladder. Others suggest that the school system serves only the purpose of training individuals or groups to fit into a particular status in

hierarchical societies (Ballantine & Hammack, 2009). For them, schools cannot promote equality, but only reinforce societal stratification and inequality between students. Indeed, a lack of educational access and opportunities as well as the low level of academic achievement of some minority youth not only limits their chance of success, but also causes marginalization, alienation, social exclusion, and language-based markers of inequality, which would probably hinder social stability, harmony and cohesion (Inglis, 2008). Therefore, in a pluralistic society, schools are supposed to make a contribution not only to formal and informal socialization of shared values, but also in selection and allocation of future human resources (Mc Andrew, 2009c).

### **1.3.2 Educational success**

Generally speaking, educational success is measured by achievement or school outcomes, which includes behavioural indications of attitudes towards school, school attendance, school adjustment, level of school engagement, and educational aspirations (Farenga & Ness, 2005). In Canadian and international literature, especially in quantitative studies, researchers have defined educational success as the marks that students obtain in annual school examinations or their performance on standardized achievement measures (Brown, 1989; Bouchard *et al.*, 1999). For example, according to Salvia and Ysseldyke (2000), educational success refers to the extent to which learners acquire the knowledge, skills, and proficiencies that the instructor seeks to teach or assign (quoted in Bradshaw, 2008, p.14). Romney (2003) defines it as a particular type of learning outcomes, specifically performance on tests and grades achieved in courses taken (p.9). Baby (2002) embodies the definition into two facets: in the process and at the end of schooling. Educational success in the process of schooling refers to obtaining a passing score (*obtenir la note de passage*) while in the last year at secondary school, it is measured by graduation (*obtenir son diplôme de fin d'études secondaire*) (p.1).

However, various groups of students have different perspectives on the definition of educational success. Marais' study indicates that some high school students consider it to be the ability to think maturely, independently and critically in addition to the ability to converse about a wide spectrum of topics, while some others define it as the

“achievement of 60% in a subject” or “the completion of a course” (Psych, 2005, p. 9). Another group of students refer this term to “hard work” or “as the reinvestment of knowledge into the community” (*Ibid*). Romney (2003) notes that most of Asian students relate academic success to “high scores” and “high income” in the future, while Latino and black students stress the importance of making a contribution to their communities, being happy and learning about other cultures.

Indeed, in considering the two functions of schooling, known as socialization and qualification, the concept of educational success should concern not only the intellectual development of children, but also their emotional, physical, and moral development. As mentioned above, in addition to transmitting knowledge and skills, schools in a pluralistic society are also supposed to contribute to transforming ethnic boundaries and promoting socioeconomic integration. It is therefore important for a school system to set its goal for assisting the youth to become responsible citizens who respect the basic democratic values of society and have equal opportunities to succeed in the future. In this respect, academic success refers not only to the attainment of learning objectives related to the mastery of knowledge and skills in each step of students’ educational pathways, but also to social and professional integration both during and after schooling (Deniger, 2004). Although it is necessary and important for all educational stakeholders to identify some performance indicators, such as graduation, GPA (grade point averages) in ministerial exams, and participation in university-bound or selective courses, these indicators are far from enough to reflect the complex social reality of students of immigrant origin. Therefore, in this research, educational success is not defined only as school performance of immigrant-origin students, but also in terms of their socioeducational integration experience in general.

### **1.3.3 Educational programs aimed at integration of immigrant youth in Quebec**

#### The presence of immigrant students in the Quebec school system

In Quebec, the arrival of immigrants has changed not only the profile of Quebec society, but also its school system (Smith & Donahue, 1999). From New France to the Quiet

Revolution, religion was a defining marker of ethnicity, as well as the centre of education (Inglis, 2008; Smith & Donahue, 1999). As Mc Andrew notes (2003b), the pattern of French Canadians attending Catholic schools and White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) attending Anglo-Protestant schools continued for nearly two centuries, although it became more complex in the in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the establishment of Anglo-Catholic, Franco-Protestant and private religious schools to cater for immigrant or minority students who did not attend the existing schools. When *Parti Québécois* came to power in the 1970s, one of its first actions was the passing of the Charter of the French Language (*Charte de la langue française*), known as Bill 101, which rendered French as the sole official language of Quebec in all public and in business. Following this legislation, French became the language of public schooling for all, with certain legal exceptions made to Anglophone community, immigrant groups, and aboriginals who had already started their “Anglicization” in English schools (Mc Andrew, 2004). The implementation of this bill seemed to be a response to the threat of a declining birth rate among Francophones and of the linguistic assimilation of immigrants by the Anglophone community (Mc Andrew, 2010).

The major impact of Bill 101 was felt by the immigrants who were obliged to attend French schools (Inglis, 2008). Since then, French schools have been transformed from homogeneous institutions aimed at the cultural reproduction of the French Canadian community into pluralistic common schools (Mc Andrew, 2003b, p. 192). For instance, in the school year of 2012-2013, immigrant origin students <sup>9</sup> made up approximately 24% of the whole student body in Quebec, of which 93% attend the French sector (MELS, 2013). Nonetheless, the presence of immigrant origin students does not have the same impact on schools in all the regions in Quebec. Historically, immigrants were highly concentrated on the Island of Montreal. However, recently one can observe two trends: on the one hand, immigration has become an urban-sprawl phenomenon, and on the other hand, there is a significant (though still limited) presence of immigrant population in several regions. The first trend results in a multiethnic school population in Laval as well as in

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<sup>9</sup> In this study, immigrant origin students are defined as the first or second generation students, including those who were born outside Canada and those who were born in Canada with at least one parent born outside the country.

Montreal, where immigrant origin students represent 49% and 58% of the whole student body respectively. The second trend of immigration leads to an important proportion of immigrant origin students in Outaouais and Montérégie (22% and 18%). In the region of Montérégie, Brossard is particularly touched by immigration because of its concentration of Chinese settlers. In the same school year, 64% of students of immigrant origin in Montreal attend French schools, of which 44% are allophone, while among students of immigrant origin in the English sector, 27% are allophone. It is thus important to bear in mind that a significant proportion of students of immigrant origin in the French sector have French as their mother tongue or language used at home either because it was already spoken in their country of origin or, in the case of second generation students, because they were educated in French. Yet, it is obvious that there remains a large percentage of newly arrived students who do not have any knowledge of the language in the Montreal French school system. For example, every year, 15% of the students attend welcoming classes (MELS, 2009).

The diversification of the immigrant population, not only in terms of language, but also country of origin, culture, religion, and experiences, poses huge challenges for the French school system. To fulfill the mission of school in integrating immigrant youth, it is necessary for educators and decision-makers, even the whole educational system to find ways to accommodate diversity in the school programs and practices.

#### Programs and measures implemented for integrating newly arrived immigrants

After the adoption of Bill 101, Quebec French educational system developed host and heritage language teaching services to students of immigrant origin as its first reaction to the diverse school population (Mc Andrew, 2001). Yet, from the 1980s to the 1990s, various initiatives aiming at the adaptation to diversity were developed with greater cultural sensitivity and an awareness of the multidimensionality of necessary adjustments to the presence of students of immigrant origin (Inglis, 2008; Mc Andrew, 2001). Despite these initiatives introduced during this period, it was not until 1998 that the Quebec Ministry of Education (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, MÉQ) released a policy statement entitled "A school for the future: Educational integration and intercultural

education” (*Une école d’avenir: Politique d’intégration scolaire et d’éducation interculturelle*), in which the relation to diversity was clearly laid out. This policy statement suggested three principles to facilitate the integration of immigrant students into the school system: 1) the promotion of equal opportunities; 2) proficiency in French, the language of public life; 3) education for citizenship in a democratic and pluralistic society. According to the first principle, schools have a responsibility to ensure not only that all students have access to the basic educational services, but also to provide special conditions or compensatory measures, such as learning French (MÉQ, 1997). In terms of the second principle, educational institutions should be responsible for turning out students who are proficient in the use of this basic tool of communication (*Ibid*). In line with the third principle, schools should promote citizenship education in order to play an active role in Quebec democracy by adopting its values, codes and norms, knowing its key institutions, and exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society (*Ibid*).

**Host language teaching program**-The concern with French has always been a priority in the settlement policies that have influenced the design of the model of integration in the educational system (Mc Andrew, 2001). Since 1969, Quebec has opted for a welcoming class program as the first program of linguistic integration. The implementation of this program reflected the view that the best way for new arrivals to learn French was through a systematic and structured approach, which sought not only to acquire the language skills, but also to develop sensitivity to the reality and cultural codes of the host society (*Ibid*). A simple exposure to French was perceived “insufficient” because French was not clearly the dominant language at that time (Mc Andrew, 2010). Nonetheless, with the adoption of Bill 101, which broke the monopoly on the integration of immigrants into the Anglophone community, the number of students attending welcoming classes increased and French became the common language for the schooling of students. Since then, many modifications were made to the welcoming program and today it exists in various models<sup>10</sup>. In outlying regions, when the number of allophone students is too small to warrant a

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<sup>10</sup> Five models of Welcoming classes are identified by De Koninck and Armand (2010) in 17 areas of Quebec: 1) total integration model with assistance; 2) partial integration model; 3) sheltered welcoming classes; 4) total integration model with assistance; 5) sheltered welcoming classes with assistance.

separate class, they attend regular classes but receive FSL (French as Second Language) support (Mc Andrew, 2010). However, in Montreal, despite the emphasis of the official discourse of MELS on the diversification of welcoming programs, all the school boards adopted the model of “separate welcoming classes” for both elementary and secondary schooling. In this model, students usually remain in welcoming classes for ten or twenty months (ten or twenty months for elementary school students, twenty months for secondary school students). Generally speaking, the duration of welcoming class is determined by a student’s level of French proficiency. In 2008, among some 18, 000 students, over 85% of them resided in Montreal, attended welcoming class or were provided with linguistic support (Mc Andrew, 2007).

**Heritage language teaching program-**Prior to the late 1970s, heritage language were not recognized as having any role in the various measures adopted for teaching French for newly arrived immigrants (Mc Andrew, 2001). However, since 1977, Quebec has created its own heritage language teaching program- *le Programme d’enseignement des langues d’origine* (PELO) as an initiative to adapt to the diversification of the school population. PELO was offered in the regular official curriculum within public elementary schools to allophone students who have mastered French. At the beginning, these courses were only provided to native speakers of certain languages to reassure some older established cultural communities in Quebec that multilingualism was a valued complement to efforts in promoting the French language (Mc Andrew, 2010). Since 1988, non-native speakers can also register in this program. Today, 18 heritage languages are taught to some 6,000 students, but this program is less popular than expected, due to resistance of public school teachers and to the schooling choices of highly committed allophone parents, who would rather enrol their children in private trilingual schools (Mc Andrew, 2006; 2011). For Chinese parents, most choose to send their children to supplementary schools in the Chinese community to learn Mandarin.<sup>11</sup> It is necessary to study the impact of these institutions on the identification and academic success of these Children. Also, PELO is criticized for lack of focus (Mc Andrew, 2006). Despite the

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<sup>11</sup> According to the findings of this study, few Chinese parents are informed with PELO. They tend to send their children to Chinese supplementary schools to learn Mandarin.

links and interactions between the host and heritage languages demonstrated by research, this program is not available for new arrivals still attending welcoming classes, and it targets only elementary school students, whereas problems in mastering French arise mainly at the secondary school level (*Ibid*).

**Adaptation to diversity-** The 1998 policy statement defined intercultural education as “knowing how to live together” (*le savoir-vivre ensemble*) in a francophone, democratic, and pluralistic society (MÉQ, 1997). According to this definition, the Quebec government has introduced many initiatives, including the design of teaching materials and programs reflecting diversity and which are free of bias, the initial training and further education of teachers in intercultural matters as well as the representation of ethnocultural diversity in the teaching force, and the support for promoting school-family-community relationships.

From the 1980s to the 1990s, to develop an awareness of cultural differences and promote interethnic relations among students, a series of measures was taken on an ad hoc basis (Mc Andrew, 2001). By the late 1980s, the representation of minority groups had increased and overt stereotypes had been eliminated (Mc Andrew, 2010). Since the 1990s, the design of school textbooks sought to the presence of diversity and the omission of ethnocentric biases (*Ibid*, p.195). For instance, an analysis of history textbooks reveals an increased inclusion of immigrant and ethnic minority groups nationally, as well as non-Western civilizations internationally (Éthier *et al.*, 2008; Mc Andrew, 1986; 2001). This improvement is particularly remarkable in the presentation and treatment of Islam and the Muslim world, in spite of the persistent limitations (Mc Andrew, 2001; 2010).

Regarding the representation of diversity in the curriculum, the largest number of commitments are made in the field of Citizenship and Community Life, which covers the teaching of geography, history, and citizenship education (Mc Andrew, 2010, p.192). In September 2008, a non-religious compulsory curriculum, Ethics and Religious Culture (*Éthique et culture religieuse*), was adopted in all elementary and high schools to replace the program of religious (both catholic and protestant)/moral education (Bakhshaei, 2013,

Mc Andrew, 2010). Despite an emphasis on Christian and Native spirituality, students have opportunity to be exposed to other religious cultures, such as Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism (Mc Andrew, 2010, p. 194). In this respect, it is also important to mention the highly debated issue of “reasonable accommodation”, especially the place of religious diversity in schools. Indeed, in 2007, MELS struck the Advisory Committee on Integration and Reasonable Accommodation in Quebec schools, comprising representative from various areas of the educational system, including school boards, parents’ committees, professional associations, and unions (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008; Mc Andrew, 2010). The Committee’s report, submitted in 2007, included an update that set the record straight on the frequency and nature of requests for accommodation (Fleury, 2007). This report also reiterated and strengthened existing guidelines for recognizing diversity, proposing some practical ways of fostering harmonious negotiations between schools and parents (Fleury, 2007; Mc Andrew, 2010).

In addition, in order to hold openness to ethnocultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, since 1995, components of an intercultural or anti-racist perspective have been included in the core professional competencies for the teaching profession created by the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sport (*Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport*, MELS) (Mc Andrew, 2010). The 1998 Policy Statement also called for all school staff to receive training related to diversity so that they can meet the educational challenges they face (Rimok & Rouzier, 2008). A recent study indicates that although most Quebec universities offer courses related to the adaption to diversity, this issue deplores a lack of status and a systemic structure (Mc Andrew & Potvin, 2012). For practicing teachers, the Ministry, school boards, the Human Rights and Youth Commission, and community organizations offer upgrading courses on intercultural communication, intervention in multi-ethnic schools, and reasonable accommodation, but none of this training is mandatory (Mc Andrew, 2010, p.195). For non-teaching professionals, the Ministry also organizes intercultural training, although it is not a part of their compulsory courses. Despite these programs, the effort is inadequate or the impact on future teachers is not conclusive (Kanouté & Chastenay, 2009).

With respect to the recruitment and integration of teachers of immigrant origin, few of the children of Bill 101 choose teaching as a profession (Audet, 2012). This is particularly the case of Chinese youth, who have mostly chosen sciences as their fields of study when they were enrolled in universities (Statistics Canada, 2006). Thus the teaching profession has diversified through a different avenue: the reorientation of many highly skilled immigrants who (when they did not find a job in their field of specialization) filled the current shortage of teachers of mathematics as well as sciences and technology in the Quebec school system. This evolution has created two emerging challenges: the professional integration of these recent immigrant teachers and the coexistence of school personnel with diverse backgrounds (Fleury, 2009).

Finally, it is important to highlight the support offered by the Quebec government to multiethnic schools in terms of parental participation and the management of value conflict (Bakhshaei, 2013, P.37). In this regard, each year, the government provides financial support for many projects to promote school-family-community partnership. Furthermore, some programs, such as *la stratégie d'intervention « Agir autrement »* (New Approaches, New Solutions), aimed at the academic success of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods have been implemented to facilitate the participation of immigrant parents in school activities. In 1994, the government developed a training module which allows educational administrators to develop knowledge and competencies regarding taking cultural and religious diversity into account in multiethnic schools. This training proposed a structured approach that school administrators can use to resolve value conflicts in a multiethnic and multicultural context (Mc Andrew, 2010).

### **1.3.4 Outcome assessment**

#### Linguistic integration

As evidenced by many recent studies, efforts made in the last 30 years to revive the status of the French language were fairly successful (Armand *et al.*, 2009; Mc Andrew, 2010, Pagé & Lamarre, 2010, Salvatore, 2001). On the one hand, a large portion of immigrants now use French in public communication (Pagé & Lamarre, 2010). On the other hand, a

large majority of new arrivals (92% in 2007-2008), who are subject to Bill 101, are enrolled in the French sector. A recent study on the academic achievement of immigrant origin students (target students are those who started their secondary schooling in 1998-1999 and in 1999-2000) in Quebec secondary French schools reveals that mastery of French, as measured by ministerial exams at the provincial level, appears to be satisfactory (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, the average scores of immigrant-origin students are similar to those of the third generation and beyond (71% versus 72%). However, it is important to bear in mind that the exam is taken at the end of secondary school, and that the participation rate of students of immigrant origin is lower than that of the third generation and beyond (64% versus 70%).

Regarding the use of French for informal exchange in schools, a number of recurrent debates have been raised on the assessment of the state and future of French, the presence of English, and the legitimacy of diverse measures (CSDM, 2009). However, the reality on the ground appears to be more complex and positive. Indeed, the findings of a study carried out in twenty Montreal primary and secondary schools suggest that despite a significant presence of multilingualism in schools, the relative strength of French over English confirms an overall trend towards the adoption of French (Mc Andrew, 2001). Although research indicates the important presence of English among Anglophone, Anglophile, and Anglicized students, the added value to French schooling is more pronounced in schools attended by these students, especially when compared with the recorded linguistic behaviour of their parents as reported in the Canadian census (Mc Andrew, 2010).

The Canadian census and research show that French schooling has a clear impact on the future linguistic choices of the youth. For instance, the 2011 Census indicates that the linguistic transfer to French among the allophone immigrants of 15-24 years old has reached to 72.5%, which is much higher than the percentage of those who are in favour of French among the whole immigrant population (Statistics Canada). Also, the data of MELS suggest that in 2010, 68% of allophone students who attended a French high school chose to further their study in a French-speaking CEGEP. Finally, Girard-

Lamoureux (2004) also suggests that allophone students who went to school after the implementation of Bill 101 are more likely to have a linguistic journey in French compared to those who were schooled before that (quoted in Bakhshaei, 2013, p. 40) According to this study, these students are also more likely to start their occupational career in French.

However, the welcoming class program is criticized by other studies for placing newly arrived students into academic and social isolation from the school's mainstream French-speaking population (Allen, 2006; Mc Andrew, 2001; Steinbach, 2010). In contrast with the dominant Canadian model of ESL (English as a Second Language) model, within or outside the regular classroom, the choice for an intensive teaching of French in a specific classroom in Quebec is linked with the particular linguistic situation of the province (Mc Andrew, 2009b, 1537). Notwithstanding the successful results of the implementation of Bill 101 thirty-five years later, there are still fears of Quebec, especially Montreal, becoming less francophone, with ongoing debate surrounding the idea of extending the legislation to encompass daycares and postsecondary education (Aubin, 2009; Carpentier *et al.*, 2009; Leclerc, 1994). These tensions and fears are actually reflected in educational policies and practices concerning adaptation to diversity and integration of immigrant students (Steinbach, 2007; 2010). It is deeply embedded in public discourse that mastering the French language is a prerequisite for integration in school and society, and it sometimes prevents the new comers from participating socially before they have completely mastered the language (Allen, 2006; Steinbach, 2010). Yet, according to Allen (2006), it is more effective to see the acquisition of French as a part of the process of integration.

#### Educational success

The research of Mc Andrew *et al.* (2011) shows that despite their less favourable characteristics compared to their counterparts of the third generation, students of immigrant origin do not constitute a population at high risk of school failure in the Quebec school system (quoted in Bakhshaei, 2013, P.40). However, these positive findings have masked the important variation in the academic achievement of students of

different sectors, regions of origin, and linguistic characteristics. If one looks at the French sector, students with French as their mother tongue or language used at home experience a higher graduation rate than their counterparts who do not have this linguistic characteristic. And the difference of graduation rate (seven years after entering a French high school) between first and second generation students appears to be significant (58% versus 70%). Nevertheless, among the subgroups, almost 80% of students of Chinese origin in this study finish their high school seven years after entering a French high school, which is much higher when compared to the whole student body (73%). Generally speaking, the same observation applies to the results of school performance, although the difference is less pronounced. There is no important difference of average score in French ministerial exams, despite the fact that the students of the third generation and beyond do slightly better in this regard. With respect to performance in other subjects, some subgroups, such as Chinese students, clearly outperform other groups and even pupils of the third generation and beyond. However, the 2009 PISA results seem to indicate a more problematic situation in terms of educational performance of students of immigrant origin in Quebec. Although Canada is the country where the difference between native-born and foreign-born population is the least pronounced, both in mathematics and literacy, the gap in Quebec's French sector is much wider than in the English sector of the other Canadian provinces.

Obviously, students with an immigrant background differ in their country of origin, language and culture, as well as their family socioeconomic status. And all of these factors can create divisions and inequities between the host society and newcomers. Ethnicity, as measured through various markers such as language, national origin, or religion, does not hold an easy-to-predict relationship with academic achievement (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009, p.20). Educational authorities, researchers and the community need to identify the dynamics influencing academic achievement of immigrant students and to better understand the significant differences among various groups. This way, they can provide more appropriate service to each group and facilitate the process of integration of students of immigrant origin in schools and in the larger mainstream society.

### Intercultural relations at school

Although assessment concerning the adaptation to diversity in Quebec schools is difficult to make, noteworthy progress has been made, including the many initiatives designed to better adapt schools to their communities (Mc Andrew, 2010; Triki-Yamani *et al.*, 2008). These initiatives, such as the development of teaching tips on immigration and different cultures as well as the programs that promote intercultural and anti-racist activities, seem to have positive impacts on intercultural relations at school (Mc Andrew, 2010). However, promoting the recognition of diversity in a school context has always been challenging and remains a work in progress (Triki-Yamani *et al.*, 2008). For instance, some communities harbour fears about the impact of adapting to diversity, such as concerns on the potential contradictions between certain accommodations and legal requirements about school attendance, programs, and security (Mc Andrew, 2010). Furthermore, although many teachers address the issues of intercultural relations in their classrooms on an ad hoc basis, some studies reveal a certain indifference, even resistance, to intercultural perspectives among many others (Potvin & Mc Andrew, 2009).

#### **1.4 Educational success of students of Chinese origin**

For decades, many studies in the United States have explored the educational success of Chinese and other Asian students (Ballantine, & Hammack, 2009; Li, 2001; Li, 2003; Zhou & Kim, 2006). In English-speaking Canadian provinces, such as British Columbia and Ontario, some studies focusing on Chinese origin students have also been carried out since the late 1990s (Tang & Dion, 1999). Nevertheless, few studies have been conducted to document their school experience in a French-speaking context, where their linguistic characteristics (as one can see from Section 1.2) seem to be less favourable. For this reason, this study focuses on the socioeducational integration of Chinese origin students in the French sector. In this section, the academic achievement of Chinese youth in an international, Canadian, Quebec context is presented to define the primary objectives of the current research.

### 1.4.1 International context

Since the 1960s, the popular media and scholarly literature have described the Chinese community as a “model minority” in the United States (Wang, 2007). They were believed to be an example of success worthy of emulation by other minorities, although they have been subjected to similar prejudice and discriminatory practices encountered by other ethnic minority groups (Chun, 1995). For instance, U.S. News and World Report featured an article entitled “Success Story of One Minority Group in the U.S. ” It begins:

At a time when Americans are awash in worry over the plight of racial minorities... One such minority, the Nation's 300,000 Chinese Americans, is winning wealth and respect by dint of its own hard work...At a time when it is being proposed that hundreds of billions be spent to uplift the Negroes and other minorities...The Nation's 300,000 Chinese Americans are moving ahead on their own -with no help from anyone else (1966, p.73).

This abovementioned article describes them as an example of an industrious and uncomplaining minority group that excels in academics, translating this excellence into greater economic mobility (Chun, 1995; Song & Wang, 2003). The Chinese seem to achieve the American dream, on account of their dedication to small business, or on account of an advanced degree in science or electrical engineering (Wu, 2002).

With respect to students of Chinese origin, their competitive edge has been recognized in the international context. In the United Kingdom, Chinese males have the highest proportion of among all ethnic minorities with a university degree and the lowest proportion with no GCSE<sup>12</sup>, and Chinese British women are more than twice as likely to have a university degree as even British Europeans (Fülöp *et al.*, 2007). In Hungary, the Chinese speaking students get into secondary school (gymnasium) in greater proportion than Hungarian speaking migrant children (quoted in Fülöp *et al.*, 2007, p.334). In the United States, regardless of social class and the economic background of their family, Chinese American students have a higher GPA and lower dropout rate compared to European Americans and other minorities (Li, 2001; Zhou & Kim, 2006). Hardworking,

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<sup>12</sup> General Certificate of Secondary Education is an academic qualification awarded in a specified subject, generally taken in a number of subjects by students aged 14-16 in secondary education in United Kingdom.

self-disciplined, and obedient, have been considered to be the central values and characteristics that enable them to succeed in school (Chun, 1995).

However, some studies indicate that not every Chinese student reaches the “model minority” standard. For instance, the research of Lee (1994) identifies some low achievers in the American Chinese community. Even some high achievers sometimes report poor psychological and social adjustment (Qin, 2007; Sue & Zane, 1985). Also, the high educational attainment of Chinese students is not being rewarded by commensurate income or occupation. Research in the social sciences indicates that the socioeconomic status of Chinese is nowhere near the level of success conveyed by the “model minority” stereotype (Chun, 1995, p. 102). Thus, it is important to bear in mind that Chinese youth are not homogeneous and may have different school experiences in various contexts.

#### **1.4.2 Canadian context**

Although studies in a Canadian context on Chinese students’ academic trajectories started not as early as in the United States, the general findings of these studies seem to be consistent with the American ones. For example, the study of Edith *et al.* (2001) on the academic achievement of adolescents from different ethnic groups in Vancouver and Toronto indicates that Chinese youth have a higher average score in their school exams compared with students from other groups, including those who identified themselves as Canadians. Indeed, 46% of the Chinese participants in this study score 80% to 100%. Likewise, these students hold high expectations for their postsecondary education. Gunderson (2004; 2007) also notes the successful educational profile of Chinese youth when he examines a sample of 2, 213 ESL students enrolled from 1991 to 2001 in provincially examinable subjects from grades 8-12 in Vancouver. Mandarin speakers dramatically outperform native-born Canadians across all subjects at all grade levels with the exception of grade 12 English, and Cantonese speakers outperform Canadian-born somehow more modestly with the exceptions of grade 12 English and social studies. Recently, a study of British Columbia’s 1997 Grade 8 cohort indicates that Chinese origin students have a higher graduation rate compared to ESL students of other ethnic groups (Garnett, 2008). Regarding postsecondary education, the study of Abada *et al.*

(2008) suggests that Chinese immigrant children have higher university completion rates than do children of Canadian-born parents, even when demographic and human capital factors are controlled.

It is also important to mention a more recent comparative study at the pan-Canadian level which demonstrates that Chinese speaking students clearly do better than other groups (including the French- or English-speaking students), even when characteristics, such as socioeconomic status and sociodemographic factors, are taken into account (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009). In Montreal, they are respectively 2.70 times (4.08 times with control variables) more likely to graduate from high school compared to French speakers (Table III). In Toronto and Vancouver, Chinese students are respectively 2.08 and 2.90 times more likely to obtain a high school diploma than English speakers. Furthermore, for participation in university-bound or selective courses (Table IV), the Chinese speaking students in the three cities, do much better compared to their counterparts from control groups. They multiply their advantage to an odd ratio of more than 10 in Vancouver, an impressive 5.87 in Montreal and a rather modest 2.86 in Toronto. In comparison with other sub-groups (Table V), Chinese speakers show more positive results with respect to their enrolment in university-bound and selective courses, which permit high school students to pursue higher education.

Table III Graduation: Different between selected sub-groups and the comparison group, with or without control variables (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver)

Language used at home	City	Only language target group		With control variables	
		Odd-ratio	Sig	Odd-ratio	Sig
Three Cities					
Chinese	Montreal	2.70	***	4.08	***
	Toronto	2.08	***	2.04	***
	Vancouver	2.90	***	2.80	***

\*\*\* = Significant at < 0.001 \*\* = Significant at < 0.05 \* = Significant at < 0.10

Source: Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009

Table IV Participation in selective courses: Differences between selected sub-groups and the comparison group, with or without control variables (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver)

Language used at home	City	Only language target group		With control variables	
		Odd-ratio	Sig	Odd-ratio	Sig
Three Cities					
Chinese	Montreal	5.90	***	5.87	***
	Toronto	2.56	***	2.86	***
	Vancouver	11.19	***	10.95	***

\*\*\* = Significant at < 0.001 \*\* = Significant at < 0.05 \* = Significant at < 0.10

Source: Mc Andrew et al., 2009

Table V Participation in selective courses: Ranking order of linguistic sub-groups included in the regression analysis in each city (with control variables) (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver)

Montreal	Toronto	Vancouver
Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
Vietnamese	Tamil	Vietnamese
Arabic	Urdu	Other English speakers
Other non-French speakers	Russian	Punjabi
French speakers	English speakers	Philippino
Spanish	Persian/Farsi	English speakers
Creole	Other non-English speakers	Spanish

Source: Mc Andrew et al., 2009

### 1.4.3 Quebec context

In Quebec, the issue of the socioeducational integration of Chinese youth was first raised by the study of Mc Andrew *et al.* (2010) and its specific descriptive analysis (Sun, 2011a; 2011b). These studies present the results of a systematic follow-up from high school up to CEGEP<sup>13</sup> of two cohorts of Quebec students of immigrant origin (e.g. those who entered Secondary 1 in 1998-1999 and in 1999-2000). These studies indicate that compared to students from other ethnic groups, Chinese origin students in both English and French sectors project a very positive educational trajectory in terms of their graduation rate and performance in the ministerial Secondary exams, in spite of their less favourable sociodemographic and school-related characteristics. Since many previous studies focusing on Chinese youth have been carried out in a context where English is the

<sup>13</sup> CEGEP is an acronym for Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel, known officially in English as a "General and Vocational College". It refers to the public post-secondary education collegiate institutions exclusive to the education system in the province of Quebec. Although they may occasionally be compared to junior colleges, CEGEPs differ in that a Diploma of College Studies (or *Diplôme d'études collégiales*, DEC) is required for university admission in Quebec unless a student enters as a mature student which typically means a minimum age of 21 with other requirements (<http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca>).

language of instruction, this section presents only the academic trajectory of Chinese origin students in the French sector. Also, as Chinese youth remain “invisible” in the Quebec school system, the characteristics of the Chinese speaking participants will be described first in this part.

#### Sociodemographic characteristics of the Chinese speaking participants

There are 638 Chinese origin students in the data bank of the abovementioned research. Of these students, 56% are originating from Mainland China, 42% from Taiwan, Kong Kong and Macao, and 2% from other areas. Regarding place of birth, the vast majority (74%) of the Chinese youth were born outside Canada. In terms of family socioeconomic environment, Table VI shows that there is no major difference between the target group and the combined total first and second generation. However, the students originating from mainland China seem to be less represented among those with a strong socioeconomic status, while their peers from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao are overrepresented in this category (38%).

Table VI Students of Chinese origin: Distribution of selected sub-groups according to the family socioeconomic environment indicator (French sector)

	Strong (%)	Medium (%)	Weak (%)
Chinese origin	29.8	39.4	30.9
Originating from Mainland China	23.5	40.2	36.3
Originating from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao	38.1	37.3	24.6
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation (combined total)	26.8	34.3	39.0
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation and beyond	28.7	41.9	29.4

Source: Sun, 2011b

#### Characteristics related to schooling process

**Level of entry into the school system**-figures in Table VII show that 74% of the Chinese youth in this research entered the Quebec school system during their elementary schooling, which is slightly less than the combined total first and second generation. Among them, those from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao are much more likely to start their schooling in a Quebec elementary school, while more students from Mainland China seem to start their schooling in Quebec at Secondary 1 or during secondary schooling.

Table VII Students of Chinese origin: Distribution of selected sub-groups according to the level of entry into the school system (French sector)

	Before Secondary school (%)	Secondary 1 (%)	During secondary schooling (%)
Chinese origin	74.0	17.1	8.9
Originating from mainland China	65.2	23.0	11.8
Originating from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao	84.3	10.1	5.6
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation (combined total)	77.1	9.4	12.9
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation and beyond	99.4	0.2	0.4

Source: Sun, 2011b

**Age when entering secondary school**-Table VIII indicates 67% of Chinese origin students entered secondary on time, which is slightly higher than the proportion of the combined first and second generation. However, those from Mainland China seem to present a less favourable characteristic in this regard. They are slightly over-represented among students who entered secondary school one or two years later than expected. In contrast, their counterparts from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao are less likely to accumulate delay when entering high school.

Table VIII Students of Chinese origin: Distribution of selected sub-groups according to the level of entry into the school system (French sector)

	On time (%)	One year delay (%)	Delay of two years or more (%)
Chinese origin	67.1	25.4	7.5
Originating from mainland China	64.3	24.7	11.0
Originating from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao	70.1	26.5	3.4*
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation (combined total)	65.2	27.1	7.6
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation and beyond	80.4	18.7	0.9

Source: Sun, 2011b

**Students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties** (*L'identification comme élèves handicapé ou en difficulté d'adaptation ou d'apprentissage*, EHDAA)-As can be seen from Table IX, Chinese youth in this research are not identified as often as EHDAA as the two control groups. However, those from Mainland China are more likely to be identified as students with special education needs.

Table IX Students of Chinese origin: Distribution of selected sub-groups according to EHDAA identification (French sector)

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Chinese origin	87.5	12.5
Originating from mainland China	86.0	14.0
Originating from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao	89.6	10.1
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation (combined total)	75.4	24.6
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation and beyond	75.8	24.2

Source: Sun, 2011b

**Frequency of school changes-** Table X indicates that there is no major difference of the tendency of school changes between the target group and the combined first and second generation. Compared to the third generation, these students seem to be more likely to remain in the same school during their secondary schooling, especially those from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao.

Table X Students of Chinese origin: Distribution of selected sub-groups according to school changes (French sector)

	No (%)	Yes (%)
Chinese origin	54.9	45.1
Originating from mainland China	54.2	45.8
Originating from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao	56.3	43.7
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation (combined total)	53.7	46.3
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation and beyond	48.3	51.7

Source: Sun, 2011b

### Graduation rate

Regarding the graduation rate, as one can see from Table XI, the proportion of Chinese youth, especially those from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, in this study who graduated on time is much higher compared to that of the two control groups (the combined first and second generation as well as the third generation and beyond). The same observation applies when pushing the normal time horizon by two years. It seems that students originating from Mainland China benefit more from this extension of schooling.

Table XI Students of Chinese origin: Graduation rate of selected sub-groups according to different time frames (French sector)

	On time (%)	One year late (%)	Two years late (%)
Chinese origin	64.1	73,8	77.7
Originating from Mainland China	58,1	69.1	73.6
Originating from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao	71.6	80.2	83.2
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation (combined total)	46.5	56.5	61.1
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation and beyond	57.0	65.5	69.5

Source: Sun, 2011b

### Performance in the ministerial Secondary exams

According to the figures shown in Table XII, Chinese youth in this study have a greater overall participation rate in ministerial exams of various subjects than do the two control groups. The gap in mathematics and sciences is particularly large between the target group and the two control groups. As for Secondary 5 Sciences, a high-selectivity course in sciences, the participation rate of Chinese speaking students is more than twice than that of the two control groups (56.6% versus 24.4% and 21.3%).

Table XII Students of Chinese origin: Overall participation in the ministerial exams (French sector)

	Maths (%)	French (%)	Sciences 4 <sup>14</sup> (%)	Sciences 5 (%)
Chinese origin	79.9	78.5	83.7	56.6
Originating from mainland China	77.0	74.7	80.1	56.5
Originating from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao	83.6	83.2	88.4	57.1
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation (combined total)	57.9	63.8	67.3	24.4
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation and beyond	60.2	69.9	75.2	21.3

Source: Sun, 2011b

In terms of performance on the ministerial Secondary exams, Table XIII indicates that Chinese origin students, especially those who are originating from mainland China, seem to do much better in mathematics and sciences compared to students from the two control groups. For instance, on the ministerial Secondary 4 Sciences exams, the gap of the mean score has reached almost to 10 points. In French, there are no major differences of the

<sup>14</sup> Sciences 4 and Sciences 5 refer to ministerial Secondary 4 and 5 Sciences exams. At Secondary 5, students take Physics 534 and Chemistry 534.

mean score between the target group and the control groups. However, considering the fact that over 70% of these students do not have French as their mother tongue, this is a very satisfactory result.

Table XIII Students of Chinese origin: Average grades obtained in the ministerial exams (French sector)

	Maths 536 (%)	French (%)	Sciences 4 (%)	Sciences 5 (%)
Chinese origin	79.2	71.8	84.5	80.1
Originating from mainland China	81.2	72.6	85.2	82.5
Originating from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao	76.4	71.0	83.9	76.9
1st and 2nd generation (combined total)	73.2	70.5	75.8	75.0
3rd generation and beyond	72.4	72.2	76.0	75.9

Source: Sun, 2011b

#### Factors influencing the educational success of Chinese youth

The descriptive data presented above show the various characteristics of Chinese youth in the data bank and their school performance. It seems that these students succeed at school despite their favourable sociodemographic and school process characteristics. Yet, to have a better understanding of the results and some factors influencing them when comparing with the entire target group, it is necessary to refer to the regression analysis in the final report submitted to MELS (see Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2010).

As can be seen from the regression analysis in Table XIV, many factors seem to be insignificant in affecting the graduation rate of Chinese origin students, especially the school level variables.<sup>15</sup> Regarding sociodemographic and linguistic characteristics, the analysis confirms the tendency of outperformance among girls. However, the impact of the socioeconomic status of the family appears to be much less significant. Finally, it is interesting to see that through regression analysis, students who do not have French as their mother tongue and language used at home turn out to have a higher odd of graduating once other factors are taken into account. This illustrates the particular resilience of these students but does not negate the descriptive findings which show that

<sup>15</sup> In certain case, the odds ratio is rather high, but the variable remains non-significant due to the small number of subjects.

overall Chinese students who have French as their mother tongue or language used at home have an actual higher graduation rate compared to those who do not have this linguistic characteristic.

With respect to the variables related to schooling process, three factors seem to be important in influencing the graduation of Chinese youth: in order of importance: the fact of accumulating additional delay upon Secondary 3, being late upon Secondary 1, and having received *soutien linguistique* (linguistic support).

For the characteristics of schools attended, as mentioned above, most of them are insignificant, except the limited influence of attending a school in a disadvantaged socioeconomic environment.

Table XIV Graduation rate (seven years after entry of Secondary 1) of East-Asian students<sup>16</sup>:  
Impact of diverse characteristics (French sector)  
(N=850)

	Odd Ratio	Sig
<b>Sociodemographic and linguistic characteristics</b>		
Girl (ref. boy)	2.03	***
Immigrants (ref. Born in Canada)	1.55	ns
Mother tongue ≠ French (ref. mother tongue=language used at home=French)	1.42	ns
Mother tongue and language used at home ≠ French (ref. mother tongue=language used at home=French)	2.85	***
Favourable FSES (ref. FSES average)	0.71	ns
unfavourable FSES (ref. FSES average)	1.39	ns
<b>Schooling process variables</b>		
Entry in Secondary 1 (ref. Primary)	1.89	ns
Late upon entry (ref. Early or on time)	0.22	***
<i>Soutien linguistique</i> in high school (ref. No)	0.29	***
Changed school (ref. No)	0.88	ns
Additional delay upon Secondary 3 (ref. No)	0.14	***
<b>School level variables</b>		
Attend private school (ref. Public)	1.65	ns
Index of challenge for public schools 8-10 (ref. Other)	0.63	*

<sup>16</sup> In this research, the Chinese origin students make a large proportion (over 64% in the French sector of the East Asian group).

Percentage of target group in the school 26-50% (ref. 0-25%)	1.17	ns
Percentage of target group in the school 51-75% (ref. 0-25%)	1.01	ns
Percentage of target group in the school 76-100% (ref. 0-25%)	1.38	ns
*** Significant at < 0.001    ** Significant at < 0.05    * Significant at < 0.10		
Source: Mc Andrew <i>et al.</i> , 2010		

### 1.5 Primary Objectives of the Study

From Section 1.4, one can see that previous quantitative studies in Quebec indicate that Chinese origin students achieve remarkable academic performance, in terms of graduation rate and the average grades obtained in the ministerial exams, especially in mathematics and sciences. However, many factors identified by these studies, which explain the educational success of students of other ethnic groups, appear to be insignificant for Chinese youth. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the school success of these youth through an in-depth reviewing of the impact of other factors, such as school practices, family values and strategies, and community-based resources. In a context where reducing high school drop-out rates in the full student body is a priority, it is essential and practical to identify methods for ameliorating the situation of under-achieving groups through a better examination of these factors, although the generalization may be limited due to the different characteristics.

Furthermore, it is also important to bear in mind that the label of “model minority” is not always true. As mentioned in Section 1.4, some Chinese students have experienced tremendous difficulties in overcoming sociocultural and language barriers. In addition, the high educational achievement of Chinese youth is not always rewarded by a successful socioeconomic integration. Thus, studies aimed to explore the reality of the educational needs (such as sociolinguistic supports) of Chinese youth and their school experience, are necessary for educators and decision-makers to provide appropriate measures and responsive mentoring.

Finally, as mentioned in Section 1.2, notwithstanding its large population, the Chinese community in Quebec remains “invisible” in both the official and unofficial discourse as well as academic research. Given the fast growing of students of Chinese origin in the French sector, more scholarly attention is needed to document their educational pathways and experience.

To fill up these gaps, the current research seeks to, on the one hand, to examine in detail certain dynamics that influence the educational experience students of Chinese origin, and on the other hand, to draw a fuller picture of their socioeducational integration in a French-speaking context.

## **Chapter II Theoretical Framework**

In modern democratic societies, where equal opportunity has emerged as a fundamental normative benchmark, schools are expected to foster the educational success of students with various ethnic or cultural backgrounds (Mc Ewen, 1995). However, studies in heterogeneous societies, such as Canada and the United States, suggest that even in the same classroom, students of different ethnic groups seem to follow different educational pathways and have different school experiences (Coleman, 1966; Ogbu, 1983; 1990; Ogbu & Simons, 1998, Zhou, 1997; Zhou & Kim, 2006; Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009). Through a review of the vast literature in international and Canadian context, this chapter first examines the dynamics influencing educational success with a focus notably on the socioeducational integration of students of immigrant origin. Since the concept of immigrant, which is defined as voluntary minority groups by Ogbu (1990), is not always differentiated from the concept of minority in the literature, the term “minority students” (some are from involuntary minorities) is sometimes used in the text. Further, based on this literature review as well as the characteristics of the Chinese community and their youth’s school experience in Quebec described in Chapter I, a critical analysis is then presented to review the extent to which these factors can explain the school success of Chinese youth and to reformulate the general and specific research questions.

### **2.1 Literature Review: factors influencing the educational success of immigrant students**

As a complex social phenomenon, educational success is influenced by various factors, especially for the students from minority ethnic groups and/or in a migration context, because the process of ethnicity and migration make it even more mysterious. Not only the sociodemographic factors, such as gender, age of entering the school system in the host society, and socioeconomic status affect the opportunities of individuals for education, ethnic characteristics, immigrant community and other social factors also have substantial effects on their school outcomes, future occupations, incomes, and prospects for poverty (Ballantine & Hammanck, 2009). International and Canadian literature

demonstrates the wide variety of educational pathways and experiences that can be related to various sub-groups defined by the markers of ethnic identity, such as: language spoken at home, religion or geographic origin (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009). Other systemic factors, such as school culture and teachers' attitude towards immigrant students, could not also be ignored. Furthermore, parental involvement and community-based resources also account for the difference in academic achievement (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). In order to provide a theoretical background to this study, this section examines the principal theories regarding the factors influencing immigrant/minority students' educational attainments.

### **2.1.1 Socioeconomic Status**

According to the *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literary*, SES is conceptualized as an individual's or group's position within a hierarchical social structure. It is usually an economically and sociologically combined variable, including occupation, education, income, wealth, and place of residence. Despite the disagreement on the concept of SES, in the field of education, it often measured as a combination of the parents' education, income, and occupation (Hauser, 1994; Sirin, 2005)

According to the theory of SES, the variation in the academic achievement among students is the result of the inequalities based on SES environment of their families. This school of thought identifies poverty as an important and main factor that cause school failure, as it is generally associated with a deficit of human capital<sup>17</sup> among families as well as a lack of active parental involvement in the educational promotion of their children (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009). Coleman (1966) firstly introduced the concept of SES in the field of education. In his famous report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, he suggests that students from affluent families can attend private schools and receive education of better quality while those from poor families may not have access to those resources. Later on, he also emphasizes the function of SES in the creation of a family's cultural and social capital, which affects students' educational pathways (Coleman, 1988). Many recent studies also stress the close relationship between SES and school outcomes.

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<sup>17</sup> According to Coleman (1988), human capital refers to parental education.

For example, Aikens and Barbarin's (2008) study suggests children's low early reading outcomes is related to poverty. Also, the school systems in low SES communities are often underresourced, negatively affecting students' academic progress. Also, the research of Morgan *et al.* (2009) indicates that children from low-SES households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from families with higher SES. Moreover, using different data and method, Heyneman and Loxley (1983) place Coleman's findings into a larger context by examining educational attainment in several countries. This study demonstrates that family background matters more for student achievement than do school variations in wealthier countries with more established school systems, while school effects are actually stronger in poorer nations where mass schooling is newer (Heyneman & Loxley, 1983; Davies & Guppy, 2006).

However, the issue of SES and its relationship to school outcomes in a migratory context is more complex than what the abovementioned research suggests. For instance, a meta-analysis of American studies published between 1990 and 2000 (Sirin, 2005) shows a medium to strong SES-achievement relationship, but this impact is not consistent across groups. On the one hand, many immigrant communities, regardless of their social class, seem to be benefiting from the high valorization of education in a context of migration (Chow, 2004). This is especially the case for Chinese and other Asian students. In the United States, for instance, not only the Chinese children of foreign-born physicians, scientists, and engineers, but also those of underprivileged families have repeatedly shown remarkable educational achievements (Zhou & Kim, 2006). In Canada, the over-performance of Chinese students stands out even when various characteristics, including the SES of their families, are accounted for. For example, the regression analysis of the abovementioned pan-Canadian comparative research demonstrates that SES indicators, such as the median family revenue, have proved to be of little significance for the rate of graduation and participation in selective courses of Chinese speakers in Montreal (McAndrew *et al.*, 2009; 2011).

On the other hand, the negative academic trajectory may be influenced not only by poverty, but also by the unfavourable pre-migration, migration, post-migration stages. In

this regard, the study of Ornelas and Perreira (2011) on Latino immigrant families in the United States indicates that pre-migration stage factors, such as political unrest and persecution negatively affect the psychological wellbeing and academic achievement of Latino children. In a Canadian context, the research of Kanouté *et al.* (2008) suggests that school failure is more related to unsafe and stressful migration experiences, low level of proficiency in the language of instruction, and discrimination upon settlement in the receiving country.

It is also important to bear in mind that immigrant families with low SES are usually in “situational” poverty, a temporary state caused by certain circumstances such as illness or migration, rather than in “generational” poverty, a state which endures for two generations or more (Bakhshaei, 2013). According to the study of Beiser *et al.* (1998) on the newly arrived immigrant families, poverty represents a transient and inevitable part of the resettlement process, which has less negative effects on their children’s health and academic outcomes. Therefore, in a migration context, SES is not the only factor that explains the students’ academic achievement.

### **2.1.2 Language proficiency**

Language is not only a crucial and significant vehicle in learning and education, but also an essential and necessary tool for information exchanges and communications. Indeed, both the host and heritage language proficiency are found important for the academic achievement of immigrant students (Chow, 2004; Inglis, 2008). Also, immigrant parents’ proficiency in the host language can play a significant role (Kim, 2002; Vatz-Laaroussi *et al.*, 2008).

#### Host language

Without student fluency and literacy in the language of schooling (most of the time it is the same as the host language), teachers can not communicate with them and achieve the objectives of the curriculum, which include transmitting society’s values as well as academic knowledge and skills (Inglis, 2008, p.70). Also, it is important to distinguish the language skills necessary to carry on a conversation and those language skills

required to be competitive academically (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). To achieve school success requires a relatively high level of proficiency in academic language which allows students to write a quality essay, read quickly enough to be competitive on a timed test, or detect the subtle difference between multiple choice items (Saville-Troike, 1984; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Many studies in the early 1960s and 1970s in the United States have found that a lack of proficiency in academic English is a primary causative factor in the low academic achievement of students with linguistic minority backgrounds (Saville-Troike, 1991). A recent study of Fakeye and Yemi (2009) in Nigeria demonstrates that the fluency and literacy of the host language is a predictor of school outcomes. Researchers in Canada also stress the impact of the academic knowledge of the host language on the school performance of immigrant students.

There is no doubt that language acquisition is much easier for native-born children, since they are “socialized to use the language” and “socialized by the language” (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984). Immigrant students whose mother tongue is other than the language of instruction need not only to learn the new language but also the culture (e.g. the way of thinking) behind it, which complicates the language process. Indeed, Mc Andrew and her colleagues (2009) argue that mastery of the language of instruction has particularly had an impact on disciplines with strong linguistic and cultural components, such as history and literature, which pose greater challenges for students whose first language is not the language of instruction comparing to scientific disciplines such as mathematics or physics (p. 20). For them, not only cognitive aptitude or linguistic ability can influence their second language learning. Other factors are also important, including prior education and literacy, previous experience with learning other languages, exposure to native speakers, and the quality of host language instruction (Bornstein, 1989; Colombo, 1982; Cummins, 2000; Hurford, 1991; Lynch, 2003; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). The dynamic interaction of these factors impacts language acquisition (Bialystok *et al.*, 1998, Jia & Aaronson, 2003).

In addition, the lack of fluency and literacy in the language of instruction among immigrant parents can lead to misunderstanding and miscommunication between the

school and the parents. And this can probably hinder parental involvement in the youth's school education. Studies in both the American and Canadian background suggest that the parental proficiency in the language of schooling may influence their children's academic achievement (Berry-Cábon, 1983; Lynch & Stein, 1987; Kim, 2002; Vatz-Laaroussi *et al.*, 2008). For instance, the study of Kim (2002) shows that Korean immigrant parents' English proficiency is strongly related to their children's educational achievement, because parents who have a higher level of English proficiency are more acculturated to American society and culture and hence tend to have higher levels of educational involvement. Moreover, Vatz-Laaroussi (2008) and her colleagues indicate that in Quebec context, when immigrant parents have a low level of French proficiency, it sets obstacles for the parent-teacher communication. However, Keith and Lichtman's (1994) research shows that Mexican American parents' English proficiency does not influence their children's academic achievement, though it does influence parental involvement. They find that parents who are less proficient discuss school activities and have higher educational expectations for their children than do parents who are proficient in English. This intriguing finding warrants further studies in other ethnic communities, such as the Chinese community and Quebec, since most Chinese in Quebec do not have much knowledge of French.

### Heritage language

Many studies suggest that maintaining heritage language has positive impacts on both their second language learning and school outcomes (Chow, 2004; Saville-Troike, 1984; Tang, 2007). First, sociolinguists suggest that the maintenance of minority students' mother tongue can contribute to their linguistic and social development, and it is especially a strong predictor of the development of their second language (quoted in Inglis, 2008, p.47). This is because metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities developed in the first language are transferred to the second, and strengthening basic concepts and skills in the mother tongue will contribute to the mastery of other languages, including the host language (Mc Andrew, 2009b, p.1530). In this regard, the research of Saville-Troike (1984) indicates that most of the students, who achieve best in a test of various

subjects, were those who have had the opportunity to discuss the same concepts in their native language with other children and adults.

Second, heritage language facilitates the creation of social capital in immigrant families and community, because it is a means of developing relationship with family members and co-ethnic networks. For instance, several studies on the Korean community in the United States and Canada indicate that a high level of heritage language proficiency of immigrant children is not only beneficial for facilitating the communication with their parents, especially on school matters, but also for developing a closer relationship with the family (including extended families) and the community (Cho *et al.*, 1997; Park & Sarkar, 2007). The findings of the research of Francis *et al.* (2009) and that on the Chinese community in the United Kingdom are consistent with these studies. Moreover, Zhou and Kim's (2006) study shows that speaking the heritage language is a key factor for Chinese and Korean immigrant children to establish networks among co-ethnic peers, which sometimes is beneficial their psychological wellbeing.

Finally, the heritage or community language is a central marker of minority students' identities, which influences their self-esteem and assimilation into the culture, and hence their attitude towards schooling (quoted in Ballantine & Hammanck, 2009, p. 139). For example, the case study of Bankston and Zhou (1995) in the Vietnamese community finds that literacy in Vietnamese is positively related to identification of the ethnic group and to academic achievement. In a Canadian context, Chow's (2004) study on Chinese immigrant children in Canada indicates that those who were born in the country, and identified themselves as Chinese, demonstrated a higher level of Chinese language proficiency, possessed more ethnic capital and performed better academically in school.

### **2.1.3 Cultural capital**

As a branch of conflict theory, cultural reproduction and resistance theories argue that the amount of cultural capital is an indicator of one's status, as well as his or her school outcomes. Bourdieu (1977; 1979; 1986) defines cultural capital as information, knowledge, skills, and education that a person has about specific cultural beliefs,

traditions, and standards of behaviour that promote success and accomplishment in his or her life. Just like economic production, some schools and families process more “cultural capital” for success, while some others do not, thus the social class structure is reproduced (Ballantine & Hammanck, 2009). According to Bourdieu (1979; 1986), cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied* state, in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body, such as culture and tradition; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods, such as pictures, books instruments and machines; and in the *institutionalized* state, such as educational qualifications which refers to certificate or diplomas.

### Embodied cultural capital

The embodied form of cultural capital is a “competence”, skill, belief, attitude, or habits developed in the process of socialization and instruction. It can be best expressed in the concept of *habitus*:

*Habitus* consists of a set of historical relations “deposited” within individual bodies in the forms of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation and action... *Habitus* and fields designate bundles of relations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.16).

*Habitus* includes bodily comportment and speaking as markers of distinction, which can be influenced by gender, family, social class, ethnic background, religion, education, etc. (Erel, 2010; Holt,1998 ). According to Bourdieu (1979; 1986), the unequal distribution of cultural capital between students with different backgrounds, especially social class, leads to the difference in academic achievement. He explains that students born in middle and upper class families have good school performance because they possess the sophisticated tastes and styles associated with highly cultured people, which are linked to formal education. Coleman (1988) also suggests that cultural capital is very much influenced by the SES of a family, because affluent families have more opportunities to socialize their children into unconscious habits such as ways of thinking, confidence, and perceptions of life choices, which provide them cultural advantages (Davies & Guppy, 2006).

However, Bourdieu's definition of this type of cultural capital is criticised as not clear, as it can be operationalized in several ways (Sullivan, 2001). For example, it can be interpreted as knowledge of and participation in the dominant culture, linguistic ability, or reading activities (De Graaf *et al.*, 2000; Sullivan, 2001). Cultural activities other than reading books have often tended towards highly exclusive activities such as attendance at theatres, museums, classical music concerts, and art exhibitions (Sullivan, 2001). Yet, many studies demonstrate that the only family cultural practice that is associated consistently with school success is reading, or any practice that facilitates literacy (De Graaf *et al.*, 2000; Kingston, 2000; Sullivan, 2001). Further, Bourdieu perceives cultural capital as a reproduction channel for families with different social strata. Nevertheless, studies in the United States and the Netherlands indicate that it actually functions as a compensating resource for parents of lower classes (De Graaf *et al.*, 2000; DiMaggio, 1982). Roscigno and Anisworth-Darnell (1999) also find that highbrow cultural capital does not have a large, independent effect on the variation in the educational attainment of different groups, although it does mediate some of the racial and SES disadvantage. The findings of these studies seem to be in favour of cultural mobility theory (rather than cultural reproduction)—cultural capital is more important for children from lower or middle classes than those from upper classes. Further, there is no deterministic relationship between social background and participation in highbrow culture, since some parents may prefer other leisure activities or may not have the time to be involved in cultural activities (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996).

Regarding immigrant students, in addition to highbrow cultural capital, many studies in North America invoke ethnocultural characteristics as their embodied cultural capital to explain their academic achievement (Yet *et al.*, 2008; Li, 2003; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). For instance, these authors see Confucian values, such as respect for education, diligence, and obedience to parents and teachers, as explanations for the high level of academic achievement of Asian students in North America. As a system of moral, social, political, philosophical and quasi-religious thought, Confucianism has had tremendous influence on the culture and society of East Asia. Therefore, many aspects of overseas Asian communities are considered to be influenced by this system of thought, such as parental

expectations towards the education of their children. Moreover, family rules such as limits on teens' television watching, time spending on computer games are found to be positively related to students' school performance, although these factors are associated with ethnocultural characteristics such as respect to parents (Yan, 1999).

According to this cultural argument, certain minority groups' school failures can be attributed to the lack of the necessary cultural criteria to push their members ahead. However, this assumption may be dangerous because they tend to blame the victims for their position in the lower socioeconomic strata in society (Zhou & Kim, 2006). According to *relative functionalism*, Asian students see education as a means for mobility because other avenues are blocked (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). For example, Connor (1975) attributes the high school outcomes of Japanese Americans to the denial of opportunities to participate in social and other extracurricular activities during pre-World War II period. Hirschman and Wong (1986) also suggest that due to their minority status which leads to exclusion from certain areas, such as leadership, sports, politics, and entertainment, education is a channel for the social mobility.

Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that immigrant youth may not accept the traditional cultural values or meet the familial expectations in a context of intense bicultural and intergenerational conflicts, with different paces of acculturation between parents and children. Hence patterns of school success are likely to vary between individuals according to their adaptation skills as well as ability to develop identity, and strategies that represent a compromise between the previous and the present society (Camilleri, 1990). For example, the study of Wong (2001) demonstrates that high orientation towards traditional culture and low orientation towards mainstream culture are related to more depression symptoms. On the other hand, clearly defined cultural identity, particularly bicultural competence, are found to be beneficial for the psychological development of Chinese American students (Tang, 2007, p. 13). Also, as will be discussed in Section 2.1.4, ethnic sociostructures are necessary to support ethnocultural characteristics in a group-dominant society (Kim, 2006).

Finally, from an anthropological perspective, it is not the possession of cultural characteristics that makes social groups distinct but the sociostructures and interaction with other groups that cause cultural evaluations to appear to be true, and make differences possible, visible, and socially meaningful (quoted in Jenkins, 2008, p. 24). In certain way, an ethnic group's performance may be related to its culture, but different circumstance and social environment may favour different behavioural patterns. With the unchanged values and beliefs, the same group of people may pursue different patterns of life and institutionalize diverse forms of behaviour when faced with the various opportunities offered in various environments (Barth, 1969, p.12). For instance, Korean students have different school performance in the United States and Japan, though they may have the same tradition and culture (Ogbu, 1990; Ogbu, & Simmons, 1998).

#### Objectified cultural capital

Objectified cultural capital is seen as more tangible household educational resources. Bourdieu (1986) conceptualizes this form of capital as simultaneous mediators between social origins and achievement outcomes without relying as systematically on a class-theoretical framework. According to the sociology of literature, material provisions (having books at home, borrowing books from a public library, or giving books as gifts) is one of the factors by which parents enhance their children's reading abilities (De Graaf *et al.*, 2000). The research of Roscigno and Anisworth-Darnell (1999) also suggests that household educational resources, such as a daily newspaper, regularly received magazines, encyclopaedias, a dictionary, and a computer, etc., have positive effects on school performance, but their mediating effects on racial and class achievements outcomes are not as strong as Bourdieu might expect. Indeed, these authors find that some of the achievement returns that objectified cultural capital brings depend on a students' ethnic background. Additionally, the impact of this form of cultural capital is partly related to but much less significant than the SES of the family, and largely to the possession of the embodied cultural capital (Roscigno and Anisworth-Darnell, 1999). For example, the provision of books requests financial resources, but parental attitudes towards reading may influence their children's utilization of the books. On the contrary,

some families with lower SES may also be willing to invest in objectified cultural capital because of the importance they attach to education.

#### Institutionalized cultural capital

As mentioned above, the institutionalized cultural capital refers to educational credentials, which state and evaluate the embodied cultural capital. A large number of studies in the international context indicate that the parents' level of schooling has impact on their children's academic achievement (De Graaf *et al.*, 2000; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Parents who have completed a higher level of schooling may offer many privileges to their children, such as the transmission of embodied cultural capital, homework assistance, and school-family partnership (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). Research on school-family relationship reveals that a high level of schooling of the parents facilitates the school-family cooperation (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Vatz-Larroussi *et al.*, 2008).

However, the impact of this factor can be modulated by other factors, such as a migration project. For example, in a migratory context, despite their high level of education, some parents are unable to offer much educational support to their children or fully engage with the school system due to poor linguistic skills in the official language(s) (Thomson & Crul, 2007). Moreover, as many immigrant parents see their children's schooling in the receiving country as a means for upward mobility, they make financial sacrifices to create optimal study conditions, although they cannot offer direct assistance because of their low level of schooling (Braeye & Hermans, 2011). Also, high parental educational expectations sometimes overcome the disadvantage of a low level of parental schooling (Vatz-Larroussi *et al.*, 2008). This is especially the case in some Asian students in the United States and Canada. For instance, some Chinese students work hard on schoolwork and do well at school to respond to their parents' expectations without their parents' assistance (Li, 2001; Zhou & Kim, 2006).

#### **2.1.4 Social capital**

Social capital is another concept that many sociologists apply to explain the variation in student achievement. Bourdieu's (1984) definition of social capital consists of two dimensions: 1) social networks and connections/relationships and, 2) sociability. He describes social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). According to Bourdieu (1986), as cultural capital, social capital that one possesses is also significantly influenced by one's socioeconomic status. For instance, economically privileged individuals have the financial resources to fund the development of cultural capital and their privileged position can be utilized to create social capital (Leonard, 2004). Nevertheless, other researchers argue that social capital can compensate or pave the way for the economic and cultural capital (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000).

In education, Coleman (1988; 1990) defines social capital by its functions as "a variety of entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of sociostructures<sup>18</sup>, and they facilitate certain action of actors-whether persons or corporate actors-within the structure" (p. 298; p. 302). According to this definition, social capital is viewed as resources or sociostructures characterized by high levels of outstanding obligations and effective sanctions which ensure that obligations are adhered to (Leonard, 2004). Furthermore, he highlights various benefits of social capital in typical settings, such as family and school systems. These benefits include exchanging obligations, expectations, and information embodied in sociostructures. For example, in educational settings, families can draw on social capital to help them navigate the schooling process, learning about the effective teachers and the best learning opportunities while also avoiding the toughest hurdles (Davies & Guppy, 2006, p.41). However, Coleman's definition of social capital is criticized as focusing only on the quantity rather than the quality of interpersonal relations (Parcel & Menghan, 1993). For instance, it is important to spend

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<sup>18</sup> The term sociostructure, used in a general sense, refers to entities or groups in definite relation to each other, to relatively enduring patterns of behavior and relationship within social systems, or to social institutions and norms becoming embedded into social systems in such a way that they shape the behavior of actors within those social systems (Abercrombie, 2000).

time with children, but how that time is spent and what types of activities are undertaken seem more important than the amount of time spent (Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004).

While Coleman stresses the importance of family and school systems as the most typical settings for investigating social capital (and thus like Bourdieu presents a more individualist picture of the construct), Putnam extends the definition to apply to societies and communities in general (Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004, p. 157). According to Putnam (2000), social capital refers to “connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p.19). Putnam (2000) divides social capital into two forms— “bonding capital” and “bridging capital”. Bonding social capital occurs among homogeneous populations, which is often parochial and only benefits those with internal access, while bridging social capital refers to ties with others in the wider society, which can pave the way for the success of a group (Leonard, 2004; Putnam, 2000). Nonetheless, Putnam’s distinction between the two types of social capital is criticized for two main problems. First, this theory ignores how different ethnic groups (or organizations) experience and view social capital (Marrow, 1999; 2001). Second, Putnam implies that making the transition from bonding to bridging social capital benefits the community as a whole rather than perhaps some individuals in the community (Leonard, 2004).

In the educational context, researchers have introduced the concept of social capital to understand the ways in which students and their parents benefit from membership in certain communities or networks which allow them to draw on information, positive role models, encouragement, support, and advice (White & Glick, 2000; Portes, 2000). For instance, a growing body of research indicates that families living and attending schools in low income isolated communities are literally cut off from information, networks, and institutional resources that are needed to achieve a high level of academic achievement (Noguera, 2003; Orfield & Eaton, 1996; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Whereas the research of Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) suggests that parents’ social investment in their children and community increases children’s odds of graduating from high school and attending postsecondary institutions. Coleman (1988)’s research in the American

context demonstrates that the frequency of attendance at religious services, which is itself a measure of social capital through intergenerational closure, is strongly related to dropout rate, with 19.5% of public school students who rarely or never attend church compared with 9.1% of those who attend often (p.114). Also, some other analysts suggest that cultural values and behaviour patterns can be conducive to upward social mobility only when they interact with a wider set of societal factors, including a high level of institutional completeness that the community uses to promote the success of their members and a favourable structure of opportunity (Zhou & Kim, 2006). For example, parental cultural capital may become irrelevant to the outcomes of the children's education if the parents are not an important part in their lives. On the contrary, if parents maintain close contact with their children, as well as with other people influencing the life of their children, these networks among them can impose consistent expectations, norms and sanctions to direct the behaviour of these youths (Li *et al.*, 2008).

Immigrant or ethnic minority groups are, by definition, more alienated from the majority and hence may have fewer possible individuals with whom to exchange obligations and information or build bridging social capital outside the group (Kao, 2004; Leonard, 2004). They often face special difficulties in forming tight networks with other adults, and there might also be cultural gaps between foreign-born parents and their native-born children (Zhou, 1997). In this situation, given the shared experience, the exchange or the bonding social capital within the ethnic community appear to be more important. Some ethnic sociostructures, such as supplementary educational institutions, community media and churches, play a vitally important role in overcoming these difficulties and gaps. This is especially the case of Asian American students in the United States. They have often been cited as those who consistently succeed in school as a result of their parents' accumulation of social capital and strong co-ethnic networks (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou & Bankston, 1998; Zhou & Kim, 2006). Though focusing on the supplementary school in the Chinese and Korean community, Zhou and Kim find that ethnic sociostructures have positive effects on these immigrant students' mainstream school career. In the Canadian context, several studies also indicate that the educational attainments of the immigrant students are attributable to their parents' network in the ethnic community (Dinovitzer *et*

*al.*, 2003; Abada *et al.*, 2009). According to studies of Mc Andrew and her colleagues (2009; 2010), a possible explanation for the high academic achievement of allophone students is that the social capital that their families possess has a positive effect on the school performance of their children, though the influence has not been examined in these studies.

However, the function of ethnic sociostructures can be limited and even inhibit the integration of an ethnic minority group in mainstream society. Firstly, as mentioned above, only when the bonding capital of a group is transformed into the bridging capital which connects the wider society, may members get ahead and then have opportunities to succeed in the wider society (Putnam, 2000). Several studies in the American and Canadian context show that Asian students receive lower occupational returns for their educational attainment, and this is partly related to the lack of social capital necessary to link to the mainstream society (Friedman & Krackhardt, 1997; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007; Zhou & Li 2003, Zhou & Kim 2006). Secondly, it is important to remember that the impact of ethnic sociostructures is related to the specific profile of the ethnic community as well as to the larger socioeconomic and political environment of the host society (Ogbu, 1990; 2003; Sun & Braeye, 2013). For instance, Ogbu's (1990; 2003) research on the school experience of African Americans suggests that the strong networks among African students in a context of mistrust and hatred of the host society may lead to educational disengagement. Also, the study of Sun and Braeye (2013) demonstrates that Chinese supplementary schools in Quebec seem to have more significant impacts on Chinese immigrant students' educational success. This is so, because the Chinese community in Quebec is much older and larger than that in Flanders and is mainly concentrated in Montreal, where it has established a more mature institutionalized and efficient network to support its own members, including the new arrivals.

### **2.1.5 Systemic factors**

The impact of social and cultural capital as well as the interaction of these factors has been discussed in the two previous sections. Indeed, in a group-based dominant society, the function of these two types of capital is also related to systemic factors—the

dynamics of the receiving society, such as ethnic relations and the model of integration (Ogbu, 2003). For instance, values, such as upward mobility through a good education and hard work, may be assumed by various groups as a prerequisite to integration, but this belief can be extinguished by the mistrust of the host society. According to a recent study (Mc Andrew *et al.*, in press) which reviews the national and international literature on the various factors influencing the academic achievement of students of immigrant origin, systemic factors can be divided into three categories: context of reception and interethnic relations; educational framework, policies, and programs; as well as the practices and interactions in school context.

#### Context of reception and ethnic relations

The context of reception and interethnic relations in the host society play an important role, though often in an indirect way, in shaping the school experience of immigrant children (Ogbu, 1990; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Mc Andrew *et al.*, in press). First and foremost, immigration policies and citizenship regimes may affect the integration of immigrant families and their children in the receiving country (Schneider & Crul, 2012; OECD, 2006). For instance, more selective immigration policies in Canada and Australia result in immigrant populations with greater wealth and education, which lead to positive situations for immigrant students (OECD, 2006). Likewise, a relatively quick or slow access fundamentally influences the identity constructing and accordingly the sense of belonging of immigrant children (Ogbu, 1990; Schneider & Crul, 2012; Stepick *et al.*, 2001). However, immigration policies that retard family reunification have negative effects on immigrant children's psychological wellbeing (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). The study of Suárez-Orozco *et al.* (2011) in the United States also suggests that growing up with undocumented immigrant parents harms the psychological wellbeing and education of the children from the beginning of life through adolescence and young adulthood, because the unauthorized status restricts access to some social services, such as quality child care, preschool and higher education.

Furthermore, the extent to which a country takes an active role in recruiting immigrants can also influence its integration policies and their successful or failed implementation

(Mc Andrew *et al.*, in press). The successful implementation of integration policies allows a real social mobility for adult immigrants so that they will be in a position to effectively support the education of their children (Portes & Hao, 2004). However, the blockage (e.g. non-recognition or discounting of the educational and professional credentials by the host country) in this regard, often related to racism and discrimination results in the mistrust of the host society and its school system, since their education has not been translated into employment success (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). This perception inhibits the development of a positive attitude that schooling is a vehicle for upward social mobility, and hence the socioeducational integration of students of some groups, such as African Americans (Ogbu, 1990; Ogbu & Simmons, 1998).

