

# Network for Research into Chinese Education Mobilities

## 中国教育流动研究网络

### Newsletter

Issue 15 November 2019

<https://chineseedmobilities.wordpress.com/>

Dear Network for Research into Chinese Ed Mobilities colleagues,

Greetings. In this November 2019 issue we have brought to you our five latest research highlights entries and two capacity building entries as follows. You can continue to read our monthly [Newsletters](#). Issue 15 (i.e. this Newsletter) has been attached to this email for your kind perusal.

### Research Highlights

1. [Dr Meng Cheng](#) (Beijing Normal University, China) introduces his research on [the schooling and family experiences of rural students in elite universities in contemporary China](#). This is based on his recent book [‘College Material’ and Their Cultural Production](#) and his series of journal articles. [中文版本](#)
2. A new research project that uses Digital Storytelling to explore how Chinese international students understand career and employment, led by [Dr Cora Xu](#) (Keele University), in collaboration with [Dr Yang Hu](#) (Lancaster University) is available [here](#).
3. [Dr Shanshan Lan](#) (University of Amsterdam) examines [the intersections between the regulatory, the commercial, and the social dimensions of the educational migration infrastructure in China](#) in her [article](#) on China’s self-funded study abroad market, published in *International Migration*.
4. [Dr Willy Sier](#) (University of Amsterdam) discusses [the unequal access to quality higher education for rural-origin youth in China and the reproduction of rural-urban inequalities in the urban Chinese labour market](#). This is based on her PhD research and a few forthcoming articles.
5. [Yuyang Kang](#) (Lingnan University, Hong Kong) examines the [nuances of institutional social capital cultivation among students on an international branch campus in China](#). This is based on her recently published [chapter](#) in *Contesting Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education*.

To consult all our Research Highlights entries, please click [here](#).

### Capacity Building

1. A Call for Papers on ‘Mobility and education in Asia: an interdisciplinary discussion?’ for the Asian Studies Association of Australia conference, 6-9 July 2020, Melbourne, Australia is available [here](#). Send abstracts of around 200 words to Zhenjie Yuan <[zjyuan@gzhu.edu.cn](mailto:zjyuan@gzhu.edu.cn)> and Vickie Zhang <[vzhang@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:vzhang@student.unimelb.edu.au)> by Monday 28 October, 2019.
2. A Call for research participants on Inner Speech and Life in the UK as a Chinese student can be found [here](#).

To consult all our Capacity Building entries, please click [here](#).

## Job Opportunities

To consult all our Job Opportunities entries, please click [here](#).

## Newsletters

1. NRCEM Newsletter Issue 15 November 2019
2. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 14 October 2019](#)
3. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 13 September 2019](#)
4. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 12 August 2019](#)
5. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 11 July 2019](#)
6. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 10 June 2019](#)
7. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 9 May 2019](#)
8. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 8 April 2019](#)
9. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 7 February 2019](#)
10. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 6 October 2018](#)
11. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 5 October 2018](#)
12. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 4 April 2018](#)
13. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 3 February 2018](#)
14. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 2 January 2018](#)
15. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 1 December 2017](#)

To consult all our Newsletter Issues, please click [here](#).

## Communication

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Yours sincerely,

Network for Research into Chinese Education Mobilities

中国教育流动研究网络

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## Research Highlights

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### **“College Material” and Their Cultural Production : A Narrative Study of Contemporary Rural Kids’ Growth in China**



Dr Meng CHENG, Beijing Normal University, China

[中文版本](#)

#### Research highlighted

Cheng, Meng. *“College Material” and Their Cultural Production : A Narrative Study of Contemporary Rural Kids ’Growth* (in Chinese). China Social Sciences Press. 2018.

Cheng, Meng. & Kang, Yongjiu. Youths from Rural Families Admitted to Elite Universities: “Empathy” and Destiny (in Chinese). *China Youth Study*. 2018(5)

Cheng, Meng. & Chen, Xian. “College Material” and Its Cultural Implication (in Chinese). *Journal of Schooling Studies*. 2018(5).

Cheng, Meng. Rural Background : A Complex Structure of Feeling (in Chinese). *Youth Study*. 2018(6)

Cheng, Meng & Kang, Yongjiu. “Things Are Increased By Being Diminished”: Another Discourse on the Cultural Capital of Underclass (in Chinese). *Tsinghua Journal of Education*. 2016(4).

