

Université de Montréal

**Materializing Family Solidarity Transnationally:
How is family solidarity enacted in Chinese immigrant
families in Montreal in the dual-context of international
migration and the one-child policy?**

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Mémoire présenté à la Faculté des études supérieures
en vue de l'obtention du grade de
Maîtrise des sciences (M.Sc.) en sociologie

Mai 2016

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Abstract

This study aims to explore how family solidarity, especially pertaining to elderly parents, is materialized in Chinese immigrant families in Montreal. These solidarities are restricted to the dual-context of international migration and the one-child policy, which distinguishes this study from others.

The qualitative research method is used in this study. Fourteen participants were recruited for the interviews based on criteria such as their residence status in Canada, their immigration category, their gender, and their family structure (whether have siblings or not). The semi-directed interview grid was designed with the following themes: motivation to immigrate in consideration of the need of care for elderly parents, establishment in Montreal, and daily activities of family solidarity. To design the study and to analyze the data, the intergenerational solidarity theory from Bengtson et al., which is composed of six dimensions (normative, affective, consensual, associative, functional, and structural solidarity), was used.

The results show that the different level of development between China and Canada is the core-motivating factor of migration between these two countries. The over-sized population, the complicated relationship in the job market, and the high-level of pollution are considered as “push” factors that drive people to emigrate from China. As for Canada, its “pull” factors are education, relatively simple relationship in job market, good environment, and its relatively welcoming immigration policy.

The results also show that Chinese immigrants depend a lot on associative and functional solidarity while enacting transnational solidarity. Transnational communication and return visits are two important dimensions of associative solidarity. However, the method and the frequency of such a communication varies from person to person, which is strongly related to normative solidarity and affective solidarity with non-migrant parents. As for functional solidarity, it is usually manifested by financial exchange, grandparenting, and elderly care. However, Chinese immigrants have to compromise somehow while enacting functional solidarity because of the limited capacity determined by the two context of this study, namely international migration and the one-child policy.

Keywords : family solidarity, international migration, one-child policy, transnationalism

Résumé

L'objectif de cette recherche est d'explorer comment les solidarités familiales, en particulier autour des parents vieillissants, se concrétisent dans les familles immigrantes chinoises. Ces solidarités familiales renvoient à un double contexte dont il faut tenir compte et qui constitue la spécificité de notre objet de recherche, à savoir celui de la migration internationale d'une part et de la politique de l'enfant unique en Chine, d'autre part.

La méthode qualitative est utilisée dans cette recherche. Un échantillon de 14 participants ont été recrutés et rencontrés pour des entrevues. Le statut d'être immigrant, la catégorie d'immigration, être enfant unique ou non, et le sexe sont choisis comme des critères de sélection. La grille d'entretien, de type semi-directif couvrait les thèmes suivants : la motivation à immigrer en considérant des parents âgés, l'installation à Montréal, et des pratiques de solidarité familiale dans la vie quotidienne. Le cadre théorique mobilisé est celui de la solidarité intergénérationnelle proposée par Bengtson et al.. Ce cadre distingue six dimensions dans ces solidarités, à savoir la solidarité normative, affective, consensuelle, associative, fonctionnelle et structurelle.

Les résultats montrent que l'inégalité de développement entre la Chine et le Canada est le facteur le plus important qui encourage la migration entre ces deux pays, ceci au prix d'une dispersion du réseau potentiel de solidarité. La surpopulation, la relation complexe au marché du travail, et la pollution, sont tous considérés comme des « push » facteurs de la Chine qui poussent à l'émigration. Du côté du Canada, des « pull » facteurs sont l'éducation, les ouvertures du marché du travail, un bon environnement, et une politique d'immigration incitative.

Les immigrants chinois recourent beaucoup aux solidarités associatives et fonctionnelles. La communication transnationale et des voyages de retour sont deux formes importantes de la solidarité associative. Néanmoins, le mode et la fréquence de communication diffèrent beaucoup d'une personne à l'autre, ce qui est révélateur des formes de solidarité normative et de solidarité affective avec des membres de famille en Chine. Quant à la solidarité fonctionnelle, elle prend la forme d'échanges financiers, de « grandparenting » et les soins donnés aux parents âgés. Néanmoins, les immigrants chinois sont souvent forcés

de faire certains compromis dans la mise en œuvre des solidarités car ils sont tributaires des limites inhérentes au contexte de migration et de la politique de l'enfant unique.

Mots-clés : solidarité familiale, migration internationale, politique de l'enfant unique, transnationalisme

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To my lovely grandma, Meixiang.

Thanks

While writing this thesis, I have not only deeply felt the sorrow of writing, but also received tons of joy from creation. I want to thank many friends and family members, it is thanks to their support and encouragement that I could finally get where I want to be.

Thank you Marianne, thank you for accepting me as your student even though I was not able to say a complete sentence in French at ease when I first came to Université de Montréal. Thank you for your patience and your countless encouragement, from which I got the power to move on. Thank you for telling me what and how should a real sociologist think and do with your professional attitude as well as knowledge. Having the chance to work under your guidance must be the luckiest thing that happened to me during my studies at Université de Montréal.

Thank you Émilie. You are the first friend I made in Montreal. It is you who make me feel how warm this city is. Thank you Léa, I will always remember how we encourage each other on thesis writing. Thank you Niloo, you are so comprehensive that I can always feel less stressed and more encouraged after talking with you. Thanks to our expert of disguise, André; our specialist of research software, Héloïse; and our coolest friend, Bruno-Pier. I will never forget our “solidarité envers la fin du mémoire”. And also, I want to thank Yuhan, Miaomiao, Anqi, and Jie, thank you for making my life in Montreal so colorful.

Thanks for all my participants. Thank you for sharing me with your stories, even though some of them are full of sorrow. The completion of this thesis will not be possible without your precious sharing.

Tons of thanks for my mom, my dad, and my stepfather, it is thanks to your support that I finally made it. Thank you Shiran, thank you for loving me. Last, I want to thank my grandma, thank you for raising me up with countless love and care. I feel sorry for not having been back home and visit you for two years, but I will make it happen soon. I promise.

Remerciements

En faisant ce mémoire, j'ai non seulement éprouvé la souffrance de rédaction, mais aussi reçue beaucoup de joie provenant de création. Je veux bien rendre grâce à mes amis et ma famille, je ne serai pas capable à terminer ce mémoire sans leurs soutiens.

Merci Marianne. Merci de m'avoir accepté comme étudiante même si je n'étais pas capable de m'exprimer une seule phrase en Française très à l'aise au début de mes jours à l'Université de Montréal. Merci à votre patience ainsi que votre encouragement, d'où j'ai obtenu la motivation la plus abondante à continuer. Merci d'avoir m'enseigné comment devais-je penser et faire comme une vraie sociologue. Avoir la chance à travailler sous votre direction est sans doute la chose la plus chanceuse que j'ai eue à l'Université de Montréal.

Merci Émilie. Tu es la première amie que j'ai faite à Montréal. C'est toi qui m'as montré la chaleur de cette magnifique ville. Merci, Léa, je me souviens toujours des encouragements qu'on a échangés pendant le processus de la production de mémoire. Merci, Niloo, tu es tellement compréhensible que je me sens toujours plus encouragée après d'avoir bavardé avec toi. Merci André, notre expert de déguise; merci, Héloïse, notre expert de logiciel; merci, Bruno-Pier, notre ami le plus cool. Je me souviens toujours de notre "solidarité envers la fin du mémoire". Et aussi, je voudrai rendre remerciements à Yuhan, Miaomiao, Anqi et Jie, merci d'avoir coloré ma vie à Montréal.

Pour tous mes participants, je voudrais vous remercier pour d'avoir partagé vos histoires avec moi, même si quelques-unes parmi elles sont tristes. Ce mémoire ne sera pas possible à être réalisé sans vos partages. Merci.

Merci, papa, maman et mon beau-père, merci de vos compréhensions et vos encouragements. Merci, Shiran, de m'aimer toujours. À la fin, je voudrais envoyer mes remerciements à ma grand-mère. Merci d'avoir m'élevée avec tant d'amour. Je me sens regrette pour n'avoir pas vous visité depuis deux ans, mais ça sera pas long, promise.

Introduction

Being filial is a moral that people around me have emphasized again and again, either by direct oral expression or by personal behavior that seems as a prototype, ever since I was a little child. It is even regarded as a standard that as important as “goodness” and “integrity” when judging whether an individual is considered a socially good person or not. “Xiao (孝)”, which is translated into “filial piety” in English, has been through numerous changes on semantics in the history. It used to require people to follow every instruction that the parents make with 100 percent of respect towards them and to support the parents both financially and physically in their old age as the unique care provider. Nowadays, when living condition is no longer tough with the economic capacity growing strong, what filial piety requires us to do is actually providing sufficient accompany as well as psychological comfort to parents when they are getting old. The old Confucian analects of “Do not journey afar while your parents are alive. If a journey has to be made, your direction must be told (父母在，不远游，游必有方)” continues to haunt quite often in mind among most Chinese even in condition that individualism is becoming much more popular than before.

Nevertheless, the globalization and the relative unequal pace of development between countries and areas has successfully motivated a mass flux of emigration from China to developed countries such as Canada and the United States in recent years. Even though the little stream of migration from China to Canada did happen ever since the end of the 19th century, the mass migration between these two countries didn't start until the 1980s, when China's economic reformation took place and the country started to have more connections with “the world outside the wall” than before. It is indicated that China has been the second most important origin of immigrants of Canada, with a total population of 1,324,700 people in 2011, while the Greater Montreal area has attracted over 91,780 Chinese immigrants to resettle as permanent resident thanks to its multi-cultural background and its romanticism. The Chinese community in Montreal is now the third largest Chinese community all over Canada, which follows just behind another two grand metropolis of the country, namely Toronto and Vancouver.

What coincides chronologically is that, it was also in the 1980s that China launched its famous demographic control policy, the one-child policy, as national policy. Decades of years later, this nationwide policy has reached its goal of controlling the augmentation of population as well as accelerating the pace of economic development. However, critics such as the inhuman deprivation of personal choice of fertility, the aggravation of gender preference and so on insist challenging this national policy. The unitary number of child that decided by the one-child policy changed most of Chinese families into the famous 4-2-1 structured families, which means there are usually four grandparents, two parents and only one child in each family. As emigration is now becoming more and more popular in China, the absence of this “1” child in the family signifies actually the tradition of “raising children to make the old age secured” being challenged. “Having no country (reliance) in the old age” therefore becomes the anxiety of more and more Chinese families, especially when on the one hand, the public service stays still unable to meet the need of old-aged support of the society, while on the other hand, a good quantity of only children who supposed to be the main provider of old-aged support in the family have moved overseas and built their own life elsewhere.

It is in this dual-context that the exploration of family relationship in Chinese immigrant families, especially that of intergenerational relationship, attracted our research interest. Since after all, family has been and is still considered as the main source of help and social solidarity among all. To better discuss the intergenerational relationship, we decided to use the concept of “family solidarity” as the core factor to explore what interests us. Hence, the goal of this research is to discuss how family solidarity is presented in Chinese immigrant families in the dual-context of international migration and the one-child policy. The participants in this research were divided into two groups according to their age as well as other criteria in order to better explore the impact of familial structure on the way Chinese immigrants presented family solidarity transnationally.

This thesis consists of three parts. The first part refers to the description of social context in which family solidarity functions transnationally in Chinese immigrant families and literature review. The history of Chinese migration to Canada and the mechanism of international migration will be discussed, which helps to understand why migration keep happening even numbers of obstacles exist. In the meantime, the promotion of one-child policy and its impact will be talked about so that the traditional comprehension of “family” in

Chinese culture and the dilemma that countless Chinese families now confront will be better understood. In literature review, our discussion will focus on the dimension of “family solidarity”, especially about how it functions in Chinese immigrant families in condition of long distance between family members that created by international migration. The second part of this thesis presents the theoretical frameworks that help us design the research as well as analyzing the data. And also, the choice of qualitative method and the conduct of data collection will be presented in this part. The last part refers to analysis and results that we obtain from the interviews. We will first present how the participants move from China to Canada, especially when considering the normative obligation and the familial structure of their family of origin. Furthermore, we will explore how associative solidarity functions under the impact of the understanding of normative obligations of being filial and the estimation of affectual intimacy with family members. In the end, the functional solidarity in Chinese immigrant families such as financial exchange and physical care will be discussed in the dual-context of international migration and the one-child policy.

PART ONE Research Context and Literature Review

1. The Chinese Community in Canada and in Québec

According to the National Household Survey (NHS) of 2011, Canada had a foreign-born population of about 6,775,800 people that year, which represented 20.6% of the total population of the country. In the meantime, 6,264,800 people identified themselves as a member of the visible minority population on the NHS questionnaire in 2011; 30.9% of them were born in Canada, and 65.1% were born outside the country and arrived as immigrants. Chinese residents, with just over 1,324,700 people in 2011, comprise the second-largest visible minority group in Canada, with 4.0% of its total population (Statistics Canada, 2013).

As with most other foreign-born immigrants in Canada, the Chinese community is highly concentrated in urban centers in Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec. According to the 2011 census of Canada, over 713,000 immigrants originated of China declared Ontario as their home in Canada, while about 464,000 lived in British Columbia, equalling 88% of the total Chinese population. At the same time, there were smaller Chinese communities in other provinces such as Alberta and Quebec, of over 155,000 and 101,000 people, respectively (Statistics Canada, 2013).

In 2011, 28% of Chinese-born Canadians aged 15 and over declared themselves as either bachelor's degree or post-graduate degree holders, which is slightly higher than that of the overall adult population of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013). However, Chinese immigrants are still slightly more likely to be unemployed and receive less annual income compared to the overall Canadian population. Such differences in employment rate and average income may be considered a reflection of inequality between Chinese and other Canadians, going back to beginning of Chinese immigration in Canada. It currently seems that many immigrants of Chinese origin are now living relatively peaceful lives with dignity in Canada. However, it has been a long and difficult path for them to get to this point.

1.1 From China to Canada: The History of Chinese Immigration in Canada

1.1.1 Dreams of Gold and the Reality of Inequality

According to Tung-hai Lee (1967), a leading writer on the history of Chinese immigration in Canada, the first group of Chinese arrived in Victoria on 28 June 1858. This group of young men left the west coast of the United States for the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, in response to the new gold deposits that were found near the Fraser River (Li, 1988). However, these poor young men eventually discovered with disappointment and frustration that their dreams of gold would never come true, as there was not much gold after all (Verma, Chan, & Lam, 1984). Even worse, though, was that the new land they entered had already been conditioned by racism imported through European colonialism, which extended European dominion to the “New World” (Chan, 1983). These new immigrants from China then had to focus on collecting enough money through incredibly hard work in order to send remittances back to support their families in China, and afford a return ticket home.

Wickberg et al. (1982) indicate in their history of Chinese immigration in Canada that, in the first several decades, most emigrants from China left their country by two forms: coolie brokers and chain migration (Wickberg, 1982). People who came overseas via coolie brokers usually had to work off their indebtedness to the brokers, who paid for their passage, until they were totally free to seek their own jobs in the new world. This category of migration was quite common among Chinese labourers in late nineteenth-century Canada, as it provided a cheap labor force, especially during the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Later on, Chinese immigrants increasingly came by chain migration, by which certain immigrants came by their own and did not revisit China until they had saved enough money to pay for the return travel fees. On their way back to Canada, some of their teenaged sons or nephews, would come along with them to seek a new life on the other side of the world (Wickberg, 1982).

However, the reality turned out to be much different than anticipated for these pioneering Chinese labourers, as they were treated extremely unfairly in the new world. The unfavorable reception towards Chinese men in Canada in that period is deeply rooted in the original need for a Chinese labor force, namely the lack of white workers and the cheap and

abundant source of offshore labor. In such a situation, Chinese labor then became more and more attractive for employers in Canada thanks to their large numbers and lower costs in comparison with white laborers (Li, 1988). But as a second choice for many employers, Chinese workers were strictly confined to certain labor-intensive industries such as mining, railroad construction, land-clearing, gardening, public works, lumber, salmon canning, and domestic services (Li, 1988). And of course, they were obviously paid less in comparison with white laborers who did the same work. According to Helly (1987), white miners earned \$2.50 per day in 1860, while Chinese workers received only \$1.00; in 1883, Chinese workers were paid \$1.25 per day, while white miners could earn up to \$3.75 (Helly, 1987). Even for those Chinese who were recruited for the construction of the Pacific Railway, their remuneration was about half of what European workers received.

Discrimination towards Chinese in Canada based on race and institution didn't amount only to inequality in term of job offers and salary rates. After the Pacific Railway was successfully completed, the Chinese remained strongly unfavorable by a Canadian society generally dominated by European-originated residents at that time (Wickberg, 1982). The Chinese were the only ethnicity in the history of Canada to have been subject to the collection of a "head tax" and entry legislation. In response to a call from the public restricting Chinese immigration, the Chinese Immigration Act was passed in Parliament in 1886, which stipulated a \$50 tax on all Chinese people entering Canada, except for diplomats, tourists, merchants, men of science and students (J. B. L. Chan & Hagan, 1982). The "head tax" was then raised to \$100 per person in 1900 and \$500 in 1903 (Li, 1988), amounts that were largely unaffordable for average workers. When the Federal Government found it ineffective to restrict Chinese from immigrating to Canada by collecting entry fees, another Chinese Immigration Act was passed by the parliament in 1923, which actually imposed the complete exclusion of Chinese immigrants by law (J. B. L. Chan & Hagan, 1982). As a result, only 15 immigrants from China were allowed to land in Canada and be admitted as residents between 1923 and 1947 (T.-h. Lee, 1967). However, those who had successfully immigrated to Canada were not treated equally as other Canadians, for they were not given the basic rights that a citizen should have in the country, while required to fulfill their social duties as all other citizens. Li (1988) demonstrated in his research on the Chinese in Canada that Chinese immigrants were actually prevented from voting in federal elections during World War II because they were not

qualified for provincial franchise, nor were they considered British subjects, which were the fundamental voting requirements at the time (Li, 1988).

Because of the harsh and isolated living conditions that Chinese men found in Canada and the restrictions of Chinese entry that lasted until 1947, the Chinese community in Canada became a famous “bachelor society” in the first half of the twentieth century, as segregated Chinatowns began to form in cities where they lived. According to Li (1988), the ratio of Chinese men to women in 1911 was 2,790 to 100, which was 25 times more than that of the general Canadian population. The gender ratio gradually eased, to 485 to 100 in 1941, and 374 to 100 in 1951, as many Chinese men left Canada during the Great Depression and more babies were born in Canada. Due to the repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act in 1947 and the adoption of a new immigration policy, the ratio of Chinese men to women in Canada finally reached a balance in 1981 (Li, 1988). The long-term separation from families ran counter to important, centuries-old Chinese family traditions, which consider filial care towards parents as one of the most important aspects of one’s life.

1.1.2 Institutional Mechanisms of Early Migration from China to Canada

To understand why there was continuous emigration from China to Canada, even though new arrivals experienced extremely difficult conditions in a new world far from home, it is necessary to further investigate the factors that drove people to leave and travel. In fact, Chinese emigration has a long history. According to Tung-hai Lee (1967), “The history of Chinese immigration in Canada is not as long as that in Peru, Cuba, etc. It could not be compared with the history that Chinese started their adventure in Southeast Asia neither, as the latter has long been a legend in the history of Chinese overseas. It was even about ten years later than Chinese first arrived in America when they landed in Canada” (T.-h. Lee, 1967, p.43). During the first few decades when the Chinese increasingly began to emigrate from their home country, the majority originated from a small area in Guangdong Province, especially the area of Siyi (Sze-yap), especially the towns of Sun-wui, Hoi-ping, Toi-san, and Yin-ping, situated along the south coast of mainland China (Tan & Roy, 1985). Tan & Roy (1985) demonstrate in their research that about 70 percent of the overseas Chinese in the nineteenth century originated from the southeastern part of Guangdong Province. According to Lai (1975), among the 5,056 Chinese in British Columbia who donated to the Chinese

Consolidated Benevolent Association in Victoria in the early 1880s, 64 percent of them were from Siyi, and 23 percent of them came from the town of Toi-san. Much different from the demography of current Chinese immigrants, the majority of early immigrants to Canada were peasants from the lower strata of Chinese society, peasants without particular skills that could help them establish new lives in Canada and fulfill their dreams of upwards mobility (Li, 1988).

Many researchers have identified the “push-pull system” as the primary theoretical frame for analyzing early Chinese immigration to Canada. People won’t leave their home unless their living conditions are particularly uncomfortable, as the sense of belonging to their hometown is actually quite strong for most Chinese people. Some of the most pressing factors that pushed people emigrate from China in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries were the rapidly growing population, the shortage of farmland, and the lack of economic opportunities. The population in China almost doubled from somewhere between 200 and 250 million in 1775 to about 410 million in 1850; however, the amount of arable land increased from 950 million *mu* in 1766 to only 1,210 million *mu*¹ in 1873 (Li, 1988). In the eighteenth century, Guangdong was ranked among the most populated areas in the world, with an average density of 1,500 to 1,600 people per square kilometre. In Siyi the amount of arable land was about 20,000 km², taking up only one-tenth of the total area of Guangdong Province with a population of almost a half of the total population of Guangdong Province (T.-h. Lee, 1967). The shortage of farmland, exploitation by landlords, the weakness of the government of the Qing Dynasty, and the colonial invasion by Europeans made famine more common, and peasants’ lives increasingly unstable. As a result, social conflict was rampant, and social movements began to arise. In the mid-nineteenth century, when migration to Canada started, China was in the throes of the great Taiping Uprising, a peasant movement that produced a widespread, fourteen-year-long civil war, in which about 20 million people perished (Wickberg, 1982). Yet this was only the largest of several mass uprisings that rocked China at the time. All these are considered as push factors that emerged in Chinese society, and which drove early migrants to leave their homeland to make new lives in another country.

¹ *Mu* is an unit of land areas used in ancient Eastern Asia. One *mu* equals approximately to 667 square metres.

In the same time as China was going through an era of instability, European and North American countries/colonies were experiencing an Industrial Revolution, which transformed the social formation from an agricultural to industrial one. As it progressed, a larger and cheaper labor force was demanded to fuel the revolution, and the “coolie trade” provided a way for the surplus labour in China to meet the labour needs of other countries. The working opportunities in North America thus “pulled” Chinese people – especially single Chinese men from South China – overseas, who were already looking for a way to escape their bleak circumstances back home, and support their families. Although current migration from China to Canada is a little more complex in terms of motivation, immigrants of both eras share a desire for a better life.

1.1.3 New Era of Migration from China to Canada

After the completion of the Pacific Railway, there was no great need for cheap labour in Canada, and due to other social pressures, restrictions were placed on Chinese immigration. In 1947, the Chinese Immigration Act, which has prevented Chinese people from entering Canada for 24 years, was finally repealed by the Parliament (Li, 1988), as immigrants from the Oriental world were needed to fill the post-war labour shortage. However, race-based restrictions existed up until the passing of a new immigration law in 1967, based on a points system. This period thus still reflected a strong racial bias of Canadian immigration policy against Asian and other non-white immigrants (Li, 1988).

However, the reputation of Chinese in Canada began to improve somewhat during the Second World War, after Japan invaded China in 1937. And then in December 1941, after Pearl Harbor was attacked, Canada declared war on Japan and became an ally of China (Li, 1988). Ever since, despite the prejudice still inscribed in law, a more favorable sentiment towards Chinese emerged, largely based on the antipathy shown towards another visible Asian minority, namely the Japanese; in addition, the great contributions the Chinese made during the war, such as volunteering overseas, joining the Red Cross, and participating in loan drives for the war effort helped to change this perception (Li, 1988). When the war ended in 1945, Canada was thus no longer able to maintain its discriminatory immigration policies towards China, one of the countries that experienced victory in the war, like Canada itself. At the same time, Europe could no longer continue to provide an immigrant labour force to Canada, as the

continent was also in great demand of labour for post-war reconstruction. So Canada turned its recruitment efforts back to China (S. Guo, 2006). With the 1967 modification of the immigration law, Canada established a point system, still in place, which considers personal qualifications such as skills and education as the prime criteria for selecting immigrants, instead of race or nationality. Since then, the Chinese have been treated equal to all other Canadian immigrants.

Soon after the point system was adopted, immigration from China to Canada grew quickly, and between 1968 and 1976, approximately 90,000 immigrants from Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan landed in Canada. The total Chinese arrivals to Canada between 1977 and 1984 was about 80,000, and a drastic increase occurred between 1985 and 1994, with 353,000 new arrivals (Li, 2005). Hong Kong was the major source of Chinese immigrants to Canada during this period, comprising 68 percent of all those who landed in Canada between 1968 and 1994 (Li, 2005). However, by 1998, mainland China took over, with a total arrival of 20,000 people, while only 8,000 came from Hong Kong that same year (Li, 2005). As a result of encouragement from the point system, new arrivals entitled “independent immigrants” were more common than those who came for “family reunification” reasons.