A more or less balanced representation of immigrant families in the whole receiving country can constitute another factor related to the context of reception which influences the integration of immigrant students. Indeed, in many immigration countries, the immigrant population, especially new arrivals, is concentrated in the urban areas of multiethnic metropolitans and is less likely present in traditionally homogenous regions, which poses specific challenges for schools in these respective cities (Ellen *et al.*, 2002). For example, this settlement pattern can lead to a concentration of immigrant origin students in some schools and restrict their contact with native-born children, and hence set barriers for their linguistic and social integration (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2010; Lafortune, 2011). Also, in some contexts, especially in the United States and Europe, communities with a concentration of immigrants are usually served by underresourced schools, and racially and ethnically segregated institutions, which provide limited opportunities for their children (Orfield & Lee, 2005; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). However, for some ethnic groups, such as the Korean community in California, the ethnic residential concentration seems beneficial for the school career of the youth, because they are able to derive the social capital in the ethnic community, such as involving in after-school activities in the neighborhood and ethnic educational institutions (Zhou, 2003).

In addition to context of reception, interethnic relations in the host society also have both direct and indirect impact on the involvement of decision-makers and educators in the

development and implementation of school programs and practices aimed at the integration of immigrant students (Hermans, 2004; Inglis, 2008; Mc Andrew *et al.*, in press). Interethnic relations influence their attitudes and behaviour as well as those of the immigrant youth. For instance, the survey results of public opinion towards immigration and integration and the debate on various challenges posed by diversity often provide justification for existing public policies, including those concerning public education, or changes in policy direction (Delruelle & Torfs, 2005; Jedwab, 2008). Evidence also shows how the majority group views ethnic minority groups sometimes results in a variation in their academic achievement, and this impact is also demonstrated by the same group residing in different societies (Norman *et al.*, 2001, p. 1105). In this regard, the research of De Vos and Wetherrall indicates that Burakumin are ethnic Japanese who perform poorly in Japanese schools, where they are stigmatized, but perform on par with their Japanese and other Asian American counterparts in the United States. Finally, a number of studies suggest that the self-esteem of ethnic minority students can also be largely influenced by an unstated pecking order that various ethnic groups hold reflecting national and international dynamics (Benson, 1995; Gillborn & Gipps, 1996; Johnson & Acera, 1999 Klich, 1988;). Fischer (1996) and his colleagues note that the groups having a relatively negative educational profile are concurrent with occupying a low ethnic caste or status position. However, the literature does not show a strong link between these general dynamics and policy decisions, nor the practice within the school system.

#### Educational framework and programs

Many studies in the worldwide and Canadian context have documented the impact of educational policy guidelines and programs on school integration of immigrant children (Crul *et al.*, 2012; Cummins, 1986; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Base on the work of Mc Andrew *et al.* (in press), this issue can be discussed in three dimensions: the characteristics of the school system, services aimed at the integration of immigrant students, and the adaptation of the educational system to diversity.

It is well known from the literature that compared to a more stratified school system, a more open and inclusive school system with a late selection in the educational career is beneficial for many immigrant students from disadvantaged backgrounds to increase opportunities to acquire skills necessary for higher academic levels (Alba & Silberman, 2006; Crul *et al.*, 2012). For example, studies on the academic achievement of Turkish immigrant children credits the educational system with somehow more favourable outcomes achieved in France than in Germany and Austria, since students in the later two countries have a late start and early selection and the educational systems are much more selective at all important transition points (Alba & Silberman, 2006; Alba *et al.*, 2007; Crul & Vermeulen, 2003; Crul *et al.*, 2012). Yet, school systems which offer a much wider array of credentials (many of which are linked fairly explicitly to labour market) and a more developed vocational program seem to favour the integration of immigrant students in the labour market, notably those with less positive educational profile (Tanguy, 1991). There is also a consensus on the fact that educational policies aimed at developing ways of teaching and services that respond to individual differences as well as school-community collaboration have a positive influence on immigrant students' school integration (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2010; UNESCO, 2009). Despite the important impact of the characteristics of the school system, immigrant families and communities also play an active role in the educational involvement (Crul *et al.*, 2012).

With respect to school programs aimed particularly at the integration of immigrant children in school, the availability of host language teaching programs and especially the effectiveness of various models have received a lot of scholarly attention in the international and Canadian context. For instance, studies in Europe indicate that a preschool host language teaching program benefits immigrant students' linguistic integration (Crul *et al.*, 2012). However, studies in various contexts do not provide an easy way to determine to which extent immigrant students should be integrated into a regular class, or on the contrary, receive specific learning support services, and what place the heritage language should hold (Mc Andrew, 2009b). Indeed, the effectiveness of the host language acquisition for students from linguistic minority backgrounds depends largely on how it is implemented and included in educational policies, which

includes curriculum and pedagogical developments (Inglis, 2008). In this regard, the existing literature suggests that it is necessary to develop a systematic and structured program with a variety of models to respond to the different characteristics (e.g. age of arrival) of the students, and recognize the importance of heritage language teaching at the same time (Mc Andrew, 2009b). As mentioned in Section 2.1.2, the language learning process is so complex that needs not only the support from the formal educational system, but also from the wider society and family to establish an environment of exposure to native speakers.

In addition to the language teaching programs, the establishment of an inclusive and integrative school system is also necessary for adapting to the presence of immigrant students (Inglis, 2008; UNESCO, 2009). As mentioned in Chapter I, the implementation of multicultural, intercultural, or antiracist education in various contexts (other Canadian provinces and Quebec) seems to play an important role in this regard. Some concrete strategies and programs are also adopted aimed at the adaptation to a diversified school population in Canada and Quebec. One of the attempts is to release some policy guidelines to support the recognition and representation of diversity and diverse communities in the curriculum and teaching material. According to Inglis (2008), this does not only enhance the cultural capital of certain groups and individuals, but also contributes to a positive self image of minority students rather than embarrassment and negativity with respect to their background and that of their families. The representation of minority group culture, history, literacy and art in the instructional material not only help minority students develop their group self-understanding and self-esteem, but also builds bridges between different groups. Cummins' (2001) research suggests that linguistic and cultural supportive curricula provided by formal schools contribute to improving the academic outcomes of immigrant or minority students. Whereas curriculum which fails to reflect students' experience or provides only negative images of students' culture and background may lead to developing an oppositional identity that removes them further from academic success (Solomon, 1992). However, these studies have not demonstrated the extent to which an ethnocultural community should be represented in the formal curriculum in order to have enough impact on the academic

achievement of immigrant origin students. Also, whether these special curricula or programs targeting students from various communities should be provided by the common school system or by ethnospecific institutions is still a highly debated issue because of the problem of financial and personnel management.

Another attempt aimed at the adaptation to diversity and integration of immigrant students is to establish school-family-community partnership. Many studies emphasize the positive effects of a such collaboration in promoting students' academic achievement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2010) The model of Epstein and her colleagues (2009) conceptualizes "partnership" to replace the term *parental or community involvement*, because "partnership" recognizes that parents, educators and agents in the community share the responsibility for students' learning and development (p.1).

However, some researchers argue that it is not always realistic to apply this model to all families, especially some immigrant families with a disadvantaged socioeconomic background. A study conducted in Quebec suggests that there are a variety of models of school-family collaboration conducive to educational success (Vatz-Laaroussi *et al.*, 2008). These authors find that the interactions that take place between immigrant parents and school staff vary greatly according to the intensity of the relationship, the level of schooling of the parents, the cultural and social capital of the family. Assigned involvement (the school-family relationship is defined and controlled exclusively by the school), partnership collaboration (based on the equality of interactions between schools and families), and symbiotic collaboration (characterized by a close and direct relationship among each other) are the three models most commonly encountered and particularly notable for their beneficial effects on school success. Yet, the other three models are also found helpful for immigrant children whose parents are not involved directly in school activities (Kanouté, & Vatz-Laaroussi, 2008). These three models are: collaboration with a sharing space for mediation (the relationship between schools and families is established through community-based organizations), collaboration over assumed distance (characterized by a division of the responsibility between schools and

families), and collaboration in search of the visibility (characterized by a mediator involving more in school space). Immigrant students may not receive appropriate educational services due to language and cultural barriers. In this regard, community-based organizations can serve not only as a mediator helping schools send their message effectively, but also to gain an understanding of parents' concerns and resources (Kanouté, & Vatz-Laaroussi, 2008; Inglis, 2008). Further, some ethnic communities even offer supportive services and programs to train their parents so that they can participate in their children's school work, as well as in school management and decision-making processes (Zhou & Kim, 2006).

Finally, the recruitment and training of faculty members and personnel in educational institutions is also perceived as an important aspect for the adaptation to diversity by many studies in the North American context (Beynon *et al.*, 2004; Hess & Leal, 1997; Mc Andrew, 1993). Policies supporting the recruitment and presence of faculty members with diverse ethnic make up send a positive message to immigrant students as well as their families on the possibility of being treated equally and achieving school success (Beynon *et al.*, 2004; Foster, 1989; Mc Andrew, 1993). Likewise, faculty and personnel bring diverse cultural resources to the whole student body (Beynon *et al.*, 2004). Finally, immigrant teachers can represent role-models for immigrant students and their families (Hess & Leal, 1997). However, current regulations in many Canadian provinces concerning recognizing credentials of immigrant teachers have the tendency to close the door to those with foreign educational and teaching experiences (*Ibid*).

However, regardless of the ethnic origin of teachers and other school staff, it is necessary to develop training and education programs aimed at the adaptation to the needs of students with diversified backgrounds (Gagliardi, 1995; English, 2008). Meanwhile, the recruitment of teaching staff with necessary linguistic and pedagogical skills is essential for the success of innovation involving curriculum change (English, 2008). As primary socialisers of children, teachers play a role of "significant others" in students' educational experiences. School failure or marginalization of many immigrant students is in part due to the lack of teacher preparation and understanding of students' linguistic and cultural

differences, because the misinterpretation of behaviours of culturally different students and inequitable treatment of them may contribute to difficulties in learning (Merino, 1999). Proper training or appropriate cross-cultural experiences may be necessary for teachers to work effectively with immigrant students (Nieto, 1992; Valenzuela, 2000). This is particularly important in the process of initial professional development and pre-service training (English, 2008). However, in order to have an important impact on the academic achievement of immigrant students, the training should not focus exclusively on the socialization function of schooling, but also emphasize some criticisms regarding inequality in the host society and its school system (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2013).

#### Practices and interactions within school context

Many factors at school and at the classroom level can influence the educational experiences of the whole student body. These factors include physical infrastructure, the social climate and ethos, the number of students in a classroom, the neighbourhood's location, the socioeconomic environment, and the concentration of immigrants, etc. (Hoxby, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). However, some factors are particularly influential for the academic achievement and sociopsychological wellbeing of immigrant students. For instance, factors such as evaluation and assessment, openness to cultural and linguistic diversity, the climate of interethnic relations, and teachers' and other school staff's attitudes towards immigrant students, are largely studied and cited in the literature on immigrant students' school experiences (Alspaugh, 1998; Aramand, 2011; Archambault *et al.*, 2009; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

There is a large consensus in the international and Canadian literature that evaluation and assessment can significantly influence students' future (Mc Andrew *et al.*, in press). Quite frequently, standardized tests are used in this process. This, nevertheless, generates special problems for immigrant students, especially at their arrival and transition from one school level to another (Alspaugh, 1998; Mehana & Reynolds, 2004; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). On the one hand, these assessment instruments are typically developed and normed on "mainstream" students, which pose questions that are often framed around issues and content not as familiar to immigrant

children as to those brought up in the dominant culture and host language (Caesar; 2004; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). It is therefore difficult to use these instruments to recognize their knowledge and experiences at their arrival, especially non-verbal abilities of immigrant students from language minorities (Oller *et al.*, 2000). Some newly arrived immigrant students are pushed toward premature disengagement from school by the label of “failure” or “under-educated” (Bakhshaei, 2013; De Konink & Armand, 2012; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, due to the lack of cultural sensitivity and the fear of being accused as racist, many teachers and other professionals are reluctant or not able to identify the immigrant students who really have learning difficulties, which delays and sets barriers to necessary response and intervention (Marshall, 2000; Caesar, 2004).

Many indicate that a stressful school context, such as danger, violence, and absence of supportive relationships undermine the wellbeing and school performance of students, whether they are of immigrant or non-immigrant origin (Samda *et al.*, 1998). For immigrant students, other factors, including the degree of openness to linguistic and cultural diversity and the climate of interethnic relations, seem to have more important influence on self-esteem and the attitudes towards schooling of immigrant students, and hence a long-term impact on their school pathways (Cummins, 2000; Lovejoy *et al.*, 2009; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). A high value placed on students’ language and culture is beneficial for establishing a close relationship with their families and communities and to develop a sense of belonging and acceptance among the students (Cummins, 2000; Lovejoy *et al.*, 2009). Also, as mentioned above, linguistics and culture can be used as tools for pedagogical implications and to help immigrant students learn the host language and mainstream culture. For example, the study of Lovejoy *et al.* (2009) suggests that a pedagogy that validates students’ heritage language varieties taps into their personal resources for learning and enables them to connect with the curriculum (p.281). With regard to the climate of interethnic relations in school, it can be influenced by immigration and integration policies, educational guidelines, school personnel’s attitude towards diversity, and the ethnic concentration of the school. According to many American authors, a school atmosphere of hostility and conflict can push students of

some groups to adopt an “oppositional relationship” to the host society and school, and finally academic disengagement, while peaceful and nurturing interethnic relations have positive effects on immigrant students’ school outcomes (Ogbu, 2003; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Although a large concentration of a group may cause segregation, the impact of this factor on academic achievement is not clear. For instance, the research of Mc Andrew *et al.* (2010) in Quebec suggests that this factor play a positive role in the graduation of South Asian students, but disfavour the educational attainments of Central and South American students.

Finally, the attitudes of school staff, especially those of teachers, should not be ignored as a factor influencing their students’ school career (Franson, 1999; Vollmer, 2000; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2009). According to the perspective of *Interactionism*, students may incorporate the label or assessment of their intelligence and abilities given by teachers as part of their self-concept and behave as the label suggests (Alexander & Thompson, 2008). For immigrant students, their academic achievement and wellbeing can be influenced by a teacher’s attitudes towards immigration, ethnocultural communities, and cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity (Inglis, 2008). The data in Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco’s (2001) study show that teachers, who resent with their new responsibilities for teaching immigrant children, fail to engage them academically. It is easy for teachers to hold stereotypes about the intellectual or academic ability of certain groups, which can lead to higher anxiety for members of those groups when compared to students of non-stigmatized groups (Steele, 1999). Studies in the United States indicate that most teachers impose the “model minority” view on their Chinese students (Brittain, 2005, p.7). These positive attitudes of teachers can provide an important element for Chinese students to feel accepted and capable of participating in the classroom (*Ibid*). However, the “model minority” stereotype could also cause psychological problems and discrimination (Wang, 2007; Tang, 2007). For instance, the communication difficulties and enormous psychological stress experienced by many Chinese and other Asian youth have been neglected because of this stereotype teachers hold (Tang, 2007). Research in a Toronto context suggests that teachers’ low expectations towards African Canadian students constitute a factor for their lower academic achievement (Brathwaite & James,

1996; James, 1994; Solomon, 1992). The interactionist approach inspires a great deal of research into small-scale interactions in educational settings, providing valuable insights into teachers and students' behavioral patterns. However, it is also criticized for failing to show how such interaction linked into larger structures of the social system (Alexander & Thompson, 2008, p.410).

### **2.1.6 Individual characteristics**

Individuals do not only have different social features, such as gender and age of arrival, but also different states of motivation, psychosocial wellbeing, and the ability to adapt to the new environment in the host societies. All of these factors affect individuals' perspectives on school career and involvement in school-related tasks and activities, though national and international literature seems to have a tendency to overlook the presence and possibility of human agency in the reproducing and transforming of contexts.

#### Gender

Gender difference in academic achievement of the whole student body is not new in the international and Canadian context (Ballantine & Hammack, 2009; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Many past studies focus on the inequality of educational opportunity between boys and girls, especially the gender-role stereotyped domains (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002; Willis, 1977). Even nowadays, in many developing or under-developed countries, there are significantly fewer girls than boys enrolled in schools, and most of these countries located in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, though the discrepancy is declining (Ballantine & Hammack, 2009). However, studies in most Western societies tend to show the "crisis" in boys' education. In the United States, boys are found to have lower levels of high school graduations, college enrolment, and college graduations (Connell, 2000). The findings of Meisuo-Storms' (2006) research based on Finnish students demonstrate a gap between boys and girls in literacy assessment performance. She concludes that "boys tend to be reluctant to write" (p.11). In Canada, in the last three decades, a dramatic change in postsecondary enrolment has been observed, with female students outnumbering men by a substantial margin (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009). The study of

Archambault *et al.* (2009) on school engagement in Quebec also suggests that boys tend to be less engaged in many behavioural and emotional aspects of schooling. Studies focusing on gender-role socialization suggest that success in the educational arena for women is closely tied to their femininity and that they are good at following instructions and authority (Mickelson, 1989). On the other hand, boys may associate academic achievement with female traits, which reduces their likelihood of sustaining motivation for achievement (Willis, 1977).

Likewise, a significant gender gap favouring girls has also emerged in the academic outcomes of immigrant students across most ethnic groups (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009; Brandon, 1991; Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009; 2010; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Qin, 2003; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2006;). For instance, the results of Portes and Rumbaut's (2001) study on first and second generation immigrant students from diverse ethnic backgrounds show that girls attain higher grades and have higher educational and professional expectations than do their male counterparts. In the Canadian context, lower levels of high school dropouts and higher levels of postsecondary school enrolment rates are observed among immigrant girls (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009; Aydemir & Sweetman, 2006; Palameta, 2007). The first possible explanation is that immigrant girls may strive for higher levels of academic achievement because their parents would have emigrated from countries where female educational opportunities are limited, and the contrast in status and opportunities between the country of origin and the host society may become a powerful motivator for educational success (Brandon, 1991). Further, compared to their male counterparts, immigrant female students are more likely to have more sources of social capital within the family, in the form of parental monitoring and parental expectation, and outside the family, in the form of peer networks and teacher support (Qin, 2003; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2006). As mentioned above, for many immigrant boys, the construction of a masculine identity tends to be in conflict with their school agenda (Connell, 2000). Also, they are more likely to perceive racism and discrimination from mainstream society (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

### Age of arrival

A general assumption is that immigrant students who enter schools of in new countries at an earlier age may have less difficulty in learning a new language and integrating into new societies. However, this issue is highly debated and more complex than the common impression. First of all, some quantitative studies show that the impact of later entry (which is related to the age of arrival) into the school system in the host society is not consistent during different school levels and across various ethnic minority groups (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009; 2010). For example, the pan-Canadian comparative research suggests that having entered the Quebec school system directly at the secondary level, rather than at the primary level has no impact on the probability of graduating (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, some qualitative studies indicate that older immigrant children who have developed literacy in their mother tongue and have greater cognitive maturity seem to be more effective in host language acquisition than do younger children (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2006). On the other hand, younger children may acquire a more precise pronunciation, which makes them seem more fluent and competent in their second language. For adolescents, nonetheless, language learning and the adaptation process do not fit neatly into the debate on age-related capacities (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Most of them have been socialized for a relatively longer time in the previous society and face more acculturation stress as well as interpersonal problems, which pose more challenges in adapting to the host society (Kuo & Roysircar, 2004).

### School engagement

Recently, a large body of literature has emerged demonstrating the significant role of school engagement for academic success. The extent to which students are involved in what they are learning, how they are learning it, and who they are learning it with seems to play an important role in how well they do in school (Fredricks *et al.*, 2004). Researchers define this concept as a multidimensional construct that unites three components: behavioural engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement (Fredricks *et al.*, 2004; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008).

Behavioural engagement refers to the involvement in academic, social, and extracurricular activities (Fredricks *et al.*, 2004; Greenwood *et al.*, 2002; Finnie *et al.*, 2010). Studies in the American context indicate that behavioural engagement, including attending class, participating in school activities, and completing assignments is highly correlated with grades, while behavioural disengagement, such as disobedience of rules and skipping school, is associated with lower school performance across grade levels (Finn *et al.*, 1995; Finn & Rock, 1997). The research of Suárez-Orozco *et al.* (2008) on newly arrived immigrant students also shows that consistently high achievers are significantly more behaviourally engaged in school than are the low or precipitously declining performers.

Emotional engagement is used sometimes interchangeably with the concept of relational engagement (Fredricks *et al.*, 2004; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). It encompasses students' affective reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, as well as school and is presumed to create ties to an institution and influence willingness to do the work (Fredricks *et al.*, 2004, p.6). These reactions include interests, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Meaningful relationships with teachers and peers as well as positive attitudes towards school are important for the academic adaptation of all students (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). It is obvious that such relationships are particularly important for immigrant students, because social relations provide a sense of belonging to the school's environment and a sense of fit between the individual and the school in the new homeland (Finnie *et al.*, 2010; Sarason *et al.*, 1990). Also, according to Fredricks *et al.* (2004), relationships in school play a crucial role in promoting socially competent behaviour in the class room and in fostering behavioural engagement and achievement.

Cognitive engagement refers to the investment in learning, which involves self-regulation, or the degree to which the students are intellectually engaged in what they are learning (Fredricks *et al.*, 2004; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Suárez-Orozco *et al.* (2008) find that it does not have a significant correlation to GPA or standardized test scores of their immigrant student participants, but it is a significant predictor of their behavioural engagement.

Indeed, as mentioned above, both cognitive engagement and emotional engagement contribute to behavioural engagement. Yet, many factors, including the willingness to work hard, the ability to make friends and to please teachers, the availability of helpful mentors, and school climate, have significant impacts on the students' engagement (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). However, immigrant students and their families, especially new arrivals, may not have all the resources and skills to face these challenges on their own. Community-based resources are necessary to support the school career of these students.

#### Psychosocial wellbeing and adaptation ability

Psychological wellbeing (the relative absence of psychological symptoms) affects a student's ability to focus on his or her studies (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Yet, in a context of migration, a closer correlation between their wellbeing and academic achievement is observed (Bankston & Zhou, 2002; Kuo & Roysircar, 2004; Samda *et al.*, 1998). Among immigrant youth, low self-esteem has been shown to impair school performance (Wiest *et al.*, 1998; Bankston & Zhou, 2002). For instance, earlier studies on African American students' school failure suggest that school segregation and racial inequality lead to their ingrained feelings of inferiority which have negative influence on their academic achievement (Hare, 1977; Long, 1968). Nevertheless, the case of Asian immigrant students seems to show inconsistency between wellbeing and school performance. In North America, Asian immigrant adolescents report lower levels of psychological wellbeing, but they tend to have higher levels of academic achievement (Chiu & Ring, 1998; Lay & Nguyen, 1998). In this regard, some studies indicate that immigrant parent status and social capital have a complex relationship to school performance and psychological wellbeing that help to explain this apparent paradox (Bankston & Zhou, 2002; Ogbu, 1990; Coleman, 1988; 1990). Although these children may experience anxiety and depression, the intergeneration communication of their parents' desires for upward mobility and the close ties to the ethnic community may contribute to their school adjustment (Bankston & Zhou, 2002).

A person's wellbeing is one of the core psychological features of his or her eventual adaptation in the new country (Ward *et al.*, 2001). Moreover, social competence and skills in managing one's daily life in an intercultural setting are also important in this process (Berry *et al.*, 2006). Immigrant youth often experience some degree of loss, ambiguity, and conflicts in situations such as separation with family members, challenges in learning new languages and culture, and cultural dissonance, etc. The study of De Leon (2005) on Mexican immigrant students' schooling experience suggests that individuals who respond effectively to ambiguous circumstances and conflicts report higher levels of academic achievement. Further, as mentioned above, individuals who are able to establish meaningful relationships with peers and teachers can facilitate the process of adaptation. However, the ability to adapt to the host society is also influenced by other sociodemographic factors, such as age, gender, religion, and socioeconomic status (Berry *et al.*, 2006). Finally, the a high level of bilingual verbal ability is also found beneficial for immigrant youth's bicultural and double social engagement, and hence the development of their adaptation ability (Berry & Sam, 1997).

## **2.2 Reformulation of Research Questions**

### **2.2.1 Critical review of the factors vis-à-vis the research objectives**

In the previous sections, various theoretical perspectives were discussed to offer relevant insights for a broad and in-depth analysis of the factors influencing the academic achievement of immigrant students. Despite the vast literature (both quantitative and qualitative) on this issue, none of these factors alone can explain it perfectly. Neither have all of them been exhaustively examined in one ethnic group. Yet, to develop my own theoretical framework, some concerns need to be taken into account. On the one hand, any research attempting to understand the high-achieving phenomenon of Chinese students certainly needs to examine a wide variety of factors. On the other hand, some of them appear to be less relevant in the case of Chinese students in Quebec, and the impact has not been explored to the same extent (Szalacha *et al.*, 2005). In this section, I will explain the reason why some of these factors are chosen to be reviewed in detail.

### Socioeconomic status

According to the literature view, the socioeconomic status of a family may be a useful predictor for the academic achievement of the whole student body. Nevertheless, it has been identified as insignificant in the school success of some Asian immigrant groups, such as Korean and Chinese (Kim, 2006; Zhou & Kim, 2006). It is also important to recall that in the pan-Canadian and Quebec provincial studies, most sociodemographic factors, including socioeconomic status do not appear to influence Chinese speaking students' graduation rates (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009:2010). Therefore, I will not focus on this factor in this study, though the participants may be asked to provide some information regarding their education and employment due to its function in creating cultural and social capital (Coleman, 1988).

### Proficiency in the host and heritage language

From the literature review, one can see that the proficiency (of both immigrant parents and students) in the host language does have an important impact on the academic achievement of immigrant students. Given the fact that the large majority of the Chinese have a mother tongue other than English or French, the immigrant parents have probably experienced serious problems in communicating with school teachers and personnel, and the youth might also have difficulties disciplines with strong linguistic and cultural components, such as history and literature (Inglis, 2008; Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009). However, there seem to be certain ways in which Chinese parents and youths can overcome the language barrier and succeed in school. A possible explanation may be that Chinese families, schools and the ethnic community play a role in facilitating the educational experience of Chinese youth. Since few studies have provided information in this respect, this study will attempt to explore the reality of their host language learning experiences through various groups of participants, although the impact of this factor is not the main research interest.

Regarding the proficiency of the heritage languages, both quantitative and qualitative research has demonstrated its significance in contributing to school outcomes of

immigrant students. In the current study, its impact will be described from the perspective of immigrant parents and the Chinese community.

### Cultural and social capital

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of cultural capital for the Chinese and other Asian students. Nevertheless, as mentioned in Section 2.1, the preservation of ethnic culture and language needs the support of ethnic sociostructures, because the impact of the dominant group is also inevitable. The research of Mau (1997) indicates that Chinese students of the third generation and beyond have no significant differences on academic achievement from their counterparts in the majority groups, because they have been assimilated by the mainstream due to a lack of social networks in the Chinese community. As described in Chapter I, the Chinese community is highly concentrated in the immigrant gateway cities, such as Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. In these cities, they have built up mature communities and efficient networks to support their own members (Li, & Lee, 2005). As in the United States, several studies in the Canadian context indicate that the educational attainments of immigrant students are attributable to their parents' network in the ethnic community (Dinovitzer et al., 2003; Abada *et al.*, 2009). According to studies of Mc Andrew and her colleagues (2009; 2010), a possible explanation for the high academic achievement of allophone students is that the social capital that their families possess has a positive effect on the school performance of their children, though the influence of social capital has not been examined in these studies. Thus, one of the main research interests is to study the role of the Chinese community and families in preserving and creating the cultural and social capital as well as the interaction of these two types of capital.

### Systemic factors

Consistent with Ogbu's (1978; 1990) research findings, studies in Canada also suggest that power and status relations operating in the wider society are directly related to the achievement of culturally diverse students within the school context (Commins, 1997). However, the complex relations between the dominant group and certain minority groups (or between various groups) cannot be simply explained by his dichotomy. According to

Cummins (1997; 2000; 2001), although educational structures (which includes policies, programs, curriculum, and accesses) are established to achieve the goals of education defined primarily by the dominant group in the society, they are not static, as with educator role definitions: they influence the microinteractions between educators, students and communities. And the microinteractions constitute the most immediate determinant of student academic success or failure (Commins, 1997, p. 425). Therefore, in this study, my particular interest is in systemic factors at the level of school context. As mentioned in Chapter I, previous quantitative studies demonstrate that many school level variables, such as attending private school, do not affect Chinese students effectively (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009; 2010). Other school-related factors, such as teachers' attitudes and language learning assistant services are found influential to Chinese students in the American context (Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008), while few studies have been carried out in Canada or in Quebec. It is, therefore, more interesting to gain in-depth knowledge of the impact of interactions and practices on Chinese immigrant youth.

Other systemic factors, such as context of reception as well as interethnic relations and educational guidance, policies, and programs will be examined within Chinese immigrant families, because these factors influence the integration process of these families and hence the school career of their children. According to Ogbu (1998), the relationship between ethnic minority groups and the dominant groups also has an impact on the attitude of acculturation and the creation of social capital in the host society. From this perspective, I will also seek to understand how these factors reverberate at the school level and their interaction with the cultural and social capital.

### Individual characteristics

It is important to keep in mind that Chinese youth are not homogeneous. As mentioned above, the sociodemographic factors such as gender, psychological wellbeing, and age of exposure to the school system in the host society are significant for determining their school success (Mc Andrew, 2008; Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009; 2010). Other individual characteristics, such as learning competence and different abilities of acculturation and adaptation, seem to be difficult to measure. In the current study, I will not focus on the

individual characteristics, though I may have a look at the pre-migratory school experiences of the Chinese youth and their parents.

### **2.2.2 General research question**

As mentioned in Chapter I, students of Chinese origin in Quebec achieve high academic performance compared with pupils of other ethnic groups. Moreover, it is important to recall that previous quantitative studies in this French-speaking context show that many factors become irrelevant in determining the school success of these youth. In Sections 2.1 and 2.2.1, I reviewed the relevance of the factors invoked to explain the educational success of students of immigrant origin in general as well as that of Chinese youth. And this review have shown that more in-depth knowledge is needed to review the influence of the school context as well as cultural and social capital of the immigrant family and community.

Further, several studies appear to suggest that the high academic achievement of Chinese immigrant youth does not necessarily always determine their social integration in the host society. Also, some Chinese students, especially newcomers, experience tremendous psychological and social adjustment difficulties (Lee, 1994; Qin, 2007; Suárez-Orozco & Carhill, 2008; Sue & Zane, 1985). Thus, it is necessary to explore the school experience of students of Chinese origin and draw a fuller picture of their socioeducational integration in a French-speaking context. To fill up the gaps in previous quantitative studies and explore the role of these elements in detail, it is important to ask the following research question:

- **How do the school context, the dynamics of Chinese immigrant families, and community-based resources influence the educational experience of Chinese immigrant students in a French-speaking context, such as Quebec?**

### **2.2.3 Specific research questions**

Based on the literature review presented in Section 2.1, the research questions formulated in Section 2.2.2 can be specified into several sub-questions:

### School context

- 1) What is the perception of school teachers and other school personnel towards Chinese origin students and their families?

How do the available services, as well as the formal and informal curriculum contribute to school success of Chinese origin students? What are the differences in terms of these elements between different school milieus that Chinese students attend?

### Chinese family

- 1) What are attitudes and values of Chinese families towards education?
- 2) What type of supports (e.g. material, cultural, or symbolic) do they offer for the school success of their children (at home or in relation to the school)?
- 3) How do they perceive the integration of the Chinese community within the Quebec society (e.g. socioeconomic and linguistic integration, attitudes of the majority)?

### Chinese community:

- 1) What kind of services do organizations in the Chinese community provide to support the school career of Chinese origin students?
- 2) To which extent are these services utilised by Chinese families and how do they assess these services in comparison with other mainstream services available?
- 3) What other mainstream resources are available in this regard to Chinese families?

### School performance versus social integration

- 1) To which extent is the school performance of Chinese youths linked to their social integration and psychological well-being?
- 2) What are the common elements and differences between the perception of these students, their families, the Chinese community and school in this regard?
- 3) What kind of supports and services are available for the Chinese students who do not reach the “model minority” standard or who experience adjustment problems in the receiving society?

## **Chapter III Methodology**

As mentioned in Chapter I, this research seeks to draw a fuller picture of the Chinese immigrants' educational experiences in a French-speaking context and examine certain factors influencing their school success. This chapter discusses the research design, including the methodological framework, research sites, participants, data collection and analysis, as well as ethical considerations that allows attaining these two main objectives.

### **3.1 Methodological Design**

Since the methodology of a study is determined by the purpose of an inquiry, the research design must fit the objective of the investigation. As indicated in Chapters I and II, the current research is conducted to fill in the gaps in the previous quantitative studies. Although these quantitative studies have provided an overview of the educational profile of Chinese youth and some factors influencing their academic achievement, many trends observed in their school performance have not been explained in detail. Further, none of these studies has documented the realities of the school experience of Chinese immigrant students in a French-speaking context, including their immigration experience, educational needs, difficulties encountered at school, and relationships with teachers and peers. This gap in knowledge is troubling because the Chinese immigrant students are entering the Quebec educational system, and have become a fast growing segment of the school population. The current research seeks to fill these gaps in collecting data about their experience of socioeducational integration, from the perspective of the students and various actors holding educational roles (such as parents, teachers, and community agents).

A descriptive- /interpretive- qualitative inquiry is essential to provide fundamental and in-depth insights into the impact of school contexts, family, and community (both ethnic community and neighborhood) as well as the interaction of the relationships among these structures. Qualitative studies assume that systematic inquiry occurs in a natural setting aimed at obtaining an in-depth and detailed understanding, rather than experiencing the

artificial constraints associated with experiments (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rosman, 1989). According to Dezin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative data, such as the expressions, discourses, and even the subjects, allows a researcher to identify and convey information on what the participants experienced, as well as to understand the dynamics of their problems.

The choice of a particular epistemology leads to a preference for a specific methodological research design, on the grounds of its greater appropriateness given the preceding philosophical deliberations (Bryman, 1984). Quantitative methodology is a positivist approach, which uses experimental methods and quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalizations (Hoepfl, 1997). Researchers based on positivist approaches view events from the outside and from the point of view of a cluster of empirical concerns which are imposed upon social reality with little reference to the meaning of the investigations of the subject (Bryman, 1984). Qualitative research is based on the phenomenological position, which takes the actor's perspective as the empirical point of departure (Bryman, 1984; Hoepfl, 1997). In social sciences, the choice of research methods is always high debated. However, it is not necessary to pit these two paradigms against one another in a competing manner, because it is not a simply a question of "whether A is better than B", but a question of "whether A is the appropriate method in terms of particular set of epistemological premises X" (Bryman, 1984, p. 78; Hoepfl, 1997). According to Patton (1990), the choice of paradigm should seek "methodological appropriateness as the primary reason for judging methodological quality" (p.39).

The qualitative methodological design is applied in the current research for several reasons. First of all, qualitative methods can be adopted to better understand any phenomenon about which little is known (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As mentioned above, the understanding of Chinese immigrant youth's school experiences in Quebec remains limited. A qualitative approach allows for exploring the realities of their lived experiences from an inside view and in a natural setting. Moreover, qualitative methods can also be used to gain a new perspective on things about which much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively

(Hoepfl, 1997, p.48). Many factors to be examined in this study, such as cultural values, immigration process, and relationships, are not easily measured in a quantitative survey, because survey data provide superficial evidence on the social world, winking out the causal relationships between arbitrarily chosen variables which have little or no meaning to individuals whose social worlds they are meant to represent (Blumer, 1956). The adaptation of a qualitative approach in this study permits the researcher to grasp the point of view of various actors toward the school experience and social integration of students of Chinese origin. Finally, the interpretative character of a qualitative methodological design allows the researcher to find patterns in the form of themes, categories, concepts and typologies that emerge in a dynamic context, rather than one right answer or a cause-effect relationship. Since the factors identified by quantitative data are unable to convincingly explain the academic achievement of Chinese youth in Quebec, the current research attempts to capture the interactions between various factors and the trends observed and the “multiple realities” behind them, not just one conception of reality or one interpretation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

In this study, qualitative data were collected from French language schools, Chinese immigrant families, and ethnic community to gain an enhanced understanding of Chinese students’ socioeducational integration experience through multiple sources of information and informants as well as to provide a contextual situated explanation to their academic achievement. Moreover, this approach allows me to contrast the perspectives of various actors and to explore the dynamics of the interaction of different elements affecting the school experience of these students.

### **3.2 Research Site**

Chinese immigrant population in Quebec is concentrated mainly in Montreal’s Census Metropolitan Area. In 2011, this area was home to more than 91,786 people of Chinese origin (Statistics Canada). In 2006, among the Chinese Canadians who resided in Montreal’s Census Metropolitan Area, the majority (87,3%) was concentrated on the

Island of Montreal (MICC 2010). This study was therefore conducted in different sites on the Island of Montreal.

### **3.2.1 School sites**

Under Bill 101, the majority (72, 2%) of Chinese origin students attend French schools (Sun, 2011a; 2011b). Moreover, although the Chinese parents have a stronger tendency to enroll their children in private schools compared with other immigrant groups, most of them (84,2% in the French sector, and 60,5% in the English sector) still choose public schools (*Ibid*). Also, the regression analyses demonstrate that the difference between public and private sector school in this regard is not significant (*Ibid*). It is interesting to understand the paradoxical phenomenon and their high achievement in the French sector and examine the impact of school context, family and community in overcoming their cultural and language barrier. Finally, since one of the objectives of our study is to understand Chinese students' adaptation and acculturation experiences, it is appropriate to choose high school students of higher level of maturity. Three public high schools in the French sector were chosen according to different socioeconomic environment indicators to have a greater variety of data. To ensure confidentiality, schools involved in the current research have been assigned pseudonyms as School A, B, and C.

These three schools are selected through a dual process. First, based on the data provided by *le Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal* (School Tax Management Committee of the Island of Montreal), five French public high schools of two school boards on the Island of Montreal have been identified with the largest number of Chinese origin students (according to the number of Chinese speaking students registered in 2010, 2011, and 2012). Indeed, over 70% of the Chinese youth in Quebec are found in the two school boards-*la Commission scolaire de Montréal* (CSDM, French Montreal School Board) and *la Commission scolaire de Marguerite-Bourgeoys* (CSMB, *Marguerite-Bourgeoys* School Board). After having completed the ethical process which allows one to gain access to these schools, I contacted the principal or vice-principal of each school to discuss the possibility of their participation. Three schools of CSMB finally accepted to participate in the current research. These three schools are placed with a

socioeconomic environment indicator. School D of CSDM is not perceived as a target school, because no teacher or school personnel in this school participated in this study. However, as five student respondents are from this school, its characteristics and audience are also described in this section.

### Characteristics of the target schools

In this section, the characteristics of the target schools are described, based on the data obtained through the interview with school personnel, on the website of the school, and from the *le Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal*. From Table XV, one can see that all of the three focal schools have a diversified school population, especially school A, which had approximately 90% of the students registered in 2010, 2011, and 2012 with a cultural background other than English or French. Actually, all of these schools are located in a neighbourhood where immigrants concentrate, although immigrants increasingly settle in the neighbourhood where School A is found.

Table XV Multicultural Environment: Percentage of students with other cultural backgrounds in the three focal schools (2010, 2011, 2012) (%)

<b>Focal Schools</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
School A	89.5	89.7	92.1
School B	75.6	77.4	78.7
School C	61.6	50.1	55.5

Source: *Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal*, 2010, 2011, 2012

**School A** is located in a neighbourhood characterized as disadvantaged and multiethnic. In the school year of 2011-2012, according to the socioeconomic environment indicator, this school was situated in one of the most under-privileged milieus (9<sup>th</sup>) (MELS, 2012). Meanwhile, as many students from newly arrived immigrant families registered in this school, the school population is highly diversified in terms of ethnic background: 70% of the students in this school were born outside Quebec and these students are from more than 120 different countries. In addition, as indicated in Table XVI, a large proportion of students have a mother tongue other than French or English. Among the allophone students in this school, most reported Arabic, Spanish, and Chinese as their mother tongue. Arabic is the most widely used language.

Table XVI Mother Tongue: Distribution according to selected linguistic characteristics of students registered in School A (2010, 2011, 2012)

<b>Year</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Other Languages</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
2010	204	65	950	73	289	123
2011	200	69	989	70	305	105
2012	207	86	967	55	306	92

Source: *Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal*, 2010, 2011, 2012

Located in a disadvantaged neighbourhood allows School A to benefit from the intervention strategy of “*Agir autrement*” (New Approaches and New Solutions). With this strategy, human resource investments (including social workers, French corrector-examiners, sport coaches, and counsellors) have been increased to provide more learning support programs for the students. Services such as homework assistance, “alternative suspension”, academic monitoring for athletes, and exploration of the vocational training, have been implemented in this school. In cooperation with the local community, students in School A can also enjoy important sports infrastructure and involvement in a sports concentration program. With six laboratories, this school also offers a sciences concentration program. Other orientation services, such as *Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi* (youth employment assistance) and guided Open House in colleges, are also available.

**School B** is situated in a less multiethnic neighbourhood compared to School A. However, its socioeconomic environment is different (5<sup>th</sup> of the deciles) in comparison with School A (MELS, 2012). Despite the fact that this school receives many allophone students, most of them are Quebec born/raised children of immigrant origin. As in School A, among the allophone students, the largest proportion reported are Arabic speakers, followed by Chinese and Spanish speakers (Table XVII).

Table XVII Mother Tongue: Distribution according to selected linguistic characteristics of students registered in School B (2010, 2011, 2012)

<b>Year</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Other Languages</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
2010	302	46	605	72	289	49
2011	271	44	596	66	195	46
2012	240	41	582	55	249	56

Source: *Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal*, 2010, 2011, 2012

Unlike School A, School B does not receive newly arrived non-French speaking students, because it does not have any welcoming program, though students having finished their Welcoming Class process can be transferred to this school. This school is famous for music as well as literature, language and sciences programs. Two-thirds of students in this school attend the regular high school program, within which optional courses are provided to add their personal touch (“*leur touche*”). The remaining one third of students chose to register in the two abovementioned special programs. To be selected into these two programs, students must excel in all the subjects. In addition, for those who have learning difficulties in French and mathematics, remedial and homework assistance (in the form of mentoring program) services are available.

**School C** is located in a neighbourhood where there are several elite French public high schools. This neighbourhood is also characterized as ethnically and linguistically diverse, especially with a large population of Black Canadians and South Asians. According to MELS (2012), its socioeconomic environment seems to be much more privileged (4<sup>th</sup> of the deciles) than School A and B. Compared to the other two focal schools, the school population of School C is much smaller and the proportion of allophone students appear to be lower (though there more allophone students than French-speaking students). Unlike School A and B, among the students with a mother tongue other than French or English, the largest proportion reported is Chinese speaking (Table XVIII).

Table XVIII Mother Tongue: Distribution according to selected linguistic characteristics of students registered in School C (2010, 2011, 2012)

<b>Year</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Other Languages</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
2010	167	18	199	51	17	20
2011	293	31	237	56	27	26
2012	267	32	271	62	30	23

Source: *Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal*, 2010, 2011, 2012

School C is one of the top public schools in the CSMB as well as in Montreal. It asks new students to pass an entrance exam in French, mathematics, creativity, cognitive abilities, and self-awareness. Those who are transferred to this school during their secondary schooling are required to present their school report card and pass an interview with the

principal. Moreover, as an international school, the students can obtain both a Quebec and an international diploma. It also has many exchange programs with various countries, including China. School C also provides various optional language teaching programs, such as a Mandarin program, for those who desire to learn these languages.

#### Characteristics of School D

School D is also found in a socioeconomically under-privileged neighbourhood (7<sup>th</sup> of the deciles), and the school population is at the top (10th) of low-income deciles (MELS, 2012). With regard to the ethnic backgrounds of the school population, School D has the highest concentration of Chinese origin students among all the high schools in Montreal as well as in Quebec (e.g. Table XIX).

Table XIX Mother Tongue: Distribution according to selected linguistic characteristics of students registered in School D (2010, 2011, 2012)

<b>Year</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Other Languages</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
2010	153	18	447	214	49	26
2011	142	20	459	216	48	26
2012	141	19	452	199	49	23

Source: *Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal*, 2010, 2011, 2012

As with School C, School D is one of the most optimal French public schools in CSDM, as well as in Montreal. Likewise, to enrol in this school, one has to pass the admission test, even for those who intend to enter this school during their secondary schooling. As an international school, the program is recognized by MELS, *Société des écoles du monde du BI du Québec et de la Francophonie* (Society of International Baccalaureate World Schools of Quebec and French-Speaking World), and the International Baccalaureate Board. According to the student and parent respondents, School D is highly recognized and well-known in the Chinese community due to the high quality of the diploma. Under the admission conditions and standards, it is difficult for new arrivals to enter this school. Therefore, most students in this school are Quebec born/raised. To fulfill the mission of opening to the world, learning a third language (aside from French and English) and involvement in various community activities are highly encouraged in School D.

### 3.2.2 Community sites

To examine the role of the ethnic community in supporting the school career of Chinese youth, ethnic social institutions, including immigrant assistance organizations, Chinese supplementary schools, and religious organizations are also chosen as research sites. In addition, to investigate the availability of the resources in mainstream society, two community-based youth organizations are also selected.

#### Community-based immigrant or youth service organizations

The criteria of chosen community-based organizations are that they should be involved in youth activities and provide services to support the school career of Chinese youth. According to MICC (2009), more than 30 non-profit organizations in the Montreal Chinese community provide various services to assist Chinese immigrants to integrate into mainstream Quebec society. Among these organizations, more than 10 serve to promote the academic achievement of the youth in this community. Nonetheless, with the limited financial and human resources, few of them have survived. According the Chinese parent participants, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* (Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal) and *Amitié Chinoise de Montréal* (Chinese Neighbourhood Society) are the two most popular immigrant assistance organizations attended by both Chinese parents and the youth. Part of the research fieldwork is therefore conducted in these two organizations. With respect to mainstream community resources, two organizations- *Centre Accroche* as well as Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle- in the neighbourhood where School A and C located are selected to participate in this study. In the neighbourhood where School B situated, no mainstream community-based origination has met the criteria of selection.

#### Chinese supplementary schools

According to the websites of the *Chinese Yellow Pages* (<http://www.cn411.ca> and <http://www.xosearch.com>), there are more than 30 Chinese supplementary schools on the Island of Montreal. In this research, two of the focal Chinese schools are located in downtown Montreal, one of them is in Verdun. These schools were chosen because they have a relatively larger school population. For ethical reasons, these three target

supplementary schools have been assigned pseudonyms as Chinese School A, B and C. The students in these three schools ranged in age from 5-17 years old, from Montreal and the South Shore. These three schools are non-profit organizations depending on government founding and donations as their main financial resources.

**Chinese School A** was founded in 2003 in order to improve the linguistic ability of Chinese immigrant students and to help them to better integrate into the new school environment. Today, it has an annual attendance of 300-500 students. The courses provided by this school include language teaching and training programs (Chinese, French, and English), one-on-one and small class tutoring, High School Entrance Examination preparation program, traditional and modern Chinese arts, as well as various summer camps. The school is mainly operated on weekends, with the exception of some tutoring classes. In this school, information workshops concerning Quebec school systems and parenting in North America are often organized for both Chinese immigrant parents and students.

**Chinese School B** was created in 2011 with the two following main objectives. First, it seeks to improve the Chinese and English communication skills of Chinese youth in a French-speaking context and help them enrol in top English-speaking universities in North America. Second, this school also serves to transmit Chinese culture to both Chinese and Western audience. Therefore, aside from English and Chinese language classes, Chinese School B also offers cultural enrichment lessons and activities, including religions in China, History of China, Classic Chinese Painting, Chinese Dance, and Handicrafts. Meanwhile, a Western cultural heritage teaching program is also provided to a Chinese audience, and these classes include Pastry and Baking, Christmas Card Making, and Western Etiquette. Notwithstanding its short history, Chinese School B has gained an increasing popularity because of its particular programs. In 2012, it had an annual attendance of more than 200 students.

**Chinese School C** has a longer history than Chinese School A and B. It was founded in 1994 as weekend school aiming mainly at transmitting the Chinese language, especially

Mandarin. Although the goal of the school when it was firstly established was to serve the Chinese community and teach younger generations Chinese language skills, it is also open to a Western clientele. Over the years, this school has developed into one of the largest Chinese schools in North America with more than 1000 students and 100 teachers and staff. Chinese heritage and culture are very important elements in the curriculum design and they become an integral part of this school's whole course line-up. Culture and art classes include Chinese Painting, Chinese Calligraphy, Chinese Traditional Dancing, Go Chess, Martial Arts and Tai Chi. In addition, a mathematics teaching program from elementary to high school and pre-university level is also provided by Chinese School C, although these courses are taught only in Chinese.

### Church sites

As mentioned in Chapter II, ethnic religious institutions, such as churches and temples are found to be influential in the process of adaptation of newly arrived immigrants. Despite the fact that the majority of Chinese Canadians over 15 years old in Canada and Quebec are unaffiliated religiously, the Buddhist and Christian affiliation of the community has grown significantly (Skirbekk *et al.* 2012). According to the 2001 census, over 24% of the Chinese in Montreal were Christians and 19% of them were Buddhists (Statistics Canada). The *Chinese Yellow Pages* and *Chinese Canadian Business Directory* (<http://belllist.com/english/quebec>) show that there are 14 Christian churches and 7 Buddhist temples or associations in the Greater Montreal Area. Due to the fact that few Chinese youth in Montreal are involved in the Buddhist temples or associations, this study focuses only on Christian churches to examine the impact of ethnic religious institutions on Chinese immigrant students' academic achievement.<sup>19</sup>

All of the ethnic Chinese churches registered on the *Chinese yellow pages* organize youth fellowships and Sunday schools. Some of these Sunday schools have developed into Chinese language schools, which provide both heritage and host language teaching programs. In the current research, I zoom in on two Chinese Evangelical churches to

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<sup>19</sup> According to the *Chinese Yellow Pages* and *Chinese Canadian Business Directory* and the author's own survey (telephone survey), there is not any Buddhist temple or association provide youth programs, while all the churches in Montreal have established a Sunday school or other youth programs.

explore the role they play in the social educational integration of Chinese youth. The two focal churches have the largest Chinese congregation in Montreal: Chinese Church A has approximately 250 adult members and 100 children, and Chinese Church B has more than 300 adult members and 120 children.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The research data were collected on the Island of Montreal through mainly semi-structured, in-depth interviews with different groups of participants during a period of one and a half years. Other data collecting instruments, including document review and media content analysis, were also applied to provide some background information and study some of the factors, such as community-based resources.

#### **3.3.1 In-depth interview**

In-depth interviews (also called *qualitative interviews*) consist of open-ended questions and provide in-depth information about a participant's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations and feelings about a topic (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Patton, 1987). Patton (1987) suggests three following basic approaches to conduct in-depth interviews:

1) the informal conversational interview

In this type of interview, the interviewer discusses the topics of interest and follows all leads that emerge during the discussion (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 183). Informal conversational interviews are typical of "ongoing" participant observation fieldwork (Berry, 1999).

2) the general interview guide approach (also called guided interview)

In this type of interview, the interviewer enters the interview session with a plan to explore specific topics and to ask relevant open-ended questions to the interviewee (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Compared with the informal conversational interview, it allows interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters traced out by the aim of his or her study (Wenden, 1982).

3) the standardized open-ended interview

Interviewers using this approach prepare a set of open-ended questions which are carefully worded and arranged for the purpose of minimising variation in the questions posed to the interviewees (Berry, 1999, para. 6). Usually, the interviewer reads the questions exactly as written and in the same order to all interviewees.

The first two types of interview were applied in this study. The informal conversational interview was used as the ongoing and complementary part of the second type of interview. Semi-structured interview was chosen because it allowed me to limit the interview time and at the same time to bring up new questions in the interview session without constraining myself to a particular format. For the second type of interview, I used face-to-face verbal interchanges with the participants, and they were asked open-ended questions. Given the fact that no single causal system can explain the educational success of students of immigrant origin, it is important to apply a multiple-perspective. Therefore, during the data collection procedure, interviews were conducted with four groups of participants: teachers and other school personnel, students of Chinese origin, Chinese immigrant parents, and community agents (from both mainstream and ethnic community organizations). These interviews were carried out in two forms according to the participants' convenience: individual interview and focus-group meeting. Throughout the study, interviews were mainly conducted in French, though three students and several community agents (in the Chinese community) were interviewed in English, and most parents were interviewed in Mandarin (only two of them were interviewed in English). Some of the quotations derived from the interviews used in this text have been translated from Mandarin into English. The interview protocols (Appendix B) were inspired by instruments developed in two former research projects on the Quebec Black and South-Asian communities under the direction of my thesis advisor (see Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2008b; Bakhshaei *et al.*, 2012).

#### Interview with teachers and other school personnel

As mentioned in Chapter II, practices and interactions in school context, such as assessment instruments, ethnic relations, and the attitudes of teachers, have important influence on students of immigrant origin (Alspaugh, 1998; Franso, 1999; Vollmer, 2000;

Mehana & Reynold, 2004; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008; Samda *et al.*, 1998;). To capture the characteristics of the focal schools and identify the influence of the French-speaking school context in Quebec, in-depth data were collected through the interviews with teachers and other school personnel. Also, the data allowed an exploration the influence of Chinese immigrant families and community from the perspective of mainstream French schools.

As illustrated in Section 3.2.1, with the permission of the school boards and the discussion with several principals or vice-principals, three schools of CSMB finally accepted to participate in this study. In each school, the first step was to carry out an interview of 90 minutes with one of the school administrators. In School A and B, I interviewed the assistant-principal of Grades 4 and 5. In School C, the interview was conducted with a vice-principal. As indicated in Appendix B-I, the objectives of these interviews were:

- 1) to identify the influence of practices and services (welcoming programs, school climate, the nature of the programs, etc. ) of the target schools and to explore the school pathways and performance of Chinese immigrant students as well as their socioeducational integration experience and psychological wellbeing;
- 2) to examine the strategies of educational involvement of Chinese immigrant parents in their children's school career and the school-family relations and communication;
- 3) to investigate the available resources in both the mainstream and ethnic Chinese community-based organizations and the school-family-community partnership;
- 4) to identify the needs of the target schools for promoting the academic achievement and social integration of Chinese immigrant youth and innovative practices for support those who have learning difficulties;
- 5) to solicit their support to recruit teachers and other personnel, Chinese students, and their parents for their participation in this study;
- 6) to solicit their support for the recruitment of mainstream-community based organizations in which Chinese youth or their parents have been involved in.

With the support of these school administrators, for the second step of data collection in school sites, interviews were conducted with teachers and non-teaching professionals. Since School B and C do not receive students without any French-speaking background, I chose to interview two teachers in Welcoming Class in School A to identify the difficulties and challenges faced by newly arrived Chinese students. In this regard, I also interviewed a pedagogical advisor in this school. In School B, interviews were carried out with a French teacher in Grade 4 as well a French teacher and mathematics teacher in Grade 5. In School C, I interviewed a pedagogical advisor, a sciences teacher in Grade 4, a French teacher in Grade 5, and a teacher who is responsible for extracurricular activities. All the interviews lasted for 60-90 minutes. The objectives of these interviews (see Appendix B-II) were:

- 1) to explore the school pathways and performance of Chinese immigrant students as well as their socioeducational integration experience and psychological wellbeing;
- 2) to identify the needs of the target schools for promoting the academic achievement and social integration of Chinese immigrant youth and innovative practices for supporting those who have learning difficulties;
- 3) to examine the strategies of educational involvement of Chinese immigrant parents in their children's school career and the school-family relations as well as parent-teacher communication, especially the problems encountered by the parents;
- 4) to investigate the available resources in both the mainstream and ethnic Chinese community-based organizations and the school-family-community partnership;
- 5) to solicit their support to recruit Chinese students and their parents for the participation in this study;

As can be seen in Table XX, in the three target French public schools, 11 interviews (2 focus-group meetings and 9 individual interviews) were conducted with teachers and other school personnel and 13 respondents participated in these interviews.

Table XX Interviews with Teachers and Other School Personnel in Target French Schools

	<b>School A</b>	<b>School B</b>	<b>School C</b>
School administrators	1) An individual interview with assistant-principal of Grades 4 and 5	1) An individual interview with assistant-principal of Grades 4 and 5	1) An individual interview with a vice-principal
Teachers	1) An individual interview with a pedagogical advisor 2) A focus-group with two French teachers in Welcoming Class	1) An individual interview with a French teacher in Secondary 4 2) An individual interview with a French teacher in Secondary 5 focus-group with two French teacher 3) An individual interview with a mathematics teacher in Secondary 5	1) A focus-group with three teachers: a sciences French teacher in Secondary 4, a French teacher in Secondary 5
Non-teaching professionals	1) An individual interview with pedagogical advisor		1) An individual interview with pedagogical advisor 2) An individual interview with a teacher who is responsible for extracurricular activities

### Interview with students of Chinese origin

Although this study does not focus on the individual characteristics, given the important role of the student as an actor in his or her achievement, it is necessary to explore their attitudes and values towards education, the reality of their school experience in Quebec, as well as the impact of family, school, and community dynamics from their perspective (Bakhshaei, 2013). To collect data from student respondents of Chinese origin, five focus-group meetings and two individual interviews were carried out. These interviews were aimed to (see Appendix B-III):

- 1) explore the reality of their school experience, their relationship with teachers and peers, the difficulties they encountered in terms of academic achievement and social integration, and their educational needs;
- 2) examine the impact of family dynamics and parental involvement from their perspective;
- 3) identify the available community-based resources for them their participation in activities organized by these organizations.

With the assistance of teachers and other school personnel, I planned to interview Chinese students with contrasting experiences both in terms of achievement, social integration, as well as sociodemographic and economic profile. For this reason, we selected three French schools with different characteristics. Those who were born in Quebec or who entered the Quebec educational system before their secondary schooling were defined as Quebec born/raised Chinese students and those who have lived in Quebec for less than three years were defined as new arrivals.

In School A, a focus-group meeting was conducted with three Chinese students. All of them were born in Mainland China and came to Quebec during their adolescence (Table XXI). During the interview, I was told that all of them were recently transferred from Welcoming classes to a regular class.

In School B, three students in Secondary 5 participated in a focus-group meeting. These students arrived in Quebec during their primary schooling (Table XXII). As can be seen

from Table XXII, one of them was born in Mainland China. The other two boys were born in Vietnam and Madagascar. They indicate that their parents immigrated to these two countries from China during their early age. From the tables below, one can see that two of the students in School B speak French at home, and they are indeed the only two among all the student participants who do so.

In School C, two students in Secondary 4 and five students in Secondary 5 were interviewed in a focus-group meeting. The student respondents in this school are more likely to be Quebec born/raised (Table XXIII). It is interesting to see from Table 26, that most of these students speak both Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese) and English at home, although they are enrolled in a French-speaking school.

In addition, I recruited seven other students through the Chinese Church B and three Chinese language schools. With these respondents, two individual interviews and two focus groups (2-3 for each) were carried out. Among these seven student respondents, five of them were from School D and two were from other French public high schools (since they are from different schools, I use church B as their affiliation), and most of them are Quebec born/raised (Table XXIV and XXV). It is surprising that two students from Church B speak only English at home, even though one of them claimed their mother tongue is Mandarin.

In short, twenty Chinese students participated in the current research, of which seven were girls, thirteen were boys. With regard to their place of birth, ten were born in Mainland China, seven were born in Quebec, one was born in Hong Kong, one was born in Vietnam, and the other one was born in Madagascar. All the parents of these students came from outside Canada. Most of them have Chinese as their mother tongue and speak Chinese and English at home.

Table XXI Sociodemographic profile of Chinese student respondents, School A

	<b>Name</b>	<b>School level</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>Mother tongue</b>	<b>Age of arrival</b>	<b>Language used at home</b>	<b>Place of birth of the parents</b>
1	Jun	Grade 3	Boy	16	Mainland China	Mandarin	14	Mandarin	Mainland China
2	Lei	Grade 4	Boy	17	Mainland China	Mandarin	15	Mandarin	Mainland China
3	Lucy	Grade 3	Girl	16	Mainland China	Mandarin	14	Mandarin	Mainland China

Table XXII Sociodemographic profile of Chinese student respondents, School B

	<b>Name</b>	<b>School level</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>Mother tongue</b>	<b>Age of arrival</b>	<b>Language used at home</b>	<b>Place of birth of the parents</b>
1	Étienne	Grade 5	Boy	17	Vietnam	Vietnamese	7	Vietnamese	Mainland China
2	Wenhao	Grade 5	Boy	16	Mainland China	Mandarin	10	Mandarin/French	Mainland China
3	Jack	Grade 5	Boy	16	Madagascar	Malagasy/French	10	Malagasy/French	Mainland China

Table XXIII Sociodemographic profile of Chinese student respondents, Chinese School C

	<b>Name</b>	<b>School level</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>Mother tongue</b>	<b>Age of arrival</b>	<b>Language used at home</b>	<b>Place of birth of the parents</b>
1	Sarah	Grade 5	Girl	16	Mainland China	Mandarin	5	Mandarin/English	Mainland China
2	Jiale	Grade 5	Boy	17	Mainland China	Mandarin	9	Mandarin	Mainland China
3	Joshua	Grade 5	Boy	17	Hong Kong	Cantonese	5	English	Hong Kong
4	Mei	Grade 4	Girl	15	Quebec	Mandarin	N/A	Mandarin/English	Mainland China
5	Henry	Grade 5	Boy	17	Mainland China	Mandarin	4	Mandarin	Mainland China
6	Jenny	Grade 5	Girl	16	Mainland China	Mandarin	8	Mandarin/English	Mainland China
7	Samuel	Grade 4	Boy	15	Quebec	Cantonese	N/A	Cantonese/English	Hong Kong

Table XXIV Sociodemographic profile of Chinese student respondents, School D

	<b>Name</b>	<b>School level</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>Mother tongue</b>	<b>Age of arrival</b>	<b>Language used at home</b>	<b>Place of birth of the parents</b>
1	Lina	Grade 2	Girl	13	Quebec	Mandarin	N/A	Mandarin	Mainland China
2	Haoran	Grade 5	Boy	16	Mainland China	Mandarin	8	Mandarin	Mainland China
3	David	Grade 4	Boy	15	Quebec	Mandarin	10	Mandarin/English	Mainland China
4	Tian	Grade 5	Boy	17	Mainland China	Mandarin	7	Mandarin	Mainland China
5	Shuhuang	Grade 3	Girl	14	Quebec	Mandarin	N/A	Mandarin/English	Mainland China

Table XXV Sociodemographic profile of Chinese student respondents, Chinese Church B

	<b>Name</b>	<b>School level</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>Mother tongue</b>	<b>Age of arrival</b>	<b>Language used at home</b>	<b>Place of birth of the parents</b>
1	Mary	Grade 3	Girl	14	Quebec	Mandarin	N/A	English	Mainland China
2	Joe	Grade 2	Boy	13	Quebec	English	N/A	English	Hong Kong

### Interview with Chinese immigrant parents

Despite the importance of social context and school dynamics, the involvement of the family plays a crucial role in the educational success of students of immigrant origin. By reviewing the national and international literature in Chapter II, one can see that among the characteristics which favor the achievement, some are related to socioeconomic status and material investment, while others are related to the immigrant family's cultural capital and capital, and their perspective towards the host society and its school system (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009; Morgan *et al.*, 2009; Yet *et al.*, 2008; Zhou & Kim, 2006; Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). In this regard, ten individual interviews and two focus-group meetings (2-3 people) were carried out with Chinese parent participants. These interviews sought to (see Appendix B-IV):

- 1) explore the influence of family dynamics, such as their migration project, and integration experiences, and strategies of educational involvement, on their children's academic achievement and social integration;
- 2) understand the expectations of Chinese immigrant parents on their children's academic achievement as well as their difficulties and needs in terms of educational involvement and how these factors influence their children's socio-educational experiences;
- 3) examine the perception of Chinese immigrant parents towards Quebec society and its school system as well as parent-school relations;
- 4) review the community-based resources and Chinese parents' attendance and utilisation of these resources.

The criteria for selecting Chinese immigrants are: those who lived in Quebec (Montreal) for more than six months and also have children enrolled in a French public high school. To recruit Chinese immigrant parent participants, two approaches were applied to gain access. First, teachers and school personnel as well as Chinese students interviewed in the three target schools were asked to assist to recruit Chinese parents. However, this approach did not prove to be efficient. Some of the target schools were cooperative in this regard, and even in those where we received assistance from the school personnel, the parents did not react every actively to our solicitation. Indeed, it is important to say that

this problem occurred quite often in other studies, especially those targeting communities who are considered not participating in a significant manner in school activities (Bakhshaei, 2013; Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2008a). Only two parents of the student respondents were willing to participate in this research. As a second strategy to recruit more Chinese parents, I solicited the support of respondents from ethnic community-based organizations. With the assistance of these organizations, I was able to convince thirteen other Chinese parents to participate in the study. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that most of the parent participants were not the parents of the student respondents.

Ideally, it might have been desirable that parent respondents be the parents of the student participants. This would allow examining their perception on the same topics. However, despite the assistance of ethnic community-based organizations, it was difficult to recruit parents. Indeed, many Chinese parents work overtime and do not have any time for other activities. Also, most of them had never had experiences of participation in academic research back in China. It is understandable that the parents of the students interviewed did not agree to participate in this study.

Table XXVI shows that most of the parent participants were born in Mainland China (only one was born in Hong Kong and one in Taiwan). All of them received postsecondary education in their country of origin. One of them has a college diploma, eight have a graduate degree, and six have a postgraduate degree. All of these parents worked as professionals or civil servants in their country of origin. However, after coming to Quebec, three of them performed manual labour, four became small enterprise operators, five still worked as professionals (two have changed their field of working), three stayed home to take care of their families. Also, during the process of recruitment, Chinese fathers seemed to hesitate to participate in the research, and their main reason was “I don’t have any time to do it”. As one can see from Table XXVII, there was only one Chinese father who finally participated in this study.

Table XXVI Characteristics of Chinese parent participants

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Current occupation</b>	<b>Occupation in the country of origin</b>
1	Mrs. Wang	Mainland China	Graduate	Manual labour	Civil servant
2	Mrs. Li	Mainland China	Graduate	Engineer	Engineer
3	Mrs. Guo	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Landlady	Chemist
4	Mrs. Chow	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Occupational therapist	Civil servant
5	Mrs. Choi	Hong Kong	Postgraduate	Librarian	English teacher
6	Mrs. Lian	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Small restaurant owner	Chinese teacher
7	Mrs. Fang	Mainland China	Graduate	Manual labour	Artist
8	Mrs. Huang	Mainland China	Graduate	Convenience store operator	Pharmacist
9	Mrs. Kwan	Taiwan	Postgraduate	Housewife	Professor
10	Mrs. Liu	Mainland China	Graduate	Housewife	Fashion designer
11	Mrs. Yang	Mainland China	College	Manual labour	Accountant
12	Mrs. Chan	Mainland China	Graduate	Preschool teacher	Preschool teacher
13	Mrs. Zhang	Mainland China	Graduate	Housewife	Biologist
14	Mrs. Cui	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Convenience store operator	Physician
15	Mr. Wang	Mainland China	Graduate	Engineer	Engineer

### Interview with Community agents

Notwithstanding its important role, the school can not alone ensure the educational success of students, regardless of their origin. This objective requires all types of resources in the community. For students of immigrant origin, the exchange of social capital within the ethnic community seems to be more crucial due to the special difficulties they confront in the host society (Kao, 2004; Lenoard, 2004; Zhou, 1997). In this respect, ten individual interviews and two focus-group meetings (2 people) were conducted with fourteen community agents from the abovementioned organizations. These interviews were aimed to (see Appendix B-V):

- 1) explore the socio-educational integration experience of Chinese immigrant students from the perspective of the community agents;
- 2) examine various community-based resources and their influence on Chinese youth's academic achievement and social integration;
- 3) gather data on the perception of community agents towards the involvement and needs of Chinese immigrant families concerning the children's school career;
- 4) solicit the support of community agents in recruiting Chinese parents for their participation in this study.

As described in Section 3.2.2, four community-based immigrant or youth service organizations, three Chinese supplementary schools, and two Chinese ethnic churches were selected to participate in the current research (Table XXVII).

Table XXVII Characteristics of community agent participants

	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Position of the interviewee</b>
1	<i>Service à famille chinoise du</i>	Social worker
2	<i>Grand-Montréal</i>	Social worker
3	<i>Amitié chinoise de Montréal</i>	Social worker
4		Social worker
5	Chinese School A	Principal
6	Chinese School B	Principal
7		English teacher
8	Chinese School C	Principal
9		Chinese teacher
10	Chinese Church A	Youth minister

11	Chinese church B	Youth minister
12	Centre Accroche	Executive director
13	Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle	Educational Program Coordinator
14		Teens Program Coordinator

### 3.3.2 Document review and media content analysis

#### Document review

Document review was conducted to collect some background information on mainstream French schools and various community-based organizations and to enrich the interview data.

- 1) Government documents and websites of the three target mainstream French schools were examined to provide information about the characteristics of these schools;
- 2) Websites, newsletters, and textbooks in the three Chinese supplementary schools to understand the history, the purpose, and the organization of these schools as well as the services and programs they offer (e.g. Picture 1).

Picture 1 Welcoming and Pre-school programs in Chinese School A

The screenshot shows the website interface for Chinese School A. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: 首页, 关于我们, 课程介绍, 教学园地, 金榜题名, 假日营, 枫叶影集, 教育资讯, 招贤纳士, 联系我们. Below this is a sidebar with a list of course categories: 最新开班, 常规开班, 中考课程, 插考课程, 走出欢迎班, 数学竞赛, 留学移民, 中文学习, 职业培训课程. The main content area is titled '移民新生欢迎班与学前班' (Immigrant Newcomer Welcome Class and Pre-school Class) and includes a sub-header '【字号: 大 中 小】'. The text describes the program's purpose, eligibility criteria, and enrollment process. It mentions that students can enroll at any time and start classes in the following week. It also notes that students with a basic understanding of French can enroll directly, while others may need to attend a pre-school class first. The program aims to help students adapt to the local education system and provides support for those who struggle in regular classes.

Source: Website of Chinese School A

- 3) Publications of immigrant youth service organizations, such as annual reports, were examined to get a broad view of their programs and services.

### Media content analysis

According to Zhou and Cai (2002), as a type of ethnic community-based resources, Chinese language media plays an important role in the adaptation and integration of Chinese immigrants in the United States. To explore the influence of ethnic media in the Montreal Chinese community, media content analysis was also carried out in this study.

Media content analysis is the deconstruction of pieces of media with a tendency towards either quantitative or qualitative research methods (Bryant, 2013). Data collected through quantitative methods are determined by keywords in context, circulation of the media, and frequency, because quantitative methods point to a structured and consequently restricted form of gathering information from clips of media (Bryant, 2013; Macnamara, 2005). Qualitative analysis examines the relationship between the text and its likely audience meaning, recognizing that media texts are *polysemic* and try to determine the likely meaning of the texts to the audience (Macnamara, 2005, p. 5). In this study, the qualitative methods were mainly applied to examine the influence of media coverage of education on Chinese audiences.

Based on the interview data with Chinese immigrant parents, the most influential newspapers, TV channels, and Montreal-based websites were chosen to be reviewed. I first collected content analysis of three major Chinese newspapers- *The Chinese Press*, *Sinoquebec Chinese Weekly*, and *Seven Days*, and *Éventuel* during six months (from August 2012 to December 2012), and then identified articles in the section of education of the four weeklies. In addition, by examining the directories as well as schedules of the available Chinese Television Channels and watching their programs (randomly chosen) during one year (from January 2012 to December 2012), I also analyzed educational broadcasting from two paid satellite TV channels and a UHF channel in Montreal. Finally, I surfed two of the Montreal-based Chinese websites once a week during one year (from January 2012 to December 2012) to review the online publication coverage on education.

