Network for Research into Chinese Education Mobilities
中国教育流动研究网络

Newsletter

Issue 17 January 2020

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Dear Network for Research into Chinese Ed Mobilities colleagues,

Happy New Year. In this January 2020 issue we have brought to you our six latest research highlights entries and four capacity building entries as follows. You can continue to read our monthly Newsletters. Issue 17 (i.e. this Newsletter) has been attached to this email for your kind perusal.

Research Highlights

1. Mengyang Li (University of Hong Kong) reveals the major challenges that English-language academic journals from China have faced amid the global knowledge asymmetries. This is based on her recent co-authored article (with Prof Rui Yang) in *Higher Education*.
2. Dr Jiaxin Chen (Lingnan University, Hong Kong/East China Normal University) discusses how rural migrant children in China's cities resist schooling, by drawing on her latest article published in *British Journal of Sociology of Education*.
3. Ben Mulvey (Education University of Hong Kong) discusses the positive and negative experiences of Ugandan graduates from Chinese universities in relation to China's strategy of employing international student recruitment for public diplomacy . This is based on his recent article published in *Higher Education Policy*.
4. Dr Yingyi Ma (Syracuse University, USA) reveals how Chinese students studying in the US have to withdraw into their peer groups for comfort and support in navigating their study-abroad experience. This is based on her forthcoming book 'Ambitious and Anxious' to be published by Columbia University Press.
5. Dr Cora Lingling Xu (Keele University, UK) discusses how class and politics have impacted on working-class Hong Kong students ('diaspora at home') who pursue higher education in mainland China. This is based on her recent article published in *International Studies in Sociology of Education*.
6. Dr Shanshan Lan (University of Amsterdam) reveals the emotional burdens of of *youxue* (Study and Travel) among mobile Chinese youth in Italy. This is based on her latest article published in *International Migration*.

   To consult all our Research Highlights entries, please click here.

Capacity Building

1. A Call for Participants on 'Chinese Master's students' job seeking and employment' conducted by Xianan Hu (Durham University) is available [here](#). Complete the questionnaire [here](#).
2. A Call for Papers on 'Diaspora and Education' for the *International Studies in Sociology of Education* (ISSE) is available [here](#). Deadline for abstract: 15 January 2020, to be sent to [Dr Reza Gholami](#).
3. A Call for Papers on 'Resilience of Chinese children, parents, and educators: A powerful response to "lazy inclusivism"' in *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education (IJDDE)* is available [here](#). Contact Dr [Guanglun Michael Mu](#) (m.mu@qut.edu.au) for more details.
4. A Call for Papers on 'Emerging and (re)shaping higher education "identities" in China' for a Special Issue in the *International Journal of Chinese Education* is available [here](#). Deadline: 1 May 2020. Contact guest editors: Dr Kun Dai ([kdai@pku.edu.cn](#)) and Prof Mei Tian ([temmytian@mail.xjtu.edu.cn](#)).

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 17 January 2020
2. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 16 December 2019](#)
3. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 15 November 2019](#)
4. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 14 October 2019](#)
5. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 13 September 2019](#)
6. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 12 August 2019](#)
7. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 11 July 2019](#)
8. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 10 June 2019](#)
9. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 9 May 2019](#)
10. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 8 April 2019](#)
11. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 7 February 2019](#)
12. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 6 October 2018](#)
13. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 5 October 2018](#)
14. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 4 April 2018](#)
15. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 3 February 2018](#)
16. [NRCEM Newsletter Issue 2 January 2018](#)
17. NRCEM Newsletter Issue 1 December 2017

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Communication

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Research Highlights

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Enduring hardships in global knowledge asymmetries: a national scenario of China's English-language academic journals in the humanities and social sciences

Li, M., & Yang, R. (2019). Enduring hardships in global knowledge asymmetries: a national scenario of China's English-language academic journals in the humanities and social sciences. *Higher Education*. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00476-3.

China's achievements in higher education during the past few decades are marked by rapidly rising 'hard' disciplines (science, technology, and medicine) and much less visible 'soft' disciplines (humanities and social sciences, abbreviated as HSS). Against such a backdrop, the government has recently stressed the significance of improving the international influence of China's HSS. Developing English-language academic journals is one of China's proactive initiatives for its HSS to go global. As a relatively recent development, these journals have rarely been researched empirically. Based on interviews with 32 journal editors and on a thorough review of related policy documents at various levels conducted

during 2017-2018, this article delineates an overall picture of HSS English-language academic journals in Mainland China, and explores their efforts and predicaments in bringing China's HSS research to the world under a context of global knowledge asymmetries.

By 2018, China had 66 HSS English-language academic journals, primarily hosted by universities, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences(CASS) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), and publishers. Political rationales have been the strongest push for these journals to emerge. While the earliest, the *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, was established in 1978, most of the journals were launched in recent one or two decades. They were directly or indirectly resulted from top-down HSS 'going-out' policy aiming at global status and soft power enhancement. Despite being influenced by the policy discourses, according to the interviewees, the journals enjoy a considerable extent of freedom in operation.

On the whole, the journals are still at their preliminary stage of development. In comparison with a total over 2000 HSS Chinese-language journals (CNKI 2017), the number of HSS English-language journals is dwarfed. The 66 journals cover different subject areas, mostly in economics, finance, business and management (17), followed by eight in law, four in education, and three in history. 47 (71%) journals cooperate with international publishers. Currently Taylor & Francis Group, Brill, and Springer are the three major international partners for the journals. By far, the international impact of these journals is generally very limited. Only six are indexed by the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and none by the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI). 27 (41%) are indexed in Scopus, the largest international citation database of peer-reviewed journals. In 2018, three journals were ranked in Q1 in their respective areas in Scimago Journal Rank based on Scopus data, while 11 were ranked in Q2, three in Q3, and 10 in Q4.