Cheng, Meng. & Chen, Xian. The Cultural Production of Conformists. *Youth Study*. 2016(2)

My publications over the past four years have been focused on a special group of Chinese rural students who were born after China's Reform and Opening-up and have managed to get access to elite universities. There are three reasons why they are special. First, they are the first generation of rural kids who grow up in a market-oriented economy as well as an Urban-Rural dual social structure. Second, most of them had to enroll in urban schools in their middle or high school for a better academic environment in their early life, experiencing rural-urban inequality deeply in their heart. Third, these rural children were not only economically placed in the bottom of Chinese society, they were also politically positioned at the bottom of Chinese society. As such, their cultural experiences were complex and their body and mind were constrained by class, identity as well as the Urban-Rural dual structure.

Their schooling experience is expanding from rural village to county, small city and big city through the view of space. Meanwhile, their schooling experience is also like migrant bird, flying from home to school and then from school to home. Unlike their father, most of those rural kids are only passing traveler of village life and will finally get middle-class jobs in cities. People had paid much attention on their academic success but ignore their special emotional experience and social actions in the process of climbing academic ladder. In some sense, they were contemporary Chinese class travelers as Trondman has described (Trondman 2006, 2018). They went into university in order to achieve upward class mobility which means they will "not be their mother, their aunt, their father" (Hurst 2012).

I would like to use a Chinese local metaphor to name these rural kids: College Material (Du shu de liao, in Chinese "读书的料"). The following text is the abstract of my recent book *"College Material" and Their Cultural Production : A Narrative Study of Contemporary Rural Kids' Growth* which is theoretically inspired by Paul Willis's Cultural Production theory and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital theory (Bourdieu 1986, 1990).

In Paul Willis's masterpiece *Learning to Labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*, the conformists are just "a dramatic foil", comparing with "the lads" who create counter-school culture (Willis 1981a, 1981b). Most Chinese researchers take this paradigm and pay their attention to the cultural production of students who come from lower classes and do not obey school rules (Xiong 2010; Zhou 2011; Xiong 2013; Li 2014). The logic of this kind of cultural production is that those underclass students create a subculture which encourage them to give up the possibility of getting higher social status and sink into the curse of social reproduction by their own. In these studies, the underclass students who have attained notable academic achievements and make a class breakthrough are selectively overseen. Are they really as bookish as the lads satirized? What is the cultural production behind their conformity? Where is their subjectivity and creativity?

Starting from the questions above, this monograph turns to the cultural production within the process of getting high academic achievements. Students from rural areas who get access to elite universities and start their school lives after China's Reform and Opening-up

become an ideal research sample to investigate the cultural production in the process of class mobility. I define these rural kids as “college material”. This research tries to interpret the cultural production of students from rural areas and its unanticipated consequences. Surrounding the growing-up narratives of “college material”, this research pushes further the applicable research objects and the space-time scope in cultural production theory.

The findings are as below: (1) There is a unique type of cultural production which runs with the logic of “Some things are increased by being diminished”. “College material” created inherent impetus, moralized thinking and school-based mind which propped up their school life. (2) The cultural production of “College material” highlights the unique culture of Chinese underclass. The reason why some kids from underclass can get high academic achievement lied in the utilizing of the cultural capital of underclass rather than the remedy of cultural capital of middle class. (3) The cultural capital of underclass students is a double-edged sword and its limitations will burst out after they enter universities. Inherent impetus is followed by tremendous recoil. Huge psychological pressure was hidden behind moralized thinking. The school-based mind was highly relying on timely encouragements from institutions and the powerful public education system. (4) The cultural capital of underclass is complex. A dark side accompanies with high academic achievements. In the process of climbing up the academic ladder, “college materials” produce a complex structure of feelings which focuses on their rural background and results in constrained body and mind. Although the character of being sensible to the sacrifice of their parents helps them fit into a family community, it also restricts their family roles and their expression of emotion, extending a relationship structure characterized by both love and hate. They turn out to be marginal individuals in the process of class and culture travelling, facing double walls of interpersonal communication, lacking cultural belongings. (5) Another cost of being college material is the imbalanced development based on personal self-torture. It will cause heavy anxiety for success, bear the completion risk of meritocracy, sink into alienation and self-estrangement or even drive their lives into the paradox between success and happiness.