### 3.4 Role of the Researcher

As a person who received my education in China, I inherited Chinese language (Mandarin) and culture. As a newcomer to Canada, I have also faced cultural conflicts. All of these similar experiences can facilitate the contact with the Chinese community. Furthermore, my status of a fellow immigrant, a Chinese woman, and a Christian has afforded me easier access to the inner world of recent Chinese immigrant families and helped obtain information about their perspectives. However, attending a mainstream French-speaking church and being admitted to a doctoral program in a French-speaking university (where I am immersed in the French language and culture), I have been largely spared the physical and emotional torment of being unemployed or even marginalized in Quebec society. Throughout the study, I have to challenge my own assumptions about the prejudices of an insider towards my participation rooted in my prior knowledge of the Chinese culture, my religious faith, and/or my own migratory experience to Quebec (Delyser, 2001, Hewitt-Taylor, 2002). To minimize this subjectivity, participant checks were pursued in this study. I sent the transcripts and analysis results to the Chinese interviewees (parents and community agents) to verify whether my interpretations reflect their meanings.

Also, the role of insider, especially the same ethnic identity with the participants, may limit what a researcher intends to accomplish (Wax, 1979). It is necessary to maintain good relationships with mutual exchanges and reciprocity during the data collection. For example, some parents asked me to interpret when having parent-teacher meetings or to help their children with homework. However, such exchange or reciprocity can jeopardize the long term research goals in certain circumstances (Zinn, 1979). It is not only a question of time consuming, but also a question of place the researcher in a “non-objective” position.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, a request phrased in insider terms has a special ethnical and political meaning to a researcher who has taken a consciously insider position (*Ibid*, p. 216). Also, some people may develop self-protective behaviours for dealing with the insider. For instance, some teacher respondents from French public

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<sup>20</sup> For instance, the researcher may be asked for assistance in dealing with officials.

schools indicated that to avoid exposing their problems to co-ethnic members, some Chinese parents are reluctant to seek help from the organizations in the Chinese community. To minimize this problem, I tended to keep a certain distance with a triangulation of multiple data sources as adopted in this study.

For the school teachers and personnel as well as mainstream community agents, I played the role of “outsider”. Thus, some people interviewed might not feel comfortable and express themselves honestly with a researcher who shares the same background with the population being studied. They may be afraid of being criticized as “racist” or lacking in cultural sensitivity. Therefore, I participated in some volunteer activities in the three target French schools and the two mainstream organizations to minimize this disadvantage as an outsider and build a mutual trustful relationship with these respondents. Also, as a person who has never attended a secondary school in Quebec, I also conducted some informal observations of the target schools to familiarize myself with the Quebec educational system, though the data collection is not based on this instrument.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The purpose of the data analysis in this qualitative research is to bring a clear understanding of how the information generated from interviews as well as document and media review answers the research questions. Johnson and Christensen (2004) indicate that in qualitative studies, data analysis takes place in parallel with data collection, because collecting qualitative data usually covers a long time period, and researchers need to use this method to develop a successively deeper understanding of their research topic and to guide each round of data collection.

During the procedure of descriptive/interpretative analysis, it is important to firstly organize the qualitative data in a certain way. Therefore, the “segmentation” and “decontextualization” (Tesch, 1990) were carried out to develop an organizing system,

and this first step took place after the interview data were transcribed and translated.<sup>21</sup> An informal form of codification was applied to the data without purposefully incorporating the theoretical framework, because it allows me to reflect during the subsequent interviews. By reading the text carefully for twice, I then wrote brief description in the margin next to the pertinent portion of text to identify the features and patterns of the data (e.g., Picture 2).

Picture 2: An example of describing the features of the data

Comment te vois-tu dans 15 ans? Quels sont tes projets professionnels d'avenir?«

- 1- J'espère trouver mon autre moitié et être mariée au proche. J'espère aussi avoir une carrière stable, un revenu stable et vivre bien. J'aimerais habiter au centre-ville où il y a plein de magasins. Mes parents, comme tous les parents asiatiques, aimeraient que j'aille en médecine, ça me dérange pas. C'est pas juste le salaire, c'est un travail stable. Tu peux jamais être sans emplois. On a besoin de toi et les gens vont être reconnaissants de ce que tu fais. C'est un emploi à tous les aspects. »
- 2- J'espère avoir une maison pour moi-même et un travail j'aime. Je veux pas toujours vivre dans un appartement. Ma famille veut que je devienne médecin, mais moi, personnellement, je préfère les arts, mais ça me dérange pas aller en médecine non plus, je m'intéresse un peu aussi, mais c'est pas mon top choice, mon premier choix. »
- 3- J'aimerais travailler en nutrition, parce que j'aime manger et j'aimerais être sage quand je choisis mes nourritures. »
- 4- La médecine m'intéresse, mais j'aime pas regarder le corps, donc je pense que je vais aller

**批注 [UW11]:** Parental expectation and career aspiration- sciences, medicine«

**批注 [UW12]:** Career aspiration-when the parental expectations do not correspond with their own goal, they tend to eventually follow their directions«

The second step of of descriptive/interpretative analysis was to categorize and recontextualize the data (Tesch, 1990). The abbreviations of the brief description (made in the first step of analysis) become the codes. In the coding process, text segments were tagged with information about the categories into which they belong. Meanwhile, the coding system was continuously evaluated to determine how effectively it addressed the data and the theoretical framework. All the textual work was constantly compared and contrasted to the coding to identify and develop meaningful themes. With these themes, I then sketched the educational experience of Chinese youth into tables (Excel) and graphs (e.g. Picture 3). Transcripts and texts of significant themes were then selected and refined in the chapters of analysis. Also, I attempted to reconstruct the different groups of participants' realities and portray the multiple viewpoints in the case (*Ibid*, p. 379).

<sup>21</sup> As mentioned above, some interviews were translated from Chinese to English.

Picture 3: Example of tables with meaningful themes

A5 The influence of supplementary institutions						
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Basic information of the supplementary school in the Chinese community	Chinese School A: Year funded: 2003, Courses offer: English, French, Chinese (not many classes), Maths, Sciences, Crash-Classes (High School Entrance Exams), Role of interviewee: principal of the school and Maths teacher				
2		Chinese School B: Year funded: 2011, Courses offered: English, French, Chinese, Chinese Paper Cutting, Chinese Kongfu, Western Cooking, Pastry & Baking, Role of interviewee: principal of the school,				
3		Chinese School C: Year funded: 1994, Courses offered: Chinese, French (not many classes), English Maths, Music, Fine Arts, Role of interviewee: Chinese teachers,				
4						
5	The influence of supplementary institutes	Direct Assistance	Host Language teaching for pupils	English and French		
6			Maths and Sciences Classes	teaching in French		
7			Tutoring	all kinds of subjects		
8			Cultivate good study habit	especially reading in french		
9		Indirect Assistance and Educational Integration	Information about the school system in Quebec	lectures, conferences and seminars held by these schools. Many parents participated in these activities	high school ranking, request of entering certain school	
10			sharing experience of other students	seminar about how to get in top schools and scholars	given by experienced students	
11			setting role model	students in top high schools and universities		
12			counseling (socio-psychological assistance)	pupils have difficulty in adapting to a new school or have conflict with their	meeting with parents and lectures about parenting	
13			mediator between school and parents	translation and communication		
14			English and French courses for parents			

During the coding process, a hand-analyzed approach was chosen instead of a computer program (such as QDA-Miner or Nvivo). The use of computer programs may facilitate data organization and searches, but “they do not analyze data for you” (Creswell, 2008, p. 248). As mentioned in Chapter II, the factors that influence the academic achievement of immigrant students are interacted and interrelated with each other. Given the complexity of the relations among these elements, the choice of using computer programs appears to be inappropriate, since these softwares do not appear to produce detailed analyses.

### 3.6 Validity and Reliability

A common criticism towards qualitative research is that it fails to adhere to canons of validity and reliability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). In qualitative studies, validity refers to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation or interpretation (Maxwell, 1996). Reliability refers to “whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam, 1998). In this study, to ensure the descriptive validity, all the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. In addition, triangulation of multiple data sources as well as methods and member checking have added to the validity and reliability of this study (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Section 3.3 shows that multiple sources of data collection. Different groups of participants, including teachers and other school personnel, Chinese immigrant parents and students, community agents were triangulated to find common themes or categories by eliminating overlapping areas. Also, to locate themes, this study provides corroborating evidence collected through in-depth interviews, document review, and media content analysis. As Creswell (2002) stated:

Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection...This ensures that the study will be accurate because the information is not drawn from a single source, individual, or process of data collection. In this way, it encourages the researcher to develop a report that is both accurate and credible (p.280).

Finally, as mentioned in Section 3.4, to minimize the subjectivity, some participants were asked to review the transcripts and analysis results. These participants were asked if the themes make sense, whether they have been developed with sufficient evidence, and whether the overall account is realistic and accurate. I thereby incorporate their comments into the final analysis and narrative.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

This research was conducted after being reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee (Comité plurifacitaire d'éthique de la recherche, CPÉR) of Université de Montréal (Appendix A). A specific informed consent form was designed for each group of participants (see Appendix X). Any information that was obtained in connection with this study and that could be identified with students will remain confidential. To prevent access by unauthorized personnel, all the interview guides and transcripts are kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office and the audio files are saved on a personal computer with a security lock. Several years later, personal data and audio files will be shredded and erased. The physical, psychological, social and legal risk to the participants will be minimal. To ensure confidentiality, all the interviewees and schools involved in this research have been assigned pseudonyms.

## Chapter IV School Experience in a French- Speaking Context

One of the objectives of the current research is to explore the reality of Chinese students' school experience in a French-speaking context. This first chapter of analysis attempts to present the school pathways and performances, social integration, and psychological wellbeing of these students mainly from the perspective of various groups of participants. Meanwhile, from a comparative perspective, the data in this chapter also examine how some of the characteristics of the students and the school influence their socioeducational integration.

### 4.1 School Pathways

#### 4.1.1 Age of arrival and level of entry into the Quebec school system

**School A-**As described in Chapter III, School A is located in a neighbourhood characterized as disadvantaged and multiethnic. Since this school is the only French public school in the neighbourhood, it offers welcoming class services to the newly arrived immigrant students to respond to their needs of adapting in a French-language school system. According to the assistant-principal and teachers interviewed in this school, most of the Chinese students came recently to Quebec at the age of 14-17 years old. By the end of the 1990s, most Chinese youth were from Hong Kong because of the Transfer of Sovereignty over Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to China.<sup>22</sup> After that, most Chinese students enrolled in school A were originating from Mainland China. As the educational system in China is more advanced in terms of mathematics and sciences, nearly none of them is identified as *sous-scolarisé* (under-schooled) when they entered School A. However, due to fact that few of them have knowledge in French, they were all placed in welcoming classes and later on in a regular class of a lower academic level.

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<sup>22</sup> On July the 1<sup>st</sup> 1997, Hong Kong was officially “returned” or “reunified” by Mainland Chinese, which marked the end of British rule in Hong Kong. Before that, many citizens were pessimistic towards the future of Hong Kong and the Transfer of the region's sovereignty, they thereby chose to emigrate to other Western countries, such as Canada, the U.S. .

Some of the parent respondents also suggest that their children have the same experience as described by the staff in School A. They seem to complain that their children's achievement in mathematics and sciences is not recognized in French public schools. They were placed only according to their level of French proficiency.

“You know, my son is very good at maths and sciences, and what he is studying now is too simple compared with what he had learnt in China. Even the courses [maths and sciences] in Secondary 4 are too simple, but they put him in Secondary 3. I asked someone to talk to the teacher, but she got very angry with us and she said my son's French is not good enough. What are we going to do? ” (Mrs Wang, Chinese mother).

Nevertheless, the assistant-principal in School A and a French teacher in welcoming Class affirm that difficulties in French can sometimes affect their achievement in other subjects.

*« En maths, ils sont généralement très forts, sauf que [...] ce qui arrive, c'est que depuis le renouveau pédagogique il y a cinq ans maintenant, l'importance des problèmes écrits a pris beaucoup plus d'ampleur dans les examens du MELS. Ça fait que du côté maths pures, résolution d'une équation, etc., ça va. Mais prendre un texte, sortir des éléments pour faire l'équation, là il y des difficultés. C'est là qu'on le voit. Donc, pour nous autres, ce sont les deux compétences, la compétence 1 qui sert à comprendre les informations parmi les textes et la compétence 2 qui est la compétence des maths. C'est jugé par rapport aux maths, mais dans les faits, le problème ce n'est pas les maths. Le problème, c'est le français. C'est la connaissance et la maîtrise de la langue. Ça prend du temps-là [...] »* (Assistant-principal, School A)

*« [en riant] Bien sûr, ils réussissent en maths et en sciences! Quand ils arrivent en accueil, il y en a qui sont déçus parce qu'ils font pas le même niveau que dans leur pays d'origine à cause de la langue, parce qu'ils comprennent pas les questions. Ça les choque un peu de ne pas pouvoir faire le même niveau que dans leur pays. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

**School B**-According to the teachers interviewed in School B, most of the Chinese students enrolled in this school entered the Quebec educational system in elementary school, because they notice that none of these students has any problems in understanding French. Moreover, School B does not provide a welcoming service to new arrivals, although they receive students who have finished this process at other schools (in the same neighbourhood).

*« La plupart d'entre eux sont ici depuis un bon moment. J'ai pas d'élèves qui viennent de l'accueil et on n'a pas de classe d'accueil à l'école. Je crois que nos élèves d'origine chinoise ici sont allés au primaire en français. Ce ne sont pas des nouveaux arrivants. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

*« Ceux que j'ai, c'est pas des nouveaux arrivants parce qu'ils comprennent déjà le français. C'est pas des élèves qui viennent directement de classe d'accueil comme certains hispanophones. Je crois qu'ils sont arrivés à l'âge du primaire. J'ai pas remarqué de problème au niveau de la langue. Je crois que ceux que j'ai actuellement, ils sont au Québec depuis au moins trois ans. »* (Maths teacher, Secondary 5, School B).

Although this school does not require an admission or evaluation exam when the students are first enrolled, the teacher participants in this school indicate that most of the Chinese students' school results were above average when they were first enrolled in School B.

**School C-**As mentioned in Chapter III, School C is an international school which requires new students to pass an entrance exam or admission test in various subjects. Those who intend to enter this school during their secondary schooling (in Secondary 2, 3, or 4) are required to have an interview with the principal and to present their school report card. Only the best candidates will be selected, because additional intellectual effort is required from students who have not started their specific programs from Secondary 1. Under this admission condition, few Chinese new arrivals have opportunities to be selected by School C because of their language barrier. The teachers and non-teaching professionals interviewed in school suggest that most of their Chinese origin students have attended a French elementary school in Quebec.

*« Les élèves sont choisis en quelque sorte, carrément sur le cheminement qu'ils ont fait à l'élémentaire et en particulier en français. »* (Vice-principal, School C).

In line with the description of teacher respondents in School C, Chinese pupils usually have good results in entrance exams, because this school is considered to be one of best French public schools and they make a lot of effort to prepare for the exams.

*« Je pense que la plupart des élèves ont réussi très bien dans leurs examens d'admission et qu'ils ont fait beaucoup de préparation. »* (Sciences teacher in Secondary 4, School C).

#### 4.1.2 Frequency of school changes

**School A**-The school teachers and other personnel interviewed in School A suggest that the frequency of school changes is very high among Chinese origin students, because their families move to the South Shore or Laval when they feel that it is time for them to settle down in Quebec. The neighbourhood is perceived as “a place of transition” and School A is perceived as “a school of transition” by Chinese immigrants. However, the teachers and other staff in this school do not appear to be very surprised by this phenomenon, because they view it the same as what happened to the “old ethnic communities”, such as Italian and Greek immigrants in Montreal.

*« Qu'est-ce qui arrive à la communauté chinoise c'est que, oui, on est dans les classes d'accueil, mais quand les affaires vont un peu mieux, la famille s'organise ou quitte. Il y a beaucoup de mouvements, [...] soit vers la Rive-Sud, soit vers Laval ou Brossard. Je vous dirais qu'ici, c'est vraiment un lieu de transition. Pour cette raison, on trouve pas beaucoup d'élèves d'origine chinoise qui sont nés au Québec. C'est le même genre de phénomène qu'on a vécu avec les Grecs et les Italiens. Ils sont là pour soutenir la famille pendant un certain temps et après ils vont migrer vers la Rive-Sud ou la Rive-Nord. »* (Assistant-principal, School A)

**School B and School C**-On the contrary, the school teachers and other personnel interviewed in School B and C indicate that most Chinese students remain in their schools until their graduation. Nevertheless, most of their past Chinese students chose to go to an English postsecondary institution to further their study. Some students were even enrolled in a college or university in other Canadian provinces or in the United States. These teachers believe that their current Chinese students will do likewise.

*« Là, je pense que si Pauline Marois tient sa promesse [interdire le droit de fréquenter le cégep en anglais], on va perdre les élèves chinois au profit des autres provinces. J'ai l'impression qu'une fois qu'ils terminent leur secondaire, parce qu'ils sont obligés de faire ça en français, ils s'en vont en anglais. Ils ne vont pas rester. »* (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).

*« Moi, je pense qu'ils ne sont pas nécessairement enracinés, s'ils ne trouvent pas un emploi ici, ils vont aller aux États-Unis, en Ontario ou dans d'autres provinces du Canada. »* (Science teacher in Secondary 4, School C).

## 4.2 School Performance

As mentioned in Chapter I and II, many studies in the North American context have shown Chinese immigrant students' high academic achievement, however, in a French speaking-context, this conclusion seems hard to generalize, especially when it comes to their French learning.

### 4.2.1 Outperformance in mathematics and sciences

When it comes to academic achievement, all the teacher respondents in the three focal schools affirm that most of the Chinese youth outperform other students in mathematics and sciences.

*« À la fin de l'année, on a des remises de prix. En maths et en sciences, on ne voit que des asiatiques sur la scène. J'ai eu un élève chinois de 13 ans qui a participé à un concours de maths pancanadien. Il est arrivé parmi les premiers. Alors l'Université d'Ottawa lui a offert une bourse pour aller à un camp d'été... »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

*« J'ai l'impression qu'ils se distinguent en mathématiques et en sciences, parce qu'ils se trouvent souvent dans les groupes qui en général suivent un profil mathématiques et sciences particulier. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B)

*« En maths, la majorité sont supers. Quand on a des concours de maths, ils vont tous y participer et ils vont avoir des médailles d'or ou des choses comme ça... »* (Pedagogical advisor, School C).

Meanwhile, the ethnic community agents interviewed also confirm the description of the teacher respondents, but they simply see the outperformance in mathematics and sciences as the results of “being intelligent”.

*“You know, Chinese kids are quite intelligent, so they do not have problems on maths or sciences. The major problem is their French.”* (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*).

Most of the students that I interviewed show their interest and enthusiasm in mathematics and sciences. They also indicate that their friends and schoolmates also have very high self-expectations in these two subjects, as the following quote denotes:

*« Pour la plupart des élèves d'origine chinoise de mon école, ils réussissent très bien en maths, dans les sciences aussi, et je pense qu'ils sont vraiment parfaits en maths. S'ils ont 95 % en maths, ils commencent à être fâchés. »* (Lina, Chinese girl, School D).

To explain this phenomenon, the Chinese parents that I interviewed suggest that most of the children who had a base in mathematics when they were in China would not encounter difficulties. They perceive the Chinese way of solving problems in mathematics is much better than the “North American way”. As for sciences, they indicate that mathematics is the foundation of sciences and this is why most Chinese students outperform equally in sciences. Moreover, as mentioned above, the educational system in China is more advanced in terms of mathematics and sciences programs, which results in some repetition in the teaching content of these two subjects.

“I think those who finished some schooling in China usually have a very good foundation in maths and sciences. They won't need any tutoring in these two subjects. I think the Chinese way of teaching maths is much more effective and efficient...” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father)

*« Souvent, ceux qui ont pas de problèmes avec les mathématiques sont plus avancés que les autres. Il m'arrive souvent qu'un élève me dise “Ça, je connais ça” ou “On a déjà appris ça” »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

However, according to most teacher and student respondents, it is the value which Chinese immigrant parents place on these two subjects that influence the youth as well as their school performance. Indeed, most of the parents expect their children to study medicine or pure sciences when they are enrolled in a postsecondary institution, and having good results in mathematics and sciences is an necessary condition for realizing their dreams.

*« Bien sûr, il faut que j'aie des bonnes notes en maths et en sciences, parce que mes parents veulent que j'aie en médecine ou en sciences pures... »* (David, Chinese boy, School D)

*« En sciences, en général, ils vont très bien. Ils sont très motivés. Ils accordent une importance très élevée aux sciences. Beaucoup d'entre eux ont déjà un profil tracé. Ils savent déjà le cégep où ils veulent aller. Ils disent déjà “Je vais aller en médecine à l'Université McGill” Donc, ils font tout pour obtenir des bonnes notes en sciences. »* (Sciences teacher in Secondary 4, School C).

In addition, some youth suggest that their parents are able to help them complete their schoolwork in these two subjects, while few of them can do so in French. The impact of Chinese parents on the career aspirations of their children will be discussed in Chapter VI.

#### **4.2.2 Difficulty in French**

Compared with mathematics and sciences, Chinese immigrant youths seem to have less delightful experiences with their French learning in these selected schools. Most of the student respondents in this research admit that their scores in French are not as high as that in mathematics and sciences. At the same time, they give the impression of not having a very high self-expectation in French as they do in the other two subjects. A possible explanation may be that their self-expectation is influenced by their parents' career aspiration for them.

*« C'est vrai que mes notes en français sont plus basses en comparaison avec mes notes en maths ou en sciences, mais je suis correcte... »* (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).

*« Mes notes en français sont correctes-là, bien plus que la moyenne, même si c'est pas aussi élevé qu'en maths ou en sciences. Je comprends très bien...Je crois que j'aurai aucun problème si je veux travailler en français à l'avenir... »* (Jiale, Chinese Boy, School C).

Several students that I interviewed express their frustration in learning French.

*« Le français est dur pour moi. C'est plutôt la lecture. Je comprenais et je croyais que je donnais la bonne réponse, mais je ne sais pas pourquoi le prof me donnait des mauvaises notes. Pendant l'examen, j'étais comme confiant de mes réponses. Mais quand j'ai reçu mes résultats, c'était comme une mauvaise surprise. C'est un nouveau prof, on sait pas à quoi il s'attend... »* (Henry, Chinese boy, School C).

In this regard, the interview data with teachers and other non-teaching professional tend to reveal more problems. For the newly arrived Chinese students, the teachers and other school staff interviewed in School A indicate that, compared to students of other ethnic groups, it usually takes more time for them to finish of welcoming class process.

*« En terme d'intégration scolaire, ce n'est pas un groupe homogène. Chacun est différent. C'est très difficile de généraliser. Probablement, pour la majorité, c'est plus long [que d'autres groupes]. Ça m'est jamais arrivé qu'un élève chinois reste en bas de six mois en*

*accueil, alors que pour les enfants hispanophones, ça peut arriver. Pour eux, c'est plus long pour l'apprentissage de la langue. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School A).

*« J'ai vu beaucoup d'élèves chinois en accueil pour la première année. Souvent, ils ne disent pas un mot pendant quelques mois. Ils se développent pas pendant des mois. Ils écrivent. Quand on leur demande la conjugaison, ils font très bien. On peut voir le blocage. On voit qu'au niveau de l'oral, c'est très long et difficile. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

From the quotes above, one can see that these new arrivals appear to be reluctant to express themselves in French. These teachers also point out their difficulty in communicating in French, even though they may do well in French exams.

*« Il y en a qui réussissent très bien au niveau des examens, mais ils ne parlent pas souvent le français et ils ne sont pas à l'aise de s'exprimer en français... »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A)

The Chinese students interviewed in School A also show their hesitation in speaking French:

*“I prefer to speak English than French, because my French is not that good. For writing, I am ok, but speaking...I am afraid of making mistakes.”* (Lucy, Chinese girl, School A).

*“You know, my spoken French is very bad. I mean I can understand most of the time what the teacher talks about, but for doing a presentation, it is hard for me. ”* (Lei, Chinese boy, School A).

As for the Quebec born/raised students, French teachers interviewed in School B and C noted that although in general, their grades in French exams do not show any differences with other students, their errors and weakness in this subject appear to be totally different than for their classmates. Teachers interviewed in these two schools affirm that if a Chinese student makes mistakes, it would be in French syntax.

*« Je vois que les élèves d'origine chinoise qui ont des difficultés en français font des erreurs différentes des autres élèves. Beaucoup plus au niveau de la syntaxe. Ils ont des difficultés avec la logique syntaxique, c'est-à-dire la logique derrière les règles pour construire une phrase. »* (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).

*« Ils vont bien écrire les mots, ils vont bien accorder, ce n'est pas un problème, les accords. S'ils ont appris des règles, des féminins, des pluriels, la conjugaison, etc. ça, ça va. Mais ils*

*ont un problème de syntaxe. Ça, c'est particulier chez les Chinois. Ils ont une syntaxe et ça ne ressemble pas au français la façon dont ils formulent. J'appelle ça "la syntaxe chinoise". Quand on leur demande de créer un texte, là, on voit le problème. Ils n'ont pas de problème quand ils font des exercices de grammaire, mais quand ils mettent en pratique leurs connaissances, ça fonctionne pas. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

*« Au niveau de la performance, je dirais qu'ils correspondent aux autres élèves. C'est similaire. Quand on a des élèves d'origine chinoise, la difficulté, par contre, en français, c'est au niveau de la syntaxe. Au niveau de la grammaire, de l'orthographe, ça va très, très bien. Souvent, c'est quand ils sont pas nés ici ou même si ils sont ici depuis quelques années, c'est au niveau de la syntaxe qu'il y a un problème. Leurs notes en français sont comme les autres. J'ai en des très faibles à 60 %, j'en ai aussi des très forts à 90 %. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

When discussing the reasons behind the syntactic errors made by Chinese students, some teachers believe that the production of this type of mistakes results from their native language –Chinese.

*« Je suis sûr que les erreurs que font les élèves chinois viennent de la différence entre le français et leur langue d'origine, soit le mandarin ou le cantonais. Il y a plusieurs élèves qui m'ont dit ça. La logique de la langue est totalement différente. Par exemple, dans la structure sujet-verbe-complément, il y a souvent l'omission de prépositions, l'omission de déterminants. Il y a des mots qui manquent. C'est souvent des petits mots. Parfois, il y a des inversions, le sujet vient après le verbe, ou l'adjectif vient du mauvais côté du sujet. C'est un type d'erreur différent des autres élèves. »* (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).

*« Le fait que la langue maternelle ou la langue d'usage est une autre langue rend difficile parfois de comprendre le mécanisme des nouvelles langues. Donc, ces élèves-là vont se tromper souvent dans les choix des prépositions. Par exemple, est-ce qu'on doit dire de, pour, à travers, par, à. C'est pas évident de le savoir quand on n'est pas complètement francophone. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

In line with the description above, it seems that Chinese students are also convinced that the syntactic errors they made are caused by Chinese language structures, such as the omission of determiners or misplaced adjectives, given that in Chinese, “*les déterminants*” (determiners) do not exist, and adjectives are always placed before nouns. However, other mistakes, such as inverting subjects and verbs, are not allowed in Chinese. Based on this assumption, Chinese students should have difficulties in verb tenses, because the concept of time in Chinese is not handled through the use of different tenses and verb forms but rather through certain adverbs. The same observation would also apply to agreement in

French, since there is no correspondence of gender, number, and/or person in Chinese. However, these teachers suggest that these grammatical phenomena are not problems for Chinese students. Indeed, some previous studies (Dulay & Burt, 1972; Lance, 1969) suggest that a major portion of such second language goofs do not reflect the native language structure. Moreover, some studies mentioned in Chapter II show a positive transfer from the knowledge in the native language to the host language. With regard to the difficulties in creating a text in French, a possible explanation may be related to the pre-migratory learning habits. For example, repetition and memorization of the content sometimes restrict a reflective and creative use of language.

On the other hand, just as the common perception of cognitive development, some community agents affirm that the process of learning a new language depends on the age of entering the Quebec school system:

“It depends on the age of entering the Quebec school system. If they are pretty young when they came, they would not have any problems in learning languages.” (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand-Montréal*).

However, some other teachers attribute Chinese immigrant students’ syntactic errors to the lack of “language awareness” or “language intuition”. They find that most of them prefer to speak English or Chinese during recreation time, and some of them are more likely to use English than French at home.

« *Je crois qu’ils parlent plus anglais et là, ça devient plus complexe pour ces élèves-là de passer d’une langue à l’autre, de la langue maternelle, la langue d’usage à la maison... Même à l’école j’ai perçu des conversations anglaises. J’ai deux élèves chinois en particulier qui parlent toujours anglais. Certains de mes élèves d’origine chinoise sont plus à l’aise en anglais.* » (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B)

« *Même si on est une école internationale, la langue d’usage est le français. Mais j’ai vu qu’il y en a beaucoup qui parlent anglais, mandarin ou cantonais dans le couloir. J’ai fait beaucoup d’interventions pour les faire parler en français.* » (Teacher responsible for extracurricular activities, School C).

« *Souvent, je demande aux parents s’ils parlent français à la maison. La réponse est non. Ils parlent chinois ou anglais. Je leur dis : “Laissez-les écouter la télévision en français”. On*

*me répond: “ Non, non, non...pas de télévision!” »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

According to the last quote above (French teacher in Secondary 5, SchoolC), it seems that Chinese parents do not perceive an informal French learning environment, such as watching TV as beneficial for their children’s development in French, even though most of them affirm that French is the most difficult subject for their children. These parents prefer to send their children to a Chinese supplementary school or have a private tutor to improve their French. Nonetheless, some students indicate that a French-speaking environment and determination are important for learning a new language.

*« Je suis toujours indépendant et je suis quelqu’un de débrouillard. Je cherche pour moi-même. J’ai jamais connu le français avant de venir ici et j’ai rapidement appris le français, parce que quand on est dans un milieu francophone et que tout le monde parle français, il faut forcément l’apprendre. Quand je regarde la télé, je regarde toujours des chaînes françaises ou anglaises chez moi, jamais en chinois. Lorsque j’avais des difficultés, j’ai cherché quelqu’un sur Internet pour m’aider. J’ai des amis plus grands que moi, mais c’est quand même rare que je leur demande. »* (Wenhao, Chinese boy, School B).

Teachers of mathematics and sciences that I interviewed suggest that they also notice that Chinese students have difficulty writing French. As mentioned above, the low French proficiency of some new arrivals can result in problems in other subjects.

*« Dans les examens, ils inventent des fois un mot bizarre, un mot qui n’existe pas en français ou en anglais. Je dois préciser le vocabulaire. »* (Sciences teacher in Secondary 4, School C)

*« C’est très clair qu’ils sont tous très bons en mathématiques. Des fois, l’incompréhension de la consigne en français rend difficile la résolution d’un problème et la logique en mathématiques. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A)

When talking about the performance of Chinese immigrant students in other subjects with strong linguistic and cultural components, such as history, ethics and religious culture, the teachers and school personnel interviewed indicate that they do not see any difference. Since no teachers of these subjects participated in this research, it is difficult to draw a conclusion on this issue, although one student mentions that most of her Chinese friends do not do well in two subjects: geography and ethics and religious culture.

*« Je pense que les matières où mes amis chinois ont le plus de difficultés sont la géographie et l'éthique et culture religieuse. »* (Lina, Chinese girl, School D).

### **4.3 Social Integration**

The data in this research reflect different situations concerning the social integration of Chinese immigrant students in the three selected schools. Teachers and school personnel interviewed in School A affirm that most of the time, the Chinese students stay together and do not have many friends from other ethnic groups. It seems that these students and their parents have created an intragroup network that excludes “others”.

*« Les élèves chinois restent toujours ensemble. Ils ne se mélangent pas avec des élèves d'autres groupes. Ils n'ont vraiment pas beaucoup d'amis de différentes origines. Souvent, les parents se connaissent. Ils ont créé un réseau fermé entre eux, mais pas à l'extérieur. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School A).

*« On voit qu'ils ne parlent pas beaucoup avec les élèves des autres origines en accueil. Je crois qu'ils ont pas beaucoup d'amis sauf des amis chinois. »* (French teacher in Welcoming Class, School A).

Likewise, the Chinese student respondents from School A also admit that they do not have many friends from other ethnic groups and prefer to stay with their Chinese classmates, because they feel more secure and being accepted by co-ethnic friends.

“You know, my French is not very good. If I make mistakes, they will laugh at me. Also, I don't think they would understand the Chinese way of thinking. I have nothing in common with them...” (Jun, Chinese boy, School A).

“Of course, I prefer to hang out with Chinese friends, though I have several Spanish speaking friends. Our experiences are too different. Their attitudes towards school or education are too different from Chinese. Sometimes, when I say that I should go to Chinese school to improve my French, they laugh at me...” ( Lucy, Chinese girl, School A).

It is important to remind that most of the Chinese students in School A, such as Jun and Lucy, are relative new arrivals. In the process of integration, they not only encounter a language barrier, but also cultural obstacles. Entering a new school system in a new country during the teenager years demands more determination and effort than for those

who were born/raised in Quebec. However, according to some parent respondents, an outgoing or extroverted personality seems to be an important factor overcoming these difficulties.

“My younger son is very introverted. He does not have any non-Asian friends. All of his friends are Chinese and Vietnamese. They go to movie theaters or Cyber bar together. They always speak Mandarin or Cantonese, it is not good for his integration, but I cannot make him to make friends with kids from other ethnic groups. I cannot control him.” (Mrs. Yang, Chinese mother).

With respect to extracurricular activities, the teacher respondents indicate that participation rate of Chinese students is very low. It seems that academic achievement is their preoccupation, while other activities are not that important for them. In the opinion of these teachers, it is the importance which their parents attach to education that limits the participation of Chinese youth in extracurricular activities.

*« On a la semaine interculturelle où chaque équipe présente son pays, la cuisine, les traditions. Ça dure une journée. Pour la première année, s'ils participent, c'est vraiment exceptionnel. D'habitude, ils ne participent à rien. Ils font seulement leurs études, aucune activité sportive, aucune autre activité parascolaire. La deuxième année, il y en a peut-être quelques-uns, mais pas beaucoup. Certains d'entre eux jouent au badminton, mais il y en a pas beaucoup par rapport à d'autres communautés. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

*« Je ne pense pas que c'est seulement à cause de la barrière de la langue. Dans la communauté chinoise, c'est vraiment juste la performance académique qui est plus valorisée. C'est vraiment exceptionnel, pour les arts ou la musique [...]. Par exemple, si quelqu'un fait de la musique, c'est à peu près le seul aspect qui peut être valorisé, mais les sports, c'est rarement valorisé. C'est ce qu'on a comme sentiment. Dans d'autres communautés, il peut y avoir la même chose, mais c'est un peu plus différent. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

In this regard, a community agent from *Centre Accroche* also suggests that the fact that most Chinese families focus extremely on their “tasks” may sometimes lead to their ignorance of social integration.

*« Les élèves chinois sont respectueux. Ils ne donnent pas de problème nulle part. Ils ont aussi des amis d'autres origines, mais globalement, le fait qu'ils sont très focalisés sur la tâche les rend moins performants dans l'aspect social. Ils ne sont pas vraiment intégrés à l'aspect social dans une classe. Ils ont tendance à travailler seuls ou entre eux. Ça ne veut*

*pas dire qu'ils vont rejeter les autres, mais les autres peuvent ressentir qu'ils restent toujours ensemble. Je ne veux pas dire qu'ils ne veulent pas s'intégrer, mais la famille est très orientée vers la tâche. Les parents travaillent énormément, et les enfants aussi doivent travailler. Cette valeur du travail est présente à tous les niveaux. »*

However, the assistant-principal believes that involvement in extracurricular activities is more likely to be related to the “adolescent way of thinking” but not to their ethnicity. Also, he assumes that if the activities are acceptable for Chinese families, their children will be encouraged to participate.

*« Je crois que la réussite scolaire fait partie du processus de l'intégration sociale, mais il faut trouver le bon type d'activité. Par exemple, l'année dernière, on a ouvert un groupe de robotique et il y a eu une compétition. On a eu des élèves qu'on ne voit pas dans les différents types d'activités, mais on en a retrouvé dans le groupe de robotique, au niveau de la programmation et au niveau de l'électronique, etc., dont des élèves de la communauté chinoise. Je pense pas que c'est une caractéristique des élèves issus de la communauté asiatique, je pense que c'est l'adolescence. Peut-être que pour les parents, le groupe de robotique est quelque chose de plus acceptable et les parents leur donnent plus la permission. Le but de cette activité était vraiment de voir et d'aller chercher des élèves qu'on ne voit pas nulle part. Ils ne participent pas du tout aux autres activités.»*

He also suggests that the socioeconomic status of the family may have an impact on the participation in extracurricular activities, though the impact remains unclear. School A is located in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, and most parents have financial difficulties. In Chinese families, children are supposed to go home right after school. They might also need to take care of their younger siblings because most parents work overtime.

*« L'influence de ce facteur n'est pas clair pour nous. Ici, nous sommes dans une zone défavorisée et il y a une très grande majorité de nos enfants dont les familles ont des difficultés financières. On a des équipes de sports de très haut niveau, mais on ne retrouve pas d'élèves d'origine chinoise dans nos équipes de sports. Il y a peut-être deux ou trois élèves chinois dans notre équipe de badminton, mais les autres ne sont pas présents du tout. Je crois que c'est parce que les familles veulent les contrôler. Pour eux, il faut rentrer à la maison après l'école, peut-être pour s'occuper des sœurs ou des frères... »*

In School B, from the perspective of the teachers and other school personnel, Chinese youth have friends from different ethnic groups. However, when it comes to team-working in class, most Chinese students prefer to choose co-ethnic friends as their “co-

workers”, because they believe Chinese work harder than do other students. This is particularly the case of Chinese boys.

*« J’ai l’impression qu’ils s’intègrent vraiment bien. Ils ont beaucoup d’amis de différentes origines, par exemple, des hispanophones et des brésiliens. C’est le fun de voir un Chinois et un Sud-américain ensemble et tous les deux ont un accent québécois. Je me disais que c’est ça, les nouveaux Québécois. »* (Assistant-principal, School B).

*« Généralement je remarque qu’ils sont souvent avec des personnes d’autres origines. Donc ils se mélangent avec d’autres groupes ethniques. C’est pas forcément entre eux, même s’ils [les élèves chinois] travaillent souvent ensemble, en équipe en classe, parce qu’ils savent qu’eux, ils travaillent fort et ils savent qu’avec eux [les amis chinois] c’est une valeur sûre, surtout chez les gars. Chez les filles, elles vont trouver quelqu’un d’une autre origine. Les gars, en général, ils se mettent entre eux pour performer. »* (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

Likewise, when the Chinese students interviewed in School B were asked to name their three best friends, they all mentioned one or two friends from other ethnic groups. One student even pointed out that when he first came to Quebec, he did not really want to hang out with co-ethnic friends because he thought it was not beneficial for practicing French.

Meanwhile, according to the teacher and other school personnel respondents in this school, Chinese students are very active in participating in extracurricular activities, including sports, music, and the arts. Likewise, they indicate that these Chinese youth are also involved in activities outside of school.

*« Ils participent beaucoup aux activités parascolaires, surtout au badminton, un petit peu en natation et au basketball. Par contre, à l’extérieur de l’école, ils font du sport un peu, ils font des arts. Ils aident beaucoup leurs parents. Si je regarde mes groupes en musique, c’est sûr qu’eux, ils passent beaucoup de temps sur la musique. Comme parascolaire, ils font de la musique dans différents orchestres. »* (Mathematics teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

*« J’ai l’impression qu’ils participent beaucoup aux activités parascolaires. Je les ai entendu parler souvent du sport. Ils s’impliquent aussi à l’organisation des soirées de rencontres des parents, ils font un peu de bénévolat. Ils sont disponibles à aider dans ce genre d’activités. Ils ont des bonnes relations avec des élèves d’autres groupes ethniques. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

Contrary to popular belief, Chinese student participants in School B do not make schooling their top priority, although all of them perceive study as very important for them and their families.

*« Mes études pour moi sont en deuxième place, la première place va à l'intégration à la société. Je suis une personne sociable. J'ai fait beaucoup de sports en même temps. Par exemple, j'ai participé à l'équipe du Québec de badminton, c'était un peu intense... »* (Étienne, Chinese boy, School B).

*« Je suis dans une école publique. Je crois que les parents dont les enfants sont à une école publique ne demandent pas forcément beaucoup. J'ai des amis qui sont à l'école privée, la meilleure école à Montréal. Leurs parents demandent beaucoup. Ils sont souvent obligés d'aller à l'école du samedi pendant le week-end pour apprendre plus que les autres. C'est un moyen important pour eux de réussir à l'école. J'accorde à mes études la deuxième place. La première place pour moi serait de m'amuser un peu et d'essayer d'avoir du bon temps »* (Wenhao, Chinese boy, School B).

In School C, Chinese students are considered to be “well integrated” in general. Nonetheless, some teachers see the integration of Chinese youth as a “progressing” process. For instance, a teacher responsible for extracurricular activities affirms that during the last two years, Chinese students seem to have more friends from other ethnic groups. A French teacher indicates that the mastery of French and the ability to self-express play an important role in the integration and socialization of Chinese students.

*« La plupart des élèves ont beaucoup d'amis à l'école. Je suis sûr qu'il y en a qui vont rechercher leurs contacts avec d'autres Asiatiques, mais il y en a plusieurs qui se mélangent avec les autres. Il y a pas de problème. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School C).

*« Je dirais qu'au cours de ces dernières années, les élèves chinois s'intègrent plus. Depuis mes débuts ici, c'étaient les Chinois d'un côté, et puis les autres. Il y avait vraiment un “clash” entre les deux, mais je remarque qu'ils se mélangent beaucoup plus avec les autres depuis ces deux dernières années. »* (Teacher responsible for extracurricular activities, School C).

*« Je remarque qu'il y a une corrélation très forte entre la maîtrise du français et leur socialisation. Souvent, ceux qui ont de la misère à s'exprimer ne vont pas socialiser. Je pense que l'âge d'arrivée au Québec doit jouer. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

When talking about “making friends” with the student participants in this school, most of them affirm that they have friends from different ethnic backgrounds, but their best

friends are always Asians, because they feel that they share the same culture and understand one another.

*« Mes amis les plus proches sont toujours asiatiques. »* (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).

*« Mes trois meilleurs amis sont asiatiques. C'est plus facile pour moi de communiquer avec eux. On partage la même culture. On sait qu'est-ce qui est approprié ou non. Quant aux Québécois canadiens blancs, c'est plus difficile. »* (Joshua, Chinese boy, School C).

*« Je suis né ici, mais la majorité de mes amis proches sont plus asiatiques que d'autres origines. »* (Samuel, Chinese boy, School C).

Although the social integration of Chinese students in School C seems better than their counterparts in School A, their participation in extracurricular activities remains the same, because their parents do not see the reward of these activities.

*« Dans mes journées blanches ou mes journées vertes [c'est une journée où il n'y a pas de cours], j'ai beaucoup d'absents chinois. J'ai compris que, pour la culture chinoise, pour les parents chinois, aller à l'école et faire des activités parascolaires, ça va pas ensemble. Ç'a pas de rapport du tout. C'est une perte du temps. Ils veulent plus les garder à la maison et les faire travailler que les envoyer à l'école pour faire les activités. »* (Teacher responsible for extracurricular activities, School C).

Even for the Chinese youth who participate in sports in School C, they do not see sports as leisure activities in which they are able to learn to work with other students but as “a performance” or “a competition” in which they intend to be on top.

*« Même en badminton, c'est pas un loisir pour eux. Ils sont comme des machines, parce que la performance pour eux est très importante, en sport aussi, pas juste au niveau académique. »* (Teacher responsible for extracurricular activities, School C).

Although the students interviewed in this school see themselves as different from newly arrived Chinese youth or their relatives (of the same age) in China, all of them indicate that they set schooling as their top priority. If they need to prepare for exams, they will not participate in any extracurricular activities.

*« J'ai pas beaucoup de temps pour participer aux activités parascolaires, car je dois me concentrer sur mes études. Tu sais, il faut que j'aie des bonnes notes pour pouvoir aller à un*

*bon collègue et ensuite à une université fameuse. » (Jenny, Chinese girl, School C).*

*« Je travaille beaucoup, surtout pendant la période des examens. J'ai vraiment pas de temps pour les activités parascolaires... » (Joshua, Chinese Boy, School C).*

Despite the fact that School D<sup>23</sup> is not included in the target schools, interviews with students as well as parents also present some information concerning the integration of Chinese origin students in this school. Although most of the Chinese youth in School D are Quebec born/raised and have a relatively higher level of academic achievements<sup>24</sup>, their social integration seems problematic. For instance, most Chinese students do not appear to have friends from other ethnic backgrounds.

*« Comme les autres élèves, moi aussi, mes meilleurs amis sont toujours les Chinois. [en riant] Tu sais qu'à l'école, il y a presque deux tiers de Chinois. On n'a pas vraiment beaucoup de choix... » (Haoran, Chinese boy, School D).*

*« Moi, j'ai pas beaucoup d'amis d'autres origines. Je crois que pour les autres élèves chinois aussi. Avec les amis chinois, on partage les mêmes expériences, mais avec les autres, j'ai pas beaucoup de choses à dire....Je sors pas souvent avec les personnes d'autres groupes ethniques. » (Shuhuang, Chinese girl, School D).*

In line with the quotes above, some parents indicate that the high concentration of Chinese students in School D appears to constitute a factor that hinders their social integration. Some parents are even told by their Chinese friends to not to enrol their children in this school, because they believe it more beneficial for the children to be placed in an environment where there are few co-ethnic peers.

“I told my friend not to send her kids to School D, though it is a good school. There are too many Chinese kids. You know, they become the mainstream, that's not good for their integration into the society.” (Mrs. Choi, Chinese mother).

From the above description, one can see that the social integration of Chinese youth appears to be related to the age of arrival in Quebec and their level of French proficiency.

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<sup>23</sup> As mentioned in Chapter III, although no teacher or school personnel have been interviewed one quarter of the student respondents are from School D, where there is a big concentration of Chinese immigrant students (over 50%).

<sup>24</sup> Just like School C, School D requires an admission exam, and the students interviewed suggest that most Chinese students do well in various subjects, especially in mathematics and sciences.

For example, students in School A have more difficulties in getting along with peers from other ethnic groups, while the counterparts in School B and C are more likely to have a more multi-ethnic peer network. Moreover, the school environment and co-ethnic peer groups seem influential for their integration. For instance, both the Chinese students interviewed in school B and C perceive themselves as more “*Québécois*” than “Chinese”, but their attitudes towards schooling and life are slightly different. Students in School B are more likely to make study their second priority, while their counterparts in School C make it their top priority. School B is seen as an “ordinary” public school, which is known for its music program, while School C is considered to be one of the “best” public schools, where most Chinese outperform. Finally, according to some school teachers and personnel, Chinese cultural values seem to have an important impact on the understanding of “integration” among Chinese immigrant parents as well their children’s practices. For them, “integration” is usually associated with “high academic achievement”, “having a good job with good pay”, or “prosperity”, while in Canada or Quebec, these are different concepts. “Integration” for Canadians or *Québécois* is more related to “having friends from different ethnic groups”, “being immersed in French culture”, or “knowing the common values of Canadian or Quebec society”.

*« Je pense que si des élèves réussissent à l'école, ils réussiront aussi dans la société, parce que l'école est une mini-société qui fait que les interactions entre les gens et la façon de fonctionner comme telle...c'est ça... Cependant, de la même manière, c'est une image de la société. On a des enfants chinois qui ont des super bonnes notes, mais l'intégration aux autres est vraiment difficile pour eux. On dit que, quand ils vont au cégep, ils vont avoir des notes extraordinaires, mais qu'est-ce qu'ils vont pouvoir faire comme métier? On sait pas, parce que tout dépend de l'intégration aux autres. Alors que les élèves qui sont pas très performants à l'école, mais qui sont très forts au niveau relationnel, ils vont fonctionner dans la société. »* (Assistant-principal, School A)

*« Mon impression c'est que, parmi les élèves asiatiques, ils se parlent beaucoup plus de la réussite scolaire et tout ça que de l'intégration sociale, parce que je connais des élèves qui ont jamais eu d'amis, mais qui ont gagné des bourses. Ce type d'élève-là est plus souvent asiatique que d'une autre ethnie. Comprenez-vous que pour les Occidentaux, la réussite scolaire ou financière et l'intégration sociale, l'un ne va pas sans l'autre, mais pour eux-autres, j'en suis pas sûr. J'ai l'impression qu'ils peuvent devenir médecin ou avocat sans nécessairement avoir des amis francophones ou aller dans les lieux de culture francophone. C'est pas comme ça qu'on définit l'intégration sociale, c'est pas juste trouver un emploi ou avoir un bon salaire. »* (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).

*« On a des journées où les élèves ont le droit de ne pas porter le costume, mais les élèves chinois portent toujours le costume. Ils ont l'habitude de le faire, même quand ils sont pas*

*obligés de le faire. Il me semble qu'ils veulent pas être un peu plus sociaux...Pour les parents, c'est comme "tu vas à l'école et tu es un élève, tu dois étudier, tu dois travailler", l'intégration est au second rang par rapport à la performance scolaire. »* (Teacher responsible for extracurricular activities, School C).

In line with the quotes above, it seems that the academic achievement of Chinese immigrant youth is not always accompanied by their successful integration in mainstream Quebec society. In this regard, some school teachers and community agents also suggest that high grades in exams may not guarantee the inclusion in the labour market and participation in social life in Quebec. Even if these students find a good job, it is still hard for them to develop a sense of belonging to the French-speaking community in Quebec. As described in Section 4.1.2, most Chinese immigrant youth tend to choose the English-speaking community (sometimes other Canadian provinces or the United States) as their destination of integration and acculturation.

*“Although our kids are good at maths and sciences, social workers and psychologists at school told me that they don't have any social skills. This is actually very true. You know, if you are not outgoing, you may not have networks, then it may be difficult to find a job here.”* (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand- Montréal*)

*« Je dirais que la vie scolaire et l'intégration sociale sont deux choses. J'ai eu un élève chinois, en fait une fille chinoise, qui a très bien réussi académiquement. C'est sûr qu'elle va avoir un très bon emploi aujourd'hui, mais est-ce qu'elle arrive à s'intégrer au sein de la communauté francophone québécoise? Ça, j'en doute un peu. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

#### **4.4 Psychological Wellbeing**

As mentioned in Chapter I and II, some studies in the American context demonstrate that many Chinese youth have experienced enormous psychological stress due to high parental expectations regarding their schooling and the “model minority” stereotype, especially among those who do not do well at school. In this section, I attempt to explore the reality of the sociopsychological wellbeing of Chinese students in the French public schools.

In general, as Chinese students always show their smile to others, the teachers and other personnel in the three focal schools that I interviewed believe that Chinese students are happy and satisfied with their life in Quebec.

*« Ils sont tous souriants, très souriants. Je sais que les Asiatiques sourient toujours, même dans les grands malheurs. C'est très important de sourire. Selon ce que je vois, ils ont des amis, ça rigole. Ils ont l'air aussi heureux que les autres. »* (French teacher in Secondary 4, school B).

*« J'ai pas d'élèves chinois qui sont malheureux ici parce qu'ils s'intègrent bien. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School C).

Likewise, most of the parent participants affirm that their children are satisfied with their school life here. For those who came here as teenagers, despite the fact that they have experienced some difficulties in terms of learning French and adapting to the new society, they prefer to live and study in Quebec than to go back to China, because the schooling in China is much more stressful. Regarding the Quebec born/raised Children, when comparing themselves with their relatives (of the same age) in China, consider themselves to be “lucky”, because they have learnt that children in China are generally under great pressure to perform well at school.

“My son is very happy here. He doesn't want to go back to China because of the pressure he experienced at school. I would say he has already become Québécois.” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

“My kids are all very happy here. There are many things that make them happy. They haven't received any pressure from school. My youngest son got in a choir several weeks ago. He really enjoys singing there. ” (Mrs Li, Chinese mother).

*« Je suis très heureuse ici en comparaison avec les enfants en Chine. Je crois que le mode de vie en Chine est très compétitif. Le monde est toujours en action. J'ai une cousine qui a 13 ans, elle n'a pas de vie du tout. Elle reste cinq jours sur sept à l'école. Qu'est-ce qu'elle fait pendant son temps libre? Elle prend des cours de rattrapage qui sont pas vraiment des cours de rattrapage. Ce sont des cours plus avancés. Elle est en secondaire 2, mais tous les élèves de sa classe prennent des cours comme ça. Donc, en fait, ils sont déjà rendus en secondaire 3 ou secondaire 4...Ici, la vie est plus relaxe. J'ai une tante en Chine qui a un bébé d'un an, mais déjà ils disent : “Il faut pas perdre à la ligne de départ”. L'enfant, il a un an! Il y a toutes sortes de cours pour les bébés. C'est fou comme compétition. »* (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).

*« À Hong Kong, aussi, l'école est dure. Ils travaillent très fort depuis le primaire. Ici, on a beaucoup plus de liberté. » (Joshua, Chinese boy, School C).*

Nevertheless, most of the teacher respondents see the initial timidity and reserve of Chinese immigrant students. This is particularly the case of those who came to Quebec during their adolescence. Those who were born or raised in Quebec appear to be more willing to express themselves. Some teachers also indicate that it is easier to communicate with a Chinese girl than with a Chinese boy.

*« Mes élèves chinois sont assez sociables, mais ils sont aussi un peu réservés. Une fois qu'ils dépassent cette timidité ou cette réserve qu'ils ont, ça va très bien. Si je regarde mes élèves chinois, je crois que c'est beaucoup plus facile pour moi de communiquer avec les filles, peut-être c'est parce que je suis une femme. Mes gars sont plus réservés. » (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).*

*« En général, ce sont des élèves très discrets, surtout, on dirait, quand ils sont pas nés ici. C'est curieux, mais on peut toujours savoir... Quand on a un garçon, surtout des garçons, ils sont plus réservés en classe. Pour ceux qui sont nés ou qui ont grandi au Québec, ils parlent plus. Quand ils sont nés au Québec, il y a moins de discrétion. » (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).*

In line with the description of the French teacher in School C, other teachers also confirm that fact that most Chinese students are very discreet. They rarely pose questions in class, and some students even feel somewhat insecure because they are afraid of “failing” or “doing not well enough” in exams.

*« Par rapport à leur participation en classe, s'il y un fait qui est très marquant, c'est qu'en général, ce sont des élèves qui ne parlent pas en classe et qui ne lèvent pas la main, ni pour donner de réponses, ni pour poser de questions. Ce sont des élèves habituellement très, très discrets. Ils vont poser des questions individuellement, mais jamais devant un groupe. Ça c'est vraiment quelque chose qui est observable. » (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).*

*« On dirait qu'ils tiennent tellement à bien faire et qu'ils vont souffrir un peu d'insécurité. Pour être sûr, par exemple, dans un examen, pour avoir la bonne réponse, ils vont en écrire au-delà des lignes permises. Ça arrive assez fréquemment. » (Sciences teacher in Secondary 4, School C).*

Indeed, the teachers and other school personnel interviewed also suggest that it is very difficult to get to know a Chinese student, especially the new arrivals, because they rarely

show their inner world to others. They seem to have strong self-control of their feelings, even if they have some special needs.

*« En classe, c'est le travail, mais dans les corridors, on voit plus leur personnalité. Ils n'ont pas l'air malheureux, mais ça reste tranquille. Il me semble qu'ils ont le contrôle de soi. Peut-être qu'à la maison, c'est pas comme ça... »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

*« En général, les élèves chinois ne sont pas très ouverts. On veut avoir une meilleure connaissance d'eux, mais ils nous parlent pas beaucoup. Ils sont très réservés. »* (Sciences teacher in Secondary 4, School C).

*« C'est très rare qu'un Chinois nous arrive en disant "je vais pas bien, je m'ennuie de ma famille..." On n'a pas vraiment beaucoup d'information là-dessus. Ils ne s'expriment pas beaucoup, même s'ils sont capables de parler le français. Ils sont jamais malades. Je crois que les élèves chinois n'ont pas de droit d'être malades. Même s'ils sont pas en forme, ils vont pas le manifester. Ils viennent toujours à l'école, il y a très peu d'absentéisme, surtout les deux ou trois premières années. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

For some new arrivals, the shyness, over self-control or even self-isolation sometimes set barriers for their French learning and adaptation process to the new school environment. As mentioned in Section 4.2.2, teachers in School A indicates that Chinese students appear to be reluctant to speak in front of the class, and they believe that this is because they are less tolerant of mistakes and their pre-migratory school experiences play a part in their attitudes towards their participation in class. According to the pedagogical advisor interviewed, this kind of attitude may be also related to the personality of the children and the perfectionism in Chinese culture. Regarding the influence of Chinese culture and the pre-migratory experiences on the school practices of Chinese youth, I will discuss more in detail in Chapter VI.

*« Au début, peut-être qu'ils ont peur de faire des erreurs. Mais quand ils sont dans un groupe de débutants, tout le monde est pareil. Tout le monde fait des erreurs. C'est sûr que, si certains d'entre eux parlent espagnol, ils vont débloquer plus vite. L'arabe n'est pas comme le français non plus. Il y en a qui ont pas de notions en français non plus chez les arabophones. Les Chinois vont faire moins d'essais. Ils vont plus se retirer. Je pense que leur tolérance à l'erreur est moins grande que les autres. Peut-être à cause du système d'éducation où ils se font demander d'être parfaits ce qui fait en sorte que ça leur prend un peu de temps à se risquer. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

*« Si mes élèves chinois ont des difficultés en français, c'est à l'oral. Je pense que la personnalité joue un rôle là-dedans, mais ça dépend aussi de leurs besoins. Il y en a qui sont super performants à l'oral parce qu'ils parlent souvent. Ils prennent le risque. Il y en a d'autres qui sont très bien en écrit et je suis sûre qu'ils comprennent, mais ils ne prennent pas de risque. Je ne sais pas s'ils sont trop timides ou perfectionnistes. Il me semble qu'ils ne veulent pas faire des erreurs. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School A).

Some teachers interviewed also point out that most Chinese parents have high expectations towards their Children's schooling and this sometimes causes huge pressure on the youth. According to one French teacher, newly arrived Chinese children seem to have a greater tendency to experience parental stress. For them, adapting to a new society and its school system is already stressful, because they do not have any knowledge of French, while being aware that they have to meet their parents' standards can produce even more pressure. She also indicates that the importance that Chinese parents attach to education makes other activities less important, even though these activities may actually be beneficial for their children's French learning and adaptation to the new social and school environment.

*« J'ai l'impression que les élèves chinois ont besoin d'un équilibre entre le travail et les activités parascolaires. Peut-être avoir du temps pour penser. Ils doivent choisir leur destinée, mais ne pas être forcés. La pression peut les motiver, mais peut-être pas pour les bonnes raisons. »* (Sciences teacher in Secondary 4, School C).

*« Je pense qu'ils ont reçu beaucoup de stress. L'exposition à la langue française est stressante pour eux, parce que quand ils arrivent, ils ne comprennent rien, zéro. Par contre, il y d'autres communautés pour qui c'est la même chose, mais ils vont le manifester autrement. Je pense que c'est surtout l'attente des parents face à l'école et à la performance de leurs enfants qui fait en sorte que tout le reste est moins important et que seulement ce qui est académique est important. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

Notwithstanding the pressure that some Chinese youth have experienced, they appear to be more tolerant than students of other ethnic groups. A mathematics teacher in School B affirms her Chinese students have never expressed their anxious feelings. She also suggests that she has never seen or heard of a Chinese student in School B who committed or attempted to commit suicide, although she heard that many youth in China choose to end their life because of the stress they are under in society and at schools.

*« Des fois, je dis aux parents lors des rencontres : « Regardez votre enfant-là, il performe bien. Arrêtez la pression. » Malgré cette pression-là, il n'y a pas d'enfants chinois qui se sont suicidés. J'ai entendu qu'en Chine, il y avait beaucoup de suicides à cause de la pression sociale et tout ça. Donc, je suis allé voir l'infirmière à l'école. Elle disait qu'il y avait pas d'Asiatiques dans la liste de suicides. En général, pour les suicides, c'est à cause de l'orientation sexuelle. Par exemple, il y a des élèves arabes qui sont homosexuels, mais leurs parents sont musulmans, ils se sont faits renier... Il y a trois élèves qui pleurent parce que leurs parents mettent trop de pression, mais ce sont pas des Asiatiques. » (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).*

A possible explanation for this phenomenon might be that these youth view their social environment and school life as more loose and relaxed compared with their pre-migratory experiences in China. As mentioned in the beginning of this section, most see themselves as being “happy” in Quebec. However, another reason may be related to the fact that they rarely express their psychological or emotional needs (especially those who came here as teenagers), and hence it is difficult for their teachers or other non-teaching professionals to be aware of their problems.

## **Summary**

The research data in this chapter allowed an exploration of the overall socioeducational integration experience of students of Chinese origin in the three target French public high schools from a comparative perspective. One can see that in Chapter III, all the three target schools are located in a multiethnic neighborhood, however, their socioeconomic environment and enrolment policies are different. The analysis in this chapter indicates that some common themes emerged regardless of the difference of generational status, socioeconomic status, and enrolment policies. These common themes include: *outperformance in mathematics and sciences, mistakes in French, satisfactory relationship with Quebec school system*, as well as *discretion and reserve personality*. Other themes are special according to various school contexts, such as *frequent school change, difficulty in French, exposure to native French speakers, participation in school (extracurricular) activities, attitudes towards education, parental stress, and pre-migration school experience*.

Indeed, students in these selected schools tend to follow different school pathways. In School A, most Chinese students arrived in Quebec during their adolescence and were placed in welcoming classes. When they were enrolled in a regular class, most of their families moved to a suburban area and they were then transferred to another school. In contrast, most their counterparts in School B and C were born or raised in Quebec and remain in the same school until their graduation, although they tend to further their study in an English-speaking postsecondary institution.

With respect to the school performance of the Chinese students in the three focal schools, the findings of this study reveal that these youth are not from a homogeneous group. Consistent with most previous studies in many English-speaking societies (Chun, 1995; Gunderson, 2004; 2007; Song & Wang, 2003; Garnett, 2008; Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009), this research indicates that Chinese immigrant students outperform in mathematics and sciences. However, in French, they seem to encounter different levels of difficulty and these difficulties sometimes have negative impacts on their school results in other subjects. This is particularly the case for the new arrivals in School A. As described in Chapter II, there is no doubt that learning a new language during adolescence is a huge challenge, but other factors, such as exposure to French native speakers in an informal context or the influence of prior experiences with learning languages, seem to play an important role. Indeed, many Chinese youth as well as their parents seem to ignore these abovementioned factors.

Regarding their social integration, the data seem to show two different types of situation in these three schools. In School A, there is a tendency among Chinese students to stay together and rarely participate in extracurricular activities, while in School B and C, one can remark a more dynamic social integration of Chinese youth. It seems that the social integration of these students is related their age of arrival in Quebec and their French proficiency. Moreover, studies (see Chun, 1995; Song & Wang, 2003) in the United States show that the academic success of Chinese Americans have been translated into greater economic mobility, but this study seems to indicate that in Quebec, the academic achievement of Chinese youth may not predict their successful integration in mainstream

Quebec society. Although the data of MELS presented in Chapter I show that the majority of allophone students who have attended the French sector would choose to go to French CEGEP, this study suggests the opposite trends in the Chinese community. Most Chinese students appear to go to an English-speaking postsecondary educational institution to further their study.

In terms of psychological wellbeing, few Chinese students in the three selected schools have reported problems in this regard, though more new arrivals appear to encounter parental stress. However, the research data do not allow drawing a conclusion on the state of these youth, because their timidity and reserve may set barriers for expressing themselves or obtaining appropriate services in this regard.

## **Chapter V School Context**

As mentioned in chapter II, systemic factors, such as ethnic status and relationship with the host society (macro-level), context of reception (mezzo-level), and school context (micro-level) are found important for the socioeducational integration of immigrant students. Many studies conducted in both English- and French-speaking contexts indicate that the first two types of systemic factors are influential, while for the micro level factors, little research attention has been given to French public schools. This chapter therefore seeks to explore how systemic factors reverberate at the school level, which include teacher-student relationship, programs and services offered by the school, school climate, and the school-family-community relations, affect the academic achievement of Chinese immigrant students attending French public high schools. Meanwhile, the research data are also presented to examine the difference in the abovementioned elements in the three focal schools.

### **5.1 Teacher-student Relationship**

#### **5.1.1 Teacher-student interactions**

When an immigrant student is enrolled in a new school environment, in addition to overcoming the language barrier, he or she also has to adapt to the new cultural norms in the school. According to the Chinese student and parent participants, the two major differences between schools in Quebec and China are the classroom atmosphere and the teacher-student relationship. Compared with schools in Quebec, schools in China seem to be stricter and demand more respect for the teacher's authority.

“You know, in China, we all sit behind a desk and the most seating arrangement in a classroom is like ‘rows and columns’, here we sometimes seat in a semi-circle or a circle and it is easier to see the teachers’ face. In China, we are not allowed to interrupt a teacher’s talk during a lecture, no one does that. Here is very very common...” (Jun, Chinese boy, School A).

“Here, school is more relaxed. Classrooms are decorated as a fun place. In China, it is not like that. Here students and teachers are more like friends, but in China, the way of teaching is more authoritative.” (Mrs. Chow, Chinese mother).

Indeed, in China, the work of high school teachers is evaluated based on their students' performance in various exams. Teachers therefore tend to be stricter and always assign more tasks to improve the school results of their students so that their employment status can be maintained. In comparison, a majority of the Quebec born/raised Chinese students perceive most of their teachers as "*gentil*", and few of them report "bad experience" with their teachers. If this happens, it is more likely to be related to the fact that they are not happy with their academic results. For example, in Section 4.2.2, the quote from a Chinese boy shows that he does not believe that he should have received such lower scores in a French exam.

*« La plupart des enseignants sont gentils, mais il y en a qui le sont moins. »* (Sarah, Chinese girl).

*« Les profs ont beaucoup d'attentes envers nous, ils nous encouragent à aller à la récupération pour s'améliorer... »* (Lina, Chinese girl, School D).

Some other students and parents also indicate that in Quebec, the teachers do not require the students to reach high standards. It seems that as long as the students attain 60%, it is satisfactory for the teachers, whereas in China, especially in senior high school, many teachers push their students to reach the goal they set for them (usually 90%), which sometimes puts pressure on the students. However, some parents express a measure of dissatisfaction with the attitudes of the teachers here, because they believe that the teachers should be stricter and set higher standards for their children.

*« En Chine, les étudiants sont stressés, parce qu'ils ont la pression des parents et des professeurs [...] Ici, les profs sont gentils, ils nous critiquent pas à cause de nos notes... »* (Wenhao, Chinese boy, School B).

"Once, my daughter got 70% in her French exam, but you know what, her teacher said she did well in French. I can't believe, I mean she should get at least 80%. I think they need to have a higher standard." (Mrs Liu, Chinese mother).

As mentioned above, many Chinese immigrant students seem to be happy and satisfied with their life in Quebec schools because of their less stressful environment. However, for some new arrivals, it seems difficult to get used to the new norms in the classroom.

As described by the teacher respondents in section 4.1.4, few Chinese students speak in class or talk about their “problems” with their teachers or other non-teaching professionals, and this also appears to be a barrier to developing a closer teacher-student relationship.

### 5.1.2 Positive stereotype

The data in the current study confirm the findings of previous research concerning the perception of school teachers and other school personnel towards Chinese students. Almost all of the teacher respondents perceive Chinese youth as “good students” and characterize these students as respectful, self-disciplined, obedient, and studious.

*« En général, on a un préjugé favorable, parce qu'on sait qu'ils sont habitués à travailler fort et à persévérer. Ce sont des qualités qu'évidemment tous les professeurs recherchent. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

*« En général, ce sont des élèves qui respectent le code de vie, qui sont toujours polis. La plupart du temps, ce sont des élèves qui s'investissent dans leurs études, qui généralement font leurs devoirs, qui ont des bons comportements en classe et des bons comportements sociaux. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

*« Mes Chinois sont toujours des élèves très studieux. C'est clair, ils sont toujours à leur affaire. Ils sont très performants. Au niveau du comportement, il y a vraiment rien à dire. On leur donne des exercices et ils font toujours les exercices. Ils sont toujours très respectueux en classe et ils viennent à la récupération. Ils posent très bien leurs questions. Ils cherchent vraiment à comprendre. Ils sont vraiment très obéissants. »* (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

*« Ils sont très travailleurs. Ils travaillent très bien. C'est très rare qu'un Chinois n'étudie pas. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School C).

In this regard, a teacher interviewed in School B indicates that she and one of her colleagues is particularly proud of her Chinese students for their academic achievement.

*« Généralement, ils réussissent dans toutes les matières [...]. J'enseigne à un groupe de musique, il y a une concentration d'élèves chinois. Pour être dans le groupe de musique, il faut que ça soit des élèves performants dans toutes les matières. On a aussi un autre groupe qui s'appelle LLS [langue, littérature et sciences] et on a beaucoup d'Asiatiques dans ces classes-là. C'est nos “bolées” de l'école. Pour être dans cette classe-là, ça demande d'être bon dans toutes les matières. Donc ça prouve que les élèves chinois sont très, très bons. J'ai une collègue qui est aussi très contente de ses élèves chinois. Elle m'a montré une liste des*

*notes de ses élèves. Parmi eux, les Chinois ont presque tous plus que 97 %. Elle semble très fière d'eux. » (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).*

From the quote above, one can see that the perceptions of these two teachers towards Chinese students are based on a small sample —the students they teach in certain “special” groups. As mentioned in Chapter III, to be selected in these groups, these students have to be the “top ones” in an ordinary class. It may be inaccurate to conclude that “all Chinese students achieve success in school”. As demonstrated in Chapter IV, some Chinese students are actually faced with big challenges in certain subjects, especially French.

When asked for the reason behind this positive stereotype of Chinese students, all of the teacher respondents suggest it is related to the attitudes of Chinese students towards education and schools.

*« On dit que le seul endroit où le succès vient avant le travail c'est dans le dictionnaire. Les élèves chinois ont beaucoup de respect envers l'école et tout ce qui s'appelle "l'éducation". Donc, je pense que c'est une source de motivation assez intense pour réussir et pour aller le plus loin possible. Souvent, ils vont mettre plus d'efforts. » (Pedagogical advisor, School C).*

Some teachers interviewed also indicate that the attitudes of Chinese parents towards education and schools may influence the teachers' perceptions of the Chinese youth.

*« Moi, je te dirais que du côté des enseignants, les préjugés sont positifs pour les élèves d'origine chinoise. Je connais des enseignants, même en accueil, quand ils prennent leurs listes de noms, quand ils voient les noms chinois, ils commencent à être très contents. Ils croient que ces élèves sont performants et que leurs parents ne sont pas très fatigants. Ce sont souvent des parents qui ne parlent pas français. Ce sont des parents qu'on ne voit pas souvent à l'école pour se plaindre. Ils ont pas de vocabulaire. Ils font beaucoup confiance à l'école. » (Pedagogical advisor, School A).*

As described in Chapter II, from an interactionist perspective, this positive stereotype may contribute to a feeling among Chinese students of being accepted in school and being capable of participation in the classroom. However, it may also create stress for those who fail to reach the “model minority” standard. Although the teacher respondents suggest that the positive stereotype does not put any pressure on their Chinese students, it

seems that it does cause ignorance of their sociopsychological needs, especially with their characteristics of shyness and self-isolation.