1.2 Chinese Immigrant Families in Quebec

As indicated by the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 63,000 people of Chinese origin live in Quebec, the province with the fourth largest Chinese community in Canada. Yee (2005) indicates in his research on Chinatowns in Canada that Chinese arrived in Montreal well before Asian immigration to the west coast. They had likely come from the United States or across the Atlantic. In 1825, one Chinese person was reported living in the Saint Joseph district, and seven appear in the 1881 census. In addition, to escape the harsh economic conditions of British Columbia, immigrants from China started to migrate to eastern Canada. In 1891, 219 immigrants originated of China moved out of British Columbia towards the east in search of new life, which increased to 2,420 in 1901. That same year, 888 Chinese people were reported as living in Montreal (Helly, 1987). Between 1877 and 1911, about 1,700 Chinese people arrived in Quebec, when Montreal was experiencing a wave of unprecedented industrialization (Helly, 1987). At that time, Chinese gradually left white employers and

became independent workers, as they considered it a way to get away from the grossly unequal treatment they experienced. They first chose a small business with little competition and low investment, namely the laundry business. In 1877, Jos Song Long started the first Chinese laundry at 633 rue Craig (now Saint Antoine), at the corner of rue Saint-Georges, which later became Jeanne-Mance (Helly, 1987). Chinese hand laundries soon spread widely across the city and formed the biggest such industry in Canada (Yee, 2005), even though only a quarter of these businesses survived. Small businesses based on a similar model appeared soon after. Wong Kee, Jung Fook and Wong Wing opened a business selling imported Asian spices, teas, dishes and fabrics in the 1890s (Yee, 2005). In 1900, Hung Fung opened the first Cantonese restaurant with a dining room on rue La Gauchetière. The job concentration among Chinese in the service, commercial and manufacture sector even remains somewhat apparent today. The booming establishment of boutiques operated by Chinese around the intersections of rue Saint-Laurent and rue La Gauchetière in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century made this area the first Canadian “Chinatown,” named by *La Presse* in 1902 (Helly, 1987).

Today, encouraged by the new immigration system, more and more Chinese people are welcomed as residents in this country. As of 2011, 91,780 of 101,880 new Chinese immigrants in Quebec live in the greater Montreal area. About two-thirds (65.1%) of them are located in the city of Montreal, while 19.4% live in Montérégie, and 4.7% in Laval. Between 2009 and 2013, 21,452 immigrants from China were welcomed as permanent residents in Quebec, which stands at 8.2% of all new arrivals in this period, and China ranks as the first source of origin of all newly admitted immigrants. Most of them (84.66%) came under the category of economic immigration, while 15.04% of them were sponsored by family members who had already begun to build their lives in Quebec.

The Statistical Portrait of Chinese Originated Population in Quebec of 2011 indicates that the Chinese community in Quebec is relatively younger in comparison with the total population of Quebec (Gouvernement du Québec, 2014b). In Quebec, 28.5% of the population is over 55 years of age, which is true for only 15.3% of the Chinese community. At the same time, the China Population Census of 2010 demonstrates that 19.41% of the total population of China is aged 55 years or older (National Bureau of Statistics of the People’s Republic of China, 2011). So why is there not a significant population of older Chinese immigrants in

Canada? Furthermore, as more and more Chinese are now becoming permanent residents in Canada, especially those born in the 1980s and who are from the families touched by the one-child policy in China in place since the late 1970s, are migration decisions made by them often taken into consideration the famous Chinese proverb saying: “A son not ought to go a distance where he will not be able to pay the due services to his parents. If he does go a distance, he must have a fixed resolution to pay the due services (父母在, 不远游, 游必有方)? As well, by what means is the filial obligation taken by the Chinese immigrants who leave their elderly parents behind and establish their own life in Canada? To answer these questions, it will be necessary to investigate the contemporary Chinese family, and in particular the changing nature of the traditional family structure. An exploration of the notions of “family” and “filial piety” from the view of traditional Chinese thinking will also help.

2. The Changing Family Structure: The One-child Policy in China

In 1979, China launched its famous demographic policy, namely the “one-child policy,” to fulfill its dual goals of population control and economic growth (Chow & Zhao, 1996). The official target of this nation-wide fertility policy aimed to limit the country’s population within 1.2 billion by the year 2000 (Liang & Lee, 2006), with 20% of families in urban area and 5% of families in rural area being shaped into single-child families (Blayo, 1992). The 2000 census indicates that the leaders of the country accomplished their goal, as the total population was about 1.267 billion, slightly more than the target set twenty years ago (Settles, Sheng, Zang, & Zhao, 2013). In the meantime, China has successfully emerged as an economic and international relations powerhouse in the contemporary world (Attané, 2010). However, the policy has long been considered unacceptable by many researchers, as well as by the public, as it has had negative impacts on both macro and micro levels. It wasn’t until 2015 that couples in China – from urban and rural areas, whether from single-child or multiple-children families – could legally have a second child.

2.1 Unbalanced Sex Ratio and Preference towards Sons

Among all the negative implications of the one-child policy in China, the severely unbalanced sex ratio is perhaps the most critical. It is widely admitted that the one-child per couple policy has greatly promoted discrimination against female newborns, “who may be aborted, abandoned, or unregistered” (Settles et al., 2013, p. 630). Furthermore, women in China are considered more likely to meet inequalities in terms of access of education, employment and health care compared to men.

According to the 2010 national census of the People’s Republic of China, the sex ratio in China has reached 104.9 men to every 100 women (National Bureau of Statistics of the People’s Republic of China, 2011). But the unbalanced sex ratio at birth is shown to be more drastic in the south than in the north, as eight provinces in central to south China have a sex ratio of over 126 men to every 100 women, and there are only three provinces in the west

China (as well as Guizhou Province) that have a sex ratio lower than 107 to 100 (Attané, 2010). In fact, the unbalanced sex ratio at birth has become increasingly serious as time goes by, for there are nearly three times more areas with a sex ratio of over 117 to 100 in 2000 than in 1985 (Attané, 2010). The factors that have created such an unbalanced sex ratio in China are various: on the one hand, they deeply rooted in traditional Confucian thought, and on the other hand, they are created by the inadequate social insurance system.

Strongly influenced by traditional Confucian philosophy, China has long been a society that puts the women in a place of inferiority relative to men. As Attané (2010) demonstrates in her research on the unbalanced sex ratio in China, Confucius regarded women as “little people” and “dull,” which is a significant source of discrimination towards women in modern China. As Confucius said: “Only women and narrow-minded men are hard to deal with (唯女子与小人难养也),” women in traditional Chinese society have always been asked to be ignorant for “ignorance is the virtue of a woman (女子无才便是德),” and the only duty of a woman is to serve her husband, take care of her parents-in-law, and raise her children (Attané, 2010). Settles et al. (2013) confirm the common conception of the role played by women in the family, indicating that the actual care offered to elders is mostly given by daughters-in-law, even though this is supposed to be the son’s responsibility. It is not hard to tell from this that China is a patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal society, and adheres to a patrilineal clan system. Female children are thus often considered as “water poured away,” as they will move in with their husbands and will have little opportunity to come back and support their families.

The cultural preference for male children is not only influenced by Confucian philosophy, but also by social mechanisms. Blayo (1992) indicates that the lack of a comprehensive pension system in China also motivates couples to prefer sons rather than daughters. In 2002, only those who work for the government or state-owned enterprises, about 45% of all workers in urban areas, are covered by the social-security system. However, as China has long been an agricultural society and the rural population still comprises a large part of the country’s total population, the actual percentage that enjoys the public pension system was estimated to be only 25% of all people in China in 2002 (Y. Zhang & Goza, 2005). As about 70% of elderly Chinese people depend on their children’s financial support (Settles et al.,

2013), Chinese parents continue to regard sons as “the key to future prosperity and security” (Davis-Friedmann, 1985, p.150).

2.2 Aging Population and Filial Piety

Another significant phenomenon reinforced by the one-child policy is China’s increasingly aging population. It is reported that the proportion of people aged 65 years old or older in 2010 reached 8.87% (National Bureau of Statistics of the People’s Republic of China, 2011), which is well above the standard declared by the United Nations as 7% (Flaberty et al., 2007). The speed of China’s transition from a young society to an old-aged society is unique in the world, as took only 25 years for China to complete, compared with 42 years for France and 61 years for Great Britain (Tian, 1991).

Scholars consider the accelerating aging population in China to be determined by three main factors: the decline of both fertility and mortality rates, the extension of life expectancy, and migration patterns. Under the one-child policy – urban couples are restricted to only one child, couples in rural areas can have a second child if the first was a girl, and those who are in special situations can have a third – the total fertility rate in China saw a sharp decrease over the past four decades. As opposed to the traditional idea of “the more offspring, the better,” the desired number of children for most couples in China has now dropped, with some differences between urban and rural areas (Zhang, Feng, & Zhang, 2006). As a result, the average family size in China has decreased and given rise to a common 4-2-1 family structure, which means 4 grandparents, 2 parents and 1 single child in a small extended family.

However, the booming elderly population in China is now experiencing an different old-age life from their predecessors. Recent research shows that half of elderly households in China are “empty nest” households, and the proportion in big cities is even as high as 70% (Zhan, 2013). Even still, grandparents in many Chinese families remain the main source of childcare (Settles et al., 2013). This is quite the opposite from the traditional norm of filial piety promoted by the Confucius. Confucian philosophy believes that “filial piety is the most important virtue,” and teaches that it is essential to give both financial and physical support to parents during their old age. Even after the Communist Party, who regarded Confucianism as a symbol of backwards feudalism, took over power over the country, the notion remains that sons are responsible for the care of their parents (Zhang & Goza, 2005). The New Marriage

Law of the People's Republic of China even reinforced such traditional norms by stating that children were legally responsible for taking care of aged parents (Davis-Friedmann, 1985). The contradiction between traditional morality governing intergenerational relationships and the reality in our time leads us to wonder: what are the factors behind this shift? Furthermore, has the understanding of filial piety and intergenerational family solidarity evolved as the social context has changed?

2.3 Changing Family Structure

Besides the macro-level social changes created by the one-child policy in the past couple of decades, there exist changes on the micro level too. The changing nature of the family structure in most Chinese families is perhaps the most remarkable. Actually, even though the widely recognized large extended family has never been the dominant shape of the Chinese family, as Settles et al. have indicated, Chinese families have never been structured as a 4-2-1 structure as they commonly are now (Settles et al., 2013). However, the promotion of the one-child policy has quickly transformed most of families, especially those who live in urban areas, into a 4-2-1 structure. Such a pattern is considered problematic, as it weakens kinship ties, burdens the responsibility on the “sandwich” generation by reducing their social resources, and aggravate the trend towards child-centeredness in Chinese society.

According to the structural-functional framework of family sociology, certain family structures create specific contexts and modify the functions of family members (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001). In many urban Chinese families, for example, grandmothers are now a main source of child-caregiving, replacing the role of mothers, especially those whose grandchildren are under preschool age. A nation-wide study shows that in 2005, about 70% of children between 0-6 years old in Beijing are raised and educated by grandparents, as well as 60% in Shanghai, and 50% of the children in Guangzhou (Fu, 2005). In the meantime, the changing family structure has impacted the quality of life among the elderly in China. A study based on a survey of elders in rural Shaanxi Province found that childless and single-child old-aged parents had a lower quality of life compared to those with multiple children, as a large number of only children have migrated to urban areas, with little physical and emotional support given regularly to the elderly parents (Liu, Han, Xiao, Li, & Feldman, 2015). Another

study shows that migrant children are more likely to have distant ties to their old-aged parents, rather than a tight or near, but discordant, relationship (M. Guo, Chi, & Silverstein, 2012).

3. Family and Intergenerational Solidarity

Since Chinese families are now undergoing unprecedented structural changes, and migration rates are increasing, both domestic and international, more and more Chinese families are becoming geographically separated, so we cannot but help ask whether the family is still playing its traditional role as a provider of support and solidarity. In this chapter, our discussion will focus on the evolution of family ties as well as solidarity within the family, particularly Chinese families, in the dual-context of separation and the decreasing number of help provider, as well as the widening residential proximity between family members due to migration and the shrinking family size due to the one-child policy.

3.1 The Family and Its Social Network

The family is a topic that has attracted the interest of social scientists since the beginnings of sociology. As the family is the key factor that constitutes the relations between individuals and society, the founders of sociology, namely Comte and Le Play, consider it more important a concept than the individual.

Emile Durkheim, another founder of sociology as well as a pioneer of research into the family, founded his interest in the family in the social context of his time, including the increasing prominence of divorce and changes to the family structure that occurred because of the on-going industrial revolution. By exploring the foundation of society, Durkheim proposed two kinds of solidarity on which the society was constructed. The first is mechanical solidarity, which refers to the conscience of similarities. Such solidarity, according to Durkheim, corresponds more to the traditional society where the social control is quite strict and little differentiation is found among individuals while people share the same conscience, follow the same faith, and believe in the same value. As for organic solidarity, which refers to the interdependence between individuals due to the different function of each, corresponds more to the modern society (Paugam, 2007). The family, according to Durkheim, is a unit maintained by organic solidarity, since every family member depends on each other for their functional differentiation (Mayhew, 1982). Therefore, in Durkheim's discussion about the

nature of family, he refers to it as a moral association, rather than simply a biological union, in which individuals with common consensus gather and depend on one another (Lamanna, 2002). Later, inspired by the evolutionary views of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, Durkheim developed an argument that the family was transforming according to changing social circumstances. As the common family form gradually shrank from large clans to nuclear families, Durkheim considered that the main form of the modern family would be conjugal and relational, and the affective husband-wife relationship would be the dominant factor that held most modern families together. However, whatever form the family took historically or will take in the future, solidarity has always been and will always be one of its most important characteristics (Durkheim, 1892). Another argument that Durkheim made for the family was that thanks to the increasing contributions made by the State to various aspects of family life, such as education and economic production, the conjugal family has been able to be more independent, compared with extended clan families, and could perform its functions in fewer but more specialized ways (Lamanna, 2002).

Parsons, who inherited a structural-functional theoretical perspective from Durkheim, accepts the idea about the emerging place of conjugal families as the dominant family form in industrialized society, indicating that the extended family can persist as the dominant family form only under the condition that it remains the basic unit of labor in society. The family, according to Parsons, is a subsystem of the wider macro-social system, where primary socialization happens among children, and the future stability of adult personality is determined. The division of functional roles in the family is typically determined by sex, with financial responsibilities often undertaken by husband-fathers, and domestic support undertaken by wife-mothers. Such a functional division assures the family as a subsystem in the overall macro social system. Parsons emphasizes the "isolation" phenomenon of modern families due to the impact of industrial processes, while non-kinship units such as states, churches and professional associations have taken the place of kinship units. Such isolation has caused the loss of function of kinship units, which turns most families in the United States into dwellings being occupied by members of the nuclear family instead of that of the whole family of orientation (Parsons & Bales, 1955).

Goode affirmed that theoretically, "conjugal family" was an ideal form of family, and the most important characteristic of which was the relative exclusion from "a wide range of

affilial and blood relatives from its everyday affaires” (Goode, 1970, p.8, 1st ed. 1963). He listed three factors that changed modern families in an industrialized social context. First, the unit of labor changed from the family itself in agricultural society to individuals in industrialized society; this accelerated the geographic mobility of individuals, as smaller families were more convenient for individuals. Second, a person’s socioeconomic status became increasingly determined by education, occupation and other factors in industrialized society, instead of the heritage of farmland, which has stimulated generational mobility in extended families and generated greater independence of the conjugal family. Third, more functions of extended families and kin units have been taken over by the increasing structural complexity and specialization of social systems, which has reinforced the functions of public services and encouraged the independence of conjugal families (Goode, 1970).

However, Parson’s and Goodes’s view about the lost functionality of kinship units in industrialized societies has not passed the test of time, and many studies have challenged this view of the family and its social relations. In Great Britain, Elizabeth Bott (1971) has examined the factors that determine the variation of “conjugal roles” of husband and wife in nuclear families and found that such role-segregation was greatly related to the family’s informal social network, which means that nuclear families are not as isolated as Parsons has expected and external social networks do have a great impact on nuclear families. In the United States, Litwak et al. (2003) argue that the emergence of large formal organizations that took over family tasks has not entirely led to a loss of function for the family, because formal organizations are only optimal for technical tasks, while non-technical ones are still more likely to be taken by primary groups – namely the family itself. In addition, family support, according to Foner (1993), remains the dominant source of caregiving towards the elderly in developing countries, instead of services from formal public organizations (Foner, 1993). Therefore, even though families in modern industrialized societies tend to be more and more independent, the networks developed among family members remain as important as ever.

3.2 Family solidarity

Considering that family networks remain strongly interrelated in spite of certain social changes, how are they formed as well as reinforced? To answer this question, I decided to introduce the concept of family solidarity in order to better explore it.

3.2.1 Defining Family Solidarity

Solidarity, while difficult to precisely define, is usually considered as mutual assistance and exchange (Martin, 2002). And it is not a fresh or new topic, as Durkheim has already classified solidarity into mechanical and organic, which comprises the core means determining how individuals relate to society. However, Van Pevenage (2009) considers “family solidarity” difficult to define because it includes two complex concepts, namely the family and solidarity, both of which are related to several factors, such as help, support, mutual assistance, exchange, giving, sociability, etc. (Van Pevenage, 2009). In research on families in Quebec, Dandurand and Ouellette (1992) conceptualized family solidarity as:

au sens large, la solidarité familiale réfère à cette cohésion grâce à laquelle les membres d'un groupe social (ici, la famille élargie ou le réseau familial) ont à cœur les intérêts des uns et des autres. [...] La solidarité est donc un état des relations entre personnes qui, ayant conscience d'une communauté d'intérêt, la traduisent concrètement dans différentes pratiques de communication (sociabilités) ou d'échanges (soutiens). (Dandurand et Ouellette, 1992, p.5)

Thus, family solidarity can be considered as the cohesion among individuals of a social group according to which socialization, exchange, and mutual support occurs. In addition, family solidarity is both vertical and horizontal, as it cannot only be found between generations in the same family but also discovered among siblings and in-laws.

Intergenerational solidarity has attracted much research interest among social scientists since the 1980s for two reasons. On the one hand, significant demographic changes that occurred in the late-twentieth century, such as the increase of the old-aged population and the decrease of fertility, have brought significant changes to families, similar to what is happening among Chinese families now. On the other hand, the parent-child relation has always been the core relationship among family members. Butts (2010) has written that people of all generations bond together in order to survive and thrive because social progress is assured by the investments made by previous generations and the knowledge that has been transferred by the older generation to the younger one; this demonstrates that “solidarity between generations

includes the giving and the receiving of resources throughout the life course” (Butts, 2010, p.84). In addition, Cruz-Saco (2010) refers to intergenerational solidarity in a larger context, compared with a single family, as “a bonding between and among individuals in multigenerational family networks and among different age cohorts in the large community” (Cruz-Saco, 2010, p.9). Subsequently, these two aspects will be brought into consideration in this thesis where intergenerational solidarity is discussed: first, the cohesion among generations in the family network; and second, where and how socialization, as well as support, occurs between family members.

3.2.2 Measuring Family Solidarity

According to Van Pevenage (2009), it is important to distinguish solidarity within families from that of public and private services. In fact, one of the dynamics that led research interest to the discussion of family solidarity in the 1980s was the insufficient role played by public solidarity to respond to individuals’ needs, especially the elderly. Under the social condition of economic crises during that period, families had to become more and more independent and responsible for solving problems. Mutual aid among family members, as Foner (1993) indicated, has always been the dominant source of help in cases of need. However, this is not to say that solidarity within the family happens only during crises; it exists regardless of crisis, geographic separation or reductions in family size. Indeed, Bengtson and Oyama (2010) have found that generational ties continue to endure among transnational families, and that families seem to be highly able to adapt to the challenges associated with the barriers of residential proximity created by migration.

It is possible to categorize family solidarity according to the logic of exchange and the logic of support. Van Pevenage (2009) categorized family solidarity into three general groups, namely the exchange of goods, providing services, and giving support. Goods refers to concrete commodities such as gifts exchanged and furniture given by parents to their children when they establish their own family, as well as money circulated among family members as loans or gifts. Service is related to regular domestic service, the care of children, the elderly and handicapped, transportation and offers of temporary lodging in the case of conjugal breakups, or even long-term stays offered to dependent parents. Support can be categorized

into affective and moral support, and informational and relational support, through which the help based on social network and information is provided (Van Pevenage, 2009).

Dandurand and Ouellette (1992), especially inspired by the work of Agnès Pitrou, categorize the support circulated among family members into three groups. As above with Van Pevenage, the first group is recognized as instrumental and material support, which means exchange of goods or services. However, the exchange of services such as caregiving of grandchildren and offers of temporary lodging, according to Dandurand and Ouellette (1992), is hard to recognize because they are often considered as a natural part of socialization, rather than help given by family members. This seems to be more immaterial compared with the concrete exchanges mentioned above, and refers to moral, affective or emotional support. Such support shows up especially during crises or dangerous situations, in which family members contribute advice, encouragement and companionship. Over the long term, a feeling of companionship and security is created. The third group is informational support, which introduces family members to social resources that they may not be familiar with, such as jobs, social benefit programs, etc. (Dandurand & Ouellette, 1992).

In the United States, Bengtson et al. (1991) focus their research on measuring patterns of cohesion among family members, especially that between generations, in the spirit of Durkheim and other theories of family sociology. According to them, family members are dependent on each other, and the factors that maintain cohesion among family members are correlated. They summarize the results of their studies into a framework of intergenerational solidarity in which solidarities are divided into six conceptual dimensions: associative, affective, consensual, functional, normative and structural (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). It is also important, in the view of Bengtson (2010), to discuss conflict when measuring solidarity within the family because these are both manifestations of human nature; while conflict often takes the opposite form of solidarity but is more than the mere absence of solidarity, they can both coexist within the context of intergenerational solidarity. For example, it is argued that there is more solidarity from parents to children, while more conflict is found from the younger generation towards their parents. In the meantime, intergenerational solidarity persists in spite of geographic separation due to international migration, and many researchers have focused their attention on this (Bengtson & Oyama, 2010).

3.3 Conservation of Family Ties in the Context of Migration

Migration has long been regarded as a process of uprooting, as immigrants leave their home countries behind in search of better lives abroad. However, evidence has shown that immigrants keep sharing their lives with their non-migrant family members, and some even live on their connections with home countries; this indicates that the widening residential proximity due to migration does not absolutely isolate immigrants from their families of origin. Immigrants, in fact, gradually create their own ways of maintaining multiple linkages to their homeland in response to international migration.

Examining migration and its dynamics, Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1995) have defined “transnational migration” as “*the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement*” (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton Blanc, 1995, p.48). By this same logic, transmigrants are those immigrants who construct their daily lives based on interconnections across national borders with their family members in their home country, and those who often identify as belonging to more than one nation. These authors conclude that immigrants live transnationally based on three main reasons, largely in consideration of economic and political factors. First, no secure location of settlement is guaranteed safe in the context that neither social nor economic conditions are deteriorated in both sending and receiving countries due to a changing form of capital accumulation procedure. Therefore, more and more immigrants live an actual life of transnationalism. Second, racism in occidental countries instils a sense of economic and political insecurity among new arrivals and their descendants. Third, immigrants develop political loyalties to both original and receiving countries to which they are related (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton Blanc, 1995).

In research on the economic performance of immigrants from Columbia, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador in the United States, Portes et al. (2002) admitted the existence of transnationalism in the field of economics. They indicate that transnational entrepreneurs, who rely on the business between host and home countries for their livelihood, represent the majority of all self-employed persons in immigrant communities, and often earning higher-than-average incomes from such cross-border business compared with those who receive regular wages from employers. They emphasize that transnationalism cannot be

understood as an alternative to assimilation, as the goal of many transnational business activities among first-generation immigrants is to achieve a better financial status by avoiding low-paid, menial occupation, and provide their offspring a better path to integration through education, occupational advancement, etc. (Portes, Haller, & Eduardo Guarnizo, 2002). It is true that economic dynamics play a very important role in transnationalism; however, the desire for maintaining connections with family members in the home country and exchanging support in case of need should also be taken into serious account when studying transnationalism.

In her research on transnational lives of Shi'ite women from Lebanon in Montreal, Le Gall (2002) found that not all immigrant communities share as many patterns of running transnational companies as previous research has indicated. In fact, transnationalism is more concerned with creating ways of maintaining social relationships among family members, such as circulating information, exchanging goods and services, as well as giving financial support – rather than a sense of economic security through transnational business. For example, Shi'ite women greatly benefit from the information provided by female family members in their home country regarding the process of childbearing. By finding that the connections to family members left behind in the home country will not necessarily be severed because of migration, Le Gall demonstrates that transnational family bonds persist across national borders, allowing the support networks within families to be maintained (Le Gall, 2002). She also emphasizes the central role played by women in conserving these distant family ties.