Therefore, we can confirm: First, there is another kind of creativity besides counter-school culture, which is an active cultural production through a kind of conformity and from which one can reconstruct their universe of meaning and achieve class mobility. “College materials” are not fully born beauty. There is a moral world based on Chinese culture traditions, family and school life practices which underlie their cultural production. This moral world encourages their own subjectivity. In this perspective, conformity is also a process of cultural production. Family relationship is an important perspective to explore the cultural production of underclass students. Second, cultural capital is not constructed by the same materials. Underclass students can produce their unique underclass cultural capital which contains inherent impetus, moralized thinking and school-based mindset that prop up school life. This kind of cultural capital is not a natural thing. It can only present itself in cultural production. This underclass capital theory connects cultural production and cultural reproduction in a unique way, extending Bourdieu’s and Willis’ thoughts with a new approach and countering the idea that the underclass lacks cultural capital. Third, the paradox that either being weeded out for resistance or being assimilated by middle

class culture and betraying the culture of their original family is not an iron law. Class and culture travelling facilitates a complex emotional orientation. Rural students with high academic achievement love and hate their parents at the same time, reconstructing their parental relationship through creative actions, rather than fully cut off cultural connections with their original families.

The high academic achievements of these college materials are not only constrained by the underclass economic condition but also benefit from the creative power of their will. *Learning to Labor* did not pay enough attention to the energy of conformists' cultural production while Bourdieu ignores the complex relations between personal will of social actor and social structure. The idea of "Things are increased by being diminished" rarely has living space in their theoretical framework. The life of college materials is a journey of fighting. Actually, their high academic achievements were based on a moral world connected with Dao tradition which has lasted for thousands of years in China. Objective family economic condition is not predestination and underclass cultural capital is not an eternal double-edged sword. The obstacles in mental and emotional structure can also be overcome. In a more sound, fair, diverse and open society, the pain of these "college materials" can be mitigated and the risk of their culture world can be defused to some degree.

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### ***Author Bio***

**Dr Meng CHENG** is lecturer at Beijing Normal University. His main areas of research are on Sociology of Education, Anthropology of Education, Educational Administration and Educational Policy. Dr Cheng gained his PhD degree in education from Beijing Normal University. He was a postdoctoral research fellow in Tsinghua University from 2017 to 2019 and was a visiting scholar in University of Wisconsin-Madison from 2015 to 2016. His publications examine how Chinese rural kids get access into elite universities and argue they had produced a special kind of culture capital which is “underclass cultural capital” (*Tsinghua Journal of Education*, 2016); the unintended consequences of rural students getting high academic achievements (*China Youth Study*, 2018; *Youth Study*, 2018; *Journal of Schooling Studies*, 2018); the cultural production process of rural kids who get into elite universities (*Youth Study*, 2016; China Social Science Press, 2018). The current research project that he is leading is on the cultural production of contemporary rural kids in the process of class travelling. He has also conducted studies on the psychological and mental problems of universities students in the perspective of medical anthropology. He can be reached at [chengmengbnu@126.com](mailto:chengmengbnu@126.com).

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## Using digital storytelling to explore Chinese international students' understanding of career and employment



This small-scale project is funded by an ESRC Methods North West Collaborative Innovation Grant to support marginalised groups to share their untold experiences.

[Dr Cora Xu](#), from Keele University's School of Social, Political and Global Studies, received the grant from the Economic and Social Research Council Methods North West to lead the project called 'Digital Storytelling: How British-educated Chinese international students understand career and employment', which aims to demonstrate how creative methods can be used in social research.

Digital storytelling is a new and innovative research method that has the potential to allow under-represented and marginalised social groups to articulate and present their own versions of stories. It gives a voice to participants who have felt unable to tell share their experiences previously, by giving them the skills to tell their story through images and film whilst remaining in control of their own narrative.

The research team is also in collaboration with [Dr Yang Hu](#) from Lancaster University and research students from both institutions, as well as those from Manchester and Liverpool universities.

The team will conduct a two-day digital storytelling workshop with six Chinese students using a guided creative research method, including digital technology to explore their understanding of career and employment, which in cultural and national contexts remains understudied. Participants will produce a digital story by combining pictures, video clips, music and individual recorded voices.