Despite their limited international visibility, HSS English-language journals in China provide a platform for bringing China's research to the world. The interviewed editors have shown a clear awareness of Euro-American hegemony in global knowledge production, pointing out a lack of understanding of the global south and misunderstandings about China and China studies. The journals therefore aim to be a platform for reciprocal communication and multiple perspectives in HSS research. They encourage theoretical discussions on Chinese, Asian, or non-Western issues, reforms, history, traditions… from various especially local perspectives, and explore their possibilities in contributing to theory building. Besides, the few journals that have achieved relatively higher global impact have demonstrated possibilities in strategic dependence on international resources to enhance visibility, such as *Chinese Journal of International Politics*. While spending substantial efforts in inviting top international scholars to join their editorial boards, and as readers, authors and reviewers, the journal works hard to balance domestic and foreign papers at the same time so as to facilitate dialogue between Chinese and international scholars.

Four major themes emerged from the data regarding challenges of journal development: English language hurdles, unfavorable position in research evaluation systems, unfamiliarity

with standards of international academic writing and publishing, and tensions between international ambition and local commitment. First, most editors report English as a major obstacle for their journals. At their initial stages of development, most of the journals can receive few submissions from foreign scholars and Chinese diaspora. Thus they need depend largely on domestic researchers. Considering the unsatisfactory English proficiency of many domestic researchers, journals have to either compromise language quality of the articles they publish or rely on translation of articles that have already been published in Chinese journals and submissions in Chinese. Yet qualified translators and copy editors are lacking, and the language ability of many editors is also a problem.

Second, the journals are hindered by their unfavorable positions in research evaluation systems. As rankings and league tables have become parts of the global governance of higher education, China's HSS research evaluation system is increasingly shaped by SSCI and A&HCI. Since the overwhelming majority of the HSS English-language journals are not indexed, it has been very difficult for them to attract international and domestic submissions. Third, many domestic Chinese researchers and some editors themselves are not familiar with standards of international academic writing and publishing. For example, among the 27 interviewed journals, about 12 journals only publish original articles while other journals rely on translated articles at varying degrees; even fewer journals (about 8) have achieved double-blind peer review. For journals cooperating with international publishers, financial pressure caused by the high cost of the partnership might restrict a sustainable development of them.

Lastly, the journals are struggling to strike a balance between international ambition and local commitment. To deal with Euro-American hegemony and bring indigenous Chinese research to the world, journals need to publish more locally-oriented research. However, hoping to be better recognized internationally, most journals in the social sciences set entry into SSCI as their current strategic goal. The intention to have a larger international readership and authorship is desperate. Even SSCI or A&HCI are not regarded as a major target in the humanities, the journals also orient to the 'golden standards' set by Western practices to enhance their international recognition. Moreover, editors confirm the lingering difficulties in the dialogue between Chinese and Western scholarship. As an editor in philosophy expressed, "We've translated and published articles written by leading Chinese scholars, but they have almost zero download, much lower than those written by younger Chinese diaspora members." This reflects the global position of China's HSS research. Issues such as catch-up mentality, over-pragmatism, academic nationalism, and lack of original theoretical contributions have exerted a combined impact on HSS research in China, leading to a limited contribution to the dialogue with international scholars.

To conclude, this study shows that HSS English-language journals in China attempt to challenge yet are conditioned at the same time by the imbalanced international knowledge structure. Theories of center-periphery structure (Altbach, 1987; 1998) and academic dependency (Alatas 2003; 2006) are still powerful in explaining disadvantages of HSS development in non-Western societies. However, China's HSS English-language journals provide us with a telling case to observe how to develop self-consciously counter-

Eurocentric and counter-hegemonic HSS (Alatas 2006). It takes time to see their effectiveness in empowering Chinese HSS researchers to become global.

Author Biography

Mengyang Li is a PhD candidate in Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong. Her research interests are in international academic relations, internationalization of the humanities and social sciences, and China's global engagement in higher education. Her doctoral research examines Mainland China's English-language academic journals in the humanities and social sciences. This paper is based on part of the doctoral thesis. She can be contacted via email: u3003515@connect.hku.hk

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Self-abandonment or seeking an alternative way out: understanding Chinese rural migrant children's resistance to schooling

Dr Jiaxin Chen, **Lingnan University, Hong Kong / East China Normal University**

Because of the rapid urbanization, industrialization, and significant economic success in urban areas, unprecedented numbers of rural people have flocked to cities seeking work, creating an extensive urban manual labor force (Chan and Pun 2010; Shi 2010; Wang 1998). By 2016, the total population of rural migrant workers in China had reached 281.71 million (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2017). Yet, because of the hukou (household registration 户口) system, these rural migrants are deemed 'non-local' or 'rural residents' in urban areas, effectively excluding them from the urban welfare system, including public education for their children.

In 2010, there were an estimated 35.81 million migrant children (aged 17 or younger) in China (All-China Women's Federation 2013). Researchers have found migrant children are more likely to fail in their schooling, and to be tracked into vocational schools or directly into the manual labor market (Li 2015; Ling 2015; Song, Zeng, and Zhang 2017). Previous studies have mainly blamed China's hukou system for the difficulties rural migrant children (RMC) facing in accessing urban schooling and their being forced to attend private migrant schools (Chen and Feng 2013; Kwong 2011; Lai et al. 2014; Li and Placier 2015). Some researchers have recently argued that migrant children also play an active role in reproducing their migrant parents' low social-economic status, through resisting schooling (Xiong 2015; Zhou 2011). However, few studies have examined the complexity of migrant children's resistance, especially the complex meanings embedded in resistant behaviors, which are essential for understanding student agency (Giroux 1983; Lanas and Corbett 2011). This article bridges this research gap.

This study examined the diverse forms of RMC's school resistance in their interactions with the school system and with surrounding social inequalties in urban society. Qualitative investigations were conducted in two primary schools in the Sun District (pseudonym) of

Beijing. Three patterns of RMC's school behavior emerged from the analysis of interview data and observations: conformist learner, education abandoner, and nascent transformative resister.

Most, if not all, RMC under study had strong expectations of bettering their and their families' futures through individual efforts. A conformist learner is someone for whom pursuing education is the preferred means of achieving this desired betterment. Xi, for example, a sixth-grade male student, clearly expressed high educational expectations in his interview, saying 'studying well can help me enter a key point middle school, then a key point high school, then a first- class university' and eventually a Master's program. He believed a high-level educational credential would command a high salary in the labor market, meaning a bright future for him.