However, even though several scholars have admitted the persistence of connections within families in the context of international migration, the ways that immigrants maintain family solidarity are currently evolving. Baldassar (2007), for example, has categorized transnational support into five types in his comparative study of patterns of solidarity between Australian immigrants from Italy and Afghanistan, and their parents in their respective home countries. First, the amount and the direction of financial support between generations in transnational families varies a lot according to the financial condition of both home and host countries, as well as the stage of migration process and life course. More financial aid was sent from Italian parents to their immigrant children in Australia, especially at significant life moments such as the birth of a child or the purchase of house, while refugees from Afghanistan feel more responsibility to send remittances back to their home country. Second, the exchange

of goods, services, and information, as well as return visits, are all considered as practical support in transnational families. Third, Baldassar emphasizes that emotional and moral support are the foundation of all other types of support, manifest through regularly telephone calls or occasionally, through remittances and gifts. The fourth type of support in transnational families is related to caregiving, especially to aged parents in the home country and that of childcare given by grandparents. This type of solidarity, according to Baldassar, is greatly affected by the understanding of filial piety obligations, and can be witnessed in the frequency of cross-border visits. The last type of support is the temporary offer of lodging from aged parents at stressful times (divorce or unemployment), and when their immigrant children come back home to visit (Baldassar, 2007).

Besides those authors who admit the conservation of transnational linkages between migrants and non-migrants in both host and home countries, there exist some scholars who believe that migration actually reinforces ties among family members. According to the life-course perspective of Xie and Xia (2011), international migration signifies an important turning point in the lives of both migrant adult children and their aged non-migrant parents, which in certain respects can accentuate their linked lives (Xie & Xia, 2011).

3.4 Intergenerational Solidarity in Chinese Immigrant Families

As indicated above, family ties persist even though the proximity among family members widens due to migration; therefore, family solidarity here is more concerned with the evolving ways that migrants and non-migrants alike maintain their bonds, rather than letting them disappear. In light of the present research, then, how do Chinese immigrants in particular materialize intergenerational family solidarity while living half a world away from home? To explore it, we will discuss family solidarity in Chinese immigrant families with four (of six) dimensions proposed in Bengtson et al.'s empirical intergenerational solidarity framework, which we have talked about in the part of 'measuring family solidarity'.

3.4.1 Normative Solidarity

The first dimension of solidarity that we consider important to discuss in the context of Chinese culture is normative solidarity, which, according to Bengtson et al., refers to "*the*

strength of commitment to performance of filial roles and to meet familial obligations” (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991, p.857). It is impossible to discuss family ties within Chinese families without talking about the norm of filial piety, especially in the context of international migration. Filial piety is a central point in Confucian philosophy, and has long been considered as the basis of the family structure that assures social solidarity and harmony. According to Luo and Zhan (2012), filial piety could refer to “love, respect, and care for parents and ancestors,” transmitted as a core value from generation to generation. To better understand filial piety, we can discuss it from two different perspectives, namely the perspective of parents’ expectations of their children’s support and that of children’s feelings of obligation to be filial. The Chinese proverb “Having children (especially sons) assures one’s old aged life (养儿防老)” describes Chinese parents’ expectations towards their adult children when considering their twilight years. Meanwhile, the duties of showing respect, being responsible, obliging and indebted towards one’s parents has been cultivated in almost every Chinese child’s moral system through school education, social norms, and parents’ early investment in their development process. The respect shown towards parents has been found to have a significant impact on Chinese children’s decisions about education, significant personal life events, and career path. In the research on migration intentions among Chinese students at the University of Saskatchewan, Lu et al. (2009) found that both students’ decision to study abroad and their intention whether to migrate or not are heavily influenced by their parents’ expectations (Lu, Zong, & Schissel, 2009). It echoes Pang & Appleton’s finding that higher education is often regarded as a migratory route to get into a better life by students originated of mainland of China (Pang & Appleton, 2004).

In fact, being filial is more than a social norm in Chinese society; it is clearly written into the law, and punishment can result for not supporting one’s parents. The 1954 constitution states that: “Parents have the duty to rear and educate their minor children, and adult children have the duty to support and assist their parents.” It is indicated in the 1980 penal code that children can be imprisoned up to a maximum of five years for neglecting their parents. In 1996, the Law of the Protection of Elders’ Right officially and legally enshrined adult children’s obligations to respect and take care of their elderly parents – physically, financially, and emotionally.

Thanks to the social norm of filial piety, the family has long been the ideal, secure place for the Chinese elderly to spend their later years, as adult children are the main source of caregiving, and family solidarity persists in various conditions of international migration. However, filial piety is considered to be less prominent nowadays due to the impact of great demographic changes in society. On the one hand, parental over-protection in China's single-child families has created concerns about whether this generation will be as filial as their parents and ancestors. Deutsch (2006) has answered this concern, arguing that single children are as likely to help their parents in the future as those who have siblings, having examined the life plans of Chinese students from both single- and multi-child families. Furthermore, children from single-child families often show more intention to take responsibility for their parents' emotional well-being and are more likely to plan to live closer to their parents, compared with those who have brothers and sisters (Deutsch, 2006). On the other hand, mass migration on both international and domestic level has separated aged parents from their adult children geographically, which has called into question the maintenance of family solidarity. In Luo and Zhan's research into filial piety and functional support between migrant children and their non-migrant parents in rural China, he found that the elders did not evaluate children's filial piety lower after their migration, and the degree that they estimate their children's filial piety is positively correlated to the latter's provision of financial support (Luo & Zhan, 2012).

3.4.2 Structural Solidarity

The second dimension in our discussion of family solidarity is structural solidarity, which is considered as "*opportunity structure for intergenerational relationships reflected in number, type, and geographic proximity of family member*" in Bengtson et al.'s intergenerational solidarity framework (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991, p.857). The two greatly evolving social factors, namely the shrinking family size and the enlarging residential proximity between family members that we have mentioned above are actually two important implications of the structural solidarity within family. They merit specific attention in the research of Chinese immigrant families because it is the structure that provides the objective condition for family members within which to maintain family solidarity.

First, children's capacity to provide elderly parents of certain kinds of support is to some extent conditioned by their residential proximity. Sun (2012), in his research on the reconstruction of reciprocal norms surrounding elderly care among Taiwanese immigrants in the United States and that of their parents in Taiwan, admits this assumption; furthermore, he argues that non-immigrant parents' expectations towards their immigrant children's degree of being filial and the way of elderly care will gradually evolve according to the fact of migration (K. C. Sun, 2012). The dynamic of non-immigrant parents' compromise to immigrant children's less functional solidarity is based on the comprehension that the latter need to spend more time and more concentration on succeeding in the host country. Given that Taiwanese immigrants cannot provide frequent and direct physical care for their elderly parents in times of need, both these immigrants and their parents gradually place more emphasis on affective solidarity, such as emotional support (K. C. Sun, 2012). Thomas (1993) refers to emotional support as "*feeling state of caring about*" (Thomas, 1993, p.652). For Taiwanese parents who stay in the home country, the most significant indicator that they use to evaluate their feeling of being cared about by their migrant children is the latter's regular checking-in. Another significant way that immigrant children materialize the solidarity with their non-immigrant parents at a distance is by sending remittances instead of providing hands-on physical care. According to Mazzucato (2006), remittance in the context of transnationalism represents "*the outcome of a self-enforcing contractual arrangement between migrant and their families in which both parties expect to be better off*" (Mazzucato, 2006, p.3) and it is regarded as an informal insurance provided to the non-migrant family members once they are of shocks.

Sun (2002) found that migrated children in urban China who live farther from parents in rural areas than their siblings who reside at a relative closer distance were significantly more likely to provide monetary support, while those who live near their parents were more likely to provide help with daily activities (R. Sun, 2002). However, whether to give financial support to non-migrant parents in the home country depends not only on the children's sense of obligation but also the parents' economic status. For example, parents in rural China emphasize how much money their migrated children send them when estimating to what extent they are cared about by their children (Luo & Zhan, 2012). In contrast, Taiwanese middle-class non-migrant parents seldom expect their adult children to send remittances back (K. C. Sun, 2012), and the parents who visit temporarily their migrant children in Canada not

only give their children financial support by providing unpaid childcare, but also by buying their own air tickets, thus minimizing their children's spending on them, as well as helping with mortgage payments when their migrant children purchase houses (Zhou, 2013).

Second, the familial structure and adult children's rank among siblings also greatly determines the solidarity in Chinese immigrant families. As mentioned above, family remains the most important harbour in the twilight period of most Chinese elderlies; hence, having more children actually signifies having more support resources in old age. At the same time, the family structure implies not only how much support elderly parents may receive from their offspring, but also the life plans of many children, especially those who are the only child in the family. It was also in Sun's (2012) research about Taiwanese immigrants and their parents in home country that he discovered those immigrants who had no sibling residing close to their parents showed more worries about how their non-migrant elderly parents could get timely support if unfavourable scenario happens compared with those who had siblings living close to their parents. In such a condition, close friends and other kin relatives become the main source of physical care helper in times of need (K. C. Sun, 2012). To avoid not being able to get in time practical support from migrant adult children, Zhou (2013) found that there were more and more seniors in China applying for the immigration to Canada under the category of familial reunion. For some of them, the migration is a strategy to achieve better mobility and security, while for the others, it is perceived as their only option because their only child is in Canada or all of their children are overseas (Zhou, 2013). However, not all parents show a willingness to emigrate from their home countries to follow their adult children, even though they have no children residing around them. For example, some non-migrant parents from Taiwan describe the United States as a "happy hell" after visiting their children there; they lose their self-sufficiency and have to depend on their children and grandchildren because of the language barriers, even though living with their family makes them happy. As a result, many parents would prefer to stay in the "lonely paradise," namely Taiwan, rather than immigrate to the United States where their children reside (K. C. Sun, 2012).

Another important factor of structural solidarity in Chinese immigrant families is the health condition of the non-migrant parents' and the birth of grandchildren, which is greatly related to the functional support of elder and childcare. I will review these two types of caring in the following sections.

3.4.3 Affective Solidarity

The third dimension of family solidarity to be discussed in the context of Chinese culture is affective solidarity, which, according to Bengtson et al., refers to “*type and degree of positive sentiments held about family members, and the degree of reciprocity of these sentiments*” (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991, p.857). As mentioned above, more emotional support, instead of daily physical support, is found between migrant children and their non-migrant parents due to geographic separation. But by what means is such solidarity manifested in the context of international migration within Chinese immigrant families? To answer this question, it is important to discuss the perceptions as well as the patterns of transnational contact.

Transnational contact, according to Fong and al. (2010), refers to the informal, cross-border communication between immigrants and the family members in the home country (Fong, Cao, & Chan, 2010). It is, on the one hand, these “re-embedding” activities that help migrants to reconnect with their home country despite the physical absence (Giddens, 1990), while on the other hand, represents a significant part of immigrants’ “habitual lives” (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

Scholars who focus their research on transnational contact emphasize the importance of technological developments, thanks to which transnational migrants can more easily connect, while the intensity and the extensity of cross-border contact are being determined. In addition, it has been found that the two dimensions of transnational contact, namely its intensity and extensity, are also heavily influenced by the migrants’ personal economic status and educational level. In the research on the intensity and the extensity of transnational contact among Chinese and Asian Indian immigrants in Toronto, Fong and al. (2010) found that the types of transnational contact among Asian immigrants could be categorized into three types. The first refers to face-to-face contact, which, according to Fong and al., is the most fundamental form of interaction in the context of migration because it is the most efficient way to transfer complicated information and foster emotional attachments. However, they found that fewer than half of Chinese and Asian-Indian immigrants in Toronto who participated in their research have visited their home country in the past 12 months, largely because such face-to-face contact is dependant on economic status. The second type of transnational contact is mediated, such as long-distance telephone calls and e-mail. They

found this type of contact more preferable among immigrants because it does not strongly rely on economic capability. The last type of transnational contact is quasi-mediated transnational contact, which focuses on obtaining information through various means such as listening to online radio stations and reading online newspapers about events in the home country (Fong et al., 2010).

3.4.4 Functional Solidarity

The last dimension that we chose to discuss from Bengtson et al.'s intergenerational solidarity framework is functional solidarity, which represents “*degree of helping and exchanges of resources*” (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991, p.857).

In considering the family as the primary provider of social security and care in Chinese families, with children acting as the core provider of all kinds of help towards aged parents (R. Sun, 2002), it is important to discuss functional solidarity, namely transnational care, in Chinese immigrant families. To understand the rupture of physical functional care due to the geographic separation caused by migration, empirical studies divide transnational caregiving into two directions. The first refers to immigrant children returning to their home country, either temporarily or permanently, to care for old-aged parents left behind. The second is related to elderly parents coming to the host country where their adult children have immigrated to take care of the grand children (Zhou, 2012). This echoes the clearly identified connection between normative solidarity and functional solidarity, which in the context of Chinese culture signifies the capacity and willingness to give and to receive care according to the logic of filial piety.

3.4.4.1 Grandparenting in Immigrant Families

Grandparenting has always played an important role in Chinese families, and continues even now in an era of widespread international migration. In his research on transnational grandparenting in Australia, Da (2003) found that the lack of childcare resources in Chinese immigrant families resulted in two ways of accessing childcare, namely either sending children back to their grandparents in China or inviting elders to Australia for caregiving. The same phenomenon also occurs on the other side of the planet, as Zhou (2012) found it common for grandparents to travel from China to Canada to take care of their grandchildren.

In fact, being invited to provide transnational care to grandchildren, few parents hesitate to accept such invitations, even if they have to come alone without their spouse or leave their own even aged parents behind (Zhou, 2013).

The dynamics of transnational grandparenting can be explained from both micro-personal and macro-social-structural perspectives. On the micro level, Chinese parents consider it their responsibility to take care of young grandchildren, as well as to give intensive care to daughters or daughters-in-law under the impact of the mutual aid model that has long structured most Chinese families. In such family model, family members create a close-knit network by caring for the well-beings of all family members and offering mutual assistance when in need. On the macro level, the social context in which many Chinese immigrant women live pushes them to pay more attention to work or education in order to succeed or integrate into the receiving country. From the perspective of immigrant women, seeking free childcare from their aged parents is an ideal way to balance work and childrearing duties (Xie & Xia, 2011). Meanwhile, seniors who provide transnational care to their grandchildren in Canada view their contribution as the only viable way to support their migrant daughters (Zhou, 2012).

In their research on transnational grandparenting in Chinese immigrant families in the United States, Xie and Xia (2011) found three primary characteristics. First, transnational grandparenting is regarded as the continuity of cultural practices as well as a way to reinforce family solidarity. Second, the role of grandparents in the host country varies from cooking and caregiving to cultural transmission and tutoring. In the meantime, their responsibilities change according to the age of their grandchildren and the needs of their own children. Third, grandparents often report having difficulties in the new country, where they feel nervous and isolated because of the language barrier and lack of social network beyond their adult children (Xie & Xia, 2011). Similar results were found in several studies indicating conflicting experiences of grandparents in other host countries.

3.4.4.2 Elder Care in Immigrant Families

Children are not the only ones in need of care and help. Elder parents in transnational families may also require support when their adult children relocate to another country (Zechner, 2008). According to Fisher and Tronto (1990), caring is a concept that refers to

specific activities done to “maintain, continue and repair our worlds so that we can live in it as well as possible” (Fisher & Tronto, 1990, p.40) They classified care into four dimensions: caring about, taking care, caregiving, and care receiving. Caring about is associated with observing what to maintain and what to repair, while taking care is the responsibility for initiating caring activities. These two refer more to emotional activities and the sense of obligation, while caregiving requires certain time and resources from caregivers to do concrete care work. Even though many scholars have affirmed that family bonds do not disappear in the context of migration, the amount and frequency of care that migrant children give to their non-migrant parents actually changes, and in many cases, naturally decreases (Baldock, 2000). For instance, Sun (2012) found that Taiwanese immigrants in the United States could not always provide their parents with daily care when the latter fell ill because of the lack of proximity, as well as their responsibilities in the host country. In such a condition, negotiation must occur, such as replacing practical caregiving responsibilities with more general emotional support (K. C. Sun, 2012).

To study the transnational care, Baldassar and al. (2007) developed a research model based on capacity, obligation, and negotiation (Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding, 2007). Capacity is related to the time and the economic status possessed by migrants in need of caregiving. In her study of caregiving from a distance in Australia, Baldock (2000) found that the frequency of return visits among her participants compared with other migrants is highly related to their profession, namely professors and university staff, which indicates the temporal flexible and financial resources required for international travel (Baldock, 2000). Negotiation is another significant factor in transnational caregiving. For those whose parents refuse to follow their adult children to a foreign country, migrant children compromise the fact of being far from their parents and being not able to provide at-hand services by sending remittances and keeping regular contact. And for those who have successfully brought their parents to their host country, a certain negotiation is also necessary in the way that caregiving is manifest. For instance, Lan (2002) found a significant transfer of elder care in Taiwanese immigrant families in California, as the main caregivers gradually switched from kin members to private or public caregivers because of the limited time resources of adult children, especially daughters-in law (Lan, 2002). It is surprising to find such little research focusing on transnational elder care, especially in Chinese immigrant families, considering that so many

studies focus on transnational grandparenting. Therefore, elder care by Chinese immigrants merits further discussion.

In fact, it is surprised to find few researches focusing on transnational elder care, especially that in Chinese immigrant families, while most of them are concentrating on transnational grandparenting. Therefore, it makes us consider the topic of “how the Chinese immigrants take the duty of elder care” merits further discussion.

PART TWO Theoretical Framework and Methodology

In this part, we will present the goal of the research and the methodology. First, we will briefly explore the theoretical frameworks that help us with the research design and that create us an ideal context to understanding the meanings of the data after having fixed our research question. And then, the concerns about criteria of the selection of participants, the process of semi-directed interviews and the treatment of data that having been collected by the interviews will be presented.

4. Research Question and Theoretical Framework

4.1 Research Question

As stated above, increasing international migration from China to Canada and the widely promoted one-child policy that changed the familial structure of most Chinese families have captured my research interest about how family ties are kept and how familial solidarity is established in Chinese immigrant families. Accordingly, the main research question of this thesis is: **“How is familial solidarity materialized in Chinese immigrant families in the dual-context of international migration and the one-child policy in China?”**.

In order to better explore the research question, I decided to divide the research question into two sub-questions. The first: **“How are migration decisions made by Chinese immigrants in Canada, especially considering the normative need to fulfill familial obligations?”**, which attempts to understand the factors that encourage the international movement from China to Canada, as well as whether concerns over familial structure, namely the one-child family structure sculpted by the national policy, have impact on the migratory decisions or not. The second sub-question of this research is: **“How and by what means if familial solidarity in Chinese immigrant families materialized in the context of international migration?”**, which aims to explore how exchanges, either affectual or concrete help such as financial exchange and caregiving, happen between migrants and their non-migrant family members at a distance.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

To answer these research questions, theories of two sociological domains should be talked about. The first is migration theory, which helps to understand why there are continuous demographic flows between countries and areas. The second refers to familial solidarity theory, which provides us with an empirical framework so that the research could be well designed and analyzed.

I consider it necessary to discuss theories of migration because one of the main contexts of this research is international migration from China to Canada. In fact, the history of migration is by no means a new phenomenon, as O'Reilly (2012) has indicated. Humans have been moving, as either individuals or groups, ever since they first populated this planet, which is considered to be strongly inherent to the nature of all social entities (Urry, 2007). However, it was not until the mass migration happened over the last century that the research interests of many social scientists were captured, which led them to explore the social mechanisms and motivations for migration. Numerous theories of migration have been proposed ever since then, though, none of them can be regarded as either a general theory of migration (Castle, 2010) or superior than the others (Massey, 1998), as for certain theories function more effectively in certain systems, while others function better in other contexts; it is thus important for migration researchers to restrict themselves to mid-range theories when working on this topic (Portes, 2010).

Among all the perspectives on which migration theories are constructed, the economic perspective, which treats economic considerations as paramount and assumes that individuals are rational-choice actors, has long been extremely influential in the field of migration research. Scholars who are in favor of such a perspective are strongly influenced by the foundation of “push & pull model” first proposed by Ravenstein (1885) when attempting to formulate the “laws of migration”. By analyzing the migratory streams that happened in the nineteenth century in the Great Britain, Ravenstein demonstrated that the migration was governed by a series of favorable and unfavorable economic, environmental and demographic conditions, which serve as the “pull” and “push” engines that drive people to move in certain directions. The “push factors” in this model of migration usually refer to population growth,

lack of economic opportunities, political repression and environmental pollution. In reverse, the “pull factors” usually include demand of labor force, economic opportunities, availability of land and more political freedom. Being criticized by having neglected a host of factors such as family and community dynamics that might also influence the migration, Lee (1966) argued that migration is not only determined by “plus” factors and “minus” factors in origin and destination countries, which attract people to move and repel people from staying, but is also influenced by intervening obstacles such as distance of travel, physical barriers, and immigration laws (Lee, 1966).

Neoclassical migration theory is also largely based on an economic perspective. At the macro-level, migration is considered a process that optimizes the allocation of production factors, such as labour and capital, which may be required in certain countries. As for the micro-level, migration is regarded as a rational personal choice that based on a cost-benefit calculation, which means that people tend to move to where they think can be the most productive and can get the maximum economic benefits.

Nevertheless, even though the economic perspective of migration theory is effective for describing migratory streams, especially that of labour migration, critics have focused on the theory’s ignorance of people’s aspirations, their capacity of moving, as well as their connections to the external world such as kin and family members pointed out the shortage of these theories (Castles, De Haas & Miller, 2014). Furthermore, economic migration theories fail to explain return migration, as well as why people stay in their places of despite conditions that promote emigration (O’Reilly, 2012). As a response, a voice of migration decisions are not made by isolated individuals but by larger units of related people, usually families or households, has arose to challenge the previous assumptions of economic migration theories. According to Stark and Levhari (1982), people act collectively not only to maximize expected income but also to minimize the risks of being involved in various kinds of markets. Different from individuals who dare not to spread their labor force over time by seasonally working in different areas, households can easily maximize their familial income by diversifying the work areas of family members. In fact, the family and community are found irreplaceable through the whole process of migration as well as generating further migration. According to migration network theory, family and community usually play important roles in migration decisions, in

terms of funding the passage, facilitating settlement and preserving family ties at distance. Pioneer migrants are usually followed by step-migrants who have various social interactions with them in their home countries. In their research on Mexican immigrants in the United States during the 1970s, Portes & Bach (1980) found that 90 percent of those respondents obtained their legal status of the States through either family or employer connections of the same origin (Portes & Bach, 1980).

Actually, the social network, especially that among family, kinship, and community, functions not only at the beginning of migration, but also throughout the whole process of such movement. More and more migrants are found living dual lives across national borders by making a living on business between countries, and by keeping social contact that of both sides even several years after migration. Glick Schiller et al. (1995) therefore conceptualize these individuals as “transmigrants” who maintain both affective and instrumental relationships across national borders (Glick Schiller, Basch & Blanc, 1995). According to Castles et al. (2014), it is the globalization which enjoys huge benefit from the rapid improvement of transportation and communication technologies, that has “*made it easier for migrants to foster close links with their societies of origin through telephone, television and internet, and to remit money through globalized banking system or informal channels*” (Castles, De Haas & Miller, 2014, p.41).

Scholars in the field of transnationalism have indicated that both migrants and non-migrants could engage themselves in transnational activities in all spheres of social life (Levitt, 2001; Itzigsohn & Saucedo, 2002), while in general, transnational practices could be categorized into familial, social-cultural, economic and political activities (Faist, Fauser & Reisenauer, 2013). Familial activities in transnational lives are nonetheless practiced by almost all transmigrants, as almost everybody is born with familial relationships that already existed before they were born and will last after their death. Migrants continue to take family responsibility, provide care, and satisfy the material and emotional needs of their non-migrant family members, even when it is impossible to share in the daily lives of their families of origin back in the home country (Faist, Fauser & Reisenauer, 2013). In other words, familial solidarity continue to function even in the context of international migration.

To discuss how and by what means familial solidarity is materialized in the context of international migration, we decided to adopt Bengtson et al.'s intergenerational solidarity theory, which is well categorized into six dimensions, as the principle framework of our research. Bengtson et al. (1991) based their conceptual design of intergenerational solidarity theory on the idea of classical social theories which emphasize the importance of group conventions and the functional interdependence in social behavior shaping, furthermore, the social consensus over rules of exchanges also inspired them. In the meantime, they considered the function of sentiment, interaction, similarity, and norms towards group memberships in fostering solidarity that emphasized by social psychologists as core factors, which help to shape a framework of intergenerational solidarity (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). After having fixed the foundation of the theory construction, Bengtson et al. indicated that there were six core elements of intergenerational solidarity. According to them, the six core indicators are associational solidarity, affectual solidarity, consensual solidarity, functional solidarity, normative solidarity and structural solidarity. Table 1 presents the six dimensions in Bengtson's intergenerational solidarity framework, as well as their nominal definitions and empirical indicators.