The workshop will provide postgraduate research students with the opportunity to observe, participate in and reflect on the use of digital storytelling in a real research context. Dr Xu and the team will develop a toolkit from the findings and present an online webinar for postgraduate students looking to use the research method.

Dr Xu, Lecturer in Education, said: "I am pleased to receive this funding as this will enable our research team to explore in-depth how to use digital storytelling in social science research.

"The digital storytelling workshop can enable our research team to work closely with a group of Chinese international students to explore their understanding about career and



employment, an area that has often been portrayed in biased manners within the media. Through this workshop, the team will together disseminate our understanding of these research methods and about how it might be applied more widely in social science research.”

This message is adapted from a funding news post on Keele University’s [Intranet](#).

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## **State-mediated Brokerage System in China’s Self-funded Study Abroad Market**

Lan, S. (2018). [State-mediated Brokerage System in China’s Self-funded Study Abroad Market](#). *International Migration*. doi:10.1111/imig.12515



[Dr Shanshan Lan](#), University of Amsterdam

### **Abstract**

The thriving of China’s self-funded study abroad market is marked by the tremendous increase of students who use the services of educational intermediaries to facilitate their transnational journeys. This is largely due to the marketization of China’s higher educational system and the liberalization of state policy towards commercialized brokerage services. Based on multisited fieldwork in China and Italy, this paper examines the intersections between the regulatory, the commercial, and the social dimensions of the educational migration infrastructure in China. It identifies a tension between the neoliberal ideas of individual autonomy and freedom, which are promoted by the state and private intermediaries, and the self-perpetuating nature of the educational migration infrastructure, which facilitates and constrains different groups of parents’ and students’ desire for international education.

Ping is a middle-aged woman whom I met in summer 2015, when she accompanied her 16-year old daughter Maggie to attend a mock SAT exam held on a university campus in Jinan.<sup>1</sup> Like the majority of my informants, Ping identifies herself as middle-class, that is the middle stratum of Chinese society. Ping and her husband are both state employees in the railway sector and both have college degrees. Although Maggie is still in her first year of high school, she has already taken the TOFEL exam twice. Ping explained her obsession with Maggie's education: "Since this is our only child, we want to provide her the best education we can afford. Now she is performing OK in school, but we know that she won't be able to attend an elite university in China. In China your exam score determines what major you can choose. We want to send her abroad so that she can attend a better university and choose a major based on her interest." Ping told me that she has been following the advice of a study abroad agent, Esther, to prepare for Maggie's eventual entry to an elite university in the United States. After the mock SAT, Ping would travel with Maggie to Shanghai to attend a six-week intensive English training course hosted by a renowned English language centre. The total cost of the trip, tuition plus food and lodging, would be around 50,000RMB. Meanwhile, since Maggie wants to major in industrial design, Esther suggested she should attend the summer school of the Chicago Art Institute next year. She convinced Ping that this pre-college overseas study trip is an important investment for Maggie's future application for universities in the US, because it will distinguish her from other applicants from China.

Ping is just one among many middle-class Chinese parents who invest extravagantly in their children's dreams to study abroad. According to the Chinese Ministry of Education, about 544,500 students left China in 2016 to study abroad and 91.49 per cent of them were self-funded. In 2014, the estimated value of China's study abroad market already reached 200 billion RMB (Er, 2014). While these statistics reflect the flourishing of the education-migration industry in China, they fail to account for the anxieties, hopes, confusions and determinations experienced by Chinese parents and children in their daily life interactions with educational intermediaries from both the state and non-state sectors. With the marketization of China's higher educational system and the commercialization of international student migration, studying abroad is often framed in popular Chinese media as a special type of educational consumption and a matter of personal choice. This article contends that recent transnational student migration from China is in fact largely facilitated and structured by the state. The diversification of brokerage services in China's self-funded study abroad market reflects the state's deliberate efforts to relax its control over transnational student mobility in order to relieve the problem of uneven distribution of educational resources in the country. However, state attempt to liberalize the study abroad market ends up perpetuating social inequalities due to its tacit endorsement of neoliberal ethos such as self-responsibility and self-improvement.