Although RMC in general believed in the significance of education, many did not feel they were capable of achieving educational success and so were less inclined to pursue it. Some became education abandoners, dismissing education as irrelevant to their future betterment. Upon education abandonment, they began searching for alternative opportunities to advance their future social positions. For instance, Miao knew going to university could help him 'become a boss [and help him to] walk my way out of peasant life and towards the city life', but he felt that he had little possibility of succeeding in school education. Thus, his best option, he felt, was to 'work as a worker at first, [to] earn and save some money. Then open my own company, [and] become the boss myself '. However, these migrant children perceived their entering the world of manual labor as a strategic move towards the pursuit of a higher social position, such as becoming 'the boss', with no intention of doing low-paying, low-ranked manual working jobs henceforth.

Many RMC in this study had already shown their awareness of social inequalities. Indeed, it was hard for them not to, as inequality was a daily experience in their lives. Conformist learners, therefore, chose to study hard for a university degree so that they could find better jobs, earn a higher salary, and improve the living conditions of the whole family. Education abandoners, by contrast, gave up pursuing academic success and decided to enter the labor market as long-game players. Both were searching for opportunities for self-improvement to the best of their ability but lacked a social justice agenda.

Yet, a small group of migrant children were found to present the potential of developing transformational resistance, for example Student Le. Le's aim of pursuing a position at the Education Bureau was not merely to improve his living conditions. Instead, it was one step towards a further agenda of changing the education policy for RMC, so that other RMC need not face the same unequal school access as he does. Nevertheless, the reason for considering them as only nascent resisters is that they still seem confused about who or what is to blame for social inequalities and how to act.

As Kipnis (2001a) has argued, Chinese society has traditionally featured a widely held and strong belief in schooling for upward social mobility. While teachers also kept emphasizing the significance of academic pursuit, RMC successfully internalized the ideology of

meritocracy. Therefore, most migrant children in this study were initially conformist learners. The change process from conformist learners to education abandoners reflects the ongoing decrease in migrant children's self-efficacy in achieving academic success throughout their education. This can be attributed to the school's promotion of educational pursuit always going hand-in-hand with a highlight on students' alleged responsibility for their academic failure.

Besides, the potential of RMC in developing transformative resistance was based on their personal experience and awareness of the social inequality caused by both an oppressive employment relationship and rural-urban differentiation in the broader society. Nevertheless, the vulnerable pursuit of social justice among nascent resisters indicates the difficulty of transferring children's initial awareness into critical reflection. While teacher-student discussions about social oppressions rural migrants facing in urban society could benefit students' development of transformative resistance, this is challenged by school's dominant ideology of meritocracy and a teaching agenda that legitimizes social inequality.

This study suggests that migrant children's school resistance should not be considered as a developed group culture, stemming from their migrant family culture in contradiction with mainstream culture in the schooling. Rather, migrant children's school resistance reflects their perceptions of social realities, which are still open to change while the children are interacting with the school system. Therefore, the analysis of Chinese RMC's educational failure should go beyond children's self-defeating resistance to mainstream schooling.

Author Biography

Jiaxin Chen is Research Assistant Professor in School of Graduate Studies at Lingnan University, Hong Kong (beginning March 2020). She received her PhD from the University of Hong Kong, and worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the East China Normal University, Shanghai, China. Her research interests include education inequality and mobility with a strong focus on disadvantaged children, migration, citizenship education and academic mobility. She can be contacted via the following email address: jxchen881116@163.com

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International Higher Education and Public Diplomacy: A Case Study of Ugandan Graduates from Chinese Universities

Ben Mulvey, **PhD Candidate, The Education University of Hong Kong**

This article addresses the recruitment of international students by Chinese universities as a means of public diplomacy. The Chinese government invests heavily in recruiting international students to study in Chinese universities, with the rationale that this will lead to improved relations between China and students' respective home countries. However, empirical evidence for, and understanding of, the mechanisms through which international study leads to improved relations between host and sending country is weak (Wilson, 2014). Whilst there is a consensus in the scholarly literature with regard to China's intention to use international student recruitment ion order to meet foreign policy goals, there has been very little empirical research carried out with the aim of exploring how China may be accumulating influence through international student recruitment in individual countries.

Students from Africa appear to be of particular importance within China's international student recruitment. In total during 2018, the Chinese Ministry of Education indicates that 81,562 African students studied in China (Ministry of Education, 2019). This means that the number of African students in China is now greater than the number in the UK or USA, making China the second largest destination country for internationally mobile African tertiary education students. With this in mind, one country in Africa with particularly close relations with China – Uganda – was chosen as a case study of interest. The Ugandan government is almost unique in that it was one of the first African governments to follow China's development model (Waldron, 2008; Shen and Taylor, 2012). It is also a member state of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), announced in 2013, which has rapidly become the dominant representation of China's foreign policy practices. International student mobility is therefore just one facet of an expanding network of social, political, and economic ties between Uganda and China.

The case study uncovered common experiences of social alienation as a barrier to 'deep' social interactions that appear to be an important means of change in attitude towards the host country (Lomer, 2017a). Participants generally reported experiences of discrimination on the basis of race in China, and this emerged in the interviews as an important potential barrier to positive social interactions and a sense of community between participants and local people. It is important to note, however, that these negative interactions were largely outside of the university, rather than with faculty or local students. These perceptions and experiences of isolation were common. Most cited examples of what they perceived to be anti-African racism in everyday interactions, or when trying to find part-time work—this echoes some previous studies on African students in China, and research on anti-African racism in China more generally, in which there is a common argument that the Chinese perception of Africans is essentialized and racialized, creating a negative image of Africa in China, and often leading to negative experiences for Africans who study or work there (e.g. Cheng, 2011; Haugen, 2013; Ho, 2017; 2018; King, 2013). In particular, Ho (2018, 20), exploring the gastronomic practices of African students in China, echoes these findings, writing that '[t]he "Western" experience continues to hold allure for the African student migrants in China, reinforced by their encounters with prejudice and social exclusion in Chinese society'. In other words, the experiences of social exclusion highlighted in both Ho's study, and this one, effectively act to subvert Chinese soft power.