### 5.1.3 Expectation of teachers

Based on the positive stereotype of Chinese students, most teachers hold high expectations in terms of their socioeducational integration. They believe that most Chinese students will achieve success in school, further their studies in a postsecondary institution, find a good job, and eventually be integrated into mainstream Quebec society, despite the fact that their high achievement does not always predict a successful social integration. Some of them are convinced that students of Chinese origin will “become *québécois*” in several years.

*« Je suis très positif envers eux. On a eu la classe d'élites chinoises...Ce sont des enfants qui réussissent à l'école. Ils apporteront toujours quelque chose à la société, parce qu'ils vont obtenir un très bon emploi. Ils apporteront aussi quelque chose à la communauté. C'est ça, le but de l'immigration au Québec. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

*« Ils vont sûrement réussir. Ce sont des élèves qui ont des belles aptitudes scolaires et académiques et ça va se développer en belles aptitudes professionnelles. Ce sont des élèves travailleurs à qui on peut faire confiance. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

*« Je pense pas qu'ils auront un problème d'intégration. Quand des jeunes sont ici depuis deux ou trois ans, ils deviennent québécois. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School C).

One teacher is extremely positive towards the future of Chinese students, because she believes that in comparison with other ethnic minorities, the mainstream also holds a “*préjugé favorable*” (favourable prejudice) towards the Chinese community. Moreover, she considers that there is a correlation between the social integration of an ethnic minority and its share of the population in a given area. For example, she is sure that Chinese students will be well integrated in the Greater Montreal Area.

*« Je crois que ce sont de bons élèves qui vont aller au moins au cégep et à l'université, donc ils vont aller chercher un bon bagage au niveau de l'éducation. Les personnes d'origine chinoise sont travaillantes. Donc, quand ils rentrent dans le monde du travail, ils vont être bien vus parce qu'on connaît leurs qualités. On sait qu'ils sont respectueux. Je crois qu'il n'y aura pas de problème pour mes élèves chinois de trouver quelque chose en rapport avec leur métier. Quand quelqu'un est arabe, il y a des préjugés. Mais vous, vous avez un préjugé favorable ou un stéréotype positif. Au niveau de l'intégration générale, c'est sûr qu'il y a pas*

*de problème dans la grande région de Montréal. En région, je ne pense pas non plus qu'il y aura des problèmes, mais je ne connais pas la proportion des Asiatiques, je peux pas dire. »* (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

However, according to some previous studies in the Quebec context, this *préjugé favorable* sometimes functions as a constraint and restriction on the lives of the individuals who experience them, because they are limited and hemmed into roles that do not take their personality into account or match their tastes (MICC, 2006). As one can see in Chapter VI, the socioeconomic integration of first generation Chinese in Quebec has not been rewarded by this prejudice, “favourable” as it might seem at first glance.

The Chinese students interviewed, especially those from School C affirm that their teachers have high aspirations for them and also feel that the school prepares them to achieve higher scores.

*« Les professeurs à mon école ont beaucoup d'attentes envers nous. Ils veulent toujours que tu fasses mieux que la dernière fois. L'école, en général, met beaucoup en valeur la générosité, la capacité d'étudier et d'avoir des bonnes notes. »* (Mei, Chinese girl, School C).

Only one teacher seems to be uncertain when talking about her expectations towards the future development of Chinese students, because she is aware of their resistance to speaking French.

*« C'est assez difficile de dire [...] qu'ils sont conscients que le français est une nécessité pour l'intégration. C'est une frustration plus qu'autre chose pour eux, je trouve, au début. Ils parlent assez souvent l'anglais et puis, ils s'attendent pas d'être obligés de parler français [...] En tout cas, avant qu'ils aient l'accès [à l'école anglaise], ils doivent passer par l'école française. Ça prend un certain temps. Donc il y a certaines résistances là-dessus. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

In line with the quote above and the analysis in Section 4.1.1, several teachers are worried that most of their Chinese students will choose to be enrolled in an English-speaking *CÉGEP* and university later on, which would not be beneficial for the future development in Quebec.

*« Moi, je pense qu'on va les perdre au profit de l'anglais. Je sais qu'ils vont à des collèges*

*ou cégeps anglophones et à des universités souvent anglophones. Mais ils vont avoir un bon emploi, ils vont devenir médecins et scientifiques, ça, j'ai aucune inquiétude pour eux. C'est pas juste les élèves chinois. Il y a de plus en plus d'élèves qui s'en vont aux collèges anglophones. Je trouve ça très triste. C'est sûr qu'ils réussissent plus en anglais, mais l'anglais est la langue seconde. Le français ici, on l'enseigne comme la langue maternelle. Peut-être qu'ils avaient déjà une connaissance de l'anglais en arrivant au pays. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

## **5.2 Learning Support Programs and Services**

### **5.2.1 Welcoming class**

For all newly arrived Chinese immigrant students and their parents, welcoming class plays the role of a gateway for entering Quebec society and its school system. Among the student respondents, those who were enrolled in welcoming classes seem to be generally satisfied with their experiences, although several of them indicate that being in a class where there are many other Chinese students can sometimes delay their linguistic and social integration into the new school environment.

*« Quand j'étais en classe d'accueil, il y avait des Chinois et on restait toujours ensemble. Mon français s'est pas beaucoup amélioré. Après, mes parents m'ont envoyé à l'école du samedi et ça m'a beaucoup aidé. Puis, on a déménagé. Il y avait moins de Chinois dans ma classe, alors mon français s'est beaucoup, beaucoup amélioré. En fait, mes parents voulaient déménager pour qu'il y ait moins de Chinois et que je puisse pratiquer mon français. »* (Jiale, Chinese boy, School C).

However, almost half of the Chinese parents interviewed seem to be dissatisfied with the experiences of their children in welcoming classes. Some of them consider the duration of welcoming class to be too long. They believe that “six to ten months” should be the maximum. Others complain that the teaching program is too simple and the passage to a regular class is problematic. As will be discussed in Chapter VI and VII, this perception is sometimes influenced by the information these parents obtain from afterschool institutions in the Chinese community, which might lead to ignorance regarding the level of their children's cognitive development.

“My son still has some problems in his French. He stayed in Welcoming Class for too long, and the change from Welcoming class to a regular class is huge for him. During the two first

weeks in the regular class, he made a lot effort, and he went to bed at 23:00 every night. It took a long time for him to adapt to the regular class. ” (Mrs. Fang, Chinese mother)

“Many Chinese kids were trying their best to get in a regular class as soon as possible, because the teaching content in Welcoming Class is too simple. That’s not good for the kids. I think in this regard, parents should try their best to negotiate with the school. You know, most of these schools would keep the kids as long as they can. If the parents insist that they should go to a regular class, the school will finally accept that. ” (Mrs Guo, Chinese mother).

Moreover, several parents are convinced that a French immersion program with specific support would be more beneficial for Chinese immigrant children, because they believe that sometimes welcoming classes are not able to provide a French-speaking environment due to an over-representation of immigrant students from certain ethnic groups. For example, Mrs. Guo points out that the students in his son’s welcoming class often speak English because of the concentration of Filipino children:

“I think the school should provide a natural French-speaking environment. I believe that an immersion program with some specific support would be much better than Welcoming Class. When my son was in Welcoming Class, there are lots of Filipino kids, and they always speak English, this way, how can he get progress in French? ” (Mrs Guo, Chinese mother).

The effectiveness of different host language teaching models raised by some parents remains a highly debated issue confronting many immigrant-receiving societies. In the opinion of some French teachers, it may be more efficient to transfer students who have difficulties in learning French as a native language to a program of studying French as a second language, although the former may be richer in some cultural aspects.

*« Il y des avantages à l’enseigner comme langue maternelle, parce qu’il y a un aspect culturel, mais ça n’empêche pas qu’on le mette dans une approche plus de langue seconde. D’après moi, un cours de français langue seconde va développer la compétence linguistique de l’élève, mais un cours de langue maternelle est un approfondissement. Peut-être que c’est pas bon d’approfondir quand on maîtrise pas les bases. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

Indeed, it is not easy to determine which model is more efficient because of the different characteristics of various clientele (Mc Andrew, 2009b). For example, the immersion program with specific support is more beneficial for students who arrived at a young age, while it may not that helpful for those who migrate during their adolescent years.

According to Mc Andrew (2009b), flexibility and diversity of formula seem a much better choice.

### 5.2.2 Other learning support services

As mentioned in Section 4.1.1, among the three focal schools, only School A offers Welcoming Class program to newly arrived immigrant students. Accordingly, to support their French learning, School A also provides service of *l'aide aux devoirs* (homework assistance), which is supported by two mainstream community-based organizations. The goal of this program is not only to help newcomers with their homework, but also to provide them a French-speaking environment and an opportunity to make friends with students from other ethnic groups. After finishing their homework, students are always invited to participate in various activities designed to improve their French. Nonetheless, the school teachers and other personnel indicate that few Chinese students participated in these activities. According to the assistant-principal of School A, Chinese students mainly attend *l'aide aux devoirs* during the exam period, and once the exams are over, the participation rate drops.

*« On a l'aide aux devoirs, mais les élèves chinois n'y participent pas beaucoup. En fait, pour moi, c'est une occasion de parler français une heure de plus. Ils peuvent le parler avec des élèves de différents niveaux, parce qu'on mélange tout le monde à l'aide aux devoirs. C'est pas seulement des élèves en accueil. Pour moi, ce mélange est idéal. Ils sont avec un professeur qui n'est pas en accueil. Donc il parle vite. C'est bien parce qu'ils voient d'autres choses. Je sais qu'il y a des élèves qui devraient rentrer à la maison immédiatement après l'école, mais j'ai dit aux parents qu'ils sont là pour l'aide aux devoirs, qu'ils sont là avec d'autres personnes et que ça aide à l'intégration. Ils peuvent se faire des amis pas juste avec les élèves de classe d'accueil. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School A).

*« L'aide aux devoirs est vraiment pour tous. Ce n'est pas particulièrement pour les élèves issus de l'immigration. C'est sur une base volontaire, mais en regardant les résultats des élèves, des professeurs vont aussi dire : "Toi, va à l'aide aux devoirs!". Les élèves chinois vont y participer quand c'est près de l'examen. Quand les examens sont finis, ça va diminuer la participation. »* (Assistant-principal, School A).

Likewise, the community agents interviewed in two mainstream organizations also affirm that only two or three Chinese students are involved in *l'aide aux devoirs* and other activities they organized. According to these respondents, the main reason for the low attendance of Chinese students is that their English is much better than their French, and

participating in French-speaking activities makes them uncomfortable. Another reason is that most of the Chinese students have good performance at school, and therefore do not need homework assistance service.

« *Quand il s'agit d'Asiatiques, ils sont surtout anglophones. Ils sont beaucoup plus confortables en anglais qu'en français. Quand on leur parle français, on voit qu'ils se débrouillent, mais c'est vraiment pas leur langue. Non seulement c'est pas leur langue maternelle, évidemment puisqu'ils parlent mandarin à maison, mais pas non plus leur langue seconde et celle qu'ils veulent utiliser. Ils veulent toujours utiliser l'anglais avec les autres élèves. Dans leur tête, la langue seconde est l'anglais. Le français vient en troisième. Deuxièmement, la plupart des élèves chinois sont déjà très performants à l'école. Ils viennent pas ici parce qu'ils ont besoin de nous. Ils sont loin de décrocher de l'école. Ils ont certainement besoin des rapports amicaux. Effectivement, leurs parents sont très occupés, mais ils sont loin d'être dans une situation d'échec scolaire. Ils sont très organisés. S'ils doivent faire leurs devoirs, ils vont les faire. Ils vont jouer après, très disciplinés d'eux-mêmes. Ils n'ont pas besoin de nous.* » (Community agent, Centre Acroche).

However, it is somewhat dangerous to believe that “most Chinese do well at school” and that “they do not need specific services, such as *l'aide aux devoirs*”. As described in Section 4.1.2, some of them, especially new arrivals, have actually great difficulty with French. This sometimes also sets barrier to other subjects, even in mathematics, which many consider to be a subject in which Chinese students perform well. Indeed, during my visit in School A, Jun and Lei (the two Chinese boys I interviewed in School A) were the only students I met who had attended *l'aide aux devoirs* on several occasions. At the end of last school year, they decided not to participate in these activities anymore. Actually, they point out that *l'aide aux devoirs* is not helpful for them because they cannot communicate well in French with the community staff or the teachers and are convinced that bilingual assistants would be more effective.

“You know that I attended [*l'aide aux devoirs*] several times, but I couldn't understand what they were saying. I told my mom that it may be more useful to find someone who speaks Chinese, and then my mom sent me to a Chinese supplementary school... ” (Jun, Chinese boy, School A).

“I decided not to go to [*l'aide aux devoirs*] anymore, I mean my problem is really the French, but they [community staff] thought I have a problem in maths, and they started to explain how to solve certain problem in maths. I told them that if I understood the question, it is very easy for me to work out the problem in maths. ” (Lei, Chinese boy, School A).

Also, according to the assistant-principal of School A, most Chinese youth do not participate in *l'aide aux devoirs* and other activities in school or other mainstream organizations, because they are not allowed to do so. Their parents require them to go home immediately after school. He believes that the reason behind for this is the insecurity and a lack of knowledge of Chinese families about their new country and city.

*« Pour les parents chinois, surtout les nouveaux arrivants, c'est une nouvelle ville, c'est une nouvelle vie. Ils ont des inquiétudes par rapport à leurs enfants, ce qui fait que le message qui est véhiculé c'est que " tu vas à l'école et après l'école, tu vas prendre l'autobus pour rentrer à la maison, tu restes pas. " Encore une fois, je crois que c'est pour ça que les familles chinoises veulent contrôler leurs enfants. Il faut que ces élèves rentrent à la maison tout de suite après l'école. Ils ne comprennent pas ce qu'on fait à l'école. Et je pense que ça prend au moins deux ans pour eux de comprendre. C'est un processus au niveau de l'intégration... Imagine, si j'étais en Chine avec mes enfants, je ferais pas mal comme ça. C'est pas une question liée à l'origine ethnique. J'ai rencontré des parents qui sont ici depuis deux ans et ils ont gardé ce genre d'habitudes quand même... »*

In addition to *l'aide aux devoirs*, School A also provides other learning support services, such as *la récupération* (revision or remedial services) as well as speech-language pathology and sociopsychological services, although these services are not exclusively offered to immigrant students attending this school. In School A, if a student is evaluated as "having difficulties", it is mandatory for him or her to participate in a specific program or *la récupération*. Teachers in this school also suggest that there are more Chinese students in French programs than in mathematics. School B and C also offer the same learning support services, except Welcoming Class or *l'aide aux devoirs*. Teachers interviewed in these two schools indicate that Chinese students participate frequently in *la récupération*, even though they do well at school. Indeed, during the interview with Chinese students in School C, one of them said that she could not stay for as long as 90 minutes, because she needed to go to *la récupération*. When asked whether she has difficulties in certain subjects, she told me that she just wanted to make sure that she mastered what had been taught in Class. As mentioned in Section 4.1.4, this may be related to the insecurity they feel.

*« Pour ceux qui sont sortis de l'accueil, ils ont accès à des programmes particuliers, par exemple, l'informatique. Si l'élève est évalué comme "en difficulté" par un enseignant qui croit qu'il doit être placé dans un programme ou un groupe, c'est obligatoire pour l'élève*

*d'y aller. Imagine, les Chinois, il doit y en avoir plus en français, moins en maths. »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

*« Les élèves chinois sont toujours à la récupération, même quand ils ont pas de difficulté. »* (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

*« Les élèves chinois vont souvent aux cours de rattrapage ou à la récupération. Quand les parents viennent et qu'on leur dit : "votre enfant doit aller à la récupération". On va sûrement voir que l'enfant est là. Il y en a qui y vont souvent, même quand ils ont pas de difficulté du tout. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

With regard to speech-language pathology and sociopsychological services, few Chinese students seek out these kinds of resources at school. As mentioned in Section 4.1.4, Chinese students, and new arrivals in particular rarely express their feelings or open their inner world to others. It might therefore be wrong to conclude that they are "feeling well" based on their frequency of seeking these services.

Besides the abovementioned services, School B started a *service de parrainage* (mentoring program) in January 2013, which allowed the students at higher academic levels in school to help those at lower levels who have difficulties in mathematics and French. According to the teachers interviewed, Chinese students are more likely to be the mentors.

*« À partir de janvier [2013], il y aura des parrainages. Les élèves plus vieux vont donner le cours. Par exemple, trois élèves en secondaire 5 qui sont bons en maths vont donner un coup de main pour aider des élèves en secondaire 4 qui ont des difficultés dans cette matière. C'est une fois par semaine en maths et en français. C'est un peu comme l'aide aux devoirs. Pour le parrainage, les élèves chinois vont plutôt être les parrains. C'est eux qui vont aider les autres, parce qu'ils sont très bons. »* (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

According to this teacher, School B also provides additional online resources on their website so that students can use them as needed. She also notes that Chinese students take full advantage of these resources and often study in teams to assist one another with their schoolwork.

*« On met aussi des ressources sur Internet. Je sais que les élèves chinois y vont souvent. Ce sont des axes supplémentaires sur Internet. J'ai entendu aussi qu'ils travaillent souvent en*

*équipe et si quelqu'un a des difficultés, ils vont lui donner un coup de main. » (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B)*

School C offers guidance and counselling services for students planning to pursue their studies in a postsecondary institution. The pedagogical advisor indicates that many Chinese have come to talk to him about their future plans. They seem to be anxious about choosing a college or university.

*« Ici, on reçoit beaucoup, beaucoup de Chinois. Ils posent souvent des questions comme : "C'est quoi les possibilités? À quel cégep je dois aller?" Il y en a plusieurs qui viennent me consulter. Il y eu des recherches qui ont été faites sur le stress de performance en 3<sup>e</sup> secondaire. On a vu que les Asiatiques sont très stressés... » (Pedagogical advisor, School C).*

In line with the analysis in Section 4.3, Chinese immigrant students generally seem to get involved more frequently in activities aimed at improving their academic achievements than in extracurricular activities. As mentioned above, the teacher and school personnel respondents indicate that Chinese cultural values and their parents' expectations may influence their choice to participate in various activities and seek different resources at school.

### **5.3 School Climate**

#### **5.3.1 Adaptation to diversity**

The adaptation to ethnocultural, linguistic, and religious diversity within a reasonable range can have positive effects on the socioeducational integration of immigrant/minority students, especially on their academic achievement. However, the research data in this study demonstrate that most teachers and other school staff seem to put more emphasis on the secular values of Quebec society and French as the language used in its public schools.

*« On est dans une école laïque, on n'a plus aucune manifestation religieuse, sauf des fêtes. Puis, au fil des ans, au départ, on essayait de faire beaucoup d'accommodements raisonnables. À l'époque, on avait des salles de prières pour tout le monde, mais il y a*

*seulement des musulmans qui y sont allés. Donc là, on a décidé d'arrêter ça... » (Assistant-principal, School A).*

*« Il n'y a pas beaucoup d'ouverture à ça parce qu'on s'adapte pas à une telle culture. On est dans une culture et tout le monde s'intègre. Je sais qu'il y a des élèves qui demandent un local de prière, mais on a démontré l'impossibilité d'offrir ça. » (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B).*

*« L'école ne s'adapte pas à la diversité. C'est aux élèves de s'adapter. C'est dans le cadre de l'école québécoise, laïque, francophone, avec comme langue d'usage le français. À ce niveau-là, il n'y a pas d'adaptation. Quand on entend des élèves parler une autre langue que le français, on les ramène au français. La direction donne un seul droit, c'est de porter le hijab. » (Teacher responsible for extracurricular activities, School C).*

Only one of respondents is ready and open to accept linguistic diversity in school context. She is convinced that the acceptance and recognition of linguistic diversity can bolster students' self-esteem.

*« Juste de faire accepter à une équipe-école que les élèves en accueil puissent parler leur langue maternelle sur l'heure de dîner, c'est déjà un début. On fait le débat chaque année. Je leur dis : « Si vous étiez en Chine et que vous appreniez le chinois, pendant la pause, vous aimeriez rencontrer vos amis qui parlent en français. Imaginez comme ça va faire du bien, surtout pour renforcer l'estime de soi. » On essaie de changer des choses...Ça arrive souvent, quand des enseignants entendent que les enfants parlent une autre langue que le français, qu'ils vont leur dire "Parlez français!" » (Pedagogical advisor, School A).*

In addition, the assistant-principal of School A perceives having teachers or other personnel of diverse ethnic origins as a positive factor for establishing connections with students and parents from various cultural communities. Although the school attempts to diversify the teachers and other staff, none of them is from the Chinese community. Likewise, there are no teachers or other school staff of Chinese origin working in the other two focal schools.

*« Au niveau du personnel, on n'a pas de Chinois, mais on a des employés de différentes origines, ce qui est aussi un facteur favorisant, parce que les professeurs savent ce que les familles se parlent. C'est une connexion [...] Je vous donne un exemple : mon épouse est égyptienne, qui est née en Égypte. Quand je parle aux parents arabes ou maghrébins, quand ils voient que je suis l'homme blanc, québécois de souche, ils ont certaines résistances. Mais quand je leur dis que mon épouse est égyptienne, ça change le rapport que j'ai avec les parents maghrébins. Je vois toute de suite cette modification qui se fait. Ça aide pour les élèves aussi. C'est rassurant pour eux que nous puissions comprendre leurs valeurs. »*

Indeed, according to the teacher and other school personnel respondents, few parents have required these schools to make accommodations for their culture, language, or religion, and this is particularly the case of Chinese immigrant parents. A teacher indicates that even during the Chinese Spring Festival, only a few parents will ask the school to authorize their children's absence.

*« Il n'y a aucune manifestation religieuse à l'école, mais à Noël, tous les enfants participent. Nous, on met des sapins dans nos classes. C'est pas qu'on veut que tout le monde devienne chrétien, mais c'est quelque chose qui se passe dans leur pays d'accueil. Il y a jamais des parents qui disent "Je veux pas que mon fils soit présent dans une classe où il y a un sapin". Dans les classes, on leur fait plutôt partager chacun son vécu à ce niveau-là, faire des échanges. On demande "Comment ça se passe chez vous?". En fait, chacun dans son pays a une occasion de faire une grande fête religieuse. Nous aussi, on fait une grande fête, pas nécessairement reliée à une religion. C'est comme une fête communautaire. » (Assistant-principal, School A).*

*« L'école offre des cours et des activités. Il y a des parents qui, pour toutes sortes de raisons, demandent des ajustements. En général, il y a une ouverture si, dans la mesure, c'est équitable et faisable. Il n'y a vraiment pas beaucoup de demande d'adaptation des parents chinois sauf, par exemple, si c'est le Nouvel An chinois. Certains parents vont appeler pour dire : « Mon enfant est absent parce que c'est le Nouvel An chinois » (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).*

*« Ce sont pas eux [les parents chinois] qui vont se plaindre ou réclamer moins d'encadrement dans les accommodements pour leurs enfants. Peut-être qu'ils connaissent pas bien leurs droits, peut-être parce que d'autres parents, d'autres cultures réclament davantage d'accommodements [...] que les parents chinois. Pour moi, c'est un respect de l'autorité. » (French teacher in Secondary 5, School B).*

In line with the last quote above, this teacher believes that the reason for not requiring accommodation is related to a non-awareness of rights or obedience to the authority of Chinese parents. Likewise, during the interview with Chinese immigrant parents, only one of them suggests that public schools should allow students to organize Bible Study groups, although she is aware that this might not be feasible and has never proposed it to the school in which her children were enrolled. Some parents raise the issue of teaching the Chinese language in French public schools, and this will be discussed in Section 5.3.2.

### 5.3.2 Heritage language and culture in the Quebec curriculum

Despite a diversified student body, the interview data indicate the relatively low representation of heritage culture and languages of various ethnic minority groups in the curriculum and teaching practice in Schools A and B, especially Chinese culture and languages. For instance, a teacher in School B suggests that in the Ethics and Religious Culture class (*Ethique et culture religieuse*), traditional Chinese philosophy, such as Confucianism is presented to the students. He also mentions that the history teachers might talk about some aspects of Chinese history, but the first and foremost mission of this course is to teach students the history of Canada and Quebec, followed by that of the United States and Europe, because in comparison to other countries, the latter two areas have a long term relationship with Canada and Quebec. Consistent with previous studies, it seems that Western culture is still the core of most courses of study in North American society, notwithstanding attempts to pluralize the curriculum (Ballantine & Hammack, 2009).

*« En Éthique et culture religieuse, ils vont parler de différentes philosophies, comme la philosophie chinoise, le Confusionnisme, des choses comme ça. C'est clair qu'en histoire, on va présenter un peu l'histoire de la Chine, mais c'est quand même l'histoire du Québec et du Canada en premier. De là, l'histoire des États-Unis et de l'Europe, parce que ces sont les pays avec lesquels on a plus de relations depuis longtemps. »* (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).

At the same time, only one of the teacher participants in both School A and B mentions that she has asked students of different ethnic groups to talk about their school experience in their country of origin and culture:

*« Quand ils peuvent mieux s'exprimer, je leur demande de parler de leurs pays d'origine et des traditions...Des fois, je leur demande de décrire leur vie scolaire dans leurs pays d'origine... »* (French teacher in welcoming class, School A).

School C seems to present a different picture in this regard. As an international school, it has many exchange programs with various countries. Over the last two years, China was a frequent topic in daily conversations, because some students in this school visited China. They offer Mandarin classes for those intending to learn this language. A teacher believes

that these programs and activities have a positive impact on the self-esteem of Chinese immigrant students.

*« Les deux dernières années, on a entendu parler beaucoup de la Chine, parce que les enfants sont allés en voyage. On a aussi des cours de mandarin à l'école. On a reçu une délégation chinoise cette année, parce que la Commission scolaire a des collaborations avec la Chine. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

*« Je crois que ce genre d'activité a un impact positif sur les élèves chinois, surtout pour leur estime de soi. »* (Science teacher in Secondary 4, School C).

In addition, a teacher in this school suggests that she has also developed sensitivity to cultural diversity in her teaching practice. At the beginning of the school year, she will ask her students to present themselves by writing their favourite food, their interests, and their country of origin. With this positive attitude towards ethnicity and diversity, it may be easier to establish a supportive school context for the students.

*« Au début de l'année, je passe une feuille à tout le monde. Je leur demande leur repas préféré, leurs passions, etc. et je leur dis : "Si vous n'êtes pas au Québec depuis trois générations, de quelle origine êtes-vous?" C'est comme ça que je sais qu'ils sont chinois, coréens, portugais, irlandais... Comme ça, je peux me sensibiliser à leur culture et je voudrais aussi leur donner le message que je suis ouverte à toutes les cultures. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

During the interview with Chinese parents, most of them criticize the Quebec curriculum for being too narrow. For example, they indicate that the history class in school only present Quebec history and not much about world history. They believe that if some aspects of Chinese culture were included in the curriculum, Chinese immigrant students would feel more accepted and understood, and this would improve the climate of ethnic relations at school.

"I think the curriculum here is too narrow. For example, my kids told me that they did not learn much about the world history, but only Quebec history. I believe that they [*québécois*] are trying to protect themselves. I think they should be more open. If some Chinese culture could be included, the kids would feel being accepted and understood." (Mrs. Lian, Chinese mother).

“I think if the school can teach some aspects of Chinese culture, more students will understand Chinese students and their behaviours. This way, they won’t tease them that much. ” (Mrs. Liu, Chinese mother).

Some parents also suggest that including Chinese culture is beneficial for developing a sense of belonging to the host society, and hence has positive effects on their academic achievement. They propose that Quebec schools present the culture of ethnic minority groups with a relatively larger population, such as that of the Chinese, South Asian, and Arabic community. One parent even points out that presenting some positive aspects of Chinese culture can help Chinese students to be nourished by the precious values of both Oriental and Western culture.

“I think Chinese culture can be included in the curriculum in French public schools, it will sure have positive effects on their academic achievement. As immigrant children, if they see something about their country of origin, they would feel that they have be included in the school, and people in the school recognize China and Chinese. I think if the public schools can present the culture of larger ethnic groups, such as the South Asian, Arab and Chinese communities, kids from these groups would feel accepted and recognized.” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

“If schools can present some positive points of Chinese culture in their curriculum, it will be good for Chinese kids to learn the good points in both Oriental and Western culture. I mean, if they can compare these two and absorb the good things in both cultures, then they will sure have a brilliant future. But if they learn the shortcoming of both cultures, it would be disaster.” (Mrs. Li, Chinese mother).

Indeed, the heritage language teaching program, known as PELO, was introduced in 1977 as a counterpart to what were then extremely active endeavours linked to the promotion of French (Mc Andrew, 2009b). Mandarin was one of the fourteen languages being taught in French public elementary schools. Although a message that multilingualism is valued in Quebec is sent to immigrant parents through this program, it seems to have only a marginal impact on the Quebec school system (Mc Andrew, 2003c). As mentioned in Chapter II, since this program is only implemented in elementary schools and the languages are mostly taught before or after school hours or at noon time, many immigrant parents prefer to enrol their children in ethnospecific schools or ethnic community-based language schools to perpetuate the heritage language. It seems that many Chinese parents are not aware of the existence of this program. In this regard, some parents and

community agents interviewed doubt that decision-makers in Quebec will accept the suggestion to include Chinese culture in the high school curriculum, because they feel strongly that the French-speaking community attempts to protect their culture and language while perceiving other cultures as unacceptable. To raise the voice of Chinese students and parents, a community agent proposes that Chinese parents should get involved in school councils or parents' committees.

“I don't think they will do that, because they have students from all kinds of ethnic groups. It is impossible that they add some Chinese culture or a history of China into the curriculum. Moreover, French-speaking people seem to protect their own culture, they won't add the cultural heritage of other nations. Also, if you add Chinese culture into the curriculum, it will cause some conflicts. Other people would say, why don't add some African or Arab culture.” (Mrs Fang, Chinese mother).

“Some private high schools would have optional Chinese courses. Our school sends some teachers to give lectures in these schools, but I don't think public schools would accept this kind of suggestions, because the proportion of Chinese is relative small, and I don't think any school would add more content of any ethnic culture, you know French schools tend to protect their own culture.” (Chinese teacher, Chinese School C).

“It is impossible for Quebec to accept to include Chinese culture in the high school curriculum. If they can really make it, I think people from other ethnic groups would know more about our culture. This would help Chinese kids to build a better self-image. I believe that Chinese parents should involve in school councils, raise our voice, this way, it is possible to present more Chinese culture in school. Otherwise, I mean, if you are only an ordinary parent, you wanna give some advice to a school, no one will listen to you.” (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand- Montréal*).

In line with the quotes above, some Chinese parents and community agents seem to have strong expectations that French public high schools can adopt a Chinese teaching program as optional courses. Several of them also express their hope of having a bilingual program as many schools in the United States do. Nevertheless, they doubt that their dream will really come true one day. Indeed, some of them even show their cultural insecurity when they mention the attitudes of some “narrow-minded politicians” towards cultural and linguistic diversity.

“You know, since *Parti Québécois* came to power this year, I was thinking may be we should move to Ontario. Pauline Marois seems very narrow-minded. I heard she wants to cut the amount of English classes in French schools, I can't understand. I was hoping one day,

we can learn Chinese in French public high schools, but when I heard this, I think it is impossible ... ” (Mrs. Chan, Chinese mother).

### 5.3.3 Ethnic relations

According to the teachers and school personnel interviewed, the climate of ethnic relations is positive in the three focal French public schools. Although there are sometimes incidents of bullying and conflicts among students, they believe that this is related to the typical adolescent behaviours rather than to differences between various ethnic groups.

*« Il n'y a pas de tensions du tout entre les différents groupes, mais c'est pas par hasard non plus. Ça a pas toujours été comme ça. Dans les années passées, c'est arrivé et on s'est rendu compte très rapidement que le problème avait aucun rapport avec le groupe ethnique [...] On parle de l'adolescent ici. C'est souvent des histoires de filles. Par exemple, "un garçon a parlé à ma blonde " et là, il se met en groupe plutôt qu'aller rencontrer la personne seul. Ça fait un groupe, je ne sais pas moi, de latinos, un groupe de libanais, qui fait que, voilà, quand on regarde ça à l'extérieur, on dit que c'est la tension au niveau racial ou au niveau linguistique. Mais dans les faits, c'est pas ça, c'est une question de fille. C'est un comportement d'adolescent plutôt que d'être relié à la tension entres des groupes ethniques. » (Assistant-principal, School A).*

*« J'ai jamais entendu qu'un élève était grossier envers des professeurs, comme j'ai déjà entendu dans d'autres milieux, dans d'autres écoles. On s'entend bien. Ce sont des adolescents qui peuvent avoir des problèmes, mais dans l'ensemble, ils vont assez bien. C'est arrivé parfois qu'il y ait des conflits entre eux, ou des cas d'intimidation. Par contre, il n'y a pas de tension entre les différents groupes ethniques, parce que la vision de l'école c'est d'être ouvert à tout le monde. C'est clair qu'on va toujours tenter de combattre toutes les sortes de discriminations raciales ou sexistes, quelles qu'elles soient. » (Pedagogical advisor, School C).*

These respondents also indicate that the conflicts or incidents of bullying at school are different from what happen in the neighbourhood where their students live. Because there are always some adults at school (e.g. teachers, supervisors, or other non-teaching professionals) who intervene in the event of conflicts, and these problems may be solved within a short time or at least might not deteriorate over time.

*« Un élément qui joue, c'est qu'on a investi au niveau de personnel d'encadrement, ce qui fait qu'il y a beaucoup, beaucoup de problèmes qui n'arrivent pas, justement parce que les adultes sont présents sur le terrain. Ils vont intervenir tout de suite, ce qui fait que ça passe à autre chose. C'est dans ce sens-là que je vous dis qu'il y a pas de tension. Mais c'est pas que tout est parfait, mais le fait qu'on a investi au niveau du personnel et qu'on a un meilleur œil*

*et une meilleure vision des jeunes. Donc, en même temps, l'intervention est beaucoup plus ciblée. » (Assistant-principal, School A).*

*« J'ai jamais vu des situations de conflit dans lesquelles il y avait des élèves asiatiques. Parmi les autres groupes, il y des tensions, mais pas beaucoup au niveau de l'école. J'ai l'impression que c'est différent dans leurs quartiers ou dans leurs milieux. J'ai l'impression qu'en général, au niveau de l'école, les élèves se retiennent, parce qu'ils savent que c'est un endroit où quelqu'un va intervenir, on va arrêter le conflit. Je sais qu'il y a de l'intimidation, je sais qu'il y a plein, plein de choses comme ça là. Parfois, on a des élèves qui nous en parlent, mais visuellement il y en a pas beaucoup. » (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).*

In line with the last quote above, some other teachers also affirm that even in the case of ethnic conflicts, it is rare to see Chinese youth involved in these incidents. Also, regarding the case of bullying, few Chinese students have reported that they were being bullied in school.

*« J'ai jamais entendu dire qu'il y a des élèves chinois qui se plaignent d'être victimes de discrimination. Je crois qu'ils sont perçus favorablement. C'est cool d'être chinois. » (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).*

However, a teacher in School C points out that there are far fewer incidents related to ethnic conflicts than before. Several years ago, the conflicts between Chinese and French-speaking students are more associated with linguistic differences, because Chinese students are considered to be more “anglicized”.

*« Il y a moins de tension qu'avant. Je dirais qu'il y a quelques années, c'était flagrant. Il y avait vraiment une torture entre les Chinois et les francophones...Je pense que c'est lié à l'anglais. La plupart des Asiatiques parlent anglais. » (Teacher responsible for extracurricular activities, School C).*

A teacher in School B suggests that Arabic students are more likely to involve in the incidents of ethnic conflict and bullying.

*« Dans mes classes, les élèves chinois ou asiatiques n'ont jamais eu de tension avec d'autres groupes. Mais je sais que, des fois, avec les groupes arabes, ça peut poser problèmes, mais ce n'est pas quelque chose d'automatique. J'en entends quelquefois parler, mais ce n'est pas automatique. Dans mes classes, tout ce passe très bien. Au niveau de l'école, si il y a de l'intimidation, c'est encore des arabophones avec n'importe qui dans l'école. Ça peut être des arabophones avec des Québécois, avec des hispanophones ou mes Asiatiques. Si je*

*regarde les plaintes sur l'intimidation, il y a pas beaucoup d'Asiatiques qui ont déclaré qu'ils sont intimidés. C'est moins que les autres groupes ethniques. »* (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

Nonetheless, she also indicates that “Arab” is not a homogeneous group. The behaviours of these students are likely to associate with their country of origin and their pre-migratory experiences. As for Chinese students, she reasons that few of them have experienced serious incidents, such as wars before immigrating to Quebec.

*« On ne peut pas dire que tous les arabophones ont des difficultés avec les autres groupes. Ça dépend d'où ils viennent, de leur pays d'origine. Par exemple, il y un Libanais qui disait en colère : “Pour survivre, il faut que j'intimide le monde”, parce qu'il a vécu la guerre. Je pense que c'est dû à leur vécu. Dans les pays arabophones, il y a beaucoup de conflits. Je pense que ça vient de ce facteur-là. Peut-être que les élèves chinois n'ont pas eu des épreuves comme ça. »* (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School B).

This reasoning may well be true, but it is also important to bear in mind that Chinese students rarely express their feelings even when they do not “feel well”. It is accordingly possible for them to remain silent, even if they have encountered ethnic conflict or bullying. For example, some parents suggest that they have read stories in Chinese newspapers about some Chinese students “being victims of discrimination”, but when they questioned their children about this, most of their answers were that they are satisfied with the school environment.

“I read a story about a Chinese kid in Chinese newspapers. He likes playing hockey very much and his parents support him to do that. They take him to play in various matches. Once he played in match in his school, a white parent asked his father ‘what are you doing here? It’s not for you at all...’ I am sure that this society Welcomings immigrants, but it is too hard for us to get integrated in here, even for kids at school. There are some barriers that you can’t overcome. ” (Mrs. Guo, Chinese mother).

“I sometimes read things about bullying or discrimination at school. I ask my son indirectly if he experienced something like that, his answer is always no. He said he is satisfied with his school. I am not sure if it is the truth...” (Mrs. Fang, Chinese mother).

Despite the positive evaluation by the teacher and other school personnel respondents in terms of ethnic relations, experiences of being victim of discrimination or prejudice have been reported by some Chinese parents. Some parents also indicate that they are not

willing to instil the ideology of “being discriminated”, because they believe that a such ideology might lead their children to adopt a negative attitude towards the whole society.

“I know that discrimination exists, because he told me that some kids laugh at him, but I don’t talk often about that. I don’t want my kid to have a bad impression of the whole Quebec society.” (Mrs Zhang, Chinese mother).

“My daughter told me that some kids ran after her and shouted out ‘*elle est chinoise!*’ Some kids even ask her ‘what’s five times five?’ I told my daughter there were only few people like that. Quebec or Canadian society is actually quite open to diversity.” (Mrs Chow, Chinese mother).

A number of teacher and parent participants also indicate that some Chinese students are bullied or discriminated against because of the general positive stereotype. As they are perceived as “good students”, other students are jealous of their academic success.

*« En général, il y un préjugé favorable du côté de l’effort. Il y un stéréotype positif. Il y en a qui sont jaloux de la réussite des Chinois. Il y en a qui posent des questions comme : “Est-ce que si tu es chinois, ça veut dire que tu es plus intelligent?” ou “Est-ce que tes parents te mettent beaucoup de pression pour que tu réussisses?” Les autres élèves savent qu’ils vont à l’école du samedi et ça devient un stéréotype chinois. “Les Chinois ont pas beaucoup de temps libre” ou “Ils font des cours de musique, ils apprennent une troisième ou quatrième langue” »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

“My son is very good at maths, and he always gets 100% or 98%. He just went to a regular class last year. When other kids saw that he was really good at maths, they started to say ‘I know you maths is good, but your French is really bad’ some even say ‘how come your maths is that good? I can’t believe’. My son doesn’t talk back a lot, I don’t know it is because his French is not that good or he is shy. He doesn’t argue with them.” (Mrs. Kwan, Chinese mother).

“When some French speaking kids saw that my daughter did very well in French, even better than did they, they said to her ‘you must try very hard to learn to French, you want to surpass us, right?’ My daughter thought they were ridiculous. You know we always speak Chinese at home, but they always speak French. Maybe she has this kind of talent...” (Mrs. Lian, Chinese mother).

The data above show that the “model minority” stereotype sometimes produces peer discrimination, which confirms the research findings in the United States to some extent. These studies indicate that positive prejudice towards Chinese students, such as teachers’ preference, has negative impact on their sociopsychological wellbeing (Qin *at al.*, 2008).

Indeed, according to most students born/raised in Quebec, this impression of “being nerdy” is not true for them. Most of them suggest that they have free time to “hang out” with friends. Also, as mentioned in Section 4.1.3, not all the Chinese students make their schooling a priority. In order to provide a healthy school environment, it is necessary for teachers and other non-teaching professionals to recognize the diversity of Chinese students and to understand how the stereotype will shape their school experiences. Notwithstanding the positive stereotype that school teachers have of Chinese students, some parents believe that discrimination against Chinese children really exists, even if only in an implicit manner.

“I am sure he [her son] has experienced this kind of things, but I don’t think it is implicit discrimination. It is under the table. You know, the teachers will like white kids better. We can all feel that. I heard that in some schools, if white kids do something against the rules, they won’t punish them. If a Chinese kid does that, he would receive very severe punishment. They could even kick him out. They still have different standards towards the majority and minority groups.” (Mrs. wang, Chinese mother).

Although most of the student respondents confirm the fact that they have not experienced discrimination or prejudice at school, several of them indicate that they have been bullied by students of other ethnic groups. They give “not sticking together” as the reason for being bullied or harrassed. Some other students also mention the fact of being discriminated against outside school.

“Once I saw some black guys stole my stuff, I was trying to tell them, that’s mine. Then they started to beat me. I was only on my own, nobody came to help me. There were about 5 or 6 black guys. Of course, I was beaten up. I reported this to a teacher, these black guys were suspended from school for several days, but when they came back, they want to take revenge to me... Finally, I transferred to this school. I think students from other ethnic groups all stick together, but Chinese kids are like ‘a plate of dispersed sand’...” (Lei, Chinese boy, School A).

*« Ici, ce qui est mauvais c’est qu’il y des parties du Canada où le racisme est encore là. Par exemple, une fois, quand je suis allé à un restaurant. Puis, quand j’attendais pour prendre mon lunch en ligne et la ligne est longue, puis ça coupe l’espace pour passer. Il y avait un vieux, pas mal vieux. Il passe... Je ne sais pas si tu as regardé le film de Jackie Chan. Ça s’appelle « Twin Dragon ». Il nous appelait Ching-Chan Twin Dragon. C’est pas quelque chose qu’on apprécie ça... On veut pas être traités comme ça. »* (Étienne, Chinese boy, School B).

« *Je n'ai pas vécu de discrimination ou de préjugé à l'école, mais je les ai vécus en-dehors. Moi, je travaille dans un restaurant et il y a des clients qui supposent que je ne parle pas français parce que je suis asiatique. Ils me parlent toujours en anglais, mais ils se parlent en français.* » (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).

According to the above quote from Sarah, some French speakers associate “Asian face” with “not speaking French”. Other students also affirm that this is particularly the perception of some French-speaking people. In line with this impression, some community agents (organizations in the Chinese community) also indicate that “not speaking French” and having “Asian” or “Chinese” accent are other reasons that some Chinese students were mocked or discriminated against in school.

“In fact, there is a prominent problem among Chinese kids. Most of Chinese families are really strict with their kids, so they are not as open as western kids. Most of the time, they are those who get bullied at school. Also, usually, they don't speak good French. It is easy for them to be marginalized.” (Community agent, *Amétié Chinoise de Montréal*).

“Several boys told me that their *québécois* friends often made fun of his accent when he was speaking French and this makes him have no confidence when speaking French. Sometimes, they said they just wanted to go back to China.” (Community agent, *Service à family chinoise du Grand-Montréal*).

In addition to Asian accent, some other community agents also suggest that another reason for peer discrimination and bullying at school is related to the physical size and strength of Chinese students, because they are often perceived as “small” or “weak” in comparison with children of other ethnic groups, although they do not believe the bullying can be only attributed to racism.

“I heard a lot of stories about Chinese kids being bullied at school, especially the younger kids. You know, most Chinese kids are very short, and they can't beat up a white, black or Arabic kid. They are often beaten by other kids. I think the situation is better for the elder kids. I don't think they would be bullied often at school. By the way, school bullying is very common in Canada. I don't believe it is much related to racism. Especially in some optimal schools, there is a big concentration of Chinese kids, and lots of them play or make friends with Asian kids, so the issue of racism doesn't exist. I think few teachers would discriminate kids from certain ethnic groups, because it is forbidden by the law. You know, Canadian Human Right Act is established to protect us, but I think there is a lot of implicit discrimination, you know under the table. It won't be on the table.” (Chinese teacher, Chinese School C).

## 5.4 Relationship with Chinese Immigrant Families

### 5.4.1 School-family connections

As described in Section 4.2.1, most teachers hold positive attitudes towards Chinese immigrant students and their parents, although this does not necessarily produce a close relationship between Chinese families and school teachers as well as other personnel. Indeed, compared with their experiences in China, most parent respondents perceive this relationship as “very rare” and “business-to-business”, although most of them appear to show their confidence in teachers and satisfaction with their work. These parents indicate that in China, relations between parents and teachers are very personal. They often meet school teachers in private and give them gifts on festivals and holidays, such as Teachers’ Day. Teachers will do a home visit if a student has behavioural or academic difficulties. In Quebec, almost all parent-teacher meetings are officially organized by the school and teachers never seem to have to talk about the problems of a specific student. The parents also express their feeling that teachers in French schools are not willing to spend much time with them.

“In China, I have a very close relationship with the head teacher of my son, I sometimes send gifts to her, but here it is almost impossible to have a private meeting with his teachers here. Every time, it is kind of in a big hall, the teachers would give information to all the parents at the same time. They don’t have time to talk to you in private. How can I know what my son does at school? I can only ask him, but he is a teenage boy, sometimes he doesn’t want to talk about all the things...” (Mrs. Wang, Chinese mother).

“When I was in China, when my kids were enrolled in a new school, I met the teachers when I picked up my kids after school. We would then exchange our cell numbers so that we could contact each other if we need to talk or something happens, here it is impossible. I mean here, the culture is totally different, work and private life, never go together. I will never expect to invite a teacher for lunch or a coffee and at the same time talk about my kids.” (Mrs. Fang, Chinese mother).

In line with the quotes above, it seems that Chinese parents are not familiar with the norms and practices of the Quebec educational system. In this regard, both the parent and teacher participants affirm that the School Board did not provide any information about the operation of the French public schools, such as teaching methods, curriculum design, or even the admission process, when the newly arrived students were first enrolled in the

Quebec school system. As will be illustrated in Chapter VI, most parents indicate that they obtain information about the Quebec educational system through their co-ethnic networks, such as ethnic media, other Chinese parents, or immigrant service organizations. Teachers and other school personnel interviewed in School A suggest that in order to provide some information about their school, they occasionally organize information workshops with certain mainstream social organizations in the neighbourhood. However, few Chinese parents have attended these workshops.

*« On a des séances d'information sur le système éducatif québécois, notre école, nos programmes, etc. en collaboration avec des organismes dans le quartier, mais il y n'a pas beaucoup de parents chinois qui y participent. Je pense que c'est peut-être à cause de la barrière de la langue. Des fois, quand on a des interprètes, il y a plus de parents chinois. »*  
(Pedagogical advisor, School A).

As mentioned in the quote above, most Chinese parents interviewed see their low level of French proficiency as a huge barrier to participating in school activities, such as parent-teacher meetings. Nonetheless, not every school provides translation services. For instance, teachers interviewed in School B and C indicate that they do not have many resources to offer interpretation services for parents who do not speak French. Being unfamiliar with social norms and the French language, many parents choose not to take the initiative to contact teachers unless they spot serious problems. However, these parents suggest that their loose connections with the teachers would inevitably have a negative impact on their children's school experience.

To improve the communication between Chinese immigrant families and French public schools, most parents express their expectation that French schools should organize activities in both English and French. Some of them also suggest that French schools hold separate meetings with only Chinese parents and provide an interpreter. Some other parents believe that parent-school communication would improve if staff with a Chinese background were included in the school personnel.

“I think it would be better if the French schools here can organize parent-teacher meeting in both English and French, because most Chinese parents here have no problem in understanding English.” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

“If possible, I hope these schools can be sensitive to the needs of Chinese parents. I think they can have a separated meeting with them and provide a translator for them. I know it’s too demanding for school to do that, because they have already done a lot, but I am sure this will improve the communication between parents and teachers.” (Mrs Chan, Chinese mother).

“If there are some Chinese staff work in these French schools, things would be better, but I am not if it is possible...” (Mrs. Li, Chinese mother).

Furthermore, to foster a sense of belonging among Chinese parents, some community agents (in the Chinese community) also propose that teachers and other personnel in French public schools develop more cultural sensitivity, and that schools should organize more intercultural activities to present the heritage of the Chinese community. They think that this suggestion could also be applied to other ethnic minority groups.

“For school, I think the teachers and personnel should know more about Chinese culture, then they can do better in communicating with the parents.” (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand-Montréal*).

“I think the school can organize more cultural activities, for example, to present the cultural heritage of an ethnic group. This way, the parents can be involved in it.” (Youth minister, Chinese Church A).

#### **5.4.2 School-family-community partnership**

As mentioned in Section 4.2.1, most teachers perceive Chinese immigrant parents as “cooperative” because of their “obedient attitudes” and the “rare” connections with them. However, Chinese parents believe that the loose ties between school and family may have negative effects on their children’s academic achievement. The literature review in Chapter II shows that community-based organizations (both ethnic community and mainstream) can play the role of mediator between parents and schools. However, the research data show that few links between schools and these organizations, especially in the Chinese community, are established with the goal of improving immigrant students’ school experiences.

Among the three focal schools, as described above, only School A has cooperated with immigrant service organizations in the neighbourhood to provide various services, such

as *l'aide aux devoirs*, information workshops, and translation. As for Schools B and C, cooperation with community-based organizations is not even seen to be necessary. When talking about the translation services provided by some organizations, the teachers and school personnel in these two schools consider that learning and speaking French is the parents' responsibility (or they should at least speak English). If they do not speak either official language, it is also their responsibility to seek help. Although the data show some parents might seek resources from the Chinese community, most of them choose not to be involved in school activities.

Also, according to the staff interviewed in the Chinese community organizations, only a few French public schools contact them about organizing information workshops or parent-teacher meetings. To their knowledge, outreach activities designed to promote the involvement of Chinese immigrant families in school life are not organized in any French schools. These respondents indicate that the absence of a school-family-community partnership may partly explain the loose connections between Chinese parents and French public high schools.

## **Summary**

This chapter examined the influence of various school contexts on Chinese origin students' educational success and their social integration at large. In general, the findings are consistent with previous studies in English-speaking contexts (Wang, 2007; Tang, 2007). Notwithstanding the difficulties that some Chinese students have experienced, teachers and other personnel in the target schools appear to hold a positive stereotype of Chinese youth and their families. This positive stereotype, however, sometimes causes ignorance of their specific educational needs. Indeed, no programs or services are provided in the three focal schools particularly for Chinese youth to meet their needs. Some teachers and school personnel indicate that this is because they want to offer equal opportunities to all students. Nevertheless, "equal opportunity" does not necessarily mean "equal treatment", rather, it means fair treatment, and some special provisions are actually necessary to level the playing field (Ghosh, 2012). On the other hand, this

stereotype can sometimes produce peer discrimination and jealousy towards Chinese students, in spite of a generally positive evaluation of ethnic relations by the teacher and school personnel respondents. Other reasons for peer discrimination and bullying are related to physical appearance and Asian accent when speaking French.

Moreover, many concerns have been expressed by Chinese parents on the effectiveness of the French language teaching program for the new arrivals (welcoming classes). However, as mentioned in Chapter II, previous studies do not provide an easy way to determine which model is the most effective, because language acquisition is a complex process and depends not only on the curriculum and pedagogical development, but also the characteristics of the students and the language environment established by their family and friends.

Another issue raised by the parent and community agent participants is the recognition and inclusion of Chinese culture and language in the Quebec curriculum. As mentioned in Chapter II, some studies have highlighted the academic, emotional, and societal importance of recognizing diversity by engaging students in learning about their heritage culture and languages (Cummins, 1996, Inglis, 2008). Although some educational policies, such as PELO, have been applied to acknowledge and foster sensitivity towards the heritage culture and language of various ethnic minority groups, the basic cultural needs of the Chinese community seem to be a low priority in Quebec society and its educational system.

Finally, in terms of the school-family relations, the loose connections between Chinese parents and French public high schools constitute a negative factor for the socioeducational integration of Chinese immigrant youth. First of all, these parents are neither well informed about the Quebec educational system and how it operates nor are they aware of the social norms concerning communication with the schools. Furthermore, few family-school-community partnership (whether ethnic minority community or mainstream) has been established to improve the relationship between French schools and Chinese families.

## Chapter VI Immigrant Family Dynamics

As described in Chapter I, although the Chinese community has become one of the largest ethnic minority groups in Quebec, it remains “invisible”. This chapter attempts to draw a fuller picture of this group by exploring the migration project of Chinese families and their integration in Quebec society. Furthermore, to examine the influence of these family dynamics on the academic achievement of Chinese youth, this chapter also analyse the parental expectations and involvement of Chinese immigrant parents.

### 6.1 Chinese Immigrant Families in Quebec

#### 6.1.1 Migration project

Wenhao’s grandparents were poor peasants who did not have any access to education. To change the life of their children, the grandparents worked hard to ensure Wenhao’s parents to finish their primary and secondary school. The parents then made great effort to succeed in the National Higher Education Entrance Examination<sup>25</sup>, which commonly known as *Gaokao* (which means “big test” in Mandarin), and finally went to a university. Wanting their son to have an easier academic life and more opportunities to succeed in the future, Wenhao’s parents made the decision to immigrate to Quebec when he was 10 years’ old:

*« En Chine, aller à l’université, c’est très compétitif et difficile, mais si tu n’y vas pas, c’est fini. Tu peux rien faire. Tu peux même pas trouver un emploi. Mes parents ne veulent pas que je vive la même chose qu’ils ont vécue. Ils ont donc immigré au Canada pour moi, pour faciliter un peu mes études et ma vie en fait. »* (Wenhao, Chinese Boy, School B).

Étienne’s parents left China for Vietnam during the Chinese Civil War in 1950s. Since they had only finished their elementary school education and had never received any professional training, they had to work as manual labours in Vietnam. They lived in a

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<sup>25</sup> This examination is a prerequisite for entrance into almost all higher education institutions at the undergraduate level. It is usually taken by students in their last year of high school, and they can only take this exam once a year.

poor neighbourhood and their local school was not very developed. When Étienne, their youngest son, was at primary school, he received a lot of corporal punishment. He described that school as full of violence. To give Étienne and his siblings a better educational environment, their parents applied for refugee protection in Canada. They finally came to Quebec in 2002, when Étienne was 7 years old.

*« On a vécu dans un quartier très pauvre. L'école où je suis allé au Vietnam n'était pas bien développée. Les profs punissaient n'importe qui. Il y avait des punitions là-bas, surtout par la violence. Je vais raconter quelque chose que j'ai vécu. Un jour, je suis rentré chez moi et j'ai pris ma douche. Quand je suis sorti de la douche, je voyais les traces rouges sur ma cuisse. Je me demandais : « qu'est-ce qui arrive? ». C'était à cause de la punition. Pour nos études et notre futur, mes parents sont venus au Canada quand j'avais 7ans. » (Étienne, Chinese Boy, School B)*

Compared to Wenhao and Étienne's story, Jun seemed to have had an easier life when he was in China. Jun and his parents lived in Dalian, a big and developed city in Northern China. His parents worked at a School Board. He had been enrolled in one of the top junior high schools in the city. Yet, in order to get a higher score in *Gaokao*, Jun had to start preparing for it when he was in junior high school and go to afterschool tutoring classes. One day, when his parents learnt from their friends that Canada has a more successful school system than China, they began planning to immigrate to Canada. In 2009, Jun and his mother first arrived in Prince Edward Island through the Provincial Nominee Program and lived there for one year. In 2010, they came to Montreal because they have friends and acquaintance here. Today, Jun is in Secondary 5 at a French public high school in Montreal. His father is still working in China to support them, because he believes that he has little chance of finding job in Montreal due to the language barrier.

“My son got too much pressure back in China. At that time, people around us and our friends in Canada talked a lot about the schooling in Canada. So I finally decide to come here so that my son could have a more brilliant future.” (Mrs Wang, Chinese mother)

As these three migatroty stories illustrate, migration has primarily been sought for the education of the children, irrespective of their different backgrounds in China. During the interview with Chinese parents, all 15 respondents described their main reason for immigrating to Canada as follows “We came to Canada for my kid's future” or “We

came here mainly for our kids' education". Likewise, most of the students interviewed mentioned that "My parents immigrated to Canada so that I could have more opportunities" or "My parents came here for my schooling". In China, *Gaokao* has been the only chance for most young people to scale up the social ladder. Every year, millions of high school students take this exam. Those who perform extremely well can expect to be courted by the nation's top schools, with the other successful candidates finding spots in provincial universities or two- or three-year colleges. The rest 40% of test-takers who fail, have to wait for next year's enrolment or attend some less-selective private institutions (Siegel, 2007). Moreover, as China's economic growth, the implementation of the Opening Up policy<sup>26</sup> and the expansion of higher education recruitment in the late 1990s have led to a fierce level of job competition. Finally, some long-standing problems, such as hazardous pollution, contaminated food, and unstable sociopolitical developments have also motivated more people to leave from the country. To provide better education prospects for their children and facilitate their academic life, many Chinese looked for alternative measures; they accordingly began to emigrate from China to Western countries with more educational opportunities, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

In recent years, changes in many countries' immigration policies have made it more difficult for Chinese people to meet their immigrant selection criteria. For instance, some countries cut the professions sought under skilled workers programs and raised the minimum criterion of official language test score for gaining a visa as well as the amount of financial commitment needed for exemptions granted to investors. With the advertisement of immigration agencies all over China, Quebec has been seen as a backdoor or even the only way to get out of China, because the province plays an active and key role in selecting its own immigrants. As a great emphasis is put on the French proficiency of its applicants, French training schools, such as *Alliance française*, are becoming increasingly popular in China. At the same time, students of these institutions have formed a potential market for immigration agencies. Through the advertisements of

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<sup>26</sup> The Opening Up policy refers to the Chinese economic reform in 1978. This reform introduced capitalist market principles

these French training schools and immigration agencies, Quebec has been well publicized for its “cradle to grave” social welfare system and its immigrant assistance services. Chinese are therefore increasingly focusing on Quebec as their better choice to immigrate. According to the data in this research, some families chose Quebec simply because it is a francophone province with less Chinese than other provinces, such as British Columbia and Ontario, and because they do not want their children to live in a “little China” in Canada. Others made their decision to come to Quebec because they have relatives or friends here to whom they can reach out. Among the Chinese parents interviewed, five mentioned they came to Quebec because of their willingness to “experience something different” or to “put my children in a place where there are not so many Chinese”. Three of them said they had relatives and friends here. The rest referred in their answers to Quebec’s natural environment and social welfare system.

“I don’t think Quebec is most people’s first choice because of the language barrier. I believe many people would choose BC or Ontario at first. We came here because they got something special to consider, such as relatives and friends, social welfare, a trilingual environment for the kids...” (Mrs Li, Chinese mother).

Most Chinese immigrants came to Quebec through Economic Class Immigration.<sup>27</sup> Of the thirty families that participated in the current research, two came here as investors, one came under the refugee category, while the rest were skilled workers. However, socioeconomic integration has not been easy for Chinese immigrants, even for those who had received higher education and professional training in China. Many of them are unable to work in the same field as they did in China due to language and systemic barriers. They start by performing manual labour or by opening a convenience store (known as *dépanneur* in Quebec) after they settle in Quebec. As mentioned in Chapter III, among the parent respondents in the current study, three are housewives, four of them are small enterprise operators (*dépanneurs* or small cafés), three are performing manual labour, and five are professionals with two having changed their field of working. When I asked about the socioeconomic status of the new arrivals, two community agents said this me:

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<sup>27</sup> According to MICC (2012), for those who landed on Quebec from 2007 to 2011, over 80% are Economic Class immigrants.

“Their economic situation is fine. Well, you know, most of them are skilled workers, not investors, so they don’t have a lot of money. If they can’t find a job in their own field [as they were in China], they can do manual labour jobs, this way, they can still support the family.” (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*).

“For new immigrants, it is hard to find a job. You know, most of them do not speak French. For those who work in IT, accounting, engineering, it is probably easy to find what they want to do. If you study law, that would be very difficult. But life is easier here. If you work in a Café as a waiter or waitress, you can also live a good life...” (Principal, Chinese School A).

Those who do not see any possibility of continuing the same profession will return to their country of origin to pursue a professional career or business. Recent research defines this type of family as an “astronaut arrangement” or “satellite arrangement” (Wathers, 2000). In astronaut households, it is usual for the father to work in Mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan to provide sufficient financial support for the family, while the mother remains in Quebec to take charge of the family’s domestic and childcare tasks. In a satellite arrangement, both parents go back to China and the children are left in Quebec with their relatives or an authorized “legal guardian”. They are willing at any cost for their children’s education, even if it involves the the family unit itself. In this regard, a teacher that I interviewed said:

*« Souvent, des élèves chinois sont ici avec leurs mères. Le père est encore en Chine ou à Hong Kong. La mère est ici avec l’enfant pour les études. Principalement, le but d’immigrer ici, c’est pour les études de leurs enfants. J’ai aussi souvent des élèves qui sont seuls ici, puis leurs parents sont là-bas. Ils sont ici avec quelqu’un de la communauté. Ils sont là pour les études. »* (French teacher of welcome class, School A).

In astronaut or satellite families, children may often encounter emotional distress which, in turn, affects their academic achievement. Two student respondents described the impact of this living arrangement:

“My father came to Montreal twice a year to see us, but for me it is far from enough. I don’t feel that I am protected. When I hang out with friends, and when it is getting late, I want to have my dad to pick me up. Sometimes, when my mom could not understand me, I really want to talk to my dad, but he is not here. ” (Jenny, Chinese girl, School C).

*« Pour moi, j’ai pas vraiment reçu l’amour parental de mes parents, parce que je suis venu ici quand j’étais très jeune et ils étaient encore au pays. Quelques années plus tard, ma mère*

*est venue, mais elle parle pas du tout le français, donc elle est jamais allée à l'école. Je peux pas être comme les autres. Je peux pas aller au musée ou faire du sport avec mon père. Je sais qu'il veut que je réussisse à l'école, mais il peut pas m'aider, ni me forcer parce qu'il est toujours pas là... » (Tian, Chinese boy, School D)*

Indeed, the lack of father role is not only a phenomenon of astronaut or satellite families. Many Chinese immigrant families have experienced this same problem. For example, of the 15 parent participants in this study, only one of them is male. When asking why the father did not want to participate in this research, the common answer is “Oh, it’s impossible for him, ‘cause he works a lot. You know, he has to work hard to support our family”. The respondents (including mothers, students, and community agents) indicate that a majority of Chinese fathers spend most of their time working; some do not even have time to talk to their children. Education is mainly seen as the mother’s responsibility. As for fathers, their role is usually to provide financial supports for the family. A mother told me that her husband believed that if he was able to make enough money to send all their children to a private school, his role of father was fulfilled. In some extreme cases like the following one, the children rarely even see their father despite the fact that they live in the same household.

*« Je vois quasiment pas mon père pendant la semaine parce qu’il travaille dans un restaurant tous les jours de 7 h 30 le matin à 10 h 00 le soir. Il est le chef du restaurant. Il quitte la maison à 7 h 00 le matin et revient à 10 h 30. Tu sais, je me lève à 7 h 20 et je dors à 10 h 00 le soir... » (David, Chinese boy, School D).*

*« C’est plutôt ma mère qui s’occupe de mes études. Tu sais que mon père travaille presque tous les jours et il ne parle pas beaucoup avec moi... » (Jun, Chinese boy, School A).*

### **6.1.2 Integration of Chinese immigrants in Quebec**

Notwithstanding the increased human capital of contemporary Chinese immigrants, especially among skilled workers, their integration in Quebec is still problematic. As indicated in Chapter II, people of Chinese origin are less likely to be employed than the whole population of Quebec (MICC, 2010). The qualitative data in this study are consistent with the statistical data. Of the parent respondents, only two consider themselves as “being integrated” into Quebec society. According to most of the parents and community agents interviewed, French is the biggest obstacle to their socioeconomic

integration. Although most of the Chinese came to Quebec as economic class immigrants with detailed plan, few of them have a high level of French proficiency.

“I worked in the field of fashion design, when I was in China. When I came here, I wanted to get a diploma. But you know what, I pay the application fee, but I was refused, because I didn’t speak French. My English was not good either at that time. I told them that all I want is a diploma and I don’t have any problem in professional knowledge, because I have ten years’ experience in this field. But finally they did not give me the offer.” (Mrs Liu, Chinese mother).

“Lots of people couldn’t find a job because of the language barrier. It is their disadvantage. If a person comes here at his or her 30s, it is impossible for him or her to speak fluent French in only one or two years. If there are some opportunities in other provinces, they would probably go there instead of spending time learning French here, because they have professional background...” (Chinese teacher, Chinese school C).

In line with the quotes above, all of the parent respondents see learning French as “very difficult” or “too hard”. The first possible reason is that many Chinese did not have the opportunity to learn French in China. English is usually the second language and compulsory course at school. Most of the time, the English taught in China, especially in Mainland China, is only written English and it is very common that someone cannot communicate in this language even after studying it for ten years. Some economic class immigrants may acquire certain knowledge of French when preparing for their immigrant selection interview. However, it is not enough to conduct long conversations, because language skills involve far more than simply knowing particular words and require an ability to communicate them effectively. It is also important to bear in mind that there are no language or educational requirements for those who come here as investors. It is therefore not surprising that they do not know either official language. According to the community agent respondents, another possible reason is that many parents did not come to Quebec at a young age. Most of them arrived here in their thirties and even forties. As described in the above quotes, it might be more practical to move to other provinces or perform manual labour instead of spending time learning a new language. For some of the people who reside in Quebec, especially the new arrivals, they will choose to forego learning French if the reward means they can provide financial support to their families or take care of their children.

“First, I need to deal with the “survival problems” here. I need to work. I actually registered in a weekend French course in 2007, but it was too difficult for me. Also, I got lots of things to do. I need to work, and I need to take care of my kids. Finally, I did not finish the course.”  
(Mrs. Yang, Chinese mother)

In addition to the language barrier, some systemic obstacles, such as non-recognition or devaluation of their credentials or work experience are also seen as “impossible” to be overcome.

“Some people have learnt some French, but they still can’t find a job, because their educational and professional experiences are not recognized here. For example, I was a teacher in China, but I have to study for 4 more years to get a teaching certificate. Even if I finish my 4 years’ study, I don’t have any advantage to compete with English or French native speakers. ” (English teacher, Chinese school B).

Many respondents view cultural differences as a big challenge. Their lack of knowledge of the social values and norms in the receiving society may hinder the attainment of their goals for employment and educational success as well as the formation of social networks.

“I don’t think Chinese immigrants have been integrated into the host society at all and I think cultural difference is one of the main problems. We have different concept or mentality. The second generation would be better, they would go to parties with white people, and they can get along with them. I know a young fellow who works for a law firm in a fancy building. When he went to a Christmas gala in a fancy restaurant, he wore a t-shirt and jeans. Although his boss did not say anything, all his colleagues looked at him strangely. It was really awkward. After that it was very hard for him to get along with his colleagues. I don’t think most of Chinese immigrants are very open. It is not like “when in Rome, do as the Romans”. Many people just want learn a skill so that they can earn their life. They do not have time to appreciate the beautiful French culture. You know, they live here, and they got a big house and big backyard, but they do not think about building up a good community. I have been here for 30years, and I finally fall in love with here. ” (Youth minister, Chinese Church A).

According to the quote above, some Chinese immigrants, including some of the parent respondents in this research are aware that the cultural barriers exist and affect their integration into Quebec, but they seem be unsure how to overcome them. From the perspective of French school staff, Chinese immigrants in many countries are seen as “culturally inassimilable” and their desire of being integrated does not seem to be strong enough to overcome the language and cultural barriers.

*« Dans plusieurs pays du monde où il y a eu l'immigration des Chinois, ils s'intègrent peu à leur nouveau pays. Ça prend quelques générations pour que quelque chose se passe. C'est un phénomène un peu normal, quand on arrive vieux dans un nouveau pays, que l'intégration se passe difficilement. Ça prend peut-être une génération, mais il faut aussi la volonté de s'intégrer comme d'autres immigrants. Ils doivent arriver à fonctionner, par exemple, essayer d'apprendre la langue. On sent que la communauté chinoise est comme "je vais travailler, je vais faire fonctionner mes choses comme j'ai toujours fait". Ce sont des gens qui ne demandent pas beaucoup à la société d'accueil. Ce sont pas des gens qu'on va retrouver sur le chômage ou des gens qui vont demander d'avoir leur lieu de prières comme d'autres. Ils s'organisent. Ils ne font pas beaucoup de demandes à la communauté. On peut dire que "les Chinois, ils dérangent pas, mais ils s'intègrent pas" » (French teacher in welcome class, School A).*

Nonetheless, according to the parent respondents, the pace of overcoming the language and cultural barriers is related to one's age of arrival in the receiving country and one's personality, as noted in following quotes:

"I think whether one can be integrated into the mainstream depends on the age of arrival and one's personality. I am in my 40s when I arrived here. It is difficult for me to learn all the new things. When I was taking French classes, I saw some young Chinese, and they seemed to build up a good relationship with people from other ethnic groups. I think they still kept in touch even after finishing the course." (Mrs Guo, Chinese mother).

"For myself, I am not integrated into Quebec society at all. I don't think French is a huge problem. I think culture is the main problem. For example, teachers will distribute gifts to students to celebrate Valentine's Day. For me, it is kind of unnecessary to do so. I don't think the Chinese community has been integrated into Quebec society at all. I think integration depends on one's personality. For instance, my husband and I are very different. Even though I can speak French, I am not willing to participate in local activities. My husband participates in all kinds of activities; even though his French is not very good." (Mrs Li, Chinese mother)

It is interesting to note that Mrs Li is one of the few respondents who believe that cultural difference is more important than a lack of knowledge in French. If looking at their post-migration experience, one can see that all of these respondents work in the fields of computer sciences, electronics, or communication engineering and their employers are all Anglophones. They might not see French as an obstacle to their integration because their working environment does not require any French language skills.

Likewise, the two mothers who considered themselves as being fully integrated also work in an English-speaking environment, although they can converse a little bit in French. For

them, “having an open mind” to the new society is an important factor for the integration of immigrants. Moreover, they seem to believe that the maintenance of Chinese culture at the same time is also necessary for their integration into a multicultural country like Canada.