Table 1 Six elements of intergenerational solidarity, with nominal definitions and examples of empirical indicators

Construct	Nominal Definition	Empirical Indicators
Associational solidarity	Frequency and patterns of interaction in various types of activities in which family members engage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frequency of intergenerational interaction (i.e., face-to-face, telephone, mail) 2. Types of common activities shared (i.e., recreation, special occasions, etc.)
Affectual solidarity	Type and degree of positive sentiments held about family members, and the degree of reciprocity of these sentiments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ratings of affection, warmth, closeness, understanding, trust, respect, etc. for family members 2. Ratings of perceived reciprocity in positive sentiments among family members
Consensual	Degree of agreement on values, attitudes, and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intrafamilial concordance among individual measures of specific values, attitudes, and

solidarity	beliefs among family members	beliefs	2. Ratings of perceived similarity with other family members in values, attitudes, and beliefs
Functional solidarity	Degree of helping and exchanges of resources	1. Frequency of intergenerational exchanges of assistance (i.e., financial, physical, emotional)	2. Ratings of reciprocity in the intergenerational exchange of resources
Normative solidarity	Strength of commitment to performance of familial roles and to meeting familial obligations (familism)	1. Ratings of importance of family and intergenerational roles	2. Ratings of strength of familial obligations
Structural solidarity	Opportunity structure for intergenerational relationships reflected in number, type, and geographic proximity of family member	1. Residential propinquity of family members	2. Number of family members 3. Health of family members

Source: Bengtson, Vern L. and Robert E.L. Roberts (1991). "Intergenerational Solidarity in Aging Families: An Example of Formal Theory Construction" Journal of Marriage and Family. 53 (4). p.857.

In fact, Bengtson et al. supposed that the six main dimensions of intergenerational solidarity are not independent but interrelated, even though some of them may have stronger correlations to others while some have less. The empirical examinations confirm their hypothesis that normative solidarity, namely the expectations of both adult children and aged parents to perform familial roles and to undertake familial obligations, is strongly related to affectual and associational solidarity. In this research, we will take the Confucian norms of filial piety in Chinese culture as the form of normative solidarity among Chinese immigrant families. Meanwhile, it is indicated that the level of affective solidarity can effectively predict the level of associative solidarity. Furthermore, Bengtson et al. found that a more open structural solidarity, the residential solidarity and the health condition of family members for example, was positively related to the level of associational solidarity (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). The structural solidarity is actually a decisive factor that has strong impact on

associative solidarity as well as functional solidarity. As a result, people will well consider the consequences of resettling at a relatively inconvenient distance from their family members because of the key role that distance plays in making intergenerational contacts feasible within family (Lawton et al., 1994). Hence, in the case of emigrating from China to Canada, whereby residential proximity between family members greatly increases, the concerns of distance while making the migration decisions and the inconvenience that distance entails for preserving intergenerational solidarity will be carefully discussed.

As a result, we will construct the analysis part of our research according to the theories mentioned above. First, we will explore why people keep moving from China to Canada with the logic of “push & pull”, which helps to better understand the institutional mechanism that determines one of our research context, namely international migration. By analysing the interviews, we will be able to ascertain the “push” factors that encourage people to leave China, as well as the “pull” factors that attract people to live in Canada. At the same time, we will discuss how the social unit of the family functions in migration decisions, as for the voice of “migration is rather a group decision than the result of personal calculation” plays an important role in migration theories. In this research, normative solidarity as well as the changing familial structure due to the one-child policy will be emphasized.

Second, with the intergenerational solidarity framework proposed by Bengtson et al., we will match some dimensions from this framework, specifically those concerning the behaviors of daily life, with those that represent relatively abstract and objective dimensions, in order to explore how Chinese immigrants materialize family solidarity in their daily transnational life. As Bengtson & Roberts (1991) indicate, normative, affective and associative solidarity are highly correlated, so we make our first match as the combination of these three dimensions. We will try to explore how normative and affective solidarity shape associative solidarity, which refers to transnational communication as well as cross-border travel. The second match in our analysis is structural and functional solidarity. Obviously, in our research, structural solidarity refers to the widening residential proximity due to the international migration, and the shrinking number of children who can provide company as well as healthcare to their aged parents under the impact of the one-child policy in China. According to this match, we aim to understand how Chinese immigrants materialize functional solidarity in compromising certain limited structures.

5. Methodology

5.1 Qualitative Research and Semi-directed Interview

Since the goal of this research is to explore how familial solidarity is presented in Chinese immigrant families and how people behave in daily life to keep relationship with their non-migrant family members in China, which requires us to translate the mechanism of international migration and the significance of everyday activities that make contact across the oceans, we therefore consider it more reasonable to use a qualitative research method that helps to describe our results. As Flick (2007) indicates:

“Qualitative research seeks to unpick how people construct the world around them, what they are doing or what is happening to them in terms that are meaningful and that offers rich insight.” (Uwe Flick, 2007, p.ix)

In our case, the world that people construct around them refers to the new social context that they choose to live in instead of their origin context. In the meantime, the truth of getting rid of the social relationships that have surrounded them ever since their births also offers the chance to build a new world after their emigration from China to Canada. As to the interpretation of what people do in order to show familial solidarity in the context of international migration, figures exactly out the mechanical puzzles that Mason (1996) listed when explaining the necessity of constructing qualitative research around intellectual puzzles so that different sets of epistemological assumptions and distinctive types of social explanation can be explored (Mason, 1996).

We decided to use in-depth and semi-directed interviews to collect the data for analysis in order to unpick how familial solidarity is presented in Chinese immigrant families. On the one hand, the interview allows the interviewers *“de faciliter la mise en parole, de faire en sorte que l’interviewé puisse aller le plus loin possible dans l’exploration de ses expériences et dans l’explication de ses perspective”* (Poupart, 2012, 61), while on the other hand, my ontological and epistemological position in this research makes me consider people’s stories, perspectives, social interactions, and knowledge as meaningful and valuable to explore. It is

the semi-directed structure of the interview that allows us to talk about the topics that are important to discuss for the interpretation of my research questions. In the meantime, it is thanks to the relatively loose structure that makes it possible for me to discover different life experiences of each participant, and also to exchange our opinions, by which a bigger picture of “*knowledge of knowledge*” (Bourdieu 1992, 103, cited in Hamel 2010, 27) can be explored.

An interview grid is created according to our research question, as well as the theoretical frameworks mentioned above, which allows me to follow when talking with my participants. The way in which the interview grid is constructed and how it functions during the interviews will be presented in the section below “interview conduct”.

5.2 Criteria of Selection, Recruitment and Interview Conduct

As stated above, the goal of this research is to explore how familial solidarity is materialized in Chinese immigrant families in the dual-context of international migration and the one-child policy. The data collection method is decided as semi-directed interview, and 14 participants were recruited for the interviews in this research according to the four criteria listed below.

The first criterion of selection is the **residential status in Canada**, which requires all our participants to be legal migrants in the country, namely either permanent residents or citizens of Canada. **The second criterion** refers to “**having siblings or not**, under the impact of the one-child policy”. Since the one-child policy was launched in 1979, and the children from the first wave of families being touched by this nation-wide policy are considered to reach 35 years old in 2015, we therefore pick up “age” as our criterion of selection in the field to satisfy our real requirement of “having siblings or not”. Seven participants in this study were under 35 years old and supposed to be the only children in their family of origin at the time the interviews were conducted, while another 7 were over 35 and had siblings. Among those who were under 35 years old, 2 out of them actually have either a sister or brother thanks to certain exceptions of the policy. **The third criterion** of selection of this study is **migration category**, namely economic migration or migration of familial reunion, by which the participants moved to Canada. To satisfy this criterion, we have recruited 12 participants who came to Canada as economic migrants, either skilled workers or investors, and another 2 who were sponsored by their migrant family members who had already been approved as

permanent residents of Canada. **The last criterion** of selection in this study is **gender**, which conducts us to recruit 8 female and 6 male Chinese migrants. The specific details of the participants can be found in appendix 1.

Regarding first criterion, the reason that we consider it necessary to have our participants be migrants, namely those who hold the status of either permanent resident of Canada or Canadian citizen, is because the focus of this research concentrates on the way that familial solidarity functions among those who left their family members back in the country of origin, especially the elderly parents, to build a new life in Canada. Hence, the ideal participants of this study should have emigrated from China to Canada as individual migrants who based their migratory decisions on a personal choice to start over in Canada without the companion of elderly parents, which is to say the latter do not have the immigrant status of Canada, at least did not obtain the status at the moment that they first moved to Canada.

The second criterion is chosen because another context of this research is the changing familial structure due to the one-child policy in China, and we are trying to explore whether there is an impact on how people materialize familial solidarity if they are the only children in the family; we therefore decided to set “whether have siblings or not due to the one-child policy” as our second criterion of selection. Since the policy was launched in 1979 through out the country, which makes the majority of Chinese who are born after 1978 and younger than 35 years old in 2015 the only children in their family of origin, so we decided to pick “age (>35 years old v.s. < 35 years old)” as our criterion of selection in function. However, when we started looking for participants by age, we discovered that even some of those who are younger than 35 years old in 2015 still have siblings because of various factors such as policy exceptions for rewarded soldiers, as well as those who remarried after their first marriage. Hence, we modified our second criterion of selection to the majority of those who are younger than 35 years old in 2015 should be single children of their family of origin.

The third criterion is due to the significant role that the economic perspective plays in migration theories as well as research on transnationalism, and we consider the economic status of participants as another core criterion of selection of this research. Once in the field, we take migration category and the job sector that Chinese immigrants are in as selecting criteria, which can be found in the table below.

Table 2 Percentage of immigrants from China admitted as permanent residents of Quebec according to the immigration category, 2009-2013

Immigration category	Percentage among all	Number of immigrants being admitted
Economic migration	84.69%	
Familial reunion	15.04%	
Others	0.03%	
Total	100%	21,452

Source: based on Gouvernement du Québec (2014a). L'immigration permanente au Québec selon les catégories d'immigration et quelques composantes 2009-2013.

The statistics on immigration categories suggest us to recruit at least one participant who was sponsored by family members (other than parents) for every five-six economic immigrants.

As for job sectors that Chinese immigrants participate in, we can find the relevant statistics in the table below.

Table 3 Percentage of Top 4 Industries in which Chinese immigrants in Quebec work, 2011

Industry	Percentage among all
Hotel and restaurant services	15,8%
Commerce	14,4%
Fabrication	11,9%
Professional, scientific and technical services	11,6%
Others	46.3%
Total	100%

Source: Gouvernement du Québec (2014b). Portrait statistique de la population d'origine ethnique chinoise au Québec en 2011, p.8.

At least a half of our participants work in the four sectors indicated above.

Last but not least, as it has been shown that a gender difference does exist in the role of keeping family ties (Kempeneers & Van Pevenage, 2011), and the sex ratio within the Chinese community in Montreal is slightly unbalanced (more women than men) (Gouvernement du Québec, 2014a), we therefore decided to recruit one to two more women than men in our study. Detailed demographic performance of our participants is attached in the appendix 1.

All the 14 participants recruited were divided into two groups according to their age, with one group older than 35 years old (with siblings), and another group in reverse, so that we could make a comparison to see how familial solidarity is materialized in Chinese immigrant families and how the familial structure influences this issue. The recruitment and interviews of this research were mainly conducted during the summer of 2015. We first posted our recruitment announcement through the network of the Montreal Chinese community, where large quantities of new arrivals are registered as members ever since they landed Canada as permanent resident. Both the recruitment announcement and the research description that we used for recruiting interviewees were written in traditional Chinese, considering that there are still a large number of Chinese immigrants who can read neither English nor French. In the meantime, I also used the snowball method of recruitment by asking friends around me to recommend those who might meet the research criteria. Once I received replies from potential participants, I communicated with them by phone, e-mail, or SMS to better determine their personal background, as well as their motivations for participating. It turned out to be not difficult to get in touch with those who have interested in being enrolled in this qualitative research and we consider it on the one hand, because people admitted that it was a common concern that affected almost all the adult migrants and many were willing to help us better understand how Chinese immigrants deal with such issue, while on the other hand, a ten-dollar gift card from Tim-Hortons would be given at the end of the interview.

Most interviews were conducted in neutral places such as coffee shops, food courts at shopping malls, where there were not many others who seemed to be able to understand the Chinese language, so that the privacy of the interviews could be assured. A confidential form was given to every interviewee to be signed before the interview started, and I also made a

more detailed research description in person ahead of the interviews in order to give the interviewees a better understanding of what we were going to do. The average time of the interviews was one and a half hour.

An interview grid, which was constructed according to the research question and the theoretical frameworks discussed above, was used during the interview. It includes four parts. The first part attempts to understand the normative expectations of every individual and their affectual intimacy with family members by asking the familial context in which they were raised up, as well as their personal experiences, especially those of childhood and adolescence. The second part refers to their decision to migrate and their new life in Canada. By asking “how was the idea of migration generated” and “what factors were considered when making the migration decision”, we try to discover the mechanisms that encourage emigration from China to Canada. Furthermore, we attempted to find out how family of origin influences the migration decision along with the questions about opinions of family members, especially when the familial structure varies from multi-children family to single-child families. The third part of the interview grid attempts to discover how Chinese immigrants show familial solidarity transnationally in consideration of normative obligation. In this part, questions are designed according to Bengtson et al.’s intergenerational solidarity framework. We first ask about the level of affectual intimacy and sense of nostalgia that were found after leaving home. Next, we focus our discussion not only on everyday behaviors such as associative connections like making telephone calls, sending e-mails and having video chats, but also the functional solidarity that people exchange with their family members in China when they are in need of financial help and other forms of help such as physical care. We are trying to describe the connections of different types of solidarities in Bengtson et al.’s theoretical framework by associating the facts of affective, associative and functional solidarity with that of normative and structural solidarity, which has been discussed above when talking about familial norms, the familial structure and the fact of international migration. As for the final part of the interview grid, it aims to discover how people understand “family” and “intergenerational relationship”, which helps to give an overall conclusion of the discussion in the third part. The complete version of interview grid could be found in the appendix.

During the interviews, I tried to focus on what the participants emphasized when talking about research topics, and developed extra questions to better explore their stories. In

addition, I found it important to be neutral both verbally and in terms of facial expressions, as Chinese people are usually quite sensitive when talking about being filial or not in order to avoid being judged by traditional social norms.

5.3 Data Analysis

The first step of the data analysis is to transcribe the recorded interviews into a written version, which helps already to reconsider what we may have collected from the ground. All the transcriptions were done in Chinese because the interviews were conducted in either Mandarin or Cantonese, which helped the participants to better express what they have experienced and what they thought about their life stories. During the writing process, the parts that were considered valuable for the research were translated into English.

After having transcribed the interviews into a written version, we decided to analyze the data both chronologically and thematically. As indicated by Miles & Huberman (1987), “*a person’s behavior has to be understood in context, and the context cannot be ignored*” (Miles & Huberman, 1987, p.91), so we used a chronological scheme to explore the life experience of our participants, especially that of their experience with their family of origin and migration procedures, which aims to better understand our research contexts. By looking back on how my participants’ families of origin were touched by the one-child policy, how they were raised by their parents, and how their immigration to Canada came true from the very beginning of the creation of migratory idea to the installation in the country, the context of our research could be well explored. As mentioned above, our interview outline was designed according to Bengtson et al.’s intergenerational solidarity framework; hence, when analysing the data, we tried to extract the themes that respond to five out of the six dimensions in the theory, namely normative, affective, associative, structural and functional solidarities, which helps already to classify the data into themes that, according to Bardin (1997), “*est l’unité de signification, qui se dégage naturellement d’un texte analysé selon certain critères relatifs à la théorie qui guide la lecture*” (Bardin, 1997, 8e, p.137), and which plays an important role while analyzing the research content thematically. Quotations related to different themes were marked with pens of different colours during the data analysis procedure. Since the total number of interviewees in this research is only 14, which is small enough for us to use the manual way of analysis.

Therefore, no analysis software was used for in this study. All the informations that might expose the participants' identities are hidden by changing their names into other forms, as well as by covering relavant informations in order to protect the participants' privacy.

What I got from the interviews and what they signified in terms of social meanings will be discussed in the next part of the thesis.

PART THREE Analysis and Results

This part will focus on the analysis of data collected from the interviews that I made with 14 participants. By recategorizing the questions from the interview, the goal is to answer my research question concerning the very beginning of migration and the specific daily activities in transnational immigrants' everyday lives. The analysis will first concentrate on describing the research context, which refers to the migration from China to Canada, as well as the shrinking family size due to the one-child policy. It then focuses on how Chinese immigrants in Canada materialize the family solidarity, especially between generations, with their parents, in the context that has been discussed above.

6. How are Migration Decisions Made?

Even though migration is the fruit of various factors, the journey of migration is actually started from certain motivations. What are these motivations? And how are they created?

6.1 Motivation to Migrate

6.1.1 China's Push Factors vs. Canada's Pull Factors

The different level of development between countries has long been a key factor among migrants when considering emigration. In terms of Canada and China, the former is a country that has already finished the industrialization process and is now one of the most developed countries in the world. Both the economic development and the public service system of Canada are excellent compared with many other developing countries. However, China didn't really start its process of modern industrial development until the 1980s, even though it is now growing with great speed. Such difference in developing period between China and Canada certainly caused unbalanced life qualities in various aspects, prompting many from China to cross national borders in search of a better life.

To be honest, in consideration of the social context (in China) at that time (in the 1990s), to live in a foreign country was a much better choice than to live in China. [...] The working environment, the payment, and many other aspects, living environment and so on, were not as good as it is now [...] that means, at the time when I emigrated, the attraction outside of China was much bigger than that inside.

- Junhao

In many cases, especially during the 1980s and the 1990s, having the chance to emigrate from China to an occidental country was an enviable life event. It is more of a symbol of getting rid of hard living conditions, rather than just leaving home and setting up life elsewhere. Even now, emigration is still regarded as a personal achievement worth being proud of by many Chinese.

When I left China, few in our neighborhoods had travelled abroad. My parents felt very proud of me then. They could even show off by saying "look at our daughter, she studies so hard that she went abroad for further studies, she is now even emigrating!" For them, it is an event that could gain them face. Yes, it is.

-Anran

However, the imbalance of development between countries is too general to be used for explaining why people emigrate from China to Canada. There exists various specific dynamics that encourage migration between these two countries. The immense population in China is one factor, mentioned by over half of all 14 participants, because it generates a chain of results that devaluates the life quality of life in China. Along with the growing population, average personal residential space in China is limited in compared with that in Canada, especially on the southeast coast of China. When population grows, the chance of being employed by good companies and that of buying property become less likely.

From my point of view, everything's good in China except for the pressure of competition, the population, after all, is huge. Everybody must work hard. But here, the pressure is much less, and also there's more space, we feel easier here.

-Lulu

In fact, the lack of work opportunities is not the only concern when people think about emigration, the difference of working culture and the levels of revenue between countries also matter. In the meantime, Canada is often considered as a springboard, as having working

experience in Canada can help to move to the United-States if opportunities become limited in Canada.

According to the feedback that I have received (from other engineers from Taiwan), about whether to go back to Taiwan for work or to stay here, the conclusion is that, if I want a better life balance and a better work culture, I'd better stay in Canada [...] Even though one day, I find that there are not as many working opportunities in Canada, it will be quite easy to move to the United-States for work, it will be easy to get in touch with the States [...] It's too tired to work in Taiwan. In Taiwan, working 12 hours per day is quite normal, especially in the high-technique industry, however, the payment is not as much as million Taiwanese Yuan per month, it is probably less than the amount that I make here in Canada, even though they work 12 hours a day [...]

-Zeyu

Pollution is another concern that has been mentioned by some of my participants (Lulu, Anran) when talking about why they moved. Such a “push” factor is especially common among people from the north and the central areas of Mainland China. It is important to understand that current pollution in China did not result from nothing. Since China's industrialization did not start until the 1980s, the labor-intensive manufacturing industry remains the main dynamic promoting the economic development of the country. The environment, therefore, was rapidly polluted under the impact of mass manufacturing, mass construction, and the mass exploitation of energy resources.

I came back to China for about one month during my summer break two years after I left home for France for the studies. When I first walked out of the plane, I felt that the air quality was really bad. And then, when I walked out of the Beijing Airport, I could smell the scent of soil in the air. It was crowded everywhere. [...] Maybe the pollution of cities in the north is more serious [...] It was serious, so, I felt huge difference at the first moment, for me, this is not where I want to live [...]

-Anran

Besides the solid factors, such as the pressures of competition and the severe pollution in China, that push people to leave, there also exist some emotional factors. Wangyang expressed his confused attitude towards China's social order as well as his disagreement towards some consensual rules in Chinese society, because of which he decided to emigrate from his home country.

My career in China didn't go well. At first, I wanted to be a teacher, however, I found it necessary to have the teacher qualification certificate. I didn't pass the exam because I had strong resentment towards the content of this exam, I thought they are all bullshits, I hate spending my time on remembering those bullshits. It is not only about passing the exam, but also bribing. Do you know how much I earn every month? Once I bribe, my revenue in the future ten years would be gone. Do you consider it necessary? I refuse to do it. Because of this, I have never had a so-called "official job" in China. I have always been self-recruited when I was there. Then I thought, on the one hand, I didn't have an employer, and on the other hand, I didn't want my off-springs to be living in such society, it was much too weird.

- Wangyan

Similar to Wangyang, three other participants (Shi'an, Jingnian, Chengmei) emphasized a consideration of their children's education as a core factor when deciding whether to migrate or not. The high quality of Canadian education is one of the main "pull" factors that Canada attracts Chinese immigrants to resettle.

To immigrate to Canada is for the sake of my daughter, for my daughter, at that time, for my daughter, for her education, to provide her a better education quality. University-level education in China is not very good, yes, that's almost all.

-Jingnian

Furthermore, some participants even said that they moved to Canada when their children came here for studies. This statement recalls me of several scholars' research that family solidarity is more downward than upwards, which is to say people have the tendency to provide more care, help and support to their descendants rather than vice versa (Van Pevnage, 2009).

6.1.2 Because My Parents Want Me to Migrate

In Lu et al.'s (2009) research about migration intentions among Chinese international students at University of Saskatchewan in Canada, they found that almost a half of their participants considered meeting their parents' expectations as one of the top motivations to study abroad, and there is a significant and strong relationship between parental attitudes towards children's migration and the children's migration intention (Lu, Zong, & Schissel, 2009). Among the respondents in my research, 3 out of 14 said that it was their parents who wanted them to leave the country and set up life elsewhere, for the sake of their better future.

In fact, the migratory route started when the parents decided to send their children to study abroad.

I was surprised to find that Zeyu, a 25-year-old engineer from Taiwan, came alone to Montreal for studies when he was only 12 years old because his parents thought that being educated in Canada would be a better choice for their son compared with staying in Taiwan. In his family of origin, there are only two children, both are sons and both were sent to Canada at a very young age without the companion of the parents. In this case, the parents' duty is to work hard in the home country in order to pay for the children's tuition fee as well as their daily costs in Canada, even though the loss of parents' fundamental function, namely providing daily care to their children, made them feel guilty.

First, is, how to say that, I don't know it was my dad or my mom, he/she thought that I could learn to speak English and French if I came here, in the meantime, since I have already been to primary school in Taiwan, I wouldn't lose my Chinese, and it wasn't too late to learn a new language. So he/she hoped that I could be educated in a more international context, that's why they sent me to Canada. [...] Since I have been here for a long time, I feel it quite natural to immigrate.

-Zeyu

To be sent abroad for studies at a very young age is actually rare among those who first came to Canada as international students. Most of them came for university studies.

I knew that I would go to a foreign country for studies in the future when I was very young. It was how my parents planned. [...] They sent me here, not looking forward to my return (permanently). [...] They think it will be better if I live here. [...] So I went to university here, I applied for the migration after I was graduated, just follow the majority.

-Xinxin

This echoes Pang & Appleton's finding that higher education is often regarded as a migratory route to get into a better life among students from developing countries (Pang and Appleton 2004).

The consideration of the working culture in Chinese society is another important concern that drives some Chinese parents to encourage their children to leave the country, especially parents of girls. Since China has always been a society that emphasizes human connections more than fixed social regularity, Chinese parents who have work experience

usually imagine that to work in an occidental culture will be easier than working in a Chinese culture.

I was unconsciously influenced by my parents' opinion that I wouldn't really suit the working culture in Chinese society. [...] To achieve, to have a good career in China, you have to "step over the others", but they said I didn't have such ability, I should be grateful only if the others don't "step over me", I won't "step over the others", I don't have such ability. That is to say, from the view of my parents, I won't be able to work well and live well in China. They said, it would be simpler in an occidental country. They said, if I wanted to emigrate, they wouldn't ask me to come back.

-Anran

It is somewhat surprising to find parents as the main proponent of children's emigration, especially when they have only one child. In China's social context, especially those who are touched by the one-child policy, children's emigration may mean the loss of an elderly-care provider, which seems to contradict the traditional thinking of "raising children for the sake of secured twilight years (养儿防老)".