Although the participants in this study expressed how feelings of social alienation and discrimination shaped their experiences in China, when asked to reflect on how attitudes towards China had changed over the course of study, most participants focused on academic experiences, which were largely positive, and on a sense of 'understanding' of Chinese society. Participants often mentioned learning not only from faculty members but also from the attitudes of Chinese students. A previous survey of African students in China highlighted that a constant refrain from students was the impact and transfer of Chinese attitudes towards work and study (King, 2013). Similarly, participants in this study emphasized learning from Chinese counterparts.

However, most participants were somewhat sceptical about Chinese involvement in Uganda, despite the fact the majority received full scholarships from the Chinese government. The following quote is fairly typical in that it highlights graduates' sceptical attitudes towards Chinese involvement in Uganda:

> "Most of the time they look at how to promote their business. I think we can call it a sweet colonial ideology. Like they are colonising us softly, and in a very sweet way and a polite way… they win favour with your government." (Participant 9)

Waters (2018, 306) writes that a result of the soft power rationale for international higher education provision is 'the dehumanizing of the international student' which 'means that they are rarely seen as political or social actors in their own right'. This flaw within the rationale is highlighted by the excerpts above. Students left China with a better understanding of relationship between the two countries, but ultimately held critical views towards their host as a result of this understanding.

Despite reporting some negative or alienating experiences in China and scepticism towards some aspects of Sino-Ugandan bilateral relations, participants found that undertaking employment related to China's interests in Uganda was also a means to gain economic advantage. Engaging in mobility to China allowed participants to accumulate a variety of resources which, due to the relationship between Uganda and China, are increasingly easily convertible into advantages in the labour market. The rapidly changing position of China in relation to Uganda means that credentials which theoretically offer proof of the holders' China-related competencies (in this case an understanding of Chinese language and culture) are highly valued by employers and can be utilised for economic gain through trade or business consulting. This incentivises Ugandan graduates to leverage their China related competencies for their own benefit—as opposed to a desire to forward China's national interests. These participants perceived that Chinese language ability and, more broadly, an understanding of the nuances of Chinese culture gained whilst in China have been important in post-graduation career trajectories. Strikingly, all other than one who had studied medicine and worked in a Ugandan hospital corroborated claims here about the value of understanding Chinese language and culture in the Ugandan job market.

The article concludes by highlighting two apparent flaws in China's assumptions about higher education as a means of public diplomacy. Chinese policy towards international students fails to account for firstly, the individual agency of students, and secondly, for how students' agentic decision-making is related to the structure of the global political economy, and the sending and host country's relative positions within it. The evidence presented highlights the nuanced and complex views of graduates towards their host and demonstrates that students are in fact political actors in their own right, rather than passive diplomatic tools, as policy texts in many destination countries sometimes imply.

Author bio

Ben Mulvey is a PhD candidate at the Education University of Hong Kong and visiting research student at University College London Department of Geography. Ben's research focuses on sub-Saharan African students in China, and what this student flow can reveal about China's attempts to (re)shape the global "field" of higher education. He can be contacted via the following email address: bmulvey@s.eduhk.hk

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'A process of withdrawal into their Chinese peer groups for comfort and support': the Chinese experience in the US*
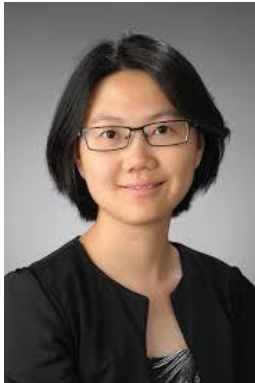
[Dr Yingyi Ma](#), Syracuse University, USA

Over the past decade, a wave of Chinese international undergraduates has swept across American higher education. From 2005 to 2015, the number of these largely self-funded students in the US jumped from 9,304 to 135,629, a more than tenfold increase. And despite the Trump administration's chilly immigration policy and the overall decline in international enrolment during 2017-18, Chinese undergraduate enrolment still grew by another 4 per cent, according to data from the Institute of International Education.

This conspicuous presence of Chinese students in the US has given rise to major headlines in the media, usually with a strong focus on the students' falsely assumed universal wealth. More recently, Chinese students have been politicised and labelled as spies by the Trump administration. As a result, the voices of these students have been silenced and their experiences obscured.

My research, at both Chinese high schools and American institutions of higher education, reveals a diverse set of Chinese students, with varying resources and different educational journeys. Their accounts illustrate that studying in the US is no longer reserved for academic or economic elites, and they reflect the increasing ambition and ability of China's burgeoning middle and upper-middle classes to obtain for their children a credential from what they take to be the best higher education system in the world.

My research also reveals the very complicated and sometimes contradictory desires and behaviours of Chinese international undergraduates in the US. They complain that their previous education in China posed a threat to their creativity, yet they credit the Chinese system for their tenacity in learning and their solid training in mathematics and science. They appear to like hanging out among their Chinese peers, yet the presence of so many other Chinese students in their classes makes them question the point of studying in the US. Many are silent in the classroom but quietly fret about the potential damage this does to their grades. And while they often desire a liberal arts college education that is not test-oriented, they still work their hearts out to take the SAT and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) multiple times, as if scores on these exams were the only thing that mattered when applying to their dream schools.

All this highlights the fact that the US and China are very different societies with distinct education systems, cultural values and social norms. Because Chinese students are steeped in the test-based university admissions system that operates in their own country, they are placed in a cultural bind by the holistic admissions criteria that characterise US college admissions.

These criteria are also disconnected from the everyday realities of Chinese schooling. Few people in a typical student's social network in China can write recommendation letters in English, and school counsellors are beyond the reach of many. However, to be competitive, Chinese students have to learn quickly how to equip themselves with interesting experiences and present themselves in a way that meets the expectations of American institutions. This entails a dramatic change of behaviour and a steep learning curve – and incentivises Chinese students to resort to the billion-dollar industry that has emerged in China to help them navigate US college admissions, with specialist agencies offering everything from test prep and essay-writing to extracurricular, internship and research opportunities.