“I think I have been integrated into Quebec. When I suggested my daughter to apply for *École internationale de Montréal*, many friends told me not do so because there were too many Chinese students there and it would hinder my daughter’s integration into the mainstream. I think it depends on how you see the concept of ‘integration’. I don’t think it means you have to lose your root culture or being assimilated. I hope my daughter and her children could know that they are Chinese and keep some good values. I will give you an example: I had a meeting with other occupational therapists last week. You know what? All the people attending that meeting are immigrants, and there was no Québécois. Some of them are second generation, and they speak the perfect English or French, but you can tell that they are minorities from their appearance. That is the beauty of Canada. When most of the people here are immigrants, you need to have your own peculiarities. If you lose your own root, people won’t respect you. ” (Mrs Chow, Chinese mother).

However, the problem of integration does not solely rest in the hands of immigrants. It seems that the context of reception in Quebec, especially the local labour market conditions, does not favour the integration of Chinese immigrants. As a visible minority in Canada, Chinese immigrants have encountered severe racial discrimination in the past, as evidenced by the “head tax” and “the Chinese Exclusion Act” period. Nowadays, explicit discrimination is rare by dint of the country’s multicultural policies and the Constitution, such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and *La charte québécoise des droits et libertés de la personne* (Quebec Charter of human rights and freedom). Implicit discrimination still exists and it particularly affects the integration of visible minorities, like the Chinese. Many of our Chinese respondents (including the parents and community agents) mention that they have difficulties in finding a job that matches their educational qualifications and professional expertise. They also report that Chinese immigrants seldom got promoted at work.

“I think the main problem is that many Chinese don’t feel as being accepted by the mainstream. My husband told me a lot about that. Taking him for example, he has a lot of conflicts and problems with his colleagues. He’s working in a printing factory, where he is the only immigrant. He is bullied by his colleagues every day. He is really suffering. He is a union member, and he should get promotion after working certain years in one position, but they’ve never allowed him to get to the level he deserves, because if he gets to certain level,

he would be taking some very easy tasks and they don't want that to happen. In fact, my husband has never made a mistake there even when his colleagues created a lot of obstacles for him. For example, when he was operating a machine, they pulled the plug. He was trying to complain to his boss, but it didn't work at all. He's made great effort to get along with his colleagues. He brought them Chinese food, teach them Chinese chess, and hung out with them, etc. Nothing works out..." (Community agent, Immigrant Service Organization A).

"I think that explicit discrimination is very rare, but the implicit discrimination is quite common. For example, you work very hard and you have made a lot of contribution to your company, but you may not get promoted in your whole life, because you are a member of visible minority. Another example, if both a white guy and you violate the traffic rules, you are gonna get a fine, but he would be ok. I am not saying that it is not right to be fined when you do not follow the rules, but I don't think they should pull any punches for white people." (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

Stereotypes and misperceptions seem to be rooted in the dominant groups due to their lack of knowledge of China, ignorance of Chinese culture, or the negative portrait of China in North American mass media. A Chinese mother told me that a white man even asked her whether most people sleep on the street in China (because he knows that China has the largest population in the world). Also, in some respondents' opinion, the hostility towards Chinese immigrants is caused by the economic development and low labour cost in China. Some also mention that "not speaking French" is one of the causes of being discriminated.

"I am pretty sure that discrimination exists in Quebec, though I did not hear many people talk about that before. You know, Chinese people don't wanna make trouble or to be aggressive. Recently, I did hear some people talking about that. They said some Québécois hate Chinese people, because all the products are 'made in China' and many factories here closed down. They lost their job and can only stay on the street..." (Youth minister, Chinese Church A).

"Discrimination won't happen openly or in public, but you can see and feel that in those small things. For example, usually when you go to McDonalds and order something. If you don't speak French, they won't talk to you or serve you. For sure, I think I have had this kind of experience, but I don't remember when. I am very open. I just walk away. I don't care and I will go to other places. Maybe once in a while, somebody will fight with them, but most of us just walk away." (Youth Minister, Chinese Church B)

Additionally, some respondents also indicate that Francophone culture is too protective for Chinese immigrants to be included.

“I feel that francophone culture is very protective. Québécois and people from other local ethnic groups have a very strong monopoly power in certain fields. Although they say they were quite multicultural or democratic, they virtually protect themselves. I think Chinese people can only enter in some fields, for certain fields, they won’t open the door for you. Even for the second generation, I don’t think they can get into the political arena. ” (Community agent, *Amétié Chinoise de Montréal*).

Despite the fact of having experienced racial discrimination in different ways and forms, most parent participants still hold a positive attitude towards Canada and Quebec. Many of them believe that the situation in Canada is much better than in any other society, such as in the United States or in European countries. Furthermore, many of these parents see “discrimination” against visible minorities as “a normal phenomenon” in Western societies. Most of them are convinced that in general, Canadians or Quebecers like them more than other minorities because they work hard, rarely depend on the social welfare system, and do not make any trouble. In line with the quotes above, their response to respond to discrimination is “to be silent”, “work harder” to improve their socioeconomic status, and preparing their children so that they can overcome any disadvantages related to their immigrant or visible minority status.

## **6.2 Parental Expectations and Children’s Educational Success**

### **6.2.1 Ethnic background and parental expectations**

This section focuses on three sources of the educational expectations of Chinese parents, which emerged during the data analysis process: Chinese culture, pre-migration experiences, and China’s social reality. As all of these themes are somehow related to their back ground in China, I present them under the general concept of “ethnic background”.

As described by the teachers and school personnel in Chapter V, all of the parent respondents affirm that education is highly valued by Chinese immigrant families and that the academic achievement of the children is their top priority. All of them emphasize that their children should at least receive quality university education. Some even suggest which university their children should attend.

“I hope my kids can at least go to university and have a good job in the future. You know, this way, they could be independent.” (Mrs. Choi, Chinese mother).

“I don’t wanna always push my kids...they have their own thoughts, but I told my oldest son, ‘if you go to McGill, I will be very happy’, and you know what? That has become his goal...” (Mrs. Li, Chinese mother).

For many Chinese, education is considered as one of the hallmarks of Chinese civilization and history. For instance, Mrs Chow is very proud of the importance and recognition of education in Chinese cultural heritage:

“In China’s 5000 year’ history, education has always been the most important thing. You know the Chinese proverb: ‘the worth of other pursuits is small, and the study of books excels them all’ (万般皆下品, 唯有读书高). I think most of Chinese immigrants in Canada have received a very high level of education. Having a bachelor’s degree is nothing among us. So we hope our kids could get more education. Those who came here before the 1960s, they probably had not had access to education. Even for them, they don’t wanna their kids to repeat their life.” (Mrs. Chow, Chinese mother).

In addition to academic achievement, Chinese parents also tend to emphasize the cultivation of good characters in their Children’s life. “Being a good person” or “becoming a morally superior person” (君子) is always the most important goal of education in Chinese culture.

“I told my kids when they were young, if you work hard at school, that’s enough. Moral integrity is more important than academic achievement. I am not saying academic achievement is not important. If your kids don’t wanna do their homework, you can’t just let it go. But study is not the only thing in their life. You should also care their personality development. That’s how I taught my three kids.” (Mrs Lian, Chinese mother).

Inconsistent with previous studies (see Li, 2001), most of the parent respondents do not totally agree with the Confucian thought of “academic achievement leads to higher social status” (学而优则仕). Although they generally believe that high academic achievement may result in job opportunities, they do not see it as a sufficient condition. Some of them also consider “doing well at school” as proof of “being capable”.

“I don’t think high academic achievement could lead directly to a higher status or success in the society, because this all depends on your whole development, for example, your personality. But I do think academic success is the result of one’s effort. If one can achieve

high scores, that means he or she is ambitious. An ambitious person has more chance to win in various competitions, such in the labour market.” (Mrs. Choi, Chinese mother).

“I think study is the most important thing during the first 20-30 years in one’s life, because it is the main task in this period. How do we evaluate one’s abilities? As a student, if you do well at school, it means you are very capable, if you are a capable person, you can at least find a good job.” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

“Teacher” is the most respected profession in Confucian tradition. The reverence a teacher holds is reflected well in expressions like “respect teachers and revere their moral teachings” (尊师重道) and “being a teacher for only one day entitles one to lifelong respect from the student that benefits his father” (一日为师, 终身为父). In this respect, a pedagogical advisor interviewed illustrated his experience:

*« J’ai un voisin qui me salue chaque fois quand il me croise, ainsi que sa famille. Ils sont très respectueux envers moi. Il ne m’a jamais appelé par mon prénom. Je lui ai demandé pourquoi il ne m’appelle pas par mon prénom. Il m’a dit : “Parce que je sais que vous travaillez dans une école, et pour nous, on a deux mères : on a notre mère biologique et la deuxième mère, celle qui nous permet de grandir et se développer, c’est l’école.” Ils ont beaucoup, beaucoup de respect envers les gens qui travaillent dans le domaine de l’éducation. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School C).

Accordingly, most Chinese parents teach their children to obey and respect the teachers. They also believe that teachers should love and discipline their students as parents do.

“I always told my son to respect and obey his teachers and see them as us [his own parents]. I think teachers should treat their students as their own kids and take care of them. I mean, if they make mistakes or they don’t obey their teaching, they should discipline them.” (Mrs. Guo, Chinese mother).

This high respect for teachers among Chinese students and their parents have shaped their perceptions of the process of teaching and learning. For most Chinese students, especially those new arrivals, talking to teachers in class or asking questions is seen as disrespectful, because they are supposed to obey and not challenge their teachers. As analysed in Chapter V, this value, however, sometimes inhabits participation in the classroom and even affects the improvement of their oral communication in French and the formation of peer networks at school.

*« Souvent, les élèves chinois nous disent que “chez nous, on parle pas avec le professeur, on écoute ce que le professeur nous dit. On parle très peu”. Alors que nous, on leur demande d’interagir dès les premières semaines... Je pense que ça les surprend beaucoup. Ils sont pas habitués à des échanges comme ça. »* (French teacher in welcome class, School A).

“You know, our kids were sometimes marginalized. I think it’s related to Chinese culture. For example, when a teacher poses a question on class, all the western kids will start to answer the question at the same time, but Chinese kids won’t express themselves. In China, the education system is trying to send the message that whatever the teacher says is right, you don’t challenge the authority.” (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*).

Meanwhile, the attitudes of Chinese parents towards teachers also explain their high confidence in teachers. They are convinced that if their children are not doing well at school, it is simply because they have not worked hard enough. They rarely question the teacher or the quality of teaching in this case, as the following quotes denote:

*« Quand je communique avec un parent à cause d’un enfant qui a eu des troubles à l’école ou qui a eu des problèmes de comportement, je ne communique qu’une seule fois. Le problème se règle très rapidement. Pour les parents chinois, si un élève ne réussit pas à l’école, c’est le problème de l’enfant, c’est pas le prof, c’est pas l’école. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

*« Les parents chinois nous font beaucoup confiance. Pour eux, si l’enfant a des problèmes à l’école, c’est sa faute. Ils sont pas comme les autres parents. Vous savez, des fois, les autres parents vont dire “pourquoi l’école fait ça à mon enfant, c’est pas sa faute.” Les parents chinois nous questionnent jamais. Il y a même des parents qui me demandent de punir leurs enfants... »* (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).

With regard to strategy of study or learning methods, hard work, frugality, and diligence are emphasized in Chinese culture. Many parent participants in this research hold the belief that “the sea of learning knows no bounds, only through diligence may its shore be reached” (学海无涯, 唯勤是岸). They believe that “working hard” is an inner and necessary condition, which will eventually lead to success. As mentioned above, for most Chinese parents, if a student fails at school, it is mostly because of his or her laziness but not the fault of teachers or the school, as the following quote denotes:

*“I think the problem of some Chinese parents is that they always want their kids to get in top schools. It has become a common thought among them. You know, some people heard that Pierre Trudeau graduated from Jean de Brébeauf, they then want their kids to get in that*

*school. Sometimes, that school also used this fact to advertise. I totally disagree with these people. I think academic achievement depends on the kid himself (herself). If one doesn't work hard, he or she won't do well at any school. I know several kids who got in that school, but finally they were kicked out. They don't work hard enough...*" (Mrs Fang, Chinese mother).

A Chinese supplementary school teacher also agrees with the parents:

*"I think if the kids do not do well at school, that's because they don't work hard or they are not trained to have a good study habit when there were young."* (English teacher, Chinese School B)

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, many Chinese immigrants came to Canada and Quebec for their children's well being. They were planning to emigrate from China because of its competitive social and educational environment. Accordingly, some parents and community agents suggest that the high parental expectations can be attributed to their own experience in China.

*"You know, in China, if you haven't graduated from a university, you can't find a job. Then, you cannot even survive in the society. When I was young, my parents always told me that I should go to a good university and learn some skills to survive in the society. I said the same thing to my kids too."* (Mrs Li, Chinese mother).

*"Chinese parents attach more importance to their kids' education because of their own school experience in China. You know, to get in a good university, you need to get a high score in the National Higher Education Entrance Exam. This is the only way to change your life. It is so competitive, because there are so many people who want to share the limited resources."* (Principal, Chinese School A)

Three parents even point out that some historical events in China may also have influence on their educational expectations or occupational aspirations for their children.

*"I think most Chinese here choose the field of Computer Science, Pure Sciences or accounting because their parents or their grandparents had experienced the Cultural Revolution. The impact is still there. For my family, we are all afraid of politics. We don't even want to express our opinion. Under this kind of influence, I think my son doesn't like to study political sciences, either."* (Mrs Huang, Chinese mother).

Aside from pre-migration experiences, the social reality in China also has a part to play in constructing parental expectations regarding education as well as the impact of these

expectations on their children's educational success. For instance, a mathematics teacher indicates that despite the emphasis on education in other cultures, their social environments tend to give individuals considerable freedom to make their own decisions, whereas Chinese society is more authoritative and requires individuals to respect its regulations.

*« Moi, je dirais que la société chinoise est très autoritaire et très structurée et les gens entrent dans ces structures-là. Mais quand on regarde les autres sociétés, peut-être que c'est un peu désordonné et ça marche pas avec tant de règlements. C'est sûr qu'on valorise l'éducation, mais on laisse beaucoup la personne libre de faire ce qu'elle veut, tandis que dans la société chinoise, les gens sont moins laissés libres. Il y a plus de limites que dans les autres sociétés. »* (Maths teacher in Secondary 5, School A).

In addition, as a consequence of China's one-child policy, five of the parents interviewed indicate that they have only one child. Among the student respondents, eight out of twenty are the only child in their families. The rest of the families usually have two or three children, while only one has four children. For these families, it is very common to find a big age gap between the first child and his or her younger siblings. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that they were only allowed to have one child when they lived in China and had their other children after immigrating and settling in Quebec. These two types of family structures also have an impact on shaping the parents' expectations.

*« La plupart d'entre eux sont des enfants uniques, ou ils sont deux. S'il y a deux enfants, l'écart entre ces deux est grand. Par exemple, j'ai souvent des élèves qui ont un grand frère et une grande sœur qui est déjà allé(e) à l'université. »* (French teacher in welcome class, School A).

*« Je suis enfant unique, pas de sœur, pas de frère. Je suis donc le centre de ma famille. Mes parents m'accordent beaucoup d'attention et ont beaucoup d'attentes aussi. »* (Jiale, Chinese boy, School C).

*« J'ai un grand écart avec ma sœur et mon frère. J'ai été enfant unique pendant huit ans. J'ai reçu beaucoup d'attention de mes parents, mes grands-parents, mes oncles, mes tantes... »* (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).

In astronaut families, taking care of the children, especially of their schooling is the preoccupation and the reason why the mother stays here. They therefore devote most of their attention and attach very high expectations to their children. Even in a satellite arrangement, the “legal guardian” feels obligated to supervise the children of their relatives or friends.

“You know, my main job is to take care of my three children here, especially help them get good grades at school. We made a lot of sacrifice for that, even the family unit. My husband works in China to support us. So I have to do my job, too.” (Mrs Kwan, Chinese mother).

*« Il y en a qui sont pas au pays. Ils les ont envoyés ici chez leurs tantes, oncles, ou même grand-parents..., mais souvent ils sont bien supervisés ou encadrés et les enfants travaillent aussi fort que ceux dont les parents sont ici. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School B).

### **6.2.2 Post-migration experiences and parental expectations**

As mentioned in Chapter II, many researchers view Chinese culture and Confucian tradition as the only factor that influence the educational expectations of Chinese parents. The data in the current study, however, uncover that an immigrant or visible minority status also impacts parental expectations. As with people from other minority groups, the final goal of Chinese immigrants is not only to improve their socioeconomic status, but also eventually to be integrated into the host society. As one can see in Section 6.1.2, despite openness to multiculturalism and immigrant assistance policies, many Chinese in Quebec have been confronted with diverse individual and systemic barriers leading to exclusion of the mainstream society, such as language difficulties, lack of experience, non-recognition or devaluation of their credentials or work experience, and discrimination. According to the assumption of Portes and Rumbaut (2006), because the context of reception in Quebec does not promote the socioeconomic integration of Chinese immigrants, they will not be in a position to effectively support their children’ schooling. However, the research data show that such unsatisfactory post-migration experiences actually function as driving force for Chinese parents to impose their educational expectation on their children.

As mentioned in section 6.2.1, high academic achievement is not regarded as a sufficient condition or “the only way” to achieve success in mainstream society, but as a necessary condition. Under the racial pressure and the visible minority ideology, they are convinced that their children must study hard and get ahead of the Caucasian majority in order to overcome the disadvantages involved with being a member of a visible minority.

“I don’t think Chinese parents want to care only their children’s marks at school. They have no choice. As a Chinese, you have no advantage to compete with white kids, so you have to work hard at school. If you do well at school, you can probably find a job in the future. If you fail, you would be marginalized very easily. I have a friend who has been in the States for many years. She has a master’s degree and her husband graduated from Harvard. They have three kids and the oldest daughter is in high school. I called her several days ago. She told me that ‘as an Asian American, you have to find a place for yourself by having high academic achievement. Her daughter did not care too much about her scores before, but now she feels the pressure. She believes that she needs to work hard so that she could have a way out. I think as a Chinese, if you don’t have any other specialities, such as expressing yourself very well, you need a high academic achievement. Because this is something you can control. The daughter of my friend understands it now, even though she was born in North America. For us, who came here in this age. We should understand it better. ” (Mrs. Guo, Chinese mother).

“It is quite common, even for the second generation, who do not have any language barrier, when some employers see that you are from a minority, they have some stereotype or bias towards you. So you should really take advantage of your high academic achievement to won in a competition or to overcome your disadvantages. You can get some rewards when you got good school performance. I think you can get a bigger chance to be hired. You know, many people from other minorities, they are immigrants, but they don’t look like us. Once people see us, they know you are from Asia, from a minority, even you were born here and you speak French without any accent. Remember that our appearance call tell that we are from a visible minority.” (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*).

In addition to academic achievement, all of the parent participants affirm that “social skills”, “the ability of self-expression and of communication”, and an “open mind” are equally important for achieving success in Quebec society. They also admit that Chinese families need to work more on training their children in these areas.

“I believe that first, you need to have a high level of education, and then you need also to be an open-minded person. If you are not good at communicating, you are shy, you probably will not go any further in this society. I hope my kids could be more open. I hope they could

tell other people what they think. If you look at the white kids, they are all very talkative and good at communicating. I hope my kids could be like them. My kids don't have any problem in French, but they seem to be shy. I think they need to take some Public Speaking Classes to improve their ability to communicate and express themselves. I think many Chinese families should do this.” (Mrs Liu, Chinese mother).

When asked about their perceptions of their immigration experiences, most parent respondents think they made the right decision even if they cannot be integrated into the host society, because they set their hopes on their children. A Chinese mother I interviewed has experienced many obstacles in terms of socioeconomic integration and grave moments after immigration to Quebec. She was not able to find a job as an accountant (her profession in China) because of her low level of French proficiency. She therefore chose a manual labour job to support her family. She lost her husband several years ago and it is still difficult for her to face with. However, she does not regret coming to Quebec, because her children like living here.

“I can't say I regret to come here, because I came here for my Children. The working environment is not as good as in China. I was an accountant; here I do manual-labor jobs. But my children like here very much. They don't want to go back to China. I can't say I will go back China for myself. I don't care whether it is fair to me, I live for my children. As long as they are happy here, I will stay here.” (Mrs. Yang, Chinese mother).

In line with Mrs' Yang story, parents who see their own experience of immigration as “unsuccessful”, a “loss”, or a “failure”, hold extremely high educational expectations towards their children, because they emigrate from China to promote of their children's academic achievement and the only hope or strength that sustains their life here is their children.

“The Chinese immigrants I know all consider themselves as a ‘a failed generation’, they all came here for their kids' education. Even some kids said that ‘my father said they were a failed generation!’ Many people were professionals when they were in China, but they have to choose a manual labour job here only to live a simple life and have some money to support their family. They set all their hope on their kids. As long as the kids do well at school, get in a good university, and find a good job, they are ok with the life here. They don't have any expectations on themselves...” (Chinese teacher, Chinese School B).

The parents of Quebec born/raised Children seem to believe that their children will not encounter as much racial discrimination as the first generation immigrants, because they

do not have to deal with the language barrier. However, these parents still fear that their children will not be treated like their Caucasian counterparts. A mother cited the experience of some second generation Chinese to prove her point:

“I know some second generation Chinese who do very well at school, but their income is still lower than local people because of implicit discrimination. For example, some Chinese have passed Civil Service Exams, but they never got an opportunity of interview.”

Post-migration experiences also shape the career aspirations of Chinese parents towards their children. Perceiving less racial discrimination in the fields of sciences, medicine, high-tech, and accounting, most Chinese immigrant parents encourage their children to pursue a career in these fields.

“My son wanna major in Computer Science, because he believes that it is easy to find a job in this field. I totally agree with him and I encourage him to do so. As an immigrant, or a member of visible minorities, you need to have some real skills which other people do not have. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to find a job” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

“I think Chinese are good at maths and sciences, so it is easy for us to work in the field of pure and medical sciences, as well as engineering. If you study sciences or engineering, you have some advantage than white people, but if you study social sciences, you can hardly find a job, not to accomplish in this field. Let’s say if you want to involve in politics, they [québécois] would have bias towards you. They would say you have no knowledge of the Quebec culture.”(Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*).

During the interview with parents, only one of them does not consider herself as having a disadvantaged status as an immigrant or a member of a visible minority. Her understanding of integration is “having a good relationship with people from other ethnic groups”. She also believes that Canada is an immigration and multicultural country and every family has a history of immigration. As a result, she never communicates the “visible minority ideology” to her children and she is convinced that this mentality will actually harm their integration.

### 6.2.3 Role of parental expectation in their children's' educational success

#### Parental expectations as motivation and orientation

With the hope of seeking an easier academic life for their children, many Chinese parents make their way to Canada and Quebec. For the parents, especially those who left their professional jobs and well-established social networks in China, the sacrifice they made becomes a source of high expectation towards their children's education, whereas, for the children, it becomes a kind of "family obligation and duty" to push themselves ahead, as the following quotes denote:

*« Il est très important pour moi d'étudier, parce que mes parents et ma sœur ont travaillé très fort pour que je puisse avoir une meilleure vie. Moi, je dois étudier très fort aussi. Je ne peux pas juste m'asseoir là et rien faire. Je veux faire de mon mieux pour répondre aux attentes de ma famille. »* (Étienne, Chinese Boy, School B).

*« Mes parents ont laissé leur travail, leur haut statut social en Chine. Ils ont immigré au Canada juste pour moi. Ils espèrent pas que je sois toujours la meilleure à l'école, mais ils veulent que je fasse des efforts à l'école. Moi, je pense que c'est important de réussir à l'école, parce que c'est pas pour tes parents, c'est pour toi-même. »* (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).

*« Les familles chinoises accordent beaucoup d'importance à l'éducation. Je crois que la plupart des familles chinoises immigreront pour l'éducation de leur enfants. Il y en a beaucoup qui ne peuvent pas retrouver le même niveau de travail, mais ils restent ici pour leurs enfants. »* (Assistant-principal, School A).

Student respondents who are only children regard their parents as considered as the most important people in their life. They are therefore willing to make an effort to meet their educational expectations. Those who have larger families view parents or siblings (in the case of a satellite arrangement) as the most important people in their lives. As mentioned in Section 6.2.1, the student respondents also believe that success at school or not is determined by their own efforts. They strive to meet their parents' aspirations by getting good results at school. The students from families with more than one child indicate that they would like to work hard either to imitate their elder siblings, or to be a good example for their younger siblings, even though they occasionally have disagreements with other family members.

*« Je suis enfant unique. Comme j'ai immigré au Canada il y a cinq ans, presque six ans, tous les amis de maternelle que j'avais en Chine, je les ai laissés en Chine. Donc mes parents sont les personnes les plus importantes dans ma vie. Ils ont beaucoup d'attentes pour moi et moi, je veux étudier fort pour répondre à leurs attentes. » (Wenhao, Chinese boy, School B).*

*« C'est ma grand sœur qui s'est occupée de moi depuis qu'on est venus au Canada. Je veux vraiment étudier fort pour ma sœur. » (Étienne, Chinese boy, School B).*

*« Je dirais aussi que ma famille est la plus importante dans ma vie. On s'entend pas toujours bien, mais à la fin, on est important les uns pour les autres. Quand j'étais enfant unique, mes parents m'a accordé beaucoup d'attention et d'attentes. Maintenant, ils comptent sur moi pour être un bon exemple pour ma sœur et mon frère. Je dois travailler fort pour avoir des bonnes notes et aussi pour pouvoir les aider à faire leurs devoirs. » (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).*

Likewise, the teachers and school personnel interviewed affirm that the great importance that Chinese parents attach to education become a strong motivation for their children to work hard and obtain good results at school. This cultural value is viewed as a significant factor that influences the school success of Chinese youth by these respondents.

*« Quand ils sont intégrés, premièrement ils ont beaucoup de difficultés en français et tout ce qui est relié à la compréhension, toutes les matières qui sont reliées à la compréhension. Par exemple, français, histoire, tout ça est difficile pour eux. Cependant, ils sont habitués de travailler. L'importance que la famille accorde aux études pour les enfants fait en sorte que ces lacunes sont comblées assez rapidement, parce qu'il y a vraiment du travail qui est fait. Beaucoup, beaucoup de travail..., je vous dirais quasi de l'acharnement qui est fait pour pouvoir faire en sorte que ça fonctionne. C'est un constat qu'on a chez les élèves chinois. » (Assistant-principal, School A)*

As mentioned in Section 6.1.2, given the influence of racial discrimination pressure and immigrant status, most Chinese parents and hope their children pursue a career in the fields of sciences, medicine, and high-tech. These career aspirations have become a source of orientation for their children. More than fifteen of the students that I interviewed confirm that they would like to work in one of the abovementioned fields. Five students point out that their parents want them to be a physician, because it is considered to be a well-paid and stable job. The self-expectation of these students is strongly influenced by their parents.

*« Mes parents, comme tous les parents asiatiques, aimeraient que j'aie en médecine. Ça me dérange pas. C'est pas juste le salaire, c'est un travail stable. Tu peux jamais être sans*

*emploi. On a besoin de toi et les gens vont être reconnaissants de ce que tu fais. C'est un bon emploi à tous les égards. » (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).*

*« Les valeurs de la famille qui sont transmises, c'est que les sciences, les maths, l'informatique et les affaires, tous ces domaines-là sont très importants. » (French teacher in welcome class, School A).*

Even when the parental expectations do not correspond with their own goal for postsecondary education and career aspirations, they tend to be convinced by their parents and eventually follow their directions.

*« Ma famille veut que je devienne médecin, mais moi, personnellement, je préfère les arts. Mais ça me dérange pas d'aller en médecine non plus, ça m'intéresse un peu aussi, mais c'est pas mon top choice, mon premier choix. Je vais quand même essayer d'aller en médecine. Je pense que je peux faire ce que je veux plus tard. » (Jack, Chinese boy, School B)*

*« En général, ce sont des élèves très studieux, très motivés. Le but visé est que tout le monde veut aller en sciences de la nature pour devenir un médecin. C'est un peu malheureux des fois, parce qu'il y en a qui viennent ici et qui disent "moi, j'aimerais mieux être un administrateur, un comptable ou un avocat, mais mes parents veulent que je sois un médecin. Ça m'intéresse pas trop..." C'est une mentalité [...] Ils vont suivre la recommandation des parents. Les parents sont convainçants » (Pedagogical advisor, School C).*

The data collected during interviews and home visit indicate that parent-teen dialogue and setting role models are the two basic approaches through which Chinese parents express their educational expectations to their children.

“Our [the parents'] influence is very important for him. Several weeks ago, I mentioned the benefits and advantages to be a music therapist. Guess what? He told me that he really wanted to major in music therapy in the future. Then he chose a CEGEP that good in this field.” (Mrs. Li, Chinese mother).

*« Je pense qu'étudier est plus une habitude. Dans ma famille, c'est surtout ma mère qui a l'habitude de bien travailler. Ma mère n'a pas eu beaucoup d'opportunités d'étudier. Quand elle ne pouvait pas trouver un emploi à Madagascar, on a immigré ici. Elle veut que nous vivions mieux qu'elle. Mes sœurs aussi, elles travaillent très bien et elles ont des bonnes notes et elles réussissent mieux que moi. Dans ma famille, c'est toujours très compétitif. Ma mère veut que je sois le meilleur. Elle me félicite quand j'ai des bonnes notes, mais j'ai l'impression qu'elle n'est pas très satisfaite... » (Jack, Chinese boy, School B).*

By sharing their own childhood and schooling experiences as well as talking about the future plans for their children, Chinese parents believe that they will gradually influence their children. For example, some parents often compared their own past learning conditions in China and the current situation in Quebec to encourage their to cherish their children to cherish their precious opportunities. Some parents also set peer role models for their children so that they could learn from them.

“I often tell my own stories to my kids. You know we had to work very hard to get in a university in China, it was too difficult. But now they have a lot of opportunities and they should really cherish that. They should work hard for themselves, not for us. You know, if you work hard now, you can have a better life in the future, otherwise, you can't be independent and you can't always depend on your parents...” (Mrs. Cui, Chinese mother).

*« Mes parents me comparent souvent avec eux-même. Quand ils étaient jeunes, ils travaillaient très fort, mais moi, je travaille pas si fort que ça... Ils me parlent aussi des enfants de leurs amis, par exemple, telle ou telle personne a été acceptée par McGill ou U of T et ils espèrent que je peux aussi aller à telle université... »* (Lina, Chinese girl, School D).

Although some parents do not talk about schooling very often, the children can still sense their expectations in their changing emotions because of the close relationship between them.

*« C'est pas quelque chose qu'ils ont vraiment à cœur, mais c'est toujours très positif pour eux si j'ai des meilleures notes et que je réponds à leur attentes, parce que j'ai une bonne relation avec eux. Donc, si je disais que je n'ai pas atteint la moyenne, ils m'encourageraient de travailler un peu plus pendant les prochaines étapes et de rattraper le cours. »* (Wenhao, Chinese Boy, School B).

### Negative effects of parental expectation

As described above, almost all student participants affirm that they are willing to work hard to meet their family members' educational expectations, because they see high academic achievement as security for their future career. Some also relate “doing well at school” to their dreams of future prosperity dreams, expressed in terms such as “making more money” or “having my own house”. According to a youth minister interviewed, these students make the connection between school success and “having a better life” because many Chinese parents adopt “money oriented” attitude towards their children's education, as the following quotes denote:

*« Moi, je trouve que réussir à l'école est très important, parce que comme ça, tu peux avoir un bon travail. Mes parents me disent toujours comme ça et moi, je suis tout à fait d'accord avec eux. C'est pour ma vie. »* (Shuhuang, Chinese girl, School D).

*“If you do well at school, you can get a good job and more money. You can learn more useful stuff.”* (Joe, Chinese Boy, Chinese church, B)

However, Étienne, a Vietnam-born Chinese boy in School B, does not agree with the Chinese mentality of “getting a stable job”. He prefers to “experience different things” and he believes that it is a positive aspect of Canadian or Quebec culture.

*« Si je me compare moi-même aux autres familles chinoises, par exemple, ma copine, elle parle mandarin, pour ses parents, l'étude passe toujours en première place. Pour eux, je ne sais pas, c'est une mentalité des mandarins, ils veulent chercher un job stable, ils veulent l'avoir pour la vie. Donc pour eux, c'est plus important de choisir directement à ce moment-ci que de changer à chaque fois. Moi, je suis ouvert et j'aimerais « expérimenter » plein de choses. Si je fais ça ici et j'aime pas ça, je vais changer, ça me dérange vraiment pas. Pour ma copine, c'est vraiment important qu'elle fasse son chemin maintenant. »*

All the parents that I interviewed believe that they have never given their children any pressure, because they express their expectations through daily conversation with their children, rather than giving orders. Nonetheless, several students respondents indicate that the perfectionism of their parents disturb them. They also see it as a negative aspect of Chinese culture. For example, some parents always push their children to be “number one” or to get above 90% in exams; if not, they will punish them. Some teachers that I interviewed also view some Chinese parents as being “too demanding”.

*« Je dirais que le point négatif de la culture chinoise est le perfectionnisme. Tu sais que les Chinois veulent toujours être les meilleurs parmi le monde. C'est pas possible d'être toujours le meilleur, puis c'est stressant... »* (Lina, Chinese girl, SchoolD).

“My parents always say ‘you should really be number one at school, or you should really get an average of 90%.’ Sometimes, they even say ‘if you don’t do well, I am sure you will get this, this, and this’, which means they would punish me, like ‘you are not hanging out with your friends. That’s really stressful.” (Mary, Chinese girl, Chinese church A).

*« Moi, en français, je remarque aussi que parfois il y a des parents chinois qui viennent à la rencontre des parents et qui me disent “mais c'est pas bon”, mais l'enfant a 89 % ou 90 %. Elle est meilleure que mes petits francophones québécois de souche-là. “Non, non, c'est pas bon”, parfois, ils sont très exigeants. »* (French teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

In line with the above quotes, some school teachers also indicate that the perfectionism of Chinese parents can sometimes lead to unrealistic or unreasonable educational expectations towards their children, because they do not take the level of the cognitive development of their children into account. As analysed in Section 5.2.1, the reason behind these unrealistic expectations is their common perception that “diligence solves all the problems for schoolwork”. This highly stressful educational environment can have negative effects on the sociopsychological wellbeing of their children. The following example given by a French teacher can better reflect it:

*« J'avais un élève qui pleurait chaque jour en classe. Il était très découragé. En parlant avec lui, j'ai appris que, quand il sortait de l'autobus à 4 h 30, il avait un tuteur qui l'attendait pour faire des maths et de l'anglais. Il était arrivé au Québec depuis seulement un mois... Il était complètement en état de panique. Il était fermé au français. Je l'ai eu deux ans, un merveilleux garçon. Au moins, lui donner quelques mois ...J'ai rencontré sa maman et elle disait : “Mais, qu'est-ce que je fais?”. Je lui ai dit de laisser tomber le tuteur. “Si tu veux qu'il parle français, il faut le mettre à l'aide aux devoirs. Il aura une heure de plus pour parler français.” Sa mère m'a écoutée. Ils ont laissé tomber le tuteur, mais le garçon va maintenant à l'école du samedi. » (Pedagogical advisor, School B).*

Meanwhile, this perception also makes children who have learning difficulties or special educational needs unacceptable to their parents, because they are convinced that diligence is the solution to almost all every problem. Even when they understand that some children are not as “intelligent” as they expected, they believe that “diligence redeems stupidity” (勤能补拙). A principal I interviewed indicates that in certain extreme cases, some parents are even willing to transfer their children to a private school to avoid talking about this issue.

*« Je trouve que quand un élève chinois a des difficultés d'apprentissage, les parents ont beaucoup de difficulté à prendre ça. Quand l'élève commence ses études en classe d'accueil, ce qu'ils veulent savoir, c'est combien de temps il va rester en accueil. Si l'élève reste plus de dix mois ou plus d'un an, ils croient que c'est un échec. Souvent, quand on dit que l'élève restera encore un an en accueil, ils ne peuvent pas l'accepter. Donc, moi, je dis souvent aux parents : “On va le garder, mais pas pour toute l'année”. Pour les élèves en difficulté d'apprentissage, c'est plus difficile. J'ai vu des parents qui amènent le tuteur chez eux. Ils ont un agenda, une liste : mathématiques, français, anglais[...] Je leur disais que je garderais leur enfant encore en accueil, mais les parents voulaient pas. Ils m'ont demandé de signer comme quoi il allait en régulier. J'ai refusé de le faire. Ils l'ont mis à l'école privée. » (Assistant-principal, School A ).*

A teacher in the same school suggests that another possible reason for this avoidance is that the parents view it as a dishonour for the family.

*« À la maison [dans la famille chinoise], il y a vraiment une organisation forte pour les études des enfants. Cependant, il y un autre volet à cette situation. On retrouve ça dans d'autres communautés, mais principalement dans la communauté chinoise. Tout ce qui arrive au niveau du secret. On n'a pas d'élèves chinois dont les résultats sont dans la moyenne. Ils sont ou bien très performants, ou au contraire, il y a des échecs lamentables, qui sont peut-être en lien avec d'autres difficultés que la langue... Mais ça, on n'en parle pas. Ce n'est pas reconnu parmi les parents. On leur dirait peut-être qu'il faudrait voir un spécialiste ou un orthophoniste. Ils veulent pas. On peut pas poser aucun jugement au niveau des capacités de l'élève quand il est en classe d'accueil. Mais vous regardez ici, l'adaptation scolaire, j'ai quelques élèves en secondaire 4 et secondaire 5, même quand ils étudient beaucoup, leur résultats ne changent pas. Mais leurs parents ne croient pas que ces enfants ont d'autres difficultés que la langue. Ils croient qu'ils ne travaillent pas assez fort. La communauté chinoise est particulièrement frappante pour le secret. Ils ne veulent pas en parler du tout, du tout. Ils vont me dire 'à la maison, ça va très bien'. Je présume que pour eux, c'est honteux. Il faut que je parle avec des moyens détournés pour savoir un peu la situation à la maison. » (French teacher in welcoming class, School A)*

Throughout the interviews with different groups of participants, several other cases are found to show that it is difficult for some Chinese parents to admit that their children have special educational needs, even when this is confirmed by a professional evaluation.

In addition, as illustrated in Section 6.1.2, obtaining high academic achievement becomes a family obligation and indebtedness for many immigrant students, because their parents emigrated from China and made sacrifice for them. However, this kind of family obligation does not always produce positive results. Sometimes, it can become a source of stress and guilt. In this respect, a teacher responsible for extracurricular activities said:

*« Je crois que les parents chinois ont une mentalité comme : "On a immigré au Québec, on a vécu des moments difficiles pour toi, maintenant on est rendus là, donc, maintenant c'est toi qui doit produire quelque chose!" Ça cause beaucoup de stress et même, des fois, de la culpabilité pour eux. » (Teacher responsible for extracurricular activities, School C).*

As mentioned above, most Chinese youths are willing to meet their parents' expectations towards their schooling and future career, even when they do not agree with them. Of course, this sometimes also produces pressure or becomes a dilemma for the youth.

*« C'est sûr que les sciences sont importantes pour mes élèves. Peut-être que c'est juste une supposition, peut-être qu'en Chine, tous les métiers en sciences sociales sont pas quelque chose de valorisé. Dans les mœurs des parents, c'est pas quelque chose qui est connu. C'est pas même une question de valoriser ce genre de métier. Pour les parents, l'enfant doit être enseignant, médecin, ou je ne sais pas quoi, quelque chose d'élevé au niveau de la classe sociale. J'ai eu un élève, il y a deux ans. Il était triste parce qu'il n'était pas capable de dire à ses parents qu'il voulait pas être médecin. Il voulait être architecte. C'était le gros dilemme pour lui, parce qu'il disait : « mes parents voudraient jamais que j'aille en architecture ». Il n'avait pas la liberté de choisir. »* (Maths teacher in secondary 5, School B)

The negative effects of high parental expectations are sometimes related to cultural difference and the different pace of acculturation of Chinese students and their parents. For instance, a conflict between the Chinese parents' demands for obedience and their children's perceptions of adolescent autonomy is considered to be a common problem for teenagers who engage in more rebellious acts.

“I feel like a failure as a mother...After they came here, it became hard for me to control them. I could not give them orders. They always say “I have the right to do what I want to do, you can't control me!” My youngest son was very obedient when he was in China. You know many friends and relatives liked him very much. I don't know why he turned to be like this. He is really rebellious and never listens to me. Maybe they learnt some bad things from the westerners maybe adolescents are all like that. I feel really sad.” (Mrs Yang, Chinese mother).

“I think it is the cultural differences. The Chinese parents from Mainland are less likely to understand what their children are going through at school. They are always using their own standard to request their kids. Compared to their Canadian peers, the teens would think they are already very good kids. Comparing to the traditional Chinese way of study, they might be under their parents' expectation. But serious issues, not in my group, but I know there are some kids from other groups who have serious issues with their parents The parents use Chinese traditional way to discipline them. You know, a lot of expectation for academic achievement.”(Youth minister, Chinese church B).

## 6.3 Involvement of Chinese Families

### 6.3.1 Attitudes of Chinese parents towards Quebec school system

Since most Chinese immigrants came to Quebec for the well-being of their children, they generally hold positive attitudes towards the Quebec school system, especially when compared with the social environment and the educational system in China. Most affirm that in Quebec, children can have a more relaxing academic life and more opportunities in the future even if they are not able to attend one of the top universities.

“I came to Canada, because I see that in China, when you go to high school, you are gonna be under huge pressure. With Gaokao, It is like lots of people are crossing a single log bridge. Here in Quebec, you can live a good life even if you do not go to a good university. Take the high school admission for example; here you don’t need to ask approval made by a superior unit, but in China, you must have a good an effective social network to get the approval. You know what, some people even called me from China to ask me to pull a few strings for them. I can’t believe. ” (Mrs Chow, Chinese mother).

“Here people don’t pursue a very high level of schooling. In China, the whole society is focusing education, diplomas, and which university you went to...The higher level of schooling you have got the better. But in Quebec, you can find a job even you don’t graduate from a high school. It is more flexible here.” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

Many parents also mention the different educational ideologies when comparing schools in Quebec and China. They see the educational system in China is more test-oriented or test-driven, while the schools here are more quality- or skill-oriented. According to these parents, the proportion of students entering higher education in Chian is the only standard for evaluating the quality of teaching, while here the development of children and their abilities and skills is more important. Some even blame schools in China for their ignorance of social justice and moral education.

“When we came back to China to visit our relatives and friends, many people told me that they wanted to send their children to Canada. You know, in China, the only thing they care is the proportion of students entering college, because if you have more students go to college or good universities, you can get more financial support from the government. In this situation, the children will have a lot of stress. They don’t care the interests or specialities of the children, they just want them to work harder or go to tutoring classes. Here, I mean in North America in general, they care a lot about the development of the children, their interests, and things that they are good at... ” (Mrs. Chan, Chinese mother).

“I think schools here attach importance to foster the ability of self-expression. My kids are afraid of speaking in front of people. In many courses, their teachers ask them to write something and do a presentation about that. I think this is very good for cultivating the ability of communication. You know, no matter what you will do in the future, you got to communicate with people. If you have only good marks at school, it is far from enough.” (Mrs. Liu, Chinese mother).

“Under the pressure of Gaokao, No one cares about moral education. Take my sister for example, she sent her kid to all kinds of afterschool classes but never taught him how to get along with people or the common values a person should hold, neither did the school.” (Mrs. Lian, Chinese mother).

Some parents also raise the issue of higher education. They make very positive comments on the universities in Quebec or in North America as a whole.

“You can’t even compare the universities or colleges in North America with those in China. In China, it is very difficult to get in a university because of Gaokao, but here it is so easy to graduate. The schools do not attach any importance to the personal development of a student. Here it is easier to get in a college or university, but it is hard to graduate. They care more about the development of your abilities and skills as well as the establishment of good characteristics.” (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese mother).

“I think for basic education, it is not that different. But for higher education, the colleges and universities are much better than those in China. In China, university students take a lot of courses, but here you got a lot of projects to do. I majored in Software Engineering and Applications. During my studies, I participated in real project, by which I mean I went to work with a team in a company. By doing this, I got to know very well about the process.” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

The negative comments of some parents mainly focus on the curriculum, student discipline in school, and certain educational policies. They criticize the curriculum for “lacking stringent academic standards”, because their children do not get “sufficient teaching” or do little homework. A parent also considers the lack of discipline in public schools to be the main reason for his child’s school failure. Several of them perceive the age limit for staying in high school and language teaching to be problematic.

“Although the education in China is like “spoon-feeding”, but I think my kid could learn more back in China. Here they are more relaxed, but the content of the curriculum is not enough.” (Mrs. Wang, Chinese mother).

“He is not doing very well. He is always at an average level. I think they need more discipline in public schools. Sometimes I think I should have sent my son to a private high school.” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

“I think they are too narrow. You know, you are obligated to go to an Adult Education Centre as soon as you get 18 years old. In Ontario or other provinces, you can stay in a secondary school as long as you came here as a high school student. When Pauline Marois came in power, she wanted to change the law [Bill 101] immediately, that’s ridiculous. I agree that French is very important here, but I think English is an international language, if our kids want to work in the States or in other provinces, they need to learn English. I think schools have the responsibility to equip them with English.” (Mrs. Li, Chinese mother).

With their extremely high respect for teachers as well as the generally positive attitudes towards the Quebec school system, most Chinese parents have developed a very high level of confidence and trust in the role that school plays in their children’s academic achievement. As described above, if their children do not succeed at school, they will rarely question the quality of instruction or the school leadership. School teachers and staff that I interviewed suggest that this attitude facilitate the communication between the parents and the school and they see it as an important factor influencing the academic achievement of Chinese immigrant students. For instance, one assistant-principal affirms that Chinese parents have never asked their children to be absent during their exam period:

*« À plus largement parler, je vous dirais que les parents restent un facteur extrêmement important. Je vous donne un exemple très concret. Pour les enfants qui performant à l'école, leurs parents sont pas en vacances pendant la période de leur examens. C'est ça, la situation. Les élèves qui performent moins bien ont des parents qui me disent lors des rencontres : « Monsieur X, ma fille ou mon garçon ne va pas être présent. On part en vacances, on retourne au pays et on va être absents du 10 décembre au 30 janvier. » Alors je dis : “Qu'est-ce que vous allez faire pour les examens?” [...] Je ne peux d'aucune manière être d'accord avec ça. Ça révèle un peu la position de la famille face à l'école. Je comprends qu'ils peuvent avoir toutes sortes de raisons, mais pendant les six dernières années, il n'y avait aucun parent chinois qui me disait ça. » (Assistant-principal, School A).*

Indeed, other teachers and school staff interviewed pointed out that the absence rate of Chinese youth is extremely low, especially for the new arrivals. A teacher indicates that among her Chinese students, almost no one has been absent from school, even when they are sick:

*« Ils sont jamais malades. Je crois que les élèves chinois n'ont pas de droit d'être malades [rire] Même s'ils sont pas en forme, ils vont pas le manifester. Ils viennent toujours à l'école, il y a très peu d'absentéisme, surtout les deux ou trois premières années. »* (French teacher in welcome class, School A).

With respect to their attitudes towards new culture and language, all of the parent respondents seem to encourage their children to try their best to adjust to the challenges of acculturation and learning French, while continuing to expect that they retain a strong Chinese identity. All of them attach importance to maintaining specific Chinese cultural values and their native language as very important, because they regard the Chinese culture and language as the “root” of their children. They also stress that a high level of Chinese proficiency facilitates parent-teen communication, especially when talking about school matters. Some also see “speaking Chinese” as a social capital for their children to establish a potential network in Chinese. All the parents I interviewed mention the fact of sending their children to Chinese language schools to perpetuate their Chinese. However, they equally emphasize that attendance at a Chinese school should not inhabit the integration of their children in the host society.

“I think learning Chinese and keeping some good Chinese cultural values are very important, because my best language is Chinese and I hope we can communicate in this language when talking about my kids’ schooling. Some good values do not exist in Western culture, such as ‘filial piety’, and I hope they can keep the good traditions.” (Mrs. Chow, Chinese mother).

“You know, when we visited China last year, my kids could communicate with our relatives and friends. They felt very happy about that. If my kids can’t speak a word to them, we would be very embarrassed. Also, if they decide to go back to work in China, they need to speak Chinese.” (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese mother).

### **6.3.2 Involvement in home learning activities**

Although many Chinese immigrant parents are unable to assist their children to complete their homework or to tutor them directly, the data of this research demonstrate that Chinese immigrants are involved in their schooling in various ways. For instance, they invest in materials and make financial sacrifices to meet their children’s educational needs; spend time discussing school matters, supervise them and control how they spend time and who they frequent; and train them to have good study habits.

### Material investment

Since Chinese immigrant parents attach great importance to their children's education and they immigrated to Quebec for the sake of their children, many of them are willing to invest money and materials for their children's education. All of the participants indicate that they provide all the resources their children need for schooling, such as a quiet place to study, dictionaries, or a computer, etc. The school personnel I interviewed also confirm that many Chinese parents have made financial sacrifice to create optimal study conditions, even though some of them have a very low socioeconomic status.

*« Au niveau des parents [chinois], ils font beaucoup de sacrifices pour les études de leurs enfants, surtout au niveau monétaire. S'ils ont besoin d'un montant X pour pouvoir être dans un cours, ils vont trouver de l'argent, ils vont le faire. Par exemple, pour le programme de sciences enrichi pour le secondaire 4 et 5, les parents vont déboursé presque 100 \$ de plus que pour le cours régulier, J'ai jamais rencontré des parents chinois qui viennent me dire "je peux pas payer cet argent". Par contre, je sais qu'il y a des difficultés monétaires. On le sait parce que l'aide sociale demande des preuves de fréquentation scolaire des enfants. Donc moi, j'ai un formulaire que je dois signer. Moi, je m'occupe des secondaires 4 et 5, donc je vois des formulaires passer. Ils ont de l'aide sociale. Par contre, si c'est pour les études, ils vont payer tout. » (Assistant-principal, School A).*

As mentioned above, all the parents interviewed have sent their children to afterschool classes to learn both Chinese and other subjects. Indeed, for some of them, the tuition fee (especially in for-profit afterschool institutions) is a financial burden, but they will put their own interests aside to support their children's schooling and meet their children's educational needs.

*“Whether there are stable economic resources or not, as a special group, Chinese immigrants value education. They give full support to their kids' education even though they have to make huge sacrifice. Actually, most people came here for their kids' schooling, so they won't complain about their own sacrifice as long as their children have a good future. Many times, we were so touched by the parents. We saw some people have never bought new clothes, but they are willing to spend money on their kids' schooling. We sometimes wave the tuition fee or give a discount for the poor families.” (Principal, Chinese school A).*

Some students I interviewed mention the fact that their parents have sought private teachers for them. Some teacher respondents also indicate that some parents ask them to be private tutors for their children. According to one teacher, “it seems that as long as the children can have good marks at school, they are willing to do anything”. As described

above, the sacrifices they make motivate their children to work hard and get good grades in school.

### Fostering study habits

All the respondents point out that few Chinese parents are able to help their children with their schoolwork, especially in French, because of their low level of French proficiency. Some parents mentioned that they assist their children to complete assignments in mathematics and sciences, because they themselves have studied and worked in these fields. When their children cannot understand certain terms in Chinese, they use dictionaries or online translation tools to explain these terms. As described above, most of the time, parental involvement means “mother’s involvement” in many Chinese families.

“I don’t speak French at all, so I couldn’t help my kids with their French homework. I can only assist them in Maths and Sciences. My husband’s French is much better, so he could sometimes help them. But he’s operating the dépanneur, he doesn’t have much time to do so. I am responsible for the schooling of all my three kids.” (Mrs Zhang, Chinese mother).

*« À part de la langue, mes parents m’aident beaucoup en maths, en chimie, en physique...Je me fie à eux quand j’ai des problèmes. Des fois, si on ne peut se comprendre en mandarin, par exemple, des termes en sciences, on va prendre un dictionnaire pour les traduire. »* (Henry, Chinese boy, School C).

However, even in mathematics and sciences, some parents find that their ability do not always match their willingness, because in these subjects, the Western way of thinking and calculating is very different from the Chinese way. They suggest that in order to help their children with their homework, they need to understand Western way of thinking.

“I mainly help my kids with his Maths and Sciences. But I find that the Western way of thinking is too different from the Chinese way. Take fractions for example, we say denominators first and then the molecular, but here it is totally opposite. They say molecular first and denominators after. We have also different ways of doing Division...” (Mrs. Li, Chinese mother).

In spite of the fact that Chinese parents in Quebec can rarely get directly involved in their children’s schooling, many of them make an effort to help their children by fostering good study habits. All of the parent respondents in this research speak highly of the

importance of effective study habits. They not only invest money and materials, but also take time to cultivate their children's habits. Most of the parents interviewed indicate that early childhood training is beneficial.

“I think good study habits are very important. When my daughter was very young, I started to read with her. I learnt some French when we came here. I went to the community library everyday to read French books with her. When we moved to Edmonton, we also read English books together. At the beginning, I read these books for her, when her English was getting better, she read them for me. When we came back to Montreal, she was in Grade 5, I assigned her extra homework in French. She is very obedient. She finished all the assignment I gave her.” (Mrs. Chow, Chinese mother)

For fostering good study habits, parental checking and supervision of homework, parent-child discussion of school matters, monitoring children's behaviours are the common strategies which the parent respondents adopt.

“I try to help my daughter to foster a good study habit. When she comes back from school, we would talk about what her school day likes. I will ask her to tell me what she has learnt at school. Then I will supervise her homework. You know, you should let your kids know that you care about them and their schooling.” (Mrs Zhang, Chinese mother).

“I think as a parent, you need to communicate frequently with your kids. This way you can find their difficulties and problems at school. For example, I went to parent-teacher meeting for my younger daughter and her teacher told me that she was very smart, but she did not like geography. I asked her why she did not like geography. She said it was boring. I then began to draw maps with her and tell her about the countries she has never been too. Guess what? She got 100% in geography. From then on, she does not have any problem with geography.” (Mrs. Lian, Chinese mother).

In line with Mrs. Lian's example, some other parents also suggest that “building up self-confidence” in their children is very important for their educational attainment. Some parents send their children to a French public high school because they fear that their children will lose their confidence if they cannot excel in the more competitive environment of a private school.

“I did not send my kids to a private school, because I think their academic achievement depends mainly on the effort they make. I think private schools are very competitive, if they cannot excel at school, they will lose their confidence.” (Mrs. Zhang, Chinese mother).

According to the school staff interviewed, the elder siblings in Chinese families with more than one child usually help their younger siblings with their schooling. It seems that even without the monitoring of the parents, the “good study habits” of the elder children gradually influence their younger siblings.

*« Ce que je vous vais rapporter, c'est que des parents et des élèves qui me l'ont raconté. Après l'école, ils arrivent à la maison et ils s'installent à la table de cuisine. Peu importe leur niveau d'études, tous les enfants s'installent autour de la table. Si les parents travaillent à l'extérieur de la maison et qu'ils reviennent tard le soir, à ce moment-là, les plus vieux ou les plus vieilles vont s'occuper des études de leurs frères et sœurs plus jeunes. En plus de ça, ils vont faire leurs propres études. »* (Assistant-principal, School A).

Furthermore, Chinese parents also emphasize the role of parental authority and discipline in educating their children. Most parents interviewed mention that they set limits for their children. For example, girls are not allowed to get home late or sleepover at anyone's houses. They also control the time that children spend in surfing the Internet or watching TV.

“Generally speaking, we don't watch TV or surf the Internet during the weekdays. These activities are only allowed at Friday night. Both my daughter and I do a lot of reading during the weekdays. In fact, as I said, we always read books together.” (Mrs. Chow, Chinese mother).

“My kids are not allowed to come back home later than 9 o'clock at night. Once my son went to a Haitian church and he told us he would get home late, but we were still worried about him. My son is allowed sleepover only at church when they have special activities, but for my daughter, sleepover is absolutely not allowed. She must go home on time. ” (Mrs. Choi, Chinese mother).

According to traditional Chinese cultural values, such as filial piety, children are expected to obey their parents without question. Although the student participants affirm that they follow their parents' directions most of the time, some of the parent respondents suggest that this authoritative parenting style does not always work when their children are exposed to the norms of the dominant wider culture which stresses independence and autonomy, especially during their adolescent years. The different pace of acculturation can sometimes cause parent-teen conflicts.

“We set limits for him. For example, he can watch TV, but he can’t watch it for more than 2 hours. He is not allowed to go to certain places. He is sometimes rebellious. You know, he was born here and he’s adolescent. He is totally a Québécois and the cultural difference between us is so big. I think the generational conflicts are just normal. If I compare him with another kid, he would say that he is Canadian, and that kid is Chinese and I can’t compare them like that. He sometimes asks me “why don’t you compare me with Western kids?” I said “because you are Chinese”. Then he stopped talking to me.” (Mrs. Huang, Chinese mother).

*« Quand on voit ceux qui ont un accent québécois, leurs notes sont moins fortes et ceux qui ont un accent asiatique, leurs notes sont plus fortes. Je pense que ceux qui ont un accent québécois ont déjà moins de pression parentale. Les parents perdent un peu leur pouvoir et ils sont déjà un peu plus ouverts à c’est quoi la façon de vivre ici, c’est quoi l’effort moyen qu’on doit mettre. On peut dire que les élèves qui sont nés ici ont plus de liberté. »* (Science teacher in Secondary 5, School C).

From the last quote above, one can see that the influence of parental expectations has been moderated among those Quebec born/raised Chinese students. It seems that their parents are more open to accept the Western life style and grant more freedom to their children. Some of the parent respondents also believe that the role of parents in Quebec is different from that in the Oriental world and they cannot just give order to their children. They see that their most important responsibility is to be a good example to their children rather than always trying to control them.

“I think we do need to discipline our children, but the key point is the kids themselves. They need self-control and self-discipline. I think as a parent, you need to be a good example, because your kids will learn from you, such as your attitudes towards education. You know many Chinese immigrants went back to school after they came here. As an adult, if you don’t work hard, how could you expect your kids to do so? ” (Mrs. Li, Chinese mother).

“I think the role of parents in Quebec is quite different. Here they don’t push their kids to get ahead. In Mainland China or Hong Kong, all the parents send their kids to afterschool classes. Here the children are more independent and they know their own mind. You can’t always push them. If they don’t want to go to tutoring classes, you’d better respect them.” (Mrs. Choi, Chinese mother).

In a few cases, strict parenting methods and a high degree of cultural difference between parents and children have led to intense parent-teen conflicts. Two mothers that I interviewed voice their frustration because their teenage children spend the majority of

the time playing video games and this behavioural problem is now totally beyond their control.

“We once cut the cable for the Internet. Then he went to a Cyber-Bar to play [video games]. We were more worried about him, because you don’t know what kind of people he would meet in that place. I then installed the Internet cable again for his security. He finally won! I really feel that I am a failure.” (Mrs. Yang, Chinese mother).

“My son got addicted to video games. I can’t control him. I can only remind him that study is more important than that. He loses self-control, so I cut the Wi-Fi, and install the cable in the living room. This way, if he wants to surf the Internet or play video games, I can supervise him. I feel that the only thing I can do is to remind him to do his homework. He is a teenager boy, I can’t push him too much, otherwise he would be really mad at me. Sometimes, we can’t even continue our conversation...” (Mrs. Guo, Chinese mother).

It is interesting to note that these two mothers are the only one in their families who takes care of their children. Mrs. Yang is a widow and Mrs. Guo’s husband (Mr. Guo) spends a lot of time away from home dealing with the demands of his business. Mrs. Yang overworked for several years after her husband passed away because she was the only one providing financial support to the family. She therefore did not pay much attention to her younger son. Mrs. Guo bought some property in Montreal and is currently a landlady. She said that she did not have much time to participate in parent-teacher meetings and learn what her son does at school. When Mr. Guo came home (usually once or twice a year), the guilt of not being with his son makes Mr. Guo always want to please his son when he is home. The boy turns rebellious when he is with his mother. From these two examples, one can see that family structure can also impact the effectiveness of parenting.

### **6.3.3 Involvement in school activities**

#### Knowledge of Quebec school system

As mentioned in Chapter V, many parents indicate that school boards do not provide much information about the educational system in Quebec. However, with the emphasis of education in Chinese culture and high parental expectations, many Chinese immigrants take the initiative to collect information concerning the school system in Quebec. For new arrivals, their language barrier and lack of social capital prevent them from learning

about the mainstream French public schools in a direct way, such as attending meetings or reading newsletters from these schools.

“When I first came here, I did not even know if I want to send my son to certain school, I have to live in that school district. So when we did the application, we did not have any choice. ” (Mrs. Guo, Chinese mother).

However, most Chinese parents have chosen an alternative way –through the Chinese community –to collect information. Some of the parents interviewed indicate that they obtain the information about school rankings and admission procedures from Chinese ethnic media, such as newspapers and websites. Others learn of the different programs offered by some French schools from ethnic organizations, ethnic supplementary schools, and ethnic churches in the Chinese community.

“After a while, I learnt that we could get a lot of information from Chinese newspapers. You know, school rankings, admission exams, welcome class...” (Mrs. Wang, Chinese mother).

“I learnt school ranking in Montreal and from the Chinese school which my daughter attend. They often have meetings to share this kind of information.” (Mrs. Chow, Chinese mother).

In addition to ethnic institutions, co-ethnic friends are also a type of social capital that Chinese parents use to obtain information about the mainstream French schools. Given the strong importance that Chinese parents attach to education, their children’s schooling is a common topic of discussion among them.

*« Mes parents parlent souvent de mes études avec leurs amis quand ils les visitent. Ils partagent des informations sur le classement des écoles à Montréal, des programmes offerts par certaines écoles, l'école du samedi dans la communauté chinoise, etc. »* (Lina, Chinese girl, School D).

### School-family communication

Although education is extremely important in Chinese culture, the school staff and Chinese students I interviewed affirm that the participation of Chinese parents in school activities is far from adequate. The data in the current research show that their low level of French proficiency is the main barrier to parent-school communication. According to school staff respondents, some parents can communicate with them in English, although

they hesitate to do so because they are unsure if speaking English is acceptable in a French school. One teacher points out that some teachers' low level of English proficiency hinders the parent-school communication. A pedagogical advisor in School B also indicates that most Chinese parents will attend when there are interpreters for school activities.

*« La communication entre les parents chinois et l'école, je dirais que c'est minime. Je reçois peu d'appels de leur part pour l'orientation de l'enfant. Ils ne viennent pas non plus au bureau. Je suis convaincu que c'est à cause de la barrière du langage. Tu sais que la plupart d'entre eux ne parlent pas français. En anglais, peut-être que c'est plus facile, mais comme c'est une école francophone, c'est pas évident pour eux. Pourtant, je pense qu'ils se forcent fort pour seconder leurs jeunes pour réussir. »* (Pedagogic advisor, School C).

*« Ils viennent parfois à l'école, mais ils parlent souvent anglais. C'est pas tous les enseignants qui peuvent leur répondre en anglais. Quand j'ai enseigné en troisième secondaire, il y avait beaucoup de parents chinois qui sont venus me voir, mais j'étais obligée de leur parler anglais... »* (French teacher in secondary 5, School B).

*« On a des interprètes à l'école. Puis au début de l'année, on fait une réunion : on les informe comment fonctionne l'école et tout avec les interprètes chinois. En général, ils sont très présents. À part de ça, les parents chinois viennent seulement quand on les contacte. Sinon, on les voit pas. Ils nous font confiance. Si les enfants ne causent pas de problèmes, ils ne viennent pas. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School B).

In line with the quotes above, some parents suggest that many teachers in the French public schools are resistant to conversing in English, although they believe that most of the teachers are able to speak English.

“My son went to a private French school, and the teachers there spoke English to me because they know I don't speak French. I participated in many activities in that school. My daughter now goes to a French public school, and her teachers never speak English to me. So I don't want to go to parent-teacher meetings or other activities anymore, because I could not understand at all.” (Mrs. Choi, Chinese mother).

The data also show that it is very common for Chinese immigrants to depend on their children (or elder children) to translate email and newsletters, answer the telephone, and interpret during parent-teacher meetings. Yet some parents see this as problematic, because some children may not translate the real message, especially when they have behaviour problems at school. The community agent respondents also report that using

Chinese students as translators sometimes cause miscommunication or misunderstanding between parents and the school, as the following quote denotes:

“Once, the school sent a letter to the parents to tell them that their son had been absent from school for several days. But they did not understand French at all. You know what? Their kid just told them ‘it’s nothing serious, just something about the extracurricular activities’. Few days later, the school informed the parents that they were going to expel their son, because they did not respond to the letter [...] When I saw the letter, I explained to them and visited school with them. I told the principal that it was really a misunderstanding. The school finally accept their son.” (Community agent, Immigrant Service Organization A).

Likewise, there are Chinese parents who seek translation service from organizations in the Chinese community to facilitate parent-school communication. These organizations provide interpreters (of Chinese origin) during parent-teacher meetings. However, some parents resist the use of translation services from the Chinese community because they do not want their families to be dishonoured by their children’s problems. The expression “do not wash your dirty linen in public” (家丑不可外扬) in Chinese reflects this belief.

*« Je crois que ça [les interprètes] peut causer des problèmes si on les cherche dans la communauté chinoise, parce qu’il y a des parents qui veulent pas que d’autres [membres de leur groupe ethnique qui les connaissent] sachent que leurs enfants ont des problèmes à l’école. C’est un problème de confidentialité. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School B).

It is interesting to note that to circumvent the language obstacle, some Chinese parents and teachers in French public schools have developed alternative ways to communicate with one another, such as using Google Translate Service or Facebook groups:

“When the teachers send me emails, I just use Google to translate that into English. Of course, the translation isn’t always accurate, but at least I can understand it in general.” (Mrs. Li, Chinese mother)

*« J’ai un groupe Facebook de classe. Comme ça, je rejoins souvent les parents. C’est un groupe fermé de classe, c’est pas pour tout le monde. Les parents chinois prennent souvent les traductions sur Google. Des fois, ça donne des choses très, très drôles. S’ils veulent me laisser un message, imagine, ils écrivent en chinois et ensuite, le traduisent sur Google. J’ai fini par les comprendre, mais c’est très drôle. S’il y a quelque chose de sérieux, on cherchera un interprète pour eux, parce qu’il faut qu’on se comprenne bien. Pour les choses quotidiennes, on fonctionne par Facebook. »* (Pedagogical advisor, School B)

In addition to the language barrier, other post-immigration stresses, including overwork and cultural differences concerning school-family communication and overwork that also inhabit the involvement of the parents. For instance, some parents, such as the four small business operators, indicate that they rarely have time to participate in school activities.

“I am too busy to participate in school activities. You know, as a landlady, I have to take care of all the apartments and tenants. If someone call me and tell me that there is something wrong in the apartment, I have to send somebody to repair it...” (Mrs. Guo, Chinese mother).

As described in Chapter V, cultural differences regarding school-family communication sometimes leads to loose parent-teacher connections. In this regard, some parents indicate that in China, many schools not only inform parents by telephone but also send formal invitations for parent-school meetings, whereas here they are only informed through their children. These parents find that teachers here are to be less accessible than in China and it is very difficult to arrange one-on-one appointments. Most Chinese parents expect teachers to take the initiative to contact them. They suggest that teachers should often give parents a call and tell them how their children are doing at school.

Also, I think they should contact the parents more often, at least tell us what the kids do at school. When we were in China, the head teacher called us quite often and she would tell us if my son had not finished his homework or made trouble at school. Here it is difficult to see the teacher. You have to wait for des *rencontres professeur-parent...* ” (Mrs. Guo, Chinese mother).

“Once, I missed parent-teacher meeting because I thought they would send me an invitation like schools did in China. I got to know later that they would only inform you through your kids. The meeting is like all the parents wait in a gym until a teacher call you. After that I email my son’s teacher and told him that I did not know the way of organizing parent-teacher meetings in Montreal and I would like to make a one-on-one appointment to talk about my son’s study. But you know what, he goes to ‘don’t worry; many parents did not attend the meeting. If you want to talk about something, just email me.’ When I saw the email, I felt that he was not willing to see me. Probably, he doesn’t want to spend extra time on that...” (Mrs. Cui, Chinese mother).

As illustrated in Chapter V, most teachers in the French public schools hold positive stereotype and high expectations for Chinese immigrant students. However, some parent participants point out that the teachers do not share the same expectations for their children as they do. During parent-teacher meetings, many teachers do not talk about the

real problems of the children or how to improve their academic achievement, even though their children's grades are considered "not very good" or "too bad". They also think that the teachers' concern for their children is not the same as theirs. In other words, the teachers do not pay enough attention to the students' grades.

"I don't want to go to parent-teacher meetings anymore, though they sometimes have interpreters. Every time, they talk about the same thing. They would say 'your kids are very good. They never make trouble at school...' even I think my kids do not do well enough at school, their grades did not reach my standards, only 70% something...I am wondering why their teachers think they are good. They don't talk about the real problems. They would only say something like 'your daughter is very shy, probably her French is not good enough. She needs to communicate more with people...' " (Mrs. Liu, Chinese mother).

In spite of the rare participation of Chinese parents in school activities, no teacher or other school staff interviewed believes that Chinese parents are "indifferent" about French schools or their children's education. As mentioned above, they are seen as respectful and cooperative. In general, Chinese parents will act on the advice of teachers or other school staff or respond to their requests.

*« Bien qu'il y a pas beaucoup de parents chinois qui me contactent, ça veut pas dire qu'ils sont indifférents envers l'école. S'il y a un message spécifique aux parents, c'est clair qu'ils vont réagir... »* (Pedagogic advisor, School C).

*« Je me rappelle d'avoir eu un enfant qui travaillait dans un restaurant durant la nuit, jusqu'à une heure ou deux heures du matin, des choses comme ça...trois ou quatre soirs par semaine. Il arrivait à l'école, il était fatigué et il ne fonctionnait pas. On a rencontré le parent pour discuter de ça et ç'a été fini. Il a arrêté de travailler la nuit. C'était aussi simple que ça. Alors l'enfant travaillait pour ramener des sous à la famille, pour aider là-dedans. Mais à l'école, on leur disait "ça affecte ses études" et ça s'est arrêté. C'est un cas dont je vous parle, mais vous voyez très bien dans cette situation-là que les familles chinoises accordent de l'importance à l'éducation et c'est une valeur très forte. »* (Assistant-principal, School A).

## Summary

This chapter explored the influence of the dynamics of Chinese immigrant families on the educational experience of Chinese youth. With various socioeconomic backgrounds and immigration procedures, many Chinese emigrate from China for their children's well

being, especially to provide them with better education prospects. As a result of changes to the immigration policies of many Western countries, Quebec has become a popular destination for Chinese immigrants. In general, the Chinese community in Quebec belongs to a voluntary group as defined by Ogbu (1998), and they believe that their dreams of prosperity can come true through the schooling of their children in the new country. However, inconsistent with most of the existing literature, most Chinese parent respondents in this research regard academic achievement as a necessary but an inadequate condition to succeed in the mainstream society (Li, 2001).

As indicated by many previous studies, Chinese cultural values influence the educational expectations of Chinese immigrant parents for their children (Davies & Guppy, 2006; Li, 2001; Zhou & Kim, 2006). Nevertheless, the data presented in this research demonstrate that their pre-and post-migration experiences also have impacts in shaping their educational expectations and occupational aspirations for their children. High academic achievement is seen as a means to overcome the disadvantage of an immigrant or visible minority status. According to most respondents, parental expectations for academic achievement motivate Chinese students to work hard and get ahead. The data also show that the parental expectations of Chinese immigrants influence their children's future plans, such as their choice of career. However, the unrealistic expectations and perfectionism of certain parents have negative effects on their children, resulting in pressure, parent-teen conflicts, and rebellious behaviours.