6.1.3 Arriving Canada Means The End of The Journey of Migration

Migrants sometimes move from one country to another as temporary settlers before they reach their final destination. This type of migration also takes place among Chinese immigrants in Canada, and more specifically, in Quebec.

Among the randomly recruited participants in this research, 3 (Lulu, Anran, Xuran) out of the 14 declared that they had been studying in France before their settlement in Quebec, while 2 of them came to Quebec because of the small chance to gain legal immigrant status in France. For those who have experience living overseas, returning to China without working in the host country without successfully obtaining permanent resident status is sometimes regarded as the worst result after graduation. However, as France is not a traditional country of migration, it is actually tough to settle permanently in this country for most Chinese students who have such intention.

I worked for H&M, I worked for them. However, I didn't have enough working time, I worked only 20 hours a week, the immigration application will not be accepted unless you have a working contract of at least 35-hour per week. [...] My obstacle at time was, I was not eligible to stay, but I didn't want to go back to China. That's why I choose Canada.

-Anran

Even for those who might have the chance to live in France legally and permanently, there exist some concerns about their career as well as the daily life. Lulu mentioned the social discrimination towards Asian immigrants in France, telling me about her reason of immigrating to Quebec.

The social discrimination in Canada is not as serious as it is in France. That is to say, in Canada, you can achieve whatever your family name is as long as you work hard. But in France, the chance to succeed will be much less.

-Lulu

It is apparent that for potential immigrants, having the chance to gain legal status in the host country or not is the main concern when deciding whether to stay or to leave. However, to live is a fundamental need of all human beings, while further accomplishments such as personal achievement and certain social connections play also important roles in life. So, why do Chinese immigrants come from China to France, then to Quebec? The mutual language that is used in France and Quebec, as well as the more efficient procedures of Immigration Quebec compared with that of the Federal Canada, are two factors that mentioned commonly by participants who arrived from France in this research.

Because, it seems quite natural to move from France to Canada, we have learnt french after all. And, French is spoken in Quebec. In addition, we can speak English, already, it will be helpful both on both living and job searching.

-Lulu

When I applied for the migration, I applied for the Immigration Quebec, and from all aspects, from the procedure of application and the chance to be approved by the Immigration Quebec is said to be easier, bigger and quicker than that of the Immigration Canada, so why not applying for the Immigration Quebec?

-Anran

From the analysis above, it is not difficult to see that Quebec is an ideal destination when one is unable to stay permanently in France, from the view of many Chinese immigrants who had experienced living in France.

6.1.4 Other Motivations to Immigrate

Besides the motivations mentioned above, emigration from China is also regarded as a way to escape from the current life by some of the participants. For those who emigrate with such intentions at the very beginning, they usually start the journey of migration by “having a try” and do not expect that they will be settling in a foreign country for such a long period. However, under the impact of the immigration policy of the host country, namely Canada in this study, they have to stay regularly and almost permanently in order to keep their status of permanent resident. Therefore, the “foreign” life in Canada gradually turns into their “daily” life in the country, to which they eventually feel a sense of belonging.

Because I really wanted, I could even foresee my bright future when I was young, I wanted to travel everywhere. But it was pretty hard to travel with Chinese passport at that time, I planned to go travelling in Hawaii with my colleague, but my visa application was refused. [...] I saw a poster of info forum about Immigration Canada, my colleagues also saw it, so we went together. The man on the forum said that we were all eligible to immigrate to Canada, then we all applied. [...] I didn't planned to get out of (China) for such a long time. [...] I was really not about to be here for such a long time, I planned to go back to China as soon as I got the Canadian passport, that's it.

- Dongning

Being eager to change living environments and experience other lifestyles happens not only among the young generation in their twenties; it happens also among the middle-aged, especially those who have successfully started up their own life and started to get bored with their careers in China.

We were in our thirties when we applied for the migration. I consider that period of life the most tranquil in my life. Some friends started to emigrate, it was probably because our life at that time was too cozy, both of us want some changes, so we applied.

-Shi'an

Often, having some connections in Canada is an important factor for the potential immigrants when making their decision, because on the one hand, acquaintances in Canada act as core information providers who can help new arrivals a lot to build an image and even life in Canada, and on the other hand, the connections with people in Canada, often family or kin members, are the main reasons why some people come to this country.

My motivation to immigrate, it was because one of my dad's colleagues, he came to Toronto at that time, he said Canada was good, it would be good to come to Canada. And I often watched news about Canada, news saying how good it would be to immigrate to Canada, on TVs in China at that time, then I thought, OK, the country of maple, the country of maple, sounds not bad, then I had the idea of coming to Canada.

- Xuran

My mom motivated me. She chatted with one of my uncle one day, an uncle who was not quite closed to us, he had been immigrated to Canada for a long time, he mentioned about the immigration program of Quebec, then my mom said, why didn't you have a try? I thought, OK, why not?

- Yajing

Among the 14 interviewees in this research, 2 of them came to Canada under the category of familial reunion. Junhao, who emigrated from China to Canada in 1992, told me that his wife sponsored him to come to Canada as soon as she had been successfully sponsored by her other family members who had already immigrated to Canada. Even though Junhao's wife's family is now living in Canada, he can still feel the sense of loneliness at sometime because, according to Junhao, the family of his wife is just not the same as his family of origin.

(I immigrated) because my wife, my wife has immigrated. [...] I didn't feel excited when I left China for Canada. I didn't know what was waiting for me here. Why, because I had no relatives here, all I had are the relatives of my wife, I felt that I was alone, I had nobody, that was how I feel.

- Junhao

Another participant, Lili, who came to Canada in consideration of her daughter, took the similar way of most grandmas when their immigrant daughters were about to give birth. She came to give her daughter as well as her newly-born grandchild daily care, and without any plan such care has been given for many years.

At the beginning, I have been retired, my daughter immigrated to Canada in 2000, and she was accepted as skilled worker. In 2001, my daughter was pregnant, she told me about it, I thought, OK, and then I came to Canada to help her. [...] When you arrived, you saw her life, you then couldn't leave, do you know?

- Lili

However, living in Canada as a visitor is totally different from immigrating to Canada as a permanent resident. Having the access to the social benefits and social insurance of the

country is the main concern, while most, especially those who are over their middle-age, think about immigration.

Later, then, it was ten months later, I think it was in October of 2001, I thought OK, I would apply for the immigration. If you were sick here, without the access to the social insurance, the situation will be pretty complicated, right? So I thought, OK, I'll immigrate. That's how I immigrated. It was fast, it was less than half a year that my application was approved.

-Lili

The statistics that we have collected from the ground do make a favour on understanding why the context of migration from China to Canada persists. According to the logic of “push & pull”, we can tell from the answers of participants that the different living quality, which is shaped by the different stage of development of each country, is the core factor encouraging people to move from China to Canada. On the side of China, the booming population is a strong engine that drives people to leave. Along with the growing population, the diminishing average residential area for per person, the high working pressure, the augmenting living costs, especially the unaffordable price of property due to the unbalanced supply and demand, are all “push” factors that make people consider emigrating. At the same time, on-going mass industrialization is another factor that motivates the emigration. Because of the need of industrialization and the population size in China, labor-concentrated industries have, on the one hand, caused an extremely uneven distribution of population within the country, while on the other hand, it has aggravated the pollution and seriously lowered the quality of life in China. On the contrary, Canada has its “pull” factors such as excellent living conditions, relative smaller working pressure and quality education, etc. It is also important to emphasize the role of a relatively welcome immigration policy of Canada, as well as Canada's amicable and equal social atmosphere, which plays a roll in pulling people from China to settle.

In fact, it is not only the factors at the macro level that encourage people move from China to Canada, but micro-level factors such as the encouragement of family members also matter. As Durand & Massey (2004) indicated, migration is rather a group decision than a personal choice. This assumption is particularly confirmed especially among the Chinese immigrants who came to Canada for higher education at the beginning.

By categorizing migration motivations according to age and marital status of the participants, it is not hard to find that relatively young and single immigrants have greater intention to migrate according to personal wills, while older people migrate for the sake of the others, especially for the education of their children and the need of care of their adult migrant children.

6.2 Being the Only Child vs. Having Siblings

Considering that age and marital status affect migration decisions among many Chinese immigrants, interest also arises about whether the familial structure of the family of origin influences people's migration decisions, especially considering of the one-child policy and the traditional concept of providing elderly parents with daily care when the latter are in their twilight years. Therefore, now we will discuss how the fact of being the only child in the family or having siblings matters while thinking about emigration, from both the children's and the parents' perspectives.

6.2.1 Considering Parents' Need of Care

When talking about the duty to provide care to aged parents, the mid-aged interviewees demonstrated more contradictory concerns while telling me how their migration decisions were made compared to the relatively young migrants. I consider this positively related to the life cycles of the interviewees, which is to say, mid-aged migrants' parents' needs of support in terms of both health care and financial care are usually greater than that of the young migrants. That is exactly why few younger participants showed concern about providing elderly care when making their migration decision.

However, what is entangled for us is, for the mid-aged people, it is that we must take account of our parents, the parents are getting old.

- Jingnian

According to Jingnian, the main purpose of migration is for the sake of his children's better education opportunity. To make the decision to emigrate in spite of the duty of providing elderly care, he was convinced by two factors. First, he considered his little sister an ideal care

provider once he was absent from his parents. Second, it was still not hard to sponsor elderly parents to come to Canada at the moment when he applied for his own immigration.

When we applied for the migration, it was not bad, it was still possible to sponsor my parents to come according to the immigration policy of Canada [...] Euh also... I had considered, at least, I had a sister.

- Jingnian

In fact, having siblings reside around the elderly parents is always a comfort for many Chinese immigrants, no matter how old they are. Zeyu, whose big brother returned to Taiwan after having finished his post-graduate studies in Montreal, expressed that the return of his brother provided him an option to stay in Canada.

If my big brother decided to stay in Canada too, I will worry about, for my parents, they had no son residing around them, I will then consider, eventually, either one of us should go back (to Taiwan), either we should sponsor them to come to Canada. Certainly, they were not that old, they were not in that life circle. But as now, my big brother has been back to Taiwan, I feel better to stay.

- Zeyu

This echoes exactly what Sun (2012) found in his research among Taiwanese immigrants in the United States; when they had siblings living near the elderly parents, they felt more comforted than those who did not. As a result, we can possibly assume that migrants who have siblings find it easier to emigrate compared to those who have no brothers or sisters. However, none of my participants touched by the one-child policy indicated that they had considered their parents' need for help when thinking about migration. Furthermore, four (Dongning, Wangyang, Lulu and Xuran) were born after the implementation of the one-child policy did not mention their intention to migrate to their parents until their immigration application was approved by the Canadian government. Another, Shi'an, the youngest son in his family of origin, who is currently 48 years old, told his nearly 90-year-old parents that he came to Canada just for a visit, in order to not disappoint them. According to my own analysis, I consider it mainly due to the age of parents, which is to say the age of parents of the roughly younger generation in this research stayed relatively young and their need of care was relatively little while the children made their migration decision. However, according to the answers from my participants, the well-developed global transportation network is the main reason that they did not consider their parents' need for care when making their decision to

move. They even make a comparison between themselves and those who leave their rural elderly parents at home to work in the three main metropolitains in China - namely Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou - which is quite normal in modern China, by saying that there is no difference between them.

Like my cousins, they work in Beijing, they go back home only if they are at vacation or the Spring Festival comes, it's the same, it's the same as for me to fly back home from here (Canada). [...] How convenient the air transporting is, if I want to go back to China, I'll be there the second day after my purchase of air tickets. It (the large geographic proximity) is nothing.

- Xuran

Once their non-migrant parents fall into bad health conditions, almost all the participants, except Dongning, expressed that they would go back to China and take care of them without any hesitation, even at the price of losing their Canadian nationality or the status of permanent resident of Canada.

I don't consider it a problem to take care of my parents. Once they were sick, or once they really need my care, I will definitely go back and take care of them even if I lost my Canadian nationality, it is for sure, right? That's it.

-Xuran

As discussed above, taking care of elderly parents is part of traditional Chinese morality and, according to my participants, such a sense of duty and responsibility is actually created not only by cultural heritage, meaning this is how their parents care for their grandparents, but also comes from the feeling of being grateful to their parents for raising them.

According to my grandma, the family is very important, the family should always be put at the first place. I can't say that my parents told me to do what exactly they did to my grandma, but I consider it what I have naturally in me, because that's how my dad does, how he takes care of my grandma, I won't think it ridiculous if I do the same as him.

- Zeyu

If my parents need care, I will definitely go back and take care of them. This is my duty. Parents gave us birth, they raised us up, like when I was sick when I was young, my parents never said « I couldn't take care of you because I had to work or I was off today », it was unreasonable.

- Jingnian

To assure flexibility between China and Canada in case of need, some Chinese immigrants even choose transnational work as their career by purpose.

If they need, I will go back and take care of them. [...] The business that I chose to make was a flexible business. [...] I chose this business in consideration of the possible changes in the future. [...] Yes, it's a business that needs communications between two countries. If it is all about Canada, here's the problem, one is I don't have such chance, another is once my parents need me in the future, I will have to start all over.

- Wangyang

What deserves to be mentioned is that familial structure, especially among divorced and regrouped families, will somehow reduce the children's sense of duty to take care of elderly parents and will facilitate the decision to migrate. Dongning, whose parents got divorced when she was 8 years old and both of them got remarried later, didn't tell them about her migration intention until the application was approved by the Canadian government, and she was the only participant in this research who accepted the public or private care resources when thinking about her own absence of care.

I don't think they will be seriously ill for several years. Once such situation comes true, I have my job in Canada, I can't go back, for sure, I have to hire someone to help. Me, what I can do is to go and visit for some time.

- Dongning

6.2.2 Hearing about the Children's Emigration

According to the responses from my interviewees, the deepest wish of parents, no matter how many children they have, is to ensure their children live a good quality of life, even though the price is to let their children live elsewhere far away from them. Therefore, the parents always persuade themselves to accept the children's emigration by "it is for the sake of their better life".

My parents never told me about their expectation of my return. But what made them happy was, I was graduated from university and I was recruited by a good company, I am now on the good pathway [...] To them, I am a normal but safely and well living child who has his own job, his own family, I am a well-grown-up child. They feel happy for this.

- Zeyu

For those who came from China to Canada in the late twentieth century when China's development was still far behind that of Canada, the parents even felt happy for their children's emigration. However, such neutral or even supportive attitude towards children's emigration changes according to the actual quality of life that emigrant children have and the older age that the parents themselves gain. Since it is common to find immigrants experience a downward shift of social rank due to various factors, many Chinese immigrants in Canada are actually struggled to find a life that is quite different from what they had expected before landing, and because of which, the parents gradually express their hope to have the emigrant children return.

According to their words, I can feel that they always want me to go back to China. Because if I go back to my country, especially when I was very down in my life or when I didn't live a good life ... Because when I left China, the country started to develop with a fantastic speed, they said that I could easily find a good job in China with my personal resume. It's better to live alone in a foreign country, feeling tired and having nobody to take care of me.

- Dongning

Such concern happens especially among the parents of female emigrants, who especially take marriage and a stable job as an important standard for evaluating the children's quality of life. Anran, a single, 34-year-old immigrant from China, told me that her parents, who supported her emigration when she first applied, have suggested her to resettle in China two years after her migration, considering her single status as well as her not being recruited by an ideal employer.

My parents said, look, you've been there for two years, you didn't get a stable job, you didn't get married neither, you don't even have a boyfriend that you can marry to, why don't you stay in China. Stay in China, then find a job, we'll find you a boyfriend, then quickly solve your personal problem (marriage).

- Anran

In the meantime, parents' attitude towards children's emigration is found strongly related to the age of the parents, which is to say, the older the parents get, the more eagerly they look forward to their children's return. I consider this to be the case not purely because of the healthcare and financial needs in later life, but also because of the need for the psychological comfort that comes from being surrounded by the children. Jingnian, who

immigrated to Canada in his forties for the sake of his own child's better education, told me that his parents could not agree with his migration decision and worried about the widening geographic proximity between generations. Similarly, Junhao, who came to Canada in 1992 with the support of his mother, told me that every time he called his mother now, she kept asking when would he come back and visit her again, looking forward to his return.

To explain with the Chinese tradition, the parents will always want their children being around them, that's all. So every week I called her (mother), everytime I called her, she will ask when will I go back and visit her, that's is.

- Junhao

Such support in old-aged life is regarded as important by almost all Chinese parents; hence, considering their potential future needs, some parents actually show little support towards the migratory intentions of the last child who resides near them, perhaps after having encouraged the emigration of their other children. Lulu, the big sister from a two-child family, told me that her parents didn't even want her younger sister to study in a foreign country due to their worries about her potential migratory intentions.

She (the younger sister) has been graduated from university. She has never left home. So she is kind of comfort to my parents. So to my younger sister, my parents were not that much supportive towards her idea about going moving out of China.

- Lulu

Obviously, the statistics from the ground did not uphold our assumption that the family structure, especially that of the one-child family structure does have negative impact on migration decision. Being the only child in the family of origin will actually not stop the pace of emigration. What it changes exactly is the stories after the migration. We suppose that this finding is determined by two factors. First, the development of transportation and communication technologies, as well as the improvement of social status of Chinese immigrants, have enabled people to move much more easily than in the old days. In such a condition, the "distance" that comes along with the international migration is no longer "scary" for many of them. Second, we consider the concerns over distance between family members, especially that in the context of normative obligations heritaged from the Confucian philosophy in Chinese culture, is defined and changed according to the life cycles of the parents.

So, what are the stories after the migration decisions are made? In the next chapter, we will discuss how family solidarity, especially that between generations, is materialized in the context of international migration, as well as the one-child policy.

7. Intergenerational Solidarity in the Context of Migration

As mentioned above, we will put five out of six dimensions of Bengtson et al.'s intergenerational solidarity framework into two groups to explore how family solidarity is materialized in Chinese immigrant families. The first group refers to normative, affective and associative solidarity; by analyzing this correlation we will attempt to know how associative solidarity behaves under the impact of normative solidarity, namely traditional requirement of filial piety in Chinese culture, as well as affective solidarity. The second group is composed of structural solidarity and functional solidarity, which aims to discuss how people materialize functional solidarity by compromising to certain limits created by the structural solidarity.

7.1 Normative, Affective and Associative Solidarity

7.1.1 Keeping Contact Transnationally

By analyzing the way and frequency to keep contact between our participants and their parents left behind, we found that the transnational communication provides family members with a context that helps to reinforce family ties, even though the actual residential proximity prevents them from talking to or caring for each other face to face. However, the way of communication is decided by the level of sense of intimacy between family members, while it is strongly related to familial structure, actual geographic proximity, and age, etc.

7.1.1.1 The Way to Keep Contact and the Development of Technologies

Among all 14 participants, the majority of them have mentioned WeChat² as a way to keep in contact with their parents in China, and they all considered such convenient and low-cost way of communication helps a lot to reduce the affective sense of distance due to the widening geographic proximity. Shi'an told me that his family of origin has created a new

² WeChat is a mobile text and voice messaging communication service developed by Tencent in China. It is one of the largest standalone messaging Apps by monthly active users. As of May 2016, WeChat has over a billion created accounts, 700 million active users; with more than 70 million outside of China (as of December 2015).

family tradition now, as the whole family chats on WeChat once a week. He even describes the little sense of decreased distance: “*as if I was working in another room*”.

But what I want to say is, the development of technology really helps a lot to reduce the sense that comes along with the distance. We have “family conference” quite often now, we chat on WeChat, it is as if I am working in another room. It’s good. It’s different from before, it has to wait for ten days, almost half a month, to receive the letter from the sender, such feeling is different.

- Shi’an

The positive impact of technical developments on transnational communication is found especially apparent among those who have left China for a long time. When Lulu began her studies in France, she could only keep in contact with her family members in China by phone because of the much underdeveloped transnational communicative technology at that time. To call from France to China, Lulu had to buy calling cards first from a variety shop run by a Korean family in the city where she studied, then go to a phone booth for the transnational calls. She talked to her parents, as well as her sister, once a week at that time; however, now she chats almost every day with her family members in China.

To call from France was not as easy as it is now. We can now call directly with cell phone, right? And it is free. [...] At that time, I called once a week, it was usually on weekends. [...] Now, the daily life, because it is pretty easy to call by WeChat and phone, we have video chats almost once every one or two days. Before, it could be once a week. But now, if I was free someday, or once I thought of them, I’ll start the video chat. I’ll ask “what are you doing?”, then the other side said “we’re having dinner, look what we have for dinner today!”. It is quite usual for now.

- Lulu

Junhao, who left China for Canada at the beginning of 1990s, told me that the cost to call back to China when he first came to Canada was more than one Canadian dollar per minute, which was a large amount for him at that time. Therefore, he would memorize what he wanted to say by heart every time before making the call, and would count very carefully the minutes while talking. He started to call his mom in China regularly every Friday night couples of years ago, to tell his mother that his son is living a good life in Canada.

I called her at least once a week now, regularly. I don’t want her to worry about me. You know, the elders, if I call her a bit later today, she will ask why do you call that late today? That’s her. Yes, it’s true. Sometimes I call a little later than usual, she’ll ask why you are so late today? Anything bad happens? [...]

She misses me very much, so I call her every Friday night, that's why I never work on Friday nights, it's to avoid coming back later and making her worry about me.

- Junhao

Changes due to well-developed transnational communication technologies are found not only in the increased frequency of contact between Chinese migrants and their parents in China, but also in terms of topics that they talk about. It was shown that people used to concentrate more on the discussion of important events or major life decisions in consideration of the high communication fees. Now, the majority of my interviewees indicated that what they talked on calling now were those “unimportant” tiny things of daily life, which helps a lot to create a sense of intimacy between family members. However, even though the highly developed communication technologies are now facilitating transnational contact by providing various possibilities of communication, not everyone has increased their frequency of contact with their parents in China after years, in the contrary, some of them have even reduced their average contact time after migrating. Some of them suggest it is due to inconvenience of coping with time difference between China and Canada, while others consider it as a result of increasing age, as well as a more independent personality.

At that time (when I was in France), yes, it was almost every day. It was everyday. Because me, I worried about my mom very much, I don't know why, actually nothing was wrong with her, but I felt worried if I didn't talk with her once a day, I don't know why, I worried if something bad happened on her, i felt like that. [...] Now, it is probably because of the 12 or 13 hours' jet lag, it's sometimes hard to find a time free for both of us, so we chat less than before. Now, we have video chats at weekends, on Saturdays. [...] I don't know when did it start, the change, it's, euh, maybe, on the one hand, I'm getting older, I don't miss that much my parents in compared with the very beginning when I left China, then, on the other hand, maybe, I feel more independent, psychologically, I don't rely on them as much as before. It's not to say that I don't miss them, it's just, maybe there's other things that are more important to do, so I talk to them less, yes it is.

- Anran

In fact, the choice of the way to communicate and the frequency of communication can be considered as indicators of affective solidarity between parents and children. Four participants (Dongning, Xinxin, Anni, Chengmei) in this study who keep in touch with their parents left behind through relatively traditional techniques, namely either by phone or by

email, at a very low frequency, told me that they don't feel considerably close to their parents in China. In condition of being free to choose the way of communication, those who feel close to each other are found more likely to communicate with technologies that are similar to face-to-face talk at a considerable high frequency; however, those who do not feel mutually close seem to prefer to keep contact by the way that are relative "at a distance". Anni, who kept contact with her parents in hometown by letters and calls ever since she moved to Beijing for work, expressed her unwillingness to talk to her family members, explaining that she never calls back regularly and even refuses to let her parents call her back. Xinxin is another interviewee who told me that she never talked with her parents on WeChat, even though it is a way of communication used by a large number of Chinese immigrants overseas.

The frequency, once every few weeks? I'll talk to him more frequently once I have something to discuss with him. Because he's very busy, he's always busy. I don't feel like to disturb him at a high frequency. I won't ask him to help me on tiny issues in my daily life. I have to have something serious enough to be qualified to disturb him, I have to have such big issues to ask him for help. Usually, I don't disturb him.

- Xinxin

Xinxin considers her recognition of "should not disturb" his father as the impact of her parents' divorce, which interrupts the inertance of living together as well as keeping in touch. Another interviewee, Dongning, whose parents got divorced when she was very young, also showed a relatively low frequency of transnational contact after her immigration to Canada, and the way they communicate with each other remains only email several years after she left China.

Furthermore, not only does affective closeness between generations influences the means of contact, but also the age of parents and their attitudes towards new technologies. Junhao's only way of communication with his mother in China now is still telephone, even though he sometimes has video chats with his siblings, for the age of his mother has already been over 90 years old and it is really difficult for her to become acquainted with new technologies. Dongning, who came to Canada when video chats had already been possible for transnational communications, still relies on emails to keep in contact with her parents because the latter did not show any interest in learning the new technology.