As for which college to choose, rankings light the way. Their straightforwardly hierarchical nature mirrors the scoring system of the *gao kao*, China's national college admissions exam, offering convenience and comfort to anxious Chinese students and their parents who are otherwise grappling in the dark with the unknowns and unpredictabilities of the US admissions system.

To improve this, US institutions need to invest more in direct recruiting in China, disseminating information about themselves that goes beyond the rankings and sharing knowledge about how to navigate the application process. This increased investment in direct recruitment – which could be achieved by networking and partnering with local Chinese schools – would help to yield better-prepared and better-qualified students. It would also help Chinese students and their families to identify the programmes and schools that fit with their abilities and interests – rather than leaving them to the mercies of the third-party agencies and the testing rat race.

Once the students have arrived, US institutions need to do more to integrate them. Contrary to widespread perceptions that Chinese students want to remain within their own groups, I found in them a strong and sometimes explicit yearning to make American friends. Yet they struggle to overcome barriers that include the individualistic orientation of American society, the excessive partying and drinking that marks the social scene on US campuses, and the lack of Western-based cultural knowledge and capital. All this leaves them feeling marginalised and excluded, contributing to a process of withdrawal into their Chinese peer groups for comfort and support.

Chinese students need their US institutions to provide diverse networking opportunities for them. For example, international student offices, which typically serve as little more than places to rubber-stamp visa paperwork, need to reimagine themselves as social homes for international students and as forums to bring them together with US students. I have found

that participation in campus organisations gives a strong boost to friendship formation with Americans.

The disadvantages faced by first-generation Chinese students, whose parents have never been to college, are particularly severe. They are more likely to have poor English and less likely to have close American friends. Their marginalisation is sometimes masked by their economic resources, but it is no less real for it. Institutions need to be acutely aware of their predicament and provide targeted support to help them integrate.

Until institutions make systematic and sustained efforts, the cultural and social benefits to American higher education brought by Chinese students will not be realised – and Chinese students will leave American institutions feeling disappointed.

*Note: This article was initially published in Times Higher Education here.

Author Bio

Yingyi Ma is associate professor of sociology and director of Asian/Asian American studies at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University. Her book *Ambitious and Anxious: How Chinese College Students Succeed and Struggle in American Higher Education* will be published in February by Columbia University Press.
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'Diaspora at home': class and politics in the navigation of Hong Kong students in Mainland China's Universities

Dr Cora Lingling Xu, **Keele university**

Abstract

This paper draws on 'diaspora at home', a concept that encapsulates the unique dynamics between Hong Kong and mainland China, as an analytical tool to explore the cross-border experiences of 23 Hong Kong students at 11 universities in mainland China. It empirically ascertains how the made and imposed claims and identifications of these Hong Kong students resulted in inclusion and exclusion as their interactions with their mainland peers and institutions deepened. Specifically, it highlights how their 'diaspora at home' status offered exclusive access to privileged higher education opportunities, preferential treatments and opportunities for upward social mobility. Meanwhile, such a status also resulted in an overwhelming sense of political liability as they unwittingly became 'political tokens' and suspected political subjects amid the increasingly tense political atmosphere between mainland China and Hong Kong. This paper pinpoints the relevance of class and politics in understanding how diasporic groups engage with higher education.

Diaspora at home

When Hong Kong returned to the PRC, overnight, the people of Hong Kong no longer belonged to the overseas Chinese diaspora. However, the legacy of colonial rule and Hong Kong's special status continue to mark Hongkongers' distinction from their counterparts in mainland China. This is a typical example in which the border migrated over people. Consequently, Hongkongers 'were suddenly narrated into the experiential status that diaspora marks when coded as the stranger[s]-within. They may not have crossed the border. The border crossed them.' Extending 'diaspora' to 'diaspora at home', in this case, seems fitting to capture the complex and multiple Chinese identities of the Hong Kong students who journey across the within-country border.

This article examines an understudied population in migration studies – cross-border students who are neither international nor domestic but have a unique 'diaspora at home' status. Through the ambiguous status of such students, the paper examines a central research question: what roles do class positions and political stances of Hong Kong students play in their experiences of mainland universities? Furthermore, this article illustrates both positive and negative roles the 'diaspora at home' status plays in these Hong Kong students' educational and occupational navigation in mainland China. The paper sheds important light on rethinking the notions of border, citizenship, and nation-state in migration studies, and contributes to an expansive understanding of international students and cross-border education.

More specifically, I have drawn on data to argue firstly that the experiences of these Hong Kong students have been deeply politicised due to their 'diaspora at home' status; and secondly, that their class positions in Hong Kong have uniquely oriented them to take up the opportunities offered by the politically-motivated preferential higher education admission policies of the PRC government, due to the prospect of upward social mobility which was much less accessible in Hong Kong.

In navigating their journeys in mainland China, these students' 'diaspora at home' status interplayed with the special 'diasporic space' in Beijing and resulted in these students' exclusive access to an elite circle of Hongkongers made up of top-rank government officials and business elites. Such social connections would not have been possible had they stayed in Hong Kong, and enabled these students to accumulate social capital that facilitated subsequent competitive internship and job opportunities. Getting admitted to prestigious mainland universities also provided these Hong Kong students much-needed institutional and professional prestige and channels to secure 'dignified' employments, either in mainland China or in Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, the highly politicised nature of their 'diaspora at home' status has been characterised by their simultaneous roles as 'political tokens' for conveying political unity messages and as potentially 'dangerous' and 'suspicious' political others, subjecting them to intense public scrutiny, hostile political confrontations and surveillance on campus. While these Hong Kong students took advantage of the higher education and upward social mobility offered by the PRC government and institutions, they became unwittingly committed to serving as subjects (or indeed 'tokens') for fostering political integration. In these senses, the Hong Kong students could be considered as becoming 'political sacrifices' for the PRC government's 'state driven strategy…toward eventual political integration' of 'disarticulated political entities including Hong Kong' (Lan and Wu, 2016, p. 745).