The data of this chapter demonstrate that few Chinese parents can get directly involved in their children's schooling due to their low level of French proficiency. However, they provide financial and material supports to meet their children's educational needs. They also invest time to foster good study habits, although their strategies sometimes do not work well because of the cultural differences between the parents and their children.

With regard to parent-school communication, the data indicate that the language barrier, cultural differences, and post-migration stress inhibit the participation of Chinese immigrant parents in school activities. Nonetheless, with the ethnic social network (to be

analysed in detail in the next chapter) in the Chinese community, they seem to be well informed of the Quebec educational system. Furthermore, Chinese parents usually hold positive attitudes towards and strong confidence in the mainstream schools and teachers, which facilitates cooperation between Chinese families and French public schools to a certain extent.

As illustrated in Chapter II, the findings in this chapter highlight the various roles the family dynamics play in the academic achievement of students of immigrant origin. However, in the case of Chinese youth, the influence of their families' socioeconomic status appears to be less clear than suggested by the previous studies (Coleman, 1966, 1988; Easton-Brooks *et al.*, 2007). For instance, although some Chinese parents may not possess enough economic capital to do much material investment in their children's schooling, they are willing to make the sacrifices, especially when investing in what Bourdieu called "cultural goods" (1979; 1986). Indeed, as seen in Chapter II, Chinese immigrants have lower incomes on average than the overall population of Quebec. It seems that the impact of cultural resources, social capital, and some specific strategies of the family can overcome the disadvantages caused by a lower socioeconomic status.

## **Chapter VII Ethnic Community-based Resources**

As one can see from Chapter II, Chinese immigrants in most Canadian provinces and metropolitan cities have established mature ethnic institutions and social networks. Also, as mentioned in Chapter I, during the “head tax” and “Chinese Exclusion Act” period, as a response to harsh realities in the host society, Chinatown was built up in many cities all over Canada to provide self-protection and support as well as to develop ethnic economies on which Chinese immigrants could depend. Nowadays, Chinese ethnic enclaves has been extended to suburbia and most Chinese immigrants seem to follow the pattern of first settling in inner city (due to the availability of social services and facilities) and then relocating to the suburbs. Furthermore, in parallel with the high rates of Chinese immigration and population growth, all sorts of ethnic institutions and social networks, such as ethnospecific immigrant service organizations, Chinese language media, supplementary schools, and religious institutions have been founded to support their co-ethnic members, especially new arrivals.

As described in the previous chapter, many Chinese immigrant parents have sought out resources in ethnic social institutions to support their children’s school career, such as collecting information concerning the Quebec school system and looking for interpreters. In this chapter, I seek to examine in detail how resources in the Chinese community promote the educational success of Chinese youngsters and to what extent these services are used by Chinese families. Meanwhile, I also attempt to analyze the availability of resources in mainstream Quebec society.

### **7.1 Chinese Language Media**

Chinese language media has achieved an influential status among Chinese immigrants because of their low level of French proficiency. As in other metropolitan cities, the Chinese community in Montreal has developed various forms of ethnic media, such as publications, television programs, and websites. To explore the influence of Chinese language media on the schooling of Chinese origin students, I conducted a survey of Chinese newspapers, television programs, and websites. A content analysis of the media

accounts, newspaper articles, and online publications was also carried out to review the effects of media coverage of education.

### **7.1.1 Coverage on education**

At present, there are more than ten Chinese newspapers circulating in the Greater Montreal Area (GMA), of which the largest and most influential ones include four weeklies: *The Chinese Press*, *Sinoquebec*, *Seven Days*, and *Éventuel*. These four particular weeklies were selected because they are the most popular newspapers among the Chinese parent and community agent respondents in this research. *The Chinese Press* is delivered to the subscriber's doorstep for a subscription fee. The other three are free and distributed in Chinese groceries, *dépanneurs*, restaurants, and other outlets. All of these newspapers have an online edition and are affiliated with a website. *The Chinese Press* is a weekly newspaper with a history of more than 30 years. *Sinoquebec Chinese Weekly* has the largest circulation (around 10,000) among the Chinese community in Greater Montreal Area. *Seven Days* focuses more on news in China and the overseas Chinese community in general. *Éventuel* was initially published in 2010 and it is the first Chinese-French bilingual newspaper in North America.

As one of the primary ways in which Chinese immigrant parents learn about the educational system in Quebec, all of the four abovementioned weeklies have a section of 4-6 pages devoted to education. In general, articles and editorials in this section focus on educational policies in Quebec, high school admission requirements and strategies, and rankings for local high schools and the top universities in Quebec, Canada, and North America. For instance, every year, *Sinoquebec Chinese Weekly* publishes information concerning the "Open House" of the top 100 high schools in Montreal (Picture 4).



In this respect, publications in the education section of *Éventuel*—the only Chinese – French bilingual newspaper—seems to focus more on cultural and language dissemination. To disseminate Chinese culture to both the Quebec born/raised Chinese and a Western audience, every volume of this weekly devotes an entire page to teaching Chinese poetry and grammar (Picture 6). In addition, articles about the importance of Chinese and strategies for learning are also published regularly in this section (Picture 7).

Picture 6: Chinese Poem and Grammar

The image shows two pages from the 'Poésie chinoise' section of *Éventuel Weekly*. The left page is titled 'Poésie chinoise' and features the poem '卜算子' (Bǔ suàn zǐ) by Su Shi. The text is presented in both Chinese characters and Pinyin, with a French translation. The right page is titled 'La durée' and contains a 'Conversation I' section with a dialogue about the duration of a stay in Beijing, followed by a 'Grammaire' section explaining the use of the character '了' (le) in such contexts.

Source: *Éventuel Weekly* (2012.08.31)

Picture 7: Why Do We Learn Chinese?

The image shows an article titled '我们为什么学习中文?' (Why do we learn Chinese?) and 'Pour quoi on étudie le mandarin?'. The article is written in French and discusses the reasons for learning Chinese, including cultural identity and academic success. It mentions that many students in Quebec are of Chinese descent and that learning Chinese can help them maintain their cultural roots and improve their academic performance. The article also touches on the challenges of learning a second language and the importance of parental support.

Source: *Éventuel Weekly* (2013 01.11)

From time to time, stories or biographies of successful students are published on these weeklies to provide role-models for Chinese youth. For instance, articles such as “Chinese Pupils Excel at International Mathematical Olympic Contest” and “A Chinese

Student Got into Harvard” are found in the education section of the abovementioned weeklies.

Furthermore, these publications offer a space where Chinese youth can publish their writings, especially those who have been awarded prizes in literacy competitions or writing contests. In Picture 8, *Sinoquebec Weekly* presents essays written by Chinese students who excelled in a writing contest held by a Chinese language school.

Picture 8: A Selection of Award-winning Works in Jiahua Cup Writing Contest



Source: Sinoquebec Weekly (2012.11.16)

Finally, full-page education-related advertisements are very common in these weeklies, especially at the beginning of the school year as well as prior to the start of summer and Christmas holidays when Chinese families are searching for the summer or winter programs for their children (e.g. summer or winter camp for learning French or visiting China). Picture 9 shows an advertisement for for tutoring centre, and Picture 10 has a full page of advertisements for three Chinese supplementary schools in Montreal, as well as the summer programs, tutoring classes, and free lectures about high school admission.

Picture 9: Advertisement for a Tutoring Centre 2012.09.14

Source: Chinese Press (2012.09.14)

Picture 10: Advertisements of Chinese Supplementary Schools

The image is a collage of advertisements for Chinese supplementary schools in Montreal. The top section features '雀之灵' (Quezhiling) with a '雀之灵夏令营' (Quezhiling Summer Camp) advertisement. Below this are various school advertisements including '英才学院' (Elite College) with '2012年中冲刺班' (2012 Mid-Year Intensive Class) and '2011年英才夏令营' (2011 Elite Summer Camp). The middle section features '枫叶学院' (Maple Leaf College) with '2012年秋季课程' (2012 Fall Course) and '第九届枫叶文化夏令营' (9th Maple Leaf Cultural Summer Camp). The bottom section features '枫叶市中心' (Maple Leaf City Center) with '2012年秋季课程' (2012 Fall Course) and '第九届枫叶文化夏令营' (9th Maple Leaf Cultural Summer Camp). The right side of the collage has a vertical banner for '35版' (Page 35) and '广告信息' (Advertising Information).

Source: Sinoquebec Weekly (2012.08.03)

In addition to these publications, Chinese television programs are also available in Montreal. There is one UHF channel in Montreal that broadcasts Chinese television programs: one-hour daily newscast (half-hour in Mandarin, half-hour in Cantonese) on the weekdays, six-hour programming on Saturday, and two-hour programming on Sundays. Television programs focus much more on entertainment, showing homeland soap operas, popular movies, and concerts. In recent years, programming schedule has included more local news reporting and documentaries on events for the Chinese community in North America. Paid satellite TV channels include CCTV (China Central Television)-4 and Phoenix TV North American Channel, which provides 24-hour Chinese programming. On these two channels, aside from programs aimed at teaching Mandarin to Western audiences, there are also animated shows for young children. On the UHF channel, few educational programs target Chinese youth or parents, although documentaries and reports on celebrities and successful students are often broadcast. Moreover, education-related commercials, such as advertisements for Chinese language schools or youth activity centers, are sometimes presented on these two channels.

Finally, at the peak of the cyberspace age, Chinese language media have expanded onto the Internet to better serve the Chinese community in Montreal. In addition to the online editions of dailies and weeklies and their affiliated websites, many web portals have been established by Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs. There are currently 27 Montreal-based Chinese websites offering local and homeland news, e-commerce, real estate, and entrepreneurial services. Table XXVIII provides a list of all these websites. Of those listed websites, [www.sinomontreal.ca](http://www.sinomontreal.ca) and [www.mtl163.com](http://www.mtl163.com) are the most popular, with a click-through rate of 20,000. Others are less visited, with a click-through rate of lower than 5,000. I therefore chose these two main websites to examine the online publication coverage on education.

**Table XXIX Montreal-based Chinese websites**

<a href="http://www.mtl163.com">www.mtl163.com</a>	<a href="http://www.sinoquebec.com">www.sinoquebec.com</a>	<a href="http://www.bmlove.com">www.bmlove.com</a>
<a href="http://sinoqc.com">sinoqc.com</a>	<a href="http://www.montrealren.com">www.montrealren.com</a>	<a href="http://lifemontreal.com">lifemontreal.com</a>
<a href="http://www.livinmtl.com">www.livinmtl.com</a>	<a href="http://www.beauwin.com">www.beauwin.com</a>	<a href="http://www.sinomtl.com">www.sinomtl.com</a>
<a href="http://www.canadachine.com">www.canadachine.com</a>	<a href="http://www.goquebec.com">www.goquebec.com</a>	<a href="http://www.cnquebec.com">www.cnquebec.com</a>
<a href="http://www.bendi.ca">www.bendi.ca</a>	<a href="http://mtclub.com">mtclub.com</a>	<a href="http://www.tyark.com">www.tyark.com</a>
<a href="http://www.mtlchina.com">www.mtlchina.com</a>	<a href="http://www.fengjing-hotel.com">www.fengjing-hotel.com</a>	<a href="http://www.21need.com">www.21need.com</a>
<a href="http://www.acupuncturechinoise.com">www.acupuncturechinoise.com</a>	<a href="http://www.orehab.com">www.orehab.com</a>	<a href="http://bbs.bestphotocanada.com">bbs.bestphotocanada.com</a>
<a href="http://www.topdrivingschool.com">www.topdrivingschool.com</a>	<a href="http://m.xinhaibao.com">m.xinhaibao.com</a>	<a href="http://www.qtnews.net">www.qtnews.net</a>
<a href="http://www.nabooks.com">www.nabooks.com</a>	<a href="http://www.montrealchina.com">www.montrealchina.com</a>	<a href="http://www.lubycanada.com">www.lubycanada.com</a>

Source: <http://www.comefromchina.ca>

As in the abovementioned Chinese weeklies, the two most popular Chinese websites each have an education section where announcements, such as “Montreal Private School Expo” and “Lecture: Open the Doors of Top Universities in North America” can be placed. Education-related advertisements, such as those for Chinese supplementary schools, language training centres, lectures on parenting, etc., are often posted on the home page. An open forum (or a discussion board) allows all registered people to talk about their children’s schooling in Montreal and Quebec. In this section, Chinese parents usually discuss their common interests, such as parenting experiences, educational strategies, and choice of high school. In Picture 11, one can see that there is a specific section devoted to advertisements for various Chinese supplementary schools and a specific sub-forum devoted to “Primary and Secondary Schooling”. On this sub-forum, Chinese parents post

threads about language learning, news and announcements related to education, tutoring information, and other related topics. Picture 12 introduces a discussion board on a special topic –the education of second generation Chinese youth. On this discussion board, various stories are presented to provide peer role models for Chinese immigrant students. Titles, such as “XX Opened the Door of Harvard” and “The Success Story of XX” are very common in this section.

Picture 11: Forum of Studying in Montreal

Source: <http://www.sinomontreal.ca>

Picture 12: Discussion Board on the Education of Second Generation Chinese

蒙特利尔华人在线 专栏

### 第二代移民在成长

我們的第二代正在為未來而拼搏在他們的身上承載著更多的希望。

隨著蒙城在线专栏文章的增加，我们建议您使用我站的“高级搜索”来查询您所需要的特定信息。比如您想查阅有关“面试”方面的资料，请在关键词一栏内填入“面试”或其他相关词语，勾选“专栏”（当然您也可以勾选其他栏目，比如“论坛”，这会在更大的范围内搜索），点击搜索按钮即可。

文章	简介	人气
<input type="checkbox"/> 潘卓源—创造新纪录的孩子	的这位就有些特别，她并非来自中国大陆，而是来自香港，而且她所擅长的领域对很多华人子女来说，涉足者很少，这就是体育。	2139
<input type="checkbox"/> 卓然—成功的道路不止一条	一个人的成功是不能与学历划等号的，尤其在加拿大这样的国家，名校、高学历更不应该成为孩子唯一的目标。	2382
<input type="checkbox"/> 唐嘉—把握生活 把握未来	坐在我对面的唐嘉显得充满活力，人长得非常漂亮，而且散发出自然真诚的气质。光从外表上看，你很难将她与其真实的年龄联系起来，你也想象不到她现在还是一介学子，而且入学的是加拿大的名校之一，就读的是最好的专业。	2209
<input type="checkbox"/> 陈肖南—叩开“哈佛”的大门	在大多数人的印象中，第二代移民应该较第一代更易融入加拿大的主流社会，因为他们有条件在本地从头开始学习，他们也有第一代移民所不具备的年龄优势。然而事实上，“融入”是一个主观的过程，即使客观条件相同，也不是每个人都能做到这一点。	2354
<input type="checkbox"/> 严文思—多元化的成长道路	……她甚至创办了自己的舞蹈学校，并受当地电影制片厂邀请在影片多兰朵中担任主要角色，这在我采访的第二代移民中是独树一帜的。	3256
<input type="checkbox"/> 张天天—兴趣是“天天”向上的动力	她并非艺术家出身，但她不仅学业出色，而且还是一位很优秀的小提琴手，我想她的经历应该是具有普遍意义的。	1991

Source: <http://www.mtl163.com>

### 7.1.2 Influence of media coverage on education

As a social ethnic institution, Chinese language media coverage not only reflect the fact that education is one of the common concerns of Chinese immigrants, but also has some untended effects on the academic achievement of Chinese youth.

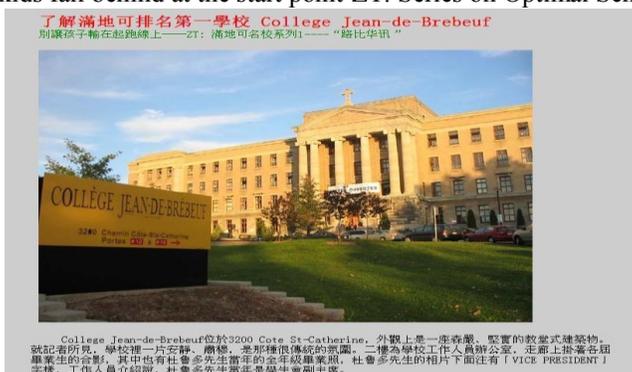
First of all, Chinese language media connects immigrant parents, especially new arrivals, with mainstream society by providing them with a detailed roadmap of the Quebec school system. Information on choosing schools, admission test-taking strategies and French learning strategies are available in various Chinese weeklies and on websites. As mentioned in Chapter V, because of the language barrier and their limited knowledge of the educational system in Quebec, most parent respondents indicate that when they first arrived in Montreal, they usually made their decisions about choosing a school for their children after searching through information in Chinese language media.

“You know, I don’t speak much French. I learnt about the high school ranking in Montreal from Sinoquebec Weekly. Every year, they always published articles about that in September.” (Mrs Li, Chinese mother).

“I don’t know much about the educational system here, but my friend always sends me email or calls me to talk about that. She got this kind of information from Chinese newspapers and websites.” (Mrs Huang, Chinese mother).

Given the unique position and influence of the ethnic media among Chinese immigrants, some mainstream schools, such as *Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf* and *École Interntaionale de Montréal* (Picture 13 and 14), occasionally put advertisements in these media. These ethnic media also keep immigrant parents informed of the supplementary educational system in the Chinese community. For example, questions such as “Which Chinese afterschool institution is the best for teaching French?” or “Which Chinese school has the most students going to the top high schools?” are often found on the online discussion board. In this regard, ethnic media also serves as an expanded co-ethnic network for Chinese immigrants.

Picture 13: Getting to know the Best School in Montreal: Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf  
-Don't let your kids fall behind at the start point-ZT: Series on Optimal Schools in Montreal



Source: [www.lubycanada.com](http://www.lubycanada.com)

Picture 14: Optimal Public Schools in Montreal: École internationale through a student's eyes  
-Don't let your kids fall behind at the start point-ZT: Series on Optimal Schools in Montreal

滿地可的公立名校一個中國孩子眼中的國際中學  
別讓孩子輸在起跑線上——ZT: 滿地可名校系列4——“路比華訊”



Ecole internationale de Montréal——滿地可國際中學, 在中學排行榜中排名第八, 是一所法語公立中學, 能在云云公立學校裡脫穎而出, 成為本地以致全省的名校, 到底有甚麼過人之處?

為了讓讀者更直觀地了解中國人比較熱衷的這所中學, 本報記者採訪了一位就讀於該校初中二年級中國籍學生, 她是今年15歲的Mandy。溫柔嫺靜、又落落大方的Mandy, 很詳細地向我們介紹了滿地可國際中學的情況。

Source: [www.lubycanada.com](http://www.lubycanada.com)

Second, the ethnic media promotes and reinforces the values of academic achievement in a subtle way among Chinese immigrants and their children. As mentioned above, success stories of Chinese youth are frequently published in Chinese print and online publications. Although the parent and student participants indicate that most Quebec born/raised Chinese pupils do not have the language proficiency to understand Chinese media content, these media support the transmission of values to them via their parents.

« Parfois, ma mère me raconte des histoires de réussite qu'elle a lues dans les journaux chinois pour m'encourager à étudier plus fort. Elle dit toujours "XX a honoré sa famille en allant à McGill"... » (Mei, Chinese girl, School C).

“I read articles of stories or biographies of success students to my daughter to encourage her to work hard at school. I want her to know that she should learn from these role-models.”  
(Mrs Chow, Chinese mother).

Chinese language ethnic media develop a taste for Chinese culture and keep overseas Chinese in touch their homeland. During Chinese festivals, many community events are reported by the ethnic media. By doing this, Chinese language media help to pass on cultural practices and habits to the next generation.

Third, ethnic media provide a means to promote the Chinese language. By using Chinese language media, readers not only receive news, but also learn about literary works. As illustrated above, some Chinese newspapers provide space where award-winning Chinese youngsters can publish their writings, which encourages other Chinese youth to pursue their Chinese studies. Moreover, publications related to teaching and learning Chinese (such as articles published in *Éventuel Weekly*) can also be used by Chinese youth as a tool to improve their Chinese language proficiency. However, it is difficult to gauge the impact of ethnic media on the promotion of Chinese learning among the Quebec born/raised Chinese pupils. Although some Chinese student respondents affirm that they occasionally watch Chinese TV, most indicate that they rarely read papers or visit Chinese websites.

However, ethnic media may inhibit the integration of Chinese immigrants. They may be well-informed by using Chinese language media and enjoy their life by watching Chinese television programs, yet not feel the need to maintain close contacts with members of dominant groups (or members of different ethnic groups). Moreover, ethnic media may weaken their motivation to learn French, because they do not need to obtain information from mainstream media, such as *Le Devoir*, *La Presse*, or *Radio-Canada* to know what is going on around them. This will likely diminish their desire to seek help from mainstream institutions.

Interviewer: How often do you read French newspapers, such as *Le Devoir*, *La Presse*, or watch TV in French?

Parent: Although I've learnt French, but it is not that good. I occasionally read *Métro* when I was in the subway before, but for the information about Quebec school system, I mainly get to know that from my Chinese friends or through Chinese language media. Now I drive, so I don't read French newspapers at all. I don't have time to watch TV because I am busy taking care of my tenants...

## **7.2 Ethnospecific Immigrant Service Organizations**

With the rapid growth of Montreal's Chinese population, various non-profit ethnospecific immigrant service organizations have sprung up like mushrooms in the Greater Montreal Area, such as a business association aiming to facilitate the incorporation of immigrant entrepreneurs and voluntary organizations providing community-based settlement services to new arrivals. However, as mentioned in Chapter III, with increasingly limited government funding and donations, many smaller settlement service providers in the Chinese community are forced into a dependent partnership with larger organizations; while others have curtailed their services or even closed their doors. At present, only two ethnospecific immigrant service organizations –*Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* and *Amitié Chinoise de Montréal* –are still operating in the Montreal Chinese community. In recent years, some for-profit agencies have also been established in the Chinese community to capture the emerging market of immigrant services, such as filling out application forms and registering children in French schools. In this section, I focus only on the two above mentioned ethnospecific organizations to explore their influence on educational integration of Chinese immigrant students.

### **7.2.1 Mission and target audience**

*Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* was formed in 1976 by a working group composed of students, professionals and Christian missionaries to act as a collective voice for Chinese families and to identify and respond to the needs of Chinese immigrants, especially new arrivals. The mission of *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* is described in their annual report as follows (*Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*, 2012):

« 1. Faciliter l'adaptation et l'intégration des immigrants à la société québécoise;

2. *Promouvoir l'ouverture interculturelle et le pluralisme;*
3. *Assurer l'accès aux services d'éducation, de la santé et des services sociaux ainsi qu'aux divers programmes facilitant l'accès au marché du travail;*
4. *Promouvoir la défense des droits de la personne. »*

To achieve these principal objectives, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* has developed services in three dimensions: 1) first-dimension services aiming to the integration of newcomers, such as lectures on Quebec society, French language course, employment assistance, and civic engagement activities; 2) second-dimension services include providing support to individuals and families who have specific needs, such as assistance to victims of domestic violence, assistance to pathological gamblers and their families, as well as parent-teen counselling, etc., 3) third-dimension services focus on recreational activities which allow members of the Chinese community to promote solidarity and mutual assistance, such as dancing, organized trips, and benevolent activities.

*Amitié Chinoise de Montréal* was created in 1979 by Chinese university students and young professionals to help Chinese immigrants become better integrated into mainstream society. Their initial efforts consisted of setting up after-work English classes to help newly arrived Chinese immigrants improve their communication skills. Gradually, their activities have been extended to job-related courses such as industrial sewing, professional cooking, and pastry-making. Nowadays, their services mainly focus on the promotion of civic participation and the accompaniment of their clients to government/medical/legal consultations. For example, in 1999, they submitted a memorandum<sup>28</sup> to the Parliamentary Committee on Education of Quebec, asking to have the teaching of religion abolished in public schools. This memorandum outlines illustrate the mission of *Amitié Chinoise de Montréal* as follows.

- « 1. *Faciliter la pleine intégration et promouvoir la participation active des Canadiens asiatiques à Montréal, au Québec et au Canada.*
2. *Promouvoir la coopération et la compréhension entre les Canadiens asiatiques et les autres membres de la société québécoise.*
3. *Fournir un soutien aux membres des communautés sino-canadiennes avec une priorité donnée aux jeunes, aux femmes et aux personnes âgées.*

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<sup>28</sup> CNS (1999), Pour un système scolaire public laïc : mémoire soumis à la Commission parlementaire de l'éducation.

4. *Sensibiliser le public aux problèmes de discrimination raciale et favoriser l'égalité des chances dans le milieu du travail.*

5. *Créer un environnement dans lequel nos droits en tant qu'individus sont pleinement reconnus et protégés. »*

By examining the history and main mission of the two target ethnospecific immigrant service organizations, one can see that both of them not only seek to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate settlement services, such as translation, interpretation, housing, employment, and educational counselling, etc., but are also deeply committed to a higher level of advocacy and help Chinese origin people develop a sense of belonging. Nevertheless, the target audience of these two ethnospecific immigrant service organizations seems to be slightly different. According to two agents and their annual report, most clients of *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* are recent immigrants who have been less than five years in Montreal.

Interviewer: What is the target audience of *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*?

Agent: We mainly seek to provide services to first generation immigrants. Although we don't have the statistical data, I think the second generation [Chinese] do not have any language barrier and they got all kinds of resources from mainstream organizations. It is not necessary for them to come to our centre. I think 60% of our clients are from Mainland China and 40% are from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macao.

Interviewer: In what way did most of them immigrate to Quebec?

Agent: 80% of them came here as skilled workers. There are also some who came [here] as family class.

On the other hand, *Amitié Chinoise de Montréal* centres more on the behalf of the broader Chinese community in Montreal. It usually speaks for the whole group and fight againsts racial discrimination by intervening in civil rights matters.

Interviewer: Could you talk about the main mission of your organization and the clients you serve?

Agent: We are aimed to speak for the Chinese community and Asian Canadians to fight against the racial discrimination. For example, if something like "head tax" happens, we would request the government to modify the law against Chinese Canadians.

## 7.2.2 Education-related services

Although civic participation is the final goal of integrating of immigrants and minorities, their foremost and immediate needs for them are their insertion on the labour market and the socioeducational inclusion of their children. As illustrated in Chapter V, with the influence of Chinese ethnic background and the pressure of visible minority status, education is a high priority for the Chinese community. The two focal ethno-specific immigrant service organizations likewise provide various services designed to improve the academic achievement of Chinese youngsters and increase their opportunities in Quebec society.

### Mediation between Chinese families and French schools

During major life transitions, such as immigration and settlement, social support is particularly important for facilitating access to employment, education and other basic needs. The most pressing issue for Chinese immigrant families is their children's education in the new country, which even eclipses their integration into the labour market. The two selected ethnospecific immigrant service organizations, and *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* in particular, provide information and services regarding school enrolment and admission. In addition, they offer a platform to improve communication between Chinese parents and French schools. For example, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* invites principals and teachers from optimal schools to give lectures to Chinese parents, so that they can be better informed about of Quebec educational system, parenting strategies, and choosing schools for their children. Furthermore, ethnospecific immigrant service organizations act as mediators between French schools and immigrant families by offering translation, interpretation and accompaniment services to Chinese parents, as the following quote denotes:

“We found that most new arrivals did not have any idea about the registration for school or *Classe d'accueil* because of their language barrier. Most of the time, our volunteers would go to the school board with them and help them get some information about *Classe d'accueil*. Sometimes, some schools would call us to and ask us if we could translate for Chinese parents, because they are going to have a teacher-parent meeting. If there is no translator, most Chinese parents won't understand anything. Sometimes, the parents don't know

anything about their kids' life in school until they are in trouble.” (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*).

The above quote shows that the language barrier is the biggest challenge facing Chinese parents when communicating with French schools. To respond to their needs, ethnospecific organizations not only organize translation services, but also provide French courses for Chinese parents. For Quebec born/raised Chinese origin students, they offer Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) courses to help them better communicate with their parents. Furthermore, when students have difficulties at school, such as behavioural problems, the community agents can negotiate with the schools on behalf of the students and their parents.

“My son takes advantage of the fact that I don't speak French. He knows I can't even read a letter from his school. He never showed me his transcript. He had been absent several times from school and I did not even know that. His teacher called me but I did not understand what she was saying. I finally called an agent from *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* to visit his school with me. I think people like me can only seek help from *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* when I need to communicate with his school.” (Mrs Yang, Chinese mother).

However, during the interview with Chinese parents, only two have mentioned the role of these two ethnospecific organizations when talking about school-family communication. As mentioned in the previous chapter, most of them do not participate often in school activities. For the few parents who do so, they usually ask their children to translate. According the data analysis in Chapter V, some parents may resist the utilization of translation services from the Chinese community due to the issue of confidentiality and the ideology of “maintaining the face of the family”.

### Social support

In addition to mediation services, the two focal ethnospecific organizations also offer psychological counseling to parents and teenagers as a way to assist them to cope with intergenerational conflicts and promote family accountability. For instance, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal* has developed and implemented interventions with *La direction de la protection de la jeunesse* (DPJ, Youth Protection Centre) to provide psychological services under the Youth Protection Act. However, the alienation of

information and knowledge regarding acceptable parenting practices in Canada and Quebec can lead to misunderstandings about the intervention of certain mainstream organizations, such as *la DPJ*. By informing Chinese immigrant parents of acceptable parenting practices, ethnospecific immigrant service organizations function as a social support network that helps them reduce their culture shock and facilitates their intercultural adjustment. The following quote can better explain it:

“I know a kid who has never gone to daycare or kindergarten, and his French is not very good. When DPJ sent some social workers to evaluate his language, they believe it was developmental language delay, and his family couldn’t provide appropriate education for him, so they took away the kid. At that time, the kid’s mother could not stop her tears. I am a mother too, so for me, it is not acceptable at all. Though they want to protect the kid, but you know, this is totally unacceptable in Chinese culture. So now I invite staff from DPJ to give a talk in our centre to avoid this kind of tragedies.” (Community agent, *Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*).

In addition, the Benevolent Activity Centre of the two selected ethnospecific immigrant service organizations has organized and implemented many projects for Chinese youth to learn the importance of civic participation.

“I think participating in these activities would change their mentality. You know, in China, people do not value benevolent activities, but in North America, it is very important. I tell them that it is very important for the kids to apply for university and to integrate into Quebec society. Then some parents understand. They would take their kids here to participate in benevolent activities. You know, kids can learn how to communicate and cooperate with others through these activities. For most kids, their parents do everything for them, and they don’t know how to communicate with people, but they learn that gradually through these activities. On the other hand, through helping others, many kids also learnt that the problems and difficulties they encountered are very common for others. This will reduce their stress and frustration. Also, they can make a lot of friends, and they feel very happy about that.” (Community agent, *Amitié Chinoise de Montréal*).

« *Je fais souvent du bénévolat avec le Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal. Je crois que c’est bon pour connaître la société. Puis, en faisant ça, tu peux te faire beaucoup d’amis, tu peux communiquer avec des gens...* » (Haoran, Chinese boy, School D).

In line with the quotes above, it seems that participation in benevolent activities is not valued very much by most Chinese parents when they first arrived in Quebec because of their “ideology” and “experience” in China. It is the importance that Chinese parents assign to formal education that sometimes leads their children to participate in these

activities, because they learn from community agent that “In North America, the participation in benevolent activities is very important for kids who apply for university”. Moreover, the involvement in these kinds of activities helps create informal networks, such as friendships, which can have an impact on the children’s sense of belonging to their communities. Another unintended effect is that communication with other newly arrived peers may have a positive impact on the sociopsychological wellbeing of Chinese youth. They can learn that “adjustment” or “acculturation” in a new school and new society is a common problem for many new comers. Other community agents indicate that participation in the benevolent activities is beneficial for language learning. There are often native French or English speakers interested in learning Chinese who get involved in their activities. Some Chinese youngsters take this as an opportunity to practice their French or English. However, according to the parents and youth that I interviewed, these activities seem to be more popular among the newly arrived Chinese students than those who were born/raised in Quebec or Canada, because most of the latter are more likely to participate in mainstream activities.

*« À part de l'école chinoise, j'ai jamais participé aux activités dans la communauté chinoise. Je fais souvent du bénévolat dans le quartier où j'habite, mais pas dans le quartier chinois... »* (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C)

*« Je participe pas souvent aux activités dans la communauté chinoise. Je vais parfois au Chinatown s'il y a des événements. Parfois, on fait du bénévolat avec le Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal ou Amitié Chinoise de Montréal, par exemple, l'organisation des événements, des spectacles et tout, mais pas très souvent. »* (Wenhao, Chinese boy, School B).

“My kids never involve in any other activities than Chinese language learning in the Chinese community. They were born or raised here. They participate more in the mainstream activities.” (Mrs Choi, Chinese mother).

### A collective voice

In general, ethnospecific organizations are assumed to not only provide social support for a specific ethnic group, but also to act as a collective voice for their equal participation in the host country’s socioeconomic, cultural, and social and political life. In addition to delivering culturally and linguistically appropriate social services, the two focal

ethnospecific immigrant service organizations in this research have made efforts to combat various forms of discrimination and institutional barriers that affect the Chinese community. For example, a respondent from *Amitié Chinoise de Montréal* told me a real story about how they defended the rights of a Chinese student.

I believe that lots of Chinese kids have experienced discrimination, but not all of them came here to ask for help. I won't say that white people are necessarily against Chinese, you know Canada is an immigration country, so they may have the same attitudes to other minorities. Let me give you an example. A Chinese kid was fighting with a white kid who was much older than him and finally the Chinese kid's wrist was fractured. He called his father, and the father said he would call the police. You know what? The teacher and principal said it was normal because the ground is very slippery in winter. The Chinese parent was very angry, he said: "My son's wrist is broken, how come it was normal?" I think the teachers were trying to cover up the truth for the white kid. Finally, we went to this school to represent the kid and his family to ask for compensation and an apology, but that was nothing compared to their physical injury and the feeling of being hurt. Now, we are planning to submit a document to the Department of Education to take some practical measures against bullying Chinese kids at school. (Community agent, *Amitié Chinoise de Montréal*)

According to the quote above, *Amitié Chinoise de Montréal* attempts to improve the educational integration and social inclusion of Chinese immigrant youth at a policy level. However, the agent indicates that the lack of ethnic participation and leadership at the decision-making level in all sectors may lead to limited productivity and responsiveness. Few Chinese seek help from ethnospecific immigrant service organizations to fight for their right even when being victims of discrimination and prejudice. The first possible explanation would be the value of "compromise" and "tolerance" in Chinese culture. Generally speaking, Chinese people do not like to "cause trouble" and they do not want themselves to be seen as "trouble makers". The Chinese proverb "first make the big problem small, and then make the small problem into nothing" (大事化小, 小事化了) can better describe the Chinese mentality of maintaining balance by adapting and compromising. "Retaliating" or even complaining about racial discrimination is often seen as too much trouble and breaking the peace (Huang, 2010). Another reason, according to some parent respondents, could be their political past and the experience of Chinese immigrants in their homeland. For instance, during the Cultural Revolution, millions of people were subjected to persecution, which was often unjustified. To survive during this period, many people adopted the a stance of ignorance. Nowadays, although

people have more liberty and civil rights, few governmental or non-governmental organizations are accessible for people to express their inner voice. Most people have a very low level of trust in these organizations. This kind of experience may influence the development of trust in ethnospecific immigrant service organizations or other mainstream organization in the new country. As described in Chapter V, most parent respondents think that discrimination against their children is normal and that it is useless to seek help from any organizations, because they are not the “dominant group”. The best reaction to racial discrimination for them is to prepare their children to overcome the disadvantages of visible minority status through high academic achievement.

### **7.3 Chinese Supplementary Schools**

As illustrated in the previous chapter, all of the parent respondents affirm that they have sent their children to Chinese afterschool institutions to perpetuate their Chinese language skills. Indeed, some also mention that their children went to Chinese supplementary school not only to learn or improve their Chinese but also to take tutoring classes. In this section, I focus on three Chinese afterschool institutions to examine their impact on the academic achievement of Chinese immigrant students.

#### **7.3.1 Development of the supplementary educational system in Montreal**

The supplementary school system in the Chinese community dates back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the missionaries of Montreal Presbyterian Church opened a Chinese Sunday School to teach English to the newly arrived Chinese immigrants as well as the Chinese language to Canadian born Chinese (Wang, 2003). During the discrimination and exclusion period<sup>29</sup>, Chinese language schools developed slowly alongside ethnic churches. It was not until the 1980s, with China’s Reform and Opening-Up Policy and the resulting increase in economic exchanges that many Chinese language schools in Montreal were founded in response to a growing need to learn Chinese, Mandarin in particular. Over time, however, these ethnic institutions have evolved into a comprehensive system of supplementary education that is not limited to the function of language affiliation and

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<sup>29</sup> From 1855 to the 1950s, Chinese immigrants experienced an era of discrimination. In this period, the government of Canada passed two immigration laws<sup>29</sup> and “head tax” system<sup>29</sup> to restrict and regulate Chinese immigration (Li & Lee, 2005)

cultural maintenance. As mentioned in chapter III, there are now more than 30 ethnic Chinese educational institutions on the Island of Montreal. Most of them are non-profit organizations (e.g. church affiliated schools) that only charge an annual tuition fee of about \$100-\$150 or are even free. Donations and fundraising activities are the main sources of the schools' operating budgets. Nonprofits rely primarily on parents or university students to act as teachers and staff members. Only a few schools are for-profit. Tuition fees in these schools vary depending on the type of program, ranging from \$100 to \$500 per semester. Summer camps and intensive programs can cost as much as \$1000 (usually for one and a half months). The majority of these schools are located in downtown Montreal and Chinatown, while only a few newly established schools are in Verdun, Brossard, and the West Island.

By visiting the affiliated websites of these schools and examining their advertisements in Chinese language media, one can see that most of the contemporary Chinese language schools in Montreal not only aim to maintain or promote Chinese language and culture, but also to meet various educational needs and foster the academic achievement of immigrant children. Older Chinese supplementary schools usually operate on weekends, while the newer schools tend to have daily programs. A recently funded Chinese school on the West Island even has a K-12 Chinese language-teaching program.

### **7.3.2 Chinese supplementary schools and the educational success**

#### Language perpetuation, cultural replication, and maintenance of ethnic identity

In Quebec, under Bill 101, Chinese immigrant children are obliged to attend French mainstream schools. Most parents see the mastery of the French language as important to their integration into the dominant society. However, according to the respondents in this research, few Chinese parents in Montreal can converse in French. Among the students that I interviewed, the Quebec born/raised ones have encountered the loss of Chinese proficiency, because almost all of them chose to speak French during the interview (three of them chose to speak English). Both the parents and student participants express the pragmatic need to bridge a significant language gap, because the this gap often

constitutes an important barrier in parent-teen communication, especially with regard to school matters. In certain extreme cases, the children cannot even understand their parents very well during a conversation, and they have to choose a third language such as English to communicate with each other.

“My kids’ Chinese is very bad. Sometimes, they wanna say something, but they don’t know the word or expression in Chinese, so they switch to English. You know, I don’t speak French. When we have something serious to talk about, for example, something about school, we have to speak English. I really hope my kids could improve their Chinese and we can communicate better with each other.” (Mrs Choi, Chinese mother).

“I really hope my kids can speak Chinese and communicate with me in Chinese. It is their mother tongue. I have a relative in Montreal, she always said to her son ‘you should work hard at school’ in Chinese, but her son never understands what she is saying. Finally he asks his mother ‘what do you mean by that’ [laugh]. I don’t want my kids to be like that” (Mrs Li, Chinese mother).

*« Mes parents et l’école, il n’y a presque rien à faire. Ils ne parlent pas français et ils ne peuvent pas vraiment communiquer avec l’école. S’il y a quelque chose, c’est moi qui prends la décision. Comme je parle pas bien le chinois, des fois, je ne trouve pas des bons termes [...] On peut dire qu’il y a pas de communication entre mes parents et l’école, même entre mes parents et moi. Des fois, la communication est pas bonne à cause de la barrière linguistique. »* (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).

Chinese supplementary schools are seen by parents as a way to bridge the language gap between them and their children, because the original purpose of most Chinese supplementary schools, especially the ones that operate on a non-profit basis, was to perpetuate the Chinese language and culture among Quebec-born/raised Chinese youngsters. As described in Chapter V, all the Chinese parent respondents whose children were born/raised in Quebec mention the fact of sending them to a Chinese supplementary school to learn Chinese. Around 80% of the students that I interviewed also affirm that they have been enrolled in one of the Chinese afterschool institutions in Montreal to learn Chinese and all of them consider speaking Chinese to be important, as the following quotes denote:

*« Je crois que c’est assez important d’apprendre le chinois, au moins avoir la base. Comme ça, je peux communiquer avec mes parents et ma parenté en Chine. Pour parler, je suis correct-là, mais je peux pas lire ou écrire. »* (David, Chinese boy, school D)

*« C'est très important de maintenir la langue chinoise. Premièrement, nos ancêtres ont parlé cette langue. C'est notre racine. Deuxièmement, en parlant chinois, je peux bien communiquer avec mes parents. Puis, j'ai encore de la famille en Chine. Je veux très bien communiquer avec eux plus tard. Je suis enfant unique, j'ai pas de frère, pas de sœur, j'aimerais compter sur eux. »* (Mei, Chinese girl, School C).

As indicated of the quotes above, most student participants see learning Chinese is beneficial not only for parent-teen communication, but also for maintaining a social network with their extended family in China. In this sense, the Chinese language can be perceived as a capital which will be helpful in the future. In fact, with the increased economic impact of China in the international arena, many Chinese immigrants and children increasingly consider the ability to speaking Chinese, Mandarin in particular, to be an asset for their children's future career.

“Here people value Mandarin, and they push their children to learn it in community school, like ours, especially in recent years. You know, China has developed so fast and has become the economic centre of the world. Twenty years ago, when I asked people whether they would send their children to learn Chinese, they said no, but now all of them have changed their mind ” (Principal, Chinese School B).

“I think my children really need to learn Chinese. Although they were born in Canada, Chinese is their root. You cannot forget your root. Also, I think learning Chinese could probably give you more opportunities in the future, if they can't find a job here, they can still go back to Taiwan or Mainland China. That's why I sent them to a Chinese language school.” (Mrs Kwan, Chinese mother).

*« Je pense que c'est très utile de maintenir la langue chinoise. Premièrement, si on regarde le monde, il y a beaucoup de Chinois. Deuxièmement, la Chine devient une nouvelle puissance. Je me dis que peut-être un jour, je vais travailler en Chine. C'est mieux de garder la langue. »* (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).

In line with the quotes above, speaking Chinese is considered not only “an asset” in Canada, but also a “back up” in China. The fear that they “can't find a job here” is somehow related to the post-migration experience of the Chinese parents. As mentioned the previous chapter, many Chinese immigrants face big challenges in terms of their socioeconomic integration into Quebec society. They are therefore willing to prepare their children with this extra language skill for their future development.

Indeed, learning Chinese in an ethnic supplementary school sometimes produce more than mere instrumental benefits, such as “maintaining social networks in China” or “an asset” in an international competition, for Chinese immigrant students. As well, the replication of culture is an indirect benefit of attending Chinese schools. Throughout this study, parent and community agent participants highlight the transmission of culture as another key purpose of Chinese schooling.

“Our school plays an important role in perpetuating their Chinese and transmitting to Chinese culture. Every year, we have a lot of activities, such as Summer Camps, Overseas Chinese Youth ‘Chinese Culture Knowledge Contest’, Lu Xun Juvenile Literature Award, Composition Contest, and Root-seeking Trip in China, etc. I am in charge of the Root-seeking Trip in China. It is organized by Oversea Chinese Society aiming to enable the youth here to get to know the hometown of their parents and their own culture.” (Chinese teacher, Chinese School B).

“I think attending Chinese language schools is good for my kids to learn and maintain Chinese culture. For example, they can listen to some Chinese legends and stories and learn some precious cultural values from that.” (Mrs Chow, Chinese mother).

According to these respondents, “Chinese culture” refers to a kind of fixed package of traditional stories, legends, handicrafts, customs, knowledge of historical facts and celebrations. In this regard, the advertisements in Chinese language media and school newsletters show that most Chinese afterschool institutions in Montreal provide cultural enrichment lessons and activities, such as Classic Chinese Painting, Dancing, and Handicrafts, to both Chinese and Western audiences. Some of these schools even offer a History of China course. Teachers and school personnel interviewed also affirm that they often celebrate Chinese traditional holidays with the students, and encourage pupils to sign up for summer camps in China, which is then perceived as part of their Chinese upbringing. In addition to the provision of this ‘vast’ package of cultural elements, parents and teachers repeatedly refer to the concomitant transmission of specific cultural values and behavioural norms. Among these, the most highlighted are education related virtues –filial piety, respect for authorities, discipline and especially the value of studying and working hard. Some parents interviewed claim that their children have too much freedom in Canada and therefore often disobedient, disrespectful and even uncontrollable.

They hope that Chinese supplementary institutions can be used as a means to reinforce the abovementioned education-related values.

“You know, my kids grew up here. The society and school give them too much freedom. They are not like Chinese. I hope they could be taught some traditions values in Chinese schools and they could learn to obey at least their parents and seniors. When I told them to study hard, they won’t say ‘study is for Chinese, I am gonna have more fun’.” (Mrs. Choi, Chinese mother).

Nonetheless, the interview with Chinese youth and my informal observation in Chinese classes suggest that these schools may only be partly successful in this regard, because the students seem to find the stories or legends their teacher told are too far way from their experiences or too old-fashioned. Despite the limited effect of the cultural enrichment program, what is important here is the way in which the Chinese parents and teachers clearly participate in a discursive (re)construction of the ethnic identity or of the notion of ‘Chineseness’ of the youth in general.

“Some kids told me that the stories that we told in class were too far away from them, but it is the treasure in Chinese culture. We understand that we can’t expect these kids to be like their peers in China. I mean they grew up here, they are *Québécois* and they have a lot of freedom, because they don’t have any discipline in the mainstream schools. I don’t think they can totally understand all the things we teach here, but at least we can pass on some aspects of Chinese culture or the traditional values, such as filial piety and self-control. This is very important.” (Princial, Chinese school B).

#### Academic enrichment and social support

Non-native born immigrant pupils may face significant difficulties in their integration into the new school system. This is particularly the case for first-generation Chinese youngsters in Quebec, where the major language of schooling is French, a language which most Chinese pupils clearly have not mastered at their arrival. As described in Chapter V, Chinese parents usually face bigger challenges in offering their children direct assistance with school assignments due to their language barrier. According to the advertisements in Chinese language media and Chinese school staff that I interviewed, most Chinese afterschool institutions in Montreal offer special French tutoring programs for newly arriving Chinese children, one-on-one or small class tutoring for those who have difficulties in certain subjects, and the High School Entrance Examination

preparation program for those who intend to be enrolled in the top high schools. Some schools have even developed special strategies to help their students excel in these kinds of exams. The principal in Chinese school A is particularly proud of the contribution his school has made in this regard:

“Many parents have a very high level of schooling, but they cannot help their kids with their schoolwork at all, because they don’t speak French. I know a father who has a doctorate degree in Chemistry, but he can’t teach his son high school chemistry. It may sound funny, but it is the truth. If parents want to do something helpful, they will send their kids to a school like ours. We have helped lots of kids get into the top high schools and CÉGEPs in Montreal, as well as into the top universities in North America. We have numerous success stories. We also give advice and orientation to the newly arriving kids, and all of this is for free. In this respect, we have a great sense of accomplishment.”

Most of the parents that I interviewed also confirm the positive effect of attending tutoring classes in these schools, especially that of the High School Entrance Examination preparation program, which is narrowly tailored for applications to either elite French public or private schools based on their admission standards for previous years. Most parents perceive this program as helpful for their children to be admitted in one of the top high schools. Some even believe that although their children do not learn a lot in these Chinese schools, it is better than “staying at home and watching TV”.

“My daughter got in international school [*l’École Internationale de Montréal*], because she took the High School Entrance Examination preparation program in a Chinese language school. If she didn’t go to that school, she would stay at home and watch TV. Even if she couldn’t learn a lot there, it is much better than just staying at home.” (Mrs Choi, Chinese mother).

The Chinese staff respondents also indicate that they provide advanced courses in various subjects and programs to help for students who already excel in school to excel in all kinds of contests, such as mathematics or chemistry contests, in order to provide them with extra credentials that could benefit their application for a scholarship or university entrance.

In addition to academic enrichment, Chinese supplementary schools also provide other services relevant to the immigrant children’s formal education. As mentioned in the

previous chapter, many Chinese parents have difficulties in collecting detailed information on mainstream French schools. To meet their needs, some Chinese schools offer free lectures, conferences, seminars, aimed at assisting the parents in gathering essential information on school choice and the process of enrolment. From time to time, announcements about these meetings are published in various Chinese newspapers and on websites. Most parent respondents perceive these activities as beneficial. Some even suggest that the information they acquire from Chinese supplementary schools has an important impact on their decision-making process for their children's schooling.

“After talking to the principal and teachers in Chinese School A, I got to know that it is not good for my son to stay in Welcome Class for too long. They told me that usually, Welcome Class could not finish half of the syllabus of a regular class. If you don't push your kids, they would not work hard to get into a regular class. I finally asked my son's teacher and principal to get him out of Welcome class.” (Mrs Guo, Chinese mother).

Consistent with the research of Armand (2011), the quote above demonstrates that the length of time of staying within a Welcome class is a great concern among newly arrived immigrant parents. Other studies (Allen, 2006; Steinbach, 2010) also indicates that staying too long in an isolated in a Welcome Class produce negative effects on the sociolinguistic integration of the newly arrived immigrant students. However, in Chapter VI, the data show that some Chinese parents tend to underestimate the time that their children need to spend in Welcome Class, which may not be beneficial for their passage to a regular class. It may be more helpful to have diversified standards for various students with different educational needs in this regard.

The analysis in Chapter VI also shows that communicating with formal French public schools is a major challenge for Chinese immigrant parents due to their low level of French proficiency. Chinese afterschool institutions thereby offer free translation service to meet their needs. For instance, some parents interviewed affirm that when they receive a letter from a French school, they would bring it to the Chinese school in which their children are enrolled, and the staff there would usually help them with the translation. According to the Chinese school staff that I interviewed, the four focal schools even write letters or make telephone calls to French schools for Chinese parents. Furthermore, two

of the selected schools offer free counselling and psychological services to pupils who have difficulties in their schooling as well as advice for the Chinese parents on parenting strategies. Some teachers even take on a mediation role between pupils and their parents in conflict situations.

“The kids in my class always tell me what happened to them in the formal public school, but they never talk about that to their parents. There is a generation gap between the kids and their parents, because the kids have grown up. I know them very well, and we are like friends, and they trust me. For example, some kids were absent from school, and their parents wanted to know the reason. The kids would not say anything, because they don’t think their parents would understand. In this case, the parents would give me a call and ask me to talk to their kids. I am not only their teacher, but also their friend. They trust me.” (Principal, Chinese School C).

By organizing the abovementioned activities for Chinese immigrant parents, Chinese supplementary schools also provide a physical site and opportunities for them (especially the new arrivals) to establish a co-ethnic network. According Chinese school staff interviewed, Chinese parents often share information on their children’s schooling, though this sharing often goes hand in hand with comparison and competition, which becomes a motivation for them to stimulate or push their children ahead in their academic career.

“Academic achievement is the most important thing for Chinese parents. I saw many of them share information [about their children’s schooling] with each other. At the same time, they would always say ‘my son goes to certain [famous] school’ ‘My daughter goes to certain [optimal] school, and it is the best French public school...’ I also heard parents criticize their kids for not doing as good as their friends in our [Chinese] school.” (Chinese teacher, Chinese School B).

For Chinese immigrant students, and new arrivals in particular, these schools also play a vital role in forming and developing co-ethnic peer networks. More specifically, these schools provide a pleasant ambiance and a social environment for Chinese pupils to socialize with their co-ethnic peers who have had similar experience. Unlike mainstream schools, these schools provide a “safe space” where they can express their identity without anxiety of being rejected or mocked.

“A kid told me that he was discriminated in school [a French public school]. Some *Québécois* kids make fun of his accent. In history class, every time when someone motioned Chinese culture or Chinese historical stories, those kids would laugh at him. They would say ‘this is Chinese, they are always like that’. But here they can talk about whatever they want with other Chinese kids. No one would laugh at them.” (Principal, Chinese School C).

“I really like going to Chinese language school, because all of my Chinese friends go there to learn Chinese or other subjects. Also I make new Chinese friends there. Even, I couldn’t learn much. You know, sometimes, my Chinese seems not enough to understand the lecture, I’d like to meet friends. We usually go out to eat after classes. We share our experiences at school [French public schools]. We can understand each other, because we sort of have the same experience...” (Mary, Chinese girl, Chinese church B).

It is also interesting to note that on the one hand, some Chinese parents tend to avoid sending their children to a school with a big concentration of Chinese youth so that they can be better integrated in a French speaking environment (as described in Chapter IV). On the other hand, some other parents are afraid that their children learn “bad things”, such as drugs, alcohol, and teen-dating, from their Caucasian friends. They believe that “hanging out” with co-ethnic friends from Chinese schools is “safer” and perceive Chinese supplementary schools as a protection for their children.

“I feel more relieved when they hang out with Chinese friends they get to know from Chinese school. You know, they may learn bad things from white kids. Problems, such as drug, teen-dating or pregnancy, or alcohol are very common among them. It is safer for them to be with Chinese kids.” (Mrs Kwan, Chinese mother).

“As long as they live here for 3 or 4 years, they would learn these bad things. If they arrive here at 11 or 12, if their parents do not discipline them, or they are not self-disciplined, if they stay with white kids for several years, they would learn these bad things. That’s why many parents told me they would rather spend a lot of money and send their kids to a private school or to a better public school, because those bad schools would have a lot of negative influence on their kids. I think that’s also the reason why they sent the kids to Chinese schools to make Chinese friends.” (Community agent, Community agent, *Serve à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*).

Furthermore, the advertisements in Chinese language media also show that in order to encourage and set role-models for their current students, some Chinese schools in Montreal provide free conferences given their past students who were enrolled in the top high schools or top universities in North America as well as those who were awarded scholarships. According to my ethnographic observations during these activities in two of

the focal schools, parents whose children go to the optimal schools are also invited to give a speech on their parenting experiences. Moreover, the parents attending these conferences often exchange their phone numbers or emails for further contact. From time to time, Chinese Canadian psychologists, researchers, and educators are also invited to give a talk on parenting and schooling in Canada and Quebec. These activities in Chinese supplementary schools seem to form and develop social capital for both the Chinese immigrant children and their parents.

In addition to forming co-ethnic networks for Chinese immigrants and their children, Chinese supplementary schools have another shared objective: to help them integrate into mainstream society by teaching Western culture and organizing activities with mainstream organizations. For example, as mentioned in Chapter III, Chinese School B provides courses in Western cultural heritage such as Pastry and Baking, Christmas Card Making, and Western Etiquette, while another school organizes demonstration with mainstream organizations on St. Jean-Baptiste Day.

“To help these [Chinese] kids get integrated into the Western society, we teach Western culture, for example, we teach Western Cooking as well as Pastry and Baking. The objective of our curriculum is to help these kids acquire manipulative skills as well as to improve their linguistic ability.” (Principal, Chinese school B).

“We have stimulated Chinese kids and their parents to participate in many activities that we organized with some mainstream organizations so that they can have a sense of belonging. You know when you participate in a demonstration team on St. Jean-Baptist Day, you don’t feel that you are an immigrant any more, you are one of them. We also organize discussions about faith and beliefs, for example on the differences between Oriental and Western culture, values and educational ideology.” (Principal, Chinese school A).

However, other school staff interviewed indicate that few Chinese parents are interested in these programs or activities, because they consider them irrelevant to their children’s schooling.

#### Negative effects of Chinese supplementary schools

Despite various benefits described above, some negative effects of Chinese supplementary schools were found during the data collection and analysis. According to

the teachers interviewed in French public schools, attending Chinese afterschool institutions is not always beneficial for learning French and the social integration into mainstream Quebec society.

*«La plupart des élèves d'origine chinoise en accueil vont à l'école du samedi. Sincèrement, à mon avis, pour mieux apprendre le français, pour mieux s'intégrer, c'est mieux d'aller au centre de loisir du quartier, d'aller jouer au basketball et faire de la natation avec des amis qui parlent français. Comme ça, l'enfant s'amuserait et il pourrait se faire d'autres amis que des amis chinois et avec qui il peut parler français. L'école chinoise, j'ai un doute sur la qualité de l'enseignement du français. Je connais une enseignante, son élève est en troisième année du primaire, mais il avait des devoirs à faire, des choses en français qui sont données au secondaire et qu'il ne comprend pas. Il prend ses devoirs à l'école pour se faire expliquer par elle. Il voit des choses et on n'est pas rendus là. Le contenu est trop avancé. Il y des préalables qui ont même pas été étudiés. » (Pedagogical advisor, School B).*

*« Au niveau de l'intégration sociale, l'école chinoise ne joue pas beaucoup. Je crois pas que ça favorise l'intégration sociale. Pour moi, la participation aux activités dans le quartier et dans le centre communautaire va aider plus. Si les parents chinois veulent que leurs enfants parlent un peu français pendant l'été, ils ne doivent pas les envoyer au camp de jour de l'école chinoise. » (French teacher in welcome class, School A).*

In line the quote above, attending Chinese schools can be stressful for some Chinese immigrant children, because the teaching content is too advanced for them to comprehend. Some Chinese parents and Chinese school teachers are too eager to help these students improve their French without evaluating their competency. Some French public school teachers also criticized the French tutoring programs in Chinese supplementary schools as over exam-oriented, given that students appear to do well in exams, but have difficulties in expressing themselves in French.

*« La communication orale est un problème pour certains élèves chinois, ils ne peuvent pas bien s'exprimer, même qu'ils ont des bonnes notes en écrit. Je sais que la plupart d'entre eux vont à l'école du samedi, mais il me semble qu'ils [l'école du samedi] ne mettent pas l'accent sur leur communication orale. Mais moi, je crois que d'apprendre une langue, c'est pour s'exprimer. » (French teacher in Secondary 4, School B).*

Teacher respondents in Chinese schools indicate that many Chinese youngsters were enrolled in supplementary schools by their parents rather than at their own behest. This obligation sometimes engenders rebellious attitudes and behaviors, such as parent-teen tensions and absence from Chinese schools. As the described by the pedagogical advisor,

School B above, some Chinese students have experienced enormous pressure due to heavy load of schoolwork from both the mainstream and supplementary schools as well as the high parental expectation for academic achievement.

In the previous chapter, one can also see that attending the supplementary schools, especially the for-profits can be a financial burden for families with a lower socioeconomic status. Some Chinese parents have made great sacrifices in order to enroll their children in these tutoring programs, because they tend to believe that there is a close correlation between the tuition fee and the quality of the teaching. Indeed, during the data collection, both non-profits and for-profits were accused of using ineffective methods to teach Chinese.

*« Auparavant, j'allais à l'école du samedi, mais je n'étais pas tellement motivée parce que j'aimais pas la façon dont ils enseignent. Alors j'ai arrêté. »* (Sarah, Chinese girl, School C).

*« Je suis allé à l'école du samedi auparavant pour apprendre le mandarin, mais je comprends pas ce que le prof dit, alors je m'arrête. Je crois que c'est plus efficace d'apprendre avec ma copine, qui parle très bien le mandarin. »* (Étienne, Chinese boy, School B).

During the interview with Chinese parents, some raise the issue of establishing of a Chinese-centric school where a full K-12 program is developed and adopted, because they expect that their children can be nourished with Chinese culture.

What I don't like here is that we don't have a Chinese public school like in the Armenian and Muslim community, where the children can grow up in our own culture. In Edmonton, where we lived before, we got a Chinese-English bilingual K-12 program in public schools. It is very popular among both Chinese and whites. And we also had a Chinese public school there. We got more Chinese in Montreal than in Edmonton, but there is no Chinese public school. I really hope my daughter can go to that kind of school. (Mrs Chow, Chinese mother).

From the quote above, one can see that although Mrs. Chow seems to be confused on the distinction of different categories of schools<sup>30</sup>, she regrets the absence of ethnospecific schools in the Chinese community. In this they echo other examples of Muslim and

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<sup>30</sup> There is no "Chinese public school" in Canada. Also, Muslim and Armenian schools in Quebec are private schools with a proportion of funding from the government.

Armenian communities that have established their own ethnic-specific schools. Before discussing the feasibility of founding a Chinese-centric school, it is important to recall that these abovementioned groups seem to have a strong desire to maintain their identity, especially their religious identity. As for Chinese, especially the new arrivals, the research data indicate that most of them would choose to forego their preoccupation for linguistic and cultural maintenance if the reward is to be integrated in the mainstream school system. For instance, some parents suggest that “going to Chinese schools” should not hinder “learning French” or “integrating into Quebec society”.

#### **7.4 Ethnic Religious Institutions**

According to Ley (2008), faith-based organizations can play a role of immigrant service hub, especially in an urban area. As described in Chapter III, although both Christian churches and Buddhist temples are the two main types of religious institutions in the Chinese community, few Chinese youth are involved in Buddhist organizations. I therefore mainly focus on two ethnic Chinese churches to examine the role that ethnic religious institutions play in the socioeducational integration of Chinese immigrant students.

##### **7.4.1 Youth organizations in the two focal ethnic Chinese churches**

**Chinese Church A** was planted in 1988 with the aim of reaching out to recent immigrants from Mainland China and Taiwan. Thereby, most of its members speak Mandarin, and 20% speak Cantonese and English. There are two services on Sunday morning: one in English and the other is in Chinese. For the Chinese service, the preaching is in Mandarin with simultaneous translation into Cantonese. There are around 20 people attending the English service and 230 people attending the Chinese service. On weekdays, there are several cell groups and fellowships organized by elders and deacons. Besides the Chinese congregation, there are several Caucasians who serve in the church. For example, a senior white couple give English lessons to the new arrivals every Saturday morning. In spite of the numerous activities, not everyone knows each other because some people attend only the Sunday service. It seems that people know only the

members of their own cell group. This church has its own website, although it is only in Chinese.

Sunday school classes in Church A are given in English, Mandarin and French. Children from kindergarten to high school are divided into three groups: 3-6 years old, 7-12 years old, and 13-17 years old. Every group has one or two classes and each class has 15-18 students. According to the youth minister in this church, the large majority of the students attending Sunday schools in this church are from immigrant families with a disadvantaged socioeconomic background. Most of the Sunday school teachers are university students or young professionals. Each age group has different programs, but most of them focus on the Bible stories and moral education. For the 3-6-year-old group, language is also one of the core courses. Students of each class meet every Sunday morning for 2-3 hours, and sometimes also have meetings during weekdays if they are involved in other activities such as sports, singing in a choir, and celebration of Chinese holidays. In addition, they often have lunch together on Saturday or Sunday, and during the lunch, they share their own stories such as school experience or family life. Every year, the church organizes summer camp for both the youth in primary and high school level, and mission tours and trips for teenagers. The 13-16 year-old group has also created a group on Facebook to contact each other and to post announcements.

**Chinese Church B** has a longer history and a larger congregation compared with Chinese Church A. All of their members are ethnic Chinese. 50% of them speak Cantonese, 40% speak Mandarin, and 10% only speak English. They have two services on Sunday morning. The first one is in Cantonese with simultaneous translation in Mandarin, while the second is in English. More than 250 people attend the Chinese service and over 50 people attend the English service. According to the youth minister and students interviewed in this church, some people attend the English service to practice their English. As Church A, Church B also organizes several cell groups and fellowships on weekdays and on the weekend. Unlike Church A, Church B has developed a bilingual website.

With respect to the Sunday school of Church B, children are divided into five groups: under 6-year-old (daycare and kindergarten), Grade 1-Grade 3, Grade 4-Grade 6, Grade 7-Grade 9, and Grade 10-11. Every group has only one class, and every class has around 20-25 students, but not all of them attend every Sunday. Most of the children in Sunday schools were born in Canada, a few of them came here when they were 5 or 6 years old. The large majority of these children are from middle-upper class families. Most of the Sunday school teachers are middle-aged professionals. The church has adopted a program from the United States for Sunday school students, which consists of a series of books for different age groups. This program focuses mostly on the growth of Christian faith but not on the teaching of morals because the church leaders and Sunday school teachers believe that the Christian faith will produce a life of moral excellence. Students of each class meet every Sunday afternoon for one and a half hours. Unlike their counterparts in Church A, they do not often have meeting on the weekdays, though students of high school level have a Bible study group meeting every two weeks as well as some occasional activities such as picnic and sports. The church has also organized summer camp or mission tour for the teenagers. As their counterparts in Church A, teenagers in this church contact each other often on Facebook, but they haven't created their own group because they do not have many activities.

#### **7.4.2 Ethnic Chinese churches and immigrant youth's socioeducational integration**

##### Discipline: from family duty to religious piety

In the previous chapter, some Chinese parents voice their frustration with raising children in Quebec, especially when their children are exposed to the Western culture which emphasized freedom and independence. As one can see from Section 6.3.2, some parents see attending Chinese school and learning Chinese as a means to maintain Chinese culture and prevent the assimilation of certain host cultural values. According to some Chinese students and youth ministers in the two focal Chinese churches, there are also some parents turn to religion, Christianity in particular, to seek a solution to the intergenerational conflicts that arise in immigrant families, and these churches seem to apply a different approach to influence the behavior patterns of the youth:

“We teach the youth to self-discipline through sermons and Sunday school teaching. We also organize activities such as “Bible Camp” and “Basic Life Principles” to improve parent-teen relationship. They (the youth) know that if they are Christian, they should have inner-discipline. I am not saying that we are using the name of God to frighten them; we are training them to be more self-controlled in Christ’s love, and we are trying to build the good characteristics of these kids.”(Youth minister, Chinese church A).

“Many parents think that they love their kids so much, they have made big sacrifice for them, so their kids should absolutely obey them. This is not love, it’s ‘control’, very bad. So we teach parents to learn to love their kids with Christ’s love, so that their kids can grow up in a loving atmosphere. You know, they need to communicate with their kids and build democratic relationships with them.” (Youth minister, Chinese church B).

In line with the quotes above, through the language of Christian discipleship rather than family duty, these churches are able to help the parents discipline their children. Also, it seems that Christianity democratizes parent-teen relationships. For example, some parent respondents suggest that they are learning to get along with their children in Christ’s love because the Bible teaches them to “bring up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” but not to “provoke your children to wrath”.<sup>31</sup> They would even apologize and listen carefully to their children, something that would never happen before becoming a Christian, as the following quote denotes:

“We don’t have serious conflicts, but you know, they [her children] are teenagers, sometimes they give me a back talk or get mad with me. When this happens, I would ask them to pray with me. We will repent and apologize, then we will forgive each other. You know what? When my eldest daughter was 14 years old, she asked me ‘Mom, do you know what makes you cooler than Daddy?’ I thought she would say I am more kind hearted than is his father. She said ‘no, you would say sorry when you are wrong.’ From then on, I start to believe that authoritative parenting style does not always work, we should learn to understand and respect our children.” (Mrs. Lian, Chinese mother).

Meanwhile, some children that I interviewed indicate that although they feel some pressure due to the high educational expectations of their parents, they would try their best to get good results because they want to obey and honor their parents and because it is also God’s will.

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<sup>31</sup> Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (American Standard Version).

“It is stressful to think that I should always get good marks at school, as I said just now, that’s my parents’ expectation for me, but you know the Bible tells us to ‘honour your parents’ and it’s the fourth commandment from God. I should obey this commandment.” (Mary, Chinese girl, Chinese Church B).

“You know, in Sunday school, we are taught to obey our parents. I think if we do that we definitely please God. Sometimes, they [his parents] don’t understand me, but I won’t give them a back talk, I know that’s disrespectful.” (Joe, Chinese boy, Chinese Church B).

From Mary’s and Joe’s illustration above, one can see that Christianity does not eradicate or reject traditional values such as filial piety, but preserves the spirit. These youth may not see “honour your parents” as moral indebtedness but rather as the commandment of God. In this way, a Christian identity seems to serve to ease tensions between Chinese and North American identities. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that the parent and youth minister respondents associate Christianity with Western or Canadian lifestyles and values. Sermons and teaching in the two focal churches emphasize explicitly that Canadian society (e.g. its justice system) was built on Christian values. Church members are also encouraged to obey civic authority and fulfill their civic duty such as paying tax. For instance, a Bible verse as “Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s”<sup>32</sup> is often cited in the sermon. During the prayer time of every Sunday morning service, a deacon or an elder pray for Canada and China. They usually praise God because they were brought to a safe, peaceful and democratic country. Moreover, according to my observations in informal settings or in private, some church members, especially adults seem to indicate that their sense of belonging is developed through religious participation.

However, some parents criticize Quebec or the Canadian society for having “turned against” the principles of true Christianity and feel that the Chinese church plays an important role in keeping the young people from violence, drugs, teen-pregnancy, and other problems. In this regard, some non-Christian Chinese parents also perceive Chinese church as a “safe” place where they can seek help and protection for their children, despite the fact that the church cannot solve all the problems.

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<sup>32</sup> Luke 20:25 (American Standard Version)

“From time to time, people outside the church are trying to bring their kids in, and ask me ‘Mrs. Ng, please help me and change my kids’, it is not that I don’t want to help them, but they want a quick fix. I cannot give a quick fix. It takes time and the efforts of the parents too. They need to be willing to be changed as well as with their kids. You know people outside the church think once their kids come to the church, they would be fine and problems of drugs, rebellion, or violence would be solved. It doesn’t work that way, the church is not a magic land. It takes time for both the parents and kids. If the parents are willing to listen to us and follow our advice, it would work finally. But many of them they just wanna change their kids not themselves.” (Youth minister, Chinese Church B).

To paraphrase the words of Chong (1998), ethnic churches seem to delineate a group boundary which is both religious and Chinese, and this boundary is created not just between Christians and non-Christians, but also between the Chinese Christian and Quebec or Canadian society at large.

#### Informal academic and social support

The two focal churches and their Sunday schools do not offer any tutoring courses or any other direct academic support to the youth. According to the church ministers I interviewed, the main purpose of the church and its affiliated schools is to teach children the Christian faith and help them build good characters. They believe that once the children are good Christians, the “fruit of the Spirit” will be produced in them, including working hard at school. In another word, Christianity can be the inner driver of having good performance at school. To prove her point, one youth minister cites the fact that that most of the pupils attending Sunday do well in mainstream French public schools:

“I don’t think academic achievement is something we should pursue. As a youth minister, I believe that if you take good care of your morals and soul, you would have good results at school gradually. Look at our church, most of the kids attending Sunday school do well at French mainstream schools.” (Youth minister, Chinese church A).

Nevertheless, in line with my observation in the two selected churches, “informal” academic supports are provided to the youngsters. For instance, in both churches, some university students and young professionals offer free tutoring and homework assistance to the teenagers attending the Sunday school. Also, in Church A, some high school students, especially those who go to the same school, usually do their homework together

after church activities on Saturday. School matters are the main subject of their conversation.

The two selected churches provide an accessible gateway for Chinese immigrant adults and youths to deal with mental health issues in a culturally acceptable format. In the opinion of the youth ministers interviewed, they are often seen as “safe” persons for the youth to talk to. In addition, they suggest that teenagers usually talk to one another about their pressures, anxieties, and problems in school which they do not want to discuss with adults. The peer group in the church offers them a space where they can express their own feelings and share experiences with friends without parental pressures. The following quote explains this:

“Many kids in our church do homework together. They share their own little secrets with friends which they would not like to talk with their parents. They also comfort each other when something bad happened. I think they have very a close relationship, even closer than with their own siblings.” (Youth minister, Chinese church A).