Due to its highly commercialized nature, educational brokerage in China starts to bear some features of international labour brokerage in regard to transnational collaborations between multiple agents and the development of complicated agent chains (Xiang, 2012). The existence of agent-chains functions to maximize profits because it broadens the scope of student recruitment for all agents, since they can always channel students who fall

outside their service range to other agents. As collaborations between agents in China intensified, some intermediaries often group the application files of all students who apply for the same university together and send them to the Italian embassy in one package. The downside of this practice is that it may significantly increase the waiting time for students whose application materials have to go through multiple agents. The profit-driven nature of commercialized intermediary practices also prompted some agents to make presumptuous promises to parents such as guaranteed admission to an overseas university and full refund in case of failed applications. In order to fulfil these promises, some agents had to resort to unethical practices such as providing falsified information concerning the student's language skills, social activities and personal talents. One of the negative consequences is that some students who got admitted by overseas universities had to drop due to their inability to follow the curriculum. In Jinan, I encountered several Chinese students attending universities in the United States, who had to switch majors or change universities after realizing that agents' advice did not serve their best interests.

The Chinese case study has important policy implications since much of the social inequalities in China's higher educational system can be attributed to the uneven distribution of educational resources by the state. Reforms in China's educational system should focus on democratic sharing of educational resources, and the cultivation of independent thinking and problem-solving capacities among Chinese students. This will prepare them to handle the many challenges of studying abroad and also decrease their dependence on commercialized agents. To protect the interests of student migrants, the state needs to play a more active role in the professionalization of educational brokerage services. To the extent that agents can persuade parents to buy expensive training courses in preparation for elite university application, and to influence student's choice of study majors and universities, unethical intermediary practices can be detrimental to the future development of student migrants. This problem has already been manifested by recent examples of Chinese students being expelled from US schools due to low grades, academic dishonesty and breaking rules (Zuo, 2015). From the receiving country's perspective, host universities should advertise their services for international students more aggressively in China, instead of depending on recruitment agents. Once students learn that many of the overseas services provided by intermediaries in China can be freely obtained from the host universities' international office, they are less likely to purchase expensive service packages from study abroad agents. This may help them to avoid some of the pitfalls in educational consumption covered in this article.

### ***Author Bio***

[Shanshan Lan](#) is Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. Her research interests include urban anthropology, migration and mobility regimes, comparative racial formations in Asia and Euro-America, transnational student mobility, African diaspora in China, Chinese diaspora in the United States, and class and social transformations in Chinese society. Lan is the Principal Investigator of the ERC project "The reconfiguration of whiteness in China: Privileges, precariousness, and

racialized performances” (CHINAWHITE, 2019-2024). For more information, please see [www.china-white.org](http://www.china-white.org)

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## **Everybody educated? Education migrants and rural-urban relations in Hubei province, China**



[Dr Willy Sier](#), University of Amsterdam

This anthropological research, based on one year of fieldwork in Hubei province (2015-2016), focuses on the contradictory experiences of ‘education migrants’, which are the growing number of Chinese rural youth who migrate to the city via the country’s higher education system. These youth’ enrolment in universities has been an important contributing factor to the rapid expansion of the Chinese higher education system since 1998. Yet their limited access to high-quality education within this higher education system results in the reproduction of rural-urban inequalities in the urban Chinese labour market, where education migrants largely work under precarious conditions in informal, white-collar jobs.

The rapid growth of China’s education system is often celebrated as an ‘educational miracle’ that promises further economic growth and development as well as the mitigation of rural-urban inequalities in Chinese society. My work critiques the idea of education as a unequivocally positive force that has the potential to alleviate social problems ranging from poverty to gender inequality, and demonstrates that the blind pursuit of low-quality education sometimes makes for a wasteful journey with disappointing results. It shows that education migrants’ access to higher education is largely restricted to universities in the bottom segment of the highly stratified Chinese higher education system. The university degrees that youth obtain in these universities translate into poorly paid and unstable jobs that do not enable education migrants to achieve their main goals: building up stable lives in the cities and providing support for their family members.

This project is interested in the linkages between processes of educational expansion and urbanisation. It therefore studies the experiences of education migrants in the context of China's rural-urban transition, and views educational expansion as an important tool for achieving state urbanisation goals as well as preparing rural communities for "agricultural modernisation", the term the Chinese government uses to refer to processes of scaling up through land consolidation. In addition to a book manuscript under preparation, the first results of this project are expected to come out in the form of academic articles.