Adopting 'diaspora at home' as an analytical lens has made it possible to tease out the nuances of the types of exclusions and navigations that these Hong Kong students as 'strangers-within' (Charusheela, 2007) have experienced, pertaining to politics and politicisation, and class and social mobility. As members of the 'diaspora at home', these Hong Kong students embodied and became impacted by many of the tensions and efforts that traditional diasporic groups have experienced when migrating abroad, e.g. exclusion and

suspicion based on assumed and imposed political beliefs. Importantly, these Hong Kong students are dissimilar to their peers from middle-class backgrounds (Waters, 2007) and/or of higher academic achievement levels (Te and Postiglione, 2018); instead, their working-class background and/or academic standing inclined them towards such cross-border higher education moves. Distilling such embedded nature of class and politics thus allowed me to follow Brubaker's (2005, p. 13) argument and focus on their 'disaporic stances, projects, claims…practices'. Such an analytical orientation thus resonates with the consensus among migration scholars regarding the pertinence of departing from methodological nationalism and becoming sensitive to internal heterogeneity of the diaspora groups (Anthias, 1998; Brubaker, 2005; Kleist, 2008).

Author Bio

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Youth, Mobility, and the Emotional Burdens of youxue (Travel and Study): A Case Study of Chinese Students in Italy

Dr Shanshan Lan, University of Amsterdam

Abstract

Based on fieldwork in China and Italy, this article examines the affective dimension of middle-class Chinese students' *youxue* (travel and study) practices in Italy. With the liberalization of state policy in China's self-funded study abroad market and the proliferation of educational intermediaries, *youxue* has become a special type of educational consumption that caters to the middle-class Chinese family's desire for transnational mobility and cosmopolitan life styles. The blurring of the line between travel and study points to the open-ended and multi-linear nature of transnational student mobility. However, due to the limitations and pitfalls in international education policies in both the sending and the receiving countries, Chinese students' *youxue* experiences in Italy are marked by notable contradictions between mobility and immobility, hopes and frustrations, self-appreciation and self-reproach.

INTRODUCTION

I met Brian in summer 2017, when he was working as a volunteer tutor for Chinese students at University X. Originally from Nanjing city in East China, Brian came to study in Italy in 2008 as an eighteen-year-old high school graduate. Since his score in the *Gaokao* (National College Entrance Exam) was not high enough for him to be admitted to an elite university in China, Brian decided to follow the popular trend of *youxue* (travel and study). Helped by a study abroad agent in Nanjing and financial aid from his parents, Brian managed to enrol in University X, a reputable university in Northern Italy. With much hesitation, Brian confessed to me that it took him eight years to learn to speak Italian fluently. A few days later, Brian made another confession: he never graduated from University X. He said, "I am still working on my thesis, but I sometimes tell Chinese students here that I graduated because I do not want them to doubt my ability as a tutor". While promising to keep the secret, I was deeply troubled by the many contradictions in his overseas educational experiences. Why is it so easy for Brian to enrol in an elite university in Italy but not in China? Why did it take so long

for him to learn to speak Italian fluently? How to explain the deep sense of shame he felt for not being able to graduate on time?

Brian is only one among many young Chinese students who study abroad at an early age. With the marketization of higher education in China and the liberalization of state policy concerning the self-funded study abroad market, student migration from China has developed new trends in terms of the diversification of student backgrounds, motivations for studying abroad, and choice of destination countries. The rise of the *youxue* phenomenon in the late 2000s is one example: the Chinese word *xue* means study, but the word *you* has multiple meanings, such as travel, tourism, wandering, play, and fun. To expand their consumer market, commercialized intermediaries often trace the origin of *youxue* back to ancient China, when Confucius travelled with his students to surrounding countries for the purpose of building their knowledge and character. While upholding the combination of knowledge formation and character training in the Confucius model, the contemporary concept of *youxue* also highlights the experimental and experiential dimensions of overseas education. There are generally three types of *youxue* activities in the Chinese context: short-term study tour or summer camps for children or adolescents (sometimes accompanied by parents); touring elite overseas university campuses by pre-college youth and their parents; and short or long-term study abroad projects for the purpose of obtaining language certificates, course credits, overseas degrees, and cross-cultural experiences.

This research focuses on the *youxue* practices of Chinese students who study abroad with the purpose of obtaining a Bachelor's or Master's degree. I chose this group due to excessive media reports of failure stories among them. Some were reported as getting involved in criminal activities in the host countries; others had to return home due to difficulties of adjusting to a new educational system (Luo, 2013; Mott, 2018). In 2014, it was reported that 8000 Chinese students were expelled from U.S. universities due to low grades, academic dishonesty, and breaking rules (Zuo, 2015). In 2017, three cases of suicides among Chinese students (one undergraduate, two doctoral candidates) were reported in U.S. universities (Chang, 2017). While such dramatic examples run the risk of pathologizing overseas Chinese students in popular media, few efforts have been made to explore the structural reasons that mediate the emotional wellbeing of these youth. This article contributes to literature on student migration and neoliberal affects by making a connection between the *youxue* phenomenon and neoliberal transformations in Chinese society. I argue that Chinese students' feelings of disappointment, frustration, shame, and hope are symptomatic of structural problems embedded in the marketization of international education and the neoliberal transformation in China's higher educational system.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In their study of middle-class British students attending élite universities in the United States, Waters et al. (2011) note that part of the goal of their informants' study abroad experiences is to seek happiness, overseas adventure, and to extend the freedoms associated with youth. To a certain extent, the youth period for the Chinese students in this research has also been significantly prolonged due to their engagements in traveling and