A mother also indicates that Chinese church provides a social setting for Chinese youth to establish ethnic peer networks, which play an important role for newly arrived ones.

“Mon son is very ambiguous. When we went back China to visit relatives and friends, he was very happy. When we came back, he was very sad and disappointed, because he doesn't have many friends here. Later on, we went to a Chinese church where there are lots of kids at his age. They have youth activities and my son has built up his own network. He goes to the library to study with his friends.” (Mrs. Wang, Chinese mother).

## **7.5 Resources in Mainstream Organizations**

### **7.5.1 Mission and target audience of the two focal mainstream organizations**

With increased flows of immigrants, many immigrant assistance programs have been adopted by the mainstream organizations in various Montreal neighbourhoods. To examine the attendance and the utilization the youth at mainstream organizations, I carried out several interviews with the community agents from two community-based youth organizations with learning support programs- *Centre Accroche* and Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle.

### Centre Accroche

*Centre Accroche* used to be an Evangelical Christian organization founded in 1993 to combat the growing high school drop-out rates in Montreal. Although originally funded by Christians, the goal of the organization is not to evangelize but to respond to the educational needs of high school youth in the neighbourhood where School A is located. Nowadays, the centre offers academic tutoring and a number of interactive activities designed to prevent high school drop-out and help newly arrived immigrant students to be integrated into the Quebec school system. Academic tutoring, known as *l'aide aux devoirs*, is organized in both School A and the centre between 15:00-18:00 from Tuesday to Thursday. Until 2011, the centre also received students who were suspended from their schools for behavioural problems, but this activity stopped two years ago due to its complicated nature and the impossibility to provide professional services. For interactive activities, the centre organized workshops in School A at the beginning of the school year to inform newly arrived immigrant parents and students of the services provided and organized summer camp in both English and French during the summer holidays to help immigrant youth learn Canada's official languages.

According to the respondents of *Centre Accroche*, their original target audience included all the high school students in the neighbourhood who are at risk for school drop out. However, with the arrival of immigrants, this organization is now largely attended by immigrant students and their parents. Of these students, most are originated from Northern and Central Africa as well as Haiti.

### Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle

Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle is part of Boys and Girls Club of Canada. It is created in 1979 to provide opportunities for youth in the neighbourhood where School C is located to build relationships and develop educational and recreational skills. The organization offers various programs for youth of 3-18 years old, including young children outreach activities, academic support services (homework assistance and tutoring), sport team, and summer day camp. A few adult programs, such as computer courses are also provided. According to the staff interviewed, all the activities are organized in both French and

English, and for some recently arrived immigrant families, interpreters in certain languages, such as Panjabi are also available. For newly arrived families, they also offer referrals to other services in various other organizations in the neighbourhood.

Although the target audience include all the youth in the neighbourhood, most of the clients are immigrant children originating from West India and the Islands of the Caribbean, especially for the afterschool tutoring programs. Their parents send them to the Club, because they are exclusively English speaking and have difficulties in assisting their children in French. The community agent respondents indicate that most of these youth come from disadvantaged families.

### **7.5.2 Mainstream organization attendance of Chinese families**

#### Attendance of Chinese youth

According to the community agents in the two selected mainstream organizations, few Chinese youth have participated in their activities. Indeed, there are less than five Chinese students have attended these two organizations to get some academic support.

*« Il y a quelques Asiatiques qui fréquentent notre centre et peut-être seulement trois ou quatre Chinois parmi ces Asiatiques. Les autres sont des Vietnamiens et Cambodgiens. »*  
(Community agent, *Centre Accroche*).

“We don’t have many Chinese kids who participate in our activities. I think only 3 Chinese students registered in the after school tutoring programs. For the summer day camp this year, only 1 Chinese kid registered.” (Community agent, Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle).

As mentioned in Chapter V, the respondents in *Centre Accroche* attribute firstly to the low attendance of Chinese students to their linguistic preference (they are not comfortable with a French speaking environment). However, this may not be true because even with all the programs available in English (in Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle), there are not many Chinese youth participate in these activities. Also, the community agents interviewed in both these two organizations suggest that most of the youth registered in afterschool tutoring programs have academic problems, and they assume that this situation is not common among Chinese students.

“Children come here because they have some academic problems. I think maybe most Chinese kids don’t have this kind of programs.” (Community agent, Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle).

Nevertheless, it may be superficial to draw the conclusion as the above quote. The data in Chapter V indicate that for new arrivals, their language barrier seem to cause miscommunication with the community staff when attending *l’aide aux devoirs*. Furthermore, the analysis in section 7.3.2 suggests that Chinese parents appear to be more confident with the efficiency of the academic support programs in Chinese supplementary schools.

With regard to extracurricular activities, the community agents interviewed in both organizations affirm that no Chinese youth have registered directly in their programs, such as their basketball team, multicultural day, or dancing class. Even those who participate in afterschool tutoring programs tend to be reluctant to get involved in these activities.

*« En général, ce qu’on voit, ce sont des jeunes très performants dans leurs études. Ils sont différents des autres. Les autres vont rester ici jusqu’à 6 heures ou 7 heures le soir, mais eux, ils font leurs devoirs et ils travaillent un peu le français. Après, ils vont jouer un peu au billard et ils rentrent. Ils rentrent bien avant tous les autres. Ils restent pas jusqu’à la fermeture. Je crois qu’ils doivent être à la maison à une certaine heure. Ils viennent pour leurs objectifs et ils se permettent pas de jouer beaucoup et puis ils rentrent. »* (Community agent, Centre Accroche).

“They don’t want to participate in the extracurricular activities, and they seem to prefer doing more individual work on their own. It is very difficult to get them to participate in group games.” (Community agent, Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle).

According to the data presented in Chapter IV and V, it seems that the preoccupation of Chinese families is the schooling of the children, and other activities are not important for them. However, most parent respondents affirm that they always encourage their children to be involved in different activities in the neighbourhood.

I sometimes push my kids to participate in the activities in the neighbourhood, for example, to be a volunteer. I think it is good for them to be integrated in the mainstream society. Also

I believe that these activities can open their mind, get to know the neighbourhood where they live. (Mrs. Liu, Chinese mother).

As described in Section 7.2.2, the importance that Chinese parents attach to formal education motivates their children to participate in these activities, because they learn from the community agents (in the Chinese community) that benevolent activities are requested by public high schools and beneficial for college applications.

In this study, most of Quebec born/raise students also confirm their high frequency of participating in mainstream activities, though some of them indicate they volunteer because they are required to do so (by their schools). As for those who came to Quebec as teenagers, they seem to show a certain level of resistance. As mentioned above, this may not only be explained by their language and cultural barriers but also by their experiences in China. For example, participation in benevolent activities is not required by public schools in China.

“To my knowledge, many of the second generation participated in some mainstream volunteer activities. For example, some of them would go to Montreal Volunteer Office, because that organization is bigger than ours, and it has longer history than ours.” (Community agent, *Amitié Chinoise de Montréal*).

« *Je fais du bénévolat dans le quartier où j’habite, parce que pour le bénévolat, on est obligé [par l’école] en quelque sorte.* » (Mei, Chinese girl, School C).

“My son never participated in any activity in the neighbourhood. I want to change his ‘isolated’ situation. I registered him in the Swimming Club in Université de Montréal, I hope he could get more in touched with the mainstream.” (Mrs. Guo, Chinese mother).

### Attendance of Chinese parents

According to the community staff respondents in both the two target mainstream organizations, few Chinese parents have participated in any benevolent activity they organized. Some simply attend these organizations to register their children. *Centre Accroche* organizes information workshop in School A to inform parents of their services, yet few Chinese parents attend. In the Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle, a community agent indicates that one mother comes only came to discuss her daughter’s the French language studies.

« *Nous, on organise des ateliers d'information pour informer les élèves et leurs parents sur les services qu'on offre, au début de l'année scolaire, mais je vois pas beaucoup de parents chinois qui sont là.* » (Community agent, *Centre Accroche*).

One of the kids, her mother came to me and was concerned about her French class. The mother was aware of the lower grade she was getting in French. She came up to me a few times to talk about her French so that we can work particularly on that. She told me that her daughter is good at maths so we don't need spend too much time in maths she really wants us to emphasize on her French. She would like ask extra work for her daughter. (Community agent, Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle).

Likewise, the Chinese parent and community agent participants confirm that Chinese immigrants seem to attend solely ethnic institutions to search resources to support their children's schooling. Several parents mention that they bring their children to community libraries to read or to listen to some lectures (only when they are translated into English). As for searching help, only one of them has attended at a mainstream organization, but he has been there only once, because he does not speak French and he feels that the community agents there are resistant to speaking English:

“I did go to a mainstream organization once, but I don't wanna go there for the second time. I first spoke English to them but they said they only provided services in French. And when I tried to speak French, they seem to laugh at me, though it is not very obvious. They said my French was not good enough, and I'd better go to an organization within the Chinese community. I felt really bad.” (Mr. Wang, Chinese father).

According to the quote above, the most possible explanation for the low attendance of Chinese parent participants in mainstream organizations is their low level of French proficiency as well as the community (mainstream) staff's resistance to speaking English and their avoidance attitude. Yet, the Chinese community agents interviewed indicate that cultural differences and a shortage of information are additional obstacles that prevent Chinese immigrants from seeking resources in the mainstream organizations.

“I think few people would go to mainstream organizations to seek help. You know, they don't speak French and they don't know how those organizations function and how to communicate with Western people. For example, some Chinese go to a mainstream organization, and the agent at the reception would tell them ‘you need to make an appointment, you can't just come here’, but Chinese people would think it is a waste of time [...] some of them are not sure weather they would be accepted by Western people.” (Community agent, *Serve à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal*).

“To my knowledge, they rarely participate in mainstream activities. All I know is that they would visit some museums on the free museum Day. That day, they are all gone. I don’t think they care about these activities. They haven’t got used to these things. They don’t feel these activities have something to do with them, but I think the second generation would be better.” (Youth minister, Chinese church A).

In line with the quotes above, it seems that this low attendance at mainstream organizations can also be explained by the “insecurity” with the receiving society. Another possible reason might be pre- and post-migration experience. In China civic participation is not emphasized, and many immigrant parents do not recognize the importance of getting involved in neighbourhood activities. Finally, some parents are preoccupied by their work and business. They thereby do not have time to participate in mainstream activities:

“I don’t have any time to participate in the mainstream activities, even sometimes I receive flyers and pamphlets. I need take care of all the buildings.” (Mrs. Guo, Chinese mother).

## **Summary**

The research data in this chapter allowed for an in-depth analysis of the impact of the immigrant community resources on the socioeducational integration of Chinese youth in Montreal. The findings identify a range of contributions and benefits made by various ethnic institutions, such as Chinese language media, ethnospecific immigrant service organizations, supplementary schools, and ethnic churches. Ethnospecific organizations and supplementary schools in the Chinese community tend to represent a main source of capital for Chinese families through its formal, institutionalized support system, whereas support in Chinese ethnic media or religious institutions is usually provided in a more informal and indirect way. Furthermore, other possible contributions, such as the maintenance of ethnic identity, are also highlighted. They not only generate instrumental benefits such as extra credentials, but also reinforce and develop an ethnic (learner) identity that can promote educational success. These ethnic institutions represent important sites for the provision of social networks and support for interaction with mainstream society.

As analysed in Chapter V and VI, many Chinese immigrant parents do not get involved in their children's schooling in a direct way due to their low level of French proficiency and limited knowledge of the host society. However, it seems that many of them depend largely on the abovementioned ethnic community-based resources to supplement their loose connection with the French schools and to support their children's school career. According to Vatz-Laaroussi *et al.* (2008), these families appear to adopt the model of collaboration over assumed distance characterized by a division of responsibility between school and family (which assumes that the school is responsible for instruction and the family is charge of socialization). Most families who choose this model often have little knowledge of the host language and rely on largely the support of the ethnic community to get involved in their children's education.

Ethnic institutions, however, are also found to set barriers to improving intergroup relations at the individual and collective level (Zhou & Cai, 2002). For instance, Chinese immigrants might be well informed by using Chinese language media and attending social organizations in the Chinese community, even without establishing social networks with members of other ethnic groups. Also, ethnic community organizations may weaken their motivation to learn French, because they do not need to use mainstream French language media or seek help from mainstream organizations. This may actually diminish the instrumental importance of making contact with mainstream institutions (Zhou & Cai, 2002). As can be seen from the Section 7.5.2, ethnic Chinese, especially of the first generation seem to rarely search resources in the mainstream organizations or participate in mainstream activities. Some parents seek out resources in an international context, although the research data do not allow for an examination of the universality of using this kind of resources.

In addition, it is important to bear in mind that ethnic resources and social capital can be effective only to a certain point. Zhou and her colleagues suggested that in the United States., Chinese young people who graduated from college often encounter difficulties in terms of integration into the labour market because of the lack of the type of social capital that can facilitate their occupational mobility (Zhou & Li 2003, Zhou & Kim 2006). A

higher exchange of social, cultural as well as human capital between the Chinese community and the larger Quebec society is thus needed in the future, because interaction between ethnic Chinese organizations and the host society is still kept to a minimum and instrumental level.

Finally, as illustrated in Chapter VI, some Chinese immigrants chose Quebec as their immigration destination, because they intend to place themselves and their children in a “less Chinese” environment. Paradoxically, In Quebec, the data in this chapter show that the role of ethnic institutions and social networks in the Chinese community appears to be more important because of the integration challenges faced in the French-speaking context.

## **Chapter VIII Discussion and Conclusions**

This study sought to examine in detail the dynamics influencing the educational success of students of Chinese origin and to draw a fuller picture of their school experience in a French-speaking context. Based on the statement of research problem, the implementation of the fieldwork, and the analysis of the research data, the main purpose of this chapter is to highlight the important theoretical and empirical contributions of current research. After an overview of the research, this goal is achieved through reviewing four major issues, including the added value of a qualitative approach, the specificity of the school experience of Chinese youth in Quebec compared with other societies, the intergroup comparison in Quebec context, and the relevance of various factors in understanding the educational success of students of immigrant origin. Following the discussion, policy implications are provided. Finally, as a concluding statement, limitations of this study are also reminded to identify the directions for future research.

### **8.1 Overview of the Research**

#### **8.1.1 Main components**

The arrival of immigrants with different ethnocultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds increased diversity in Canada and Quebec, but posed challenges of social integration and cohesion as well. As a public service, education plays a significant role in dealing with these challenges, because education provides knowledge, shapes attitudes, and acts as an important vehicle for social mobility and integration. However, many previous studies demonstrate the variation in the academic achievement of students of various ethnic groups as a particular challenge for education provision. Among these students, Chinese youth in various Western societies are considered to be “model minority” (Chun, 1995; Francis & Archer, 2005; Wang, 2007). More specifically, some quantitative studies in Canada and Quebec also indicate that Chinese pupils, regardless of the social class of their families, attain high academic achievement (Mc Andrew *at al.*, 2009, 2010; Sun, 2011a, 2011b). In this regard, Chapter I provided background

information of this study and defined the research problem. The main purpose of the study was to explore the dynamics influencing the educational success of Chinese students and to draw a fuller picture of their school experience in Quebec. More specifically, this study sought to explore the influence of French public schools, Chinese families and the ethnic community on the socioeducational integration of Chinese youth in a French dominant culture.

Chapter II presented an extensive literature review on various factors influencing the academic achievement of students of immigrant origin which allowed for the establishment of an open and inclusive theoretical framework for the current research. On the one hand, this framework enabled the researcher to view the school experience of these youth from the impact of the characteristics of their families, community, such as the cultural and social capital. On the other hand, it permitted the researcher to explore the influence of the school context, including the teacher-student interactions, learning support programs and services, school climate. This theoretical framework also opened a door for a comparison between different school milieus in impacting the socioeducational integration of immigrant/minority students and ethnic relations in general. Based on this theoretical framework, the research question was formulated as: “how do school context, the dynamics of Chinese immigrant families, and ethnic community-based resources influence the academic achievement of Chinese immigrant students in a French speaking context, such as Quebec?”

Following closely this theoretical framework, a qualitative methodological design was applied to emphasize the importance of interaction between different actors in the social construction of reality and to provide fundamental and in-depth insights of the impact of schools, family and community as well as the interaction of these structures. A triangulation of multiple sources and methods of data collection, including in-depth interviews, document review, and media content analysis, was adopted to insure the validity and reliability of this study.

To document the school experiences of Chinese youth in Quebec, Chapter IV presented the school pathways and performance, social integration, and the psychological wellbeing of Chinese immigrant students in three French schools with different characteristics.

The data analysed and discussed in Chapter V, VI and VII sought to respond to the research question. Data presented in Chapter V allowed for exploration and comparison of the impact of different school contexts. In this regard, teacher-student relations, school programs and practices, and school-family-community relations of the three target schools were analysed from the perspectives of various participants to examine the impact of different school milieus. Secondly, Chapter VI examined the influence of the immigrant family dynamics, such as their cultural capital, migration project, pre-and post-migratory experiences, as well as various involvement strategies, on Chinese youth' schooling. Finally, Chapter VII investigated the existing resources mainly within the Chinese community which support the school career of Chinese immigrant students. In addition, this chapter also attempted to review the attendance of Chinese immigrants in mainstream community-based organizations.

### **8.1.2 Major findings**

#### School experiences

Despite language and cultural barriers, pupils of Chinese origin in Quebec seem to have positive school experience in Quebec. First, it is important to note that among the three target schools, School C is one of the most selective secondary institutions in Quebec and its Chinese students are often enrolled in the best programs and outperform in various subjects. Second, as expected, Chinese youth have a very high level of performance in mathematics and sciences. Although some encounter different levels of difficulty in French, the data show that this does not appear to set barriers for them to access to higher education. Third, few of them report psychological problems.

However, they are not from a homogenous group in terms of linguistic integration. Indeed, this study indicates Chinese students who came to Quebec during their

adolescence experience more difficulties in acquiring French language proficiency. Compared to students of other ethnic groups, some of the Quebec born/raised Chinese are more likely to make mistakes in French syntactic structure.

Regarding their social integration experiences, the findings of this study tend to show that the school performance of immigrant students may not always predict their social integration at school or in the wider host society. For the first generation students, importance is attached exclusively to academic achievement and the role of education in social promotion by their families, which seem to have negative impacts on their participation in extracurricular activities and hence their social integration. These students often establish networks only with their Chinese peers, because they believe that their Chinese friends perform as well as themselves. Yet, one can observe a decreased trend among the second generation students. Moreover, the problems in French learning sometimes hinder the development of their sense of belonging to the Francophone community. For example, even some Quebec born/raised students prefer to speak English, and many of them expect to further their studies in an English speaking postsecondary educational institution.

#### The role of school, family, and ethnic community

With respect to the factors that influence the educational success of the Chinese origin students, the research data highlight the impact of the diverse milieus that the student occupies.

**School-level systemic factors**-The educational system, including teacher-students interactions, various policy guidance and programs, as well as climate and environment, play an important role in this regard. Indeed, compared to their academic life in China, Chinese immigrant youth tend to report a very satisfactory relationship with their teachers and other school personnel. However, this relationship is far from “tight”. Influenced by Chinese culture, newly arrived students tend to remain silent (not to raise questions in public) due to the fear of exposing the teacher as ignorant. Also, the shyness, reserve, and even self-isolation of some Chinese youth set barriers for establishing a close relationship,

although some teachers may intend to have a better knowledge and understanding of these youth. Meanwhile, the research data show that most teachers in the target French high schools hold positive attitudes and high expectations towards Chinese students. These students are considered to be respectful, self-disciplined, obedient, and studious. This positive stereotype seems to produce a sense of being accepted for Chinese youth, however, it can sometimes cause peer discrimination and bullying as well as ignorance of their communication difficulties in French.

With regard to school programs and services, there is a doubt among Chinese parents about the effectiveness of the reception programs for newly arrived immigrant students. They believe that the separate welcoming classes diminish the opportunities for their children to be exposed to native French-speaking peers. Nevertheless, this view is not shared by teachers who consider welcoming classes is to be particularly necessary for Chinese youth given the linguistic distance between Chinese and French. When it comes to the problems experienced by Chinese students in a regular class (after staying in welcoming classes for a long time), some teachers suggest that more learning support services should be provided to them. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter II, previous studies on host language teaching have not shown which model is more effective, because the efficiency of various models is determined by the characteristics of the students, such as age of arrival and pre-migration language learning experiences.

In addition to welcoming classes, other learning support and sociopsychological services are offered in the Quebec educational system, such as *l'aide aux devoirs* as well as speech-language pathology and sociopsychological counselling, although not every school provide all of these services. The data in this study reveal that few Chinese new arrivals are involved in these school activities or other mainstream organizations due to their discomfort with speaking French or their insecurity towards the host society. The findings, on the other hand, show that Quebec born/raised Chinese youth participate much more frequently in learning support programs, including *la recuperation* as well as guidance and counselling services. However, both new arrivals and Quebec born/raised Chinese students rarely seek speech-language pathology or psychological services.

However, it may be superficial to draw the conclusion that all of them are psychologically healthy students because of their reluctance to express their own feelings. It is also important to notice that despite various programs and services provided in French public schools, none of them are specifically designed for Chinese immigrant students who have difficulties in their academic life and social integration.

Furthermore, the data in this study show that an openness and sensitivity to diversity from teachers and school personnel contributes to a supportive school context for immigrant students. In general, few Chinese parents have required the accommodation for their children. Yet, through the interviews, they seem to indicate that their basic cultural needs occupy a low priority in Quebec society and its educational system. They sometimes even show some cultural insecurity with respect to the perception of French speaking community towards linguistic and cultural diversity. With regard to school climate, despite the positive and satisfactory attitudes of Chinese youth, some of them have reported their experiences of being victims of discrimination or prejudice. And the reasons for being discriminated and bullied is related to the “model minority” stereotype, physical size and strength, and an Asian or Chinese accent when speaking French.

Finally, this study suggests that the connection between French schools and Chinese immigrant families remains loose and weak, in spite of the mutual positive attitudes between parents and teachers. And this can be attributed to an ignorance of the difference of culture and norms between the previous and new society. On the one hand, Chinese parents are not familiar with the social norms and practices within Quebec educational system. On the other hand, school boards have not informed the new arrivals of school operations, including activities aimed to help involve them more in academic and social life at school. In this respect, few activities have been organized to promote an intercultural dialogue between the Chinese community and the mainstream, although some French schools maintain connections with these mainstream organizations. Some school teachers and personnel do not view that intercultural rapprochement is part of the responsibility of the host society. Also, a lack of partnership between French schools and

organizations in the Chinese community may set barriers for establishing a close school-family relationship.

**Family dynamics-** This study underscores the influence of family dynamics, such as migration project, pre-and post-migration experiences, and involvement strategies. Indeed, these factors interplay to shape the role of immigrant families in their children's school career in Quebec society.

Chapter VI suggests that many families emigrated from China to provide better educational prospects for their children and to promote their socioeconomic status. With a large proportion of economic class immigrants, Chinese immigrants' educational qualifications and proficiency in one the official languages, especially in English, have been significantly increased (Wang & Lo, 2005). However the entire group's increased human capital does not predict an easy formula of integration into Quebec society for all its members. These various types of incorporation have shaped different family structures, such as the "astronaut" and "satellite" household arrangements (for those who return to China to work). This study suggests that these two abovementioned family structures can have negative effects on the academic achievement and psychological development of Chinese immigrant youth. In addition, the implicit discrimination and misperception towards the Chinese community also set barriers for their social integration in Quebec. Notwithstanding the unsatisfactory post-migratory experience of socioeconomic integration to some extent, the data indicate that most Chinese parents hold a trustful attitude towards Canadian and Quebec society and its school system. To prevent the formation of "victimization mentality" in their children, some parents even avoid talking about discrimination to their children. This positive attitude seems to be beneficial for the promotion of the youth's academic achievement.

Moreover, this study also suggests that pre-and post-migration experiences as well as the Chinese culture are important in shaping Chinese parents' educational expectations and occupational aspirations towards their children. The high expectations are salient sources for the academic motivations of the youth. Most of them believe that high achievement is

an important part of their family obligations and their success will somehow fulfill the family's prosperous dreams. In order to respond positively to their parents, some even would like to yield their own will in terms of career aspirations, though the extent to which these youth will actually act in accordance with their beliefs still remains unclear. Nevertheless, in the case of a high level of acculturation difference between parents and their children, parental expectations regarding academic achievement may be less effective.

The data analysis in this research indicates that although Chinese immigrant parents have relatively low direct involvement with French public schools, they play an active role in their children's home learning activities. For example, in order to foster healthy study habits, Chinese parents are actively engaged in supervising their assignment, monitoring their behaviours, as well as setting limits on Internet surfing and television watching. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, strict parenting methods and the high level of cultural difference between parents and children sometimes produce intense parent-teen conflicts which may have negative effects on the children's school performance and psychological wellbeing. With respect to their low level of involvement in French schools, the data in Chapter V and VI show that language barriers, cultural differences concerning school-family communication, and different perception on education are the main factors that challenge their participation. Yet, the analysis in Chapter VII suggests that many parents seem to seek resources in the Chinese community to support their children's school career. Although the connections between mainstream French schools and the organizations remain loose, these parents seem to be well informed of the Quebec educational system by these ethnic institutions.

**Ethnic-community based resources-** This study indicates the importance of ethnic institutions, especially Chinese language media and supplementary schools, in language perpetuation, cultural replication, as well maintenance and reinforce of ethnic identity. Through teaching Chinese and providing a Chinese language environment, ethnic media and Chinese supplementary schools, particularly the later, seem to bridge the language gap between immigrant parents and children, and hence remove the communication

difficulties between them to some extent. As an indirect effect of language perpetuation, some education-related virtues, such as filial piety, respect for authorities, discipline, and diligence, are transmitted and highlighted to Chinese youth. Although the function of cultural replication may not be fulfilled in this respect, Chinese immigrant students are nourished in a social environment of discursive (re) construction of their ethnic identity.

These above-mentioned ethnic social institutions provide both academic and social support to Chinese immigrant families. With respect to academic support, Chinese supplementary schools tend to represent a source of capital in a more formal and institutionalized manner, while such support in ethnic media and religious institutions, such as Christian churches, seems to be provided in an informal and indirect way. For example, Chinese supplementary schools offer various tutoring and academic preparation programs, whereas friends and Sunday school teachers in ethnic Chinese churches occasionally provide homework assistance. As for social support, all the institutions investigated in this study tend to establish supportive social contexts for the interaction of co-ethnic members. The co-ethnic networks serve to help exchange information, establish role-models, and provide culturally as well as linguistically appropriate counselling.

Nevertheless, the data also seem to suggest that the reliance on ethnic community-based information resources may set barriers to integration into the host society at large, because it weakens the motivation to learn French or to seek help in mainstream organizations. For instance, in this study, both the parents and community agents interviewed mention the low attendance of Chinese families, especially the first generation, in mainstream organizations.

## **8.2 Theoretical and Empirical Contributions**

### **8.2.1 The added value of a qualitative approach**

Generally speaking, this study analyzes an issue currently highly debated in the field of sociology of education and ethnic relations, especially within the context of migration. The research is one of the very first qualitative studies aiming at an exploration of the

factors influencing the educational success of Chinese immigrant students in Quebec. It, therefore, contributes to fill up the gaps in previous quantitative studies in examining the school experiences of Chinese origin students in Quebec.

Compared to previous quantitative studies, this qualitative study allows for the gaining of in-depth knowledge on the educational trajectories of youth of immigrant origin. These quantitative studies give insights on the school pathways and performances of these youth rather than the social reality of their experience. Although quantitative data show that Chinese origin students achieve a higher level of performance in mathematics and sciences than do they in French (see Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009; 2010), the qualitative data in this research serve to a better understanding of their difficulties in learning French. Moreover, the data also show that Chinese students attain their achievement goals at the expense of their own social integration. Many Chinese families make schoolwork the priority of their children and this limits their opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities and to establish networks with peers from other ethnic groups. In this regard, research in the American context indicates that Chinese students experience more psychological problems (Qin, 2007; Sue & Zane, 1985). Although the findings of this study are not consistent with these studies, it is not always easy for Chinese youth in Quebec to achieve this success.

Likewise, previous quantitative studies suggest that Chinese origin students experience a high secondary graduation rate (nearly 78%) and lower net dropout rate (11%) compared to the whole students body in the French sector. Although from the perspective of quantitative researchers or decision-makers, it is more urgent to develop specific strategies for higher at-risk groups, studies are needed to understand the Chinese youth who do not succeed at school. The qualitative data in the current research enable these students to make their voice heard and it is important for educators and decision-makers to identify their challenges and difficulties so that appropriate measures can be provided.

In addition, a qualitative approach permits the researcher to access to what extent the similarity of ethnic culture and the more or less conflictual relationship with the host

society can explain the academic achievement of students from various ethnic groups (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2008a). As mentioned above, many factors examined by previous quantitative studies in national and provincial contexts (see Abada *et al.*, 2008; Garnett, 2008; Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2009; 2010) become insignificant for Chinese youth and intergroup differences (sometimes due to the small size of population). Yet, this study highlights the role cultural as well as social capital possessed by Chinese immigrant family in supporting their children's school success. The qualitative data also underscore the important impact of the positive attitudes that Chinese families hold towards the host society and its school system.

Third, qualitative research methods facilitate the study of immigrant or culturally diverse families in the context of social environment and allow one to draw a vivid picture of family by presenting narratives that capture insights, meanings, conflicts, emotions and motivations of its members (Amber *et al.*, 1995; Sherif Trask & Marotz-Baden, 2007). By answering open-ended questions during in-depths interviews, Chinese immigrant students and parents can give their own voice to describe their lived experiences of migration and schooling (Sussman & Gilgun, 1997). As mentioned in Chapter I, the objective of the study is to document the school experiences of Chinese youth. Since quantitative data often lack diagnostic details, a qualitative approach enables the researcher to understand better how students and parents construct their own realities, interpret their new circumstances, and make meanings of their experiences in a new society and its school system (Nesteruk *et al.*, 2009).

### **8.2.2 The specificity of Quebec case**

As one of the first qualitative studies on students of Chinese origin in Quebec, the findings of this research provide important insights for intragroup comparison with other contexts and the assessment of the specificity of Quebec experience. Although several studies on the Chinese community in Europe were reviewed in Chapter II, given the central role that selective immigration policy plays in the school results of students of immigrant origin, this section compares the socioeducational integration of Chinese youth in Quebec only with the case of Canada and the United States.

As in the American and Canadian context (see Edith *et al.*, 2001; Wu, 2002; Song & Wang, 2003; Wang, 2007), Chinese students in Quebec are also perceived as “model minority” in terms of academic achievement. Likewise, the difficulties that some Chinese students encounter and students who do not reach the “model minority” can be ignored due to this common impression. Consistent with previous studies (Yet *et al.*, 2008; Zhou & Bankston, 1998), this research also indicates that these students benefit from not only the cultural capital of their families, but also from various practices, such as monitoring the children’s behaviours, which favour their school success. In addition to Chinese families, the whole Chinese community appears to be mobilised to support the school career of the youth through reinforcement of the ethnic identity, information exchange, as well as the provision of academic enrichment and social services. Nonetheless, due to their language and cultural barriers, Chinese immigrant families seem to rely more on ethnic community-based resources compared to those in the United States and other Canadian provinces.

In Quebec, as in other societies, Chinese students are faced with important challenges in linguistic integration. However, this is more pronounced for the Quebec case due to its sociolinguistic situation. Previous studies on Chinese adolescents and learning English in the United States show the impact of many factors in this regard (Bornstein, 1989; Colombo, 1982; Hurford, 1991; Lynch, 2003; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). For instance, pre-migration learning habits, such as repetition and memorization restrict a reflective and creative language use. Also, the shyness and perfectionism in Chinese culture sometimes set barriers for speaking French and adapting to a new socioeducational environment. However, the complexity of the sociolinguistic situation in Quebec sets a second level of obstacles. For example, Chinese youth seem to have few opportunities to be exposed to French native speakers and this inhibits the switch of their language preference from Chinese (or English) to French. As mentioned above, the difficulties in French can hinder the development of their sense of belonging to the Francophone community. The research data show that most Chinese, even those who were born in Quebec tend to choose the Anglophone community in Quebec or other Canadian

provinces as their future destination of integration. Vice versa, this trend among Chinese youth seems to complicate their French learning.

Studies in the United States and other Canadian provinces seem to show that the high academic achievement of Chinese students is not always rewarded by a successful socioeconomic integration (Balakrishnan & Hou, 1999; Chun, 1995; Song & Wang, 2003; Wang, 2007). Yet, this is even truer in Quebec. This study suggests that they are more likely to establish their own intragroup networks instead of making friends with people from other ethnic groups. Likewise, many Chinese families prefer to exclusively attend ethnic community-based institutions rather than mainstream organizations, although they appear to be well informed by the co-ethnic networks. For Chinese youth in Quebec, the research data do not allow examining to what extent their school success can be translated into a successful socioeconomic integration in the long run. However, as in other societies, limited knowledge of the host language and a lack of multiethnic networks can hinder their integration, especially for the first generation. In the case of Quebec, a sense of alienation from the French language among Chinese students poses bigger challenges in this regard.

The last but most important point to note is that all the student participants in this study are directed (by their parents) to pursue an occupational career in medicine or natural sciences. It seems that none of them would choose social and political sciences or education as their fields of study in a postsecondary institution. Although the same phenomenon may be also observed in other societies, the trend in the Quebec Chinese community is much more pronounced. This unbalanced occupational distribution among the Chinese community has not only a negative impact on the formation of diverse personnel in many fields, but also on their full participation in the wider Quebec society. However, it is possible that as Quebec becomes a home for larger and older Chinese settlement (as the case in the United States and other Canadian provinces), the same positive trend may be observed among Chinese youth.

### 8.2.3 Implication for intergroup comparison

By exploring the school experiences of a high-achieving group, this study also contributes to an intergroup comparison in terms of diverse factors, especially the school and family dynamics.

As mentioned in Chapter II, previous studies on the school success of students of immigrant origin in Quebec suggest that pupils from certain ethnic minority groups are often labelled “failure” or “under-educated” by the test results upon arrival (Bakhshaei, 2013; De Konink & Armand, 2012). Nonetheless, this study shows some contrary findings in this regard. Although many Chinese youth were placed in welcoming classes and later on in a regular class of a lower academic level due to their limited knowledge in French, few of them are identified as *sous-scolarisé* upon entry to a French school, because the educational system in China is more advanced in terms of mathematics and sciences. In addition, the literature in the Canadian and Quebec context indicates that teachers and other school personnel often perceive the immigrant or minority label as a euphemism for educationally at-risk students (Brathwaite & James, 1996; James, 1994; Solomon, 1992). This influences their academic achievement negatively. However, the data in this study shows the opposite trends. Chinese immigrant students are often considered to have various favourable characteristics of “good students” or “high achievers” and their parents are also seen as more “cooperative”. The positive results of evaluation upon arrival and high expectations of teachers and other non-teaching staff may provide an important element for Chinese youth’s self-esteem and hence to be more motivated for school. Yet, the positive stereotype of the teachers sometimes may set barriers to identify the Chinese students who really have learning difficulties.

Regarding linguistic integration, as illustrated in Chapter I, research shows the satisfactory results in French among students of immigrant origin and relative strength of French over English during the informal exchange (Mc Andrew *et al.*, 2010). However, compared to other groups, the data in this study indicate that the presence of English is more pronounced among Chinese youth, even if they were born/raised in Quebec. Also, it takes more time for the Chinese new arrivals to be integrated into regular classes and

finally into the French-speaking context. In this respect, as indicated in Mc Andrew's (2009b) study, the host language teaching program in Quebec is still a highly debated issue among the participants of the current research, especially Chinese immigrant parents. Consistent with the research findings on French learning of other groups (Allen, 2006; Steinbach, 2007; 2010), this study suggests that the primary obstacle is a lack of opportunities for contact with native French speakers. The parent participants lament the fact that the isolation in welcoming classes makes it impossible for their children to practise French at school. In addition, discomfort and fear of ridicule also set barriers for the sociolinguistic integration of immigrant students.

Additionally, although Quebec has made noteworthy progress towards the adaptation to diversity in its school system, both previous research and this research indicates the unsatisfactory experiences of immigrant families in this regard. For instance, studies on other groups, such as South-Asians, suggest that their languages and culture of origin represents a very low priority in the school curriculum (Bakhshaei, 2013; Ghosh, 2012). However, it is necessary to understand the tension between the recognition of the pluralism in Quebec society and the need to protect the distinct culture and French language in light of the history of political, economic, and fragile majority position of the francophone population (Leclerc, 1994; Mc Andrew, 2010; Steinbach, 2007). This tension sometimes influences the implementation of educational policies, such as PELO. For instance, few parents in this study were even informed of this program. As mentioned in Chapter I, some policies emphasize learning to live together (*vivre ensemble*), but they give little attention to the culture and language of ethnic minorities as well as the roles and responsibilities of the host society population (Steinbach, 2007). This ambiguity sometimes produces a large gap between Quebec's inclusive and pluralistic official discourse and the persistence of exclusion and discrimination at school.

Finally, compared immigrant students of other groups, under the influence of the cultural and social capital of their families, some factors become less salient indicators for Chinese youth's educational achievement (Abada *et al.*, 2009; Bakhshaei, 2013; Kim, 2006; Vatz-Laaroussi *et al.*, 2008; Zhou & Kim, 2006). For example, while holding high

educational expectations for their children, many Chinese parents, even those with a low socioeconomic status, make financial sacrifice to create optimal study conditions. Although immigrant parents of other groups, such as the Haitian community, also hold high educational expectations, a lack of supporting sociostructures seem to diminish their impact (Kanauté & Lafortune, 2011). On the contrary, the resources available in the Chinese community play an important role in supporting the education-related cultural values and overcome to some extent the negative impact of the low level of French proficiency of the parents.

#### **8.2.4 Relevance of diverse factors to understanding of the educational success of students of immigrant origin**

In considering the theoretical approaches reviewed in Chapter II, the findings of the current research permit a deeper exploration of the impact of school, family, and community dynamics on the educational success of students of immigrant origin.

##### Socioeconomic status

With respect to the impact of the socioeconomic status of the immigrant family, the results of the previous study do not appear to apply for the Chinese community (Zhou & Kim, 2006). Although the data of the current research do not allow for examination of the role of this factor clearly, they do suggest that the less conflictual relationship with the host society as well as the social and cultural capital of the family seem to supplement or complement in some extent its low socioeconomic status.

It is also important to bear in mind that in a migration context, the definition of socioeconomic status is not very clear. For example, in this study, it is defined according to the revenue of the family, the level of schooling of the parents, as well as their profession (Hauser, 1994; Sirin, 2005). Yet, many of them have become “disqualified” in their own field of work in the new society due to the nonrecognition of their credentials. Therefore, the low socioeconomic status of some immigrant families may be a temporary state caused by migration. As mentioned in Chapter II, this situational poverty seems to

have a less negative impact on immigrant students' school outcome (Beiser *et al.*, 1998; Payne, 2005).

### Language proficiency

Consistent with studies in many English-speaking contexts, the current research also indicates that the fluency and literacy in the host language plays a significant role in the school outcomes of students of immigrant origin. In addition, this study also suggests that their language proficiency also influences their social integration and psychological wellbeing. Some authors in the United States argue that the age of arrival and the length of stay in the host country most significant factors for learning the host language (Hurford, 1991; Lynch, 2003; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Indeed, the research also reveals that many other factors, including pre-migration experience of learning languages, exposure to native speakers, attendance of tutoring classes, and the personality of the students, interplay with each other and shape the language acquisition of immigrant youth. Among these factors, the exposure to native speakers and the personality of the student seems to be more important in the process of language learning. For instance, the interview data in this study show that extroverted personality facilitates the rapprochement with peers from other ethnic groups and hence increases their opportunities to practise the language. Also, students who are frequently exposed to native speakers, such as peer groups and watching television in the host language, seem to achieve a higher level of proficiency.

Literature presented in Chapter II also suggests that a low level of proficiency in the host language among immigrant parents has a negative impact on their children's school success (Berry-Cábon, 1983; Lynch & Stein, 1987; Kim, 2002; Vatz-Laaroussi *et al.*, 2008). However, the data in this study appear to show a different picture. Resources in the ethnic community are largely used to supplement and complement the limited knowledge of the host language. For example, with the support of organizations in the Chinese community, Chinese parents seem to be well informed about the Quebec educational system and are able to communicate with teachers and other school personnel.

With respect to the impact of heritage language proficiency, this study seems to confirm the findings of previous studies. Students with high levels of heritage language proficiency discuss more often with their parents on school matters and have a closer relationship with them (Cho *et al.*, 1997; Francis *et al.*, 2009; Park & Sarkar, 2007). More importantly, they seem to possess more ethnic cultural and social capital which promotes their academic achievement.

### Cultural capital

Consistent with previous studies in both Canadian and international contexts, this study also demonstrates the important role of embodied cultural capital in the educational success of students of immigrant origin (Yet *et al.*, 2008; Zhou & Kim, 2006). However, the data in this study show that cultural capital is not the only factor that influences the parental expectations and their educational involvement. The pre-and post-migration experiences also have important impacts in this regard. Indeed, the interaction of these factors shapes the attitudes of the immigrant family towards education, schools, and teachers. Also, as mentioned above, in a context of acculturation difference between parents and children, the impact of cultural values on the children sometimes becomes less effective.

Further, as illustrated in Chapter II, some authors argue that the achievement returns of the objectified cultural capital bring is related to a student's ethnic background and his or her family's socioeconomic status (Roscigno and Anisworth-Darnell, 1999). However, this study shows that the embodied cultural capital is much more influential on the possession of the objectified cultural capital and its impact. For instance, as mentioned above, many parents make financial sacrifice to create optimal study conditions for their children, such as providing computers, extracurricular books, and private tutors, because of the importance they attach to education.

As for institutionalized cultural capital, many studies in the American context tend to show that parents with higher level of schooling usually transfer more embodied cultural capital to their children and are involved more in their schooling (Christenson & Sheridan,

2001; De Graaf *et al.*, 2000; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008). Nevertheless, the findings of this research correspond more to the results of a few studies in European and Quebec contexts. In a migration context, the impact of a high level of schooling among the parents can be diminished because of the language barrier (Thomson & Crul, 2007). The embodied cultural capital, such as educational expectations, can overcome the disadvantage of a low level of parental schooling to a certain extent (Vatz-Larroussi *et al.*, 2008).

### Social capital

As discussed above, the cultural attributes of an ethnic group can play an important role in the academic achievements of their first and second generations (the third generation and beyond is not included in this study). However, educational attainment may not be entirely attributed to culture, because ethnic cultural values can die out in the new country as immigrants and their children are gradually acculturated in the host society (Kim, 2006; Zhou & Kim, 2006). Social capital in the ethnic community is therefore necessary to support or reinforce certain cultural values. Likewise, this study also highlights the influence of ethnic sociostructures on cultural replication as well as academic and social support, for immigrant families. In addition, consistent with the findings of the studies of Coleman (1988; 1990), social capital can also constitute information channels that reduce the amount of time and investment require to gather information.

As mentioned in Chapter II, co-ethnic ties can be defined as the “bonding” social capital which promotes the development of tight bonds of trust and solidarity within homogenous population (Putnam, 2000). However, Putnam (2000) suggests that this type of social capital may prevent members of a particular group from reaching out to the wider society, because it reinforces the concept of “us” and “others”. Accordingly, only when the “bonding” social capital turns into the other type of social capital –the “bridging” social capital, which means that intragroup ties are forged with the “outside” world, members of the group (or the whole group) may be able to obtain the necessary resources to get ahead (Leonard, 2004; Putnam, 2000). For example, this study shows the unsatisfactory social integration of Chinese immigrants in Quebec society, and this may

be partially explained by the fact that the interaction between ethnic social institutions in the Chinese community and mainstream Quebec society is still kept in a minimum and instrumental level, although some programs and activities have been organized to help them better integrate into the host society.

### Systemic factors

Consistent with many previous studies, this research underscores the impact of systemic factors, especially school dynamics, on the educational success of students of immigrant origin. The data suggest that positive teacher-student relationships play an important role in the socioeducational integration of immigrant youth, especially for new arrivals. Moreover, an opening and sensitivity to diversity among teachers and school personnel contributes to a supportive school context. Finally, although the research data do not allow an examination of the effectiveness of various models of the reception services, it seems beneficial to adopt a more flexible and socially integrated model to students with various backgrounds and educational needs (Allen, 2006; Mc Andrew, 2009b).

Regarding the programs aiming at a promotion of school-family-community partnership, many studies stress the positive impact of this collaboration pattern (Epstein *et al.*, 2008; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2010). However, this study suggests that for parents with a low level proficiency in the host language, such collaboration seems to be unrealistic. As an alternative, some parents rely on the ethnic community as a mediator to communicate with the school. As mentioned in Chapter II, according to Vatz-Laaroussi *et al.* (2008), this model is defined as a collaboration over assumed distance. In this model, although immigrant families may keep a loose connection with the school, ethnic community-based resources seem to play an important role in supporting these families and their children's school career.

With respect to the context of reception, this study seems to show similar trends. A more welcoming context and relatively quick access to citizenship appear to have positive impacts on the school integration of students of immigrant origin (Ogbu, 1990; Schneider & Crul, 2012; Stepick *et al.*, 2001). These policies seem to be a counterbalancing factor

for immigrant parents to face the obstacles in terms of socioeconomic integration and to hold positive attitudes toward the host society.

Moreover, studies in other contexts show that the concentration of immigrant population in an urban area may, on the one hand, restrict their contact with native-born children and have negative impact on their linguistic and social integration, but on the other hand, give more access to community-based resources (Ellen *et al.*, 2002; Lafortune, 2011). Nevertheless, the case the Chinese community in Quebec is more interesting. Compared to other contexts, one can observe a less significant presence of Chinese immigrants in many Quebec neighbourhoods and schools and Chinese youth tend to be enrolled in schools where there are less immigrant students. Paradoxically, these schools usually have a high concentration of Chinese students, because these schools are more likely to be chosen for their better programs by many Chinese parents. Another paradox is that although many Chinese live in immigrant-concentrated neighbourhoods, they do not appear to attend mainstream community-based organizations, but rather to search for resources of their ethnic community.

#### Individual characteristics

Although the main purpose of this study is not to explore the role of individual characteristics, the research findings highlight the role of the student as an actor in his or her school career.

Consistent with previous studies (Archambault *et al.*, 2009; Finn *et al.*, 1995; Finn & Rock, 1997; Suárez-Orozco *et al.*, 2008), immigrant students who are more behaviourally engaged are more likely to be high achievers. These students are rarely absent from school and complete their assignment on time. More specifically, for new arrivals, the participation in extracurricular activities seems to be beneficial for their own linguistic and social integration in the new school system. Moreover, emotional engagement, such as meaningful relationship with mainstream peers, also has a positive impact on their language learning and their development of a sense of belonging.

Previous research also shows that the psychological state as well as social competence and skills in managing one's daily life in an intercultural setting are important in the process of adaptation (Berry et al., 2006; Ward *et al.*, 2001). Indeed, this study suggests that the interplay of these individual characteristics, ethnic culture, and pre-migration experiences shape the attitudes and behaviours of immigrant students in the new school environment. For example, some teachers interviewed in this study indicate that the reluctance of speaking French among some Chinese students is related not only to their shyness, over self-control or even self-isolation, but also the perfectionism in Chinese culture.

### **8.3 Policy Implications**

#### **8.3.1 Programs and services in school context**

This study suggests that despite the fact that Chinese immigrant youth seem to have a high level of educational achievement in Quebec French schools, some of them, especially the new arrivals, have encountered difficulties in linguistic integration. In this regard, it is necessary for the decision-makers, educators, and counsellors to understand their difficulties and educational needs and to improve welcoming and learning support programs. For instance, since the problem with French among Chinese students concentrates on syntactic structure, specific tutoring classes can be offered that aim to overcome these difficulties. Also, bilingual mentors in learning support programs, such as *l'aide aux devoirs*, may be beneficial for newly arrived immigrant students to be included in these activities. Moreover, although the student respondents have not reported many psychological problems (may be because of their shyness and self-isolation), it is essential to continue to explore their psychological state, since these findings may be due to their shyness and self-isolation.

Aside from language barrier, the challenge of social integration appears to arise among Chinese youth. Partnership should be promoted between French public schools and community organizations (both mainstream and ethnic community) in providing extracurricular activities aimed to encourage these youth, especially the first generation

students, and their French-speaking peers to interact with each other, to discover common interests, as well as learn to understand and accept differences. Also, it is also necessary to develop programs and services to motivate Chinese immigrant families (especially those with children of the first generation) to participate in activities in mainstream community-based organizations. Since some Chinese students have been victims of stereotypes and prejudice due to their outperformance at school, it may be beneficial to continue efforts in intercultural education and activities aiming at anti-prejudice and intergroup dialogue.

In addition, it is obvious that teachers in French high schools hold positive attitudes towards Chinese origin students, but they do not appear to be aware of the difficulties and challenges behind the high school achievement of these students. It is, therefore, necessary to develop sensitivity to the multidimensionality of the school experience of immigrant students as well as to develop a better understanding of the impact of diverse factors in this regard, especially for minorities which are perceived as unproblematic. Furthermore, it is important for teachers to learn that there may be diverse models of school-family collaboration. For example, notwithstanding the low participation of Chinese parents in school activities, the model of school-family collaboration they adopt seems to be efficient. As mentioned above, they rely more on ethnic community-based resources to overcome their language barrier.

Finally, as some Chinese parents regret that Chinese culture is not sufficiently represented in the school curriculum, there may be an opportunity for these schools to recognize and highlight some cultural practices and achievements of the Chinese community in the curriculum of various subjects, such as history, sciences, and arts. And this may contribute to a positive self-image of Chinese immigrant youth, and hence increase their participation in education and schooling in the host society.

### **8.3.2 Immigrant parent receiving services**

As emphasized above, the low level of French proficiency of Chinese immigrants set barriers not only to their own integration into mainstream Quebec society, but also to

family-school communication and eventually to the school success of their children. According to the research data, most Chinese parents have English as their second language, and this may weaken their motivation towards learning and speaking French. It is therefore important for MICC and other organizations to develop strategies aimed to convince these parents that learning French is the primary and essential process for the participation of both themselves and their children in the Quebec social life. Also, it may be more effective for MICC and MELS to provide information concerning the Quebec educational system in multi-languages, including Chinese, to immigrant parents when they first arrive in the province. Meanwhile, it is also necessary to increase the content concerning the schooling in Quebec in *Francisation* (French courses for newly arrived residents in Quebec) courses to provide a detailed roadmap for immigrant parents. In these classes, workshops and presentations on schooling in Quebec can be organized in partnership with French public schools and other community organizations.

Further, to motivate Chinese parents to participate in School activities and family-school communication, partnership between French public schools and community-based organizations should be encouraged. Indeed, the community-based organizations may play an important role of mediator to help educators and counsellors in mainstream French schools to understand cultural values and expectations of Chinese families on their children's schools and accordingly provide responsive academic and social mentoring to these students. Services, including translation and accompaniment, in these organizations should also be provided and improved for Chinese parents to facilitate their communication with school. Also, if more Chinese and immigrant parents from other groups can be included in curriculum writing and decision-making process, the voice of minority groups will be more likely to be raised and heard.

### **8.3.3 Community-based organizations**

The study shows the important impact of ethnic community resources on the educational success of Chinese youth. However, significant concerns are raised by the respondents in non-profit organizations in the Chinese community regarding the question of funding. Therefore, a greater recognition of their contribution and different levels of government

funding are needed to be discussed in this regard. A lack of “bridging” social capital with the wider society can hinder the eventual integration into the host society (Leonard, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Zhou & Li 2003, Zhou & Kim 2006). Given the low attendance of Chinese parents in mainstream organizations as well as the minimum interaction between mainstream and ethnic community-based organizations, it is thus necessary to encourage a higher level of cooperation as well as exchange of social, cultural, and human capital between the Chinese community and mainstream Quebec society at large. Finally, it is important for the ethnic institutions in the Chinese community to make an effort to establish deeper connections with mainstream French schools, especially for supplementary schools and churches which should maintain more cooperative relationships with them.

#### **8.4 Avenues for Future Research**

In spite of the contributions outlined above, this study has several limitations as well as a specific focus which cannot cover all the relevant aspects of the school performance and social integration of students of Chinese origin in Quebec, nor some of the related but important topics.

Firstly, although I attempted to include Chinese immigrant families from various socioeconomic strata, there were almost no parent or student respondents from a disadvantaged family. Even though the data indicate that this variable appear to be less salient in affecting the academic achievement of Chinese youth, it would be interesting to explore the social reality of students from disadvantaged families in future studies.

Secondly, to examine the role of religious institutions in the socioeducational integration of Chinese students, various faith-based organizations, such as Christian churches and Buddhist or Taoist temples, should have been included in this study. However, with the fact that no parent or student participant attends the two later types of organizations and that these organizations do not provide any youth program, it was not possible to identify the impacts of these two more traditional religions in this regard. Future studies are

needed to examine in detail the influence of these religious institutions on the educational involvement of the families that participate in their activities.

Thirdly, this study sought to explore the educational experiences of Chinese students in a French-speaking context. Nevertheless, the findings concerning the impact of school context and the ethnic-community based resources were mainly grounded in the school life of Chinese youths in Montreal, where there is a high concentration of Chinese and other immigrant populations. As analysed in Chapter II, a more or less balanced representation of immigrant families in the whole receiving country may influence immigrant integration. Therefore, the Chinese students in other types of local receiving contexts, such as cities with relatively small Chinese population, may have different experiences of socioeducational integration. A comparative study conducted in various local receiving contexts in the future seems relevant to examine the influence of systemic factors and ethnic social institutions.

The findings of this study suggest that students of Chinese origin are not from a homogeneous group. Indeed, not all these youth have reached the “model minority” standard. Their socioeducational interation experiences may vary according to their generational status, length of time residing in the host country, more or less established ethnic community, and personality. Studies tracing over time Chinese students’ school success are needed to explore the interagroup variability. It might also be interesting to conduct research comparing the Quebec case with more matured English-speaking Chinese community in other Canadian provinces and the United States.

In addition, this research focused on the actual situation of students of Chinese origin, with regard to both their academic achievement and social integration. The data seem to reveal that there is not necessarily a direct relation between these two phenomena. For instance, not all of the students that excel in French exams have sufficient communication skills to participate in the social life in Quebec. This is concurrent with other studies regarding the marginal status of Chinese Americans in certain fields, such as politics, sports, and entertainment (Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Xie & Goyette, 2003). Thus, since it is

the major concern of the parents, further studies on the future labour market integration and civic participation of Chinese youth are needed. Research questions in this regard include: will the academic achievement of Chinese immigrant students be eventually transferred to a successful integration in mainstream Quebec society? Or are they going to encounter the same obstacles as their parents did in this regard?

On a final note, it is also interesting to note that although this study targeted Chinese students attending French-speaking institutions, the data suggest that many of them would choose to further their studies in an English-speaking postsecondary educational institution, and eventually integrate into the Anglophone community. A deeper examination of the matter is deemed necessary to investigate more thoroughly the reasons behind this, especially to what extent this choice is related to their more or less positive experiences in French schools. In this regard, it would be relevant to compare the research data with those of other societies experiencing similar ambiguity of ethnic dominance, such as such as Belgium and Northern Ireland, to see how the dominant host majority groups can shape and be shaped by the integration orientations of immigrant groups.

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# Appendix A: Permission of Ethics Committee of Université de Montréal



**Comité plurifacultaire d'éthique de la recherche (CPÉR)**  
Facultés de l'aménagement, de droit, de musique, des sciences  
de l'éducation et de théologie et de sciences des religions

23 février 2012

Ming SUN  
Candidate au doctorat  
Administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation

## **OBJET : Certificat d'éthique**

Madame Sun,

Le *Comité plurifacultaire d'éthique de la recherche (CPÉR)* a étudié le projet de recherche intitulé « Academic achievement of chinese origin students in a french speaking context: the role of school, family and community » et a délivré le certificat d'éthique demandé suite à la satisfaction des exigences précédemment émises. Vous trouverez ci-joint une copie numérisée de votre certificat; copie également envoyée à votre directrice de recherche et à la technicienne en gestion de dossiers étudiants (TGDE) de votre département.

Notez qu'il y apparaît une mention relative à un suivi annuel et que le certificat comporte une date de fin de validité. En effet, afin de répondre aux exigences éthiques en vigueur au Canada et à l'Université de Montréal, nous devons exercer un suivi annuel auprès des chercheurs et étudiants-chercheurs.

De manière à rendre ce processus le plus simple possible et afin d'en tirer pour tous le plus grand profit, nous avons élaboré un court questionnaire qui vous permettra à la fois de satisfaire aux exigences du suivi et de nous faire part de vos commentaires et de vos besoins en matière d'éthique en cours de recherche. Ce questionnaire de suivi devra être rempli annuellement jusqu'à la fin du projet et pourra nous être retourné par courriel. La validité de l'approbation éthique est conditionnelle à ce suivi. Sur réception du dernier rapport de suivi en fin de projet, votre dossier sera clos.

Il est entendu que cela ne modifie en rien l'obligation pour le chercheur, tel qu'indiqué sur le certificat d'éthique, de signaler au CPÉR tout incident grave dès qu'il survient ou de lui faire part de tout changement anticipé au protocole de recherche.

Nous vous prions d'agréer, Madame, l'expression de nos sentiments les meilleurs,

PL/ca

**Pierre Lapointe**  
Président  
*Comité plurifacultaire d'éthique de la recherche*  
Université de Montréal

c.c. Gestion des certificats - BRDV  
Marie Mc Andrew  
Lucie Lefrançois (AFE)  
p.j. Certificat CPER-12-005-P

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## CERTIFICAT D'ÉTHIQUE

*Le Comité plurifacultaire d'éthique de la recherche (CPÉR), selon les procédures en vigueur et en vertu des documents qui lui ont été fournis, a examiné le projet de recherche suivant et conclu qu'il respecte les règles d'éthique énoncées dans la Politique sur la recherche avec des êtres humains de l'Université de Montréal.*

<b>Titre du projet</b>	<b>Academic achievement of chinese origin students in a french speaking context: the role of school, family and community</b>
<b>Étudiant requérant</b>	<b>Ming SUN</b> Candidate au doctorat Administration et fondements de l'éducation Faculté des sciences de l'éducation Université de Montréal
<b>Direction</b>	Marie Mc ANDREW Professeure titulaire Administration et fondements de l'éducation Faculté des sciences de l'éducation Université de Montréal
<b>Financement</b>	Non financé

### MODALITÉS D'APPLICATION

Tout changement anticipé au protocole de recherche doit être communiqué au CPÉR qui en évaluera l'impact au chapitre de l'éthique.

Toute interruption prématurée du projet ou tout incident grave doit être immédiatement signalé au CPÉR.

Selon les règles universitaires en vigueur, un **suivi annuel** est minimalement exigé pour maintenir la validité de la présente approbation éthique, et ce, jusqu'à la fin du projet. Le questionnaire de suivi est disponible sur la page web du CPÉR.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pierre Lapointe, président  
Comité plurifacultaire d'éthique de la recherche  
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23 / 02 / 2012

Date de délivrance

01 / 12 / 2013

Date de fin de validité

## **Appendix B: Interview Protocols**

### **I Interview avec des membres de la direction**

#### **1. Caractéristiques de la personne-ressource**

- **Avant d'aborder directement le sujet de cette entrevue, j'aimerais que vous me donniez un aperçu de vos principales responsabilités ici à l'école...**
  - Principales responsabilités- nombre années dans la même fonction
  - Nombre années à la même école-dans le domaine de l'éducation en général
  - Postes-fonction antérieures : même école/ autres écoles (% élèves d'origine chinoise)

#### **2. Caractéristiques de l'école, de la clientèle générale et de la clientèle d'origine chinoise**

- **Pourriez-vous nous présenter brièvement votre école?**
  - Organisation
  - Personnel scolaire
  - Clientèle actuelle
- **De façon générale comment qualifiez-vous le climat de l'école?**
  - Aspects positifs/aspects négatifs
- **Pourriez-vous nous parler du projet éducatif ou du code de vie de l'école? –Quels sont les principaux objectifs et les principaux résultats?**
- **Parmi les élèves de votre école, on retrouve un pourcentage relativement important de jeunes d'origine chinoise. Pourriez-vous nous décrire brièvement cette clientèle?**
  - Lieu de naissance et région originaire (Chine continentale, Hong Kong, Taïwan, Macao) :  
1<sup>ère</sup> -2<sup>e</sup> génération : Nb-%
  - Sexe : filles (Nb - %) - garçons (Nb - %)

- Âge moyen par rapport à l'ensemble des élèves
- Langue d'usage (hors de la classe, à la maison)
- Milieu socioéconomique : favorisé vs défavorisé
- Niveaux scolaires : Nb - % par niveau
- Programme (générale-professionnel-cheminement particulier-class d'accueil ou francisation-éducation spécialisée-autres)
- Écoles primaires bassin
- Évaluation dans le temps : Nb et % - pays d'origine - % natifs / immigrants - % arrivant directement au secondaire - provenance (écoles primaires) – milieu socioéconomique

### **3. Intégration et cheminement scolaire**

- **De façon générale, comment vos élèves d'origine chinoise s'intègrent-ils dans l'école?**
  - Domaine dans les quels ils ont plus de facilités / difficultés
  - Différences entre les élèves et explication
- **À l'école, y-a-t-il (y-a-il déjà eu) des tensions ou incidents entre groupes ethniques ou linguistiques-Vos élèves chinois sont-ils impliqués? -Pourriez-vous nous en parler?**
- **Pourriez-vous nous parler des résultats et du cheminement scolaires de vos élèves d'origine chinoise?**
  - Profil lors de leur arrivée dans le système scolaire québécois
  - Meilleur / semblable / plus faible que l'ensemble des élèves
  - différence de l'ensemble des élèves d'origine chinoise
  - Matières dans les quels ils réussissent le mieux / dans les quels ils ont plus de difficultés : explication
- **Selon vous, quels sont les facteurs qui expliquent la réussite scolaire des élèves issus de l'immigration?**
  - **Caractéristiques des élèves**
    - Intérêt-motivation / absence d'intérêt ou de motivation
    - Facilité / difficulté d'ordre linguistique

- Confiance-estime de soi / absence de confiance – d’estime de soi
- Équilibre psychosocial / problèmes d’ordre psychosocial
- Facilité / difficulté d’apprentissage (déficit éducationnel)
- Satisfaction face à situation financière / désir d’autonomie financière
- Autre
- **Caractéristiques du milieu familial et social**
  - Valorisation / dévalorisation de l’école
  - Soutien / absence de soutien des parents ou de la communauté
  - Capacité / incapacité des parents d’aider leurs enfants (langue, etc)
  - Influence des pairs à l’école / hors de l’école-rôle des amis ou autres Chinois
  - Autres
- **Caractéristiques du milieu socio-économique : pas de besoins financiers de la famille / besoins financiers de la famille-nécessité de contribuer financièrement**
- **Facteurs liés à l’école**
  - Langue d’enseignement
  - Attentes des enseignants ou autres intervenants scolaires
  - Communication –concertation entre les divers types d’intervenants / absence de communication de concertation
  - Adéquation des mesures ou services d’aide
  - Adéquation de l’école & du curriculum- présence / absence de modèles
- Autre

➤ **Ces facteurs, sont-ils les mêmes pour les élèves d’origine chinoise et pour l’ensemble de la population scolaire?**

#### **4. Soutien et stratégies des familles**

➤ **À votre connaissance, comment et dans quelle mesure les familles de vos élèves d’origine chinoise s’impliquent-elles dans les études de leurs enfants- Quel type d’aide leur apportent-elles? Pouvez-vous nous donner quelques exemples concrets?**

- **Si pas ou peu d'implication : Motifs-explications**
  - Facteurs d'ordre linguistique-méconnaissance du français
  - Niveau de scolarité des parents / celui des frères et sœurs
  - Surcharge de travail
  - Problèmes de relation parents-enfant
  - Autre
  
- **Selon vous, leur implication est-elle bénéfique-serait-elle souhaitable? Quelles sont vos attentes à cet égard?**
- **Dans quelle mesure les parents de vos élèves participent-ils aux activités de l'école ou de la commission scolaire?**
  - Type et objectifs (soutiens pour faciliter leur implication)
  - Fréquence
  - Différence entre les parents et explication
  - Langue d'usage
  
- **Comment qualifiez-vous la communication entre l'école et les parents de vos élèves d'origine chinoise?**
  - Meilleure / moyenne / moins bon
  - Moyens pour les rejoindre
  - Langue d'usage
  - Difficultés
  - Impact sur la réussite
  
- **Selon vous, qu'est-ce que l'école pourrait faire de plus ou différemment pour améliorer-faciliter la communication avec les familles de la communauté chinoise? Des tentatives en ce sens ont-elles déjà été faites avec ce groupe de parents ou avec d'autres groupes?**

## 5. Soutien communautaire

- **De façon générale, quel type de liens l'école entretient-elle avec les organismes communautaires dans le quartier ou ailleurs? – Ceci sont-ils fréquentés par la communauté chinoise?**
- **Avez-vous des liens avec des organismes qui servent directement la communauté chinoise?**
  - **Activités**
  - Type et objectifs
  - Effets et résultats
  - Impact sur la réussite
- **À votre avis, comment l'école, les familles chinoises, la communauté, pourraient-ils intervenir davantage- ou différemment – pour favoriser la réussite scolaire des élèves d'origine chinoise?**

## **6. Ressources à l'école**

- **Comment votre école intervient-elle pour aider les élèves issus de l'immigration pour favoriser leur réussite et persévérance secondaires?- Quels sont les services ou les mesures destinés à cette clientèle spécifique?**
- **Interventions d'ordre pédagogique ou psychosocial**
  - Type et objectifs
    - Aide par les pairs-tutorat ou pairage d'élèves
    - Soutien pédagogique ou linguistique
    - Plan d'intervention actif
    - Étude dirigée- aide aux devoirs et aux leçons
    - Récupération – rattrapage- mise à niveau
    - Jumelage- parrainage- tutorat
    - Orientation personnalisée
    - Adaptation scolaire ou sociale ou autres services d'ordre psychosocial
    - Autres

- Origine-nombre d'années d'existence(permanent / ponctuel) – évaluation
- Manifestation concrètes-cela se traduit comment?
- Effets-résultats
- **Projet parascolaires ou communautaires- mesures d'intégration sociale**
  - Type et objectifs
  - Intervention ou organismes impliqués
  - Origine-nombre d'années d'existence- évaluation
  - Manifestation concrètes-cela se traduit comment?
  - Effets-résultats
- **Jusqu'à quel point les élèves d'origine chinoise en bénéficient-ils?**
- **Comment l'école s'adapte-elle à la diversité linguistique, culturelle et religieuse?**
  - Au niveau des normes et des activités de l'école (ex. les fêtes et le calendrier scolaire)
  - Au niveau du curriculum (ex. éducation à la citoyenneté, vision du monde, histoire)
  - Respect du multilinguisme et de l'utilisation de plusieurs langues
- **Jusqu'à quel point cette adaptation est-elle positive pour les élèves d'origine chinoise?**
  - Plaintes / satisfaction des élèves ou leurs parents
  - Lien avec la réussite scolaire

#### 7. L'intégration sociale et le bien-être psychologique des élèves d'origine chinoise

- **Pensez-vous que la réussite scolaire des élèves d'origine chinoise s'accompagne la plupart du temps d'une bonne intégration sociale et d'un développement psychologique harmonieux?**
  - Ils sont heureux / malheureux : explication
- **D'après vous, quelles sont les caractéristiques les plus importantes qui font réussir dans la société québécoise les membres d'une minorité? Comment les élèves de la communauté chinoise pourraient-ils obtenir ces caractéristiques?**

- **Y a-t-il des soutiens ou services destinés aux élèves d'origine chinoise qui ne réussissent pas à l'école?**
  - Type et objectifs
  - Utilisation par ces élèves
- **Comment voyez-vous l'avenir de ces élèves sur le plan de l'insertion au marché de travail et de l'intégration dans la société québécoise?**
  - Caractéristiques, compétences et savoir-faire que les élèves devraient posséder
  - Le moyen pour les obtenir

## **8. Commentaires ou suggestions**

- **Auriez-vous des suggestions ou d'autres commentaires relatifs aux questions que nous venons d'aborder? – Y a-t-il des éléments dont nous n'avons pas discuté et qui vous semblent importants?**

## **II Interview avec des enseignants et d'autres intervenants scolaires**

### **1. Caractéristiques de la personne-ressource**

- **Avant d'aborder directement le sujet de cette entrevue, j'aimerais que vous me donniez un aperçu de vos principales responsabilités ici à l'école...**
  - Principales responsabilités- nombre années dans la même fonction
  - Nombre années à la même école-dans le domaine de l'éducation en général
  - Postes-fonction antérieures : même école/ autres écoles (% élèves d'origine chinoise)

### **2. Caractéristiques de la clientèle d'origine chinoise**

- **Pourriez-vous nous parler des élèves d'origine chinoise auxquels vous enseignez / auprès desquels vous intervenez?**

- Lieu de naissance et région originaire (Chine continentale, Hong Kong, Taïwan, Macao) :  
1<sup>ère</sup> -2<sup>e</sup> génération : Nb-%
- Sexe : filles (Nb - %) - garçons (Nb - %)
- Âge par rapport à l'ensemble des élèves
- Langue d'usage (hors de la classe, à la maison)
- Milieu socioéconomique : favorisé vs défavorisé
- Niveaux scolaires : Nb - % par niveau
- Programme (générale-professionnel-cheminement particulier-class d'accueil ou francisation-éducation spécialisée-autres)
- Écoles primaires bassin
- Évaluation dans le temps : Nb et % - pays d'origine - % natifs / immigrants - % arrivant directement au secondaire - provenance (écoles primaires) – milieu socioéconomique

### 3. Intégration et cheminement scolaire

#### ➤ **De façon générale, comment vos élèves d'origine chinoise s'intègrent-ils dans l'école?**

- Domaine dans les quels ils ont plus de facilités / difficultés
- Différences entre ces élèves : explication
- Relation avec ceux des autres groupes
- Amis à l'école
- Participation aux activités parascolaires
- Impact sur la réussite scolaire

#### ➤ **À votre connaissance, y-a-t-il (y-a-il déjà eu) des tentions ou incidents liées au facteur ethniques ou linguistiques impliquant des élèves d'origine chinoise?**

- Location et cause
- Solution
- Impact sur la réussite scolaire et le bien-être psychosocial

➤ **Pourriez-vous nous parler de la performance scolaire des élèves d'origine chinoise auxquels vous enseignez / auprès desquels vous intervenez?**

- Profil lors de leur arrivée dans le système scolaire québécois
- Meilleur / semblable / plus faible que l'ensemble des élèves
- différence de l'ensemble des élèves d'origine chinoise
- Matières dans les quels ils réussissent le mieux / dans les quels ils ont plus de difficultés : explication

➤ **Selon vous, quels sont les facteurs susceptibles qui expliquent la réussite scolaire des élèves issus de l'immigration?**

- **Caractéristiques des élèves**
  - Intérêt-motivation / absence d'intérêt ou de motivation
  - Facilité / difficulté d'ordre linguistique
  - Confiance-estime de soi / absence de confiance – d'estime de soi
  - Équilibre psychosocial / problèmes d'ordre psychosocial
  - Facilité / difficulté d'apprentissage (déficit éducationnel)
  - Satisfaction face à situation financière / désir d'autonomie financière
  - Autre
- **Caractéristiques du milieu familial et social**
  - Valorisation / dévalorisation de l'école
  - Soutien / absence de soutien des parents ou de la communauté
  - Capacité / incapacité des parents d'aider leurs enfants (langue, etc)
  - Influence des pairs à l'école / hors de l'école-rôle des amis ou autres Chinois
  - Autres
- **Caractéristiques du milieu socio-économique : pas de besoins financiers de la famille / besoins financiers de la famille-nécessité de contribuer financièrement**
- **Facteurs liés à l'école**
  - Langue d'enseignement
  - Attentes des enseignants ou autres intervenants scolaires

- Communication –concertation entre les divers types d'intervenants / absence de communication de concertation
  - Adéquation des mesures ou services d'aide
  - Adéquation de l'école & du curriculum- présence / absence de modèles
  - Autre
- **Ces facteurs, sont-ils les mêmes pour les élèves d'origine chinoise et pour l'ensemble de la population scolaire?**

#### **4. Soutien et stratégies des familles**

- **Comment et dans quelle mesure les familles des élèves d'origine chinoise auxquels vous enseignez / auprès desquels vous intervenez s'impliquent-elles dans les études de leur(s) enfant(s)- Quel type d'aide leur apportent-elles? Pouvez-vous nous donner quelques exemples concrets?**
- **Si pas ou peu d'implication : Motifs-explications**
- Facteurs d'ordre linguistique-méconnaissance du français
  - Niveau de scolarité des parents / celui des frères et sœurs
  - Surcharge de travail
  - Problèmes de relation parents-enfant
  - Autre
- **Selon vous, leur implication est-elle bénéfique-serait-elle souhaitable? Quelles sont vos attentes à cet égard?**
- **Dans quelle mesure les parents de vos élèves participent-ils aux activités de l'école ou de la commission scolaire?**
- Type et objectifs (soutiens pour faciliter leur implication)
  - Fréquence
  - Différence entre les parents et explication
  - Langue d'usage
  - Impact sur la réussite

➤ **Si pas ou peu de participation : Motifs-explications**

- Facteurs d'ordre linguistique-méconnaissance du français
- Facteurs d'ordre culturel : pas l'habitude de participer dans le pays d'origine
- Niveau de scolarité des parents / celui des frères et sœurs
- Surcharge de travail
- Problèmes de relation parents-enfant (situation familiale)
- Autre

➤ **Comment qualifiez-vous la communication entre l'école et les parents de vos élèves d'origine chinoise?**

- Meilleure / moyenne / moins bon
- Moyens pour les rejoindre
- Langue d'usage
- Difficultés
- Impact sur la réussite

➤ **D'après vous, est-ce que votre école prend des moyens particuliers pour susciter leur participation (la communication avec eux)?**

**5. Soutien communautaire (Q4)**

➤ **À votre connaissance, l'école entretient-elle des liens avec les organismes de la communauté chinoise ou avec ceux dans le quartier?**

- Activités : type et objectifs
- Effets et résultats

➤ **Quel effets la collaboration école-communautaire a-t-elle (pourrait-elle avoir) pour vos élèves d'origine chinoise? – Pour vous en tant qu'intervenants de l'école?**

➤ **À votre connaissances, les élèves d'origine chinoise participent-ils souvent aux activités dans ces organismes (ex. l'école supplémentaires)?-Pour vous en tant qu'enseignant(e)s de ces élèves.**

- Activités : type et objectifs
- Effets et résultats
- Impact sur la réussite

## 6. Ressources à l'école (Q8)

➤ **Comment votre école intervient-elle pour aider les élèves issus de l'immigration pour favoriser leur réussite et persévérance secondaires?- Quels sont les services ou les mesures destinés à cette clientèle spécifique?**

- **Interventions d'ordre pédagogique ou psychosocial**
  - Type et objectifs
    - Aide par les pairs-tutorat ou pairage d'élèves
    - Soutien pédagogique ou linguistique
    - Plan d'intervention actif
    - Étude dirigée- aide aux devoirs et aux leçons
    - Récupération – rattrapage- mise à niveau
    - Jumelage- parrainage- tutorat
    - Orientation personnalisée
    - Adaptation scolaire ou sociale ou autres services d'ordre psychosocial
    - Autres
  - Origine-nombre d'années d'existence(permanent / ponctuel) – évaluation
  - Manifestation concrètes-cela se traduit comment?
  - Effets-résultats
- **Projet parascolaires ou communautaires- mesures d'intégration sociale**
  - Type et objectifs
  - Intervention ou organismes impliqués
  - Origine-nombre d'années d'existence- évaluation
  - Manifestation concrètes-cela se traduit comment?
  - Effets-résultats

- **Jusqu'à quel point les élèves d'origine chinoise en bénéficient-ils?**
- **Comment l'école s'adapte-elle à la diversité linguistique, culturelle et religieuse?**
  - Au niveau des normes et des activités de l'école (ex. les fêtes et le calendrier scolaire)
  - Au niveau du curriculum (ex. éducation à la citoyenneté, vision du monde, histoire)
  - Respect du multilinguisme et de l'utilisation de plusieurs langues
- **Jusqu'à quel point cette adaptation est-elle positive spécifiquement pour les élèves d'origine chinoise?**
  - Plaintes / satisfaction des élèves ou leurs parents
  - Lien avec la réussite scolaire
- **Comme enseignant(e)s (intervenants scolaires), quel genre de relation entretenez-vous avec les parents de vos élèves d'origine chinoise? – Si vous devez communiquer avec eux, quel moyen privilégiez-vous?**

#### **7. Intégration sociale et le bien-être psychologique des élèves d'origine chinoise**

- **Pensez-vous que la réussite scolaire de vos élèves d'origine chinoise s'accompagne la plupart du temps d'une bonne intégration sociale et d'un développement psychologique harmonieux?**
  - Ils sont heureux / malheureux : explication
  - Des amis de différentes origines
- **D'après vous, quelles sont les caractéristiques les plus importantes qui font réussir dans la société québécoise les membres d'une minorité? Comment les élèves de la communauté chinoise pourraient-ils obtenir ces caractéristiques?**
- **Y a-t-il des soutiens ou services destinés aux élèves d'origine chinoise qui ne réussissent pas à l'école?**
  - Type et objectifs
  - Utilisation par ces élèves

➤ **Comment voyez-vous l'avenir de ces élèves sur le plan de l'insertion au marché de travail et de l'intégration dans la société québécoise?**

- Caractéristiques, compétences et savoir-faire que les élèves devraient posséder
- Le moyen pour les obtenir

### **8. Commentaires ou suggestions**

➤ **Auriez-vous des suggestions ou d'autres commentaires relatifs aux questions que nous venons d'aborder? – Y a-t-il des éléments dont nous n'avons pas discuté et qui vous semblent importants?**

## **III Interview avec des élèves d'origine chinoise**

➤ **Quelle langue préfères-tu parler pendant l'entrevue, mandarin ou français ?**

### **1. Caractéristiques de l'élève**

➤ **Avant d'aborder directement le sujet de cette entrevue, j'aimerais que tu te présentes brièvement en indiquant ton âge, langue maternelle, lieu de naissance, niveau scolaire, année d'arriver au Québec (ou Canada) (sauf ceux qui sont nés au Canada), connaissance du français avant d'arriver au Québec**

Nom: \_\_\_\_\_ Sexe: \_\_\_\_\_

Âge: \_\_\_\_\_ Lieu de naissance: \_\_\_\_\_

Niveau scolaire et programme : \_\_\_\_\_

L'année d'arriver au Québec ou Canada: \_\_\_\_\_

Connaissance du français avant d'arriver (si applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Attitudes et valeurs envers l'éducation

- **Jusqu'à quel point est-il important pour toi de réussir à l'école?**
  - Éléments les plus importants qui t'influencent à cet égard
    - Culture chinoise
    - Famille
    - Pression des parents ou des amis
  
- **Par rapport à d'autres activités (ex. sport, loisir ou sortir avec des amis), quelle place accordes-tu à tes études?**
  
- **Quelles sont les attentes de tes parents à cet égard?**
  - La façon dont elles s'expriment
  - Différentes / semblables à celles de l'élève (ainsi qu'à celles des parents d'autres élèves)
  - Sentiment de pression
  
- **Quels sont les personnes importantes dans ta vie? Quel rôle jouent-elles dans ta carrière scolaire?**
  - Attitudes et valeurs envers l'éducation
  - Stratégies pour la réussite scolaire
  
- **Quelle langue tes parents et toi (parmi tes frères et sœurs) parlez-vous plus souvent à la maison? Selon toi, jusqu'à quel point est-il important de maintenir la culture et la langue chinoise? Pourquoi?**

## 3. Soutien et stratégies des familles

- **Comment tes parents (ou d'autres membres de ta famille) s'impliquent-ils dans tes études? – Quel type d'aide t'apportent-ils?**
  - Aide aux devoirs
  - Inscrire aux cours supplémentaires

- Tuteur (ou payer un tuteur)
  - Discipline
  - Autres
- **Si pas ou peu d'implication : explication**
- Facteur d'ordre linguistique- méconnaissance du français
  - Niveau de scolarité des parents / celui des frères et sœurs
  - Surcharge de travail
  - Problèmes de relations parent-enfant
  - Autres
- **D'après toi, leur implication est-elle bénéfique?- Si non : explication**
- **Quel rôle tes parents jouent-ils dans ton succès scolaire?**
- Différences en comparaison avec les parents des autres élèves
- **De façon générale, comment qualifies-tu la relation entre l'école et tes parents?**
- Participation aux activités à l'école
  - La communication entre eux
  - Difficultés
  - Autres
- **Selon toi, qu'est-ce que l'école / tes parents pourraient faire de plus ou différemment pour améliorer-faciliter la communication entre eux?**
- 4. Soutien communautaire**
- **Participes-tu souvent à des activités dans les organismes de la communauté chinoise (ex. église, centre culturel, école chinoise, etc.)?**
- Type et objectifs
  - Fréquence

- Lien avec le programme scolaire
  - appréciation
- **Participes-tu souvent à d'autres activités dans le quartier (ex. support, fêtes, loisir, etc.)?**
- Type et objectifs
  - Fréquence
  - Lien avec le programme scolaire
  - appréciation
- **Nomme-moi tes trois meilleur(e)s ami(e)s.**
- Origine ethnique
  - Activité auxquels tu participes avec eux
  - Lieu où vous vous êtes rencontré(e)s (école, communauté, gym, etc.)