The first article, called 'The price of aspirations: education migrants' pursuit of a new stability through higher education in Hubei province, China', brings an analysis of the structural condition of China's social transformation and higher education system into dialogue with a discussion about the goals Chinese rural youth aspire to achieve. It analyses in detail how one families' choices in relation to their children's education are rooted in changing land policies and how students' rural status inhibits their success within the Chinese higher education system. It also presents research data gathered among rural high school students that shows how students' awareness of the challenges faced by their parents shapes their motivations.

The second article, 'Daughters' dilemmas: university-educated women in the rural Chinese household in Hubei province, China', looks at education migrants' experiences through a gendered lens and demonstrates in which ways the increased participation of rural women in higher education changes the role of rural daughters in the household. The cases presented in this paper show that highly educated women struggle to use their newly gained status as university graduates for the betterment of their families' situations and their own position in the city without hurting their position on the marriage market, where they might be perceived as a 'hero women' who prioritise career over family.

### ***Author Bio***

[Willy Sier](#) is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Amsterdam. Her PhD-research focused on rural university students in Wuhan and the role of China's higher education system in the country's rural-urban transformation. Currently, she works on a project on whiteness in China (<https://www.china-white.org>). To see her in action, please see her short film "Empty Home": <https://vimeo.com/209590747>. She can be contacted at [w.m.sier@uva.nl](mailto:w.m.sier@uva.nl) and she tweets @WillySier.

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## Institutional Social Capital and Chinese International Branch Campuses: A Case Study from Students' Perspectives



Yuyang Kang, Lingnan University

Kang, Y. (2019). [Institutional Social Capital and Chinese International Branch Campus: A Case Study from Students' Perspectives](#). In *Contesting Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education* (pp. 163-178). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

### Article Summary

In the special context of International Branch Campuses (IBCs) in China, which operate somewhat midway between Chinese and Western cultures, this chapter looks specifically at the role of institutional social capital and how it influences Chinese students' university experiences, focusing in particular on what and how social capital is transmitted and accumulated by students within the IBC. Empirical data was gathered through in-depth interviews with current students, graduates and faculty members of one IBC in China (IBC-A, hereafter). This chapter argues that although certain aspects of institutional social capital may be curtailed, students still have many chances to cultivate their social capital in an IBC context. However, the most commonly addressed function of institutional social capital (that is, its role in students' job-hunting) was not observed in this research.

Based upon findings generated from the interviews with students, this research finds that the assumption that IBCs can provide better institutional social capital is part of the reason why some Chinese students choose to study at an IBC. Some students believe that networking opportunities at IBC-A are better than other institutions in China, with *gaokao* (Chinese National College Entrance Examination) scores and high tuition fee as two compulsory requirements for entry. The university enrolls Chinese Mainland students only through the channel of the Ministry of Education (MoE), which means *gaokao* is the prerequisite. In 2014, the average *gaokao* score of IBC-A newly enrolled students majoring in science was 650, which was 18 points higher than that of Ningbo University and 49 points lower than the average of Zhejiang University. Ningbo University is neither a 985 nor 211 project university while Zhejiang University is one of the top 10 higher education institutions in China. Although IBC-A usually avoids being

compared with other universities in China's public higher education system, the *gaokao* score indicates it is viewed as a good but not top university by Chinese students and their parents. Moreover, most of the students in IBC-A come from relatively well-off family. In 2012, IBC-A raised its annual tuition fee for undergraduate students from 60,000 Yuan to 80,000 Yuan, which was 15 to 20 times higher than the fees charged by a typical Chinese public university. According to the Statistical Yearbook of China, the per capita annual income of Chinese urban households was 24,564.7 Yuan in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Therefore, it is reasonable to state only individuals from relatively rich families can afford the tuition at IBC-A.

Regarding cultivation of institutional social capital, this research finds that it might be difficult for IBC-A students to maintain long-term contact with faculty members. Both students and staff who were interviewed mentioned that faculty members tend to stay only for a few years at IBC-A. In addition to commonly known disadvantages of working in China such as blocked internet access, the interviews with faculty members reveal that IBC-A has two systems of faculty recruitment. The home University A directly recruits some of the faculty from the UK and those recruited are usually registered at both University A and IBC-A. The Chinese campus also recruits faculty members on a global scale on its own. Faculty members recruited via the latter channel are only signed as IBC-A faculty instead of University A. The differentiation or inequality in administration and management increase the tension within faculties and undermines people's willingness to stay. As IBC-A is still running under deficit, it is also difficult for faculty members to get promoted. After two or three years at IBC-A, many faculty members find it difficult to be promoted and decide to move to other institutions for the development of their careers. After a faculty member leaves for other institutions, some of the students find it difficult to keep in contact, as the teachers would change their contact information too. It also sets obstacles for those who need to find references for their further studies, which is very common among IBC-A students.