part-time working activities, and the extra time they take to obtain an overseas degree. However, there are also important differences between the Chinese case and the British one. Most importantly, student migration from China to Italy has been heavily mediated by policies in both the sending and receiving countries and by commercialized educational intermediaries. The Marco Polo and Turandot programmes represent the Italian state's effort to speed up its pace in the internationalization of higher education and to strengthen its geopolitical interests in China. The extremely lenient admission policy, endorsed by official bi-lateral agreements between the sending and receiving states, not only creates a short cut for Italian universities' recruitment of students from China but also effectively fends off competitions from universities in other European countries. However, the active involvement of both the Italian and Chinese states in transnational student mobility has its drawbacks. According to Matteo, a staff in the international office of University X, due to the politically sensitive nature of the Marco Polo programme, he and his colleagues are cautious not to offer any critique of it for fear of jeopardizing Sino-Italian relations. Although there are plenty of complaints among the teaching staff at University X concerning Chinese students' poor Italian proficiency and inadequate performance in class, there seems to be a lack of communication between top administrative personnel and teaching and support staff who work with Chinese students on daily basis. The politically sensitive nature of the Marco Polo programme ends up doing a disservice to Chinese students, since many of the challenges they face cannot be openly discussed and dealt with by the university authorities.

It is important to note that while the Marco Polo and Turandot programmes are state-initiated pathways for student migration, the operationalization of the study abroad services are generally handled by private educational agents. In other words, the Chinese and Italian states not only function as big brokers of international education but also facilitate the development of agent chains at the local and transnational scales (c.f. Xiang, 2012). Collaboration between state and non-state sectors highlights the neoliberal transformation in the international higher education market; but it also poses limits to the state's power to regulate unethical business practices. Diego, a senior administrator at University X, disclosed to me that in 2016 the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had discovered 400 forgery cases among Chinese students. Examples of fake documents include language certificates, diplomas, transcripts, and other supporting materials. Diego blamed the unethical practices of study-abroad agents for the relatively "low quality" of Chinese students they have recruited. Meanwhile, he considered it difficult to implement structural changes at University X. He said, "Since these students have already been admitted to the university, there is nothing I can do". To a certain extent, the lenient admission policy of Italian universities has become a double-edged sword. While it allows academically less competitive students from China to easily enrol in elite universities in Italy, it does not guarantee a stimulating and nurturing learning environment for these students. While it is easy to blame some Chinese students for their inadequate performance in class, the neoliberal discourse of self-responsibility also obscures important structural constrains faced by them in Italy.

Another difference between the Chinese case and the British case is the intensive emotional turmoil most of my student respondents had to go through, mainly resulting from the

tensions between the study dimension and the consumption dimension of their *youxue* experiences in Italy. This research finds a contradiction between Chinese youth's self-narration of personal growth and the reality of their prolonged youth period abroad, which highlights the emotional complications of some Chinese youths' mobile transitions to adulthood through overseas *youxue* practices (Robertson et al., 2018). Regarding their job prospect in China, younger returnees with Bachelor's or Master's degrees from non-traditional study abroad destinations often find themselves falling into the cracks of state policies, which favour overseas returnees with doctoral and post-doctoral qualifications (Zweig, 2006; Xiang, 2011). The structural marginalization of these younger returnees in China's job market is further aggravated by negative media coverage of radical examples of failure, mentioned in the introduction to this article. This research suggests that we need to move beyond the success and failure binary in evaluating the *youxue* experiences of Chinese youth. Instead, we should pay attention to how *youxue* impact youth's mobile transition to adulthood and how this process is filled with feelings of vulnerability, confusion, self-appreciation and self-depreciation. Instead of criticising these youths' problematic behaviours, we need to question the institutional power relations that normalize *youxue* as a pathway for middle-class youths' transition into adulthood. Due to the limitation of the research sample, this article cannot represent the study abroad experiences of all Chinese students in Italy. Future research needs to be conducted on the experiences of returnees and how these *youxue* experiences translate back into life in China.

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

Capacity Building

Call for Participants: Chinese Master's students' job seeking and employment

I'm Xianan Hu, a second year PhD student in Education at Durham University.
I'm currently conducting an investigation related to Chinese postgraduate master's students who have graduated since 2016 or are currently registered at UK or Chinese universities. The questions are related to family background, academic performance, career aspirations and employment situation, and it takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

All answers from this survey are for use in this research only, and the names and other personal information will never be used. All reports will be based on aggregated results and so no individuals or institutions will be identifiable. Information about our data protection policy is available at http://www.dur.ac.uk/ig/dp/.
I'll be really grateful if you could complete this questionnaire: https://huxianan.wjx.cn/jq/51423081.aspx, which could be filled out through WeChat or other devices.

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CfP: Diaspora and Education: Towards New Sociological Perspectives for ISSE

Diaspora and Education: Towards New Sociological Perspectives

A special issue for International Studies in Sociology of Education.

This Special Issue aims to explore the theoretical, methodological and empirical relevance of the concept of diaspora for an international sociology of education. It will bring together high-quality, original research and scholarship from a range of disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, migration and diaspora studies, comparative and international education, digital literacies, among others.

The Special Issue invites cutting edge empirical and theoretical research examining the ways in which diasporic communities are drawing upon their transnational linkages and manifold capitals to educate themselves and others in diverse societies.

The conception of diaspora which is the focus of this special issue is different from the so-called 'check-list' approach which associates diasporas with loss of, longing for and possible return to a homeland, while also moving beyond the 'anti-essentialist' focus on hybridity and difference. Rather, diasporas are seen as normal and constant features of the contemporary world and analysed as highly significant in shaping social, political, economic and cultural processes at local, national and transnational levels. Special attention is therefore expected to be paid to the particular nature of settlement, relationships with the country of settlement, and intra-diasporic, local and global dynamics. However, contributing authors are welcome to adopt other positions and to use their work to critique and further develop the concept of diaspora.

Your paper may wish to address one or more of the following questions (not an exhaustive list):

- How can 'diaspora' help us to more rigorously challenge methodological nationalism in education and/or offer methodological innovations?
- What advantages (e.g. theoretical, empirical) does the diaspora concept offer the globally-comparative study of education?
- How do diasporans use their 'diasporicity' to engage with and challenge/overcome educational inequalities in national and international arenas?
- What does a diasporic approach to education offer in terms of developing (or theorizing) innovative, inclusive models of education and citizenship?