## **5. Ressources à l'école**

- **Pourrais-tu me parler de façon générale de ton école?**
- Enseignants
  - Autres élèves
  - Programmes et projets visant la réussite scolaire
  - Activités scolaires et parascolaires
  - Différences par rapport au pays d'origine (si applicable)
- **As-tu reçu des services de soutien à l'apprentissage du français? Quelle a été ton expérience à cet égard?**
- **Te considères-tu comme un bon élève?**
- Explication
  - Matière s dans les quelles tu réussis (mieux / moyen / moins bon)
- **As-tu déjà vécu (vie-tu présentement) de des difficultés à l'école?**

- Nature de la difficulté (ex. facteur d'ordre linguistique- méconnaissance du français, problème sur le plan psychologique, exclusion, etc.)
- Lien avec la réussite scolaire

- **Si oui, as-tu bénéficié des services offerts pour t'aider?**
- **As-tu déjà vécu (vie-tu présentement) des situations où tu croyais (crois) victime de discrimination de préjugés à l'école?**
  - Tensions ou incidents entre groupes ethniques ou linguistiques
  - Solutions apportés
  - Effets et résultats

## **6. L'intégration sociale et le bien-être psychologique des élèves d'origine chinoise**

- **Es-tu actuellement heureux (heureuse) ou satisfait(e) à l'école et de façon plus large?**
  - Points positifs / négatifs
  - Caractéristiques de la société québécoise que tu aimes
- **As-tu du temps libre dans le weekend? Qu'est-ce que tu fais pour t'amuser?**
- **Te sens-tu bien accepté(e) dans la société québécoise? Pourquoi?**
- **À ton avis, quels sont les points positifs / négatifs dans la culture chinoise? Quels sont les points positifs / négatifs dans la culture québécoise?**
- **D'après toi, pour réussir dans la société, quelles sont les plus importantes caractéristiques, compétences et habiletés qu'une personne doit posséder? L'école aide-t-elle à cet égard?**
- **Comment te vois-tu dans 15 ans? Quels sont tes projets professionnels d'avenir?**

## **7. Commentaires ou suggestions**

- **Aurais-tu des suggestions ou d'autres commentaires relatifs aux questions que nous venons d'aborder? – Y a-t-il des éléments dont nous n'avons pas discuté et qui te semblent importants?**

## IV Interview with Chinese Immigrant Parents

### 1. Socioeconomic status and family immigration history

Name: Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Age: Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Area of birth: Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Education level: Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Knowledge of English/French: Father \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Annual revenue: Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_

How long have been in Quebec or Canada: Father \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

The number of children: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's age: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Attitudes and values towards education

- **How important is the academic success of your children?**
- **What are your expectations on the school career of your children?**

- Culture, value and belief
- Life experience in the country of origin and in Quebec

### 3. Family supports

➤ **How do you involve in your children's studies? What kind of help do you bring to you?**

- **Within the family**

- Help with their homework and school projects
- Extra exercises (besides homework)
- Quiet place to study
- Dictionaries and other reference books
- Discipline (study / TV and other activities)
- Others

- **In the community**

- Register in after-school classes
- Choose a personal tutor
- Learn the language of instruction (French)
- Collect information in different ways
- Others

- **With the school**

- Participate in school activities (ex. parent-teacher meetings)
- Ask someone to translate letters (note) to parents (from school)
- Discuss with other parents
- Others

- **Others**

➤ **Do you feel you can really help them?-If not: why?**

- Lack of information or support from the school?
- Linguistic barriers-poor knowledge of French
- Level of schooling / difference of curriculum

- Overworked
  - Parent-child relational problems
  - Others
- **As a parent, how do you perceive your role in your children's academic success?**
- Difference between the role of parents in the country of origin
  - Comfortable / uncomfortable with the role attributed to parents in Québec
  - Difficulty in communicating with the children: explication

#### **4. Identification and attitudes towards the host society**

- **What is your impression about Quebec or Canadian society compared with China (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao)?**
- **Generally speaking, are you satisfied that your family immigrated to Quebec?- Do you consider that you have integrated into Quebec society (mainstream)?**
- Positive / negative points
  - Main Difficulties
- **What are the main differences between Quebec (or Canadian) society and your country of origin?**
- Positive / negative points
  - Preference
- **To your knowledge, how is the Chinese community perceived in Quebec society? Have you ever experienced discrimination or prejudices?- Have your ever heard other Chinese friends talking about that?**
- Acknowledge / ignorance
  - Discrimination
  - prejudice
  - Stereotype
  - Historical experiences

➤ **Is it important for your Children to maintain the Chinese culture or language? Why?**

**5. Services provided by the Chinese community in Montreal to support Chinese students' school career**

➤ **What type of support does your organization bring (has brought) to promote the Chinese origin students' school success?**

- **Services offered to parents**
  - Information about the educational system in Quebec
  - Translation
  - Teaching French
  - Others
- **Services offered to children**
  - Heritage language teaching
  - Tutoring
  - After-school activities
  - Sunday school
  - Cultural week
  - Others
- **Services offered to school**
  - Mediator between school and parents
  - Activities aiming at presenting Chinese culture (ex. Journée pédagogique)
  - Others
- **Participation (parents / youth / school)**
  - Frequency
  - Numbers

- **Do they have any friends (neighbours) from the majority group to whom you can talk about your children's schooling? –If so, what kind of information can you get from them?-If not, why?**

## **6. School-related factors**

- **Generally speaking, what is your perception of the school system in Quebec compared with the school system in China (Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan)?**

- Positive / negative points

- **What do you think of ...school? For example, what do you like the most?-the least? Why?**

- Quality of teaching and pedagogical approaches
- Pedagogical services or interventions
- Discipline
- School atmosphere
- Adaptation to cultural and linguistic diversity
- Pedagogical services or interventions to help them succeed in school
- Others

- **In general, do your children succeed well at ...school? Are you satisfied with their academic achievement?**

- Subjects they do well in / have more difficulties
- Comparison with their schooling in the country of origin

- **Generally speaking, how would you qualify your relationship with...school?**

- Communication
- Participation in school activities
- Participation in special projects aiming at school success: effects
- Difficulties

- Satisfaction / complaint
- What would you suggest to facilitate or improve the communication between you and the school?
7. **Social integration and psychological well-being of Chinese origin students**
- Do you think your children are happy or satisfied with themselves or their school life? -Why?
- Do they have free time on weekend? What do they do for fun?
- Do they have friends from different ethnic groups? What do they do together?
- To your knowledge, do you think high educational attainment of the Chinese in Quebec (Canada) has been rewarded by commensurate income or occupation? Why?
- In order to succeed in this society, what do you think are the most important characteristics, abilities, and skills a person (from a minority) must possess? In which way, do you think your children can obtain these abovementioned characteristics, abilities, and skills?
- How do you plan the future of your children?
8. **Comments or suggestions**
- Would you have any suggestions or other comments related to the questions we have just discussed?- Are there some elements we have not discussed which your find important?

## **V Interview with the Chinese Community**

1. **Characteristics of the organization and of the resource- person**
- First of all, could you please briefly describe...(name of organization) and its role in the Chinese community?

- Year it was founded- Nb years of existence
- Objectives
- Type of intervention
- Methods of action-resources
- Obtained results (in general)
- Data / statistics on its use- evolution

➤ **How long have personally intervened within the Chinese community and what are your main responsibilities within ...(name of organization)?**

- Experience within the community
- Role of function-main responsibilities

**2. Characteristics of the Chinese community**

➤ **Could you please tell us about the Chinese community which you serve?**

- Natives / immigrants: Nb-%
- Region of birth or of origin: Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao
- Mother tongue: Chinese / English / French
- Immigration trajectory- chain immigration
- Length of stay in Quebec: % new arrivals
- Age group: children / teens / young adults / middle aged adults / seniors
- Family situation: Nb children; mono-parental / bi-parental / other
- Socio-economic background
  - Privileged / underprivileged
  - Level of schooling
  - Socio-professional categories
  - Occupation- employment
- Evaluation in time: origin, mother tongue, socio-economic background

### **3. Academic achievement**

#### **➤ To your knowledge, do Chinese origin students succeed in French schools?**

- School subjects : success / difficulties
- Type of difficulties or problems
- Learning difficulties or problems
- Occasional problems in certain subjects
- Others

#### **➤ In general, how would you explain that some of these youths succeed well in French school whereas others have difficulties?**

- Prior school baggage- characteristics of the school system in country of origin
- Programme and current school level
- Language of instruction
- Passage from classe d'accueil or francisation: school level , Nb months, exit date
- Prior elementary school
- Characteristics of students (1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants, age, gender, country of origin & immigration trajectory, Nb months or years in Quebec, age & school level upon arrival, chain immigration-arrival at adolescence, socio-economic and family milieu, others)
- Interest / inadequate school or curriculum- presence / absence of role models
- Influence of peers at school / outside school – role of friends or other Chinese friends
- Parental or community support
- Attitudes – expectations of teachers and other school staff
- Other

### **4. Identification and attitudes towards the host society**

- **Generally speaking, are the Chinese families satisfied that their migratory experience to Quebec?- Do they consider that they have integrated into Quebec society (mainstream)?**
  - Positive / negative points
  - Main difficulties
  
- **To your knowledge, how is the Chinese community perceived in Quebec society? Have you ever heard Chinese origin people talking about their experience of being victim of discrimination or prejudices?**
  - Acknowledge / ignorance
  - Discrimination
  - prejudice
  - Stereotype
  
- **For most of Chinese parents, is it important for their children to maintain the Chinese culture or language? Why?**

## **5. Family supports**

- **To your knowledge, how important is education and academic success to the Chinese families?-**
  - Explication (culture, experience, etc.)
  
- **How do Chinese parents get involved in their children's studies?- What type of help do they provide? Could you please give us some examples?**
  - Type of assistance: e.g. quiet place to study, discipline (study / TV and other activities), help with school projects, dictionaries or other references volumes, etc.
  
- **Do they say they can help them in their studies?- How? – If not: why?**
  - Lack of information or support from the school?
  - Linguistic barriers-poor knowledge of French

- Level of schooling / difference of curriculum
- Overworked
- Parent-child relational problems
- Others

➤ **To your knowledge, how is the communication between ...school or other French schools and Chinese parents?**

- Quality of the communication
- Participation in school activities (type, objectives and frequency )
- Satisfaction / complaint
- Linguistic barriers-poor knowledge of French
- Level of schooling
- Overworked
- Parent-child relational problems
- Others

➤ **What would be some of your suggestions to facilitate-improve- the school-parents communication?**

**6. Services provided by the Chinese community in Montreal to support Chinese students' school career**

➤ **What type of support does your organization bring (has brought) to promote the Chinese origin students' school success?**

- **Services offered to parents**
  - Information about the educational system in Quebec
  - Translation
  - Teaching French
  - Others
- **Services offered to children**

- Heritage language teaching
- Tutoring
- After-school activities
- Sunday school
- Cultural week
- Others
- **Services offered to school**
- Mediator between school and parents
- Activities aiming at presenting Chinese culture (ex. Journée pédagogique)
- Others
- **Participation (parents / youth / school)**
- Frequency
- Numbers

➤ **According to you, what are (were) the impacts of these measures?**

- Positive / negative points
- What would you do more to help them if you have the possibility and the means

➤ **To your knowledge, what other activities do they participate within the Chinese community or in the mainstream organizations in their neighbourhood?**

- Type and objectives
- Frequency
- Impacts

➤ **Do the Chinese parents have access to other resources (national or international) to get information about their children's education?**

- Type and objectives
- Frequency
- Impacts

- **Do Chinese parents have friends (neighbours) from the majority group to whom they can talk about their children's schooling? –If so, what kind of information can they get from them?-If not, why?**

## **7. School-related factors**

- **To your knowledge, what does the school do to help Chinese families involve in their children's study? - What could it do more or differently?**

- **Satisfaction / complaint from parents**
- Quality of teaching and pedagogical approaches
- Pedagogical services or interventions
- Discipline
- School atmosphere
- Adaptation to cultural and linguistic diversity
- Pedagogical services or interventions to help them succeed in school
- Others

- **Generally speaking, how would you qualify the relationship between Chinese parents and ...school (French schools in general)?**

- Communication
- Participation in school activities
- Participation in special projects aiming at school success: effects
- Difficulties
- Satisfaction / complaint

- **Do you believe that a better adaptation of the school curriculum to history, culture, and the values of the Chinese community would optimise chances of success for the Chinese origin students (e.g. citizenship education, history worldview)?**

## **8. Social integration and psychological well-being of Chinese origin students**

➤ **Do you think the Chinese youths that you know are happy or satisfied with themselves or their school life?**

- Being a minority students in Quebec schools
- Pressure from school, family and friends
- Integration / Marginalization
- Free time on weekend
- Things they do for fun

➤ **To your knowledge, do you think high educational attainment of the Chinese in Quebec (Canada) has been rewarded by commensurate income or occupation? Why?**

➤ **In order to succeed in this society, what do you think are the most important characteristics, abilities, and skills a person (from a minority) must possess? In which way, do you think these students can obtain these abovementioned characteristics, abilities, and skills?**

➤ **How do you see the future of these students?**

**9. Comments or suggestions**

➤ **Would you have any suggestions or other comments related to the questions we have just discussed?- Are there some elements we have not discussed which your find important?**

## Appendix B: Consent Letters and Forms

### I Consent Letters to Parents



Dear Parent,

Achieving school success is a significant challenge faced by all students and their parents, including those of immigrant origin. Furthermore, it is an essential requirement for the economic stability, vitality and development of their community as well as the host country.

The Chinese community is one of the fastest growing ethno-cultural groups in Canada and in Quebec. According to a recent research, Canadian youth of Chinese origin experience a high school success compared with other ethnic minority groups, and even the majority groups. In a context where reducing high school drop-out rates in the full student body is a priority, it is important to better understand the factors influencing their success. However, few studies have been carried out to document the experience of socio-educational integration of Chinese youth in Quebec, where the principal language of instruction is French. Furthermore, international literature indicates that students of Chinese origin often report poor psychological and social adjustment. An exploration of the overall social and school integration of these students is therefore needed.

As a Chinese immigrant, I am interested in this phenomenon for my Ph.D. study in University of Montreal. I have received supports of my thesis advisor, Prof. Marie Mc Andrew, Holder of Canadian Research Chair on Education and Ethnic Relations.

My research seeks, on the one hand, to examine in detail the impact of French schools, family and ethnic community on the academic achievement students of Chinese origin, and on the other hand, to draw a fuller picture of their school experiences and pathways in a French dominant culture. It will involve three secondary schools in Montreal with the highest number of students of Chinese origin, one of which is your child's school. This study has already received the approval of Marguerite-Bourgeoys School Board and St-Laurent Secondary School.

I intend to understand the research problem from the perspective of school teachers and personnel, as well as that of Chinese parents. Your participation is therefore invaluable to us. However, it necessitates your written consent. A consent form requiring your signature is attached to this letter.

By accepting to be a part of this research, you will participate in a group interview. The interview will be carried out in school by researcher. The interview questions will essentially revolve around your child' educational pathways and his / her socio-academic experiences here in Quebec and in his/ her country of origin, if applicable. Furthermore, it is possible that we solicit an individual interview with you, as well as a participant observation on activities related to the schooling of your child in your home or in the organizations within the Chinese community.

Rest assured that your identity will remain anonymous and confidential at all stages of the research and dissemination of the research results.

Your participation in this research does not involve any particular risks or disadvantages. However, if this occurs, please do not hesitate to talk about it with the researcher.

You will receive a letter summarizing the study's main conclusions and recommendations. A final report will also be transmitted to your child's school.

No financial compensation will be paid to you for the participation of your child in this research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ming Sun  
Ph.D. candidate  
Department of educational administration and foundations  
Faculty of Educational Sciences  
Université de Montréal

Research Supervisor:

Marie Mc Andrew, Holder, Canada Research Chair on Education and Ethnic Relations. Professor, Department of Administration and Foundations of Education, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Université de Montréal. Co-director, Centre for Ethnic Studies of Montreal universities (CEETUM)

Cher Parent,

La réussite scolaire est un enjeu d'une grande importance pour tous les élèves et leurs parents, y compris ceux d'origine immigrée. De plus, elle joue un rôle essentiel dans l'avenir socioéconomique de leur communauté, ainsi que du pays d'accueil.

La communauté chinoise est un groupe ethnoculturel qui connaît une forte croissance au Canada et au Québec. D'après une recherche récente, les jeunes canadiens d'origine chinoise connaissent une performance remarquable en comparaison avec d'autres groupes minoritaires et, même avec les groupes majoritaires. Dans un contexte où la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire chez l'ensemble des élèves est une priorité, il est pertinent de mieux comprendre les facteurs à l'origine d'une telle réussite. Toutefois, le vécu scolaire de ces jeunes est relativement peu documenté au Québec, où la principale langue de scolarisation est le français. De plus, la littérature internationale indique que le succès des jeunes chinois ne favorise pas toujours leur intégration sociale et leur bien-être psychologique. Il est donc également important de dresser un portrait plus large de leur expérience scolaire. .

En tant qu'immigrante d'origine chinoise, je m'intéresse à ce fait dans le cadre de mon doctorat qui se réalise à l'Université de Montréal. J'ai également reçu le soutien de ma directrice de recherche, Madame Marie Mc Andrew, la titulaire de Chaire de recherche du Canada sur l'Éducation et les rapports ethniques.

Notre recherche vise ces deux objectifs. Dans un premier temps, nous voulons explorer l'impact de trois grands types de facteur qui influencent la réussite de ces jeunes. Soient ceux qui sont liés à l'école, à la famille et à la communauté. Dans un second temps, nous nous penchons sur leur intégration scolaire et sociale plus large dans un contexte francophone. L'école de votre enfant a été choisie parce que c'est une des écoles secondaires au Québec où on retrouve une forte concentration des ces élèves. Cette recherche a déjà reçu l'autorisation de la Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys et celle de la direction de l'école.

Dans cette recherche, nous avons l'intention de recueillir la perception de la direction des intervenants scolaires et celle des parents. Pour cette raison, votre participation est d'une valeur inestimable pour nous. Elle nécessite cependant votre consentement écrit. Un formulaire de consentement requérant votre signature est joint à cette lettre.

En acceptant de faire partie de la recherche, vous participerez à une entrevue en groupe. Cette entrevue aura lieu dans un local de l'école de votre enfant. Les questions de l'entrevue porteront essentiellement sur son vécu socio-scolaire ici au Québec, ainsi que dans le pays d'origine, si c'est le cas. Par la suite, il est possible que nous vous

sollicitations pour une entrevue individuelle et des observations sur des activités liées à l'apprentissage scolaire que vous menez avec votre enfant soit dans votre domicile et soit dans des organismes communautaires.

Soyez assuré que votre identité restera anonyme et confidentielle à toutes les étapes de la recherche et de la diffusion des résultats.

Votre participation dans cette recherche ne soulève pas de risques ou d'inconvénients particuliers. Cependant, si cela se produit, n'hésitez pas à en parler avec la chercheuse.

Vous recevrez une lettre résumant les principales conclusions et recommandations de la recherche. Un rapport final sera également transmis à la direction de l'école de votre jeune.

Aucune compensation financière ne vous sera versée pour la participation de votre enfant à cette recherche.

Merci de votre collaboration.

Sincèrement,

*Ming Sun*

Étudiante au 3<sup>e</sup> cycle  
Département d'Administration et fondements de l'éducation  
Faculté des sciences de l'éducation  
Université de Montréal

**Direction de la recherche :**

Marie Mc Andrew, Titulaire, Chaire de recherche du Canada sur l'Éducation et les rapports ethniques. Professeure titulaire, Département de Administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal. Codirectrice, Centre d'études ethniques des universités montréalaises (CEETUM)

## II Cosent Letters to Parents for Students



Dear Parent,

Achieving school success is a significant challenge faced by all students and their parents, including those of immigrant origin. Furthermore, it is an essential requirement for the economic stability, vitality and development of their community as well as the host country.

The Chinese community is one of the fastest growing ethno-cultural groups in Canada and in Quebec. According to a recent research, Canadian youth of Chinese origin experience a high school success compared with other ethnic minority groups, and even the majority groups. In a context where reducing high school drop-out rates in the full student body is a priority, it is important to better understand the factors influencing their success. However, few studies have been carried out to document the experience of socio-educational integration of Chinese youth in Quebec, where the principal language of instruction is French. Furthermore, international literature indicates that students of Chinese origin often report poor psychological and social adjustment. An exploration of the overall social and school integration of these students is therefore needed.

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I intend to understand the research problem from the perspective of school teachers and personnel, as well as from that of students of Chinese Origin. The participation of your child is therefore invaluable to us. However, it necessitates your written consent. A consent form requiring your signature is attached to this letter.

By accepting to be a part of this research, your child will participate in an individual interview. The interview will be carried out in a classroom in his/her school with the door open. The interview questions will essentially revolve around the students' educational pathways and their socio-academic experiences here in Quebec and in China (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao), if applicable.

Rest assured that your child's identity will remain anonymous and confidential at all stages of the research and dissemination of the research results.

The participation of your child in this research does not involve any particular risks or disadvantages. At any moment, you may talk with the researcher and ask her questions if you have concerns regarding the participation of your child. If necessary, she will refer you to a resource person of your child's school.

By the end of this research, you will receive a letter summarizing the main findings and recommendations. A final report will also be transmitted to your child's school.

No financial compensation will be paid to you for the participation of your child in this research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ming Sun  
Ph.D. candidate  
Department of educational administration and foundations  
Faculty of Educational Sciences  
Université de Montréal

Research Supervisor:

Marie Mc Andrew, Holder, Canada Research Chair on Education and Ethnic Relations.  
Professor, Department of Administration and Foundations of Education, Faculty of  
Educational Sciences, Université de Montréal. Co-director, Centre for Ethnic Studies of  
Montreal universities (CEETUM)

Cher Parent,

La réussite scolaire est un enjeu d'une grande importance pour tous les élèves et leurs parents, y compris ceux d'origine immigrée. De plus, elle joue un rôle essentiel dans l'avenir socioéconomique de leur communauté, ainsi que du pays d'accueil.

La communauté chinoise est un groupe ethnoculturel qui connaît une forte croissance au Canada et au Québec. D'après une recherche récente, les jeunes canadiens d'origine chinoise connaissent une performance remarquable en comparaison avec d'autres groupes minoritaires et, même avec les groupes majoritaires. Dans un contexte où la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire chez l'ensemble des élèves est une priorité, il est pertinent de mieux comprendre les facteurs à l'origine d'une telle réussite. Toutefois, le vécu scolaire de ces jeunes est relativement peu documenté au Québec, où la principale langue de scolarisation est le français. De plus, la littérature internationale indique que le succès des jeunes chinois ne favorise pas toujours leur intégration sociale et leur bien-être psychologique. Il est donc également important de dresser un portrait plus large de leur expérience scolaire.

En tant qu'immigrante d'origine chinoise, je m'intéresse à ce fait dans le cadre de mon doctorat qui se réalise à l'Université de Montréal. J'ai également reçu le soutien de ma directrice de recherche, Madame Marie Mc Andrew, titulaire de Chaire de recherche du Canada sur l'Éducation et les rapports ethniques.

Notre recherche vise ces deux objectifs. Dans un premier temps, nous voulons explorer l'impact de trois grands types de facteur qui influencent la réussite de ces jeunes, soit ceux qui sont liés à l'école, à la famille et à la communauté. Dans un second temps, nous nous penchons sur leur intégration scolaire et sociale plus large dans un contexte francophone. L'école de votre enfant a été choisie parce que c'est une des écoles secondaires au Québec où on retrouve une forte concentration des ces élèves. Cette recherche a déjà reçu l'autorisation de la Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys et celle de la direction de l'école.

Dans cette recherche, nous avons l'intention de recueillir la perception de la direction des intervenants scolaires et celle des élèves. Pour cette raison, la participation de votre enfant est d'une valeur inestimable pour nous. Elle nécessite cependant votre consentement écrit. Un formulaire de consentement requérant votre signature est joint à cette lettre.

En acceptant de faire partie de la recherche, votre enfant participera à une entrevue individuelle. Cette entrevue sera effectuée à son école par la chercheuse dans un local de l'école dont la porte sera entrouverte. Les questions de l'entrevue porteront essentiellement sur son vécu socio-scolaire ici au Québec, ainsi qu'en Chine, si c'est le cas.

Soyez assuré que l'identité de votre enfant restera anonyme et confidentielle à toutes les étapes de la recherche et de la diffusion des résultats.

La participation de votre enfant dans cette recherche ne soulève pas de risques ou d'inconvénients particuliers. À n'importe quel moment, vous pouvez parler avec la chercheuse et lui poser des questions si vous avez des inquiétudes concernant la participation de votre enfant. S'il y a lieu, elle pourra vous référer à une personne-ressource de l'école de votre jeune.

À la fin de recherche, vous recevrez une lettre résumant les principales conclusions et recommandations de la recherche. Un rapport final sera également transmis à la direction de l'école de votre jeune.

Aucune compensation financière ne vous sera versée pour la participation de votre enfant à cette recherche.

Merci de votre collaboration.

Sincèrement,

*Ming Sun*

Étudiante au 3<sup>e</sup> cycle  
Département d'Administration et fondements de l'éducation  
Faculté des sciences de l'éducation  
Université de Montréal

**Direction de la recherche :**

Marie Mc Andrew, Titulaire, Chaire de recherche du Canada sur l'Éducation et les rapports ethniques. Professeure titulaire, Département de Administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal. Codirectrice, Centre d'études ethniques des universités montréalaises (CEETUM)

## III Consent Forms to Parents

### CONSENT FORM: PARENTAL VERSION

**Title of Study:** Academic Achievement of Chinese Origin Students in a French Speaking Context: the role of school, family, and community

**Researcher:** Ming Sun

**Research Supervisor:** Marie Mc Andrew, Full Professor, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation

#### A) INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

##### 1. Purpose of the study :

The Chinese community is one of the fastest growing ethno-cultural groups in Canada and in Quebec. According to a recent research, Canadian youth of Chinese origin experience a high school success compared with other ethnic minority groups, and even the majority groups. In a context where reducing high school drop-out rates in the full student body is a priority, it is important to better understand the factors influencing their success. However, few studies have been carried out to document the experience of socio-educational integration of Chinese youth in Quebec, where the principal language of instruction is French. Furthermore, international literature indicates that students of Chinese origin often report poor psychological and social adjustment. An exploration of the overall social and school integration of these students is therefore needed.

My research seeks, on the one hand, to examine in detail the impact of French schools, family and ethnic community on the academic achievement students of Chinese origin, and on the other hand, to draw a fuller picture of their school experiences and pathways in a French dominant culture. It will involve three secondary schools in Montreal with the highest number of students of Chinese origin, one of which is your child's school.

##### 2. Participation in the study

Your participation in this study will consist of meeting the researcher for a group interview. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes and will be carried out in the school of your child. Interview will be recorded and kept for analysis.

##### 3. Confidentiality

The information you provide to us will remain absolutely confidential. Audio records and field notes will be erased. Each study participant will be given a number, and only the researcher will have access to the list of participants and their assigned numbers. Furthermore, field notes, interview protocol, audio files will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office in University of Montreal. No information that can be used to identify you in any way will be

published. Personal data, audio files will be shredded and erased by 1st January 2019. Only data that does not allow you to be identified can be kept after this date.

#### **4. Benefits and risks**

By taking part in this study, you will contribute to the development of measures needed to improve the school experiences of Chinese origin students in Quebec. Your participation will also help me successfully complete my doctoral dissertation and studies. There is no particular risk involved in participating in this study. However, should this happen, don't hesitate to talk to the researcher about it.

#### **5. Right to withdraw from the research**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from this research at any time without penalty. If you decide to withdraw from this study, don't hesitate to contact the researcher at the phone number listed on the last page of this document. If you withdraw from this study, the personal information and data will be destroyed immediately.

#### **6. Dissemination of the results**

Once approved by the University of Montreal, you will receive a letter summarizing the study's main conclusions and recommendations. A final report will also be transmitted to your child's school.

#### **7. Allowance**

No financial compensation will be paid to the respondent for participating in this research.

#### **B) CONSENT**

I declare that I have read the information above, received answers to my questions about participating in this study, and that I understand the purpose, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of the study.

After careful consideration, I agree that my child take part in this study. I understand that he/she may withdraw at any time with simple verbal notice, without giving any reason.

I agree that the interview may be electronically recorded if necessary. YES  NO

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_  
Last name of the parent : \_\_\_\_\_ First name of parent : \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that I have explained, to the best of my knowledge, the purpose, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of this study for the participants.

Signature of the researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

For any question about the study or to withdraw your participation, please contact Ming Sun, the researcher.

Any complaint about your participation in this study can be addressed to the Université de Montréal ombudsperson.

## **FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT**

### **Parents**

**Titre de la recherche:** La réussite scolaire des élèves d'origine chinoise dans un contexte francophone : le rôle de l'école, de la famille et de la communauté

**Chercheure :** Ming Sun

**Directrice de recherche :** Marie Mc Andrew, professeure titulaire, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation

#### A) RENSEIGNEMENTS AUX PARTICIPANTS

### **1. Objectifs de la recherche**

La communauté chinoise est un groupe ethnoculturel qui connaît une forte croissance au Canada et au Québec. D'après une recherche récente, les jeunes canadiens d'origine chinoise connaissent une performance remarquable en comparaison avec d'autres groupes minoritaires et, même avec les groupes majoritaires. Dans un contexte où la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire chez l'ensemble des élèves est une priorité, il est pertinent de mieux comprendre les facteurs à l'origine d'une telle réussite. Toutefois, le vécu scolaire de ces jeunes est relativement peu documenté au Québec, où la principale langue de scolarisation est le français. De plus, la littérature internationale indique que le succès des jeunes chinois ne favorise pas toujours leur intégration sociale et leur bien-être psychologique. Il est donc également important de dresser un portrait plus large de leur expérience scolaire.

Notre recherche vise ces deux objectifs. Dans un premier temps, nous voulons explorer l'impact de trois grands types de facteur qui influencent la réussite de ces jeunes. Soient ceux qui sont liés à l'école, à la famille et à la communauté. Dans un second temps, nous nous penchons sur leur intégration scolaire et sociale plus large dans un contexte francophone. L'école de votre enfant a été choisie parce que c'est une des écoles secondaires au Québec où on retrouve une forte concentration des ces élèves. Dans cette recherche, nous avons l'intention de recueillir la perception de la direction des intervenants scolaires et celle des parents.

### **2. Participation à la recherche**

La participation à cette recherche consiste à rencontrer la chercheure pour une entrevue en groupe. Cette entrevue durera environ 90 minutes et aura lieu dans les locaux de l'école de votre enfant. Elle sera enregistrée sur audio.

### **3. Confidentialité**

Tous les renseignements recueillis à votre sujet demeureront entièrement confidentiels. Les entrevues seront retranscrites et les enregistrements effacés. Chaque participant à la recherche se verra attribuer un numéro et seule la chercheuse à cet effet aura la liste des participants et du numéro qui leur aura été accordé. De plus, les renseignements seront conservés dans un classeur sous clé situé dans le bureau de la chercheuse à l'Université de Montréal. Aucune information permettant de vous identifier d'une façon ou d'une autre ne sera publiée. Ces renseignements personnels et les notes seront détruits au plus tard le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2019. Seules les données ne permettant pas de vous identifier pourront être conservées après cette date.

#### **4. Avantages et inconvénients**

En participant à cette recherche, vous pouvez contribuer à l'avancement des connaissances et à l'amélioration du vécu scolaire des élèves québécois d'origine chinoise. Votre participation à la recherche pourra également favoriser la réussite de mes études au doctorat. Votre participation dans cette recherche ne soulève pas de risques ou d'inconvénients particuliers. Cependant, si cela se produit, n'hésitez pas à en parler avec la chercheuse.

#### **5. Droit de retrait**

Votre participation est entièrement volontaire. Vous êtes libre de vous retirer en tout temps par avis verbal, sans préjudice et sans devoir justifier votre décision. Si vous décidez de vous retirer du projet de recherche, vous pouvez communiquer avec la chercheuse, au numéro de téléphone indiqué à la dernière page de ce document. Si vous vous retirez de la recherche, les renseignements personnels qui vous concernent qui auront été recueillis au moment de votre retrait seront détruits.

#### **6. Diffusion des resultants**

Une fois approuvée par l'Université de Montréal, vous recevrez une lettre résumant les principales conclusions et recommandations de la recherche. Un rapport final sera également transmis à la direction de l'école de votre jeune.

#### **7. Indemnité**

Les participants ne recevront pas de compensation financière pour leur participation à la recherche.

#### **B) CONSENTEMENT**

Je déclare avoir pris connaissance des informations ci-dessus, avoir obtenu les réponses à mes questions sur ma participation à la recherche et comprendre le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de cette recherche.

Après réflexion et un délai raisonnable, je consens à ce que mon enfant participe à cette étude. Je sais que mon enfant peut se retirer en tout temps, sur simple avis verbal, sans aucun préjudice et sans avoir à justifier sa décision

J'accepte que les entrevues soient enregistrées sur bande audio, si nécessaire : OUI  NON

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Nom : \_\_\_\_\_ Prénom : \_\_\_\_\_

Je déclare avoir expliqué le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de l'étude et avoir répondu au meilleur de ma connaissance aux questions posées.

Signature de la chercheure : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Pour toute question relative à la recherche ou pour vous retirer du projet, vous pouvez communiquer avec Ming Sun, la chercheure.

Toute plainte relative à votre participation à cette recherche peut être adressée à l'ombudsman de l'Université de Montréal.

**Un exemplaire du formulaire d'information et de consentement signé doit être remis au participant**

## IV Consent Forms to Parents for Sarents

### CONSENTE FORM: STUDENT VERSION

**Title of Study:** Academic Achievement of Chinese Origin Students in a French Speaking Context: the role of school, family, and community

**Researcher:** Ming Sun

**Research Supervisor:** Marie Mc Andrew, Full Professor, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal

#### A) INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

##### 1. Purpose of the study :

The Chinese community is one of the fastest growing ethno-cultural groups in Canada and in Quebec. According to a recent research, Canadian youth of Chinese origin experience a high school success compared with other ethnic minority groups, and even the majority groups. In a context where reducing high school drop-out rates in the full student body is a priority, it is important to better understand the factors influencing their success. However, few studies have been carried out to document the experience of socio-educational integration of Chinese youth in Quebec, where the principal language of instruction is French. Furthermore, international literature indicates that students of Chinese origin often report poor psychological and social adjustment. An exploration of the overall social and school integration of these students is therefore needed.

Our research seeks, on the one hand, to examine in detail the impact of French schools, family and ethnic community on the academic achievement students of Chinese origin, and on the other hand, to draw a fuller picture of their school experiences and pathways in a French dominant culture. It will involve three secondary schools in Montreal with the highest number of students of Chinese origin, one of which is your child's school.

##### 2. Participation in the study

The participation of your child in this study will consist of meeting the researcher for an individual interview. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes and will be conducted in his / her school under the supervision of the school staff. The questions of interview will be explained to him / her in advance. These questions will focus on his / her school experience in Quebec and in your home country (if applicable). Interview will be recorded and kept for analysis. Field notes will be taken during the observation.

##### 3. Confidentiality

The information you child provide to us will remain absolutely confidential. Audio records will be erased. Each study participant will be given a number, and only the researcher will have access to the list of participants and their assigned numbers. Furthermore, field notes, interview protocol, audio files will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office in University of

Montreal. No information that can be used to identify your child in any way will be published. Personal data, audio files will be shredded and erased by 1st January 2019. Only data that does not allow your child to be identified can be kept after this date.

#### **4. Benefits and risks**

By taking part in this study, your child will contribute to the development of measures needed to improve the school experiences of Chinese origin students in Quebec. His / her participation will also help me successfully complete my doctoral dissertation and studies. There is no particular risk involved in participating in this study. However, should this happen, don't hesitate to talk to the researcher about it. If necessary, she can refer you to a resource person at his / her school.

#### **5. Right to withdraw from the research**

Your child's participation in this research is completely voluntary. He or she has the right to withdraw from this research at any time without penalty. If he or she decides to withdraw from this study, please feel free to contact the researcher at the phone number listed on the last page of this document. If he or she withdraws from this study, the personal information will be destroyed immediately.

#### **6. Dissemination of the results**

Once approved by the University of Montreal, you will receive a letter summarizing the study's main conclusions and recommendations. A final report will also be transmitted to your child's school.

#### **7. Allowance**

No financial compensation will be paid to the respondent for participating in this research.

#### **B) CONSENT**

I declare that I have read the information above, received answers to my questions about participating in this study, and that I understand the purpose, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of the study.

After careful consideration, I agree that my child take part in this study. I understand that he/ she may withdraw at any time with simple verbal notice, without giving any reason.

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Last name of the parent : \_\_\_\_\_ First name of parent : \_\_\_\_\_

This study was explained to me and I have received permission from my parent (s). I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Last name of the student : \_\_\_\_\_ First name of the student: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that I have explained, to the best of my knowledge, the purpose, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of this study for the participants.

Signature of the researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

For any question about the study or to withdraw your participation, please contact Ming Sun, the researcher.

Any complaint about your participation in this study can be addressed to the Université de Montréal ombudsperson.

## **FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT**

### **Élèves**

**Titre de la recherche:** La réussite scolaire des élèves d'origine chinoise dans un contexte francophone : le rôle de l'école, de la famille et de la communauté

**Chercheure :** Ming Sun

**Directrice de recherche :** Marie Mc Andrew, professeure titulaire, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation

#### A) RENSEIGNEMENTS AUX PARTICIPANTS

##### **1. Objectifs de la recherche**

La communauté chinoise est un groupe ethnoculturel qui connaît une forte croissance au Canada et au Québec. D'après une recherche récente, les jeunes canadiens d'origine chinoise connaissent une performance remarquable en comparaison avec d'autres groupes minoritaires et, même avec les groupes majoritaires. Dans un contexte où la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire chez l'ensemble des élèves est une priorité, il est pertinent de mieux comprendre les facteurs à l'origine d'une telle réussite. Toutefois, le vécu scolaire de ces jeunes est relativement peu documenté au Québec, où la principale langue de scolarisation est le français. De plus, la littérature internationale indique que le succès des jeunes chinois ne favorise pas toujours leur intégration sociale et leur bien-être psychologique. Il est donc également important de dresser un portrait plus large de leur expérience scolaire.

Notre recherche vise ces deux objectifs. Dans un premier temps, nous voulons explorer l'impact de trois grands types de facteur qui influencent la réussite de ces jeunes. Soient ceux qui sont liés à l'école, à la famille et à la communauté. Dans un second temps, nous nous penchons sur leur intégration scolaire et sociale plus large dans un contexte francophone. L'école de votre enfant a été choisie parce que c'est une des écoles secondaires au Québec où on retrouve une forte concentration des ces élèves.

##### **2. Participation à la recherche**

La participation de votre enfant à cette recherche consiste à rencontrer la chercheure pour une entrevue individuelle. Cette entrevue durera environ 90 minutes et aura lieu dans les locaux de l'école. Les questions de l'entrevue lui seront expliquées au préalable. Celles-ci porteront

essentiellement sur son vécu socio-scolaire ici au Québec, ainsi qu'à votre pays d'origine, si c'est le cas. L'entrevue sera enregistrée sur audio.

### **3. Confidentialité**

Tous les renseignements recueillis au sujet de votre enfant demeureront entièrement confidentiels. Les entrevues seront retranscrites et les enregistrements effacés. Chaque participant à la recherche se verra attribuer un numéro et seule la chercheuse à cet effet aura la liste des participants et du numéro qui leur aura été accordé. De plus, les renseignements seront conservés dans un classeur sous clé situé dans le bureau de la chercheuse à l'Université de Montréal. Aucune information permettant d'identifier votre enfant d'une façon ou d'une autre ne sera publiée. Ces renseignements personnels et les notes seront détruits au plus tard le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2019. Seules les données ne permettant pas d'identifier votre enfant pourront être conservées après cette date.

### **4. Avantages et inconvénients**

En participant à cette recherche, votre enfant contribuera au développement des interventions nécessaires à l'amélioration du vécu scolaire des élèves québécois d'origine chinoise. La participation de votre enfant à la recherche pourra également favoriser la réussite de mes études au doctorat. Il se pourrait que le fait que votre enfant raconte son expérience suscite des réflexions ou des souvenirs émouvants. Si cela se produit, n'hésitez pas à en parler avec la chercheuse. S'il y a lieu, elle pourra vous référer à une personne-ressource de votre école.

### **5. Droit de retrait**

Participation de votre enfant est entièrement volontaire. Elle / il est libre de se retirer en tout temps par avis verbal, sans préjudice et sans devoir justifier sa décision. Si votre enfant décide de se retirer du projet de recherche, vous pouvez communiquer avec la chercheuse, au numéro de téléphone indiqué à la dernière page de ce document. Si elle/il se retire de la recherche, les renseignements personnels qui la / le concernent qui auront été recueillis au moment de son retrait seront détruits.

### **6. Diffusion des résultats**

Une fois approuvée par l'Université de Montréal, vous recevrez une lettre résumant les principales conclusions et recommandations de la recherche. Un rapport final sera également transmis à la direction de l'école de votre jeune.

### **7. Indemnité**

Les participants ne recevront pas de compensation financière pour leur participation à la recherche.

#### **B) CONSENTEMENT**

Je déclare avoir pris connaissance des informations ci-dessus, avoir obtenu les réponses à mes questions sur ma participation à la recherche et comprendre le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de cette recherche.

Après réflexion et un délai raisonnable, je consens à ce que mon enfant participe à cette étude. Je sais que mon enfant peut se retirer en tout temps, sur simple avis verbal, sans aucun préjudice et sans avoir à justifier sa décision

J'accepte que les entrevues soient enregistrées sur bande audio, si nécessaire : OUI  NON

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_  
Nom du parent : \_\_\_\_\_ Prénom du parent : \_\_\_\_\_

On m'a expliqué le projet de recherche et j'accepte d'y participer. Je sais que je peux me retirer en tout temps, sans avoir à donner de raison

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_  
Nom de l'élève: \_\_\_\_\_ Prénom de l'élève : \_\_\_\_\_

Je déclare avoir expliqué le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de l'étude et avoir répondu au meilleur de ma connaissance aux questions posées.

Signature de la chercheure : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Pour toute question relative à la recherche ou pour vous retirer du projet, vous pouvez communiquer avec Ming Sun, la chercheure.

Toute plainte relative à votre participation à cette recherche peut être adressée à l'ombudsman de l'Université de Montréal.

**Un exemplaire du formulaire d'information et de consentement signé doit être remis au participant**

## IV Consent Forms to Principals and Other Non-teaching School Staff

### FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT Membres de la direction et acteurs scolaires

**Titre de la recherche:** La réussite scolaire des élèves d'origine chinoise dans un contexte francophone : le rôle de l'école, de la famille et de la communauté

**Chercheure :** Ming Sun, candidate au doctorat, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal

**Directrice de recherche :** Marie Mc Andrew, professeure titulaire, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal

#### A) RENSEIGNEMENTS AUX PARTICIPANTS

##### 1. Objectifs de la recherche

La communauté chinoise est un groupe ethnoculturel qui connaît une forte croissance au Canada et au Québec. D'après une recherche récente, les jeunes canadiens d'origine chinoise connaissent une performance remarquable en comparaison avec d'autres groupes minoritaires, voire même avec les groupes majoritaires. Dans un contexte où la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire chez l'ensemble des élèves est une priorité, il est pertinent de mieux comprendre les facteurs à l'origine d'une telle réussite. Toutefois, le vécu scolaire de ces jeunes est relativement peu documenté au Québec où la principale langue de scolarisation est le français. De plus, la littérature internationale indique que le succès des jeunes chinois ne favorise pas toujours leur intégration sociale et leur bien-être psychologique. Il est donc également important de dresser un portrait plus large de leur expérience scolaire.

Notre recherche vise les deux objectifs suivants : dans un premier temps, nous explorerons l'impact de trois grands types de facteurs qui influencent la réussite de ces jeunes, soit ceux qui sont liés à l'école, à la famille, ainsi qu'à la communauté; dans un second temps, nous nous pencherons sur leur intégration scolaire et sociale plus large dans un contexte francophone. Votre école a été choisie parce que c'est une des écoles secondaires au Québec où on retrouve une forte concentration de cette clientèle.

##### 2. Participation à la recherche

La participation à cette recherche consiste à rencontrer la chercheure pour une entrevue individuelle. L'entrevue durera environ 90 minutes et aura lieu dans les locaux de votre école (un lieu que vous choisirez) pendant deux périodes (selon votre disponibilité) : du 15 mars au 20 avril 2012 et du 1er septembre au 15 octobre 2012. L'entrevue sera enregistrée (sur enregistreuse audio).

##### 3. Confidentialité

Tous les renseignements recueillis à votre sujet demeureront entièrement confidentiels. Les entrevues et les notes seront retranscrites et les enregistrements effacés. Chaque participant à la recherche se verra attribuer un numéro et seule la chercheure sera en possession de la liste des participants et du numéro qui leur aura été accordé. De plus, les renseignements seront conservés dans un classeur sous-clé situé dans le bureau de la chercheure à l'Université de

Montréal. Aucune information permettant de vous identifier d'une façon ou d'une autre ne sera publiée. Ces renseignements personnels seront détruits au plus tard le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2019. Seules les données ne permettant pas de vous identifier pourront être conservées après cette date, le temps nécessaire à leur utilisation dans le cadre de cette recherche.

#### **4. Avantages et inconvénients**

En participant à cette recherche, vous contribuerez à l'avancement des connaissances et à l'amélioration du vécu scolaire des élèves québécois d'origine chinoise. De plus, vous ne courrez pas de risques ou d'inconvénients particuliers. Cependant, si cela se produisait, n'hésitez pas à en parler avec la chercheure.

#### **5. Droit de retrait**

Votre participation est entièrement volontaire. Vous êtes libre de vous retirer en tout temps par avis verbal, sans préjudice et sans devoir justifier votre décision. Si vous décidez de vous retirer du projet de recherche, vous pouvez communiquer avec la chercheure, au numéro de téléphone indiqué à la dernière page de ce document. Si vous vous retirez de la recherche, les renseignements personnels qui vous concernent qui auront été recueillis seront détruits au moment de votre retrait.

#### **6. Diffusion des résultats**

Vous recevrez une lettre résumant les principales conclusions et recommandations de la recherche. Un rapport final sera transmis à la direction de votre école. Les résultats pertinents seront également diffusés auprès de l'ensemble des organismes de la communauté chinoise, ainsi qu'auprès d'organismes communautaires et scolaires intéressés par la thématique de la réussite scolaire des élèves issus de l'immigration.

#### **7. Indemnité**

Les participants ne recevront pas de compensation financière pour leur participation à la recherche.

#### **B) CONSENTEMENT**

Je déclare avoir pris connaissance des informations ci-dessus et avoir obtenu les réponses à mes questions sur ma participation à la recherche. Je comprends également le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de cette recherche.

Après réflexion et un délai raisonnable, je consens librement à prendre part à cette recherche. Je sais que je peux me retirer en tout temps sans préjudice et sans devoir justifier ma décision.

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_  
Nom : \_\_\_\_\_ Prénom : \_\_\_\_\_

Je déclare avoir expliqué le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de l'étude et avoir répondu au meilleur de ma connaissance aux questions posées.

Signature de la chercheure : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Pour toute question relative à la recherche ou pour vous retirer du projet, vous pouvez communiquer avec Ming Sun, la chercheuse.

Toute plainte relative à votre participation à cette recherche peut être adressée à l'ombudsman de l'Université de Montréal.

**Un exemplaire du formulaire d'information et de consentement signé doit être remis au participant**

## IV Consent Forms to Teachers

### FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT Enseignants

**Titre de la recherche:** La réussite scolaire des élèves d'origine chinoise dans un contexte francophone : le rôle de l'école, de la famille et de la communauté

**Chercheuse :** Ming Sun, candidate au doctorat, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal

**Directrice de recherche :** Marie Mc Andrew, professeure titulaire, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal

#### A) RENSEIGNEMENTS AUX PARTICIPANTS

##### 1. Objectifs de la recherche

La communauté chinoise est un groupe ethnoculturel qui connaît une forte croissance au Canada et au Québec. D'après une recherche récente, les jeunes canadiens d'origine chinoise connaissent une performance remarquable en comparaison avec d'autres groupes minoritaires, voire même avec les groupes majoritaires. Dans un contexte où la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire chez l'ensemble des élèves est une priorité, il est pertinent de mieux comprendre les facteurs à l'origine d'une telle réussite. Toutefois, le vécu scolaire de ces jeunes est relativement peu documenté au Québec, où la principale langue de scolarisation est le français. De plus, la littérature internationale indique que le succès des jeunes chinois ne favorise pas toujours leur intégration sociale et leur bien-être psychologique. Il est donc également important de dresser un portrait plus large de leur expérience scolaire.

Notre recherche vise les deux objectifs suivants : dans un premier temps, nous explorerons l'impact de trois grands types de facteurs qui influencent la réussite de ces jeunes, soit ceux qui sont liés à l'école, à la famille, ainsi qu'à la communauté; dans un second temps, nous nous pencherons sur leur intégration scolaire et sociale plus large dans un contexte francophone. Votre école a été choisie parce que c'est une des écoles secondaires au Québec où on retrouve une forte concentration de cette clientèle.

##### 2. Participation à la recherche

La participation à cette recherche consiste à rencontrer la chercheuse pour une entrevue individuelle et pour deux observations, une en classe et une autre lors d'une rencontre parents-professeurs (s'il y a lieu). L'entrevue durera environ 90 minutes et aura lieu dans les locaux de votre école (un lieu que vous choisirez) pendant la période : du 1er septembre au 15 octobre 2012. Les deux observations dureront 60 minutes chacune et auront lieu dans les locaux de votre école pendant la période du 1er septembre au 15 novembre 2012. L'entrevue sera enregistrée (sur enregistreuse audio). Pendant les deux observations, la chercheuse prendra des notes.

##### 3. Confidentialité

Tous les renseignements recueillis à votre sujet demeureront entièrement confidentiels. Les entrevues et les notes seront retranscrites et les enregistrements effacés. Chaque participant à

la recherche se verra attribuer un numéro et seule la chercheuse sera en possession de la liste des participants et du numéro qui leur aura été accordé. De plus, les renseignements seront conservés dans un classeur sous-clé situé dans le bureau de la chercheuse à l'Université de Montréal. Aucune information permettant de vous identifier d'une façon ou d'une autre ne sera publiée. Ces renseignements personnels seront détruits au plus tard le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2019. Seules les données ne permettant pas de vous identifier pourront être conservées après cette date, le temps nécessaire à leur utilisation dans le cadre de cette recherche.

#### **4. Avantages et inconvénients**

En participant à cette recherche, vous contribuerez à l'avancement des connaissances et à l'amélioration du vécu scolaire des élèves québécois d'origine chinoise. De plus, vous ne courrez pas de risques ou d'inconvénients particuliers. Cependant, si cela se produisait, n'hésitez pas à en parler avec la chercheuse.

#### **5. Droit de retrait**

Votre participation est entièrement volontaire. Vous êtes libre de vous retirer en tout temps par avis verbal, sans préjudice et sans devoir justifier votre décision. Si vous décidez de vous retirer du projet de recherche, vous pouvez communiquer avec la chercheuse, au numéro de téléphone indiqué à la dernière page de ce document. Si vous vous retirez de la recherche, les renseignements personnels qui vous concernent qui auront été recueillis seront détruits au moment de votre retrait.

#### **6. Diffusion des résultats**

Vous recevrez une lettre résumant les principales conclusions et recommandations de la recherche. Un rapport final sera transmis à la direction de votre école. Les résultats pertinents seront également diffusés auprès de l'ensemble des organismes de la communauté chinoise, ainsi qu'auprès d'organismes communautaires et scolaires intéressés par la thématique de la réussite scolaire des élèves issus de l'immigration.

#### **7. Indemnité**

Les participants ne recevront pas de compensation financière pour leur participation à la recherche.

#### **B) CONSENTEMENT**

Je déclare avoir pris connaissance des informations ci-dessus et avoir obtenu les réponses à mes questions sur ma participation à la recherche. Je comprends également le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de cette recherche.

Après réflexion et un délai raisonnable, je consens librement à prendre part à cette recherche. Je sais que je peux me retirer en tout temps sans préjudice et sans devoir justifier ma décision.

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Nom : \_\_\_\_\_ Prénom : \_\_\_\_\_

Je déclare avoir expliqué le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de l'étude et avoir répondu au meilleur de ma connaissance aux questions posées.

Signature de la chercheuse : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Pour toute question relative à la recherche ou pour vous retirer du projet, vous pouvez communiquer avec Ming Sun, la chercheure.

Toute plainte relative à votre participation à cette recherche peut être adressée à l'ombudsman de l'Université de Montréal.

**Un exemplaire du formulaire d'information et de consentement signé doit être remis au participant**

## V Consent Forms to Community Agents

### CONSENT FORM: COMMUNITY AGENT

**Title of Study:** Academic Achievement of Chinese Origin Students in a French Speaking Context: the role of school, family, and community

**Researcher:** Ming Sun, PhD candidate, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal

**Research Supervisor:** Marie Mc Andrew, Full Professor, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal

#### A) INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

##### 1. Purpose of the study

The Chinese community is one of the fastest growing ethno-cultural groups in Canada and in Quebec. According to a recent research, Canadian youth of Chinese origin experience a high school success compared with other ethnic minority groups, and even the majority groups. In a context where reducing high school drop-out rates in the full student body is a priority, it is important to better understand the factors influencing their success. However, few studies have been carried out to document the experience of socio-educational integration of Chinese youth in Quebec, where the principal language of instruction is French. Furthermore, international literature indicates that students of Chinese origin often report poor psychological and social adjustment. An exploration of the overall social and school integration of these students is therefore needed.

My research seeks, on the one hand, to examine in detail the impact of French schools, family and ethnic community on the academic achievement students of Chinese origin, and on the other hand, to draw a fuller picture of their school experiences and pathways in a French dominant culture. It will involve three secondary schools in Montreal with the highest number of students of Chinese origin. Your organization is chosen because we also intend to understand this issue from the perspective of some organizations within the Chinese community.

##### 2. Participation in the study

Your participation in this study will consist of meeting the researcher for an individual interview. The research questions will be explained to you in advance. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes and will be carried out in your office (or another place you like). Interview will be recorded and kept for analysis.

##### 3. Confidentiality

The information you provide to us will remain absolutely confidential. Audio records and field notes will be shredded and erased. Each study participant will be given a number, and only the researcher will have access to the list of participants and their assigned numbers. Furthermore, field notes, interview protocol, audio files will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office in University of Montreal. No information that can be used to identify you in any way will be published. Personal data, audio files will be shredded and erased by 1st January 2019. Only

data that does not allow you to be identified can be kept after this date for the purpose of this research, as only as long as this data is needed for the purposes of this research.

#### **4. Benefits and risks**

By taking part in this study, you will contribute to the development of measures needed to improve the school experiences of Chinese origin students in Quebec. There is no particular risk involved in participating in this study. However, if it occurs, don't hesitate to talk to the researcher about it.

#### **5. Right to withdraw from the research**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from this research at any time without penalty. If you decide to withdraw from this study, please feel free to contact the researcher at the phone number listed on the last page of this document. If you withdraw from this study, the personal information and data will be destroyed immediately.

#### **6. Dissemination of the results**

You will receive a letter summarizing the study's main conclusions and recommendations. The relevant findings of this research will also be disseminated to the organizations in the Chinese community as well as the mainstream community and educational organizations which are interested in the academic achievement of students of immigrant origin.

#### **7. Allowance**

No financial compensation will be paid to the respondent for participating in this research.

#### **B) CONSENT**

I declare that I have read the information above, received answers to my questions about participating in this study, and that I understand the purpose, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of the study.

After careful consideration, I agree that my child take part in this study. I understand that he/she may withdraw at any time with simple verbal notice, without giving any reason.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that I have explained, to the best of my knowledge, the purpose, nature, benefits, risks and disadvantages of this study for the participants.

Signature of the researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

For any question about the study or to withdraw your participation, please contact Ming Sun, the researcher.

Any complaint about your participation in this study can be addressed to the Université de Montréal ombudsperson.

## **FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT**

### **Intervenants communautaires**

**Titre de la recherche:** La réussite scolaire des élèves d'origine chinoise dans un contexte francophone : le rôle de l'école, de la famille et de la communauté

**Chercheure :** Ming Sun, candidate au doctorat, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal

**Directrice de recherche :** Marie Mc Andrew, professeure titulaire, Département d'administration et fondements de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal

#### **A) RENSEIGNEMENTS AUX PARTICIPANTS**

##### **1. Objectifs de la recherche**

La communauté chinoise est un groupe ethnoculturel qui connaît une forte croissance au Canada et au Québec. D'après une recherche récente, les jeunes canadiens d'origine chinoise connaissent une performance remarquable en comparaison avec d'autres groupes minoritaires, voire même avec les groupes majoritaires. Dans un contexte où la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire chez l'ensemble des élèves est une priorité, il est pertinent de mieux comprendre les facteurs à l'origine d'une telle réussite. Toutefois, le vécu scolaire de ces jeunes est relativement peu documenté au Québec, où la principale langue de scolarisation est le français. De plus, la littérature internationale indique que le succès des jeunes chinois ne favorise pas toujours leur intégration sociale et leur bien-être psychologique. Il est donc également important de dresser un portrait plus large de leur expérience scolaire.

Notre recherche vise les deux objectifs suivants : dans un premier temps, nous explorerons l'impact de trois grands types de facteurs qui influencent la réussite de ces jeunes, soit ceux qui sont liés à l'école, à la famille, ainsi qu'à la communauté; dans un second temps, nous nous pencherons sur leur intégration scolaire et sociale plus large dans un contexte francophone. Votre école a été choisie parce que c'est une des écoles secondaires au Québec où on retrouve une forte concentration de cette clientèle.

##### **2. Participation à la recherche**

La participation à cette recherche consiste à rencontrer la chercheure pour une entrevue. Les questions de la recherche vous seront expliquées au préalable. L'entrevue durera environ 90 minutes et aura lieu dans votre bureau (ou un lieu que vous choisirez) pendant la période du 21 avril au 1<sup>er</sup> Juillet 2012. L'entrevue sera enregistrée (sur enregistreuse audio).

##### **3. Confidentialité**

Tous les renseignements recueillis à votre sujet demeureront entièrement confidentiels. Les entrevues et les notes seront retranscrites et les enregistrements effacés. Chaque participant à la recherche se verra attribuer un numéro et seule la chercheure sera en possession de la liste des participants et du numéro qui leur aura été accordé. De plus, les renseignements seront conservés dans un classeur sous-clé situé dans le bureau de la chercheure à l'Université de Montréal. Aucune information permettant de vous identifier d'une façon ou d'une autre ne sera publiée. Ces renseignements personnels seront détruits au plus tard le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2019. Seules

les données ne permettant pas de vous identifier pourront être conservées après cette date, le temps nécessaire à leur utilisation dans le cadre de cette recherche.

#### **4. Avantages et inconvénients**

En participant à cette recherche, vous contribuerez à l'avancement des connaissances et à l'amélioration du vécu scolaire des élèves québécois d'origine chinoise. De plus, vous ne courrez pas de risques ou d'inconvénients particuliers. Cependant, si cela se produisait, n'hésitez pas à en parler avec la chercheuse.

#### **5. Droit de retrait**

Votre participation est entièrement volontaire. Vous êtes libre de vous retirer en tout temps par avis verbal, sans préjudice et sans devoir justifier votre décision. Si vous décidez de vous retirer du projet de recherche, vous pouvez communiquer avec la chercheuse, au numéro de téléphone indiqué à la dernière page de ce document. Si vous vous retirez de la recherche, les renseignements personnels qui vous concernent qui auront été recueillis seront détruits au moment de votre retrait.

#### **6. Diffusion des résultats**

Vous recevrez une lettre résumant les principales conclusions et recommandations de la recherche. Un rapport final sera transmis à la direction de votre école. Les résultats pertinents seront également diffusés auprès de l'ensemble des organismes de la communauté chinoise, ainsi qu'auprès d'organismes communautaires et scolaires intéressés par la thématique de la réussite scolaire des élèves issus de l'immigration.

#### **7. Indemnité**

Les participants ne recevront pas de compensation financière pour leur participation à la recherche.

### **B) CONSENTEMENT**

Je déclare avoir pris connaissance des informations ci-dessus et avoir obtenu les réponses à mes questions sur ma participation à la recherche. Je comprends également le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de cette recherche.

Après réflexion et un délai raisonnable, je consens librement à prendre part à cette recherche. Je sais que je peux me retirer en tout temps sans préjudice et sans devoir justifier ma décision.

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_  
Nom : \_\_\_\_\_ Prénom : \_\_\_\_\_

Je déclare avoir expliqué le but, la nature, les avantages, les risques et les inconvénients de l'étude et avoir répondu au meilleur de ma connaissance aux questions posées.

Signature de la chercheuse : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

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