We communicate by email, usually, because they don't know how to use WeChat. They're actually kind of person who are left behind by the technical developments. When I first left China, I left them some

equipment for video chats, but they never used it. Perhaps it was because they were no longer young. They felt difficult to get acquaintance of those new technologies. I used to call them, but now we send emails.

- Dongning

It is not hard to tell from the analysis above that technical development has provided people with more possibilities for transnational communications than ever before; however, the use of this technology to facilitate transnational contact varies from person to person. It is interesting to find that the more and more convenient ways of communication helps to reduce the sense of distance between immigrant children and their parents in China, in the meantime, the existing level of affective solidarity also plays an extremely important role in picking certain methods for communication.

7.1.1.2 Why Keeping in Contact Transnationally?

With the development of communicative technologies, there have emerged several new ways to communicate transnationally, which facilitate the communication across borders. However, we found that not everyone has increased their frequency of contact though the technology evolves, in the meantime, not everyone is using the relatively more advanced and more “close” way of communication even though almost no cost will be accrued by doing so. Why does there exist such differences from person to person? To find the answer to this question, we are going to start with the motivations for keeping in contact from the perspective of Chinese immigrants in Montreal.

Among all the 14 participants in my research, only three indicated that they now or used to talk with their parents in China every day, while the common reason for them to communicate so frequently is that they miss their parents and they worry about them. To keep in contact is to know how the parents are doing on the other side of the Earth. Another participant who keeps in contact with his parents with the same motivation mentioned above, told me that he calls his mother in China every Friday night, and he described his commitment to this tradition of talking transnationally with his mother at a fixed time and frequency as: “*I won't change my position even there is thunder around me (Junhao)*”, which means the calls will not be stopped under any circumstance. If we examine the demographic characteristics of

these four participants who have the same motivation of transnational contact, it is easy to find that three among them are the eldest out of all in this study. Lili's mother was over seventy years old when she immigrated to Canada in consideration of her own daughter's need of help 15 years ago. Since her big brother and sister-in-law, with whom her mother lived, are not the kind of people who know how to take care of others (in the view of Lili), she therefore called back to her mother every day in order to check on her living conditions. When she found that her mother needed something, Lili would ask her friends or other relatives such as her little sister-in-law for help. Lili's husband described her behavior as “*control at a long distance*”

I called her everyday, and also to my son in China. [...] Why did I call her everyday? Because I wanted to know how he was going on, does she need anything, I must arrange for what he needed. I worried about her. [...] My mother, actually, she loved her children and she cared for us, thus she always talked about good news with me instead of bad news. [...] Because she never told me bad news about her, everything was always good according to her, everything was good, good, good. So I asked my husband's cousin to take care of my mother for me, to accompany my mother for half a day every day, to wash her, to feed her, etc.

- Lili

According to Lili's response, we can tell that friends and other kin relatives are ideal options when asking for help, when immigrants themselves cannot give in-time care to their elderly parents in China due to geographic proximity. This brings us back to the Sun's study on transnational help between family members, which emphasizes the important function of kin networks and friends who stay in the home country in providing care and help to the elderly parents of emigrants (Sun, 2012). In the meantime, we suppose that middle-aged migrants show a greater intention to care for their parents compared to relatively younger migrants. On the one hand, this is because of different life cycles that migrants of different ages stay, while on the other hand, middle-aged migrants who have their own children may be more understanding of their own parents' situation, which motivates them to care for the elderly. Jingnian's story reflects exactly our suggestions about why migrants of different ages show different levels of concern towards their parents. When Jingnian emigrated from China to Canada, both of his parents were in their sixties. He told me that the reason why he had video chats with his parents everyday was not only to know how his parents were going, but also to

create a chance for his own children to get in touch with their grandparents, by which the family ties would not be dismissed due to geographic proximity.

We had video chat almost everyday. All the family members could talk with one another by video chat, especially, it's to let my children talk with their grandpa and grandma.

-Jingnian

However, relatively younger migrants in this study did not show an intention to communicate with parents in China unless there was something important to discuss. In fact, the “important issue to be discussed” can be regarded as a medium, by the push of which the “communication” happens. Zeyu, a 25-year-old engineer in Montreal, told me that he called his parents in Taiwan only when there was something complicated that was worth discussing with family member, while his father, who is now retired from a high school in south Taiwan, started to call Zeyu every day when he found that it was free to call internationally with apps such as WeChat and LINE³. Another participant (Xinxin) who expressed that there would not be communication between her and her father unless there was something important to discuss, told me that she considered it kind of disturbing if she calls for nothing. Such intentional avoidance of communication with parents is actually the result of institutional mechanisms, which will be further discussed in the next part of thesis.

Except for the medium of “having something important to discuss”, there exists another core medium for transnational contact between Chinese immigrants and their family members, namely, festivals. Almost all the participants in this research demonstrated that they would send blessings to their parents in China during traditional festivals, especially the Chinese New Year, and their parents’ birthdays. This is, on the one hand, due to the meaning of the festivals themselves, which traditionally symbolize familial reunion and has been internalized by almost every Chinese person in their lifetime, thus, when these specially moments arrive, the nostalgia naturally motivates transnational communications in the context of international migration. On the other hand, to send respect and to greet seniors during

³ LINE is a proprietary application for instant communications on electronic devices such as smartphones, tablet computers and personal computers. LINE users exchange texts, images, video and audio, and conduct free conversations and video conference.

traditional festivals is exactly what the Chinese tradition requires, which reflects the decisive connection between normative and associative solidarity in Chinese families. However, transnational and intergenerational communications that rely on traditional festivals are not really highly related to the affections that family members have for each other. According to the answers of my participants, even those who seldom call back and those who feel extremely unwilling to talk with their parents being left behind will greet the elderly during the traditional festivals.

Even though we don't talk quite often on phone, but I have to, I have to call her, just like to do a duty. [...] I sometimes even feel scary, about having to call her when the spring festival comes.

- Chengmei

Both Chengmei and another participant, Anni, who showed extreme unwillingness to communicate with their parents in China, mentioned the word “duty” when describing their transnational contact. In fact, what merits clarification is that not all transnational contact that is motivated by the normative solidarity of having a duty to keep contact with parents is generated by negative emotions; there exist a large proportion that is generated by respect towards traditional Chinese norms. Both Xuran and Wangyang told me that they regularly made video chats with their parents in China once a week because they consider it necessary to tell their parents that they are safe and good in Canada. This can be regarded as a kind of completion of personal duty, while it is also about preventing their elderly parents from worrying about them.

I call them once a week, at least once a week. But our talk won't last too long, it lasts for about ten minutes every time, that's it, sometimes it will be longer, when it is the spring festival, it may be half an hour, or even one hour. [...] I feel it obliged, at least once a week, to tell my parents that I'm safe here, to not let them worry about me.

- Xuran

In addition, with the development of new technologies, more and more Chinese immigrants feel happier than ever to talk with their parents in China whenever and wherever thanks to the convenience and the low cost of international communications, which greatly facilitate transnational communication among Chinese immigrants. Even though the starting point of such communication is to spend time as well as for essential contact, it actually

reinforces the affectual ties between immigrants in Canada and their parents on the other side of the planet. Lulu talks with her parents quite often on video chats whenever she is free when she feels like missing home. Another participant, Yajing, started the habit of calling her mother in China on her way back home after work and when the talk ended, she would arrive home.

By analyzing the motivation of Chinese immigrants in Montreal for keeping in contact transnationally, we can probably divide them into six dimensions, which refer to “to make sure the non-migrant parents are in good condition”, “to not make the parents worry about their migrant children”, “to discuss important decisions”, “to create a context for the interactions between family members”, “to greet on festivals” and “to fill time blanks”. It is obvious that some of these dimensions are more affective, while some of them are more normative or functional. Furthermore, we found that the participants who are in relatively older age in this study are more likely to communicate transnationally in consideration of affective and normative solidarity, while the relatively younger participants tend to communicate for functional needs. By combining the participants’ answers about how they keep in contact and how frequently they communicate with their non-migrant parents, we can tell that those who feel more affectively close to the parents are more willing to talk at a relatively high frequency compared to those who feel relatively distant from their parents, in the meantime, the way that the former use to communicate is more similar to that of face-to-face communications. But how is the sense of affective intimacy, or in other words, affective solidarity, created? We will discuss this topic in the next part.

7.1.1.3 The Sense of Intimacy and the Affective Solidarity

By analyzing the answers about how close the participants are affectively to their parents and also why they estimate their sense of intimacy at such level, we can generally divide the answers into two parts. The first part refers to the familial structure of the family of origin, and the second part is about how the participants were raised by their parents, which could also say by the sense of consuality from the adult children to their parents.

It is not surprising to find that the familial structure is one of the core factors that determine the sense of intimacy between generations when we combine the motivation, the

method of transnational communication, and the frequency of transnational communication found among the participants with familial structure. Two of the least communicative and least motivated participants in this research both come from divorced families. Xinxin told me that she started living at school when she was at primary school and was only 7 years old, and the only time that she could probably spend with her parents was weekends as well as every summer and winter break. Both of her parents are business people, so none of them were free enough to spend a lot of time with Xinxin. She even told me that she would rather live at school than at home, for as she had to go to business dinners with her parents almost every night once she was at home, because of which she felt difficult to finish her homework after school. While her parents were applying for their divorce, both of them made a lot of negative criticism of each other in front of Xinxin. The small chance of getting along with her father after the divorce made Xinxin consider it a kind of inertia to not communicate or to communicate at a very low frequency with him in China, after all, she met her father once a week at maximum when she was still in China.

In fact, to communicate at a very low frequency, it isn't determined by the widening geographic proximity. It might be because, well, it's kind of inertia of not being living together everyday, it won't change very much by the distance. And then, for me, I'm an adult, I actually feel wasting my time talking with him if I called him everyday.

- Xinxin

Another participant who comes from divorced family indicated that the reason for communicating infrequently was because she did not feel any desire to talk with her parents. The fact that her parents have been divorced for a long time and both of them had new families several years after the divorce made her feel more affectively independent in compared with the others, furthermore, her independent personality and the lack of intimacy between her and her parents gradually increased as the time went by.

I don't feel close to them. Sometimes you'll feel that there's nothing merits talking about, because you don't share any mutual life with them. Even though sometimes you mentioned some topics on purpose to make both of you have something to talk about, they just feel no interest. Because there is distance between you, it's hard, not living together, I think.

- Dongning

In the meantime, we actually discovered with surprise that migrants from one-child families show lower frequency of transnational communication than those who have siblings, while the latter's motivation to keep in contact is more affective than the former's. We can probably suppose that the reason for such a difference is familial structure, which is to say that the growing number of family members increases the chance of interaction within the family, and because of which the sense of intimacy with one another, as well as the sense of understanding towards the "family", could be generated little by little. However, only children in Chinese families tend to receive a lot of focus and care from the whole family while growing up, which effectively motivates their sense of selfishness rather than that of care for other family members. Yajing even described her relationship with her mother as "*the focus point of firepower*". She told me that the only focal point of her mother before the latter's remarriage was her, which naturally brought out conflicts between generations by highlighting the difference of values between them and thus eroded the sense of intimacy. However, the situation has somehow improved since her mother was remarried.

The fact that she's remarried successfully moved her focus point of firepower away from me, and now, she can nag another person day and night other than me. It helps to solve a big problem for me lol.

- Yajing

Other than the familial structure, the sense of consensuality from the Chinese immigrants towards their parents and the way that the parents raised them are also core factors that determine the sense of intimacy between generations. Anni and Chengmei are two participants who showed strong disagreement with the way that their parents raised them; at the same time, they also demonstrated clear and determined reluctance to keep in contact with their parents in China. What merits further discussion is that, they both had the same experience of being sent to their grandparents to be taken care of when they were very young. In fact, such an experience is quite common in Chinese families, and 8 out of our 14 participants in this research indicated that most of the time during their early childhood was with their grandparents. A large number of Chinese parents felt obliged and consider it a good option to have their children cared by their own parents during the weekdays, considering of the limited daycare resources and long working hours; this means that the only time for the most participants to spend time with their parents during the childhood was during the

weekends. Such decision gradually decreases the time spent together as well as the sense of intimacy between parents and children during the most important period of the children's construction of personality, and so people that children feel the closest to in many families are actually their grandparents. Anni even described her feelings towards her parents as “*heart freezing*” when she talked about her estimation of sense of intimacy towards them. She wasn't sent back to her parents until she was eligible to go to primary school, and the lack of time spent together made her feel quite different from her other family members.

I don't feel close to my family members. Maybe it's because we are so different on personality. I've been considering they are more like a family every since I was a little girl. [...] I don't know, I don't know if I am making excuses, but I was raised up by my grandparents, well it's until when I was four. But it is said that the relation with the world is constructed according to the interactions with people around us when we were under three years old, generally, that “people” are parents, however, for me, it were my grandparents. [...]

- Anni

Another participant, Chengmei, who considers it “scary” to talk with her mother because of the critical personality of the latter, even asked her husband to call her own mother on behalf of her on every traditional festival, in order to fulfill the normative duty of being filial.

You must call her, or she will say I no longer care for her after my dad's passed away. [...] Yes, it's a duty, it's an obligation. My call is never motivated by my miss. [...] Sometimes I feel scary to call, once I feel it obliged to call her because the spring festival is coming, I may even asked my husband to call for me, I said that I was inconvenient to call her from here. He said your mom was not easy to get along with, she was too mean. Look, she even gets angry with my husband. My husband said that he spent a lot of time to make her happy, to boil her by language, ok, she was happy again, but my husband said, ooh, I was so tired.

- Chengmei

The personalities of the family members as well as the consensual level that migrant children have towards their parents matters greatly in estimating the sense of intimacy. Even though Yajing's mother has already moved to Canada thanks to her second marriage so that the residential proximity between her and her daughter is reduced, Yajing still feels a great sense of distance in mind between her and her mother. She explained her unwillingness to get along with her mother by do not have the same views and values.

I don't like her negative judgements, my mom, she's fine when talking with the others, however, when she talks with me, she'll tell me the gossips unconsciously, she'll make judgements on the others [...] I might disagree with her and sometimes quarrel with her, I considered it nonsense. [...] But in conclusion, I don't like the negative emotions that she sends me, so I try to talk with her less on purpose. [...] It created conflicts between us, quite easily, so I'll try to not talk about those things in front of her, I actually avoid discussing with her [...] I prefer to say less, I prefer to have a cooler relationship with my mom. I'll have more things to be judged by her if I said too much.

- Yajing

We can probably tell that the sense of intimacy between generations is constructed little by little in everyday life rather than by certain decisive life events. It is strongly related to familial structure as well as the way that parents treat their children and the consualities between them. Furthermore, the sense of intimacy has a strong effect on the way people communicate transnationally, as well as the frequency.

7.1.2 Return Visits to China and Shared Activities with Family Members

Even though the means of keeping in contact varies from person to person, almost all the Chinese immigrants in this study admitted that it was unfilial not to have a return trip to China for a much too long time, saying that it was essential to preserve family ties. Travel fees are no longer a great consideration for most Chinese immigrants in Canada nowadays while compared to their ascendants; however, there exist still certain barriers, such as the unnegotiable working schedules, that prevent them from going back to China.

Junhao is in the least favorable position among all participants in this study. He has been working in restaurants for minimum wages due to his lack of language and professional skills ever since he emigrated from China to Canada. His wife, who is now retired from a garment factory, receives monthly pension fees from the government. However, he is the one who flies back to China most frequently among all the participants, and the average length of his return trips to China are between two to three months. Talking about why he flies back so frequently, he told me that the desire to spend more time with his elderly mother as well as other family members motivated him.

Nostalgia? Sure, I always have it. How to say that, euh, anyways, we're a family, and I'm the only one here, they're all there. And my parents are already old at that time (when I immigrated to Canada), it's even older now. So I go back to China as long as I'm free, I go back every time when I'm free.

- Junhao

In fact, the return trips to China have been more and more important to him since 2000, when his father and his little sister passed away one after another.

At the beginning, I didn't have that many holidays when I was still working at XX restaurant, but I went back to China as long as I had holidays. Then, it became once a year, gradually. It was in 2000, my dad passed away, and also my little sister. Since then, I felt that, ok, I must take it as precious, take my family members as precious, so I tried my best to go back and visit as frequently as possible, I go back to get along with them as long as I have time. That's it.

- Junhao

According to the case of Junhao, we find the little correlation between the frequency of return visits and the length of stay, and the personal financial status; what matters most is actually the sense of intimacy with non-migrant family members and how important the family of origin is estimated by the immigrants themselves. Another participant, who travels quite often between Canada and China, travels for the sake of her son. Chengmei immigrated to Canada six years ago with her son who was three at that time, while her husband decided to stay and work in China to support their living expenses in Canada. Every summer, when her son's summer break comes, Chengmei goes back to China in order to make chance for her son and her husband to get along with each other, meanwhile, to create more interactions with other family members such as her own mother and her own siblings for his son.

To go back, for a short term, it's for sure. As a child, to go back and have a look, to get along with his father, it's important. He'll have more confidence, he'll know more about what he wants in life [...] I'll bring him to visit my mom. The main reason that I go back to China is for the sake of my son, in fact, it's for my son, me, as a mother, I do everything for my son [...] Do you know why? Because he's growing up, he needs to have the concept of kinship, he needs to know little by little that he is not the center of the world, he has many other connections such as cousins, aunts, uncles, many other people, that he needs to get in touch with.

- Chengmei

From the view of Chengmei, it is important to create a context to let her son spend time with other family members, which echoes Bengtson's intergenerational solidarity framework that the structural solidarity, namely the geographic proximity between family members and the chance to get along with each other, is a decisive factor that has strong impact on affective solidarity as well as functional solidarity (Lawton et al., 1994). Return visits, therefore, signify the structure in transnational intergenerational solidarity. In the meantime, regular return visits to the home country among Chinese immigrants in Canada confirms Le Gall's finding that the family ties persist even though residential proximity between family members widens greatly after international migration (Le Gall, 2002).

Zeyu is another interviewee who travels regularly between his home country and Canada. He started to work as an engineer in Montreal after his graduation from university two years ago. In the past two years, he has been back to Taiwan twice, once a year, and will travel back once more this summer. He told me that the reasons for his return visits were all for certain important familial events.

It (my return visit) is approximately once a year. It happens to have some reasons to go back. The first time was for the funeral of my grandpa; the second time was to celebrate the 80th birthday for my grandma, the whole family gathered at that time and celebrate her birthday together; the third time, which means the next time, is for my big brother's wedding.

- Zeyu

Zeyu's story is just one of the thousands of Chinese immigrants overseas. Even though they live far away from their hometown, as well as the whole kin network, they stay positive and active at participating in important familial events. The return visits that motivated by the desire to participate in familial events therefore create a context for family gatherings, as well as interactions between family members, which helps a lot to reinforce family ties between migrants and their non-migrants family members. Zeyu described the family events that he had been involved in transnationally as a carrier, which satisfied his need to spend some time being with his family members.

Well, there happens to be some important events. Cause actually, I feel that, we can't just don't see each other for a much too long time, even though we have the habit to talk on phone quite regularly, but we need to get along with each other indeed, face to face"

- Zeyu

What deserves to be emphasized is that the spring festival (traditional Chinese new year) is considered as the most important carrier, namely the event that should be spent with the whole family, by almost all the participants in this research. Therefore, it was found that more return visits from Canada to China occur during the period of spring festival at the beginning of every year. Meanwhile, the need to provide daily care to family members, especially elderly parents who are in sick, is also considered an important carrier that motivates the transnational travels among middle-aged interviewees in this study. Lili, who immigrated to Canada in consideration of the need of her own migrant daughter, has travelled between Canada and China several times in the past ten years in order to take care of her elderly mother as well as her daughter-in-law.

My mom was diagnosed cancer at that time, already, in 2004. The cancer was found, she was sick, so I went back. I invited my mom to live with me when I was in China. Then the second time, my daughter-in-law was having a baby, I was having another grandson, so I went back to help her, I stayed in China for one year that time. Usually I would stay in China for four months, sometimes five, I accompanied my mom and I took care of her. When she was getting better again, once I considered it ok to leave my mom to my brothers, I came back, because I have my daughter's family here, they also need my help.

- Lili

There are three children in Lili's family of origin, and she is the only girl among them. Even though her mother lived with her big brother almost all the time during her elderly years, the actual care provider is still Lili, a migrant daughter who had to travel back from the other side of the planet, when her mother needs daily care while falling asick. We can therefore suppose that the actual taker of the caring duty remains the daughter in the family rather than the wives of the married sons, which contradicts Settles et al.'s research about the real care provider in Chinese families is daughters-in-law (Settles et al., 2013). From the view of Lili, to take care of her aged mother transnationally is on the one hand, a kind of return, which aims to thank her mother for raising her up, while on the other hand, a way to avoid familial conflicts.

So the sense of being filial, it's not mutual, for example, I am filial, I can't ask you to be as filial as me, the only thing I can do is to take my own responsibility, so that the conflicts can be covered. If all the children in the family are filial, that will be great. If one is more filial while another is less, that's ok, no problem, the one who's more filial will cover the conflicts, because he did everything that should be done by the

others, so that the the conflicts won't be more and more evident, more and more serious. For example, the elderly may have to live lonely without any accompany, may have no money to use, conflicts like that.

- Lili

Except for migrants who feel close to their family members and who have the desire to spend some time at home, those who feel quite isolated from their families of origin are also found having the habit to travel back to China once every couple of years, and the main purpose of their return trips is to visit their non-migrant parents in China. Even Anni, who calls her aged mother in China only once several months, went back to China and visited her mother once in the last four years after she left China for Canada. She described the reason for her visit to China as “*it's unreasonable to not visit my parents*”.

Return visits, either motivated by the desire for spending time with parents or the sense of duty to show filial piety, are an important way to keep family ties transnationally and is commonly found among Chinese immigrants in Canada because after all, “*getting along face to face cannot be replaced by making calls transnationally (Lulu)*”. However, even though travel fees are no longer a core concern for most Chinese immigrants nowadays when considering whether to return or not, there exist still some other obstacles on their way home. For those participants who immigrated to Canada through higher education, their frequency of return visits after graduation is much lower than that of the days when they were students, and the reason for such diminution is often indicated as the need to work regularly and continuously in Canada. Therefore, in the restriction of need to work, the sense of intimacy between migrants and their non-migrant family members reduces gradually due to the lack of face-to-face interactions, which is quite apparent in the example of Dongning,

At the beginning, I went back to China almost once every year. I was still going to school at that time, I was relative free than I am now, I could go whenever I wanted, but now, I have to work, I can't go at anytime I wanna go, even though I have holidays, I may prefer to go elsewhere for sightseeing. Actually, I will feel bored if I go back to China quite frequently now. There's little thing that China attracts me now, its touristic points, its gastronomies, and my parents. If it was for tourism, there are many other sights in the countries other than China that merit visiting. So, it's (return visit) just for the parents.

- Dongning

We can probably tell from the interviews that return visits are quite common in the Chinese community overseas. When thinking about whether to go back and visit or not, Chinese immigrants in Canada are no longer restricted by the worries about travel fees as their ascendants did. However, the need to work continuously in Canada is the main concern that Chinese immigrants have to consider while making the return visit plans.

There are many factors that encourage Chinese immigrants to travel between the two countries, among which we found the factor of “showing filial piety to the parents” to be the most common and important. By analyzing the return visits of my participants, I actually found three carriers by which the return visits are generated. The first refers to traditional festivals. In general, festivals in Chinese culture symbolize nostalgia and encourage familial reunions in the whole society. Chinese immigrants tend to have return visits during the festivals so that they can have more chance to interact with other family members, by which filial piety could be also shown. The second carrier is important family events such as weddings, birthdays or funerals. Our finding confirms exactly Le Gall’s (2002) declaration about the ties with family of origin will not be cut after the migration, in contrast, migrants stay positive on participating in various types of family events. The third carrier of return visit among Chinese immigrants is the non-migrant parents’ health condition, which we will discuss as structural solidarity in the next part of the thesis.

In fact, return visits are a way to keep family ties, according to which the context of interaction between family members could be invented. After all, *“We, as a family, just can’t don’t see each other for a much too long time. It’s like two persons who are in relationship. Being in a relationship at distance is totally different from spending days and nights altogether (Lulu)”*.

What the exploration on normative, affective, and associative solidarity in Chinese immigrant families inspired us to declare that, first, transnational communication and return visits are two main forms of associative solidarity that Chinese immigrants in Montreal use for materializing family solidarity transnationally. The motivation of keeping contact transnationally varies from person to person, which we group into six dimensions as “to make sure the non-migrant parents are in good condition”, “to not make the parents worry about their migrant children”, “to discuss important decisions”, “to create a context for the

interactions between family members”, “to greet on festivals”, and “to fill time blanks”. It is obvious that some of them are more affective, while some are more similar to obligation fulfilling. The age and the sense of intimacy with the non-migrant parents do have strong impact on motivations of keeping in contact transnationally. Second, we found that people tended to communicate with their non-migrant family members at different levels of frequency and by various means of communicative technologies. Those who feel relatively close to the non-migrant family members are more likely to communicate by the medias that are similar to face-to-face conversations at a relatively high frequency, while those who feel distant from the non-migrant family members behave in a contrary way. The sense of intimacy is constructed little by little in every day life, which is strongly associated to the family structure that has strong impact on interactions within family, as well as the way that the parents raise the children. Third, even though the pattern of transnational communication differs from person to person, return visits are widely found among Chinese immigrants in Montreal, as it is considered as an ideal way to materialize family solidarity by creating a real context for interactions between family members.