Submission Guidelines

Prospective authors are very welcome to contact the guest-editor directly to Dr Reza Gholami to informally discuss their contribution or seek feedback on their abstract.

To formally express an interest in contributing to the Special Issue, please submit an abstract of no more than 250 words to the same email address by *15 January 2020*. Successful authors will be notified by *15 February 2020*, and full drafts are required for submission and peer review by *1 April 2020*.

For an example of an article in this special issue, refer here.

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CfP: 'Resilience of Chinese children, parents, and educators' for International Journal of Disability, Development and Education (IJDDE)

1. Title of the Special Issue

   Resilience of Chinese children, parents, and educators: A powerful response to "lazy inclusivism"

2. Name of Special Issue Editor and Affiliation

   Guanglun Michael Mu (m.mu@qut.edu.au), Queensland University of Technology

3. Introductory Statement

   Three decades after the advent of "Learning in Regular Classroom" (LRC), various strategies have emerged to do "inclusion" in China. At the national level, the State Council (2010, 2019) has stressed the importance of inclusive education. At policy level, Ministry of Education (2018, 2019) has consistently included LRC as one of its annual key work objectives. At school level, students with special needs have become increasingly visible in regular classrooms (Mu, Hu, & Wang, 2017). Parallel to these developments is the strident criticism of the structural absence of system support to LRC (Wang et al., 2015). Behind the commitment to, and the criticism of, LRC is the logic of "lazy inclusivism" where seemingly hard-working legislation, regulation, and education paradoxically engage in much tokenistic inclusive practice that barely introduces transformational change.

   In response to the paradox of "lazy inclusivism", the Special Issue aims to produce knowledge about the ordinary and extraordinary wisdom of Chinese children, parents, and educators emerging from the context of inclusive education full of attractions and distractions. When faced with visible adverse conditions and invisible structural constraints, some may play the game of tokenism and become "lazy"; others, however, may strategically refuse to play the game, demonstrating resilience to symbolic violence of "lazy inclusivism". Questions remain in terms of who become "lazy", why and how; and who awaken from the epistemic slumber of "laziness", why and how. To address these enigmatic questions, articles to be included in the Special Issue will collectively explore pathways to resilience that purposefully not perfunctorily transforms inclusive education into an enabling and welcoming pedagogical space for the betterment of children with diverse needs in China.

4. Paper Information

   The Special Issue aims to put together seven articles, including an introductory article and a concluding article by the Special Issue Editor, and five empirical articles written by key researchers with expertise in Chinese inclusive/special education. Details regarding the authors and the topics of each empirical article are be confirmed.

5. Concluding Article

Author: Guanglun Michael Mu, Queensland University of Technology

The concluding article will engage in a critical analysis of the issues raised by the five empirical articles, connect these issues to the global debates around the concept and praxis of inclusion, and propose a tentative agenda for research and policy for Chinese inclusive education, which may also be of reference to inclusive education elsewhere.

6. Working Timeline

    <u>December 2019:</u> Call for EOIs

    <u>January 2020:</u> Editor's response to EOIs

    <u>February 2020:</u> Deadline for submission of proposal that includes a concise title, a 250-word abstract, and six keywords maximum

    <u>March 2020:</u> Editor's response to proposal

    <u>September 2020:</u> Deadline for submission of full paper, 7000 words maximum including title, abstract, keywords, main text, footnotes and endnotes, tables and figures, references, acknowledgements, and appendices

    <u>October 2020:</u> Completion of internal review by editor

    <u>December 2021:</u> Deadline for submission of revised paper with a response to editor's review

    <u>March 2021:</u> Deadline for submission for external blind review

    <u>Expected publication date:</u> End of 2021

7. Reference

Ministry of Education, P. R. C. (2018). *教育部 2018 年工作要点[2018 key work objectives of the Ministry of Education]*. Beijing: Ministry of Education.

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Call for Papers: Emerging and (re)shaping higher education 'identities' in China for Special Issue of International Journal of Chinese Education (IJCE)

Submission deadline: 1 May 2020

Guest Editors: Dr Kun Dai (Peking University), Prof Mei Tian (Xi'an Jiaotong University)

Dr Kun Dai

Prof Mei Tian

China's government and universities have taken many steps to internationalise higher education. Chinese universities are encouraged to collaborate with international partners on teaching and research. China continues to be the largest international student source country in the world. China has also developed its ability to attract international students to its own universities. Selected Chinese universities are also building campuses and research facilities abroad.

Such internationalisation diversifies Chinese higher education, and reveals opportunities as well as challenges. One critical challenge involves how Chinese people and universities

perceive and (re)position their identify among the change. Much can be gleaned from foreign experiences, theories and methodologies. But it is becoming more important to move beyond such borrowing, adaptation and normalisation. There is an opportunity to build innovative insights into the nature and development of the 'Chinese identity'.

In this IJCE Special Issue we invite discussions of and reflections on the 'identities' of different parties (e.g., policymakers, universities, academics, and students) in the current changes of Chinese higher education. We welcome contributions engaged with studies of 'identities' in Chinese higher education from different perspectives, i.e., sectoral, institutional, professional, or individual. Authors from doctoral students to established scholars are welcomed to contribute papers. Articles should make a theoretical or technical contribution.

Possible topics include but are not limited to studying:

- Educational policy and identity
- Globalisation/internationalisation of systems
- University characteristics
- Faculty education and research identity
- Student characteristics and theories

Interested authors are invited to contribute a 7,000 word paper (including abstract, references, footnotes, tables and figures) to the two guest editors Dr Kun Dai (kdai@pku.edu.cn) and Prof Mei Tian (temmytian@mail.xjtu.edu.cn). All submitted manuscripts will be double-blind reviewed. All paper submissions will use the online editorial system.

First draft paper due for editorial consideration and review	1 May 2020
Papers returned to authors for revision	1 June 2020
Second draft paper due for editorial consideration and review	1 July 2020
Final submission after changes for publication	31 August 2020

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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.

You can follow us on Facebook and on Twitter @ChiEdMobilities