Although some institutional social capital might be curtailed by faculty turnover, students still have many chances to cultivate their social capital in an IBC context. Because of differences in higher education systems, IBC-A students need to take fewer courses than their peers in Chinese universities and students at the UK-style university are expected to be more independent in learning. Although the students interviewed tend to hold varied attitudes toward the reduced course hours, it is noticeable that fewer course hours allow IBC-A students to actively engage in extra-curricular activities and increase their sense of being members of the 'corps.' This paper reveals that fewer course hours together with smaller classes and students' higher intention to build networks with each other are three factors that contribute to lasting social connections among IBC-A students and alumni.

Studies of social capital, especially institutional social capital, are unequivocal about how institutional social capital helps students to find their first jobs after graduation. However, in this study, there is no strong evidence indicating correlation between institutional social capital and IBC-A students' first jobs. The main reason is that most of the graduates go on to postgraduate study outside of China instead of finding a local job. Interviews with IBC-A

students reveals that most of them believe there are fundamental differences between IBC-A and other Chinese universities and a mismatch between demands of local job market and the IBC graduates. Some students found it difficult to adapt to the local job market and the massification of higher education in China makes it increasingly difficult to secure a good job with a bachelor's degree only. According to the participants, only a few students planned to go directly to work after their four-years' study, and this group of students mainly intended to take jobs in foreign companies or jobs that their families found for them.

This paper has examined the role of institutional social capital in Chinese IBC students' university experiences. It contributes to current institutional social capital literature by showing its special role in recruitment of Chinese students. Based upon findings generated from the interviews with students, this research finds that the assumption that IBCs can provide better institutional social capital is part of the reason why some Chinese students choose to study at an IBC. Because of historical and cultural circumstances, young Chinese individuals being educated in a Western-style university still attach special importance to being a member of certain institutions. It might be difficult for IBC-A students to maintain long-term contact with faculty members who tend to move to other institutions, which curtails accumulation of certain institutional social capital. However, fewer course hours together with smaller classes and students' higher intention to build networks with each other are three factors that contribute to lasting social connections among IBC-A students and alumni. Despite these positive factors indicating the strong potential for developing institutional social capital, the job-finding effect of institutional social capital was not obvious in this research because a large portion of the graduates did not go to work directly after their graduation.

### *Author Biography*

[Yuyang Kang](#) is PhD candidate in Sociology and Social Policy at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. This paper is developed from her thesis submitted to King's College London. Her research interests are in the subfield of internationalization of higher education and the role of HEIs in local innovation development. Her current projects focus on graduate entrepreneurs in the Great Bay Area of China. Her PhD is funded by Hong Kong PhD Fellowship and she is also the awardee of Sino-British Fellowship Trust Fund and Fung Scholarship.



## ***Capacity Building***

### **CFP Mobility and education in Asia, ASAA 2020 Melbourne**

**\*\*Call for papers\*\***

Mobility and education in Asia: an interdisciplinary discussion?

Asian Studies Association of Australia conference, 6-9 July 2020, Melbourne, Australia

Abstracts of around 200 words should be submitted to Zhenjie Yuan <[zjyuan@gzhu.edu.cn](mailto:zjyuan@gzhu.edu.cn)> and Vickie Zhang <[vzhang@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:vzhang@student.unimelb.edu.au)> by Monday 28 October, 2019.

Education has become a high-profile social issue across Asia, involving complex, selective and far-reaching mobilities of people, things and ideas across traditional boundaries and borders. With a broad faith in the capacity of 'better' education to enhance chances at upward social mobility, people in societies across Asia are moving from place to place in the pursuit of institutionalised educational experiences, opportunities and qualifications. This session aims to intersect insights of the now well-established 'mobilities turn' with studies of education in Asia, particularly given a recent move in migration studies towards embracing the mobilities approach's fine-grained attentiveness to a world of duration and flows (Brooks and Waters 2011, Sheller and Urry 2006, Hannam & Guerenzo-Omil 2015, King 2012, Schapendonk & Steel 2014).