Therefore, we can probably say that the structural solidarity, especially the geographic proximity, plays an extremely important role on the materialization of family solidarity in immigrant families. It determines how do people participate in family events, how do people interact with other family members, and how much can people show filial piety. In the next part, we will discuss how are the structural solidarity and the functional solidarity interrelated.

7.2 Structural Solidarity and Functional Solidarity

The research contexts of this study have determined two dimensions of structural solidarity, which refer to the widening residential proximity between family members due to the international migration, and the shrinking family size under the impact of the one-child policy in China. We consider both to have a strong impact on how Chinese immigrants materialize the family solidarity transnationally.

7.2.1 Financial Exchange and Residential Proximity between Family Members

According to Bengtson et al.'s intergenerational solidarity framework, the financial exchange between family members is an important dimension among all immigrants. At the same time, the replacement of remittances by hands-on care giving, as indicated by several studies, also shows the key role that financial exchange plays in transnational links thanks to its flexibility in spite of national borders.

By analyzing the financial exchange between Chinese immigrants and their non-migrant parents, we discover that financial independence usually starts from the day when adult children begin to work or to have their own income; hence, the daily financial exchange of small amounts between generations is not common among the participants in this study. However, there does exist an evident pattern of financial flows of large amounts, especially those from the aged parents to their migrant children. Among all 14 participants that I have met in this research, half of them admitted that they had received or they would receive financial aid from their parents in China when purchasing their own property here in Canada. The mutual characteristic shared by these participants is that they all belong to the younger generation in this research, which means they have not yet accumulated enough savings of their own. When signing the contract, it is usually the parents who pay for the down payment, while the adult children undertake the part of debt from the bank by themselves. In fact, it is important to mention that it is usually the non-migrant parents who urge their migrant children to buy property. The parents' motivation of having the children buying property is always described as: *“As a Chinese, it doesn't feel like home if the house doesn't belong to me. I will always feel worried if it doesn't belong to me (Dongning)”*.

They (parents) helped me to pay for the mortgage. My mom suggested me to buy a house. I've never thought about buying me my own house, at the beginning, it was my mom, she kept urging me, for three years, hehehe, and then I finally bought one. Yeah, she was extremely positive at it. She has her own idea on this part, which is to say that I should do some investments.

- Yajing

Even though for those parents who do not urge their adult migrant children to buy their own property, they are actually quite positive and supportive when hearing about their children's

idea about buying one and will pay for the mortgage without hesitation. According to the migrant children, their parents regard the payment of a mortgage as a help given to the children to establish their new lives in Canada.

My dad helped me a lot at paying for the mortgage. He gave me without my request. [...] I felt that it might be time to be independent (from my auntie's family). When my dad heard about my idea, he thought it not bad, it was good, then he considered pushing me to move forward, but he didn't want me to feel too tired financially, so he helped me paying for the mortgage.

- Zeyu

The financial push factors from non-migrant parents that help to establish migrant children's new life in Canada not only show up with the real estate, but are also found when the children restart their careers in the host country. It is indicated in research on transnationality that first-generation immigrants are not always able to continue the career path that they used to follow in their country of origin because of the lack of language and professional skills, hence, a large number of first-generation immigrants make money as self-employed business people. The start-up capital needed for starting a business, therefore, often comes from non-migrant parents.

When I started my business in Montreal, I asked my parents for money. There's no problem for them, they said they would help me as long as I was doing the right thing.

- Xuran

According to those Chinese immigrants who have received financial aid from their non-migrant parents, the return of such financial help should rather be a sense of gratitude towards their parents, as well as the provision of hands-on care when the parents are in need, rather than the return of the same amount of money. In other words, from the view of many Chinese immigrants, functional solidarity given by the parents is turned into children's affective solidarity.

Certainly, we got a big amount of money from parents, we feel really grateful to them, for sure.

- Lulu

It's hard to say which one, a gift or a debt, that I should consider this amount of money as... well but for me, it's a kind of gratitude. My parents sacrificed a lot for my brother and me, when they need help, it is to say, for sure, without hesitation, in any condition, even though we haven't received that much from our

parents, we have to do something, let alone we do have received that much. They provided us with a perfect context to grow up, if to help the parents when they are in need merited hesitating, now, there'll be no need to hesitate. As engineer, we're good at calculating, but these (return help to parents) don't merit any calculation, we've been owing too much.

- Zeyu

The idea of regarding the parents' financial help as non-debted is also strongly related to the familial structure, which means that the only child in the family is the sole exit of downward flows of family fortune, which is a clear but common pattern in Chinese families nowadays. From the answers of the only children in this research, many said that their parents never ever expected them to return the money.

She gave it to me. From her view, hers is mine. Anyways, she won't ask me to return, she never holds that expectation. It's like, all my belongings, all my money, will be yours in the future.

- Yajing

In fact, this pattern of financial exchange between generations confirms Van Pevenage's indication that there are more flows of money from older generation to the young generation, than verse versa (Van Pevenage, 2009). However, this is not to say that there do not exist flows of financial exchange in reverse. We found from our interviews that the common pattern of upward financial flows from migrant children to non-migrant parents is more likely to be gifts sending or lucky money giving on festivals and birthdays, rather than regular remittances sending.

My parents and my parents-in-law gave me money everytime I went back to China, but I never gave them in return. They asked me to buy whatever I want with that money. Me, I never gave them money, but I bought them gifts.

- Lulu

The small flow of money from children to parents is actually established on the understanding that what the aged parents in China need is rather emotional support than financial help. Wangyang, who sometimes asked his parents for financial aid when he first came to Canada, explained the direction of money flows in his family of origin in the same way.

We are not making that much money now so we don't have enough balance to give them financial support. For now, it makes me feel satisfied already if I no longer need their help. [...] I think what they need is not

my returned money, what they need is not money, they need time. So, I'll compromise more on time as well as on space in the future, which is to say, I'll spend more time with them, as much as possible.

- Wangyang

This confirms again our suggestion that the financial solidarity from parents to children is usually transformed into children's affective solidarity towards the parents.

When comparing the patterns of financial flow between that of the younger and elder generations in this study, we found more money flows from migrant children to their aged parents in China when the latter fall sick or need therapy. Chengmei's father and Junhao's, for example were both diagnosed with cancer and told that they needed medical care when they left home for their own life in Canada. The cost of medicine as well as that of hiring caregivers is taken on their accounts, even though a large part of the medical fees can be covered by social insurance. When paying for it, they both shared the amount with their siblings as a family convention.

We didn't need to care about the medical fees, it was still covered by the social insurance at that time, so actually we didn't need to spend a lot of money on it. However, the cost of hiring care helpers as well as other small amount of money is on us. Generally, we make up the money together, no matter it is needed or not, because we thought that we needed to contribute, we needed to do something, that's it.

- Junhao

Those who left the sick parents behind even indicate that they are willing to give more financial help than their siblings for their parents' medical spending, after all, they cannot provide hands-on care as much as their siblings who are still near the parents.

It's, to give as long as I have. I thought that on the one hand, I were not around, and on the other hand, it was my big sister who took care of him, so I could give more money, no problem. [...] For example, it cost several thousands, we would divide it into equal parts and then we put our own parts. Or, I could give more, no problem, that's it. [...] Yeah, it's kind of compensation, to make them feel free with money, to not be disturbed by having no money to use on theraphying my dad. As long as he was well cared, no problem.

- Chengmei

The replacement of in-person care by financial support among transnational migrants is already mentioned by Sun (2012) in his research about how Taiwanese migrants in the United States retain family ties transnationally (K.C. Sun, 2012). Actually, it is a pattern that is shared

the vast majority of Chinese immigrants in Canada, especially those who are in their middle age and who have already had their own savings. Lili's mother was in her seventies when Lili immigrated to Canada. When she left China for Canada, she left her account of pension fees in the meantime to her big brother, with whom her aged mother lived, in order to assure her mother's financial resources.

She lived with my big brother, but her living quality was not as good as when she lived with me, it was sure. Even though my pension fee is left to that whom my mom lived with, but they just could not take care of her as well as I did. [...] I just imagined I was the only child of my mom, could I ignore her and just leave her alone? I must support her, right?

- Lili

To give money in lieu of hands-on care also occurs among young participants in this research. Xuran has sent his parents lucky money on festivals and birthdays ever since he graduated from university and started to make his own money. He has kept this till now, three years after his immigration to Canada.

I sent them lucky money every year, on their birthdays, on the festivals. When I received my first salary, I started to send them money on special days, it's been kept until now, and it's been a custom. [...] It's better to leave more money to the parents. Yes, to leave more money to them. Because I am not around, once they had trouble, having more money at hand will always be better than having less.

- Xuran

According to the answers about financial exchange from the 14 interviewees in this research, it is true that there exist more downward financial flows than upward, which confirms Van Pevenage's finding of the direction of financial flows in families when talking about the functional solidarity (Van Pevenage, 2009). I suppose this pattern strongly related to the social context in which the Chinese grow up and make their living nowadays. On the one hand, non-migrant parents in this study who were born in the 1950s and 1960s happened to meet the economic revolution in China during the last twenty years of the 20th century so that they made much more money than their own parents, while on the other hand, most of those who made big amount of money at their adulthood thanks to the economic revolution were touched by the one-child policy in China, because of which their fortune can only go to one exit, namely, the younger generation of immigrants in this research. However, this is not to

say there is no upward financial flow in Chinese communities overseas. The financial flow of this direction happens especially in certain contexts, when non-migrant parents need to receive medical care in terms of falling sick, for example. Generally, migrant children return their parents' financial support by giving them emotional support, by sending gifts or by spending more time with their non-migrant parents. Once there is no way to spend a lot of time with aged parents no matter whether the latter needs hands-on care or not, those migrants who have no trouble with their own livings will probably, therefore, choose to give financial support to their parents as kind of compensation of not being able to be there for them.

7.2.2 Health condition, Number of Siblings and Care Providing

As mentioned above, family ties in many Chinese families rely greatly on mutual aids among family members, which are not only about financial exchange but also the functional help. On the one hand, this is determined by normative solidarity in Chinese culture, which requires family members to give mutual aid to one and another, while on the other hand, it is decided by the lack of public services in China. However, to assure the functional solidarity, namely hands-on care, to be happened, some degree of the geographic proximity is required. Hence, how is the functional solidarity within families materialized in the context of international migration? How do Chinese immigrants compromise to the widening residential proximity when providing physical care? We will discuss these two questions below.

7.2.2.1 Grandparenting in Immigrant Families

Nowadays, grandparents often take the responsibility of raising young children instead of the parents, which is mainly determined by two factors. First, the familial structure in a large number of Chinese families nowadays is shaped into a 4-2-1 framework by the one-child policy in China, which means there are four retired grandparents, two at-work parents and only one child within an urban family. In consideration of the financial need and the governable time, the parents themselves usually play the role as breadwinner of the family by working regularly or intensively, while the caring responsibility falls on the relatively free grandparents. Jingnian's daughter was born almost twenty years before they immigrated to Canada. He told me that his own parents helped a lot on taking care of his own daughter and he described it as a "*fit-in-easily agreement*" between them. When asking why is the decision

of sharing responsibility easily fitted in, he answered by the familial structure of his family of origin.

You can see, in China, if a couple had only one child, then there would be the couple themselves and the parents of each, six persons in total, in the family, who gonna like only one child together. There is only one child to be liked in the family, right? So, in a normal family in China, nobody will refuse the responsibility of taking care of the child, actually everybody tries to seize the chance to get along with the child, right?

- Jingnian

Besides the inverted triangle familial structure, the sense of duty and responsibility to help adult children with taking care of grand-children also make the elderly generation in Chinese families eager to play the role of care provider. From the view of the grandparents, it is a way to show their value in the family even though they are no longer young; furthermore, it is an important way to prove their equality among adult children in multiple-children families.

My mom has helped us on taking care of our daughter for half a year. Actually, we didn't want her to do it because she was already at her seventies at that time. [...] But she insisted, she said that she helped my three brothers with child caring, she would feel sorry if she didn't help me. We had already hired a domestic helper at that time, but my mom was mad at us when she knew that. So we had to fire the helper. Half a year later, my mom broke her leg by accident so that she had to stop helping us. She is a strong person, that's her personality. Now she's old, my little sister sometimes said that mom couldn't hold up a baby because she was too old. Once my mom heard it, she would go to sweep up her grandson right away, it was like she was telling us that she was still able to do something.

- Shi'an

Actually, grandparenting in Chinese families does not disappear even under the impact of international migration. According to Xia & Xie (2011), they consider the persistent transnational grandparenting in Chinese immigrant families the result of institutional mechanism. The relatively unfavorable status of female immigrants, due to the lack of linguistic knowledge and the professional skills, pushes them to spend more time and spirit on integrating into the host society; therefore, the time available to spend with children decreases. In the meantime, the relatively low wages that new arrivals receive as first-generation immigrants make it hard for them to pay for babysitting, while the lack of kinship in the host

country for the new arrivals, especially those with children, increases also the demand of functional help towards aged non-migrant parents. Lili's migratory path to Canada echoes the research of Xie & Xia (2011). Lili first came to Canada in the late 1990s as a visitor to provide care to her migrant daughter in Montreal who was about to give birth. Before her departure to Canada, Lili considered it necessary to come and help because on the one hand, her daughter had no other relatives in Canada, while on the other hand, her daughter was still studying and her son-in-law worked at full-time for Ericsson. A couple of years after Lili's arrival, she started to work in a restaurant while his husband stayed at home and took care of their daughter's family, in consideration of her first grandchild no longer needed intensive daily care. She explained her return to the market as: *"They have nobody around here, and the only financial resource of them is the salary of my son-in-law. It's always better to have them having more money than less"*. When she was out for work, she also tried to hire a domestic servant for her daughter's family with her own salary in order to make her daughter feel easier with both economic and household duties. However, she gradually discovered that the work of the servant could not satisfy her and the cost of paying servants was exactly what she made from working. Therefore, Lili decided to quit her job and replay the role of care provider in her daughter's family.

My daughter was pregnant in 2001, I quit my job in China and came to help her after she told me about it. [...] My daughter immigrated to Canada, where the cost of hiring a domestic servant is relative high, and the servants were not working well. Furthermore, the only financial resource in my daughter's family was my son-in-law, they had no relative, no kinship here. It's always better to leave them more money than less, right? So I went to work. [...] It's expensive to hire a servant here in Canada, we have hired before, but we didn't feel satisfied, they were not good. [...] Because actually I prefer to work, I feel happier to work. Then I went to work and pay for the servant with my salary, me and my husband, we both went out for work. But what the servant cook was not as tasty as mine, it was not delicious and was too salty. And the servants here, they must leave once it was seven o'clock, no matter her work was finished or not. So I thought, ok, it had to be me who do this job for my daughter. [...] Now, we lived at aged residence at Chinatown, they are still living in Laval. [...] And now, we go back to my daughter's every morning, early in the morning, to take care of my grandchildren, to cook for them, then we come back to Chinatown at night. Almost everyday. Sometimes we stay at Chinatown on Sundays, sometimes on Mondays.

- Lili

Even though Lili and her husband had successfully moved to the aged residence in Chinatown and their two grandchildren are both adolescents, they keep going to their daughter's house in Laval for housework. Lili describes it as “*hard to give away once I picked it up*”, which is exactly the same as how her migration decision was made several years ago. What merits mentioning is that, Lili pays for the domestic servant at her son's house with her pension fees in China because she felt sorry to be unable to take care of the family by herself.

I hired a servant for my son when my grandson was still a little boy. I paid for the servant, to release them (son and daughter-in-law) from heavy housework. It was good, so they weren't unsatisfied with me (my absence). My son is very filial.

- Lili

Her decision to hire a domestic servant to play the role of care provider instead of her is another example of how aged parents show their equal attitude towards adult children on grandparenting, meanwhile, it corresponds exactly to the finding of our last part about replacing hands-on care with financial help once the former cannot be done due to the widening residential proximity in the context of migration. In fact, the “equity” of providing help to the next generation by the aged parents is relative rather than absolute, which means how to divide helping resources depends on the actual need of each child. Chengmei's mother left her home for her big sister's after having given help to Chengmei for a couple of months during her childbearing. Chengmei's nephew was born autistic, so her mother has been taking care of this grandson ever since he was born.

My mom came to help me for couples of months when I gave birth to my son, and then she left. She had to take care of my nephew. [...] It was mainly me who takes care of my son. Because we don't have the resource, my mom helped my big sister with her son, so she cannot help me. My nephew needs companion all the time, he's a bit special in compared with the other children.

- Chengmei

Such relative equity is also found in Lili's case. From the view of Lili, her migrant daughter's need for help is much bigger than that of her non-migrant son's, because the governable social network of the former, especially those from the wider kin network, is much less than that of her son's.

In fact, the transnational grandparenting can not only be understood from the view of aged parents' sense of "fulfilling duty", but also from the actual need of migrant women. According to the participants in this research, even those who have really bad relationships with their mothers also invited them to come from China to Canada to help during her childbearing period. For example, Anni told me that she had been seriously hesitating about whether to invite her mother to Canada for help or not, even though the latter showed great eagerness to come.

She insisted to come and help me. Me, actually, I didn't expect anything from her. I thought about it, but I hesitated, whether to have her to come or not. It became one of my annoyances at that time. I considered it every day, what were the benefits to have her come, and what were the disadvantages. That's why it wasn't until the sixth or the seventh month of my pregnancy that I applied the visitor visa for her. [...] I told her not to come, I would hire someone to help me. But she insisted. Actually we had conflicts on phones, we were mad at each other and we ignored each other for some time. But still, she insisted. I then compromised, I thought I might really need some help from her. [...] To be honest, there are some benefits if she came. First, I don't have to worry, nothing else, but for her love for my daughter. She will be extremely careful when taking care about my daughter. You can see, she's there 24h a day to help me, no matter day or night.

- Anni

Anni's story confirms that functional solidarity resources within a family remain the prime option of help from the view of most Chinese immigrants, for not only is it free of charge but more importantly, it is a considerably safe resource. Functional solidarity within the family is the kind of resource based on blood relationship and love, which is much more superior, according to the Chinese, than that of private or public service.

According to the exploration of transnational grandparenting in Chinese immigrant families, we found that grandparenting is not only a tradition in Chinese culture, but also the result of institutional mechanisms in Chinese society, especially in Chinese community overseas. In China, the only focal point of the whole family is the only child in the family because of the one-child policy. Therefore, grandparenting in most Chinese families is rather a precious "right" that every aged retired parent is eager to have than a "responsibility" that has to fulfill. Such eagerness is on the one hand generated by the elderly parents' desire to help their own children with childbearing, while on the other hand, grandparenting is considered by

the elderlies as a way to prove their values, even though they are no longer young. Furthermore, grandparenting is a solid need in the context of international migration. First-generation immigrants usually have to spend more time and spirit than natives to build their new lives in the receiving country, which limits their time for taking care of the family. At the same time, immigrants are usually relatively unfavorable compared to the native residents due to various factors, which leads them to seek help through non-migrant family members rather than to look for help through public resources such as daycare centers and domestic servants. In such a context, grandparenting across borders happens quite commonly in Chinese communities overseas.

7.2.2.2 Elderly Care in Immigrant Families

Not only do infants and young children, but also the elderly, need intensive functional solidarity in Chinese families. As is indicated by Settles et al. (2013), 70% of Chinese elderlies depend on children's support during their old-aged life because of the double impact of the traditional Confucian morality and the lack of public services in China. However, the lack of residential proximity in the context of international migration makes the functional exchange between migrant children and the non-migrant parents hard to come true when the need of exchange arises. In the next part, we will use Baldassar's transnational care model (2006), which emphasizes three dimensions in transnational elderly care, namely obligation, capacity, and negotiation to give care. We will first discuss how Chinese immigrants in Montreal understand their obligation of elderly care, then to explore how they fulfill their obligation when compromising to the reality of residential proximity as well as personal financial ability.

When talking about the elderly care, none of my 14 participants refused that they had the duty to take care of aged parents, as it is considered part of the heritage from the aged generation in the family. This is because the participants themselves have watched how their own parents took care of their grandparents, which makes them feel necessary and natural to do the same as how their parents do.

Because actually, I was taken care by my parents when I was very young, but from my adolescence to my adulthood, it was actually my grandma who took care of me. According to my grandma, the family is extremely important, we should always put family at the first place. I couldn't say that it was my parents

who asked me to do how they did to my grandma. It's more like it is planted in my personality, because this is how my dad does, so I don't feel it weird to do it (do the same as how he takes care of my grandma).

- Zeyu

None of the participants indicated that their parents had once asked them to fulfill the duty of taking care of the elderly in the family; however, because they have observed how their parents took their responsibility towards their own parents, almost all participants admitted that it was a convention, without any need of discussion to take care of the parents while they are getting older. At the same time, the sense of obligation to give care to aged parents is also strongly generated by the gratitude deep in heart, which implies an exchange for having been raised by their parents. Zeyu mentioned the word of “owe” and “return” when talking about why he will take care of his aged parents in the future without any hesitation. Here, the relationship between his “owe and return” is rather a relationship of gratitude and thanksgiving than that of the debt and return as how it happens at banks.

It's hard to say which one, a gift or a debt, that I should consider this amount of money as... well but for me, it's a kind of gratitude. My parents sacrificed a lot for my brother and me, when they need help, it is to say, for sure, without hesitation, in any condition, even though we haven't received that much from our parents, we have to do, let alone we do have received that much. They provided us with a perfect context to grow up, if they provide of help merits hesitating, now, there'll be no need to hesitate. As engineer, we're good at calculating, but these (return help to parents) don't merit any calculation, we've been owing too much.

- Zeyu

Jingnian, another participant who feels quite strongly to take the duty of elderly care at home gave me a more solid example to better explain why he considered it more than natural to take care of his aged parents.

Yes, it's my duty, without any hesitation. Parents gave me life, they raised me up, and, when we got sick at our very young age, parents never said that they were too busy at work to bring me to the hospital, or, they were in holidays so they didn't feel like bringing me to the hospital, never, it's not reasonable, right?

- Jingnian

Jingnian's explanation well confirms that family solidarity is based on the logic of exchange between family members (Van Pevenage, 2009). This is thanks to the need of exchange

among family members so that the chance of interaction increases, which reinforces the relationships among family members.

However, even though almost everybody feels obliged to fulfill his own duty to take care of aged parents, their actual capacity to give care is determined by the reality and is not always as enough as how they have expected. The widening residential proximity in the context of international migration is one of the most difficult barriers to conquer that stand between Chinese immigrants and their non-migrant parents. Jingnian described the ideal residential proximity between his own family and his family of origin as “*the proximity of a bowl of hot soup*”, which means the soup will not cool down because of the long way to get reach to the destination if he brings a bowl of hot soup from his home to his parents’ house. Such residential proximity between generations is actually quite welcomed in China’s urban areas because it not only keeps the relative independence of each family but also assures the need of close residential proximity for realizing care exchange. Jingnian and another middle-aged immigrant, Shi’an, both told me about their concerns about “*being too far away*” when talking about whether to immigrate or to stay. The need for caring for middle-aged migrants’ parents is much more than that of the relatively young generation, which make the middle-aged migrants’ feel “*quite entangled*”. For those who have already immigrated to Canada, a lot of them feel it is hard to provide, or to provide in time, care to their parents when the latter need intensive daily care.

I felt that if I had no sister, I could probably be unable to go back to China at once when they really needed me. Because there must be someone around the elderlies, especially when they have operations. It’s totally different from hiring a servant to take care of them.

- Lulu

As indicated by Zhou (2013), a good number of Chinese immigrants consider it a good choice to sponsor the parents to come to Canada as permanent residents in order to kill or to decrease the sense of distance in the context of international migration. At this time, a second barrier therefore shows up in front of some of the Chinese immigrants, which refers to the financial ability to sponsor the parents’ immigration as well as the money required for the whole family to live in Canada. Even though applying for the super visa instead of the permanent resident status helps a lot to reduce the financial pressure of sponsorship while simplifying the entry of

the aged parents, the high cost of private medical insurance for the elderly family members worries the migrant children.

The super visa, it's not easy for us to apply neither. Even though the requirement of annual income for the super visa is lower than that for the application of permanent resident, it's still hard for us. As new arrivals, how can we have family income, right? We're still living on social insurance, we're still learning how to live in Canada. Secondly, even though our family income satisfied the requirement, our parents got the super visa, there exists another high cost, the medical insurance, once a year, especially when they're very old, that for the elderly, it's really expensive, right? I estimate, I'm not sure about the exact price, but it's like hundred thousand a year, it's really expensive.