Education-driven migrations present compelling scenes of movement across global, regional and local scales, as sites of anxiety and aspiration, mobility and stasis. Education can, for example, be a key element in the production of place, especially in an era of education marketization, city branding and neoliberalization. It is increasingly incorporated into regional economic development strategies, rendering it a source of socio-economic development and reproducing geographically differentiated relations of power and prestige. As sites of social reproduction, schools are implicated in processes of social inclusion and exclusion based on race, class, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and immigration status, especially in societies where diversity is understood through visible characteristics. Educational spaces are widely posited as sites for different technologies of power, in which control, discipline, instruction, negotiation and resistance are intertwined and performed.

The aim of this session is to explore how theories of mobility may be a productive approach to the analysis of educational spaces, including, but not limited to, formal institutions such as state schools, private schools, international schools, universities and other hybrid educational spaces (e.g. home schooling, tutoring, schooling in workplaces, etc.) (Collins & Coleman 2008; Edwards et al. 2019, Holloway et al. 2010; Holloway & Jöns 2012; Gulson & Symes 2017; Raghuram 2013). Simultaneously, the session aims to explore the way educational spaces harness and respond to frictions and flows that arise from the mobilities of people, things and ideas, focussing primarily on contemporary Asian societies. This could include topics such as: (i) the logistics, institutions and materials that enable or disable the movement of people, things and ideas through space and time, including political and geopolitical factors (Bissell 2016, Cresswell 2010, Pottie-Sherman 2018); (ii) the way in which practices of movement are framed, performed and given value within educational

spacetimes and beyond; (iii) the attachments and detachments, hopes, aspirations and despairs driving educational movements and desires (Conradson & McKay 2007, Carling & Collins 2018, Robertson et al. 2018); (iv) more descriptive accounts of education-driven migrations, including depictions of educational experiences, rhythms and routines in everyday life and throughout the life-course (Collins and Shubin 2018, Findlay et al. 2017, King 2018, Symes 2007), and (v) much more.

Both conceptual and empirical papers are welcome in this session, including papers focussing on specific circuits or types of movement. Comparative perspectives are encouraged.

Abstracts of around 200 words should be submitted to Zhenjie Yuan <[zjyuan@gzhu.edu.cn](mailto:zjyuan@gzhu.edu.cn)> and Vickie Zhang <[vzhang@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:vzhang@student.unimelb.edu.au)> by Monday 28 October, 2019.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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## **Call for Research Participants: Inner speech and life in the UK as a Chinese student**

Hello! I am a PhD student at Birkbeck, University of London. I am recruiting Chinese students studying in the UK (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Mainland China, all welcome) to fill out a questionnaire for my PhD research.

This research aims to investigate the relationship between language experience in inner speech, and life in the UK as a Chinese student. It has received ethical approval from SSHP Ethics Committee, Birkbeck, University of London.

The questionnaire takes 15 minutes to complete. Please select a language at your convenience.

English: <https://bbk.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/inner-speech>

Traditional Chinese: <https://bbk.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/inner-speech-traditional>

Simplified Chinese: <https://bbk.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/inner-speech-simplified>

Many thanks in advance!

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## About the Network for Research into Chinese Education Mobilities



A research community for sharing of research ideas and events related to Chinese education mobilities. We understand 'Chinese' and 'education mobilities' in a broad sense.

The Network for Research into Chinese Education Mobilities (NRCEM) is the continuation of our highly successful Sociological Review Foundation Seminar Series on '[A Sociology of Contemporary Chinese \(Im\)mobilities: Educating China on the Move](#)'. This seminar series has not only attracted [renowned and emerging scholars](#) to present their [cutting-edge research](#) on various forms of and issues around Chinese education mobilities, but also gathered synergy of a community of scholars from different parts of the world interested in this important field of research and scholarship. To take this seminar series further, we have decided to establish this Network (NRCEM) to carry out networking and research events. We are currently inviting contributions to our '[Research Highlights](#)' section (800-1,200 words reports) as well as recruiting [committee members](#). If interested, please get in touch by emailing [chineseedmobilities@outlookcom](mailto:chineseedmobilities@outlookcom).

You can follow us on [Facebook](#) and on Twitter [@ChiEdMobilities](#)