- Jingnian

In such an embarrassed situation, the difference between only children and those who have siblings is quite easy to distinguish. For those who come from multi-children families, the desire to bring parents to live around is far less eager than those who are the only child in their families of origin, because the former have more resources to share the obligation of elderly care with.

I think I will return to China. If I had no sister, I will certainly stay in China.

- Lulu

On the other side, those who are the only children in the family remain the unique source of elderly care when their parents get older and older. Anran even picked up the word “catastrophic” to describe the impact of unwilling birth control for both parents and children when talking about her worry of how to fulfill elderly care obligations in the future.

I feel like, maybe it couldn't be said as sad, but I still consider it catastrophic. It's real that for our generation, it's very unfortunate that there is only one child in each family. From this point of view, for my parents, they are also very helpless. Actually they want to make two or more children, so that the burden or the pressure that the child will have in the future will be divided into half and half, you know? For example, if I had a brother or sister, we could take care of our parents together. But now, all the responsibilities, all the burdens, all the pressures, will fall on my shoulders, because I am the only child. At this time, parents themselves also feel embarrassed to rely on me in the future. Sometimes when we talk about this topic, they would say that they didn't wanna make me feel pressured, so they tried their best to keep themselves in good health condition. It couldn't be better and better, but it's satisfied enough to not fall asick. I feel sad about their wish of not burdening me.

- Anran

Therefore, how do Chinese immigrants in Montreal compromise to the fact of widening geographic proximity, limited financial capacity and limited sources to share the elderly care obligation, in order to fulfill their own obligations? As engineer, Zeyu used the concept of “*requirement*” and “*solution*” to explain how he undertakes the obligation of care providing after migration.

I'll try as how I do at work. My job is to find a solution in certain requirement. Here, what is the requirement? The requirement is to let my parents being cared, the care should be of certain quality on the one hand, and on the other hand, my career should also be assured as well developed. I'll try to find the solution in such requirement. If I couldn't find any satisfied solution in such requirement, I'll then consider modifying a bit the requirement.

- Zeyu

It is evident that Chinese immigrants, no matter whether they are single children or have siblings, are now trying hard to find their own solutions to fulfill their elderly care obligations. Many participants in this research indicated that except for regular phone check-ins, they also had the habit of sending supplemental products to their non-migrant parents by various means, either sending by packages or asking friends who are returning to bring back. This is on the one hand, because of their different estimation of biomedicine and food safety between China and Canada; on the other hand, it is because they regard sending supplement products as a way to express affective solidarity to their non-migrant parents. As for most parents in modern China, especially those who live in urban areas, don't live on the adult children's financial support, hence, the supplemental products are actually a symbol of expectation towards the parents' good health.

For example, I sometimes send some supplement products to them, hoping that they could always be in good health. [...] So I send them those products every year.

- Dongning

However, sending supplemental products is far from sufficient for replacing hands-on care when the parents need intensive health care. For example, Lulu's mother had an operation after she immigrated to Canada.

I feel that because I've been leaving home for ten years, so we're all adjusted to it. But I missed my mom very much when she had operation last month. I missed her very much. Maybe you won't miss them that

much until they have something bad to suffer. [...] Such as last month, I couldn't do anything. Even though we had video chat everyday and it helps to reduce the worries and missings, I still felt helpless for not being able to do something. I bought something for them here in Canada, I mean the supplement products, they couldn't get it right away. It takes time for them to receive it. So it's quite different from having me around. [...] So my parents said that they were lucky to still have my little sister around them.

- Lulu

According to Lulu's story, we can probably say that multi-children is a familial structure that helps a lot to facilitate functional solidarity between family members to Chinese immigrants overseas. This familial structure not only facilitates the obligation fulfilling but also gives Chinese immigrants some peace of mind. Lulu admitted that hiring a servant to take care of elderly parents is totally different from giving care by family members. Furthermore, she would definitely go back to China to undertake the elderly care if she had no sister at all. We also found the obligation for sharing between siblings in Junhao's story. Junhao could not be around his father regularly in his later years because of migration, therefore, he tried to take the majority responsibility of care giving and let his siblings take a rest during his return visits to China.

I was not that free to go back to China at that time, so I went back as long as I had holidays. [...] I've been back twice in those two years, one month for each time. [...] In the month that I was in China, I took the most work of care because my brothers and my mom have been working on it for a long time. I was responsible for the days, and we hired a helper during the evenings. During those two months, it's true, it's almost all me who took care of him. They had been taking care for such a long time, I should take my part when I was around. I didn't go to anywhere in those two months, I didn't even meet any friends. I spent my days and nights at hospital. [...] I feel that I should do it. Why? Because I was not always around, so I should do it when I was back, without hesitation.

- Junhao

In fact, Junhao's story reflects exactly how Chinese immigrants compromise to being unable to finish elderly care obligation regularly, which means to keep regular return visits in a certain period and to take the large part of care giving duty during the return visits as an exchange with the siblings' regular care at their absence. What merits mentioning is that the care duty has more of a tendency to incline to affect daughters instead of sons in multi-children families. Even though Lili has been immigrated to Canada since 2002, she stays as the main care provider for her aged mother in China, which contradicts Settles et al.'s (2013)

declaration that the main care provider in Chinese families are daughters-in-law. In fact, she paid her cousin-in-law with her retirement pension to take care of her own mother when the latter was still in considerable good health. When her mother fell ill seriously, she left Canada at once to take care of her non-migrant aged mother in China.

I went back to stay with her, once for about four months, but usually I would stay for about five months. I just stayed with her. When I considered she was fine, nothing serious, ok, I would come back to Canada. In another one or two year, I would go back again. [...] I paid for my cousin-in-law to take care of my mother when I was not around, she helped to wash her, to do other things that my mom needed. Cause I know my sister-in-law isn't filial to my mom, she's not in good relationship with my mom, so I paid for my cousin-in-law to care my mom. [...] Her health condition was extremely bad in the last two years of her life, the last two or three years. I spent a lot of time in China during her last couples of years. [...] The last time was, I went back in April or something, and my return ticket was on the 16th September. My mom left in late August. [...] I was supposed to come back on the 16th of September, she knew I would leave that day. She was sent to hospital on the 15th June, and she left on the 30th August. I couldn't do anything during the last few months of her life. [...] I hired a helper, 24 hours. I made fish soup and congee for her. [...] My brothers, they did almost nothing. They came to visit, and then they left. [...] I imagined I was her only child. Will you leave your mom alone if you are her only child? No you won't. [...] So as a human, we must be virtuous, must be kind. The god is looking at how we do everything. So my brothers' children are not filial, neither. They don't care about their parents. No, they are not good.

- Lili

Lili's thinking is actually found quite normal in Chinese families because most families in China nowadays are touched by the one-child policy while the only care provider during the parents' twilight years is their only children. Wangyang used to suspend his studies in Canada to take care of his mother altogether with his father when the former was attacked by radial chemics at work. The health condition of his mother once influenced his decision of emigration. Besides, Wangyang chose to do transnational jobs in consideration of the potential need of highly frequent flies between China and Canada due to his care obligation.

My mom worked at the medical radiation department at hospital, she was attacked by the radiations and she got the cerebral infarction. She was almost dead at that time. My dad asked me to come back. I tried my best to take care of her. She was still quite misted when she waked up from coma. And she still needed to recover, so my main job at that time was to help her recovering. I suddenly felt kind of tacit agreement and closeness with my dad at that time.

- Wangyang

We can tell from Lili's and Wangyang's stories that pausing the life in Canada and going back to China is a common way to compromise among Chinese immigrants overseas when confronting the need of elderly care giving. However, the way to compromise in consideration of obligation and actual capacity is found strongly related to familial structure. For those who have siblings, it is an option to go since they have somebody else to share the obligation of elderly care with, while for the only children, going back and giving hands-on care seems to be the only choice in order to establish normative solidarity. Even though, providing intensive care in collaboration with other family members is actually a media which helps to reinforce affective solidarity between family members, because it increases the chance of interaction and it augments the sense consensuality by overcoming the same challenge altogether.

In fact, private services towards elderly from private institutions is also regarded as a way to compromise other than sending supplement products, giving financial support and giving hands-on care, in the context of international migration. However, only one among all my 14 participants has mentioned such a way of compromise, while the others consider the public service, or even the private service, in China, is far less ideal than care provided by family members. This is not only because of the imperfect conditions in which most public elderly care centers in China operate, but also because elderly care is more about spiritual support and emotional comfort than simple physical cares, which in the most conditions, family members stay always as the most ideal providers.

According to the analysis above, we can probably assume that elderly care is a kind of normative solidarity that is deeply internalized by almost all Chinese immigrants overseas. Such internalization of obligation is on the one hand, shaped by family context, which means it is a kind of imitation to how their parents take care of their grandparents, while on the other hand, it is a transition from affective solidarity to functional solidarity, in other words, an exchange between generations. However, many structures that prevent Chinese immigrants from fulfilling the obligation of elderly care are created under the impact of the dual-context of international migration and the one-child policy, because of which the capacity to provide elderly care is actually quite limited. First, the widening residential proximity between migrant children and non-migrant parents determines the delay and the uncontinuity of hands-on care that the former can provide. Second, the identity of first-generation immigrants, in most cases,

prevents Chinese immigrants from having abundant financial resources, because of which the requirements to sponsor the non-migrant parents' migration seem unreachable. In the mean time, the younger generation has to undertake all the responsibility of elderly care in the family due to the impact of the one-child policy. It is in such a multi-context that Chinese immigrants in Montreal take various forms of concession, keeping regular phone check-ins, sending supplement products, and returning for intensive care, for example, to fulfill their normative obligations.

In conclusion, three main findings are discovered while exploring the structural and the functional solidarity in Chinese immigrant families. The first is about the financial exchange. It is confirmed that there are evident financial exchanges in Chinese immigrant families. Flows from the parents to the children are found more evident than that of the contrary direction, and the majority of them are rather gift-alike than debt-alike. Immigrant children tend to transfer the financial help from the parents into emotional support such as making regular check-ins, spending more time with the non-migrant parents, etc. Upwards financial flows take place when the non-migrant parents fall asick and fall into need of help. In case of being unable to provide regular hands-on care, financial support is often regarded as a replacement of in-person care by the Chinese immigrants. Second, grandparenting is found quite common in Chinese immigrant families, which is not only determined by the Chinese tradition, but also by the identity of "immigrant". To build a better life in the receiving country, immigrants have to spend more time and spirit on succeeding than the natives. Furthermore, the relatively weak socioeconomic status that immigrants have makes them prefer to look for free caregiving from family members than that from public or private service institutions. Third, elderly care is widely regarded as a norm that must accomplish by almost all the Chinese immigrants. However, the widening geographic proximity, the relatively weak socioeconomic status, and the shrinking family size due to the one-child policy, force the Chinese immigrants making some compromises while trying to undertake the obligation of transnational eldercare. As a result, keeping regular phone check-ins, sending supplement products, and making return visits for intensive caregiving, are usually taken as the ways to compromise in the context of international migration.

Conclusion

Talking with the 14 participants being involved in this study, we have reached some points that merit sharing as answers to our research question: **“How is family solidarity materialized in Chinese immigrant families in the dual-context of international migration and the one-child policy in China”**.

Once in the field, we divided our research question into two subquestions as **“How the migration decisions were made by Chinese immigrants in Canada, especially in consideration of the normative need to fill familial obligations”** and **“How and by what means family solidarity in Chinese immigrant families is materialized in the context of international migration”**, so that we could better understand the social context of this research, namely the widening geographic proximity due to the international migration and the shrinking family size under the impact of the one-child policy, before getting into the exploration of what and how people do while attempting to materialize family solidarity transnationally.

To answer **the first subquestion**, we talked about the migration process and their considerations while making the migration decisions with our participants, as it is because of the international migration that one of the most important obstacles in materializing family solidarity, namely the widening residential proximity between family members, is created. According to the interviews, we found that the unbalanced development between two countries is the core factor that encourages Chinese immigrants to leave China and to resettle in Canada. By analyzing the mechanism of migration between these two countries with the logic of “push & pull” theory, we found three “push” factors on the side of China, which refer to booming population, special working culture, and severe pollution. First, the booming population makes the population density in China much too high to assure a relatively comfortable environment to live in. At the same time, the living cost in China is also raised by the booming population, especially that of buying property in urban areas, which is regarded as a fundamental need to be fulfilled in the view of most Chinese people. Second, the special working culture in Chinese society is another “push” factor that encourages many Chinese,

especially those who are in their twenties and thirties, to leave. The long working hours as well as the low salary rate makes people feel too pressured to live a good life in China. Meanwhile, the job market in China is considered as a mirror of Chinese society, where the relationship between people that based on mutual favor plays a super important role. People who disagree with the bribing culture, which is widely considered as a necessary path to go to be promoted, would therefore rather to leave than to stay. Another “push” factor that we found on the side of China is the severe pollution, which greatly lowers the living quality in China. As for the “pull” factors of Canada, we found the education of excellent quality, the good living environment, the relatively comfortable working culture, and the relatively welcoming immigration policy instrumental in attracting Chinese immigrants. What merits mentioning is that, according to the answers from our participants, migration is rather a family strategy than simply a personal decision, which is strongly related to the age of immigrant. Among our participants, the middle-aged migrants tend to immigrate for the sake of other family members, especially the children, while relatively young migrants tend to move according to their personal interests. We once assumed that family structure, especially that under the impact of the one-child policy, would influence people’s migration decisions. However, such an assumption is not upheld by our sample. Whether having siblings or not is not found having strong impact on people’s migration decision. What it influences is the way that people keep family ties after the migration.

To answer the **second subquestion**, we used Bengtson et al.’s intergenerational solidarity framework, from which we have selected five dimensions to talk about, in order to explore how and by what means family solidarity is materialized by Chinese immigrants while living transnationally.

First, two types of associative solidarity are found important when Chinese immigrants materialize family solidarity transnationally, and both of them are strongly correlated to normative solidarity and affective solidarity. The first type of associative solidarity refers to transnational communication, which is generally motivated by six factors, namely to assure that non-migrant parents are in good condition, to tell non-migrant parents that they are living a good life in Canada, to discuss important decisions with non-migrant parents, to show respect and filial piety towards non-migrant parents on festivals, to create a context for

interactions between family members, and to fill time blanks. The motivation of keeping in contact transnationally was found strongly related to the age, which reflects the old Chinese proverb of “It is not until understood the parents’ favor that we have the children of our own (养儿方知父母恩)”. It is thanks to the development of new communicative technologies that the communication between Chinese immigrants overseas and their non-migrant parents has been easier and more effective than before. However, even though, not every Chinese immigrant is now using high-technic way to keep contact transnationally. It is, on the one hand, because the capacity to master high-technic communication technologies is strongly related to age, while on the other hand, family structure and affective solidarity between family members do have strong impact on the desire, the way, and the frequency that people keep contact transnationally. We found from our sample that people who have siblings show higher frequency of transnational communication than those who are the only children in their families of origin, which we attribute to three caused factors about family structure. First, the understanding of being a unit, namely a family, is weakened by the shrinking family size since it decreases the interactions within family. Second, what the only children receive is the focus of the whole family ever since they are born, which effectively generates selfishness. Third, only children in this research belong to a relatively younger generation, the age of whom determines their weak understanding of the importance of materializing family solidarity even though transnationally. Furthermore, we found that for immigrants who come from divorced families, the family structure has strong impact on affective solidarity between generations, and they are less willing to have highly frequent and relative close transnational communications with their non-migrant parents in China. Those who feel close to non-migrant parents tend to communicate using methods similar to face-to-face contact, at a relative high frequency, while those who feel far from their non-migrant parents are more likely to use traditional methods such as email and phone calls, which lowers the frequency of contact. Even though the method and the frequency of transnational communication vary from person to person, another way to materialize associative solidarity, namely return visits, are widely found with similar characteristics among Chinese immigrants. The travel fees between China and Canada are no longer a main concern that determines the return visits of Chinese immigrants nowadays. What plays the decisive role of whether to return or not is actually a

sense of normative solidarity, the non-migrant parents' health condition, and a negotiable working timetable. In general, we found three main factors that motivate return visits, which is to visit and to take care of non-migrant parents, to participate in important family events, and to create a real context of interaction in order to materialize family solidarity. After all, *“getting along with each other in real life is just different from having video chats (Lulu)”*.

Actually, Chinese immigrants try to materialize family ties by not only associative solidarity, but also functional solidarity, even though they have to compromise somehow in the dual-context of international migration and the changing family structure due to the one-child policy. Here comes the second way that we found on Chinese immigrants while exploring how they materialize family solidarity transnationally. One of the most common ways to reinforce functional solidarity transnationally is through financial exchange. Sending remittances regularly back to China was not found to be widespread among Chinese immigrants; however, evident financial flows are found when important purchases happen in Canada such as buying real estates and business. Such financial flows are usually more common from non-migrant parents to migrant children, which, according to the former, are considered as help provided to the migrant children to establish their new lives in the receiving country. It merits mentioning that migrant children who have received such financial help from the parents tend to regard the help as a gift instead of a debt. They tend to transfer this financial help from the parents into affective solidarity, in other words, gratitude towards their non-migrant parents. At the same time, it is transferred into a sense of obligation to provide care to the aged parents once they are in need. Such a transformation is actually based on the understanding of *“What they need is not money. What they need is my time, my company (Wangyang)”*. An also, we consider the indebted financial help from parents to children in Chinese immigrant families is strongly related to the one-child family structure, which determines, on the one hand, the only child in the family is the only exit of family fortune, while on the other hand, no worries about “equality” among siblings should exist since there is only one child in a family. As for financial flows from adult children to their aged parents, this usually happens when the latter fall into unfavorable health condition. Money is usually regarded as the way of compromise, in other words, the replacement of company, in the context of international migration, since migrant children are usually unable to provide regular

hands-on care to their non-migrant parents. Here comes the second way to materialize functional solidarity in Chinese immigrant families, namely care providing, which is generally divided into grandparenting and elderly care. We can tell from the interviews in this research that grandparenting is actually a phenomenon that widely exists in Chinese community overseas, which is determined by the identity of “immigrant”. As immigrants, Chinese migrants are usually isolated from their kin network in China, from whom most Chinese people seek help in most cases. At the same time, immigrants have to spend more time and spirit on integrating as well as succeeding in the receiving country, which limits their time spent on family life. Furthermore, the relatively unfavorable financial status that most immigrants have in the receiving country make them prefer free child care resources, namely grandparenting, rather than look for paid public or private care centers. As for elderly care, which is exactly the starting point of this research, it was found widely admitted as a personal obligation to fulfill by all my participants. On the macro level, it is generated by the social context in China, which emphasizes the Confucian philosophy of filial piety. On the micro level, it is on the one hand, determined by family heritage, which means, “*I will do what my dad did to my grandma (Zeyu)*”, while on the other hand, it is based on the logic of exchange in family solidarity, which refers to “my parents raised me up, I’ll assure their elderly life as return (父母养我小, 我养父母老)”. However, for many Chinese immigrants, their capacity to provide regular hands-on care to their non-migrant parents is actually quite limited because of the widening residential proximity, the relatively unfavorable financial status, and the limited number of siblings, which force them to compromise while providing care. Therefore, sending supplemental products regularly, giving intensive care when making return visits, and looking for private elderly care resources are usually accepted as the ways to compromise by many Chinese immigrants in the context of international migration. At this time, having siblings is actually considered as a comfort for many Chinese immigrants, since having siblings residing near aged parents provides the migrants an option to fulfill their elderly care obligations while staying at a distance. Even though there are various ways to compromise in the context of international migration, we can tell from the answers of our participants that their attitudes towards transnational elderly care are actually regretful, since “*what they (the non-migrant parents) need is our company (Wangyang)*”.

In this research, three relatively independent elements, namely the international migration, the one-child policy in China, and the family solidarity, are associated, which offers a fresh standing point to study Chinese community overseas. However, certain shortages do exist in this research. First, we consider the size of our sample is not large enough to present the characteristics of a community whose population is actually around 100,000 in Montreal. Further studies may recruit a larger group of participant so that the statistics could be more abundant and the results might be more scientific. Second, we did not explore the views of the non-migrants while studying how family solidarity is materialized by both the migrant children and their non-migrant parents. We consider it also valuable to examine what and how people do on the other side of our planet, since the behaviors of non-migrant parents do have strong impact on how their migrant children do in Canada, and the family members, as many scholars have indicated, are interdependent.

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Appendix 1: Demographic Description of Participants

	Name	Age & Gender	Dad's age & Mom's age	Nbr of Sibling	Rank among Siblings	Migration Category	Occupation	Annual Income	Year of Migration
1	Xinxin	31, F	60, 54	0	N/A	Economic	Data analyst	40k	2009
	Anran	33, F	62, 60	0	N/A	Economic	Secretary	30k	2012
	Yajing	34, F	N/A, 60	0	N/A	Economic	Secretary	35k	2010
	Lulu	32, F	62, 61	1	#1	Economic	Teacher	30k	2012
	Zeyu	25, M	60, 58	1	#2	Economic	Engineer	62k	2013
	Wangyang	34, M	61, 60	0	N/A	Economic	Self-recruited	30k	2014
	Xuran	32, M	62, 60	0	N/A	Economic	Self-recruited	N/A	2012
2	Dongning	37, F	64, 63	1	#1	Economic	Bank Employee	30k	2005
	Anni	39, F	N/A, 69	2	#3	Economic	Bank Employee	30k	2011
	Chengmei	40, F	N/A, 67	2	#2	Economic	Homemaker	N/A	2010
	Lili	67, F	N/A, N/A	2	#2	Familial Reunion	Retired	N/A	2002
	Shi'an	48, M	90, 87	7	#6	Economic	Not recruited in Canada	N/A	2015
	Jingnian	46, M	74, 73	1	#1	Economic	Not recruited in Canada	N/A	2014
	Junhao	61	N/A, 94	3	#3	Familial Reunion	Cook	15k	1993

Appendix 2: Interview Grid

1. Life before Migration

- (1) Can you tell me the love story of your parents?
- (2) When and where were you born?
- (3) What was your parents' family like in your memory?
- (4) Can you simply describe the life after school in your family? How about the weekends and the holidays?
- (5) Can you draw me a simple family tree of your family?
- (6) Were you close to your family members? To whom do you feel most close? Why?
- (7) Where did you get your higher education?
- (8) When did you start working? Can you describe your work in China?
- (9) Have you ever moved out from your parents when you were in China? What made you move?
- (10) Can you describe the residential proximity between you and your parents at that time? Why did you choose such residential distance?
- (11) As you were no longer living in your parents' family at that time, how did you keep in touch with each other? When would you meet each other? For what purpose did you meet?

2. Migration Decision

- (1) What made you first consider about immigrating to Canada?
- (2) What have you considered while making your migration decision? From your point of view, what were the advantages and disadvantages of migration?
- (3) Did your family members help you to make the decision? Were they happy for your migration?
- (4) What was the key point that made you emigrate from China to Canada?

3. Installation in Canada

- (1) Can you describe the day you left China to Canada?
- (2) How did you pick up your first job in Canada? Can you describe your current job?
- (3) Can you simply describe your daily life in Canada?
- (4) How do you spend your weekends?

4. Connection with family members and Family Solidarity

- (1) Do you feel homesick when you are in Canada? How often do you feel homesick?
- (2) When do you mostly like to feel homesick? Why?
- (3) Will you share your happiness or sadness with your family members in China? How do you share your sentiments with each other?
- (4) How often do you talk on call with your parents? What kind of topics do you usually talk about?
- (5) Except for such topics mentioned above, is there any else motivation that makes you make overseas communications?
- (6) How often do you fly back to China? For what purpose do you go back?
- (7) Have you ever invited your parents to come to Canada? Why? Did they come?
- (8) According to your parents' trip to Canada, do you prefer them staying in China or immigrating to Canada? Why?
- (9) What's your parents' opinion on moving to Canada?
- (10) Is there any conventions or traditions, in daily life or towards big events, in your parents' family?
- (11) Is there anything that you think is very important to do altogether with your parents?
- (12) Is there any flow of money between you and your parents?
- (13) When you need economic support, to whom do you usually ask help for?
- (14) Do you consider the flow of money between generations as a kind of debt or as a kind of giving?
- (15) Have your parents been sick and need others' daily care? Who took care of him/her? Why is that person?
- (16) Do you or your parents need basic help in your or their daily life? Who help the other?
- (17) Have you ever had any conflict with your parents? What arose those conflicts?
- (18) Could you tell me your way you educate your own children? How about your parents' way that they picked for educating you?

5. Understanding of family solidarity

- (1) From your point of view, what is "family"?
- (2) What's your understanding of parent-child relationship?
- (3) Are you satisfied with your current relation with your parents? If not, do you intend to make some efforts to improve it? How?
- (4) Is there any other question related to the topic we have just talked about that you think I should ask you?

